



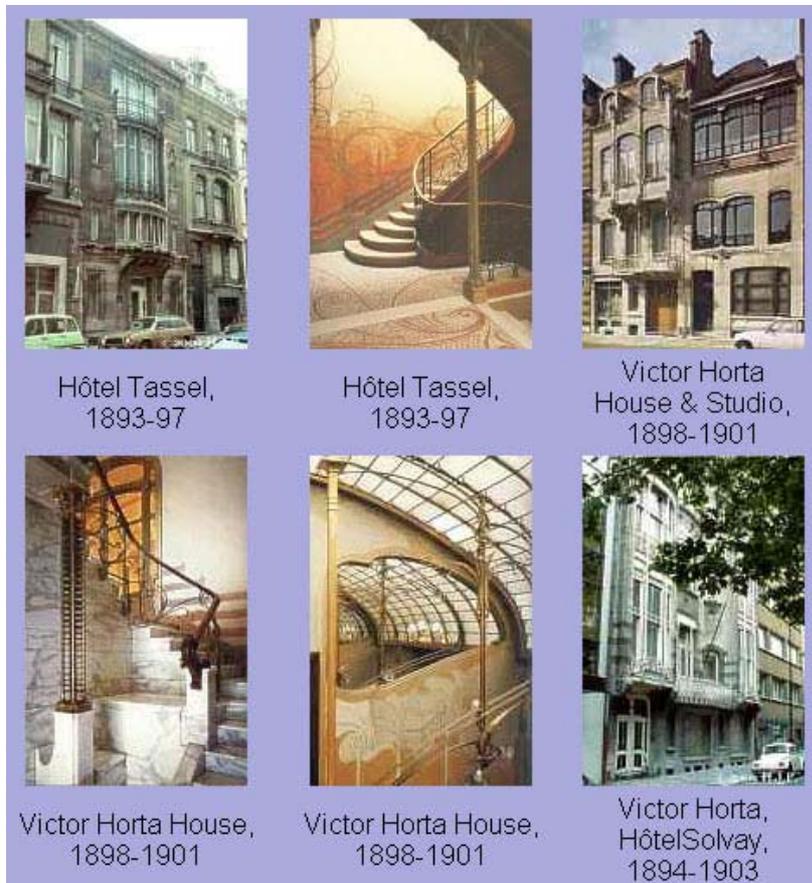
Sight seeing tour - Brussels Art Nouveau Architecture (4 hours)

Brussels is the capital city of Belgium and is also the capital city of the Art Nouveau in the world. A lot of buildings have been built around 1900 in the Art Nouveau style. A style that also began in this town with the Tassel House by Horta in 1893.

Horta and also Hankar are the major architects but a lot of other artists have done very good jobs that are worth seeing: Blérot, Van de Velde, Hamesse, Taelemans, Vizzavona, Cauchie...

In 1900, the Brussels of nowadays was divided in a lot of little suburbs that surrounded the inner city. In the second part of the XIXth century, the city wall was destroyed to make a circling boulevard. The inner city was not much influenced by Art Nouveau because there were not a lot of destruction of older quarters but the suburbs like St Gilles/Sint-Gillis, Ixelles/Elsene, Forest/Vorst and Uccle/Ukkel feature hundreds of Art Nouveau buildings or villas that you still can see nowadays.

Horta houses



Hôtel Tassel,
1893-97

Hôtel Tassel,
1893-97

Victor Horta
House & Studio,
1898-1901

Victor Horta House,
1898-1901

Victor Horta House,
1898-1901

Victor Horta,
Hôtel Solvay,
1894-1903

Victor Horta's museum.

This is not a museum in the traditional sense: a building where the objects exposed draw all the attention. Here it is the reverse : the building itself is the museum. The Horta Museum was actually the house that Victor Horta built for himself in the late 1890's. It's a true example of the architectural style that made Horta into one of the most acclaimed architects in Belgium.

The Art Nouveau style was popular in Europe, and especially in Brussels, between 1893 and 1918. The characterizations are: the use of industrial materials like steel and iron in the visible parts of houses, new decorations inspired by nature (e.g. the famous whiplash motive, which occurs very often in the Art Nouveau style and especially in the work of Horta), decorative mosaics or sgraffito on the façades of houses, etc... Most of these principles can be seen applied in the Horta Museum itself. This house also shows one of the great innovations of Horta: the rooms are built around a central hall. From the beautiful glass ceiling light falls into the house and thereby creating a much more natural illumination of the building than was the case in the traditional late 19th century houses in Brussels and Belgium. This style has sometimes a different name in certain countries: Jugendstil in the German-speaking countries, Modern Style, Liberty Style in Britain, Estilo Modernista in Spain.

Victor Horta was born in 1861 in Gent, Belgium. After studies in Paris, he settles in Brussels and continued studying at the Académie des Beaux Arts (Beautiful Arts Academy). In 1893 he builds his first true Art Nouveau house, the house of the Tassel family, which can still be seen in the Rue Emile Janson / Emiel Jansonstraat,6.

Other truly magnificent constructions were to follow: 1894 The Solvay House (his masterpiece); 1895 La Maison du Peuple (the meeting house of the Brussels socialists, now sadly demolished) and the Van Eetvelde House; 1898 the Horta house (his private mansion and this museum), 1901 Les Grands Magasins Innovation (destroyed by a fire in 1967 during which over 300 people were killed), 1903 Les Magasins Waucquez (nowadays the Comic Strip Museum of Brussels).

Stoclet Palace,

279-281, avenue de Tervuren, Woluwe St Pierre by Hoffmann in 1910-12



The Stoclet Palace is considered sometimes as the first Art Deco work because of its geometrical shape which is not very Belgian although the Belgian Art Nouveau has become more and more geometrical after 1903. It was built by Hoffmann, a viennish architect who created the Wiener Werkstate. This palace was designed until the ultimate detail including the tea spoons, the bathrooms,... The paintings were designed by Klimt himself.

Saintcyr's house, Square Ambiorix by Strauven.



Maybe the most narrow facade of Brussels, it is well known for its circled loggia at the top. Circle shape loggias are typical for the Belgian Art Nouveau. There are still 3 of these in Brussels and Antwerp but this building is the top. The ironwork is very detailed, f.e. the areal sculpture on the roof. The windows are split in numerous curved panes that represent well the Belgian Art Nouveau trend. Strauven's work for colour textures using coloured bricks is enormous. His houses feature always a lot of details which remind somehow baroque art and often use a personal gothic interpretation in its structural designs. The feeling of highness is nearly omnipresent in his works.

Music Museum.



(Ex Old England departement store), 2, rue Montagne de la cour, by Saintenoy in 1899. An all iron and glass building. The iron work is really fine.

Hannon Hotel, 1

Av. de la jonction, Saint Gilles by Brunfaut.



Today this is the museum of photography, which can be visited. The treatment of the angle is remarkable: at first view it seems to have an angle tower. The balconies and the bas-relief by Rousseau give a real illusion. The living room has a large window circled with stain glasses. The shape of the facade allows a lot of light enter this bay. Inside decoration and furniture was done by the famous Nancy artists Gallé and Majorelle. Don't forget to take a look at its neighbour, nr 55, boulevard Brugmann which features owls in the door sgraffito and top sculptures.