SABENA

VOYAGER GLAMOUR · REIZEN IN STIJL · TRAVEL IN STYLE

24.11.16 - 10.09.17
The Atomium is an important symbol in the skyline of Brussels, she is sublime in both an architectural and technical way. Her astonishing architecture and extraordinary view underlies this famous touristic attraction of the Belgian and European capital. The building is a historical place as well, one of the few remainders of Expo ’58, the legendary event in the collective memory of Belgium.

This Belgian monument is since the renovation in 2006 a place for exhibitions about Belgian architecture, design and contemporary creations, led by the department Atomium expo. This initiative contributes to the cultural and creative vitality of Brussels and is supported by many collaborations. Rich, varied, targeted and yet accessible to a broad audience, the temporary exhibitions at the Atomium offer a great cultural agenda. This gives your visit to this place many surprises.
In a time of “low cost”, we would almost forget there was a time when traveling by airplane belonged to the top of glamour.

Among the airlines, that realised many dreams, Sabena belonged to the top for decades. Their slogan “You’re in good hands” promised to rhyme ‘transport’ with ‘comfort’.

The exhibition “Travel in style” immerses you in the enchanting world of SABENA, the Belgian World Airlines.

Without nostalgia or bias, the exhibition reveals the history, founded in 1923 under the acronym ‘Société Anonyme Belge d’Exploitation de la Navigation Aérienne’. SABENA was the third oldest airline of the world. The exhibition shows the beginning in the airport of Haren until the abrupt ending in 2001, their international developments in the four continents and their regional helicopter-network.

The visitor will discover original objects, several scale airplanemodels, uniforms, posters, photos, movies and some gadgets and other souvenirs from private and public collections. These illustrate the 78 years this commercial aircompany was in service.

Special attention to the leading players in this extraordinary adventure, they called themselves the “Sabéniens”, showing their commitment to the company.

The exhibition reproduces the full experience going from the check-in, the boarding and the flight itself with the service and comfort, which made this an experience reserved exclusively for the upper class.

Boarding from 24.11.2016 in the exhibition sphere from the Atomium.
I. Belgium Takes to the Air (1923 – 2001)

This introductory section presents the key moments in Sabena’s history, through photographs and scale models.

a. The Odyssey begins (1919 - 1930 – Haren Airport). The first aviation endeavours, the establishment of the Syndicate for the Study of Air Transport (SNFIA) in March 1919, the creation of Sabena on 23 May 1923, and the first flight to the Congo, which was made by the “Marie-José” on 12 February 1925 (in 75 hours!)

b. Growth and progress (the 1930s - 40s). Commercial development, technological advances such as reliable radio systems, the establishment of regular flights between the capital and the Belgian colony (Brussels – Léopoldville in 5 days, two flights a month) and, on 10 May 1940, the bombing of Haren/ Evere Airfield.

c. The golden years (1945 - 60). Exclusivity, glamour and modernity. Helicopters appeared on the scene, jets made their revolutionary début, aircraft, employees and passengers all increased in number. Businessmen and celebrities flew with Sabena: exclusive flights featured sleeper berths and meals, a service provided by the most prestigious airlines. A “Tourist class” was established in 1952. This was also the period when Boeing 707s were used to repatriate Belgian residents of the former Belgian Congo following the country’s independence (1960).

d. Holiday flights (1960s - end of the 70s). The extension of the Asian network (to Tokyo), the rise in the number of holiday-makers and flights bound for Spain, Greece, Turkey, Malaga and North Africa. Tourists succeeded businessmen as a major passenger group. The system featuring one travel class ended with the introduction of the Economy classe.

e. Expansion, development, growth (1980s - 90s). Sabena formed partnerships with other companies and was keen to be flexible in its response to clients’ needs.


II. Air Travel

a. Sabena Terminal. Visitors to “Sabena. Travel in Style” will (re) discover the departure and arrival halls, the check-in area, Mademoiselle Sabena (the ground crew hostess), flight time display boards, baggage stickers, advertisements, and so on.

b. Welcome aboard. This part of the exhibition presents Sabena’s passengers (businessmen, colonial families, missionaries, celebrities and tourists), as well as their luggage and clothing. Visitors can also learn about the Cargo flights, including the transportation of animals between Belgium and the Congo.
c. **In-flight comfort.** This section recalls the services provided for passengers through a series of objects on the aircraft: the seats, which combined comfort with cost-effectiveness, the beds and kitchens on board (hot meals were served from 1948 onwards). It also shows the air-hostesses, who were then presented as maternal figures.

d. **Destinations.** The themed exhibition ends with a presentation of the destinations offered by Sabena, particularly Africa (with an account of Sabena’s role in providing access to the Congo).

III. **A Human Adventure**

Visitors will be able to admire the uniforms worn by the ground crew (the hostesses, the Sabena Police, and the technical staff), as well as those of the flight crew (pilots, stewards, hostesses and chefs).
SABENA
TRAVEL IN STYLE

Held in the Atomium's temporary exhibition spheres (levels 3, 4 & 5) Take-off : 24.11.2016.
Landing : 10.09.2017

Atomiumsquare - 1020 Brussel - www.atomium.be/sabena

Colophon

An initiative of the Atomium in partnership with the city of Brussels

GENERAL DIRECTOR  Henri Simons
EXHIBITIONS DIRECTOR  Arnaud Bozzini
ASSISTANT MANAGERS  Julie Almau Gonzalez & Johan Vandenperre
PRESS RELATIONS  Inge Van Eycken & Axel Addington
THE ENTIRE ATOMIUM TEAM  Yvonne Boodts + Ilse De Braekeleer + Bénédicte Lejeune
+ Sandra Libens + Alicia Tirmarche + Lina d’Ostilio

SCENOGRAPHY  Pièce Montée
GRAPHIC DESIGN  Sign*
CREDIT  Curatelle Sabena / © mrah - kmkg

Partners

Contacts

EXHIBITIONS DIRECTOR
Arnaud Bozzini : +32 476 53 20 31 - arnaud.bozzini@atomium.be
PRESS CONTACT
Inge Van Eycken : +32 479 95 05 94 - inge.vaneycken@atomium.be