VAN OYS

MAASTRICHT
RETREAT

HeART of Slow

Press Kit

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300th Anniversary of César van Hoensbroeck: Unveiling the Van Oys Maastricht Retreat

Congratulations to César van Hoensbroeck and Van Oys Maastricht Retreat! A historic celebration and unveiling.

On 28 August 2024, the Van Oys Maastricht Retreat in Eijsden-Margraten was officially unveiled during a grand ceremony attended by 500 guests. This special date coincided with the 300th birthday of César van Hoensbroeck, the penultimate Prince-Bishop of Liège and notable resident of Kasteel Oost. The event not only celebrated van Hoensbroeck but also marked the beginning of a new era for Kasteel Oost, which is set to reopen in Spring 2025 as a 5-star superior retreat and a proud member of *Leading Hotels of the World*. The Van Oys Maastricht Retreat promises a truly extraordinary experience for discerning guests. As Michel and Leon Maes, owners of Van Oys, aptly remarked:

> *"The foundations laid in a historical context provide a basis for the future."*

Embracing the Slow Travel Philosophy

Van Oys invites guests to embrace the rhythm of slow travel, fostering a deep connection with the local community, traditions, and cultures. At Van Oys, guests are encouraged to take a slower path, one that promotes relaxation, rejuvenation, and a profound sense of well-being. By slowing down, guests can practice mindfulness and introspection, enriching the soul, nourishing the spirit, and appreciating the natural beauty that surrounds them. The retreat also highlights the richness of regional culinary exploration, offering guests the finest local produce and cuisine, making every meal a celebration of the local terroir. As Managing Director Marc Alofs notes:

> *"Cittaslow; our local products, regional customs and traditions are the attractions for our international clientele to experience the authentic 'couleur locale' at a high level of sophistication."*

Van Oys is more than just a destination; it's an invitation to embrace the journey itself, to savor each step, cherish every moment, and seize the unique opportunity for personal growth, self-discovery, and cultural exchange. At Van Oys, guests are immersed in the richness of the present moment, indulging in the flavors of regional cuisine while exploring the depths of their own consciousness.

Festivities and Visionary Plans

The festivities were inaugurated by Emile Roemer, Governor of the Province of Limburg. Alain Krijnen, Mayor of Eijsden-Margraten, alongside Emile Roemer and Van Oys owner Michel Maes, unveiled the donated statue and painting of the jubilarian, César van Hoensbroeck. The statue is the work of Elisa Amadeus Puts, a highly talented local artist who based her work on extensive research in the Liège episcopal and family archives. The painting is by Alisa Gibet, originally from St Petersburg, who once lived in the Van Oys farmhouse, making this project and its surroundings particularly close to her heart.

Following this, Michel Maes and Managing Director Marc Alofs presented their visionary plans for the former Kasteel Oost, outlining its promising future as the Van Oys Maastricht Retreat. The ceremonial opening was accompanied by culinary delights inspired by the Cittaslow philosophy—a taste of what's to come—expertly prepared by ES&C caterers based in Eijsden. The regal atmosphere was further enhanced by musical accompaniment from Koninklijke Harmonie Sainte Cécile Eijsden, setting the tone for what will surely become a cherished destination for travellers seeking a deeper, more meaningful journey.

César van Hoensbroeck

César van Hoensbroeck, born in 1724 at Kasteel Oost, was a significant 18th century figure. Celebrated for his piety and administrative talents, he became Prince-Bishop of Liège in 1784 but, despite a reputation for mildness and humility his tenure was marked by controversy. Hoensbroeck was a staunch defender of the traditional values of the Ancien Régime, opposing the Enlightenment reforms initiated by his predecessor. In Liège, he implemented key administrative reforms and supported cultural initiatives, such as the establishment of a public library. His firm stance on defending ecclesiastical rights and resisting Emperor Joseph II's reforms highlights the complexity of his legacy, which continues to evoke both admiration and critical reflection.

Limburg's First 5-Star Superior Hotel and Member of *Leading Hotels of the World*

When Van Oys Maastricht Retreat opens next year, it will be Limburg's first 5-star superior hotel as well as proudly joining the prestigious ranks of *Leading Hotels of the World*. These distinctions underscore Van Oys's unwavering commitment to delivering exceptional quality and service, setting a new benchmark for luxury in the region.

Eco Luxe at Its Finest

Van Oys is dedicated to sustainability, integrating eco-friendly practices throughout its operations. From farm-to-table dining using locally sourced organic ingredients to energy-efficient technologies, the hotel ensures guests enjoy luxury while contributing to a greener future.

Culinary Excellence

Van Oys is set to become not just a hotspot for foodies, but *the* place to be for extraordinary culinary experiences. Under the guidance of former 2-Michelin-starred Chef Pascal Jalhay and Chef Guido Braeken, the retreat's innovative cuisine promises to make Maastricht an international culinary destination.

An Extraordinary Venue

Van Oys Maastricht Retreat offers a stunning setting for events, from weddings to high-profile gatherings, making it an extraordinary venue for those seeking a truly unique experience. The historic charm of Kasteel Oost combined with modern luxury ensures that every event at Van Oys is unforgettable.

Unparalleled Amenities

Van Oys Maastricht Retreat will offer 81 luxury rooms and suites, an all-day *cuisine du terroir* at Restaurant Maes, fine-dining experiences at Restaurant CREATE, the relaxed César wine bar, and a cookery studio for masterclasses. Additionally, the retreat will offer an indoor and outdoor spa, a gym, and top-tier wellness treatments.

Setting New Standards

Under the leadership of hospitality expert Marc Alofs, Van Oys is not only aiming for 5-star superior status but also solidifying its position by being a member of *Leading Hotels of the World*. These achievements will establish Van Oys as a premier destination in Limburg, setting new standards in luxury, culinary excellence, and event hosting in the region.

FACTS & FIGURES

The History: Kasteel Oost dates back to the early 13th century. Named after the knightly Van Oys family, the building changed ownership several times over the centuries, with the most recent change occurring in 2005. The current owners, Maastricht entrepreneurs Michel and Leon Maes, are transforming the historic Van Oys in the Eijsden-Margraten region into a luxurious retreat. Meticulously restored and repurposed, Van Oys will offer guests an unparalleled experience of elegance and comfort.

Cittaslow Philosophy: The transformation of Van Oys emphasises sustainability and the Cittaslow philosophy, focusing on creating a high-quality environment and fostering a strong social community. Cittaslow promotes a lifestyle that values quality, sustainability, and local culture, which aligns perfectly with the ethos of Van Oys.

5-Star Superior Rating & Membership of *Leading Hotels of the World*: Van Oys Maastricht Retreat proudly holds a 5-star superior rating and is a member of the prestigious *Leading Hotels of the World*, underscoring its commitment to the highest standards of luxury and service.

Proprietors & Leadership: Van Oys Maastricht Retreat is the vision of Maastricht entrepreneurs Michel and Leon Maes. The retreat is led by Managing Director Marc Alofs, a renowned figure in the hospitality industry, who is steering the project towards a future of sustainable luxury and exceptional guest experiences.

81 Luxurious Rooms, Suites & Spa Suites Across Three Buildings: Château, Carré, and Remise : Each room and suite at Van Oys Maastricht Retreat has been thoughtfully designed to provide modern comforts while embodying sustainability. The accommodation, spread across the Château, Carré, and Remise buildings, reflect Van Oys's commitment to eco-friendly luxury, offering guests an unparalleled experience of elegance and comfort.

- Remise Classic Room – 17–24sqm
- Carré or Remise Deluxe Room – 30sqm
- Carré Deluxe Room with Balcony – 30sqm plus French balcony
- Carré Deluxe Room with Terrace – 30sqm plus terrace
- Château or Remise Junior Suite – 26–34sqm
- Château Suite (1 room) – 34–54sqm
- Château Suite (2 rooms) – 44–54sqm
- Carré Spa Suite – 52sqm
- Château Wellness Loft – 98sqm

Accommodation ranges from the elegant Classic Rooms to the expansive Spa Suites and Wellness Lofts, each designed to cater to the varied needs and preferences of guests, ensuring a luxurious stay that harmonises with the retreat's sustainable ethos.

Restaurant Maes, Cuisine du Terroir: Under the guidance of former 2-Michelin-starred Chef Pascal Jalhay, this restaurant celebrates regional ingredients with a strong focus on sustainability. Guests can enjoy their meals on a beautiful terrace, surrounded by nature.

Restaurant CREATE by Guido Braeken: Led by 2-Michelin-starred Chef Guido Braeken, CREATE offers a culinary experience that highlights local produce and eco-conscious practices, complemented by an inviting terrace for alfresco dining.

Extensive Private Dining Options: Ideal for celebrations, weddings, meetings, and events, with flexible open-air possibilities, these spaces are designed with the Cittaslow philosophy in mind, promoting a high-quality, unhurried experience.

The Nature Spa: A wellness sanctuary that aligns with Van Oys's sustainability ethos, offering treatments that use natural, locally sourced ingredients and cutting-edge technology to nourish both body and soul. The spa is defined by its holistic approach and evolutionary spa architecture.

Wine Bar César: An elegant space offering a curated selection of organic and biodynamic wines, reflecting Van Oys's dedication to sustainable luxury.

Atelier du Terroir: A unique culinary workshop led by retired Michelin-starred chefs, where the emphasis is on slow food and sustainable cooking techniques, in line with the Cittaslow principles.

FARMOYS Shop: This farm-to-table shop showcases the best local produce, supporting the community and reducing the carbon footprint by sourcing ingredients directly from nearby farms.

Culinary Hotspot: Van Oys is not just a retreat but a destination for slow, sustainable dining. Featuring Sunday brunches, socially-minded dining options on Fridays and Saturdays, and exclusive events with international star chefs, all focused on local, seasonal ingredients.

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