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## BRUSSELS : THE GUILD HOUSES



The fame and beauty of the [Market Place](#) do not lie only in the [Town Hall](#) and the [King's House](#), but perhaps first of all in the presence of a remarkably beautiful set of elaborately decorated guild houses. The name "guild houses" is most commonly used for the entire set of houses, although in reality they did not all belong to the medieval guilds. Some of the houses were always privately owned. During the Middle Ages and later every city in the Low Countries had **guilds or corporations** which always had a stake in the city administration. Because they were very wealthy and politically powerful, their importance had to

show in their houses in which they regularly met to discuss new rules or regulations within their specific trade or commerce. (Above : *The so-called House of the Dukes of Brabant*)

In Brussels the [House of the Dukes of Brabant](#). After the French bombardment of August 1695, the city ordered the guilds to submit the restoration plans of the houses before a final approval could be given for the construction. Because of this wise decision the unity of style could be preserved and former irregularities could be done away with.

In the Middle Ages no house numbers were given, but names. There were so few stone houses that most people could locate a house just by its name. On the [Grand-Place](#) the names of the houses are often indicated by a little statue or some part of the decoration. Here follows a list of the houses with their names and eventual specific historic details. The list starts at the group of houses on the left side of the [Town Hall](#) and continues clockwise:



The MOUNTAIN OF THABOR - The ROSE -The GOLDEN TREE - The SWAN (Now a renowned restaurant "La maison du Cygne (house of the swan). Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels stayed here in 1847 during meetings of the Deutsche Arbeiterverein (the German labourers union) - The STAR (In the Middle Ages this house was occupied by the Amman, the Duke's representative in the city. Under the arcade is a statue of Everard 't Serclaes, a medieval Brussels hero. Legend has it that striking the arm of the statue brings luck. )

(The TOWN HALL)- The FOX (House of the traders guild with the statue of St. Nicolas on top) - The HORN (House of the sailors. The upper floor looks like the rear end of a ship) - The SHE-WOLF - The SACK - The WHEELBARROW  
These last three houses were not completely destroyed in 1695. Because of the partially preserved facades, they rank among the most beautiful houses on the Grand-Place.

The KING OF SPAIN (House of the guild of the bakers) - The MULE - SAINT BARBARA - The SAMARITAN  
- The OAK - The PEACOCK - The HELMET - (The KING'S HOUSE) - - The MERCHAND OF GOLD - The PIGEON - The GOLDEN SLOOP - The ANGEL - JOSEPH and ANNA - The DEER

### The HOUSE OF THE DUKES OF BRABANT

(This is actually a group of 7 houses, each with a different name. The ensemble is called "The Dukes of Brabant" because on the first floor, under the windows, the statues of the dukes can be seen. No duke or king actually lived here. The names of the houses are: The FAME - The HERMIT - The FORTUNE - The WINDMILL - The TIN POT - The HILL - The BEURS ) (See picture on top of page)

