



GUILTY PLEASURE

Hotel de Goudfazant (hoteldegoudfazant.nl) is a hip restaurant set in a refurbished warehouse on the River IJ. This is dining in an industrial space, so don't be surprised if there are old cars parked near your table, chandeliers hanging from rusty beams or a row of 1970s-style office chairs nestling against the crisp white tablecloth. Don't expect to rest your head after dinner either — despite the name, there are no guest rooms. The cuisine is mainly French with lots of seafood and a three-course meal comes in at €31.50. In another nearby warehouse (the former Stork factory), Café-Restaurant Stork (restaurantstork.nl) specialises in seafood with mains from around €18.



CHEAP KICK

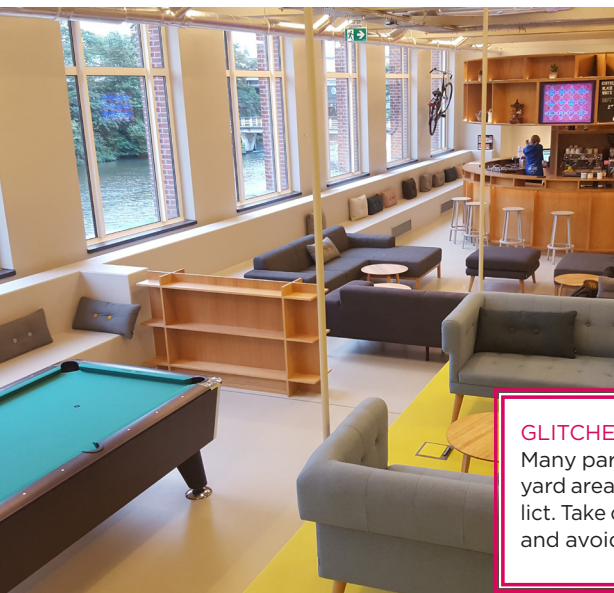
One of the prettiest areas of Amsterdam Noord to explore by bike is Nieuwendammerdijk, a long crooked street with old wooden houses built on a dam and dating back to the 18th century. Over at the old shipyard, check out the NDSM warehouse now converted into 'Art City' with art, design and media studios for 250 artists. Nearby at the Noorderlicht — Northern Lights — café, (noorderlichtcafe.nl), in a transparent greenhouse-like construction, you'll find DJs and outdoor festivals during the summer months.

northern lights

Done the Dutch capital's Old City? Try Amsterdam Noord for your next visit, says
YVONNE GORDON

SET THE MOOD

Amsterdam is famous for its pretty canals, bicycles and its spring tulips. On this visit, however, I've crossed the River IJ (pronounced *Eye*) by free ferry to explore the city's hottest area, Amsterdam Noord. The regenerated district, which was once home to three large shipyards, now boasts a film institute, art and music studios, quirky architecture that uses the area's industrial past, and funky restaurants and hostels — all giving it a vibrant, creative atmosphere. My first port of call is the EYE Film Museum (eyefilm.nl, pictured main) on the waterfront, where you can see films and exhibitions and then enjoy coffee or cocktails on the terrace while admiring the river views.



INSIDER INTEL

Noord's funkier new space is the hostel Clink Noord (clinkhostels.com, beds from €20pp). Part of a chain founded by Dublin sisters Anne and Shelly Dolan, it's a creative hub with a bar, café, club and events space. Dorms are en-suite, bunks have lockers and power points and there's free Wi-Fi. There are programmes for visiting musicians, artists and writers too. As an alternative, the quirky Faralda Crane Hotel (faralda.com, from €435) has three private suites set in a crane!

GLITCHES: Amsterdam Noord is regenerating. Many parts are still quite run down and the shipyard areas are not residential and are partly derelict. Take care of personal security and belongings, and avoid walking alone at night.

TOP TIP

One of Noord's landmarks, Shell's old Overhoeks tower, will open as A'DAM tower (Amsterdam Dance And Music, adamtoren.nl) this spring, with a design hotel, nightclub, offices, a 22nd-floor observation deck and revolving restaurant.

GET ME THERE

Free ferries (gvb.nl) run day and night from behind Amsterdam Centraal station. Take the Buiksloterweg ferry for the Eye Film Institute, Clink Noord and A'DAM tower. The crossing takes around five minutes. For the NDSM shipyard, plus restaurants Pilek, IJ Kantine or Noorderlicht café, take the NDSM ferry (around 15 mins). For Hotel de Goudfazant and Stork, take the IJplein ferry. Bike hire from Mac Bike (macbike.nl) starts from €7.50. For more, see iamsterdam.com.

