

From Tulips to Tailpipes: A Dutch Detour Worth Taking

STORY AND PHOTOS BY ARNON KASETER

"Sure, babe," I said to my wife when she sweetly asked (or maybe insisted?) we visit Keukenhof in the Netherlands. Tulip fields, flowers galore, couples taking selfies—I was all in. Well, sort of. While my mouth said "yes," my brain was already racing at warp speed, mapping out car museums nearby. Jackpot! The Louwman Museum in The Hague!

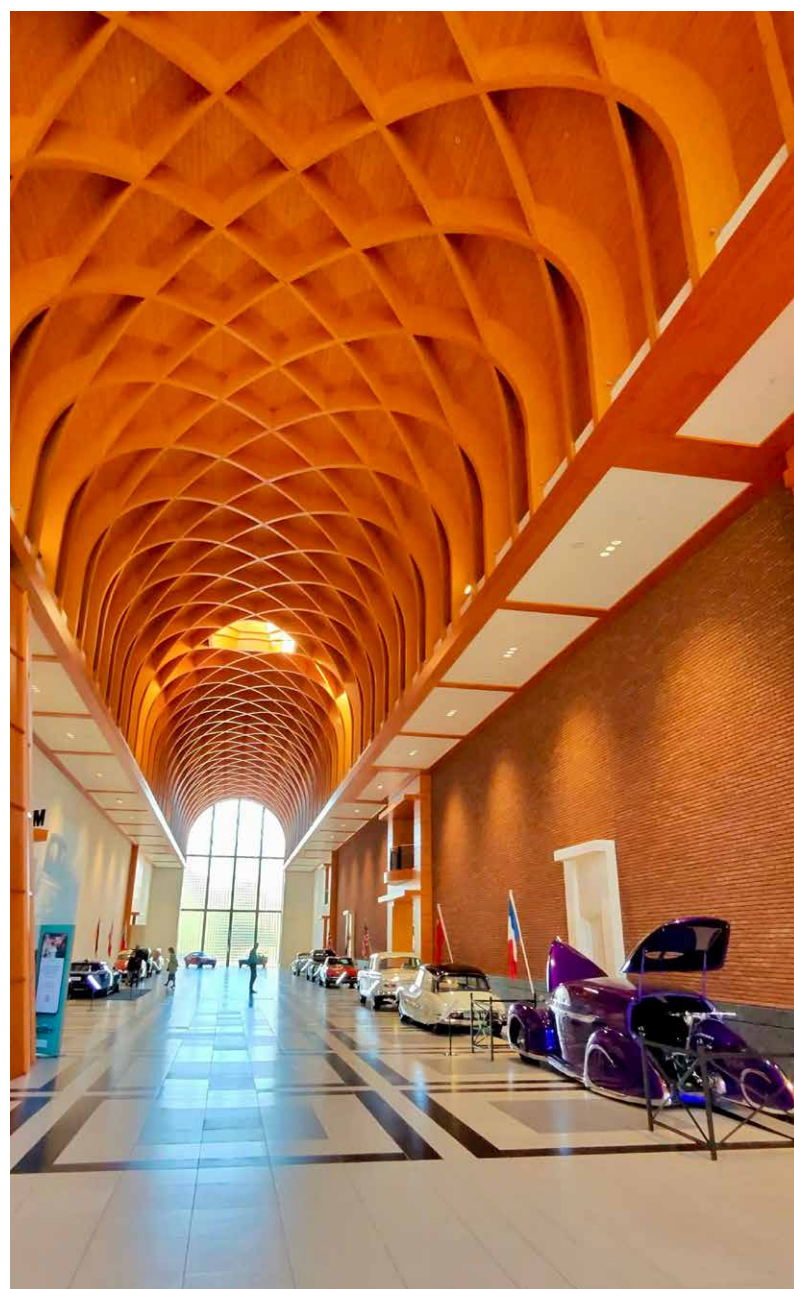
Flights booked. Train tickets sorted. Tulips admired. Time for some horsepower.

After doing my floral duty at Keukenhof, we hopped on a train to The Hague the next morning. Destination: Car heaven.

The Louwman Museum is huge. The tour starts on the third floor and winds its way down through time—from the earliest horse-drawn carriages to modern-day marvels. And for Porsche fans like me, there's one very special stop.

Between 1962 and 1994, Porsche police cars were a familiar (and intimidating) sight on Dutch motorways. These weren't your average patrol cars—only elite officers, after extensive training, were allowed behind the wheel.

The museum features one of the first 12 ever delivered to this special squad, call sign "ALEX 2707." This 356 Cabriolet served until 1966 before being sold off, stripped of its police gear. A Belgian enthusiast





later rescued it and spent years restoring it to its full, flashing-lights glory. Only three of these early Porsche police cars are known to survive.

And that's just the beginning.

A few additional highlights:

- James Bond's Aston Martin DB5, straight from Goldfinger, gadgets and all.
- An 1886 Benz Patent-Motorwagen, widely considered the world's first automobile.
- The Swan Car—yes, really. A 1907 Brooke 25/30 HP English-made car built by an eccentric Scotsman living in Calcutta. The carved wood represents a swan gliding through water. It spits steam from its beak and lights up from the tail. It was eventually sold to an Indian maharaja. Not your average daily

driver, it was acquired and restored by the Louwman Museum in 1991 and appeared at the 1993 Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance.

- Maserati MC12 Corsa—only twelve were ever built, and one lives here.
- Baker Electric Roadster—an early American EV from 1908, topping out at a blistering 30 mph.

One of the most impressive surprises? The world's largest collection of Spyker cars -

the pride of Dutch automotive history. Sleek, advanced, and beautifully engineered, these cars once rivaled the best from Germany and Britain. The museum also houses the only surviving Eysink, a rare Dutch marque that vanished long ago, making this a truly one-of-a-kind find for any enthusiast.

The collection spans the globe. Dutch and Belgian classics sit proudly alongside French elegance from Peugeot and Citroën. British refinement from Bentley, Jaguar, and

Aston Martin. German icons from Porsche, Mercedes-Benz, and BMW. Italian flair from Ferrari, Alfa Romeo, and Lancia. American muscle from Ford, Dodge, and Cadillac. Japanese innovation from Toyota and Honda. Even Czech Tatras and a few rare Swedish Saabs make appearances.

Motorsport fans aren't left out, either. The museum boasts multiple Le Mans winners, vintage Formula 1 cars, and rare prototypes that never made it to production. It's like flipping through the greatest hits of automotive history—except life-sized and gleaming under museum lights.

And then there's the memorabilia: original Art Deco posters, vintage fuel pumps, goggles, trophies, you name it. It's not just a museum—it's a deep dive into over a century of car culture. The walls practically hum with nostalgia and octane.

At €20, this place is a steal. I'd say it was the highlight of my trip (don't tell the tulips). In fact, if my wife wants to visit Keukenhof again, I'd happily tag along. After all, there might be another museum nearby just waiting to be discovered. ■

