

Beat the heat with a walrus retreat

July 31 2020



Visitors look at a walrus from their hotel room at the Pairi Daiza animal park in Brugelette, on July 30, 2020.

Much of western Europe was sweltering in a heatwave on Friday, but visitors to one Belgian safari park could at least seek shelter in an igloo with a cool view.

Six Arctic-themed rooms at the Pairi Daiza resort have been given underwater windows onto the world of the walrus, and the giant sea mammals can swim up to say hello.

"The first customers who came were like, 'Wow, that's beautiful'," the zoo's technical director, Jeremy Lannoy told AFP.

"They leave with stars in their eyes, because experiences like this, there aren't that many elsewhere in the world."

Rooms come with a 10 centimetre (four-inch) thick window that can withstand huge water pressure or the charge of a tusked beast that can eventually grow up to two tonnes.

The two younger walruses at the park don't seem aggressive, however. If anything, they are intrigued by their human neighbours.

"There is no chance you're disturbing the animal because its territory is so big anyway, and it has access to the inside and outside," said [park](#) spokeswoman Claire Glissen.

"Sometimes the [walrus](#) goes up to the [window](#) and is interested in who is in the room. But it also happens that he's not interested. It depends on his state of mind.

"But it's true that in this interaction between animals and humans, sometimes we don't know who is the attraction."

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