

4 MICHELIN STARS LIGHT UP ANTWERP'S GREEN HEART AT THE GOURMET MECCA THAT IS BOTANIC SANCTUARY ANTWERP



The 2023 MICHELIN Guide for Belgium and Luxembourg has just been presented, and the *Leading Hotels of the World* BOTANIC SANCTUARY ANTWERP is in celebratory mood! The leaders of the 5-star superior gourmet hotspot are confirmed: Hertog Jan by Gert De Mangeleer and Joachim Boudens has again been awarded 2 stars. Fine Fleur by Jacob Jan Boerma and Thomas Diepersloot, and Het Gebaar by Roger van Damme also kept hold of their scintillating star of culinary excellence.

Just one year ago, the first 5-star superior hotel in Belgium, the BOTANIC SANCTUARY ANTWERP, catapulted straight into Europe's top culinary league. This recognition of the Botanic as a gourmet hotspot has been more than confirmed, thanks to the sensational revival of Hertog Jan by Gert De Mangeleer and Joachim Boudens. No less impressive is the success story of Fine Fleur by Jacob Jan Boerma and Thomas Diepersloot. And of course, the temple to all things dessert, Het Gebaar by Roger van Damme, where sweet (and savoury) culinary experiences excel at the BOTANIC SANCTUARY ANTWERP. The diamond in the heart of Antwerp also has additional culinary aces up their sleeve – the two fine-dining restaurants Bar Bulot (Hertog Jan Restaurant Group) and 1238.

- ||| **2 stars** – **Hertog Jan** by Gert De Mangeleer & Joachim Boudens
- ||| **1 star** – **Fine Fleur** by Jacob Jan Boerma & Thomas Diepersloot
- ||| **1 star** – **Het Gebaar** by Roger van Damme



HERTOG JAN GERT DE MANGELEER & JOACHIM BOUDENS

2 MICHELIN stars

Gert De Mangeleer and Joachim Boudens always reach for the stars, and they've certainly gone the extra mile in delighting diners. As well as beginning a new chapter in the Hertog Jan Restaurant Group's story, De Mangeleer and Boudens's Hertog Jan at the Botanic offers near mystical experiences. Within the understated and elegant interior designed by Benoit Viaene, the congenial duo have taken a new approach: a journey through the world of imagination, art and indulgence, with many flavours from their own herb garden producing a seductive synergy of aromas and textures. The highly restricted number of covers directs attention to the experience and its exclusivity. This exceptional revival fulfilled De Mangeleer and Boudens' dream of once more scaling culinary summits by offering something quite extraordinary – and it's done so for a second year running.

Gert De Mangeleer & Joachim Boudens – Scaling the Heights

By the time he was nine years old, Gert De Mangeleer knew that the only career his heart desired was to be a chef. To say that his childhood dream came true would be quite an understatement! The five-year-old Joachim Boudens also loved nothing more than to don his little chef's hat and play with a toy stove – this is where his attention to presentation and service was born. As he grew, so did the desire to embark on a gastronomic path, and as he gained experience, his ambition matured – only the top will do! De Mangeleer and Boudens met in 1999, at Zeebrugge's 't Molentje, and, three years later, moved on to what was then the Brasserie Hertog Jan in Sint-Michiels, a suburb of Bruges. By 2005, they had taken over the business, and a year later they were awarded their first star with a second following in 2009. In 2010, Gert De Mangeleer and Joachim Boudens purchased an old farm in Zedelgem with its own kitchen garden. Their home-grown produce further raised their culinary standards. In 2011 Boudens received recognition as Belgium's best sommelier and, in November of the same year, Hertog Jan received its third star. In 2014, De Mangeleer was voted European Chef of the Year. In July of that year, Hertog Jan moved into the renovated farm, and the restaurant in Sint-Michiels became home to LESS, a world cuisine sharing concept. Then, in 2018, they announced that they were closing Hertog Jan to pursue new adventures and challenges. Indeed, within a very short space of time, their concept flourished, and the Hertog Jan Restaurant Group opened three restaurants. In private, however, they still harboured a star-spangled dream ... which came true in 2022 thanks to the exciting reawakening of Hertog Jan at the Botanic Sanctuary Antwerp.

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FINE FLEUR JACOB JAN BOERMA & THOMAS DIEPERSLOOT

1 MICHELIN star

They who journey have delights to share! That's certainly true of Jacob Jan Boerma and Thomas Diepersloot. The Fine Fleur at the Botanic Sanctuary Antwerp is the duo's latest endeavour, featuring a cuisine defined by finesse and celebrated with a streak of perfectionism. With a shared cosmopolitan outlook and skilled craftsmanship, their inspiration comes via Asia, Spain, southern Europe and North America. Local ingredients and nature take the lead with aromas and spices from all over the world adding to the harmonious mix. Creativity is also evident in the restaurant's interior, while restaurant manager, Mark Reynders, provides lashings of cordiality and charm.

Evolution of Culinary Artistry – Jacob Jan Boerma & Thomas Diepersloot

As a child, Jacob Jan Boerma got hooked on the art of cooking by reading his first MICHELIN Guide while on a family holiday. After studying at a college of hotel management in the Netherlands, he gathered experiences in Germany, the UK and Belgium before joining the MICHELIN-starred de Nederlanden in Vreeland as chef de cuisine and earning them a second star. In 2002, the kitchen virtuoso and his wife Kim set up their own restaurant, De Leest in Vaassen. Six months later, the first star sparkled over De Leest, the second arrived in 2007, and the crowning third followed in 2013. Thomas Diepersloot was also young when first bitten by the gourmet bug. At the age of 17, having trained in the classic French tradition, he travelled and immersed himself in the world of Asian cuisine. On his return to the Netherlands, Diepersloot joined Boerma at De Leest, and then worked at Restaurant Voltaire in Leersum, where he cooked up a star. Diepersloot and Boerma are back together at the Fine Fleur – a superb synergy of culinary talent that culminates in a unique taste experience.

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HET GEBAAR ROGER VAN DAMME

1 MICHELIN star

Roger van Damme's superb restaurant at Botanic Sanctuary Antwerp is appropriately housed in a fairy-tale-like 'gingerbread house'. The restaurant's fame is based on creative, innovative desserts and modern twists on sweet classics, although savoury starters and mains also testify to the chef's inquisitive creativity. Roger's versatility, technical skills and repertoire have not only earned him a well-deserved Michelin star but also made him a star among pastry chefs. And, in case anyone might think mouthful after mouthful at Het Gebaar is sweet sweet sweet, van Damme has also developed a sophisticated repertoire of savoury delights to make every lunchtime an adventure and teatime treat an exciting experience. Van Damme's is a labour-intensive, high-tech cuisine, informed by his travels ... and his great-grandfather, a baker by trade who left a lasting impression on this star of Antwerp's culinary scene.

Roger van Damme – as Sweet as Sugar

MICHELIN Star, Dessert Trophy, Coupe de Monde, Guardian Pastry Award, Chef de Jores, 'BEST PASTRY CHEF OF THE WORLD' ... Roger van Damme's awards are extensive and well deserved. His love of dessert goes hand-in-hand with the passion of a chef. Roger van Damme has perfectly combined the two in a unique restaurant, housed in a 'gingerbread house'. Like a fairy-tale on the outside, it offers truly fairy-tale delights on the inside. Het Gebaar makes dreams come true with van Damme's lunch and dessert concept.

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About Botanic Sanctuary Antwerp

As well as being a major rising star in the gourmet world, the 5-star superior Botanic Sanctuary Antwerp is a sparkling diamond of hospitality nestled in the hidden Botanical Gardens. Following a challenging restoration scheme on a historic monastery site, the Botanic offers plenty of innovative spirit, as well as a profound sensitivity for environment, sustainability and heritage. The mission: to preserve the historic buildings' legacy, which dates back to the 13th century, and giving it a new life by focusing on its tradition of botanical study. Steeped in history, the hotel's botanical tradition accompanies visitors on a journey into 14 incomparable worlds of experience, totalling 20,000sqm. Four fine-dining restaurants honour the culinary excellence of *Leading Hotels of the World* with, most notably, the spectacular return of Hertog Jan. Fine Fleur, Bar Bulot, 1238 and Het Gebaar offer a shared celebration of culinary experiences and authenticity. The atmospheric Henry's Bar is an homage to the botanist Henri-Ferdinand van Heurck and embodies a successful association of tradition and modernity. This destination also offers numerous superb event locations, a 15th-century chapel and the Botanic Congress Centre's 14 meeting and conference rooms.

As well as forming the basis of Traditional European Medicine (TEM), medieval monastic medicine paved the way for modern herbalism's scientific and holistic approach. Recent years have seen a growing desire for natural healing and holistic solutions. The mission, therefore, was to carry this tradition of monastic and natural healing into our own millennium,

establishing it here in the diamond city of Antwerp. This is reflected in both infrastructure and treatment concept. The Botanic Health Spa combines nature – embodied by the Botanical Garden – with the attitude to wellbeing of a state-of-the-art spa. Its architectural concept evokes the historic greenhouse that once stood here, while looking into the future with its groundbreaking concept, facilities, products, treatments and sustainable energy management systems. The synergy between traditional medicine and science also underpins a unique solutions concept: Mylife Changer combines the best of TCM and TEM with the latest scientific findings. The concept is based on cosmeceuticals, manual therapy, device-based skin rejuvenation, dietary supplements and tonics.

While the monastery's historic pharmacy is reborn as a niche botanic concept store featuring Saint Charles. Those thirsting for nature and art drink their fill at the Granada Gallery, where Jochen Leën skilfully traces an arc to the city of diamonds. A good night's sleep is found in spaces as unique as the destination itself. 108 rooms and suites are housed in five historic buildings, all of which have their own story to tell with the rebirth of their historic architecture, incomparable interiors, concierge and butler services and, of course, judiciously selected works of art. Resonant names offer a sense of each building's uniqueness: *Sint Joris, Monasterium, Sint-Elisabeth, Alnetum* and *Filips Van Marnix Huis* ... Another enigma is found in the Sanctuary's cavernous depths: The Unprecedented is a VIP members-only Scotch whisky investors club. General Manager Marc Alofs was instrumental in the destination's development. His distillation of the Botanic's magic: 'We redefine luxury experiences and create unique moments that our guests will always remember.'

- ||| www.botanicantwerp.be
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