Park De Mik in Brasschaat: A Photographic Walk Through Time and Nature



The historic gate blends seamlessly into the landscape with red stone and medieval charm.

The Gothic Entrance Gate

Since 1830, this neo-Gothic tower gate has marked the northwest entrance to Park De Mik. Designed by Charles-Henri Petersen as a romantic “folly”, it is nearly identical to the medieval Porte d’Auron in Bourges.

Two cylindrical towers are connected by a pointed arch with a drawbridge and family crest.

Built from local stone unearthed during pond construction, the gate is now a protected heritage site of Brasschaat.



A noble U-shaped castle surrounded by 37 hectares of English landscape park.

Castle Hof ter Mick

Built in 1785 and expanded in 1830, this castle was restored after a fire in 1871. It showcases neoclassical design with Renaissance influences and once housed a noble family from the Della Faille lineage.

The surrounding park was designed by landscape architect Petersen and includes Belgium’s first American oak, planted here in 1803—before Belgium even existed.



Black silhouettes among branches: cormorants watching the water.

Resting Cormorants

Along the pond’s banks, cormorants dry their wings in the sun. Their dark silhouettes are a striking contrast against the soft landscape of De Mik.

These skilled fishers are regular guests and often nest in tall trees above the waterline, offering bird watchers a moment of quiet observation.



Bright feathers and ancient trees: exotic life in unexpected places.

Mandarin Duck & Exotic Species

The colorful mandarin duck is one of many exotic animals that inhabit the ponds of De Mik.

Originally from East Asia, these ducks likely escaped or were released from private collections.

They nest in tree hollows and thrive among other introduced species like yellow-bellied sliders. In the quiet of the park, these animals have found a new kind of home.



A massive treetop nest sways above the reedy island waters.

Grey Herons Nesting

On the central island in the pond, a large colony of grey herons returns each spring. Their stick nests balance high in the trees, safe from disturbance.

Herons typically breed from February to May and migrate to milder climates in winter. Their slow flight and elegant posture add grace to the landscape.



Young goats curiously exploring behind wooden fences.

Erf De Mik – The Children’s Farm

Near the forest edge lies a charming petting zoo where children meet goats, ponies and chickens. Erf De Mik is both a learning space and a cherished memory for many families.

Volunteers and educators ensure the animals are cared for, and seasonal events make each visit unique.



Natural corridors whispering legends in green silence.

The Golem Beech Trail

The “Golem Trail” leads through towering beech hedges, designed to evoke mystery and

myth. Named after the legendary figure shaped from earth, the path invites quiet exploration.

Kids love its narrow turns; adults appreciate its symbolism and cool shade in summer.



Cold air and still waters beneath the leafless sky.

Winter Bridge Scene

In the cold months, De Mik becomes more contemplative. A wooden bridge connects paths across frozen water, with ducks gliding slowly through patches of open pond.

Seasonal stillness and soft light make it an unexpected favorite for photographers.



Time made stone: a Roman god's madness immortalized by the pond.

Saturn Devouring His Son

One of the park's most dramatic sculptures, this statue depicts the Roman god Saturn (Kronos) consuming one of his children—an allegory for power, time and loss.

Its origin is unknown, though likely 19th-century. The statue sits across from the Gothic gate, part of a classical sculpture walk.

Photography & text: Photolus.com
