

The Amstel Hotel was built 150 years ago in a year and a day. The large-scale restoration of the roof and the facade of the Amstel Hotel also had to be completed in a year and a day. This was a challenge that many contractors were too afraid to take on. It was a complicated assignment with a great deal of time pressure with the hotel remaining open to guests. Construction company Burgy Bouwbedrijf didn't flinch at the challenge and completed it in time with fantastic results. The partnership between Amstel Hotel and Burgy went so smoothly that General Manager Anita Bos is almost sad that the restoration is completed.

# BURGY: THE CUTTING EDGE OF RESTORATION

ANITA BOS:  
'THEY SAW  
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It might even sound a little strange: a contractor and client who are still friends after such a complicated renovation, but Kasper Burgy and Anita Bos have only good things to say about each other. After all, on the one hand the contractor together with all his craftsmen was able to turn a nearly impossible project into an overwhelming success, and on the other hand the management of the hotel did everything they could to let them do their jobs properly. 'I've seen a lot of projects over the years, but this one was truly unique,' says Anita. 'The craftsmanship that was needed for this restoration combined with the passion that these men had for this project was quite special. For an entire year, it felt to them that this was their hotel.' She turns to Kasper: 'That's what drew our team to your team, so they were able to get along from the start. I really miss having you guys around in the morning, and that's a

sentiment felt by many of my colleagues. You were all part of a great group of craftsmen that was going to restore the former glory of the hotel. That dedication was something that really touched us, but it also touched you right from day one.'

## A LOT OF FUN

'I'm not afraid to say it: we're great at what we do,' states Kasper. 'The work here was of a very high level, but that doesn't scare us. It's just that this time we had to work in a running hotel, so that added an extra dimension. This required good organisation, clear communication and sensing what the other party needed. The hardest part is knowing how to keep your client happy. The architect initially wanted to clear out the hotel, but then the plan changed to close off only half of the hotel, and finally the decision was made to keep the hotel fully operational.' 'All our facilities

stayed open,' explains Anita. 'From the start we discussed how we were going to make this work. We were all open to being as positive and effective as possible in our approach. We always had fun working together, and that gives you the ability to creatively solve things together. We were able to set out the schedule in such a way that we could both get the best out of it. It was a case of giving and taking.' Kasper agrees and gives an example: 'Just like the scaffolding which was meant to go around the entire hotel. At some point, the project leader Olle de Graaff asked Anita: "Is that terrace really necessary in the summer?" You can guess what her answer was... So we agreed to change the schedule to ensure that the terrace was free of scaffolding and other construction materials during the summer.' 'The initial schedule was thrown out of the window during the first meeting and instead we asked each other: "What





## IT WAS THE PERFECT COMBINATION OF EXPERIENCE AND YOUNG TALENT



do you want?" says Anita 'The Burgy team was able to integrate all those wishes in the plan. And even once you have an outline for the schedule, small things happen every day that require adjustments. In addition to our biweekly meetings, we discussed things with each other three or four times a day.' 'Every morning at 7:00 AM we had a meeting with the construction workers,' explains Kasper. 'That's not usual, as they'd normally just get started with work. During those meetings we'd go through the agreements we'd made the previous day. You manage each other at the micro-level this way. Anita would call to ask if a room was available, but we were still busy with glazing, as all rooms have double windows. So we'd arrange things so that we'd work a little faster and ensure that the room was free at 4:30 PM, at which point the cleaners could come in so that the guest could check in at 5:30 PM. Could you ask for anything better?' 'All the men in the team became just as fond of the building as we are,' says Anita. 'And they saw the hotel guests as their guests as well. Even the construction workers would agree and say: "OK, we'll do it that way, so we'll be done at 4:30 PM." It was great!'

### TIGHT FINISH

The time pressure of a year and day made the project even more complicated. Of course there were a few unforeseen circumstances that threatened the schedule. 'That final period

was very tense, as we were a week behind as a result of the storm, so it was really touch-and-go,' says Kasper. 'Those were exciting times. It was only by working together with the hotel that we managed to pull through. We were lucky to work with a hotel that understood that this was a complicated project. Many clients would say: "You only have to paint and call the plumber. I don't understand why this is so difficult" Because we were understanding of your needs, you were understanding of ours. I am actually more proud of our partnership than of the beautiful result.' 'I completely agree,' says Anita. 'There are several layers of pride in this project and that is one of the most important ones. Because of this, we were able to stay positive even when things seemed to be going wrong.' And all's well that ends well. The entire exterior was restored to its historical condition within the allotted time frame. What's especially interesting is that all the details were made even better. What slate and lead specialists Jobse have done on the roof is truly top-class.' He points out the wooden lions that are clad in lead. 'Those lions turned out perfectly. There are only a few companies in the Netherlands that can reach that level of craftsmanship. The faces are exactly the same. It's like embossing silver, if you do that too hard it becomes too thin and the silver breaks. It's the same with lead, you have to emboss it in such a way that it stays the same thickness all over, or it might tear at the noses for example.'

### CHAMPION TEAM

It was not only Jobse but all the craftsmen who worked at the best of their ability, even the younger generation. One of my guys was a young apprentice joiner. He grew through this process. At the end he had not only become a better joiner, but he had become a joiner who really understood the craft. He just wanted to make his work better and more refined. We had a young team, but there were a few older guys as well.' 'It was the perfect combination of experience and young talent,' says Anita. 'Luckily there are still young people who want to take up the trade.' 'All parts of the project strengthened one another in this way,' explains Kasper. 'I had a top team here, but that team can only perform at its best if the circumstances are ideal. If your coach, or in this case the architect, is the best, and if the manager is the best, then you're bound to become champions.' 'The original architect Cornelis Outshoorn would have been incredibly proud to see that we restored the building to what he intended it to be,' says Anita. 'I think he would have been unbelievably proud of the passion of everyone involved and of the way in which it was lifted to a higher level 150 years later. Yes, he would certainly be proud.'

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