



Brabant's story: Brabant and its inhabitants



Brabant's story: Brabant and its inhabitants

Was Brabant created through resistance or just plain guts? The fact is that in the summer of 1795, the towns in Brabant were quick to act when the French troops invaded the Netherlands. Their initiative to create 'Bataafsche Brabant' culminated in a fully-fledged provincial government by the end of that same year. The people of Brabant have shown plenty of initiative. 200 years of Brabant is the story of alertness, connections and astute actions. Brabant is there as soon as and as long as necessary.

Brabant's intervention was not only suggested by its location, though that does play an important role. Brabant connects the Rhine-Schelde Delta to Germany and beyond. Business can't do without this area. But that also applies to the traffic of entrepreneurs and administrators between the north and south; it's not surprising that the province's borders once literally stretched to beyond Brussels. This crucial location provides a bounty of opportunities for meeting people and the area's desire to network is legendary: you will never stop becoming acquainted with new people here. The location also creates the obligation to keep working on accessibility and flow: on land, water and, though somewhat more modestly, through the air. Without the province's attention to spatial infrastructure, the Dutch economy would slow down or, to put it more positively: Brabant's connections have always fed our country's drive for entrepreneurship and innovation. This is where top designers have their roots and our industries have developed countless innovations in the fields of transportation, electronics, water works and engineering. Education is part of a unique web in which talents develop, branch out and lead to new enterprise. You do not lead Europe's top technology centres or come out top in design just like that. And don't forget our sports stars who have surprised many and broken boundaries...

If you make connections, you seldom have time to sit still. Every now and again perhaps you can awe at the riches this joining of rivers entails: the fertile combination of effluvial & maritime clay and sandy soils has led to lakes, recreation areas, and inviting places in which to set up your company or settle down yourself. The Province of Noord-Brabant, with its open character and modest, amiable, welcoming, bon vivant lifestyle. Where people still have time and attention for one another. Where a holiday means total relaxation, indulging yourself, enjoying southern hospitality. Where beautiful cities are located in breathtaking nature reserves and where there is a rich cultural life. Where apparent contradictions reinforce one another: no cities without rural areas and no high tech without a highly empathic human touch. Tradition lives by the grace of the modern age and progress. Brabant has all of that.

The people of Brabant embody those apparent contradictions: they are amiable bon vivants, welcoming and fun loving, and are skilled at using these traditional sounding characteristics in today's modern society.

Of old, people in Brabant have come together to get things done, to seek solutions. The motto for many things is: 'You can't do it alone'. Innovation has deep roots in Brabant's culture, in its business community: this is related to the province's (agricultural) past. The land was not really suitable for agriculture. Nevertheless, the inhabitants managed to engage in high-level agriculture. Due to circumstances (regulations, no room for expansion, social changes) Brabant's inhabitants are still flexible today: forced to bid farewell to farming they have started new activities such as bed & breakfasts in former pig sties or the selling regional produce.

Brabant's inhabitants have a strong focus on social contacts and take their time for the latter. They share that attitude; pleased with one another. They would never be able to manage their struggle for life on their own. They are always ready to help out their families and neighbours, the (back)door is always open to unexpected visitors. Alongside their family and group ties, they also develop and maintain networks to help one another and to shape their culture. Brabant's inhabitants meet in one of the many associations and whilst doing volunteer work. In their spare time they congregate in community centres, bars, theatres, streets or on sports fields. Top-level sports flourish thanks to the many associations. Amateur choirs and orchestras practice nightly and volunteers organise concerts and performances at cultural centres.

Brabant is a household name. This is due to its people, their history and their traditions. Most of Brabant's inhabitants feel they are 'Brabanders' and present themselves as such elsewhere. They know their province and are proud of being Brabanders.

Brabanders, welcoming and amiable, but also enterprising, with no fear of change or innovation. And with a natural drive to strike a balance between working hard and enjoying life. But first and foremostly, they are ready to help one another. That typifies Brabant.

's-Hertogenbosch, October 2010