

Marlies Dekkers: A Dutch treat for France

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Holland's hottest lingerie designer sets up shop in Paris.

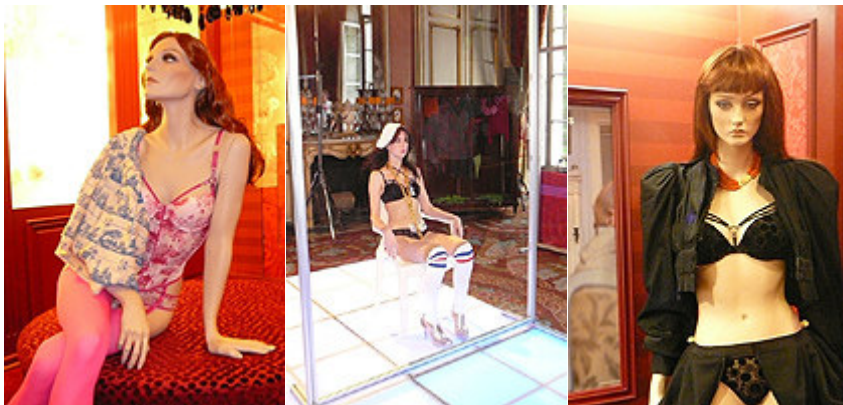
When Dutch designer Marlies Dekkers had her **voluptuous models pose** in front of glass screens to launch her new lingerie collection in Paris, it was hard not to think of a certain saucy quarter of Amsterdam. "That's your fantasy," says Dekkers, with a hint of a wink. "I believe in **strong, powerful women.**"



Marlies Dekkers store front at launch party, Paris April, 2007 Marlies Dekkers and model

As the recent recipient of the **Veuve Clicquot Dutch Businesswoman of the Year Award**, Dekkers certainly fits the bill. She has fulfilled a lifelong ambition by opening her first Paris boutique.

"**Being in Paris is a dream for any designer, but perhaps especially a lingerie designer,**" she observes. "It is, after all, the capital of romance. When I was a kid, I remember driving to Spain with my father. He expected me to sleep through France, but I insisted on keeping my eyes open because I wanted to see the Eiffel Tower."



Delft print underwear Fashion show In-store mannequin

Including the new Paris space, Dekkers now has **six own-brand stores** (the others are in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Maastricht, Antwerp and Bangkok) and more than 1,000 points of sale worldwide.

Reflecting Dekkers' geometrical, frill-free designs, the Paris boutique dispenses with typically French boudoir fantasies in favour of a **sombre, yet cosy, northern European feel**. Lush burgundy carpeting matches fairy-tale wallpaper designed by Dekkers, while **Delftware vases make subtle appearances**. A red velvet sofa contrasts with glossy black display units and black chandeliers.

An open fire glows in the fitting room area, where the **individual booths have adjustable lighting**. Imagine a **Helmet Newton model superimposed on a Vermeer print** and you're getting close to the

Marlies Dekkers



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Marlies Dekkers at launch

atmosphere. Branded chocolates are also available for those who wish to indulge.



Model at launch

Fitting rooms

Display units

The Dutch ambience is enhanced by Dekkers' new collection, which draws on her homeland. Some sets feature delft-inspired prints, although Dekkers came up with the designs herself. She even commissioned a commemorative delft tile for the occasion.

A sexy twist on Dutch traditional costume completes the picture.

Aside from the new line, the **full range** of undressed lingerie, sundressed swimwear and nightdress outerwear will be available at the boutique. Prices range from €120 to €140 for a set to €250 for a dress.

Although Dekkers enjoys being provocative, she insists that she makes lingerie "for women to wear rather than for men to look at". Lace and bows rarely appear, but shape and cut are all-important.

She says: "I want to frame and enhance the most beautiful parts of a woman's body - the base of her spine, the décolletage. And I believe all women's bodies are beautiful," she adds. Indeed, her models at the launch were no beanpoles, and the brand's bra sizes run up to an F-cup.

In Holland, which does not suffer from the "skinny equals perfection" complex that afflicts France, it is known for offering a wide range of sizes and combinations. "The idea is that any woman should be able to find something that fits perfectly."

Dekkers considers most lingerie brands "too industrial" and laments the fact that there are very few genuine lingerie designers, who treat their art as reverentially as couturiers treat dresses. That's partly why **she has attempted to blur the border between lingerie and daywear.**

"I think beautiful lingerie should be seen," she says. She **likes to experiment with dresses that would not look out of place in the bedroom**, and vice versa. Her most famous design touches are the **straps that rise above her bra cups**, following the curve of the breasts and drawing attention to the décolletage.

The result is that, when a woman is wearing a Marlies Dekkers bra, **it's apparent to everyone in the know.**