

VAN OYS MAASTRICHT RETREAT

## EMERGES AS A RISING LEADER IN SUSTAINABILITY EMBRACE THE CITTASLOW PHILOSOPHY



Maastricht is entering a new phase of international attention and Van Oys Maastricht Retreat is positioning itself at the forefront of sustainable luxury hospitality. Less than a year after opening in summer 2025, the 5-star superior retreat, now also an official André Rieu Travel Partner, invites guests to experience the region through the values of the Cittaslow philosophy: a slower, more mindful way of travel that celebrates local culture, seasonal cuisine and meaningful relaxation. Just five minutes south of Maastricht's historic centre, the restored Château estate offers a tranquil counterpoint to the city's vibrant cultural energy, combining eco-conscious hospitality, a deep connection to the landscape and curated experiences that highlight the identity and traditions of the region.

### OFFICIAL ANDRÉ RIEU TRAVEL PARTNER

No summer in Maastricht is complete without André Rieu. His open-air concerts on the Vrijthof transform the historic square into a global stage, drawing tens of thousands of visitors and broadcasting the city to millions worldwide. Grand yet accessible, theatrical yet intimate, the performances have become synonymous with Maastricht itself. As an official travel partner, Van Oys welcomes concert guests seeking proximity to the cultural spectacle yet distance from its crowds.

### A CITY EXPERIENCED SLOWLY

Beyond the concerts the region reveals itself through experiences best enjoyed at an unhurried pace. On Sunday mornings, collectors cross the nearby Belgian border to Tongeren, home to the largest antiques market in the Benelux. Since 1976, more than 350 exhibitors have gathered here weekly, offering antiques, brocante, vintage design and rare collectibles – each piece carrying echoes of another era. The Bonnefanten Museum in Maastricht balances contemporary art with old masters, historic churches house bookstores and cafés, and medieval streets lead to lively terraces where afternoons stretch comfortably into evening.

Cycling defines life in Limburg during the warmer months. With more than 2,000 kilometres of safe, signposted cycling routes, the region is considered one of Europe's most accessible cycling destinations. Paths wind effortlessly through orchards, forests and river landscapes, connecting Dutch and Belgian Limburg in a seamless cross-border experience. Leisure riders follow scenic routes along the Meuse, while ambitious cyclists test themselves on legendary climbs from the Amstel Gold Race, including the steep Cauberg and Keutenberg – climbs that reward every ascent with sweeping summer views. Maastricht and its region are best experienced slowly, by bike, on foot, or over a glass of wine beside the river, offering travellers a refined European escape that feels both vibrant and effortlessly relaxed.

### LANDSCAPE AS AN IDENTITY

That rhythm extends to Van Oys itself. The two-hectare park surrounding the Château, designed by Belgian landscape architect Guy Stockmans, has evolved from construction site to quietly contoured landscape. 'Our goal was never to create a garden that feels designed,' says Stockmans. 'We wanted to capture the soul of the place and allow guests to discover the landscape slowly – from structured parkland into nature that becomes increasingly wild.' Gentle slopes conceal modern infrastructure, while a circular kitchen garden and vineyard reflect the Cittaslow philosophy, a movement that champions quality of life, local identity, sustainability and a slower rhythm of living.

Inside, master florist Frank Bruninx adds a living layer to the retreat's interiors. His floral compositions are intuitive, seasonal and echo the landscape outside. 'A flower is a living organism,' he explains. 'You guide it, but nature always has the final word.' From intimate salon arrangements to large-scale event installations, the floral design reinforces the retreat's atmosphere of quiet elegance and connection to nature. Together, landscape, architecture and floral artistry create an environment that evolves continuously. As trees mature, planting deepens and seasonal rhythms unfold, Van Oys becomes less a newly opened hotel and more a place that feels rooted, a destination shaped as much by time as by design.

### SLOW LUXURY ROOTED IN PLACE

With 81 rooms and suites set across a restored Château, the Remise and contemporary Carré wing, Van Oys Maastricht Retreat positions itself not as a grand statement but as a sanctuary rooted in its landscape and region. Eco-friendly construction and design was at the forefront of the restoration of the 13<sup>th</sup>-century Kasteel Oost. By using local materials, such as marlstone and oak and involving local craftsmen, the team reduced the carbon footprint.

The local connection extends directly to the table. At fine-dining restaurant Create, awarded two Michelin stars shortly after opening, chef Guido Braeken presents a cuisine defined by aromatic clarity, precise technique and subtle international influences grounded in exceptional produce. Alongside it, Maes, Cuisine du Terroir offers a farm-to-table and responsible sourcing approach. Many of the ingredients are sourced within a 50km radius of the estate. Together, they reflect the culinary identity of South Limburg – refined yet deeply connected to place. The recently opened Oysana Spa & Sports concept mirrors this philosophy, using energy-efficient innovative technology, focusing on longevity, balance and natural wellbeing rather than traditional wellness excess. Here, gastronomy and wellbeing are not opposing ideas but complementary expressions of thoughtful living.

As the city reawakens and outdoor terraces fill, the retreat becomes an ideal base from which to experience Maastricht's quieter luxury, a destination defined less by spectacle than by atmosphere. Cultural life unfolds across museums, galleries and historic churches, while the internationally renowned art fair TEFAF continues to reinforce Maastricht's role as one of Europe's most important meeting points for art and collectors. For travellers seeking meaningful European escapes closer to home, where fine dining, culture, landscape and heritage intersect naturally, Maastricht may prove one of the continent's most unexpected discoveries.



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