

Get our weekly globetrotting newsletter

About Contact Advertise

Your Email Address

Browse by Topic Location

Food & Drink

Amsterdam  
08/27/13 1:02pm

## Diner en Blanc Netherlands: 1800 Flash Mob Diners Take Over Grounds of Royal Dutch Navy in Amsterdam

By Michelle Young @NYCComments

[Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [LinkedIn](#) [Google+](#) [Pinterest](#) [Tumblr](#) [Vimeo](#)



After this year's breathtaking dinner in Paris with the Eiffel Tower as a backdrop and New York City's answer at Bryant Park, we wondered if we'd seen the best of the secret pop-up dinner that originated in Paris. Amsterdam and the organizers of the Netherlands event answered that with a resounding "No!" by putting on a spectacular evening, festive in food, while celebrating history and the city's close ties to its waterways.

Having travelled as a group to attend this year's June dinner in Paris, the Chef du Bus for the Netherlands were determined to provide a "wow" factor to the evening and make up for the previous year when an electric storm struck forcing the dinner to be abandoned. With closely guarded secrecy, both literally, and figuratively, they pulled off an amazing night.



Just like in other cities where attendees only learn of their destination shortly prior to their arrival, as the sun lowered over the canals of the Dutch city, a wave of buses with white clad passengers started their journey toward Amsterdam from across the small country. Arriving at large metal doors, the 1800 joyous flash mob diners found themselves entering the (normally) off-limits harbor front grounds of the Royal Dutch Navy.



One organizer of the Dutch dinner (who wishes to remain anonymous) shared details of the celebration, "In addition to the elusive location, this year's dinner made a special tribute to the 525th anniversary of the Royal Dutch Navy, and the 400th anniversary of Amsterdam city canals. Throughout history, both the navy and the canals brought prosperity to the Netherlands through intensive trade, inspiring arts and exuberant feasts. And therefore the location this year was a precious one: the oldest (525-year old) navy base at the very heart of Amsterdam."



With the majestic *Scheepvaartmuseum* in the background, picnic tables were set up and glasses raised in celebration before the sound of a Naval bell rang, signaling the debut of the evening's dinner.

Champagne flowed and fresh oysters were enjoyed as a mesmerizing voice floated through the air, pulling people from their tables to the water's edge and to the vision of the 'Floating Diva'. Evoking sentiments of mermaids and stories of shipwrecks from Dutch history, the singer floated on a statue of umbrellas - pulled around the harbor by two men acting as graceful water servants. Her appearance was akin to that of a wandering ghost of a lady who drowned at sea in the distant past.



With the Diva disappearing into the evening air, a choir that had been assembled from national conservatories across the Dutch country came together and the 1800 strong crowd united with them to sing two of the Netherlands most popular songs, *Aan de Amsterdamsche Grachten* and *De Zilvervloot*. The Wilderness Lake trombone band then entertained diners with a parody on navy signals before the evening quickly moved to an impromptu waterfront dance floor. A jam session broke out between a New Orleans Style Jazz Band and renowned DJ's Olivier and Roeland Meijs carried the night through until the end.

When the clock struck twelve diners packed up, fled onto their buses and left without leaving a trace of what had just taken place. The barracks fell quiet, and the whispers of history disappeared into the night.

See more photos from the 2013 Diner en Blanc in [New York City](#) and [Paris](#).

[@dinerenblanc](#)