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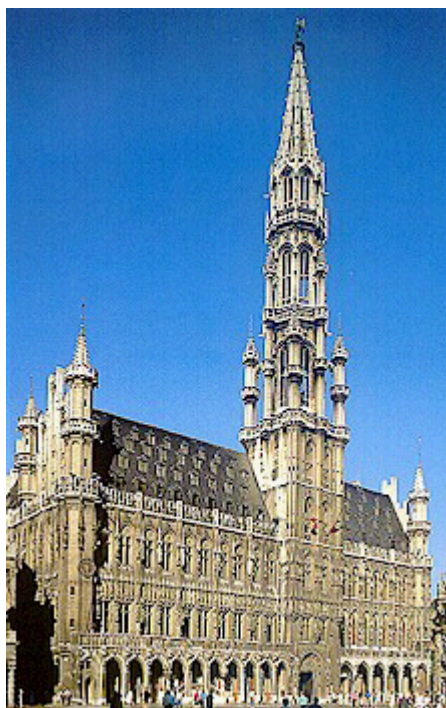
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## BRUSSELS : THE TOWN HALL



When entering the [Market Place](#) from one of the seven side-streets, one's eyes are drawn automatically to the **gothic tower of the town hall pointing skywards**. Up to this day the "Hotel de Ville", or "Stadhuis" is considered to rank **among the most beautiful city halls in the Low Countries**.

The construction of the building represents **the growing power of Brussels** as the capital of the Dukedom of Brabant. Until the end of the 14th century some small wooden houses and inns used to stand on the site where later the town hall would be build. Because of the growing importance of the city, the administrators decided to buy these old houses one by one, demolish them and build a new town hall that would match the city's need for a large administrative center. The first stone was laid in the spring of **1402**. This original town hall (which is now the left wing) was completed in 1405, together with a small tower. The architect is believed to be **JACOB VAN THIENEN**. However, on March the 3rd 1444, the original building was extended with a smaller right wing, which was ready in 1449. In that same year the architect **JAN VAN**

**RUYSBROECK** built the tower that still crowns the building today. This extension of the town hall was a result of the rivalry between Brussels and the neighboring city of Leuven. Leuven also aspired to the title of 'capital of the Dukedom of Brabant' and had therefore constructed a massive and extremely prestigious town hall (which still is the most beautiful one in Belgium and worth a trip).

Finally, in 1455 a **gilded statue of St. Michael** slaying the devil was put on top of the Brussels town hall tower. The original statue was to remain on the tower until June 1996, when it was replaced with a completely new one (after 541 years !). When facing the town hall most people remark immediately that the tower is standing in the middle of the building. Legend has it that the architect committed suicide by throwing himself of the tower when he noticed that the tower was not in the middle. Like most other legends surrounding the monuments of Brussels, this one also is not true. The tower not being in the middle is simply the result of the fact that the right wing of the town hall could not be made as large as the left wing because the town authorities wanted to preserve the street next to the right wing.

After the **destruction of Brussels in August 1695** by the French troops of DE VILLEROY, only the tower and the outside walls of the town hall had been saved. Restoration works started almost immediately after the catastrophe. In the 17th and 18th centuries the original decorative statues withered away or disappeared. By **1840 a complete restoration was necessary**. It was then that the entire facade became decorated with a total of 203 little statues representing the Dukes and Duchesses of Brabant who ruled the dukedom between the year 580 and 1564.

The town hall is still the seat of the Mayor of Brussels . The city administration is located elsewhere, on Boulevard Anspach. In the **first half of the 1990's the tower has been completely restored**. In the following years the facades of the building has been cleaned and restored where necessary.

**Location**

Grand-Place - Grote Markt 1000 Brussels  
tel: 32(0)22794365

**Admission**

2,48 € (Euro) per person and 1,98 € (Euro) per person for groups of minimum 12 persons

**Opening hours**

The town hall can be visited only with guided tours in Eng., French, German and Dutch. For the timings of the tours please consult the Town Hall or the Brussels Tourist Office in the right wing of the building.

