

A white facade,
five floors
and an open door.

GRAANMARKT 13



A white facade,
5 floors and an
open door.
GRANMARKET 12

2&3 Apartment
0&1 Show
-1 Restaurant

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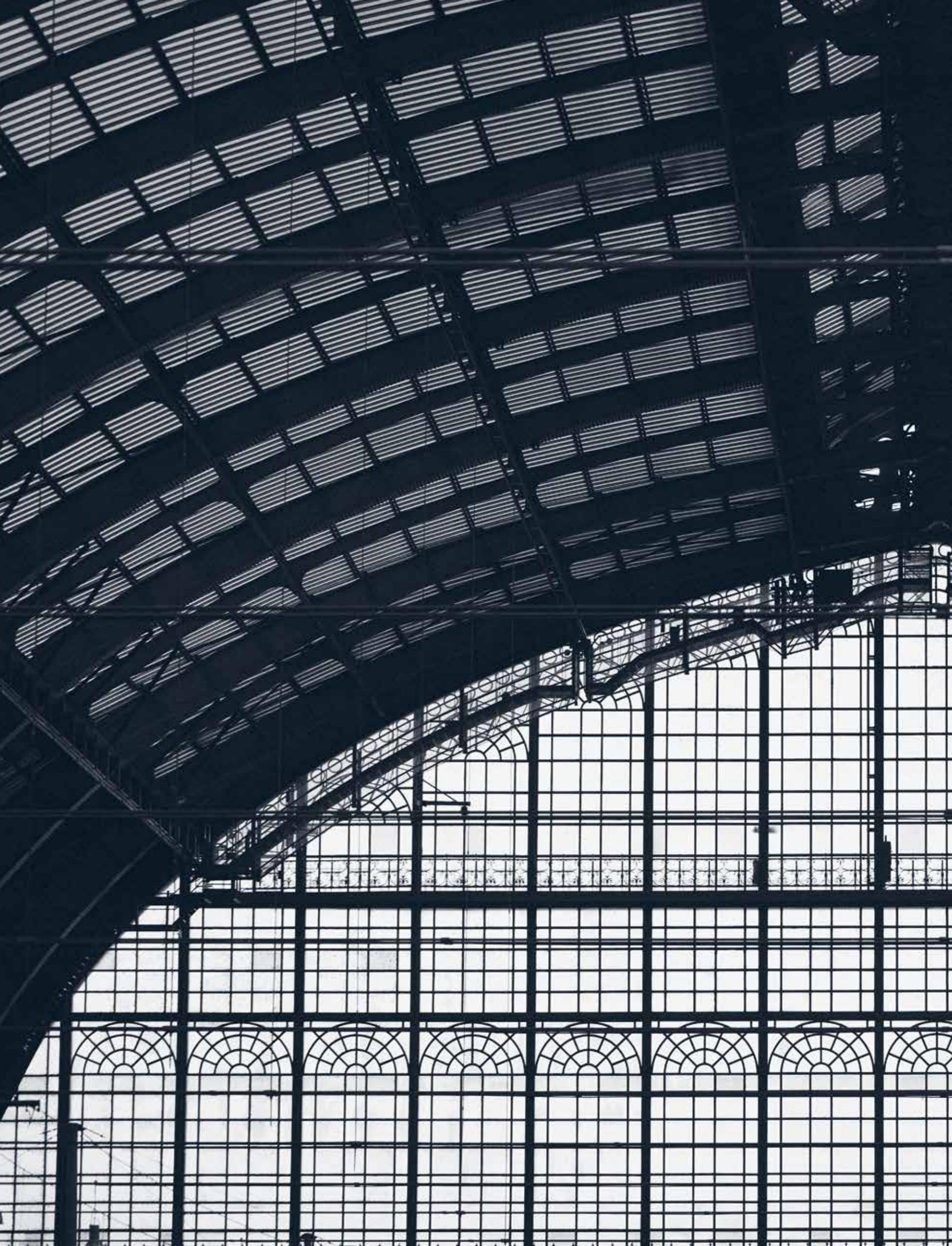
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*All things tell stories.
Take them with you.*

GRAANMARKT 13



MIDDENSTADT





The Graanmarkt 13 story began in earnest when we left Amsterdam to make a new home in Antwerp. Coming here was easy — Ilse’s roots are in Belgium, and Tim is from just over the border in Breda. Once the decision was made, we packed our suitcases and moved into Ilse’s family apartment here in the city.

The first year was about testing the water and finding our feet. We went back to Amsterdam often to spend time with family and friends. We eventually got to a point, however, when we realised that Antwerp was the place for us. It was time to make our dream a reality.

We looked at so many rental properties, but we were still young and inexperienced, and the landlords always seemed to find a safer bet. We came across number thirteen, Graanmarkt right at the beginning of our search, but it was for sale rather than for rent, and, after standing empty for 10 years, the building was in a lamentable state. We worried that it was simply too big a challenge to take on. After more than six months with no luck renting, something told us to look at Graanmarkt 13 one last time. Things happened very fast after that. We bought it on a Sunday afternoon.

Antwerp has been our home for the last 12 years, and our stories are inextricably intertwined. If we had decided to stay in Amsterdam, or move to a big world city like London, New York, or Paris, things would have turned out quite differently. There is an intimate relationship between this city and Graanmarkt 13 that deepens with every passing year. They blend so seamlessly into one another that it is hard to know where one begins and the other ends. After a while, every place becomes shaped by those who pour their passion into it. The end result of this process is that Graanmarkt 13 has slowly transformed into an organic and integrated part of the natural and urban landscapes around it.

Antwerp, and the people who live here, have taught us what it means to have taste. The typically Belgian obsession with quality has worked its way into our DNA, as has the unique character of the city. This place is worldly and sophisticated,

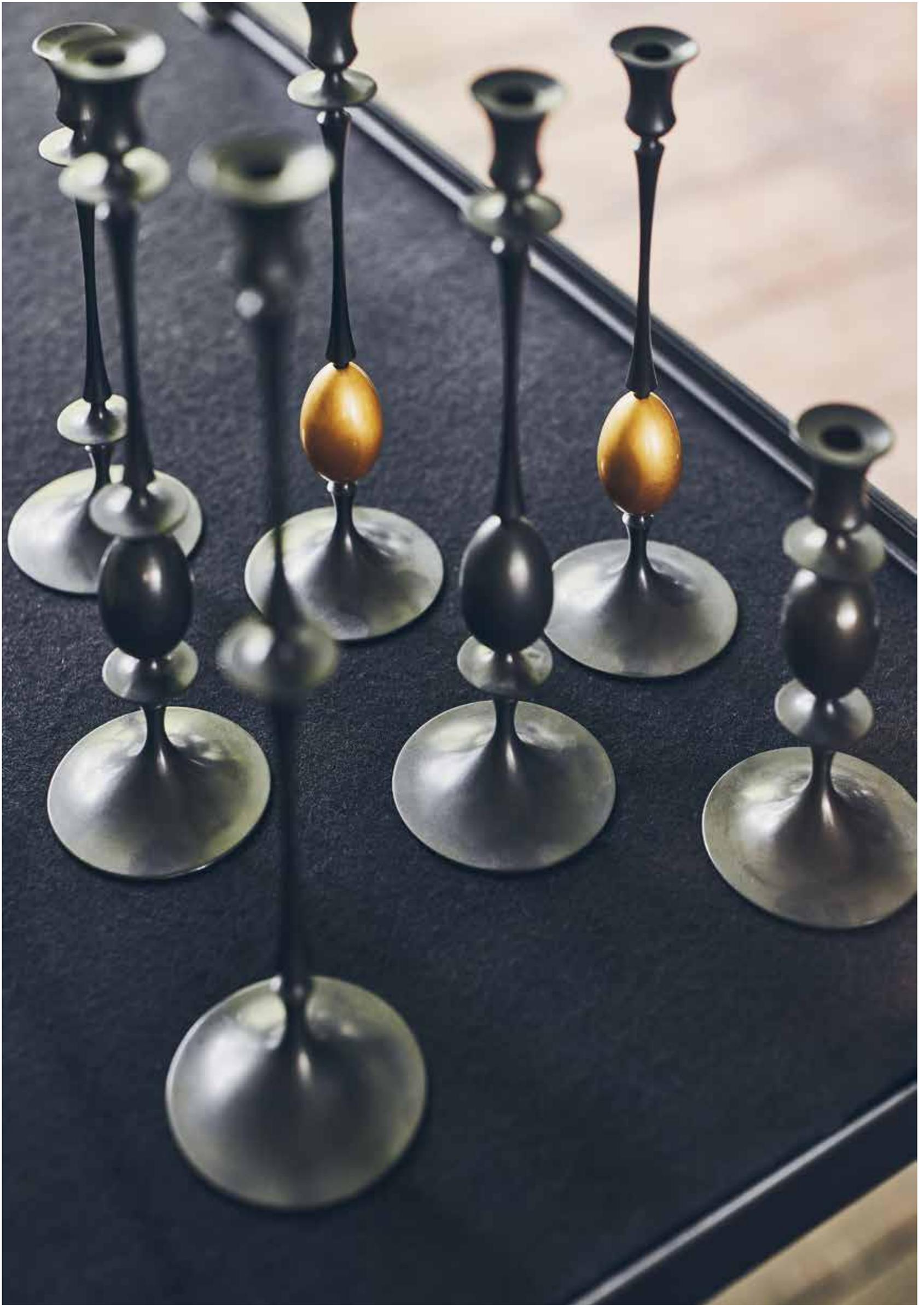
yet still stubbornly and idiosyncratically defined by its history. Amazing things happen on every corner in terms of art, fashion, architecture, and design, and some of the world’s biggest names call it home. It is also a city that feels no compulsion to shout endlessly about its achievements, and which maintains a slow and eminently liveable pace of life. Antwerp has held onto its soul while, all around, others are losing theirs. Its quiet charms are one of Europe’s best-kept secrets.

It has taken time for Graanmarkt 13 to win the trust and confidence of its clientele. It has also taken us time to have the courage to make those decisions that have transformed, and continue to transform, the project into what we believe it can and should be. We have now reached a point where we feel Graanmarkt 13 has begun to reflect the dream that brought us here in the first place. You won’t find all the big brands here, nor do we feed on a stream of ever-changing trends, or strive to be the *next big thing*. Instead, we search constantly for the very best in timeless style. And we try to do it with honesty, integrity, and a good dose of humour.

This book is a tribute to the city that has taken us in and treated us as its own, and to the fact that Graanmarkt 13 has become home to a growing family of people who share in a desire for quality and the art of living well. It is through these voices that we tell our story. We are varied and diverse, we do not conform to a specific demographic, and each of us has our own unique passions. As we look forward to new adventures, it is our aim to keep learning and listening, to look after the people who have helped us along the way, and to grow in a way that nurtures the environment around us. This is a moment of celebration and an opportunity to take stock of our achievements, and to look to the future.









Honey

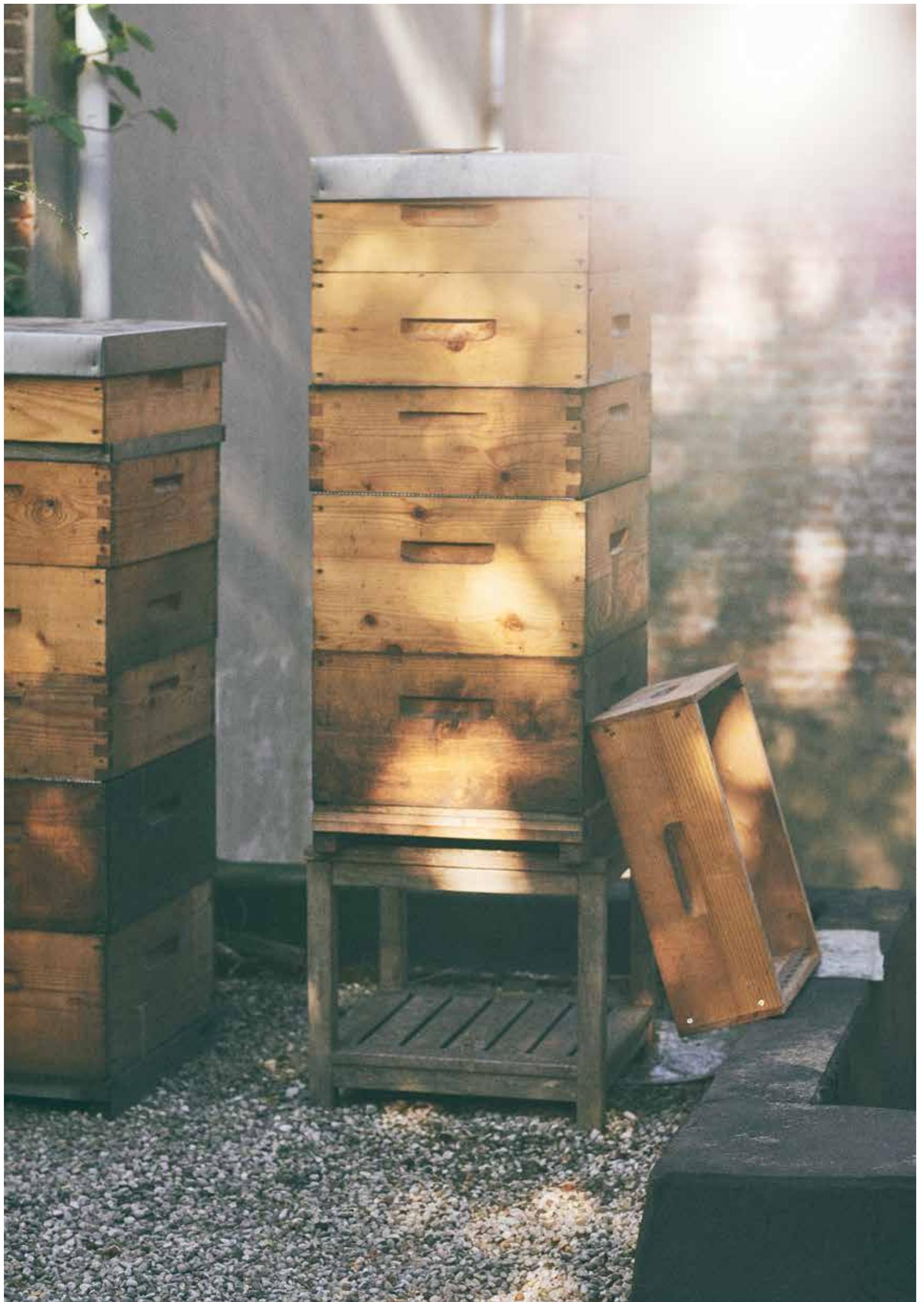
A forager bee navigates her way through the trees in the marketplace, veers up past the white façade, and soars over the roof of Graanmarkt 13. Though there is plenty to tempt her in the flower garden around the apartment and the herbs in the rooftop garden beyond, her hind legs are already heavy with yellow pollen, and her crop is filled with sweet nectar. The parks, gardens, and wild spaces of Antwerp were her hunting grounds. She has visited patches of native flowers and grasses growing by the roadside, rows of fruit trees heavy with blossom, rose gardens and window boxes, and even the exotic, sumptuous blooms of the botanical garden.

Her hive is contained within six boxes of golden wood, piled one on top of the other. She hovers, wings tiring, waiting for her turn to land, climb inside, and dance the day's discoveries to her sisters. In the darkness between the hexagonal combs, there is a world unto itself inhabited by a close knit sisterhood, each willing to die in the fight to defend their livelihood or each other from predators and invaders. The pollen she has brought with her will be fed to the ever-hungry brood, or transformed into hard, crystalline propolis to maintain the structure of the hive, while the nectar will be processed into golden honey to nourish them through the winter famine.

Antwerp City Honey reflects its natural environment. The complex blend of nectars gathered from countless different types of flowers gives it its distinctive character and flavour. Pale, polyfloral, and delicate, it is a forager's map of the city. Like the bees in the hive, when the food we eat reflects the environment around us, we are likely to be healthier and happier. At Graanmarkt 13, we serve a menu that is diverse, colourful, and largely local, bringing you the very best that the local environment has to offer. It is good for both mind and body.

We aim to bring together the best of two worlds. Our vegetable dishes have a haute cuisine touch, yet are made from just a few simple ingredients of the highest quality. We choose our ingredients for colour, texture, and taste, prepare them with skill and devotion, and serve them with a minimum of fuss and ceremony. The result is light and nourishing, raw and rich, tender and crisp. Bright vegetables, dark green leaves, delicate shoots, earthy roots, tart-sweet fruit and berries. The taste and texture of each element stands out enough to be appreciated alone, yet comes in surprising and satisfying combinations. Good food is celebratory enough for the most special of occasions, yet down to earth enough for everyday nutrition. When we eat for nourishment and quality, not only are the eye and palate delighted, the body feels lighter and better balanced.

There is a wisdom in simple food. By freeing us from distractions, it allows the body to tell us what it needs to be happy and healthy. By eating the things that grow around us, not only do we care for ourselves, we are also inspired to care for the world we live in and share with others. We rely on our environment for everything: shelter, livelihood, sustenance, and the strength of our bodies and minds. Where bees thrive, we can be sure that our environment is thriving too. Honey is not only delicious, it is a symbol of living in balance with nature.



Book Credits

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Created by CEREAL
Published by Lannoo Publishers nv, Tielt, 2018
D/2018/45/649 – NUR 450-640
ISBN 978 94 014 5695 1
Paper: Munken Lynx 150gsm

lannoo.be
If you have any observations or questions, please contact
our editorial office:
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