

KLM marks 106 years with new Delft Blue miniature honoring historic Leiden landmark

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Dhaka: To celebrate its 106th anniversary, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines has unveiled its latest Delft Blue miniature — a replica of Villa Rameau, the historic sexton's residence located beside the Pieterskerk in Leiden.

The site holds deep historical significance, as it once housed the Pilgrims before they embarked on their journey to America aboard the Mayflower in 1620.

106 years of transatlantic connection

This year's commemoration highlights more than a century of transatlantic ties — from the Pilgrims' voyage to KLM's modern-day partnership with Delta Air Lines under the Air France-KLM Group.

As the world's oldest airline still operating under its original name, KLM continues to play a pivotal role in connecting Europe and the United

States. Today, the airline serves fifteen US destinations and transports millions of passengers annually, strengthening economic and cultural relationships across both continents.

“With the unveiling of Villa Rameau as our 106th Delft Blue house, we celebrate not only our birthday but also the values of connection and resilience,” said Marjan Rintel, KLM’s President and CEO.

“This house symbolizes enduring ties — from the Pilgrims’ spirit of exploration to KLM’s mission of connecting people worldwide. It reminds us that even in challenging times, staying connected remains essential to progress and innovation.”

Villa Rameau: Symbol of perseverance

Now home to the Leiden American Pilgrim Museum, Villa Rameau carries a rich legacy. The Pilgrims’ first harvest celebration in Leiden — inspired by the city’s Relief of Leiden — later evolved into what Americans recognize today as Thanksgiving.

During World War II, the Rameau family, who lived in the house, played a notable role in the Dutch resistance. The villa thus stands as a testament to perseverance and unity — values that align closely with KLM’s own heritage.

“We are honored that Villa Rameau, with its remarkable history and strong ties to Leiden, has been chosen for this year’s Delft Blue miniature,” said Peter Heijkoop, Mayor of Leiden. “It tells a story that connects our city to both the past and the world beyond our borders.”

Continuing tradition: KLM’s Delft Blue houses

KLM began its Delft Blue tradition in the 1950s, gifting miniature houses filled with Bols Dutch Gin to World Business Class passengers on long-haul flights.

Each house represents an iconic building from Dutch history and culture, and since 1994, the number of houses released has matched KLM’s age.

Every year on October 7, the airline introduces a new addition to the collection, celebrating the places and stories that symbolize the Netherlands’ enduring connections with the world.

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