



Great rijstafel at the Cilubang



Vijff Vliegen is popular for good Dutch food

23 SPIEGELKWARTIER (ANTIQUES)

Sandwiched between the Rijksmuseum and Herengracht, the Spiegelkwartier is the art and antiques centre, providing the city's best serious window-shopping at serious prices. Antique blue tiles, delft porcelain, grandfather clocks, pocket watches, pipes, model ships and Old Master-lookalikes conjure up Old Holland, while the CoBRA (Copenhagen, Brussels, Amsterdam) school at Jaski's and Shunyam's exuberant pop-style "Uj-art" gallery offer some welcome new Amsterdam relief. **Where:** Nieuwe Spiegelstraat and Spiegelgracht. **When:** Shunyam open Saturdays only.

24 ST NICOLAAS BOAT CLUB

In Amsterdam, boats and beer do not usually make a very good combination. The average boat commentary will trot out the same old platitudes to the sort of shell-suited day-trippers you would normally cross the canal to avoid. Not so the 12-seater boats run by the St Nicolaas Boat Club. Their clients are younger visitors, often straight out of Boom Chicago Comedy Club (see No 3, page 4) in search of a night-time canal cruise. And because the St Nicolaas boats are smaller, they go where larger cruisers fear to tread – including the Red Light canals. **Where:** Summer only, book at Boom Chicago. **How much:** No charge, but a donation of £20 suggested.

25 RIJKSMUSEUM

This national treasure house, the repository of Empire, is devoted to painting, sculptures and



The café downstairs at the Americain Hotel combines elegance with top-class service

decorative arts – in fact, it's rather reminiscent of our very own V&A. Head straight for *The Nightwatch* (to see what all the fuss is about), admire the surrounding Dutch Art rooms, the exquisite Doll's Houses (not just kids' stuff), and finish with the Asiatic Art, which is a breath of fresh air after all the preceding fussiness. One for a rainy day. **Where:** Stadhouderskade 42 (020 674 7171). **When:** Open daily 10am-5pm. **How much:** Admission £15.

26 CAFÉ NOL / TWEE ZWAANTJES

Behind those lacy curtains, where the glow of fairy lights illuminates the hardcore kitsch, it's time to camp it up and singalonga Max – not to mention Wim and Els and half the neighbourhood. Accordion music, yodelling and old Amsterdam songs make the Café Nol the Working Man's Club of the Jordaan. Show willing and the locals might even teach you the words. For a less OTT knees-up, you should visit the Twee Zwaantjes, but get there early to secure some personal space. **Where and when:** Café Nol, Westertstraat 109, singalong daily 9pm-late; Twee Zwaantjes, Prinsengracht 114, singalong Fri and Sat. **How much:** Both free.

27 TEMPO DOELOE RESTAURANT

Most Indonesian restaurants in the city tone down the spices in their food to protect conservative Western palates – not so Tempo Doeloe. If you see a dish marked *pedis* (sharp), it means hot – and they're not kidding. Try the *nasi koening* if you

think you're hard enough, otherwise sit back and enjoy their well-balanced dishes from Java, Bali and Sumatra without fear of spontaneous combustion. **Where:** Utrechtsestraat 75 (020 625 6718). **When:** Open from 6pm for dinner only. **How much:** Average main course £30.

28 JORDAAN

The Jordaan ("your-darn") is village Amsterdam – leafy and quiet with narrow, pretty canals lined with houseboats, comfy cafés and smoochy brown bars. Old brewery warehouses have been converted to chic apartments, and its restaurants have replaced the traditional Dutch stodge with trendy world cuisine. Don't miss a stroll along Bloemgracht, Egelantiersgracht or Prinsengracht, and keep your eyes peeled for the tiny "secret" *hofjes* (courtyards) along the latter. **Where:** North-western district of the city.

29 AMERICAIN HOTEL

It's a short walk for any visiting rock stars who may be playing the Paradiso or even the Melkweg, though in truth you're more likely to meet wealthy middle-aged couples from the Mid-West than Debbie Harry or Damon Albarn. They come not just because of the name, but also for its glorious art deco styling, top-class service, style, elegance and all mod cons right in the very heart of town. Good value if you are in this price league. **Where:** Leidsplein 97 (020 556 5200), www.winterconfi.com. **How much:** Double rooms from 1475.