

Social Life

Dames en Heren (Ladies and Gentlemen):

I like all of you guys so I will not lie to you. This blog, hilariously entitled “*Social Life*”, may be the most difficult post that I will write during my Semester in Amsterdam. I realize that this is a bold statement to make since Amsterdam is such a vibrant city, but the fact of the matter is that I am a full time student! And as a full time student... I have no social life!

I’m sure that half of you out there are scratching your heads wondering what the heck I’m talking about. This is Amsterdam after all! There are literally hundreds of unique things to see and do in this great city. The other half of you are giant nerds like me and probably aren’t reading this blog because you are all so wrapped up in your studies that you are too busy to pay attention. So I will speak on your behalf and say that you all agree with me ;) But fear not everyone! While it is true that my nose is currently buried so deep within books that I’m getting paper cuts on my beautiful face, I have had the wonderful opportunity to sample some of Amsterdam’s wonderful social scene.

Using my powers of foresight, I knew that around the time of me writing this blog (November 4/17) I would be fully immersed in my studies. With this information in the back of my mind I decided to go out into the city as much as humanly possible to explore and get a taste of Amsterdam’s amazing social scene. In this blog I plan on sharing my experiences as well as my top 5 recommendations you should all check out before heading back home to your respective lands of origin.

As I have stated on numerous occasions, it is one of my goals to become fluent in Dutch by the end of the semester. So I asked myself what the best course of action might be. I decided to “*Do as the Romans Do*” and sign up for various Dutch student clubs and become a regular at the Dutch hotspots throughout the city. It was my hope that I would be interacting with a majorly Dutch crowd and I’m happy to say that the mission was a success!

It all started during the first couple weeks of the semester when I ended up signing up for the various clubs and agencies designed to help students get jobs. While at the VU information market, I ended up signing up for the Skøll Rowing Club as well as an agency called the Hospitalitist. One was a club that taught students about rowing while letting them drink copious amounts of alcohol in order to bond, and the other was a job that outsourced student employees (aka Talents) throughout the city to various locations such as restaurants, museums, hotels, and festivals. As you can imagine I was very excited about the possibilities.

My Journey as a Skøll rower began when I arrived for the opening evening and was assigned to a boat. I met many great people that evening and perhaps drank a little more dizzy water than I should have. Over the course of the next two months, the fine folks at Skøll taught me a great deal about rowing. We met twice a week in the evening and, after a short warm up, worked on proper form as we rowed along the Amstel River. Whilst rowing, I was always mesmerized whenever I saw the lights

of houseboats and various buildings along the rivers edge being reflected by the waters surface. After our rowing practice everyone would meet in the clubhouse where we would get to know each other better over a few beers. It was certainly a memorable two months, but, unfortunately, due to the increase of my schoolwork, I was forced to quit the club. However, it was an amazing experience and I definitely recommend that everyone try rowing at least once in his or her life.



As I mentioned earlier I also applied for various job agencies at the VU info market. Fortunately, I was offered a job through an agency called the Hospitalitist. I have been working for this company for about two months now and have had the opportunity to travel throughout Amsterdam to work at various unique places. On my travels to and from work I have also seen numerous unique spots that I would like to recommend to all of you before you all head home. So, without further ado, I would like to present my top 5 must visit spots!

1.) Edelwise

Edelwise is a really cool spot which is only a 10 minute bike ride from the VU! The chill and relaxed atmosphere made every night I spent there a great one! They also through wicked parties so if you have the chance I recommend you check it out!



2.) M'Adam

Located across from Amsterdam Central Station at the top of the Amsterdam Tower, M'Adam was a very cool spot where you can get a great view of the city while having a few drinks with your friends. P.S. there's a swing on top of the building that is pretty cool too ;)



3.) Tobacco Theater

Located in a really cool industrial style building, Tobacco Theater is a great place to catch dinner and show. Trust me on this one guys, check this place out!



4.) Schinkelhaven

This is a cool hole in the wall type café where you'll have the opportunity to chill and have a few drinks with some Dutch locals. Plus the beers are really great as well!



5.) Albert Cuyp Market

Lastly, Amsterdam has lots of great markets scattered throughout the city, but I definitely recommend that everyone check this one out thoroughly. Here you will have the chance to interact with not only Dutch merchants, but also people from all over the world. With lots of cool shops and amazing fresh food you can't go wrong. So check it out if you haven't already!



I could write a whole new blog post dedicated to all the other amazing places throughout the city that I have found, and if you all play your cards right I just might :) The bottom line is that Amsterdam has an extremely diverse social scene. I now find myself working harder than ever on my assignments so that I will have more free time to continue my exploration of this great city's vibrant social underbelly.

Thanks for reading, and tot de volgende keer (until next time)

Ruben – Semester in Amsterdam Blogger

