

Best Bread  
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Keen on Croissants

# PARIS

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## n o t e s

Euro March 9: .746  
Euro Feb 7: .783  
Rain Days: 14  
High Temp: 60°F/16°C  
Low Temp: 43°F/6°C  
Nat'l Holidays: none

APRIL 2005

VOLUME 14 ISSUE 3

# BELLY ACHE

By David Downie

Will wary Parisians swallow the design and future plans for the “new” Les Halles?

Les Halles, the historic market district nicknamed “The Belly of Paris” since the mid-1800s heyday of novelist Emile Zola, is set to morph in the coming years from its gutless 1970s incarnation. Into what, no one is yet sure. A public architectural competition held in 2004 ostensibly to bring the complex up to European Union safety standards proved unsatisfactory. Fanciful designs by star-architects Jean Nouvel and Rem Koolhaas lost. No one “won.” Described by the New York Times as a “toothless architectural figurehead,” the relatively unknown David Mangin will “supervise” the remake of the subterranean Forum des Halles shopping mall, adjoining park and RER commuter train station, under the watchful eye of mayor Bertrand Delanoë.

With a budget running into the hundreds of millions of dollars and a timeline of many years, this is no minor urban renewal scheme. Few Paris neighborhoods are freighted with heavier symbolic baggage. Victor Hugo set the riot scenes here in “Les Misérables,” and every French writer or poet worthy of note since has at least nodded in Les Halles’ direction. When George Pompidou’s Gaullist government brazenly removed Les Halles’ wholesale market to suburban Rungis in 1969 then demolished the market’s iron-and-glass “Baltard pavilions” two years later, an estimated 300,000 Parisians’ livelihoods were turned upside down. From across the political spectrum the French shouted bloody murder and marched in the streets. Amid accusations of illegal real estate speculation involving Les Halles and other “development” schemes, the Gaullists were defeated at the polls in 1974.

At the time, muckraking historian Louis Chevalier wrote in his broadside, “L’Assassinat de Paris,” “Les Halles were Les Halles but then, and even more so, they were Paris itself.”

Many Parisians remember the scandals, dust and chaos to this day. Nostalgia for Baltard’s Les Halles and hatred of what replaced them are tangible. That’s why Mangin’s reputation and Delanoë’s future as a presidential hopeful in spring 2007 ride

on the current project’s timing and outcome.

The bland southern suburb of Nogent-sur-Marne may seem an odd place to seek Les Halles’ secrets, but the two sites are linked by the RER A commuter train line. In addition, the only Les Halles pavilion left in France is in Nogent; it stands reassembled on a leafy hillside over the Marne River. As I rode the RER to Nogent on



a recent visit, I couldn’t help noting the irony. Baltard’s handsome, airy 1850s structures and their slender fluted iron columns, gingerbread tin roofs and glass-paned sides were destroyed in part to make way for what at the time was an ultramodern commuter rail network. Of ten original pavilions eight were sold as scrap metal (and fetched a paltry 395,000 francs). The ninth was bought by the city of Yokohama in Japan. The sole pavilion Pompidou preserved is now a venue for prestigious events such as the World Salsa Dance Championship, the Cat Salon or Miss Europe Contest, and is flanked by cast-iron Belle Epoque streetlamps, a Wallace Fountain, a section of Eiffel Tower staircase and a curbside fire-alarm box. Nogent’s tragicomic Belle Epoque theme park of architecture, transplanted and deprived of its pieces’ original functions, is typical of sixties-seventies Paris urbanism.

While riding back into town in a packed RER train, I reviewed my own tragicomic experiences with Les Halles, which started in 1976, when I

watched the high-gloss paintwork being applied to the unfinished Pompidou Center at Beaubourg. In my ignorance I imagined the behemoth was a refinery. Much of the quarter had been bulldozed to accommodate it. A local set me straight: until a few years earlier a tangle of alleys had converged on the so-called Plateau Beaubourg, a depot for the trucks that hauled fruit, vegetables and meat to the wholesale market.

My curiosity piqued, I walked west from Beaubourg to where the market had been, and through clouds of dust watched construction workers lining the celebrated “trou”—the great twenty-five-acre hole of Les Halles—with cement. In 1979 and 1983 I was in Paris again. I saw a quarter of the pit still gaping, and felt the ground still shaking from pneumatic drills. It was only when I’d moved fulltime to the city in 1985 that the hole had finally been filled and the Forum completed (by several teams of architects working at cross-purposes). The once seedy, unmistakably Parisian alleys where Billy Wilder’s irreverent 1963 tale of prostitute Irma La Douce was filmed had disappeared and been “renovated” beyond recognition, as had the streets that had inspired Hugo, Zola, Breton and a hundred others.

Since my first encounter with Les Halles I’ve probably dashed through the complex a thousand times—usually to change subway trains or buy an otherwise un-findable book at FNAC, the world’s biggest and possibly most claustrophobia-inducing bookstore. Despite goodwill on my part the labyrinthine, five-level underground Forum with its mirrored-glass “corolla” buildings springing from the depths has never won my affection.

Like the 800,000 daily commuters and forty-one million annual Forum regulars, I’ve seen the mall decline from mere architectural hodgepodge to sordid, vandalized sump. The only boosters appear to be restless youths from the distant housing projects the RER was designed to serve. So it was with trepidation that I alighted from my train and talked myself into taking a fresh look.

When still a wholesale market, roughshod Les Halles employed (continued on page 7)



Every April, I pull out a copy of Volume 1, Issue 0, of Paris Notes, the April 1992 issue, and read it cover to cover. It was a test issue; the first issue for circulation, Issue 1, would come out in June of that year. The September issue would be the first issue that someone actually bought—I was astonished. I perform this ritual to remind myself of our editorial mission: to provide people who love Paris with insightful, useful and entertaining information.

What strikes me every time I look at the first issue is how much it reads like the latest issue. It hasn't changed all that much for one reason: our editorial formula—how we accomplish the mission—worked then and, thanks to your support, it works today. Funny thing, I can easily state our mission, but I can't tell you what our formula is. Because after all these years, I really don't know what it is (here's where I have to acknowledge the considerable patience of my writers with their editor).

I walk the streets of Paris, and I see things. I take hundreds of ideas from writers who walk those same streets. I read the French press. I read countless books about the city. I read letters from you—what you like and what you don't. I scour the Internet. I speak with French friends. At social gatherings I talk to people who love to tell me about their trips (they all have “discovered” the “best” restaurant in Paris). I even talk to ex-subscribers to find out why they didn't renew.

In the end, as I sign off on each new issue, I have no idea what we have put together. It just comes together. In the end, what all of us contributing to Paris Notes like to think we have put together is a humble “dose” of Paris that reflects the “feeling” of the city (here's the copout), a certain “Je ne sais quoi.”

—Mark Eversman, Editor  
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### Best Bread

Eric Sanna, 34, has a problem. He has no delivery truck, and he lives in the 20th arrondissement, about as far from the Elysée Palace, home of President Chirac, as one can in Paris. So how is he going to make deliveries every day? It's not a bad problem to have. Sanna is the 2005 winner of the Grand Prix de la Baguette de la Ville de Paris. As the winner, he is charged with making the president's daily bread. For the next year, President Chirac will eat Sanna's now-famous Rétro d'Or. It took the jury of representatives from the City and members of the Chambre Syndicale de la Boulanger a whole day to taste bread made by 159 candidates, and to narrow the field down to three winners (Sanna was third last year). To present to the jury, Sanna, the son of a boulanger, cooked loaves for eleven hours and chose two of the session's best baguettes. His passion for making things from scratch guides him. He uses flour from Moulin Viron and lets his dough sit for six hours after it has been properly kneaded. Only then does he bake it. For a taste of the best in Paris, visit Sanna's shop at 3 Rue du Retrait, 20th. The second- and third-place baguettes can be found at La Boulangerie de Denis Grande, 45 Blvd de Reuilly, 12th; and Hugues Desgranges, 6 Rue de Passy, 16th.

### Culture Shock

Two block-long buildings at 182 Rue St-Honoré, 1st, sometimes called Les Bons Enfants, are the new home of the Ministry of Culture. The buildings, built in 1920, were rather plain, so architect Francis Soler decided to make a statement: “modernity and patrimony must now live together.” He covered the entire exterior of the building with shiny iron-grill panels measuring about six feet by six feet. Rather than straight bars, the grills have what are best described as scribbles of metal—almost Pollock-esque. Each one is unique. It's impressive artistically. But, should culture be caged in like this?

### Bed-and-Breakfasts

Some people want mints on the pillow; some just want the pillow. The logic of paying a lot of money for a hotel in Paris has always been questionable. In a city like Paris, with so much to do, you shouldn't spend much time in a hotel. So why even pay \$100 for a room? Well, for some it's a good question, and it's a question the City is now asking. Chambres d'hôtes, or bed-and-breakfasts, are almost nonexistent in Paris; in comparison, Rome has thousands of them. (We're not talking about the quaint Napa Valley kind, but the very inexpensive room in someone's apartment kind.) The City is now looking at them as a

way to increase its visitor bed count (with an eye to hosting the Summer Olympics in 2012). With this in mind, it has begun to develop a system of quality controls, and standards for comfort and cleanliness (now billed Qualité Paris). Soon, chambres d'hôtes could be rated similarly to hotels. B&Bs are a way to sleep cheaply (as low as 40E a night) and to make contact with city residents. These two companies specialize in chambres d'hôtes: Alcôves et Agapes ([www.bed-and-breakfast-in-paris.com](http://www.bed-and-breakfast-in-paris.com)) and B&B in Paris ([www.2binparis.com](http://www.2binparis.com)).

### Rules of the Road

There are 5,971 streets in Paris and 300,000 street addresses. A Plan du Paris (a one-arrondissement-per-page booklet with X and Y coordinates) is an essential tool for finding Paris addresses. However, here are a few pointers for finding the address you're looking for, based on street numeration laws established in 1805. While you're navigating Paris, it's always helpful to know where the Seine is. Here's why. All streets that run perpendicular to the Seine start their numbers at one and go higher the farther you get from the river. For these streets, if you are facing away from the Seine, the street numbers on the left will always be odd, while those on the right will be even. For all the streets that run parallel to the Seine, the numeration will increase in the direction of the current of the Seine—that is, from the east to the west. Should someone give you an address on Rue de Rennes with a number below 41, ask again. Rue de Rennes starts at 41. Should someone give you an address number on Rue des Degrés, ask again. There are no street numbers on this tiny street.

### Orangerie

A year ago, when a major renovation of the Orangerie (located on the southwest corner of the Tuileries Gardens, 1st) seemed to be on schedule for completion in 2005, the project hit a wall, literally. This highly anticipated renovation came to a complete stop when workers, digging an enlargement of the basement, ran into a section of the ancient Charles IX wall. (Charles built the wall during the mid-sixteenth century by order of his mother, Catherine de Médicis. It protected her Tuileries palace.) The situation became political: Why didn't anyone know about the existence of the wall (apparently, some people did)? Would the wall be saved? It now appears that most of the wall, about sixty feet, will be saved and encased in a kind of crypt. However, no one in the government has mentioned when the Orangerie, home to Monet's water lilies, will be finished.

• PARIS •  
**B I T E S**  
By Rosa Jackson



Une révolution? Irresistibly French as the idea might sound, it hasn't caught on in Paris restaurants, where the more prosaic "plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose" nearly always applies. Witness Joël Robuchon, whose no-reservations policy at **L'Atelier** rubbed so many fur coats the wrong way that two years after opening he has finally dropped it, now operating the same way as any other restaurant.

This was good news for me and two friends, who ate at L'Atelier recently to mark their return to the United States after a food-filled year in Paris. They had saved this meal for the end, wisely as it turned out since the new policy allowed us to eat at the unadventurous hour of 1pm. The reservation issue aside, I was curious to see whether Robuchon's "small plates" had caught on with the regulars now that the hype over this restaurant has died down.

The restaurant's bento-box décor still looks fresh and innovative—the mix of black lacquer, dark wood and red stools with bright displays of red bell peppers and green apples prevents it from looking too somber, though I always long for a better view of the cooks in the open kitchen. Interestingly, even at this peak time a few stools were empty and the two rooms felt far from frenzied.

This could be explained by the prices, which for the neighborhood's authors and proofreaders, if not its publishers and lawyers, puts this restaurant firmly in the category of "a rare treat." When I visited shortly after L'Atelier opened, some small plates were democratically priced at under 10E. Now, they range from about 12E to 30E—and, given their minimalist size (when the menu says "the scallop" or "the langoustine" it means just one), it would take quite a few to fill anyone up. We took what I think is the best approach here: two small plates each, followed by a main course and dessert. Sounds a lot like a conventional meal, doesn't it?

That said, the food was pretty fabulous. Our first round of dishes all had a Mediterranean slant: a plate of silky Spanish ham with slightly under-salted tomato toasts; a little tower of roasted eggplant, zucchini and tomato layered with buffalo mozzarella; and marinated anchovy filets alternated with strips of roasted red pepper. Next up, three takes on French classics: three frogs' legs fritters flavored with parsley and served with garlic

cream; a poached egg atop parsley purée and bathed in mushroom cream; and a single scallop in its shell topped with truffle shavings (18E each).

Our main courses included two Robuchon signature dishes, the merlan Colbert and his take on spaghetti carbonara. In the first, the whiting looked as though it had leaped straight from the sea and into the frying pan, where it acquired a crisp golden coating before being served with herb butter alongside the chef's legendary potato purée (that is, butter purée with a little potato). The carbonara, made with Alsatian bacon and crème fraîche, proved a worthy interpretation of this Italian classic. Feeling carnivorous, I couldn't resist the steak tartare, which turned out to be a particularly rich version, spicy with green peppercorns and served with hand-made crinkle cut fries—25E but worth it.

One of us finished with a plate of very thinly sliced Basque ewe's cheese with cherry jam, passing up a generous-looking plate of three perfectly ripe cheeses. Those with sweet teeth opted for the chartreuse soufflé, dramatically pierced at the table with a spoon and topped with a dollop of sorbet, and the warm chocolate tart, whose crust could have been a little more tender. With a bottle of white Bordeaux Vieilles Vignes and coffees, our bill came to 225E for three—expensive, yes, but a worthwhile occasional indulgence and still slightly more affordable than lunch at a more formal restaurant.

A few days later I found myself at **Pinxo**, Alain Dutournier's Spanish-inspired bistro (Dutournier, who also runs Le Carré des Feuillants, is from the French Basque region near Spain). This inviting modern space is done up in dark wood, granite and black leather with white linen shades that shelter the room from the street. You can sit at the bar and watch the cooks at work or choose a standard table, which is what the group of French wine experts I was accompanying that day preferred. As at L'Atelier, the menu is designed for grazing, and our very friendly waiter encouraged us to choose several different plates and share them.

What actually happened, though—and I imagine this would be the case with most groups of French people who know each other well but not intimately—is that people ordered the dishes they felt like eating and proceeded to eat them, with no further men-

tion of sharing. Dividing up the contents of a plate is not part of the French food culture, and even in Chinese or Indian restaurants in Paris the idea is greeted with suspicion.

As for the food, then, I can only really speak of what I tasted. The crabe royale frais en rouleau vegetal, a kind of spring roll, contained satisfying chunks of crabmeat that tasted delicious with the peanut sauce, but the roll was awkward to eat—too big to pick up with the fingers, yet not very manageable with a knife and fork. Those who ordered the chipirons (a southwestern French word for squid), sautéed with garlic, ginger and chili pepper and served on skewers, devoured them quickly.

The goose breast I chose was beautifully cooked and tender, but the sauce was too sweet and the accompanying cannelloni forestière were unappetizing with their gray filling that shot out of the pasta as I cut into it. I think I was unlucky, though, because everyone else praised their dishes, particularly the lacquered seared tuna with sesame.

Again, one person ordered cheese—deep-fried camembert balls that remind you how guilt-free the French can be about rich food—while the rest chose dessert. The crêpe norvégienne, filled with an eggy cream and doused in Grand Marnier, looked extremely tempting, but I settled for the more original smoked pear with bitter chocolate cake and green tea sorbet. Following the waiter's advice, I put a little bit of each on my spoon with every bite, and the combination was wonderfully intriguing.

My wine-minded dining companions approved of the way the list was pragmatically organized by price (starting at 5E for a glass or 25E for a bottle), and ordered a divine white Saint-Joseph "Lombard" Vieilles Vignes and a smooth Coteaux du Languedoc Pic Saint-Loup. The food prices were similar to L'Atelier's, with slightly bigger portions but a little less refinement. Still, the seating is comfortable, the waiters jovial and the overall experience fun—a minor révolution in itself. Incidentally, both L'Atelier and Pinxo would be fine choices for solo diners, who could feel comfortable ordering just a main dish if they so chose.

•L'Atelier de Joël Robuchon: 5 Rue de Montalembert, 7th. Tel: (1) 42 22 56 56.

•Pinxo: 9 Rue d'Alger, 1st. Tel: (1) 40 20 72 00.

# THE SUPER SCARF

For classic style, an Hermès scarf is the ultimate accessory

Worn as a fluttering shawl, a smooth hair band, a knotted necktie, a rolled necklace, the ubiquitous Hermès silk scarf even appears on lap dogs, and secured over baby carriages. It is a bustier, a belt, a sash, a purse adornment. Yet, despite such prominent sightings, these versatile cloth squares are far from ordinary. It is rare to see the same scarf twice, since there are hundreds of original designs, each in a rainbow of colors. Classics like “Brides de Gala” and “Promenade de Longchamps” tell a romantic story. Contemporary prints such as “Les Zébrés,” five frisky beasts frolicking across a sky blue background, express an attitude. In all cases, the artist signs his or her name in the corner.

Annelys Cangula, a fashion design student visiting from Barcelona, says, “Hermès successfully balances classic style with modern trends. Their scarves appeal because there is a huge variety for all tastes, conservative or bold, young or old.”

Parisian Felicia Dolset, a corporate lawyer, agrees, “There is something new for each season. For me, this is very important. Fashion is dynamic. It should change to reflect the times.” She wears a pearly scarf of orange and yellow, a landscape of trees designed by Catherine Baschet.

For Dolset and many local Hermès followers, a visit to the classy Rue Faubourg-St-Honoré store is a much-anticipated Saturday outing. Salespeople in elegant black suits help customers navigate yellow and white tiled floors to different departments. A wide spiral staircase connects the two floors. Products contained by glass cases are illuminated by bright lights. By mid-morning, the scarf counter at the center of the first floor is crowded with admirers. Scarf shopping is a collective, social activity that transcends generations.

An elderly woman with pearl earrings points out the piece she wishes to see. A saleswoman carefully unfolds it for display. It is impossible not to notice the excitement that accompanies the unveiling of a work of art. She has chosen a light blue scarf printed with multicolored pencils. “Gorgeous,” she says, turning to her daughter. “It matches your eyes. See how it drapes?”

The daughter, studying the scarf’s companion booklet, says, “This one is called ‘A Vos Crayons!’ and is designed by Leigh Cooke. Look at the shavings in the middle.”

“Timeless yet whimsical. This will go with everything,” says the woman, motioning to the cashier.

Nearby, Sophie Leroy, a high school teacher, compares a red and white pattern of flowers to a royal purple forest of fluttering birds. Even with such diversity, it is always possible to identify an Hermès by the weight, gauge and texture of the silk; its characteristic bright colors; and the sharpness of its patterns. These scarves aren’t about labels or price but about how they make their wear-

ers feel: pampered. Each scarf contains sixty-five grams of silk from approximately 250 cocoons. The material is heavy, flawless. Its matte texture paradoxically catches and shimmers in the light.

Leroy expresses the opinion of many enthusiastic customers. She wears a white and gold scarf knotted discreetly around her neck and tucked into the collar of her white coat. Hints of violet and rose bring out her fair complexion. “It makes any outfit elegant. Most importantly, I know I am wearing something of the highest quality. I appreciate the detailing. All four corners are different. The images are crisp and clear.”

Twill silk scarves, which measure thirty-five by thirty-five inches, sell for 245E, a price that she finds appropriate given the care that goes into making them. Each scarf’s life begins at the company’s workshop in Lyon, a city famous for



its silk tradition.

The artist submits his or her design, which is then rendered in gouache, a water-based pigment of crushed chalk, difficult to handle and requiring artistic mastery. Multiple layers are built up to produce different levels of opacity. After the rendering, the silk-screen printing frames are carefully prepared. Each pigment takes two months to be mixed from scratch. The silk is spread on heated tables for a batch of one hundred squares to be printed. A single scarf design can take up to 1,200 hours and can require up to thirty-five silk-screening frames. This painstaking process results in full, luminous palettes. Lastly, each scarf is hand-rolled, a process that takes forty minutes. In total, each new seasonal line takes two years to design and produce.

These scarves are the Paris store’s most popular product, with best sellers harkening back to the company’s roots: a circular arrangement of twelve horses and riders, and a horse and rider composed of flowers and ribbons. Near the entrance, a section devoted to leather saddles and riding whips further alludes to the company’s history.

Hermès was founded by Thierry Hermès in 1837, and first specialized in harnesses and custom-made saddles for the wealthy. It quickly became known for its excellent-quality products and

decorative saddle-stitch. In the 1870s, Thierry’s son Emile-Charles relocated to the Rue du Faubourg-St-Honoré, and branched out into boots, handbags, gloves and other leather goods. His son Emile-Maurice took over in 1922. By this time, horse-drawn carriages were in decline, due to the invention and popularity of the automobile. Adapting to changing high-class needs while maintaining the character of the original company, Emile-Maurice diversified into travel and sport goods, like luggage and ready-made apparel. In the 1930s, he passed the company to his son-in-law, Robert Dumas.

The first Hermès scarf was born under Robert’s direction. Printed with automobile names, it came out to accompany a 1928 collection and met with instant success. In 1937, the company’s centenary, the Lyon factory opened. Since then, it has produced some 25,000 different designs. Forty thousand scarves are manufactured each week. The highest yearly sales record, during the 1980s, was an astounding 1,123,000.

In a city of thriving antique markets, and layered with history, the old is valued as much as the new. Consumers like the idea of supporting a multi-generational French company as much as owning an item that may increase in value with age. There is a large market for secondhand scarves, which can cost upwards of 2,000E for the most coveted, such as the one Grace Kelly once wore as a sling for her broken arm. Dolset says, “An Hermès is an heirloom item. It’s something a family can keep for generations. Husbands give Hermès as anniversary gifts to their wives. Mothers pass on Hermès to their daughters.”

Fashion student Cangula adds yet another observation, “I see more Hermès in a single day in Paris than I’ve ever seen in Spain. The weather in Paris is perfect for wearing a scarf, and if you’re going to wear one anyway, why not choose something fabulous?” She holds up the geometric silver and navy blue scarf she will bring back with her as a memento. “When I look at it, I think of the city, its vibrancy, its stylish citizens.”

The continued popularity of the Hermès scarf expresses a duality in Parisian women. Dora Maar, Picasso’s confident model, was famous for her brilliant red nail polish. Marlene Dietrich was known for her pantsuits, which added to her image as a liberated woman. An historically masculine item, the scarf, inspired by neckerchiefs worn by Napoleon’s soldiers, accomplishes the same goal. It is a combination of these two inherent psychological components that ensures the continued success of the Hermès scarf. Rather than being a mere accessory, it is a symbol of the competent, bold Parisienne.

•Hermès: 24 Rue du Faubourg-St-Honoré, 8th. Tel: 1-40-17-47-17. Open: Mon-Sat 10am-6:30pm. Site: [www.hermes.com](http://www.hermes.com).

—By Whitney Barton

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## A la Carte

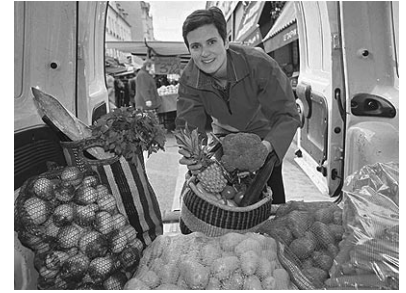
By Paul B. Franklin

It should come as no surprise to we gourmands that one of the fastest growing, most inventive sectors of tourism in Paris today focuses on gastronomy. Laure Maso and her new company, A la Carte, are welcome additions to this increasingly popular market devoted to the cherished traditions of the French table. Proposing both private and group cooking courses as well as guided food excursions around the capital and beyond, A la Carte promises to educate your palate and enrich your own repertoire in the kitchen. Its offerings are made to measure, tailored to fit your particular desires on any occasion and within almost every budget.

With family roots in Alsace and Brittany, thirty-five-year-old Maso began creating in the kitchen as a girl. She gave her first cooking classes to Francophile friends in Albuquerque, where she lived while working on an MBA. After a stint in the world of finance, she decided to pursue her passion for French cuisine and enrolled at the prestigious Ritz-Escoffier cooking school associated with the renowned hotel. Her business savvy and culinary clout enabled her to launch A la Carte last April. Dynamic, down-to-earth and captivating, Maso is also at ease in English. Her philosophy is simple: Preparing good food can and should be convivial and fun. Her objective is modest: To share her love and knowledge of French gastronomy and in the process cultivate the same in her clients.

Weekly thematic cooking workshops (30E/hour per person), like “All About ... Meats,” “Tasting Cheeses” and “Healthy Grains,” are the bread and butter of A la Carte. During these two- to three-hour hands-on sessions for up to six people, Maso will guide you in preparing select recipes, using only the finest ingredients culled from her trusted suppliers all over Paris. Along the way, she will instruct on traditional and contemporary French culinary techniques (in French or English or both, depending on your preference), the proper use of utensils and time management—the keys to any

successful dish. Every class culminates around her table with a tasting or actual meal; thoughtfully chosen wines will augment the elegantly arranged dishes you will have made (her tips regarding food presentation are outstanding). You’ll leave with a full stomach and the recipes to try at home.



For those who prefer a more intimate experience, Maso offers private classes (prices upon request). You and your spouse or friends can gather in her kitchen cum laboratory and delve into whatever suits your fancy. Learn to make the perfect chocolate mousse, the secret to a tasty beef bourguignon or three delectable ways of preparing fresh cod. Maso will assist you in planning the menu and will ensure that your appetite is sated. If you would rather spend your time outside the kitchen, she can propose a number of guided gastronomic tours in Paris or the provinces (beginning at 250E/half day for up to two people). She’ll happily share, for instance, her insider’s knowledge of the many open-air markets throughout the city and will introduce you to some of her favorite merchants and delicacies.

Weekly cooking workshops for children, ages six to fifteen (50E per child for two and a half hours), are one of the most original aspects of A la Carte. “It’s a pleasure to teach kids how to cook, to surprise them when it comes to their likes and dislikes,” she admits. Maso, a mother herself, will nurture your child’s creativity, providing instructive insights along the way.

Whatever you choose from A la Carte’s elaborate menu, you won’t go wrong, and you won’t go hungry.

•Laure Maso’s A la Carte: 104 Rue Oberkampf, 11th. Tel: 6-30-51-97-01. E-mail: info@alacarte-paris.com. Site: www.alacarte-paris.com.

### ▲ PARIS VISITS ▼

## Palais de Tokyo

By Paul B. Franklin

Paris’ museums and their treasures are legion. But many Parisians, especially the cadres of practicing artists, have long lamented the dearth of contemporary art on view around the city. The Palais de Tokyo, towering over the Seine opposite the Eiffel Tower on Avenue du Président-Wilson, is the government’s answer to that cultural conundrum. Inaugurated in January 2002, the Site for Contemporary Arts, as it is known, is not just another museum; it possesses no permanent collection, and one-person exhibitions are anathema. This experimental, multifunctional space has a unique mission: to situate contemporary art in the thick of everyday urban life and establish Paris as one of its hubs. To this end, from noon to midnight every day (except Monday), visitors can experience creations by living artists from the world over in a venue that also hosts numerous other leisure activities. One “goes out” to the Palais de Tokyo just as one goes out to the theater, the movies, a restaurant, a bar, a bookstore or a boutique (all of which happen to be present under its roof).

Erected in 1937 for the Universal Exhibition, the Palais de Tokyo has housed a succession of occupants, each progressively mangling the interior. Architects came to the rescue in 1999, when the Minister of Culture announced the site’s reincarnation. Even though budgetary constraints prohibited a total makeover, the inside was gutted, the ceiling’s concrete girders exposed and walls whitewashed. The final effect is that of a decrepit, cavernous factory edifice, an ideal backdrop for the provocation and playfulness that are contemporary art.

Upon entering, you’ll be struck by the magnitude of the place. The vast main floor is divided into two sections, separated by a cutesy caravan doubling as information booth and ticket kiosk. To the left of it extend a few thousand square meters of open exhibition space. The art installations on display, predominantly multimedia, casually flow in and out

of one another, the absence of physical boundaries exemplifying the Palais’ dedication to inclusiveness. As you take in these aesthetic offerings, don’t be surprised if you encounter a young artist or art history student. Dubbed “médiateurs,” they stand ready to answer your questions about the art.



The Palais’ satellite activities are its true innovation. Its bookstore sells quirky, hard-to-find titles (many in English). Tokyoldem, a self-service café on the lower level, provides basic eats. Chunky, colorful, plastic furniture makes it an inviting hangout, day or night. Graffiti legend Mr. André designed BlackBlock, the onsite boutique where you’ll find a hodgepodge of fun, trendy trinkets. Next door stands TokyoEat, the Palais’ principal attraction after art. This sizable restaurant-bar offers a menu of moderately priced, tasty nouvelle cuisine (main dishes, 17-28E), wines and cocktails (prices vary). Its mod décor brings to mind a James Bond flick. Flying-saucer fixtures hover overhead, flooding the space with pinkish light. Local artists have taken paintbrushes to the collection of classic shell chairs by Charles and Ray Eames (re-editions) that punctuate the tables. A light meal, a glass of red or a bottle of bubbly is a perfect way to begin or end your visit at the Palais. TokyoEat is also a convivial meeting place at the end of a long day, even if you don’t have the stamina for art. A fashionable, arty crowd gathers here after dark on weekends.

While the Palais de Tokyo strives a bit too hard at times to be cutting edge, it promises you—no matter what your take on contemporary art—a novel environment and experience you won’t find elsewhere in Paris.

•Palais de Tokyo: 13 Avenue du Président-Wilson, 16th. Tel: 1-47-23-38-86. Open: Tues-Sun, 12pm-12am. Site: www.palaisdetokyo.com.

# KEEN ON CROISSANTS

Addressing the ongoing debate of who makes the best croissant

Nothing better captures the essence of awakening in Paris than the simple indulgence of a croissant with a café au lait. Whether one is a native Parisian or first-time visitor, this quintessential experience ought never to be taken for granted. Of course, a really wonderful croissant—they're not all created equally—makes the moment even sweeter.

Determining who makes the best croissant in Paris is like deciding who makes the best pastrami sandwich in New York or the best barbecued ribs in Texas—ask a hundred people and you're likely to get nearly that many answers. And because croissants are taken rather seriously by Parisians, regardless of social or economic standing, skilled artisans can become local legends. Even City Hall gets into the act, each year presenting an award to the local boulanger deemed to be the best croissant-maker. Tracking down the champions may provide some insight but certainly doesn't settle the issue. If anything, it simply fuels a debate that's destined to have no conclusive winner.

First, a little history lesson is in order. Although the croissant may be regarded as one of the most classic French pastries, its origins are probably not French at all. According to most authorities, the croissant was originally baked to commemorate a thwarted siege of Vienna—other credible sources suggest Budapest—by the Turks in the late 1600s, thanks to alert bakers working through the night. Its crescent shape mirrors the symbol of Islam and the crescent on the flag of the Ottoman Empire (and modern-day Turkish flag). However, those original croissants likely did not possess the fluffy, buttery qualities—signature French modifications—that today's croissants are cherished for. The current standard (popularized in the beginning of the twentieth century) is now firmly a part of Paris life, and heaven help the unsuspecting boulanger who fiddles with the beloved, time-tested recipe. Legend has it that when Ladurée, the prominent Parisian pâtisserie, attempted to do so, it literally caused a riot.

The awards from the City of Paris, in conjunction with the *Chambre Professionnelle des Artisans Boulangers-Pâtisseries* (an association of artisanal bakers in the region), are presented each May, during the *Fête du Pain* (Festival of Bread). To the winner of this competition—invariably a little-known baker from a modest boulangerie in an outlying arrondissement—comes a fleeting moment of international acclaim, an immediate though not necessarily permanent upturn in business, and bragging rights until the day he dies. The names of most honorees are rarely uttered from the mouths of hungry tourists, but their work has a permanent place in the culinary tradition of the city. Winners must wait three years before attempting to reclaim the crown, thereby ensuring a constant stream of new talent. Some of these champions are worth seeking out, while

others are best left to serve their quiet neighborhoods in relative anonymity. There are so many outstanding boulangers in Paris that it's simply impractical to narrow the field conclusively, but the following represent some of the best among the scores of great croissant-makers.

A pleasant neighborhood boulangerie in the 16th arrondissement called **Le Petit Prince** (56 Boulevard Murat) sells one of the best croissants in town. Located near the Auteuil Race-track and Bois de Boulogne—not a particularly touristy area despite these attractions—Le Petit Prince is home to the 2002 competition winner, Pascal Perrotin. Medium in size, a bit lighter in color than most and as buttery as a croissant can be without soaking a napkin, Perrotin's sensational product is modestly displayed along with his golden baguettes, brioche, rustic sourdough



loaves, éclairs, quiches and apple tarts.

**Boulangerie Connan** (38 Rue des Batignolles, 17th) is better known for its loaves of bread than its croissants. Indeed, the window of the unassuming shop, shaded by a faded green awning, shows off a recent first-place trophy from the City's baguette competition. However, the shop's croissants are equally outstanding. With a medium golden-brown color and delicate flakey texture, they exhibit a nearly perfect butter-to-air quotient. This is a simple neighborhood boulangerie, where the shy Laurent Connan produces a relatively small repertoire of fruit tarts and breads that are as unfussy and straightforward as the little storefront itself. Nearly all customers are from the neighborhood, but any excuse to visit this quiet middle-class quartier demands a stop at Boulangerie Connan.

Not all winners are likely to send you to croissant heaven. Although the 2003 winner was a boulanger from Villecresne, a distant suburb, the runner-up and top finisher among Parisian boulangers was **Philippe Guesdon** (4 Avenue Jean-Jaurès, 19th), who bakes at an unpretentious boulangerie/pâtisserie in a less-than-glamorous neighborhood not far from the Périphérique on the city's northeastern edge. His croissants are certainly respectable, but a bit denser and chewier than is ordinarily desirable, and the obviously lib-

eral application of butter isn't balanced with the desired lightness and flakiness. If this croissant were sold in Chicago or L.A., folks would gladly cross town for a nibble, but it doesn't merit a special trip in Paris.

Any boulangerie with the promising message "La Passion du Bon Pain" embroidered on its awning begs and deserves a visit. And **Boulangerie Malineau** (26 Rue St-Paul, 4th) turns out to be one of the most charming establishments in the Marais, where a wide selection of tarts, sablés, madeleines and breads fills a homey space with blue-and-white tiled walls. Proprietor Hervé Malineau produces one of the better croissants in town, with a delicate texture (despite being a bit more al dente than some others described here) and a beautifully flaky, golden crust. Across town, **Le Palais d'Or** (71 Rue de la Tombe-Issoire, 14th) is an establishment no bigger than a postage stamp but whose reputation for exceptional croissants looms large among knowledgeable Parisians.

Although the joys of discovering an unheralded young boulanger toiling in a nondescript working-class neighborhood cannot be overstated, it must nonetheless be conceded that some larger, more commercial operations produce croissants that are also worth seeking out. One is **Maison Kayser** (8 Rue Monge, 5th), whose shops are found in several Parisian quarters. The always-present line outside the original location is evidence of the popularity of this boulangerie, which carries a wide assortment of rustic-looking loaves (e.g., raisin baguette, sesame baguette, olive bread) fresh from a modern stainless steel oven in the rear of the shop. Kayser's croissant is slightly darker and considerably longer than most, and is extremely light without falling apart in your hands. And while it's plenty rich, you don't feel as if you're ingesting a pound of butter.

Other "chains" offering fine croissants include **Le Grenier à Pain** (52 Avenue d'Italie, 13th) with branches in several arrondissements, and **Au Levain du Marais** (32 Rue de Turenne, 3rd), whose original store is notable for its tasteful burgundy façade and antique stained-glass ceiling. Au Levain du Marais' croissant is characterized by a feather-light texture, although its buttery flavor is understated. Even **La Grande Epicerie de Paris** (38 Rue de Sèvres, 7th), the massive food market at Au Bon Marché department store, produces a relatively sizeable croissant that's very highly regarded. It's sometimes tempting to discount high-volume producers, but nearby **Poilâne** (8 Rue du Cherche Midi, 6th, and other locations) is further evidence that traditional artisanal technique can be preserved in the face of massive demand. One would also be remiss for failing to include some of the city's more celebrated establishments—the likes of Pierre Hermé, Gérard Mulot and Ladurée—among the better croissant-makers in Paris. And although **Jean-Luc Poujauran** (20 Rue Jean-Nicot, 7th) is no longer baking at the charming little boulangerie that bears his name, the croissant sold there—quite light despite an extremely liberal butter content—remains one of the city's best.

—By Roger Grody

upwards of 13,000 round the clock, including hundreds of the famously scurrilous “forts”—bruiser porters who got certified by hauling 440 pounds of freight on a hand-truck across the hangars, about five football fields’ length.

Nowadays, escalators raise you from the dark, joyless RER platforms into a soulless sunken plaza via a laminate of fluorescent-lit corridors. The plaza and its bulging Plexiglas windows look vaguely like outsized Tupperware. Europe’s busiest mall, with 3,000 employees and 160 commercial spaces, it generates nearly \$500 million annually for its private leaseholder, Unibail. That might explain the eagerness of sixties-seventies real estate developers, and the pressure being exerted on Mayor Delanoë today. Reportedly only the FNAC (where I stopped to buy a copy of “Le Ventre de Paris”) and the shops on level minus-3 nearest the RER entrances thrive. Much of the complex is deserted, adding to its gloom.

Despite earnest wishes that it were otherwise, the air proved as caustic as I remembered, perfumed by fries, disinfectants and an eye-stinging stench many mistakenly attribute to sewage. “The Belly of Paris aches,” pundits quip. Some invoke the supernatural: the Places des Innocents cemetery abutted the site. An RATP municipal transit worker once explained to me that the odor comes not from disgruntled, displaced souls, but rather from decomposing limestone, exposed by the “trou.” Long ago, the district was called “Champeaux”—“water-field.”

The Forum des Halles has two parts, the more recent and less hideous to the west. Designed by Paul Chemetov (of the notorious Ministry of Finance building at Bercy), it opened in 1985. According to the understandably embittered architect, interviewed in early 2005 by *Le Journal de Paris*, it will cost the city one hundred million euros just to tear off the Forum’s cement ceiling. How much it would cost (and if it’s possible) to eliminate the stench is unknown. It could be interesting to shop in the supermarket that Mangin would install in reconverted car tunnels beneath Les Halles.

Spend an hour, as I did, navigating the wilted corolla pavilions excited by the long-forgotten Jean Willerval, and then sit in the dog-eared park facing the church of Saint Eustache or the handsome, round eighteenth-century Bourse de Commerce. You may wind up sharing the *New York Times*’ assessment that Les Halles is “the worst of late twentieth-century Modernity, with its tabula rasa approach to history and its penchant for sterile, inhuman spaces.”

The “worst”? To those who suggested in the 1960s that Baltard’s pavilions be re-purposed as Pompidou’s contemporary art museum, and adjacent areas groomed into a “Central Park,” Pompidou retorted, “It would be invaded instantly by 60,000 hippies!”

Pompidou’s visionaries dreamed up the Pompidou Center instead, and strove to erect colossi considerably worse than what we now see. They imagined spaghetti bowl freeways and slug-like skyscrapers rearing their spiky heads. Today’s

“visionaries” seem immune to history’s lessons. Nouvel wanted sleek high-rises with rooftop gardens. Koolhaas planned vividly colored “Popsicle” towers poking up from below to broadcast the fermenting mall’s “energy.” The Dutch firm of MVRDV preferred stained glass expanses judged ludicrous and “un-buildable.”

By contrast, Mangin’s suggestion to raze the corollas and blaze an esplanade from the Bourse de Commerce to a low, glass-covered subterranean atrium seems downright reassuring. In the end, no matter how the remodel is done, the shopping mall and RER station will remain.

Though eager to slip away, I coaxed myself into exploring the car-free district around Les Halles. It’s remarkable how the litter, fast food franchises, down-market souvenir and clothing shops, noise pollution and aggressiveness decrease the farther from the complex you get. Other than a few pleasing architectural details, the strongest reminders of pre-Pompidou days are Irma La Douce and her many sisters. They’ve plied their trade around the Rue St-Denis for centuries. A pest-control specialist from rat-infested times, and a handful of cafés, did survive the wrecker’s ball. Like Baltard’s pavilion in Nogent-sur-Marne, most vintage storefronts are bleached bones in a wasteland. Au Père Tranquille on Rue Pierre-Lescot facing Les Halles’ mirrored facade may be an exception.

Once upon a time, market workers and slumming partygoers would sup night and day on the café’s “fine, pungent onion soup,” as Evelyn Waugh noted in early 1929. Cheap and warming, onion soup was the ideal fast food and hang-over cure. Au Père Tranquille still has the requisite broken-tile floors, (faux) cane chairs and puffing poseurs of market days, and even occasionally the onion soup. From a tiny round table I observed a kaleidoscope of Les Halles adolescents, and wondered how much they knew of the site’s historical, literary and political significance.

It’s hard to evoke watery Champeaux, the medieval pilgrimage route of Rue St-Denis, or the succession of marketplaces that operated here, starting with King Louis VI’s stalls of 1137. There’s no trace, either, of Emperor Philippe Auguste’s walled market compound from 1183. Of François I’s Renaissance market arcades (built from 1534 to 1572), only photographic evidence remains. That’s because, in keeping with tradition, Emperor Napoleon III toppled them in his seismic Second Empire redesign of the district from 1852 to 1856. Did Parisians protest then? I wondered.

Baltard’s much-bereaved pavilions, conceived at the behest of Paris Prefect Rambuteau in 1848, account for a little over one-eighth of the market district’s nine-hundred-year history. But they were—by all accounts, especially Zola’s—magnificent to look at. Today’s Forum seems neutered; by contrast, the market’s energy was dizzying.

How many still read “Le Ventre de Paris” cover to cover, I asked myself, riffling the pages of this 1873 tome, part of the Rougon-Macquart saga. When the notoriously shortsighted Zola first stumbled upon Les Halles one sleepless night in 1869, he found “all the blossoming poetry of Paris’ streets on the muddy sidewalk amid Les Halles’

edibles.” But as any French high school student knows, “The Belly of Paris” is no facile ode. The novel’s ambivalent hero Florent, mistakenly incarcerated on Devil’s Island as a revolutionary rioter during the coup d’état that brought Napoleon III to power in 1851, discovers upon his return in 1856 the then-new Les Halles. Hemmed in by menacing cartloads of carrots, mountains of cabbages and piles of potatoes, Florent is swept along by the raucous crowd, slipping on greasy sidewalks and discarded artichoke leaves in a horrifying cornucopia.

Like Zola himself, Florent is fascinated by the architecture and life of Les Halles—“the luminous, polished transparency” of the panes flooded with dawn’s light, the “slender herringbone pillars, the elegant curves of the woodwork ceiling, the geometric outlines of the roofs.” In the pavilion’s vaulted cellars Florent discovers Champeaux’s secret waters flowing into giant urns and tanks full of live fish. In the bright, prosperous charcuterie where he works, Florent is mesmerized by the abundance of hams, sausages, salami, lard and other fatty, greasy, slippery delicacies, and he becomes increasingly obsessed by the corresponding plumpness and carnivorous contentment of the men and women around him—examples of a budding consumerist economy.

The smell of the charcuterie, of Les Halles themselves, becomes intolerable, however. Florent develops chronic indigestion from the stench. The book’s “belly” is no mere organ—it’s a metaphor for the mouth, stomach and burgeoning bowels of the Second Empire’s nouveaux riches, for bodily functions, for the disquieting alimentary realities of bourgeois existence. As the novel closes, the tormented Florent battles nightmarish imaginings of “giant vats, the vile rendering cauldrons where the fat of a nation was melted down.”

I left Au Père Tranquille smoked like a ham and troubled by Zola’s words, reflecting that it was perhaps this kind of unsentimental view of Les Halles that had animated Pompidou and his speculator-sanitizers. From the 1940s on, succeeding administrations had threatened to remove the wholesale market, decried as unsanitary, overcrowded, rat-infested, the cause of traffic jams and a drag on the economy. Some officials openly regretted the fact that central Paris—Les Halles in particular—had not been destroyed in World War Two. The first official eviction notice was issued in 1958. More than a decade later, the lure of potential profits from Rungis, the RER and the Forum, not to mention the thrill of seeing a bright, new Pompidou Center rise from a remade neighborhood, became irresistible. I realized now why Baltard’s pavilions had to go, and why Pompidou exiled the one survivor to a Belle Epoque theme park far away. The pavilions were a threat: had they been preserved on site they might have become a rallying point for the “rioters,” “communists” and “hippies” Pompidou feared.

A final, comforting thought ushered me home to the pre-modern Marais. Based on past performance, whatever Les Halles’ next incarnation is, it’ll be a long time coming. In the meantime, I’ll be re-reading Zola. I might even pick up a DVD of Irma La Douce—and a huge tub of popcorn.

PICK OF THE MONTH

**Trash Art**

This exposition, appropriately named "Dionysiac," is interesting for those who wish to consider the place of "Art" in our lives today: what it means to us, what we expect of it and how we relate to it—and whether we ask for beauty or a political statement. Fourteen artists (including Richard Jackson, Keith Tyson, Maurizio Cattelan and Fabrice Hyber) present their work—for you to judge. •Centre Pompidou. Until May 9. Site: [www.centrepompidou.fr](http://www.centrepompidou.fr).

ON THIS MONTH

**Visions of Beauty**

Sixteenth- or seventeenth-century Italian drawings (including those of Taddeo Zucarro, 1529-1566; Federico Barocci, 1535-1612; and Cecco Bravo, 1601-1661) and contemporary works (by John Cage, Markus Raetz, Andy Warhol, et al.) seem to have very little in common; that is, until we look closely at them as shown side-by-side at this two-part expo organized by the Louvre and the Centre Pompidou. •Musée du Louvre, Salle de la Chapelle and the Centre Pompidou, Galerie d'Art Graphique. Until May 16. Sites: [www.centrepompidou.fr](http://www.centrepompidou.fr), [www.louvre.fr](http://www.louvre.fr).

**Mario Giacomelli**

Stark black-and-white photographs of incongruously carefree monks dancing, weary peasants and scenes from the Italian countryside. "Métamorphoses": 165 incredibly lovely photos. •Bibliothèque Nationale, 58 Rue de Richelieu, 2nd. Until April 30. Site: [www.bnf.fr](http://www.bnf.fr).

**Richard Lindner**

This expo, called "Adults-only," pays homage to Richard Lindner (1901-1978). Bold colors and intense sensuality mark the work of the "spiritual father of Pop Art." •Musée de la Vie Romantique. Until June 16. Site: [www.paris.fr/musees](http://www.paris.fr/musees).

**Ann Hamilton**

The Maison Rouge, a new exposition space dedicated to innovative contemporary art and installations (see PN, Feb 2004), opens with the work of an American artist, Ann Hamilton (who

represented the U.S. at the Venice Biennial in 1999). A very promising beginning. •La Maison Rouge-Fondation Antoine de Galbert. Until May 22. Site: [www.lamaisonrouge.org](http://www.lamaisonrouge.org).

**Painters as Photographers**

Eighty photos by Carabin, Emile Gallé, Bonnard, Mucha and other painters from the museum's collection, taken in their studios. Artists tended to have eclectic groups of visitors pass by. These shots are both posed and "live." •Musée d'Orsay, 7th. Until May 15. Site: [www.musee-orsay.fr](http://www.musee-orsay.fr).

**Sartre**

This exceptional expo of videos, photographs and manuscripts, as well as paintings by his friends, pays homage to the life and work of the philosopher, novelist, playwright and political-activist Jean-Paul Sartre—one of the most influential thinkers of the twentieth century. •Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Grande Galerie. Until Aug 21. Site: [www.bnf.fr](http://www.bnf.fr).

**Robert Wilson**

On display are Wilson's original costume designs for the "Fables de la Fontaine," created for the current Comédie Française production. •Fondation Pierre Bergé-Yves Saint-Laurent, 1 Rue Léonce-Reynaud, 16th. Until July 24. Site: [www.ysl-hautecouture.com](http://www.ysl-hautecouture.com).

**Romanesque France, 987-1152**

This is the first major expo of Romanesque art in France. An exceptional grouping of reliquary statues, illuminated manuscripts, precious objects and ivories from the mid-tenth to the mid-twelfth centuries. •Musée du Louvre. Until June 6. Site: [www.louvre.fr](http://www.louvre.fr).

**Neo-Impressionism: From Seurat to Paul Klee**

In 1886 Seurat and Signac exhibited their first pointillist paintings and influenced both Pissarro and the younger generation: Van Gogh, Dubois-Pillet and Charles Angrand. This expo, following the different branches of the movement down to German Expressionism and Italian Futurism, also marks the centenary of Fauvism. •Musée d'Orsay. Until July 10. Site: [www.musee-orsay.fr](http://www.musee-orsay.fr).

**Jules Verne**

A joyous celebration of the life and work of Jules

Verne. •Musée de la Marine, Palais de Chaillot, 16th. Until Aug 29. Site: [www.musee-marine.fr](http://www.musee-marine.fr).

**Matisse: A Second Life**

Works from Matisse's last period (1941-1954). Exhibitions organized by the Musée du Luxembourg have become very popular; reservations are suggested (can be made at the website). •Musée du Luxembourg, 6th. Until July 17. Site: [www.museeduluxembourg.fr](http://www.museeduluxembourg.fr).

**Brazil**

This expo of the arts and crafts of the Amerindians of Brazil is just part of the many events organized during the City's "Year of Brazil." •Grand Palais. Until June 27. Site: [www.bresilbresils.org](http://www.bresilbresils.org).

**Bacon and Picasso**

Paintings by Francis Bacon and Picasso have been selected to show Picasso's influence on Bacon's work. Major works from the Musée Picasso, the Musée National d'Art Moderne, the Tate Gallery, the Moderna Museet and the Fondation Beyeler. •Musée Picasso. Until May 30. Site: [www.musee-picasso.fr](http://www.musee-picasso.fr).

**29th Annual Paris Marathon**

The race starts at 8:45am on the Champs-Élysées, heads east across the city and then back west. Over thirty thousand runners are expected, including about a thousand Americans. •April 10. Site [www.parismarathon.com](http://www.parismarathon.com).

**Poussin, Watteau, Chardin, David...**

French painters from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. •Grand Palais, 8th. April 20-Aug 1. Site: [www.rmn.fr](http://www.rmn.fr).

COMING SOON

**101st Foire de Paris**

A weird and wonderful expo of all the latest French inventions. •Porte de Versailles. May 12-22. Site: [www.foiredeparis.fr](http://www.foiredeparis.fr).

**French Tennis Open**

The annual event to see and be seen at—and to watch a little tennis, too. •Roland Garros Stadium. May 23-June 5. Site: [www.frenchopen.org](http://www.frenchopen.org).

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