

**BXL**LA VILLE
DE STAD

PLAISIRS D'HIVER WINTERPRET

24.11 > 31.12.2023**PROLONGATIONS > 07/01 @ place de Bourckère, place de la Monnaie, Grand-Place
VERLENGING > 07/01 @ De Brouckère-, Muntplein & Grote Markt

plaisirsdhiver.be / winterpret.be

PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, Thursday 16 November 2022 – In the early hours of today, Thursday 16 November, the Christmas tree arrived at Brussels' Grand-Place, where it will take pride of place alongside the traditional life-size Nativity scene until 7 January. It will be decorated from 18 to 20 November and switched on at 6 p.m. on Friday 24 November, ahead of traditional dances and chants performed by the 11 Indigenous Nations of Quebec (Winter Wonders' guest of honour) and the first sound and light show. It will mark the official launch of the 23rd Winter Wonders, which will open at 12 noon on the same day.

Once again, the tree was meticulously selected. The search led to a regal Nordmann. After being felled on Wednesday 15 November, the specimen was carefully transported in a special convoy to Grand-Place, where it was erected this morning.

Fact file:

Species: Nordmann
Age: approximately 50 years
Height: 22 meters
Origin: Lier, Antwerp Province

Until yesterday, it stood in the garden of a private home in the quaint village of Lier, in the Antwerp province. Planted by the owners in the 1970s, the Nordmann is around fifty years old. In five decades, it had grown to an impressive size, becoming too invasive for the property it overlooked.

By donating it to the City of Brussels, its owners have given it a worthy setting on the world's most beautiful square, where tens of thousands of visitors will admire it. And the adventure won't stop there as, once Winter Wonders ends, the tree will be transformed into various objects that will make it eternal.

It was felled and transported by Inter-Arbo, a nursery gardener who has specialized in large trees since 1915 and for four generations. The company also provides tree replanting: for every five-meter or larger specimen it fells, it pledges to replant ten. Like the Dick Frères group, which positioned the tree, all the specialists overseeing these tricky operations again demonstrated their incredible expertise and skill.

It will be decorated from Saturday 18 to Monday 20 November. Ten professionals, assisted by three bucket trucks, will decorate the tree with 140 ornaments representing the 11 Indigenous Nations of Quebec (Mi'kmaq star, snowshoe, inukshuk and dream catcher), 50 white beads of light and 2 km of fairy lights. All the lights will be LED.

- **Mi'kmaq star, red:** The eight-pointed star representing the sun has been a symbol of Mi'kmaq communities for centuries.
- **Snowshoe, gold:** A key transportation tool for Quebec's Aboriginal people.
- **Inukshuk, silver:** An inuksuk is a pile of stones, but above all a form of communication in the Arctic.
- **Dream catcher, 20 gold and 20 silver:** To keep only the good dreams and eliminate the bad ones at first light.

"The long-awaited moment has finally arrived, when we welcome the traditional Christmas tree to the most beautiful square in the world! More than just a tradition, this tree is also a symbol, the symbol of finding light even in the darkest of times. So, I'm delighted to see the eyes of Brussels locals and tourists shining in the glow of its garlands", explains Philippe Close, Mayor of the City of Brussels.

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