

Dear Guest,

more than **100 years** ago the city of Ghent opened its' "International World Expo" on these grounds just south of the *Citadelpark* and next to the, then newly built, *Sint Pietersstation*. Because of this "Worldfair" the inner city was renovated: The Belfry, the Castle of the Counts, Koren- and Graslei and numerous other buildings were restaured.

The World Exhibition, the last one that the industrial revolution generated, was planned with great care and had a great style unity.



The impressive Honorary square was centrally adorned by the the sculpture "**The Ros Beyaert**", the only monument preserved on sight which can still be seen in the park diagonally across the hotel.

Because the heavy statue was so difficult to move it still stands on its original location today.



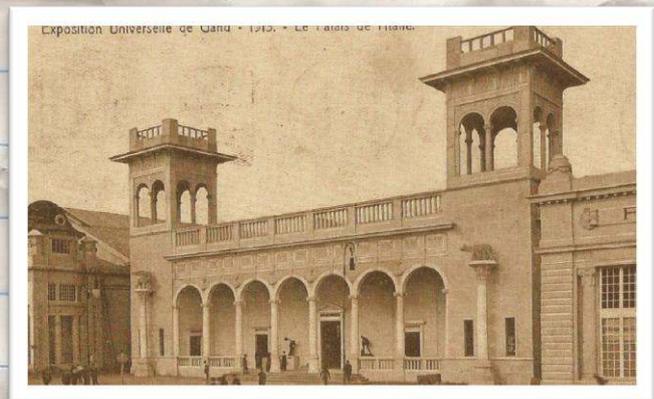
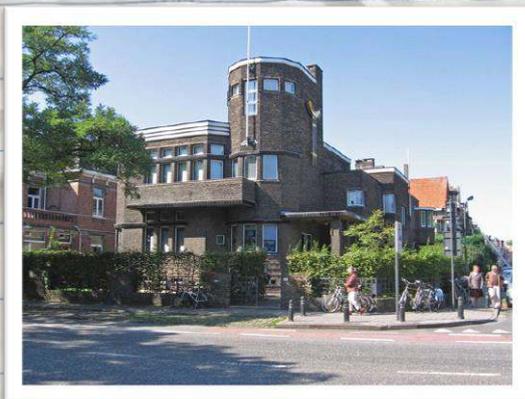
For the first time people were informed on 'how well the Belgian were doing' in the Colonial Palace "**Congo**".

About *30 countries*, such as Holland, France, Italy, Germany, Canada and Persia participated. Only a few months later the optimistic belief in

the industrialisation came to an abrupt stop when the first great war started.

After the war, the restoration of Ghent began and the first plans were made to create a residential area on the former grounds of the World fair, then transformed into a vegetable garden for the hungry population. The district was to become the place for the 'bourgeoisie' of Ghent, and would soon be called "**The Millionaires Quarter**", which referred to the estimated fortune the future residents possessed. After all, only they had the opportunity to escape the overcrowded and heavily polluted inner city.

The city wrote some guidelines, such as "75% of the roof must tilt", but otherwise allowed the landowners to build their houses at their own discretion. Moreover, one could easily get around the rules and regulations with a fine; the local millionaires didn't have to think twice. Villa De Bondt, across the street, was the first house in Ghent with a flat roof. See the next picture.



The "*Millionaires Quarter*" is a great mix of styles, making it almost impossible to believe that the majority of homes was built between 1926 and 1939. You can find every possible revival style, but also - at that time - modern trends. Fairy-tale houses with turrets, building blocks and richly decorated cottages stand harmoniously together.

Because of its heterogeneous character the neighbourhood becomes a mirror of the flavour in the "Crazy years", the early '20s before the Wall Street crash and following depression.

More than 250 homes were built here by over 125 architects. Some built their own house as a business card.

On the place of the Renaissance Palazzo of Italy (1913) a monumental villa was built, without an architect but as a result of a remarkable collaboration of the client, the charterer Lalemant, and the contractors, the Van Autryve brothers. In 1928, two years after the start of the works, the villa was finished.

Villa Lalemant, influenced by the world famous *Frank Lloyd Wright*, is characterized by in-wall projecting masses, asymmetric angular shaped bays, expanding and vibrant materials. The impressive villa is built from the inside out, according to the New Objectivity, with Modernist and Art Deco influences.



Because of the early death of Mr. Lalemant and the early move of their only son, the widow, Mrs. J. Lalemant lived here alone for most of her life. A butler, cook, maids and even her permanent music teacher lived here too.

Mrs Lalemant had a very great love for classical music, especially the violin. She sponsored and played herself on a Stradivarius in an orchestra, she lent the most expensive violins to the best players and organized chamber concerts in the villa for the upper classes, even the Royals. Her love of music was so great that after her death she left the house to her music teacher, who charmed her daily with his violin.

After his death, about 6 months later, the house was sold to a company that transformed the home into an office building.

In 2006 the villa became a luxurious and private hospital with guest rooms, now with restaurant, indoor pool, sauna and gym, focusing on rehabilitation of patients.

In 2013, the villa was reopened as "**Hotel Orion**" with over 2000m² connected spaces, around the central hall and changed into a variety of attractive rooms, some richly decorated with Art Deco motifs and stained glass windows.

"The Millionaires Quarter"! If a residential area receives such a nickname, there must be something going on... Does the luxury of the houses prevail? The distinctive architectural styles? The fortunate resident? Or... You, as our highly valued hotel guest?

Esteemed guest, we hope to welcome you again to this unique location.

Always welcome! **Gerald, Hotel Orion**