



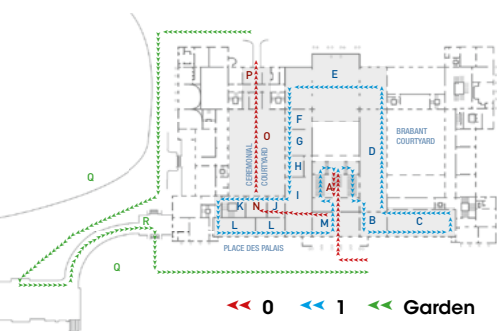
In accordance with tradition, the Royal Palace of Brussels opens its doors to the public throughout the summer.

Via the impressive vestibule and main stairway - designed by architect Alphonse Balat - visitors enter the state floor with its historic salons, used for official activities by the King and Queen throughout the year.

The tour leads through the various rooms, each with its own history, built during three major phases: the end of the 18th century during the Austrian period, the beginning of the 19th century during the Dutch period and finally the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century under the reign of King Leopold II.

this digital file is designed to guide you throughout the entire tour. Each room is marked on the plan using a letter. When you click on it, you will receive more information regarding that particular space. You may also click through to learn more about the palace's most important works of art.





◀◀ 0 ◀◀ 1 ◀◀ Garden

- A. The Ceremonial Vestibule and Grand Staircase**
- B. The 'Il Pensieroso' Room or Square Room**
- C. The Hall of Mirrors**
- D. The Long Gallery**
- E. The Throne Room**
- F. The Marshals' Room**
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- H. The Louis XVI Room**
- I. The Empire Room**
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- L. The Small and Large White Drawing Rooms**
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- P. The Audience Entrance**
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A. The Ceremonial Vestibule and Grand Staircase

The busts in the Ceremonial Vestibule are of Belgian kings and queens.

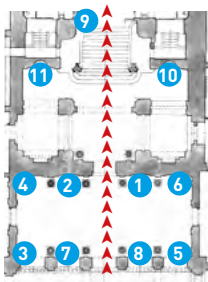
The majestic Grand Staircase and its domed ceiling were designed by Alphonse Balat for King Leopold II. A bright, harmonious unity is created by the pale stone of the walls and columns, the white marble of the broad staircase, the green marble of the balustrade, the impressive candelabra, the gilding, the mirrors and the windows. Dominating the Grand Staircase, and created by Belgian sculptor Charles Auguste Fraikin, is the imposing statue of Peace in the guise of the Roman goddess Minerva. The candelabra flanking the passage between the Ceremonial Vestibule and the Grand Staircase take the form of Michelangelo's slaves.





A. The Ceremonial Vestibule and Grand Staircase

1. *King Philippe* (1960) - Osvaldo Leite, 2018
2. *Queen Mathilde* (1973) - Osvaldo Leite, 2018
3. *King Leopold I* (1790–1865) - Willem Geefs
4. *King Leopold II* (1835–1909) - Attributed to Jules Halkin, 1887
5. *King Albert I* (1875–1934) - L. Dubar
6. *King Leopold III* (1901–1983) - Alfred Courtens
7. *Queen Elisabeth, née Duchess in Bavaria* (1876–1965) - Charles Samuel, 1908
8. *Princess Astrid, Duchess of Brabant, née Princess of Sweden* (1905–1935) - Victor Rousseau, 1933
9. *Peace, personified by the goddess Minerva* - Charles Auguste Fraikin, 1877
10. *Hebe, symbol of Eternal Youth* - Louis Samain, 1867
11. *Bacchus with a faun* - Anonymous





B. The 'Il Pensieroso' Room or Square Room

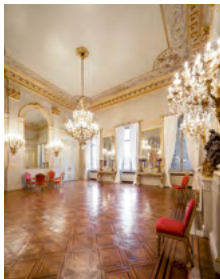
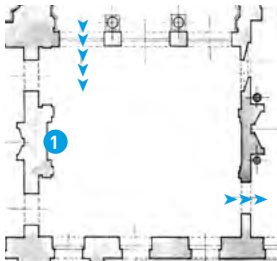
The Long Gallery runs between the Throne Room and the Grand Staircase, along the full length of the Brabant Courtyard, to the front of the palace, where it leads into a small drawing room. This room owes its name to the imposing mantelpiece clock, which includes a bronze reproduction of Michelangelo's sculpture *Il Pensieroso* (The Thinker). The room adjoins the Large Anteroom and the Hall of Mirrors, a state room from the time of King Leopold II.





B. The 'Il Pensieroso' Room or Square Room

1. Clock known as *Il Pensieroso*, inspired by Michelangelo - Ferdinand Barbedienne, Paris





C. The Hall of Mirrors

The Hall of Mirrors was built and decorated in the early 20th century. King Leopold II intended to create a dedicated Congo room, as seen from the map of Africa in the pediments above the fireplaces. The luxuriant floral motifs of the room's décor also refer to the exotic and the tropics. The walls are abundantly adorned with marble and copper – instead of gold – as the Congo produced copper ore. Construction came to a virtual halt after the death of King Leopold II in 1909. King Albert I did not complete the room according to the original plan. Mirrors were placed on the walls rather than the intended allegorical paintings, and the ceiling was not decorated. A century later, in 2002, the artist Jan Fabre created a work of art for this space: *Heaven of Delight*. He clad the ceiling and one of the three chandeliers with nearly one and a half million gleaming jewel-scarab wing cases. When a foreign ambassador comes to present their credentials to the King, they are currently received in the Hall of Mirrors. This hall is regularly used for official receptions.

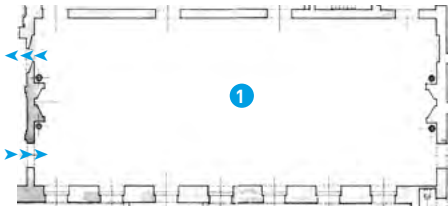




C. The Hall of Mirrors

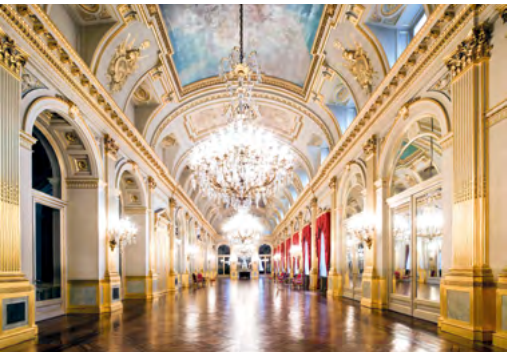
1. *Heaven of Delight* - Jan Fabre, 2002

Expo: Memory Palace



On April 29th, 2022, the artist Jan Fabre was convicted of sexual offences against several women.

Heaven of Delight has been part of the architectural heritage of the Royal Palace for 20 years. The Palace has decided to keep the artwork, following the example of other institutions that make a distinction between the convicted artist and his creations.



D. The Long Gallery

The Long Gallery is situated between the Throne Room and the Brabant Courtyard. This elongated hall is the ideal room for receptions and dinners catering to numerous guests, such as the event held in December 1999 to celebrate the wedding of the present King and Queen. The ceiling paintings by Charles-Léon Cardon show the various phases of the day, from dawn to dusk. The artist was inspired by the work of the French court painters Charles Le Brun and Louis-Jacques Durameau in the Louvre and the Palace of Versailles.





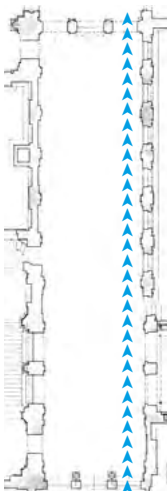
D. The Long Gallery

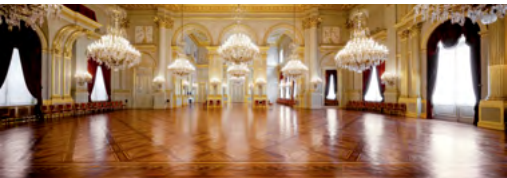
Paintings by Charles-Léon Cardon, inspired by or copied from the works of Charles Le Brun and Louis-Jacques Durameau in the Louvre.

On the partition wall between the Long Gallery and the Throne Room: *Dawn*

On the ceiling: *Morning, Day, Evening*

Expo: Belspo





E. The Throne Room

The Throne Room was built under the reign of King Leopold II. Some of the bas-reliefs are by Auguste Rodin and Thomas Vinçotte. Each relief shows two economic activities that are or were exercised in Belgium's provinces: hunting (Luxembourg), heavy industry (Liège), fishing (West Flanders), textile industry (East Flanders), overseas trade (Antwerp), animal husbandry (Limburg), mining (Hainaut) and quarrying (Namur). The province of Brabant is implicitly present, as the palace lies on Brabant soil. Depicted above the doors on either side of the Throne Room are the rivers Meuse (a female figure) and Scheldt (a male figure), symbolising Wallonia and Flanders.

Important receptions are held in the Throne Room, such as the New Year reception for the government, and the Spring and Christmas concerts. This is where King Baudouin and Queen Fabiola celebrated their civil marriage in December 1960. In 1999, the room was used for the wedding banquet of Prince Philippe and Princess Mathilde.





E. The Throne Room

1. *King Leopold I* - Willem Geefs, 1841

Bas-reliefs above the doors:

The Scheldt, allegory of Flanders

The Meuse, allegory of Wallonia

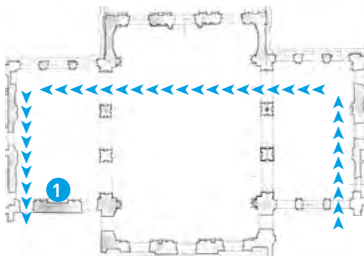
Thomas Vinçotte, c. 1872

Bas-reliefs in the central section:

Each relief represents two Belgian provinces, with the exception of Brabant (e.g. Luxembourg with a hound, Antwerp with an anchor).

Attributed to Auguste Rodin

Expo: MyMachine





F. The Marshals' Room

The new interior design of this room – originally King William I's audience chamber and, later, the Marshals' Room – is the result of a collaboration between Axel Vervoordt and Michaël Borremans, which aimed to create the ideal setting for Borremans' artwork. The six paintings show footmen or palace valets in unusual poses and were hung here in 2010.

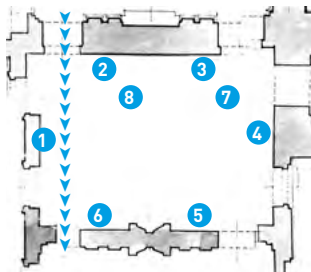
The globe, *Erdglobus für den Weltverkehr* (1909), originally stood in King Albert I's study, as did the cylinder desk. Another noteworthy item in this room is the clock with different dials that variously show the hour, the date, the day of the week, the month, the sign of the zodiac, etc. This rare piece is the work of the celebrated clockmaker and astronomer Louis Zimmer from Lier.

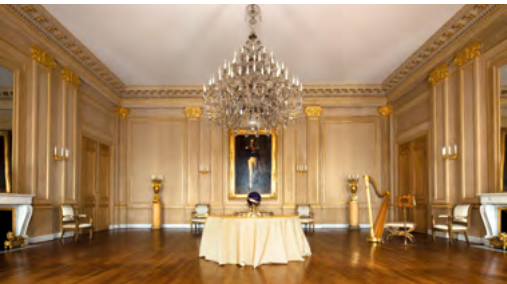




F. The Marshals' Room

- 1-6. *Valet* - Michaël Borremans, 2010
7. *Erdglobus für den Weltverkehr*, published by Dietrich Reimer in Berlin, Heinrich Kiepert, 1909
8. Cylinder desk of King Albert I





G. The Pillar Room

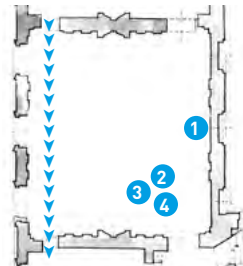
This room was originally an anteroom for audiences with King William I, and was subsequently the dining room for court dignitaries ('marshals'), and even a room reserved for meetings between the King and Queen with leading members of the aristocracy following an event at the palace. Up until 1815, four of the Empire-style armchairs were at the Palace of Laeken and were among the furnishings used by Napoleon Bonaparte and Joséphine de Beauharnais. The harp was played by Queen Louise-Marie and the music stand probably belonged to her as well. The portrait of King Leopold I was painted by Franz-Xaver Winterhalter and dates from 1846. The Pillar Room was renovated in 2010. The stylish décor bears the stamp of the Antwerp antiquarian and interior designer Axel Vervoordt, who based the colouring on the ochre tones used at the time of William I, when this antechamber was first decorated.

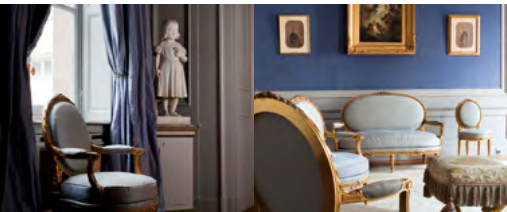




G. The Pillar Room

1. *King Leopold I* - Franz-Xaver Winterhalter, 1846
2. Harp played by Queen Louise-Marie - Sébastien Erard, London
3. Music stand owned by Queen Louise-Marie
4. Louis XVI folding chair - Made for Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette





H. The Louis XVI Room

Three rooms dating from the time of William I are found between the Empire Room and the Throne Room.

They were renovated in 2010 – an occasion marked by artist Michaël Borremans' creation of several works specifically for this room and the Marshals' Room: a video and a series of paintings.

The Louis XVI Room brings together various paintings from King Leopold I's personal art collection, alongside portraits of his relatives. The depiction of his deceased first wife, *Allegory of the death of Princess Charlotte*, is a late work by the British history and portrait painter Arthur William Devis.

A marble bust of Queen Elisabeth stands on the mantelpiece and is by Victor Rousseau. The Louis XVI folding chair came from Louis XVI's room at the Château de Compiègne. The Klems piano originally belonged to the Count and Countess of Flanders, King Albert I's parents, and is ebony inlaid with copper, mother-of-pearl, silver, rosewood and tortoiseshell.

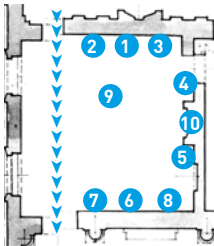
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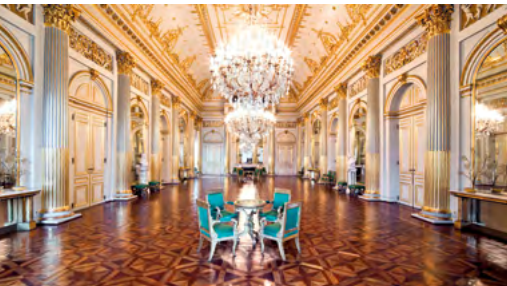




H. The Louis XVI Room

1. *King Leopold I* - Lieven De Winne
2. *Duke Franz of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld* - Attributed to Johann Heinrich Schroeder
3. *Valet* - Michaël Borremans, 2010
4. *The stoning of Saint Stephen* - School of Rubens
5. *King Solomon burning incense to an idol* - Attributed to Willem De Poorter
6. *Allegory of the death of Princess Charlotte of Wales on 6 November 1817* - Arthur William Devis
7. *Prince Leopold, Duke of Brabant (Leopold II)* - Felix Genaille, 1850
8. *Prince Philip, Count of Flanders* - Felix Genaille, 1851
9. Klems piano (Düsseldorf)
10. *Queen Elisabeth* - Victor Rousseau, c. 1910





I. The Empire Room

This was the ballroom during the Austrian period. The gilt decoration and bas-reliefs of angels dancing and playing instruments exemplify the refined tastes and lifestyle of the upper echelons of society towards the end of the Ancien Régime. William I had the room enlarged and added female figures above the mirrors, the oak and mahogany parquet flooring, the clock and the candelabra.

On certain occasions, a beautiful Kirman carpet is placed in the centre of the room. It was a gift from the Shah of Persia to King Leopold II, commemorating a state visit to Belgium in around 1900. The ensemble *Flowers of the Royal Palace* by Patrick Corillon was acquired in 2004.

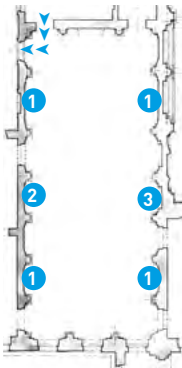




I. The Empire Room

1. *The Flowers of the Royal Palace* - Patrick Corillon, 2004
2. *King Leopold I* - Charles Auguste Fraikin, 1866
3. *Prince Philip, Count of Flanders* - Thomas Vinçotte

Expo: Royal Society for Dynasty & Cultural Heritage





J. The Coburg Room

The paintings show King Leopold I and his Coburg relatives: Leopold I's parents, Duke Franz of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld and Augusta of Reuss-Ebersdorf; the parents of Queen Victoria of Great Britain, Edward, Duke of Kent, and his wife Victoria of Saxe-Coburg, King Leopold I's sister. The man in the white uniform is Prince Friedrich-Josias of Saxe-Coburg, a field marshal in the Austrian army and King Leopold I's great-uncle, who taught his great-nephew military strategy. The state portrait of Queen Louise-Marie was painted by Ange Ottoz after an original dating from 1845 by Franz-Xaver Winterhalter. A marble bust on a side table shows her second son, Leopold, Duke of Brabant, at a young age. The sculpture is by Willem Geefs.

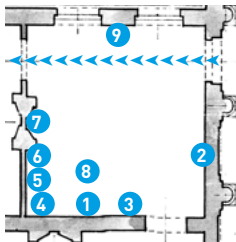
The clock with a posy of flowers set beneath a bell jar is an ingenious mechanical device bought by William I in 1830 at the Brussels Industrial Exhibition. The workings make the flowers 'bloom'.





J. The Coburg Room

1. *Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld* - George Dawe
2. *Queen Louise-Marie* - Ange Ottoz, after Franz-Xaver Winterhalter
3. *Augusta Reuss-Ebersdorf, wife of Duke Franz of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld* (1757–1831) - Attributed to Ludwig Döll
4. *Duke Franz of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld* (1750–1806) - Anonymous
5. *Edward, Duke of Kent* (1767–1820) - Copy after George Dawe, original dates from 1818
6. *Victoria of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld, wife of Duke Edward of Kent* (1786–1861) - Copy after George Dawe
7. *Prince Friedrich-Josias of Saxe-Coburg* (1737–1815) - Copy after Ferdinand Jagemann
8. *City view* - Attributed to King Leopold I
9. *Prince Leopold, Duke of Brabant (Leopold II)* - Willem Geefs





K. The Venice Staircase

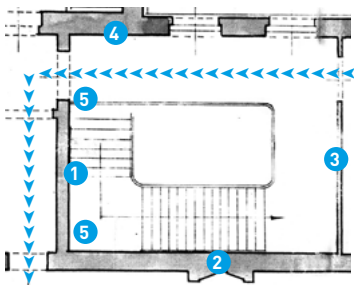
This part of the palace was redeveloped in the second half of the 19th century. The large oil paintings on canvas adorning the walls of the Venetian Staircase were done in 1867 by Jean-Baptiste Van Moer. Upon ending his studies at the Academy of Fine Arts in Brussels, Van Moer received the Prix de Rome, a scholarship that allowed him to travel to Italy, which was where artists needed to go to complete their training at the time. It was during his Italian trip that Van Moer collected the material to produce these paintings.

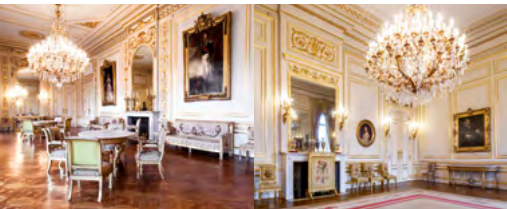




K. The Venice Staircase

1. *Venice, view of the Piazza San Marco* - Jean-Baptiste Van Moer, 1867
2. *Venice, view of the Grand Canal* - Jean-Baptiste Van Moer, 1867
3. *Venice, view of the inner courtyard of the Palazzo Ducale* - Jean-Baptiste Van Moer, 1867
4. *Venice, view of the Grand Canal with the church of Santa Maria della Salute in the background* - Jean-Baptiste Van Moer, 1867
5. *Sculptures of a man and a woman made from various types of marble and stone. Italy, 19th century.*





L. The Small and Large White Drawing Rooms

Like the Empire Room, these rooms are among the oldest parts of the palace. They were official reception areas from the outset and not used for domestic purposes. Their late-18th-century decoration is still well preserved. The Italian-inspired grotesques in the Large White Drawing Room are masterpieces of woodcarving.

The portraits in the Small White Drawing Room show Queen Louise-Marie and her parents, Louis-Philippe King of the French and Marie-Amélie of Bourbon. The latter can also be seen in a second, smaller portrait, hanging against one of the mirrors between the windows.

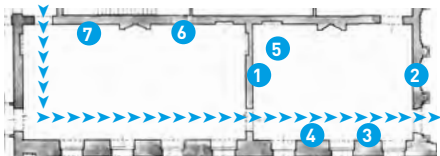
The state portraits of King Leopold I and Queen Louise-Marie take centre stage in the Large White Drawing Room.





L. The Small and Large White Drawing Rooms

1. *King Louis-Philippe of France, (1775–1850)* - Edouard Dubufe, 1849
2. *Marie-Amélie of Bourbon, Princess of the Two Sicilies, wife of King Louis-Philippe (1782–1866)* - Charles-François Jalabert, 1882
3. *Marie-Amélie of Bourbon, mother of Queen Louise-Marie* - Nicolas Gosse
4. *Queen Louise-Marie, née Princess of Orléans* - Joseph Leroy, 1850
5. Empire chairs made at the Jacob-Desmalter workshop in Paris and upholstered with tapestry from the Beauvais Manufactory. Wedding gift from King Louis-Philippe of France to his daughter Louise-Marie and son-in-law Leopold.
6. *King Leopold I* - Copy after Franz-Xaver Winterhalter, original painted in 1843
7. *Queen Louise-Marie* - Copy after Claude-Marie Dubufe





M. The Large Anteroom

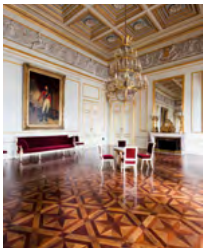
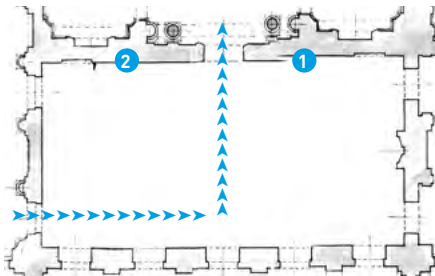
The Large Anteroom dates from the period of Dutch rule after the Battle of Waterloo, when the Southern and Northern Netherlands were united to form one kingdom under King William I. This political background is emphasised in the frieze encircling the entire room. The allegorical figures on the frieze show the nation's four principal economic activities (commerce, shipping, industry and agriculture) and the four pillars of effective rule (plenty, prudence, military power and peace). The bas-reliefs were produced by French sculptor François Rude and by Jean-Louis Van Geel of Mechelen. The companion portraits of Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg (the future King Leopold I) and his first wife, Princess Charlotte of Wales, are by the British artist George Dawe.





M. The Large Anteroom

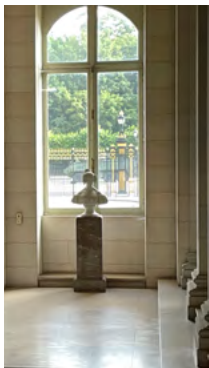
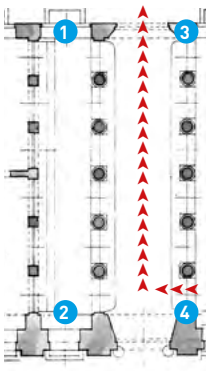
1. *Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld (Leopold I)* - George Dawe, c. 1816
2. *Princess Charlotte of Wales (1796–1817)* - George Dawe, c. 1817





N. The Ceremonial Entrance

1. *King Leopold I* - Willem Geefs
2. *Queen Louise-Marie* - Willem Geefs
3. *King Leopold III* - Alfred Courtens
4. *Queen Astrid* - Victor Demanet, 1935





O. The Ceremonial Courtyard

The Ceremonial Courtyard is one of the two inner courtyards around which the Royal Palace was built. This courtyard was built during the Dutch period.

The courtyard is bordered by two wings, with the state rooms on the north (or street) side and on the west side. The living quarters were located on the east side and on the south (or garden) side. The courtyard also leads to the King's office.

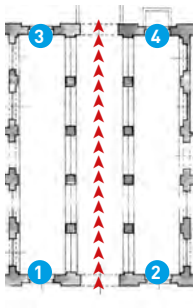
The second courtyard, visible from the Long Gallery windows at the beginning of the tour, is known as the Brabant Courtyard. It was built more than fifty years after the Ceremonial Courtyard. It was designed at the end of King Leopold I's reign to accommodate the residence of the Duke of Brabant, the future King Leopold II. Work only really began at the beginning of his reign.



P. The Audience Entrance

People coming for an audience with the King are welcomed via this entrance. Leading to the audience chamber and the King's office, it was refurbished by King Leopold III. This is the beating heart of the Palace.

1. *King Albert I* - Frans Huygelen after Thomas Vinçotte, 1936
2. *Queen Elisabeth* - Alfred Courtens, 1926
3. *King Baudouin* (1930–1993) - Idel Ianchelevici, 1963
4. *Queen Fabiola* (1928–2014) - Idel Ianchelevici, 1962



A short walk through the garden brings you to the Semicircular Gallery.



Q. The Garden

Upon exiting the Audience Entrance, visitors enter the garden on the south side of the building.

As you turn the corner on the east side, you will be able to admire the beautiful façade, behind which lay the private apartments of the successive kings who once lived in the palace. The buildings around the Ceremonial Courtyard are the work of architects Charles Vanderstraeten and Tilman-François Suys. Here visitors can take in the typical yellow-coloured sandstone of the time, and the beautiful Corinthian columns that give this façade its elegant character.

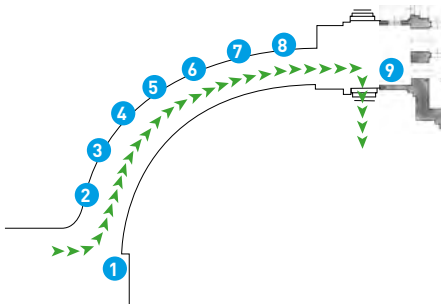
The entrance to the Semicircular Gallery also provides access to the King's Cabinet and Military Household on the right. Turn left here and enter the gallery that leads back to the palace and the King's office. It was built at the beginning of the 20th century, when the palace got its current façade.

The tour ends at the end of the gallery.



R. The Semicircular Gallery – The Square Room

1. *Princess Marie Henriette, Duchess of Brabant, born Princess of Austria* (1836–1902) - Charles Auguste Fraikin, 1866
2. *Boy with Greyhound* - Eugène Simonis, 1834
3. *Cupid Watering his Doves* - Luigi Bienaimé
4. *Flute-Playing Shepherd* - Jean-Louis Van Geel, 1832
5. *Mother Nursing her Child* - Louis Dupuis 1885
6. *Rebecca at the Well* - Girolamo Masini
7. *The Bather* - Philippe Parmentier, 1823
8. *Souvenir from Venice, the Dove of St Mark's* - Charles Brunin, 1875
9. *Venus Anadyomene or Venus Born from the Sea* - Charles Auguste Fraikin, 1861





Royal Palace of Brussels

Place des Palais / Paleizenplein, 1000 Brussels

Open from Friday 3 July to Sunday 16 August 2026,
from 10.30am to 5.00pm (last admission 4.00pm).

Closed on Monday

Exceptionally closed on 15, 16, 21 and 22 July.



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