

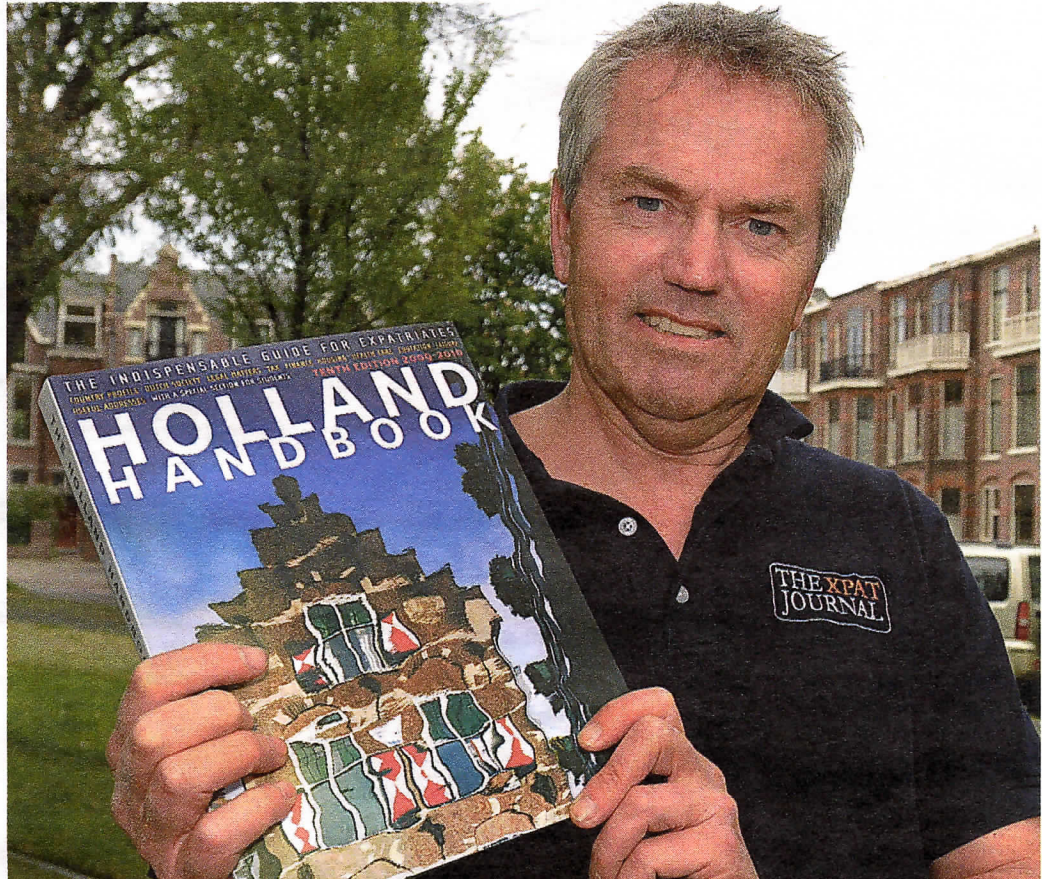
A book to hold on to

The Holland Handbook makes living in the Netherlands so much easier.

HANS PIËT

THE HAGUE – It's been called the bible for expats. That might be a bit exaggerated, but if ever there was a handy book, the Holland Handbook is the one. Its 10th richly illustrated edition just hit the shop. The 256 full-colour pages contain essential information on all aspects of living and working in the Netherlands. As a girlfriend once told; 'I learned more about healthcare, education, housing and taxes in an hour reading this book, then I would ever found out from friends and relatives'. The Hague's Bert van Essen is the initiator. "At the end of the century I was approached by a publisher in Schiedam. He knew the Xpat Journal that I make and said: 'Why don't we collect the best stories that you publish and put them in a handbook'. And that is what we did". With success. "Every year 10.000 copies are printed and most years they are sold out". To keep the Holland Handbook up to date twenty people are working on the content.

"They are specialists in a certain field and that is important. We want the reader to have the latest information on subjects



Bert van Essen shows the new Holland Handbook.

FOTO: WHM/RONALD STAM

like taxes and healthcare, but also about relevant websites and addresses from, for instance, estate agents. I want it to be a reference book that gives the answers you were looking for.

Most content is updated, and a lot is new". As most international companies regard the book as a social bible, they are very happy to distribute it to employees that come to live in

The Hague. "But also universities give it to new teachers and students." The Holland Handbook is for sale at all big bookshops. It can also be ordered at Xpat Media.

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Song of the year-singer in town

THE HAGUE – For Ray Bonnevillie nothing can go wrong this year. That is due to the fact that his song 'The Big Easy' was elected Song of the Year at the International Folk Alliance conference in February. "It's a song in which the city of New Orleans is speaking to the world", the Canadian singer-songwriter, who, on Sunday is playing in Sociëteit Transvaria (Steijnlaan 150 at 16.00 hrs), says. "As a

songwriter I observe. I see how people handle hope and despair. I make notes or put thoughts down on my dictaphone. When I'm home I build a simple musical landscape around it". His gritty storytelling finds its way to the public before it is actually finished. "Playing a song on stage tells me if it is working. If it doesn't fall of the tongue effortlessly, it needs changing".