

# A Perfume Shopping Guide to Amsterdam

By Marcello Aspria

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## Skins Cosmetic Lounge

Runstraat 9  
1016 GJ Amsterdam

Tel: +0031 - (0)20 528 6922  
Fax: +0031 - (0)20 528 6921  
URL: [www.skins.nl](http://www.skins.nl)

Located in one of the '9 straatjes' (nine little streets) of the Jordaan area in Amsterdam, Skins Cosmetic Lounge is a boutique specialized in exclusive fine fragrances, skin care products and home fragrance accessories. It also features a hair salon, and offers make-up sessions and facial treatments.

If you are looking for niche fragrances in Amsterdam, be sure to pay this store a visit. Skins Cosmetics Lounge features a breath-taking selection of Creed Millésimes, some of which are hard to find anywhere. Small cups filled with coffee beans are placed on the shelves, so you can neutralize the last scent you've smelled. Perhaps you want to lavish yourself with Penhaligon's, L'Artisan Parfumeur, Etro, Coudray, Antonia's Flowers or Carthusia Profumi di Capri; other perfume brands include Agent Provocateur, Comptoir Sud Pacifique, Acqua di Genova, Knize, Damien Bash, and Miller Harris. If you like scented candles, natural sprays, and burning essences to match your perfume, be sure to browse through the extensive collection of Diptyque products.

Besides perfumes, the Skins-collection features a wide array of skin- and hair care products. Brands include REN,

Aesop, and Philosophy; the devoted shop assistants will give you great professional advice on their products and skin care in general. Finally, the make-up section is well-worth mentioning here: an exclusive selection of Laura Mercier and Bloom products that are hard (if not impossible) to find anywhere else in Amsterdam.

Skins is the exclusive importer for most of the above mentioned brands in The Netherlands, making it a definite must for perfume enthusiasts. Besides, any tourist should pay a visit to the 'nine little streets' of Amsterdam: the nice restaurants, wonderful antique shops, and beautiful canal views make this a truly great area, to be discovered at your ease.

If you stay in a hotel in Amsterdam, Skins offers a delivery service for gift boxes; and once you're back in your home country, you can benefit from their Worldwide mail order service ([orders@skins.nl](mailto:orders@skins.nl)) for all those hard-to-find products.

Skins Cosmetic Lounge is located at a two minute walk from Spui square, in the heart of the old city centre of Amsterdam.

Opening hours:

Monday 13:00 - 19:00  
Tuesday 11:00 - 19:00  
Wednesday 11:00 - 19:00  
Thursday 11:00 - 21:00  
Friday 11:00 - 19:00  
Saturday 10:00 - 19:00  
Sunday 12:00 - 17:00

## Bijenkorf

Dam 1  
1012 JS Amsterdam

Tel: +0031 - (0)20 55 21 700  
URL: [www.bijenkorf.nl](http://www.bijenkorf.nl)

"De Bijenkorf" is the most famous chain of department stores in the Netherlands. The warehouse in Amsterdam, conveniently located on Dam square, was created in the late 19th century, and can be considered as the Dutch equivalent of Au Bon Marché and Harrods. On the ground floor it features licensed fragrance and cosmetics counters for Chanel, Dior, Guerlain, and Yves Saint-Laurent; there are also separate counters for Estée Lauder, Clinique, Clarins, Shiseido, and Biotherm, which are primarily focused on cosmetics, but offer fragrances as well. It's worth noticing that the Shiseido counter includes the export line of Serge Lutens fragrances.

Besides these dedicated counters, Bijenkorf features a wide selection of miscellaneous brands; it is also a good place to shop for gift sets. Some of the sales associates at Bijenkorf have been working there for a long time, and are well-trained and experienced; like in any department store, there's always a chance of running into a clueless SA as well. My impression is that the Guerlain and Chanel associates are best informed about their fragrances.

Bijenkorf regularly organizes public make-up sessions on the ground floor, and I've been told that the cosmetics people are very competent.

### Opening hours:

Monday: 11:00 - 19:00  
Tuesday: 9:30 - 19:00  
Wednesday: 9:30 - 19:00  
Thursday: 9:30 - 21:00  
Friday: 9:30 - 21:00  
Saturday: 9:30 - 18:00  
Sunday: 12:00 - 18:00

## Shu Uemura

Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal 182  
1012 SJ Amsterdam

Tel: +0031 - (0)20 63 88 127

Shu Uemura's boutique, located on the ground floor of the elegant Magna Plaza Shopping Center in Amsterdam, features a wide range of cosmetics and grooming accessories, and a recently inaugurated perfume section. The bottles and boxes of Burberry, René Lazard, La Perla, Krizia, Pal Zileri, Lalique, Amouage, Mauboussin, and Armand Basi are closely aligned, fighting for shelf space. Most of these brands are hard to find elsewhere in Amsterdam. But there is more. An extensive lineup by Maître Parfumeur et Gantier, including Secrète Datura, Georges Sand, and Eau de Gloire. And the entire Villorosi Collection, with a beautiful selection of LV scented candles, soap tablets, pot pourris, and incense; not to forget a few 'specials', like the Olea Europaea body oil and shower gel, the Uomo after shave, and a few rare 50mL bottles. And despite the limited amount of space, they even managed to squeeze in an impressive selection of Les Parfums de Rosine (including some exquisite scented candles) and a modest range of Caron, Boellis, and Hanae Mori.

Perhaps it's all a bit too much, really. It's easy to overlook things, as there are no separate cabinets for different brands. Despite the physical openness of the boutique, in my opinion this is not the kind of place for a calm and laidback "shopping experience". Perhaps this will change over time.

While the perfume section at Shu Uemura is still a bit of a novelty, the friendly sales associate is very experienced, and will provide you with good, professional advice.

The Magna Plaza Shopping Center is hidden behind the Royal Palace, at a ten minute walk from Central Station (there's a tram stop right in front of the door, too). With its beautiful colonnades and dome-shaped top, this former post

office features about forty exclusive stores, and a fairly decent (although slightly expensive) bar on the top floor.

Shu Uemura and the Magna Plaza Shopping Center are open seven days a week.

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**Drogisterij en Parfumerie Marjo**  
Damstraat 27-29  
1012 JL Amsterdam

Tel: +0031 - (0)20 625 57 85  
URL: [www.marjo.nl](http://www.marjo.nl) / [www.klassiekegeuren.nl](http://www.klassiekegeuren.nl)

There are two Marjo shops in the center of Amsterdam, both located near the world famous red light district. The bigger store, at a one minute walk from Dam square, has a decent fragrance selection: all the usual suspects can be found here, including a modest lineup of Guerlain, Lalique, and Hermès. The biggest vantage point of this shop – one of the last independent perfumeries in the city – is that they offer substantial discounts on their entire fragrance collection. Since they are located in a touristic area, their main competitors are not the neighbouring specialized retailers, but airport duty-free shops. This means they sell their fragrances cheap: prices are at least 10% below retail, while special offers displayed in the window can be discounted up to 40%. Although Marjo is not a luxurious boutique, they have two cabinets in the middle of the store with special (limited) editions by such brands as Lalique, Hermès, and Thierry Mugler; these are generally *extraits de parfum* in cristal bottles, priced anywhere between 350 and 1200 euro. If you are in the market for vintage Guerlain fragrances, know that the Damstraat store keeps the old-style Guerlain Vetiver after shaves in stock.

Opening hours:

Monday: 9:00 - 18:00  
Tuesday: 9:00 - 18:00  
Wednesday: 9:00 - 18:00

Thursday: 9:00 - 21:00  
Friday: 9:00 - 21:00  
Saturday: 9:00 - 21:00  
Sunday: 12:00 - 17:00

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**Drogisterij en Parfumerie Marjo**  
Zeedijk 68-70  
1012BA Amsterdam

Tel: +0031 - (0)20 624 17 42  
URL: [www.marjo.nl](http://www.marjo.nl) / [www.klassiekegeuren.nl](http://www.klassiekegeuren.nl)

Although the store on the Zeedijk is small, it's definitely worth mentioning. They offer the same discounts on their collection, and if you're lucky, you will find some very rare imports here, like vintage products by Piver. They currently have a wide range of Lagerfeld fragrances (I saw Photo, KL, Classic), and hold the exclusive distribution rights to a fragrance sold under the 'Van Gogh' brand. For a complete list of their current selection, check out Marjo's site dedicated to perfume classics: [www.klassiekegeuren.nl](http://www.klassiekegeuren.nl).

Opening hours:

Monday: 9:00 - 18:00  
Tuesday: 9:00 - 18:00  
Wednesday: 9:00 - 18:00  
Thursday: 9:00 - 21:00  
Friday: 9:00 - 18:00  
Saturday: 9:00 - 18:00  
Sunday: closed

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**Aromatique Amsterdam**  
Nieuwe Spiegelstraat 11 B  
1017 DB Amsterdam

Tel: +0031 - (0)20 624 00 44  
URL: [www.aromatique.nl](http://www.aromatique.nl)

Aromatique Amsterdam is a little boutique in the center of Amsterdam, at walking distance from the Rijksmuseum. It offers a wide range of aromatherapy products from Alqvimia, Oshadhi, L'Occitane, Arran Aromatics, and

Babylon Bubbles, and features a space reserved to a variety of therapeutic treatments (both for women and men). Aromatique's manager, Dubravka Sabljak, explains more about these treatments in the little (English spoken) streaming video on her website.

Although the focus is on aromatherapy, a wide range of Annick Goutal and Diptyque fragrances and candles are available at this address as well. While the combination of perfume and aromatherapy is becoming a clear trend in the fragrance industry, in this particular setting it still looks very authentic and convincing. The boutique closes during treatments, but I happened to access the store area (the sign on the door said "Open") while a client was still snoozing behind the big curtain. I have to admit that it made me feel slightly uncomfortable at first (whispering to the salesperson in order not to disturb the other client), but in the end I found this place far more accessible and welcoming than most perfume shops. It's a charming little place, located in an equally charming area.

Opening hours (shop):

Monday: Flexible  
Tuesday: 13:00 - 17:30  
Wednesday: 13:00 - 17:30  
Thursday: 13:00 - 17:30  
Friday: 13:00 - 17:30  
Saturday: 13:00 - 17:30  
Sunday: Flexible

For treatments, other opening hours are applicable (check the website for details)

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## Fragrance shopping at the P.C. Hooftstraat

P.C. Hooftstraat is the best-known high-end shopping street in The Netherlands. It comprises two large perfume retailers – Douglas and Ici Paris – which offer roughly the same products as elsewhere in the city, albeit in a more luxurious

environment. For a generic overview: [www.pchooftstraat.nl](http://www.pchooftstraat.nl)

### Douglas

Pieter Cornelisz Hooftstraat 107-109  
1071 BR Amsterdam

Tel: +0031 - (0)20 679 58 22  
URL: [www.douglas.nl](http://www.douglas.nl)

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### Ici Paris XL

Pieter Cornelisz Hooftstraat 132-134  
1071 CE Amsterdam

Tel: +0031 - (0)20 675 80 32  
URL: [www.iciparisxl.nl](http://www.iciparisxl.nl)

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### John en Vera Hartman

Pieter Cornelisz Hooftstraat 38/HS  
1071 BZ Amsterdam

Tel: +0031 - (0)20 67 10 688

There are three Hartman en Hartman fashion boutiques in Amsterdam. Their store on the P.C. Hooftstraat is obviously specialized in clothing brands: they carry Cerruti 1881, Iceberg, Kenzo, Mulberry, and Trussardi, to name a few. They also have a modest but refined selection of perfumes: Diptyque, Etro, and Acqua di Parma. The Diptyque lineup is the most extensive one, containing about 25 different fragrances and candles; they currently have the Galliano candle as well. Make sure you browse through the whole boutique, because the different brands are displayed in different spots. Hartman en Hartman is quite accessible and pleasant, and definitely worth a visit.

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### Oger

Pieter Cornelisz Hooftstraat 75-81  
1071 BP Amsterdam

Tel: +0031 - (0)20 67 68 695  
Fax: +0031 - (0)20 67 10 547  
URL: [www.oger.nl](http://www.oger.nl)

Oger Lusink started his own fashion boutique in the P.C. Hoofstraat in 1990, and later opened two stores under the same name in The Hague and Rotterdam. Clothing brands include Zegna, Isaia, Boglioli, and Etro, and two collections of his own. As for perfumes, they have a decent range of Creed and Santa Maria Novella; the latter are hard to find anywhere else in The Netherlands. A little word of advice: if you want some service, make sure you don't visit this store wearing old jeans and a pair of sneakers, as they are quite fussy about style. In fact, many people will concur that the sophisticated ambiance at Oger is sometimes a little intimidating.

Opening hours:

Monday: 12:00 - 19:00  
Tuesday: 10:00 - 19:00  
Wednesday: 10:00 - 19:00  
Thursday: 10:00 - 21:00  
Friday: 10:00 - 19:00  
Saturday: 9:00 - 18:00  
Sunday: 12:00 - 17:00

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## Chanel

Pieter Cornelisz Hoofstraat 66-68  
1071 CA Amsterdam

Tel: +0031 - (0)20 30 53 777  
Fax: +0031 - (0)20 30 53 770

The Chanel boutique in Amsterdam carries Bois des Iles, Gardénia, No.22, and Cuir de Russie. Furthermore, it's the only place in the Netherlands where you can buy perfumes from the Exclusifs-line: Eau de Cologne, No.18, Coromandel, Bel Respiro, 28 La Pausa, and 31 rue Cambon.