

ONE DAY, ONE PLACE



Koen Smilde Photography / I amsterdam

The NDSM area was a shipping yard and warehouse district that is now thriving with 400 artists, architects and designers.

AMSTERDAM-NOORD

Creative hub evolves across the river

Amsterdam is known for its pretty canals, old canal houses and bicycles, but take a short trip across the River IJ and you'll come to a whole different world, where an old shipyard houses studios for artists, colorful shipping containers make homes for students and an old crane is a tiny boutique hotel. Add in outdoor markets and gigs, street art, clubs and some quirky hotel accommodations, and you have a buzzing, creative hub to explore — and an alternative side of the Dutch capital from the tulips, museums and canal boats.

— Yvonne Gordon, travel@sfcchronicle.com

MORNING

Rent a bike, and go to the back of Amsterdam Centraal station, where you can hop on the free ferry (for pedestrians or bicycles) across the River IJ to Buiksloterweg. From here, walk or cycle to the Eye Film Museum, the asymmetrical white building on the waterfront. Here you can take in films (there are four cinemas) and exhibitions, or enjoy drinks or coffee on the riverside terrace while watching the maritime traffic go by. On Eye's lower floors are small booths where you can watch a selection of the 37,000 titles in the archive (free), and film buffs should check out the gift shop, which has all sorts of movie-themed goodies from Angelina Jolie & Brad Pitt wine to David Lynch coffee and Twin Peaks trays.

MIDDAY

Cycle over to the NDSM area (or take another ferry from Centraal station), and explore the old shipping yard. To set the scene, on the way in on the ferry, you'll pass an old Russian submarine, a floating boat-hotel and some tall ships tied up on the quay. This area was abuzz with shipbuilders in the 19th century, but the shipyard closed in 1984. Artists then moved into one of the old NDSM warehouses and Kunststad (Art City) is now thriving with 400 artists, architects and designers. At another hangar, IJ Hallen, there's a huge flea market once a month, with everything from books and CDs to furniture and food (you can rent a stand yourself from \$37 per day, in case you have excess luggage to offload). In the shipyard, you'll also find old trams that are now lived in, painted shipping containers that are student accommodation and an old crane that's now the three-room Faralda Hotel.

For lunch, check out Pllek, which is also partly made from converted shipping containers and has a popular man-made beach. Keeping with the industrial theme, floors are bare concrete and furniture is recycled materials and salvaged maritime objects. On weekend nights, the restaurant turns into a club.

AFTERNOON

Noord is not all derelict shipyards — take your bike to Noord's pretty areas like the long narrow street Nieuwendammerdijk, which is lined with wooden houses that date to the 18th century. Many of the houses belonged to old shipping captains, and No. 204, De Halve Moen (half moon), was built for a wealthy shipbuilding family and named after the Dutch East India Co. ship that took the first Dutch settlers sailed to New York in 1609. Or take your bike and explore some of the rural scenes in the countryside with farmland, meadows, old farmhouses with the typical Dutch cheese-cover shape and small villages like Broek in Waterland. You can also explore the area by boat or kayak, going through locks and under bridges.

EVENING

Wherever you are in Noord, you won't miss the landmark A'dam tower — the former Shell building right on the waterfront that has clubs, restaurants and offices and the A'dam Lookout, a 360-degree observation deck on the 22nd floor. Try the swing over the edge if you're brave enough, then tuck into burgers from the hole-in-the-wall bar at the Butcher Social Club on the ground floor. Then head upstairs to rest your head — A'dam tower is also home to the trendy Sir Adam hotel, which has music-themed features like record players in all rooms and a room-service menu of guitars (the hotel is run by a well-known trio in the Dutch music scene). Or, for a budget option, check into nearby ClinkNoord, where creativity is also the theme. The hostel's events space hosts everything from beer tastings to yoga (depending on the day) and visiting artists or writers can take part in the Stay and Play program in return for treating guests to a free gig or exhibition.



Luuk Kramer / I amsterdam

The landmark A'dam tower, a former Shell building on the waterfront, has clubs, restaurants, offices and the A'dam Lookout, a 360-degree observation deck on the 22nd floor.



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The NDSM was a busy shipbuilding area during the 19th century, but the shipyard closed in 1984. Eventually, artists moved in and now the district is abuzz with creativity.

IF YOU GO

- Ferry:** For the Eye Film Institute, A'dam Tower and ClinkNoord, the Buiksloterweg ferry (free, see www.gvb.nl) takes bikes and pedestrians, and journey time is around five minutes; for the NDSM shipyard, IJHallen and Pllek, the NDSM-werf ferry takes around 15 minutes.
- Bike hire:** Mac Bike, www.macbike.nl
- Eye Film Institute:** IJ-promenade 1, www.eyefilm.nl
- Kunststad (Art City):** Tt Neveritaweg 15, www.ndsm.nl/gebouw/kunststad
- NDSM:** www.ndsm.nl
- IJ-Hallen:** Tt Neveritaweg 1, www.ijhallen.nl/en/
- Faralda Hotel:** NDSM-plein 78, www.faralda.com
- Pllek:** Tt Neveritaweg 59, www.pllek.nl
- A'dam Toren:** Overhoeksplein 1, adamtoren.nl; Sir Adam, www.siradamhotel.com; A'dam Lookout, www.adamlookout.com; Butcher Social Club, www.the-butcher.com.
- ClinkNoord:** Badhuis-kade 3, www.clinkhostels.com/Amsterdam/clinknoord
- More information:** www.iamsterdam.com