

The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD

The RotterTram on Erasmus Bridge in Rotterdam. The vintage 1969 tram is now used as a dining car and does a complete tour of the Dutch city.

VINTAGE TASTE OF ROTTERDAM

BY DIANE DANIEL | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

When Suzanne Knegt took skyline photos of her hometown, she would wait for a tram. That image of a tram in the foreground crystallized her vision of the Dutch city known for its modern architecture and giant port.

“My friends used to laugh at me because I took so many photos of the skyline with trams,” said Knegt, whose former job was marketing the city’s public transportation services, including buses and trams. “But I love the way trams look and I love Rotterdam, and I think that especially when you’re riding in a tram, you can really see and experience the whole city. Every section has its own personality and you can see those differences from the tram.”

Knegt recently turned her affection into a business — RotterTram — a sightseeing tram that doubles as a dining car. Open for business since the summer, it offers a fixed-price meal with drinks during the course of a ride that lasts 2½ hours and travels over some 18 miles of tracks throughout the city. It runs every Wednesday through Sunday evening and is also available for private parties. Knegt expects to offer lunch trips soon.

Sights along the way include the stylish cable-stayed Erasmus Bridge; Coolsingel, Rotterdam’s promenade and shopping street; and Delfshaven, the historic harbor and

one of the oldest places in the city. Information is shared with guests via tableside tablets. English versions will be offered soon, said Knegt, whose initial customers were primarily Dutch but are now growing more international.

Part of the appeal is the tram itself, a vintage 1969 model that stands out with its green and white façade and lines of gleaming steel. Knegt, who bought the tram partly with crowd-sourced funds, overhauled the inside to add dining tables, a modern kitchen, and restroom. The car, divided in two dining sections, holds a total of 44 people.

Not only is it popular with diners, onlookers get a kick out of seeing people dining in a tram car, Knegt said.

“When we ride past terraces, everybody is waving at us,” she said. “I love that.”

RotterTram
www.rottertram.nl

Departs Wednesday through Sunday at 6:30 p.m. from Willemplein and returns at 9 p.m. Price of \$92 per person includes fixed-price four-course meal, including drinks. Vegetarian and custom orders can be arranged. Reservations are required and can be made only in even numbers. For an odd number of diners, a surcharge will be added.

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PHOTOS BY AMANDA DEN BUITELAAR

Suzanne Knegt is the driving force behind RotterTram.

HERE

TIPSY TOURS ON BEACON HILL

Beacon Hill is synonymous with cobblestone streets, grand historic homes, and the gold-domed State House. For a tour that adds a “tipsy” twist to an otherwise decorous neighborhood, why not try the new boozy chocolate and wine Beacon Hill walking tour offered by Topsy Chocolates? On a 90-minute stroll, guests will learn some history of the neighborhood, as well as the origins of chocolate and its deep ties to Massachusetts. Taste local and international chocolates at four locations, from the north slope to the south, beginning with a chocolate espresso mini-size martini at the Liberty Hotel. The tour concludes with wine and chocolate pairing class, led by Topsy Chocolate owners Lucca Tognazzi and Anne Wright, at Bin 26 Enoteca on Charles Street. By the end of the class, you’ll be able to identify the differences between Dominican and Ecuadorian chocolate, and French and Italian wine, and choose your favorite pairing. Tours begin at Liberty Hotel, Saturdays starting at 3:30 p.m. \$74 per person. www.topsy-chocolates.co/tipsy-chocolate-tours

HOGWARTS HALLOWEEN FOR GROWN-UPS

Who says Halloween is only for kids? This year, Blantyre — the recently-renovated Relais & Chateaux estate in the Berkshires — is throwing an adults-only, Harry Potter-themed Halloween party on Oct. 27. Guests arriving at the Gilded Age property will find the place transformed into J.K. Rowling’s mysti-



cal world of witchcraft and wizardry. The evening includes a creative cocktail hour followed by a lavish buffet dinner and dancing with live entertainment. Hogwarts-inspired menu items include Golden Snitch Cake Pops, Chocolate Frogs, Bertie Bott’s Beans, and more. Guests are encouraged to dress up, and the hotel staff will be adorned in Harry Potter-esque attire. Open to hotel guests and the general public. Reserve tickets by phone, online, or in person. \$85. 413-637-3556, blantyre.com/blantyre-events/harry-potter-halloween-party/

THERE

FLY FISHING AND PHOTO TOUR IN BELIZE

Pack your camera and fishing gear for Frontiers International’s newest offering, Belize Fly Fishing and Photo Tour (Feb. 7-14, 2019). Hosted by award-winning photographer, angler, and journalist Jess McGlothlin, the week-

long trip starts with three days of guided fishing for bonefish, tarpon, and permit in the waters surrounding Ambergris Caye at El Pescador Resort, and ends with three days of cultural and gastronomic activities at the famed Copal Tree Lodge in southern



Belize. In addition to fishing, the action-packed trip includes hiking, biking, horseback riding, kayaking, wildlife viewing, and yoga classes in the jungle; exploring and photographing a 12,000-acre nature reserve; visiting Mayan ruins; handcrafting chocolate from boutique-grown cacao beans; and cooking classes with the lodge’s chef. From \$4,805 per person double occupancy with shared guide. 800-245-1950, www.frontiers-travel.com/copal-tree-lodge-and-el-pescador-resort-february-2019

EVERYWHERE

THE ULTIMATE PARTY COOLER

File this under “Coolest Must-Have Gadget in 2018.” The Classic Coolest



Cooler (yes, by a company called Coolest) is debuting a multiuse cooler that is perfect for beaching, boating, camping and — appropriate for fall — tailgating parties. In addition to a 55-quart dual compartment storage capacity (that will keep ice frozen for four to five days), the sturdy unit is a party-in-a-cooler with its own ice-crushing blender (operated by included battery pack) and, hidden in a secret compartment — a.k.a. accessory deck — a detachable, splash-proof Bluetooth speaker that can stream up to eight hours of music from your iOS or Android device. Other fun features include a USB charging port; LED lid light; picnic essentials (ceramic knife, corkscrew, and four plates designed to double as Frisbees); cutting board; magnetic bottle opener; and built-in cup holders. Built to hold up to 600 pounds, the cooler also boasts oversize rubber wheels, telescoping handle, and bungee cord for strapping on additional party paraphernalia. Available in five colors. \$399. coolest.com/pages/new-coolest-cooler-6-20