



# The Netherlands' most sustainable hotel

TEXT THESSA LAGEMAN | PHOTOS: SEARCH AND IWAN BAAN

**Hotel Jakarta is an extraordinary triangle-shaped building with glass facades and a timber structure in Amsterdam. It's not just a hotel: there is a restaurant, sky bar, wellness centre, bakery and subtropical indoor garden too. "We wanted to build the neighbourhood's living room," explains architect Kathrin Hanf.**

The city council wanted a unique hotel concept, not only in its architecture but also in its public programming and sustainability. SeARCH, an Amsterdam-based, leading architecture and urban design bureau managed to create just that. The spectacular 16,500-square-metre building opened last year and includes many special features.

According to the city council's plans, the outside had to reflect the industrial characteristics of the harbour. From this spot on the Java island, ships departed to

Indonesia between 1870 and 1970. "We wanted to bring the history alive in the building," says Hanf, who supervised the project from the contest until completion. "For example, on the aluminium panels, you'll find a Dutch merchant ship."

## Subtropical atmosphere

Once you enter the building, you arrive in another world: suddenly you feel you've been transported to an exotic atmosphere. For example, you can admire the Indonesian plants and trees in the subtropical indoor garden, created in cooperation with the Hortus Botanicus in Amsterdam. "The warm, pleasant, Indonesian atmosphere fits the concept of Hotel Jakarta well," explains the architect. "It has a completely different atmosphere from other hotels in Amsterdam."

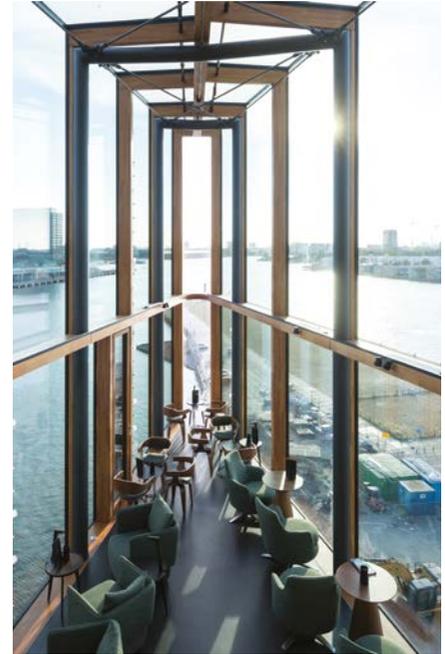
Unique for the Netherlands is the 30-metre-high timber structure. "The building industry is one of the biggest polluters

right now," explains Hanf. "It's responsible for a large quantity of CO2 emissions, because of the CO2 that is released when producing concrete. However, you can often replace concrete with wood. CO2 is stored in wood and is, therefore, a much more sustainable option. This way, we contribute to the climate goals."

## Sustainable timber structure

Many people think wood might not be strong enough for construction purposes. "That's a misconception," the architect emphasises. "When you use it well, it is very strong and lasts a long time, and it's also suitable for large buildings." SeARCH has been building with wood for over 15 years.

Hotel Jakarta's ceiling, floors and walls are made of bamboo, which is a sustainable material too, explains Hanf. It grows fast and takes CO2 from the air. Solar panels have been put on as many places



as possible, as well: on the roof, including the glass parts, and at the south side.

The energy-neutral building has an Excellent certificate from BREEAM, the world's longest established method of assessing, rating and certifying the sustainability of buildings, by the UK-based Building Research Establishment. Hotel Jakarta is even the most sustainable hotel in the Netherlands now. "It's iconic for the climate discussion," says Hanf with pride.

### Prizewinning design

It is not only SeARCH's architects who are enthusiastic about the results.

"We've been to many award ceremonies in the past few months," says Hanf. The company, for example, won the Golden A.A.P 2019 (the Amsterdam architecture public jury prize), the Green Good Design Award 2019, the WAF Award Best Hotel of the year, the Architecture Masterprize in Green Architecture, and the Public Building of the Year from Architectenweb Award 2018.

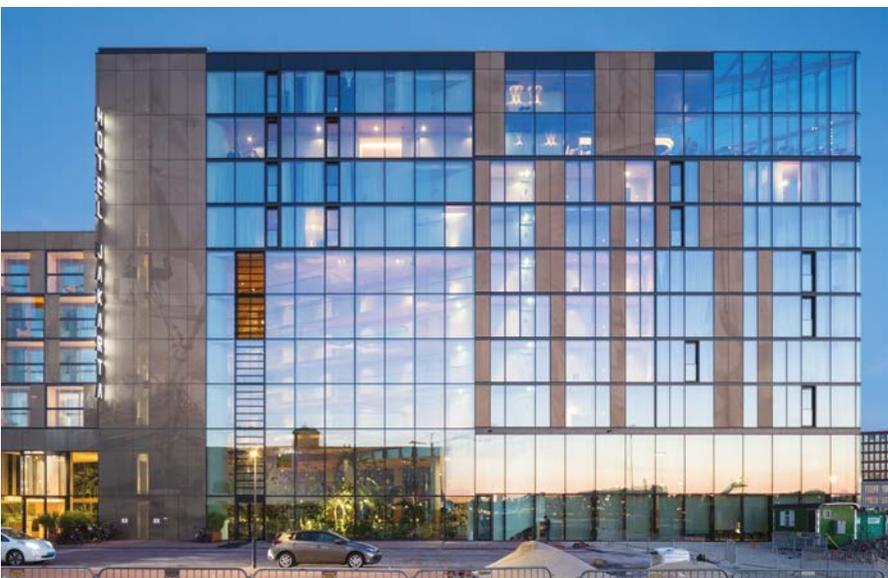
Also remarkable about this building is the fact that 176 of the 200 hotel rooms – all made from wood – were prefabricated elsewhere. They were put at the construction site within three weeks, saving

half a year of construction time. "This meant less nuisance for the neighbourhood. And for the investor, it was very interesting too, because the hotel could open its doors sooner."

### Neighbourhood living room

Apart from the hotel, there's a dynamic public 'pasar' on the ground floor, an Indonesian market place, with various bars, a restaurant, bakery and coffee corner, a wellness centre and cultural activities. "You don't often go to a hotel if you aren't staying there," says Hanf. "However, we wanted to invite the neighbourhood in and create a space where tourists and residents can meet and enjoy sitting in a subtropical sheltered garden."

From the sky bar on the top eighth and ninth floors, you have stunning views over the IJ river, the central station, some high buildings and the large ships in the cruise terminal. "A lovely place to watch the sunset," says Hanf, who has enjoyed staying in the hotel herself a few times, as well. "As architects, it's not often we can stay in the building we designed," she smiles.



Web: [search.nl](http://search.nl), [hoteljakarta.amsterdam](http://hoteljakarta.amsterdam)  
 Email: [info@search.nl](mailto:info@search.nl)  
 Tel: +31207889900