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## BRUSSELS : THE SABLON SQUARE

(a.ka "De Zavel")



The Sablon is **one of the most prestigious and attractive areas in Brussels**. In recent years it has become the center of the antiques shops and art galleries.

The name of this area refers to the time when it was still situated outside of the city walls of the 12th century. It was **originally a sandy road** along which people had access to the city gates. Because of frequent use this road had become hollow and on both sides a yellowish earth layer could be seen. This type of sandy clay was called

"zavel" in Dutch and "**sablon**

was transformed into an important pilgrimage site where a miraculous statue of Our Lady was venerated. Very soon the area became more populated and was enclosed within the 14th century city walls. Around 1450 the little chapel had been transformed into a beautiful gothic church, the **Sablon church or church of Our Lady of the Victories**. In the following centuries more and more noble men settled in the area because it was close to the duke's palace.



A big change occurred in the second half of the 19th century. The Sablon was divided into two parts by the construction of the **Regentschapstraat/Rue de la Régence**.

During this period the church was renovated in neo-gothic style and the houses which had been attached to it were demolished. On the eastern side of the church a new park was laid out, called "**De kleine zavel/Le petit sablon**". This park is still surrounded by 48 little statues representing the medieval guilds of Brussels. In the center is the statue of the counts of

**Egmont and Hoorne** who were executed at the [Market Place](#) by order of Philip II of Spain in 1568.



Nowadays, the Sablon is **visited by lovers of antiques and art** because the entire area boasts hundreds of antiques shops and art galleries. Especially popular is the weekly antiques market which is held on Saturdays from 9 a.m. till 6 p.m. and on Sundays from 9 a.m. till 1 p.m. A lot of people also visit the daily flea market (from 6 a.m. till 1 p.m.) which is situated at the Vossenplein/Place du Jeu de Balle in the adjacent Marolles area. Not only famous for its antiques, the Sablon also offers a range of good restaurants and pleasant cafés. A visit to **WITTAMER**, the most exclusive pastry maker in Brussels, is also a must.

