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 Travel Guide
 Forty Somethings

PARIS

n o t e s

Euro Nov 10: .776
 Euro Oct 13: .810
 Rain Days: 16
 High Temp: 44°F/7°C
 Low Temp: 36°F/2°C
 Nat'l Holidays: Dec 25, Jan 1

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JUST FOR KICKS

By Vivian Thomas

High-kicking fun at Paris' fabled cabaret shows continues—the Moulin Rouge, Lido and Crazy Horse

It's too bad that the fabled Folies Bergère closed its cabaret show before Baz Luhrmann's film "Moulin Rouge" proved to be such a surprise hit. Although set in a rival cabaret, the film sparked such interest in the venerable feathers-and-bare-breasted-beauties shows that it brought a whole new crowd to the cabaret scene.

"We've seen a definite change in our audience," a spokesperson for the Moulin Rouge said when asked about the film's impact. "The show is attracting younger people now, in addition to our regular crowd."

I had first-hand proof of this recently when my 25-year-old niece from Maryland visited me here in Paris. Unsure what her reaction would be when I asked if she'd like to go to the Moulin Rouge, I was delighted to discover that she was thrilled. A fan of the film, she'd even checked out the Moulin Rouge website before her trip, and decided that her grad-student budget wouldn't stretch that far. But what else are aunts in Paris for?

So off we went, Susie and I, to the Boulevard de Clichy, joining the crowd swarming under the red rooftop windmill. Although I'd seen several Las Vegas shows, I'd never been to a Paris cabaret, so neither of us knew quite what to expect when we entered the former haunt of Toulouse-Lautrec and home of the legendary cancan.

We'd come for the 9pm show, and found the showroom and its tiered white-clothed tables almost filled with patrons who'd just finished the 7pm pre-show dinner. Sipping our champagne, we admired the showroom, which, with its tree trunks hung with lanterns and striped awning, is built to resemble an outdoor "palais de danse."

Then the lights went down and the curtain went up to reveal a romantic garden setting, with mist rising, a light-trimmed gazebo and a stage full of couples swirling in a ballroom dance made cabaret worthy with some great high kicks. For this opening number, "The Moulin Rouge Today, Yesterday, and Forever," the Doriss Girls, named for original ballet mistress Doris Haug,

wore tiaras, long white gloves, floor-length white skirts trimmed with floaty feathers and, above them, strands of sparkly beads through which bare breasts peeked.

From the beginning, we were entranced. The current show, "Féerie," has four main tableaux with 17 colorful sets, each one a sumptuous feast for the eyes. And the costumes alone are worth the price of admission. In one scene, the girls appeared enclosed in globes of red feathers, with only their heads and long legs visible. After cavorting a while as feathery red balls, they flung out their arms, transforming the globes



into trailing skirts and revealing sequin-spangled bare torsos.

Another tableau was an Oriental fantasy, starting with a pirate ship (with sexy female pirates in huge plumed hats, thigh-high boots, wide leather belts and little else). A love story threaded through the scenes; it involved British officers, a princess, priestesses, a Gorgon with snakes for hair and a statuesque blonde who swam with four live pythons in a giant aquarium that rose from beneath the stage. At one point we looked up to find magic carpets floating in mid-air to the left and right of the stage, with the male and female leads singing to each other above our heads (later in the show they reappeared up there, this time riding little Eiffel Towers).

A circus tableau included a string of adorable miniature ponies paraded across the stage by long-legged dancer-jockeys. And between the big numbers, some excellent front-of-the-curtain acts included acrobats and a multilingual performer who used audience members in the funniest ventriloquist act I've ever seen.

But for me, the highlight of the show was the cancan. As the red windmill trimmed with lights turned in the background, dancers ran out in an excited rush of ruffles and plumes, and suddenly we were in the Moulin Rouge of 1900. Lifted skirts and high kicks galore revealed fishnet stockings, ribboned garters and ruffled panties, in an incredibly fast-paced, acrobatic dance with lots of cartwheels, jumps, splits and yelling. It looks improvised, although it's not, and everyone claps to the music, onstage and off.

That's when, just for a moment, past and present mingled. While it may be hard to imagine just how risqué the Quadrille (as it was called then) was when the Moulin Rouge opened in 1889, it was easy for me to picture a bearded Toulouse-Lautrec sketching on a bar stool, a glass of absinthe at his elbow. There was no stage then—dancers ran into the middle of the room and their well-aimed kicks often sent top hats flying off the heads of delighted gentlemen.

The most famous dancers, like La Goulue and Jane Avril, danced the Quadrille solo, with two other girls or with the famous male dancer Valentin le Désossé (Valentin the Boneless). Dubbed the "French Cancan" by a music hall owner who tried it out in Britain, it was quickly banned there, instantly increasing its notoriety in Paris.

Dancers weren't topless then, although contemporary accounts show that kicks and cartwheels often revealed a lack of other underwear. Not all of today's dancers are topless, either. The program lists the 60 Doriss Girls as either "danseuses" or "danseuses nues." And male dancers, aside from the occasional bared chest, are completely covered up, al- (continued on page 7)

Dear Jacques, I am the publisher of a small (although well-known among Francophiles in the U.S.) newsletter about Paris. I am writing to ask for a favor. Since about two years ago, sales have been down—do I need to explain why? Anyway, I know the elections in the U.S. didn't exactly turn out as you'd hoped, but now that it's a done deal, maybe it's time for you and George to kiss and make up (in the interest of compromise, just one kiss on the cheek—the right). I need you guys to be friends so I can sell more subscriptions.

I mean, things are really getting better. We're not pouring French wine into gutters anymore and there were no demonstrations in the streets of Paris after the elections—none related to the elections, at least. Hey, that's a start, isn't it?

You know, I never quite understood why you and George never got along. You guys are alike in many ways. You are both Conservatives and few thought you'd ever become president. You both have lovely wives. Both of you spend a lot of time at your country homes. You both love working the ropes—and you're both good at it. You both are confident and determined, and can get things done (remember, they used to call you "the bulldozer"). And you both can be stubborn, which, I'll grant you, is not necessarily a bad thing when you're leading a country.

So, please, work with me. I'm doing my best to sell your country. Now, it's your turn. Call George and do your part to settle this little rift. I think you'll find he's ready to talk. In the meantime, I know you would like to join me in wishing all my readers—who love your country—a very happy holiday. My best to Bernadette.

—Mark Eversman, Editor
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Paris Live Radio

With an estimated 500,000 English-speaking people in the greater Paris metropolitan area, surely there is a demand for English-speaking radio. Richard Booth, general manager of Paris Live Radio, agrees. In May, Paris Live Radio went live from its new studios in the 18th arrondissement. While the station is promising to start broadcasting on AM radio soon, for now, PLR is an Internet radio-show stream that can be accessed from its website (www.parislive.fm). To bring a little of Paris into your home, just go to the website and click on the button that says "On Air." The online show is an eclectic mix of music, talk, interviews and news—all with a Paris edge and an international appeal. It's a great dose of Paris from afar. In fact, we're listening to it as we write. Booth estimates that the station's audience is around 30,000, which is attracting a growing list of marketers who are searching for an Anglophone audience.

Cardin's Collection

Couturier Pierre Cardin, 82, is known throughout the world for his clothing designs and his ability to sell them. But he is also the owner of Maxim's de Paris, a famous turn-of-the-century restaurant in Paris (3 Rue Royale, 8th, www.maxims-de-paris.com), which he bought in 1981 (the Maxim's brand includes 18 principal restaurants worldwide, including a boat restaurant, 50 bistros, 800 licensed products and a Paris hotel). For the last 60 years Cardin has been collecting Art Nouveau objects all over the world; his collection is one of the best anywhere. And, now, in his twilight, he has decided to bring together his collection and put it on display on the third and fourth floors of Maxim's. Christened Musée Maxim's in October, the new exhibition space will evoke the great moments of the Belle Epoque by recreating the apartment of a typical "courtesane," and, in particular, her "chambre d'amour." Cardin also hopes to host special temporary Art Nouveau exhibitions. Guided tours of Musée Maxim's are available Tue-Sun, 9:30am-4pm.

New Champs Turns 10

Ten years after a 37M-euro renovation, the new Champs-Élysées is now the second most expensive (in terms of real estate) street in the world; it's behind New York's 5th Avenue (according to a survey called "Main Streets Across the World 2004," by Cushman & Wakefield Healey & Baker). A square meter of space on the Champs averages 6,287E per year versus 8,406E on 5th Avenue. The renovation by architect Bernard Huet and designer Jean-Michelle Wilmotte sparked an economic and architectural boom that has

entirely changed the Champs' face, ambiance and pedestrian makeup. About a mile long and 330 feet wide, the Champs now attracts 300,000 people per day (500,000 on the weekends), which brings the annual total to 100 million per year. It is lined with well-kept trees, and its skating-rink-wide sidewalks are paved with grey cobblestones that make for pleasant strolling and people watching. Soon, a new 200-suite "palace" hotel, Fouquet's Palace, will open above the legendary Fouquet's café, which should up the limo-and-poodle traffic. While fast-food restaurants on the Champs still flourish, many chic stores have learned to coexist with them. Recently Vuitton moved in, followed by Cartier. It has become a fact in Paris that if you really want to be somebody, you've got to have a store on the Champs. But few can afford it. Air France's flagship bureau has left; so has the Paris Bureau of Tourism—both longtime residents. There were 17 cinemas 10 years ago; now there are seven. While "the most beautiful street in the world," as it has been dubbed, evolves, it is doing so with growing pains.

Smoke Free

A lot of people who love Paris, and love to eat in its famed restaurants, hate smoke. This often presents a difficult dilemma: eat where you want, but suffer the smoke. Several years ago, the City passed a law that required all restaurants and cafés to have no-smoking areas. But more than not, these areas are small, in the worst part of the establishment and not far enough from the smoking areas, so they aren't really smoke free. Help for smoke-haters may soon be on the way. The City is now backing a voluntary "federation" of eating establishments that are declaring themselves 100 percent no-smoking (there are about 100 such places out of 12,000 in the city; you can find a list of them at this website: www.smokefreeplaces.net/en/FR/75/75000). The City has designed a distinctive sticker that says: "Ici, C'est 100 Percent Sans Tabac" (Here, It's 100 Percent Tobacco Free), and it's to be stuck on entrance windows so passersby can easily see it. The sticker shows a cartoon person, arms spread wide, breathing deep on a blue background. Eventually, the City will list smoke-free restaurants in a brochure published by the Paris Office of Tourism, and it will post the list on the bureau's website (www.paris-touristoffice.com). Parisians might not be as opposed to the smoke-free trend as we Americans think. Interestingly, in a recent study by the Alliance Contre le Tabac, 72 percent of French people said they would be open to curtailing all (continued on page 8)

• PARIS •
B I T E S
By Rosa Jackson



People often ask me whether I think Paris restaurants are still the best in the world. Much as I would love to come up with the definitive sound bite, the truth is that I can't answer, since for incomprehensible reasons no one has yet sent me on a comparative, continent-hopping tasting. From my limited experience, I can say that it's hard to imagine anything better than crisp-skinned roast goose at Sham Tseng Yue Kee Roast Goose restaurant in Hong Kong; sushi at 7am next to the fish market in Tokyo; a giant cinnamon bun at the High Level Diner in my hometown of Edmonton, Canada; freshly caught barracuda in Kerala, India; or handmade tortelloni just about anywhere in the Italian province of Emilia Romagna. Unless, perhaps, it's a meal cooked by Alain Solivèrès at **Taillevant**.

I have had the good fortune, or should I say duty, of eating at Taillevant not once but three times in the last four years—each time with a different chef at the helm. Thoroughly enjoyable as the first two meals were, they were memorable more for the overall experience than the excellent but rather tame food. This time, however, the food very nearly overshadowed all the other decadent aspects of a meal here.

The spacious and rather subdued front room, where I had sat during my previous meals, seemed to be reserved on this occasion for men of a certain age and what appeared to be their mistresses—whether or not you have a wedding ring, this room with its well-spaced tables is ideal for seduction. Visiting with my old friend L.—perhaps the only woman ever to pull up to Taillevant on a moped—I was pleased to be led through to the livelier second room, feeling I had been let into the “inner circle.” Seated side-by-side, as in a café, we were perfectly placed to observe and gossip in a room filled with French businesspeople, Japanese foodies and the occasional English-speaker. Earth-toned contemporary paintings bring an understated modern touch to the otherwise classic dining room, with wood-paneled walls and cushy brown banquettes.

Both of us were given menus with prices, which here are not as shocking as in some restaurants at this level—with a bottle of wine at 64E (more on that later), some mineral water and two coffees, our bill came to 300E. It's undeniably a lot of money, but here it feels justified by the quality of the food and service. Another tempting option was the

six-course tasting menu for 130E, which we declined, fearing sensory overload.

In a bid to waltz through, not stagger out of, the restaurant, L. ordered light, starting with the *rémoulade de coquilles Saint-Jacques*. This dish turned out to have been introduced the previous day, and the slightly flirtatious but always gallant waiters were eager to see our reaction. It was quite a technical feat, with slices of raw, marinated scallop wrapped in a tube shape around a finely diced apple filling, all of it encircled by a mayonnaise-like *rémoulade sauce*. Decorating the plate were paper-thin slices of beet, curls of white radish and pretty Chinese chive flowers. I ordered an earthier dish, the chef's trademark *épeautre*—an obscure Provençal grain called *einkorn* in English—cooked “like a risotto” with bone marrow, black truffle, whipped cream and Parmesan cheese, and topped with sautéed frogs' legs (the curious cooks among you can look up the recipe on the Taillevant website). What can I say about this dish except that I very nearly picked up the plate and licked it clean? “I see you didn't enjoy your dishes, mesdames,” said the waiter with mock seriousness as he picked up our sparkling plates.

To match her starter, L. ordered a whole pan-fried red mullet that again was typical of Solivèrès' southern-influenced cooking (he is from the Languedoc but worked in Provence before coming to Paris). The fish had been completely deboned—no mean feat with a red mullet—and stuffed with a spider crab filling, allowing L. to savor the crab's delicate flavor without actually having to wrestle the beast. I couldn't resist the chef's recreation of a medieval dish by none other than Guillaume Tirel, the chef known as Taillevant in the 14th century. Dating from 1360, it's called *Caillette de porcelet aux épices et raisins de Malaga*. A round sausage no doubt containing some “offal” bits of the pork, the *caillette* was boldly spiced, a reminder of the liberal use of spices in medieval French kitchens. It came with two beautifully juicy little pork chops, all perched atop a mound of caramelized cabbage and Puy lentils. Again I lapped it all up.

We passed on cheese to give desserts their due, and since none on the list jumped out at me, L. chose both. I might not have picked the *Ravioli au chocolat araguani*, but it was perhaps the most surprising and wonderful thing I have tasted this year: pillowy pockets of soft chocolate pasta that explode in the

What can I say about this dish except that I very nearly picked up the plate and licked it clean?

mouth, releasing liquid bitter chocolate. Less spectacular but also outstandingly good was a simple caramelized pear with cinnamon, served with paper-thin slices of crisp pear.

I nearly forgot to mention the wine, but the young sommelier's suggestion of a white 1998 Haute Côtes de Nuit from Domaine A. Gros was part of what made this meal so pleasurable. Through hard experience, I have learned that if you want to keep costs down (that is, under 400E) at this type of restaurant, it's wise to skip *apéritifs*, especially champagne, and order wine by the bottle rather than the glass. Taillevant has one of the most extensive cellars in France, if not the world (it also runs the *Caves Taillevant*), but the wine list is not intimidating and is quite reasonably priced, and the sommeliers are respectful of whatever budget you might have.

An article about Taillevant would not be complete, either, without a mention of the owner and impeccable host Jean-Claude Vrinat, who is largely responsible for the restaurant's 30-year run as a Michelin-three-star restaurant. As always (or nearly always), he was there keeping an eagle eye on the whole proceedings, and graciously signed a menu for us to keep. We left in such a good mood (partly thanks to the wine) that a walk up and down the Champs-Élysées was necessary before L. could zoom off on her moped into the sunset.

So are French restaurants the best in the world? If you're looking for a luxury experience, Taillevant certainly delivers with a *panache* that's hard to beat. If I have even one meal as good as this one in 2005, I'll be delighted. Until February, *bon appétit* and *bonne année!*

•Taillevant: 15 Rue Lamennais, 8th. Tel: 1-44-95-15-01. Site: www.taillevant.com.

Rosa Jackson's Edible Paris: Our own Rosa Jackson now has a Paris restaurant reservation service to complement her custom-designed food itineraries service. For as many meals as you like, she will provide personalized recommendations (a particular specialty, kind of place, chef, etc.) and, if you wish, make your reservations. The cost is \$15 per recommendation, or \$25 for a recommendation and reservation. You can get in touch with Rosa by going to her Edible Paris website (www.edible-paris.com).

FIREBIRD'S FIREBRAND

Stravinsky caused a scandal when his "The Rite of Spring" opened

It looked so easy. Stravinsky had in fact even called this little suite of piano duets "Three Easy Pieces." So while my husband took on the bass part, I confidently undertook the treble.

That was when I began to understand the reaction that even professional musicians had almost a century ago when they first encountered Stravinsky's scores: laughter and disbelief, then outright dismay. And that didn't even come close to the audience's response. The scandal that "The Rite of Spring" caused on its opening night in Paris, in 1913, is legendary. Long after, Stravinsky clearly remembered the catcalls and protest, which drove him from the hall.

Not surprisingly, Igor Stravinsky had always felt misunderstood. The third of four sons born to a respectable St Petersburg family with connections to minor nobility, Stravinsky later described his childhood as unbearable. True, his father seems to have had a nasty temper, and his parents clearly preferred their taller and more handsome eldest son. But young Igor's life was not one of hardship. He wasn't even deprived of music. His father was a well-known opera singer who acquainted him with the world of music, and his parents gave him piano lessons.

Still, he certainly wasn't understood or appreciated—by his parents or by virtually anyone else in St Petersburg. That is, except for the great composer Rimsky-Korsakov, who privately tutored him, and a quiet and perceptive first cousin, Katya, whom Stravinsky eventually married. Recognition would first come from Paris, where young Stravinsky almost immediately became a star. His passport to fame was a colorful fellow-Russian by the name of Sergei Diaghilev, founder of the Ballets Russes who desperately needed a score for a new ballet scheduled for his 1910 Paris season. Taking a chance on Stravinsky, Diaghilev was rewarded with "The Firebird."

Stravinsky was 27 when he first saw Paris from the arrival platform of the Gare du Nord. He couldn't have been more excited. It was springtime, and fame lay just around the corner. He immediately joined in rehearsals for "The Firebird," which was about to appear at the Opéra, and quickly found himself in the company of like-minded companions, including Claude Debussy, Maurice Ravel, Erik Satie, Manuel de Falla, André Gide and Jean Cocteau, as well as the Ballets Russes team. Eventually, he would also work closely with Pablo Picasso. It was a heady experience, especially after "The Firebird" completely dazzled its audience, as Diaghilev had predicted.

Despite Paris' allure, Stravinsky was reluctant to pull up roots from his beloved Russia, and so he still was a visitor—albeit a far more knowledgeable one—when he returned to Paris the following spring for the opening of his second ballet, "Petrouchka." This time, he bunked with composer Maurice Delage in Auteuil, at 3 Rue de Civry

(16th). His new ballet appeared at the Théâtre du Châtelet, with Nijinsky playing the title role. And just as with his "Firebird" music, Stravinsky had a major hit.

Two out of two. Was it too much to go for three? Diaghilev certainly didn't think so, and scheduled "The Rite of Spring" for the opening of the new Théâtre des Champs-Élysées (13 Avenue Montaigne, 8th) in the spring of 1913. Perhaps Stravinsky should have anticipated trouble. After all, members of the orchestra had burst out laughing when they first saw the "Petrouchka" score, and the music for "The Rite of Spring" was even more



daunting. But afterwards, Stravinsky claimed to have been stunned by the audience's response.

Of course the costumes and choreography were not for the faint of heart (in his conversations with Robert Craft, Stravinsky later described the opening scene as a "group of knock-kneed and long-braided Lolitas jumping up and down"). But it was the music's raw rhythms and harsh dissonances that sent the audience into riot mode. One man frantically pounded the head of the hapless gentleman in front of him, while catcalls howled throughout the hall. "Shut your trap!" Stravinsky heard someone yell, while someone else hollered, "Shut up, strumpets of the 16th!"—a boggling put-down of all those proper upper-crust attendees from the 16th arrondissement.

Furious, Stravinsky left the hall and went backstage, where things were little better. Nijinsky, who had choreographed the ballet, was standing on a chair and shouting out the beat—in Russian—to the dancers, in the hope that they could hear him, if not the music, above the din. And throughout it all, the conductor, Pierre Monteux, imperturbably marched on, calmly bringing the orchestra to its destination. Afterwards, Diaghilev, who recognized the value of this kind of publicity, was ecstatic. And within a year, the concert-goers of Paris were able to listen to a repeat performance with complete equanimity. But in the meantime, however uncomfortably, history had been made. And Stravinsky was at the center of it.

Unfortunately, fame did not necessarily guarantee fortune, and the outbreak of war dried up commissions and curtailed performances. The end

of war revived his fortunes, but the Bolshevik Revolution had sent a mass of White Russians flying to the West. These included a large number of Stravinsky's relations, who were even more impoverished than he, and dependent on his help. He would support most of them for the rest of their lives.

Stravinsky now added concert tours to his repertoire, conducting his own orchestral works and playing his own piano solos (he premiered his "Piano Concerto" at the Paris Opéra in 1924 and his concerto-like "Capriccio" at the new Salle Pleyel in 1929). He was a regular at the salon of the American sewing machine heiress, the Princesse Edmond de Polignac (Winnaretta Singer), a loyal friend and supporter who provided financial backing at critical moments. He also recorded extensively and, in the 1920s, produced a number of piano rolls for Pleyel, the French piano manufacturer. A sharp negotiator who constantly claimed that he was being taken to the cleaners, Stravinsky ended up becoming a wealthy man.

He needed to, because by this time he had four children plus a large number of relatives to support. He insisted on a country life for his family for health reasons, but this arrangement undeniably gave him the freedom to carry on a number of affairs, including a brief fling with Coco Chanel and a lasting relationship with Vera Sudeykina (whom he married in 1940, after his wife's death).

In 1934, though, Stravinsky at last brought his family to Paris, where they moved into a large apartment at 125 Rue Faubourg St-Honoré (8th). Here, he expected that they all would thrive, and he signaled that he had at last put down roots by taking out his French citizenship. By this time he was composing in a more austere neo-classical style. He had also renewed his interest in religion and wholeheartedly embraced the Russian Orthodox Church. The nearby Russian cathedral of St-Alexandre-Neveski (12 Rue Daru, 8th) now played an important part in his life.

But illness continued to stalk his family, and within five years, his wife, mother and eldest daughter all died. Unable to continue living at this address—or even in France—Stravinsky left for America just as war was breaking out. Here he would live the rest of his long and highly productive life, eventually becoming an American citizen.

Yet he never forgot Paris, nor could he forget Sergei Diaghilev, that staunch friend and backer from those heady Paris days. In life, quarrels divided them, but in death, Stravinsky chose to be buried near Diaghilev, who had died in Venice. Together, they had reshaped the course of 20th-century dance and music, and these two cosmopolitan Russians now quietly rest together in the peaceful cemetery island of San Michele.

•Note: Don't miss the whimsical Stravinsky Fountain in Place Igor-Stravinsky (shown), 4th, adjoining the Pompidou Center. Designed by Jean Tinguely and Niki Saint Phalle as a tribute to Stravinsky's music, the sculpture with the flaming crown is the Firebird.

—By Mary McAuliffe

Image Building

By Ellen McBreen

The Jeu de Paume—former shrine to Impressionist painting—is once again featuring art that captures the elusive nature of light. In June 2004, this elegant building off the Place de la Concorde reopened as a venue for photography and its related media. Its long narrow space, originally designed as an indoor tennis (jeu de paume) court, has proven to be surprisingly flexible, its galleries as open and luminous as the images on its walls.

A cultural institution is shaped more by the vision of its leaders, however, than by its physical plant. Régis Durand will serve as Jeu de Paume Director through 2007. His curatorial mission is to break down boundaries, to loosen up the purist distinction between fine art photography and its many others: publicity, fashion and documentary images. This was clearly the message of the Jeu de Paume's inaugural exhibition, which featured the sexy, frozen narratives of influential French fashion photographer Guy Bourdin this summer. Durand frequently describes the new Jeu de Paume as an "espace transversal"—a space that cuts across categories. To that end, he will alternate between exhibitions of historical and contemporary photography, and between monographic (devoted to one artist) and thematic shows.

Even the definition of what constitutes photography is being examined. Because photographic practice is no longer limited to developing an image in the darkroom, the Jeu de Paume will also show film, video and installation alongside works on paper. An exhibit of the American video installation artist Tony Oursler, for example, is set to open in April 2005.

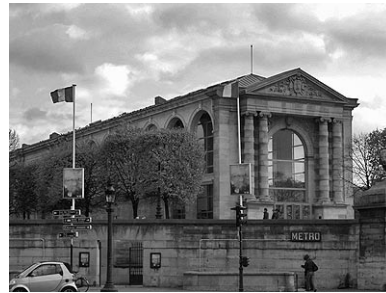
Behind this curatorial reconsideration of photography is also a larger cultural one. The new Jeu de Paume signals the Ministry of Culture's (some say belated) recognition of photography's coming of age. It consolidated three distinct entities: the Jeu de Paume Concorde Site in the 1st; the National Center for Photography (CNP), formerly housed in the Hôtel Salomon

Rothschild in the 8th; and the Patrimoine Photographique at the Hôtel de Sully in the 4th, an agency responsible for the State's photography collections. Although the Salomon Rothschild site was vacated, the Sully locale was kept and now serves as a satellite exhibition space. The somewhat cramped basement galleries there are less dazzling than the light-filled spaces of the Concorde site.

The most challenging divide for any art institution to bridge is the one separating innovation and accessibility. Although cutting-edge video art greets you in the lobby at the Concorde site, the new Jeu de Paume wants to cater to as broad an audience as possible. A recent chronological survey at the Concorde Site—"The Shadow of Time"—served as a solid introduction to the major themes and players in the last century of photography. To visitors already familiar with that history, however, the choices would have felt a little ho-hum in their predictability. The program for 2005 seems to take more creative curatorial leaps, with a double exhibition that pairs images of Charlie Chaplin with the burlesque in contemporary art.

The aim is to widen the audience for photography, to lure in a new kind of art viewer. But there are other ambitions, too. Whenever possible, exhibitions will draw from the Patrimoine's existing collection (the donated archives of fourteen 20th-century photographers) in order to increase its visibility and cultural prestige. The hope is to encourage future donations to a French State that has, by opening the new Jeu de Paume, publicly promised to take photography very seriously.

•Jeu de Paume: 1 Place de la Concorde, 1st. Open: Tue-Fri, 12pm-7am (until 9:30pm, Tue); Sat-Sun, 10am-7pm. Site: www.jeudepaume.org. Hôtel de Sully: 62 Rue St-Antoine, 4th. Open: Tue-Sun, 10am-6:30pm.



▲ PARIS VISITS ▼

Travel Guide

By Gary Lee Kraut

Librairie Ulysse, the most singular store on Ile St-Louis (4th), may look like the ideal browsing bookshop. Its new and used travel books are crowded floor to ceiling and three tomes deep. Its narrow passageways are lined with hundreds of titles within reach at every step, and its old handwritten section-signs indicate countries and regions near and far. But the first thing you must know when you enter is that browsing is not permitted. Don't even dream about touching anything without first inquiring. It isn't that the books are of enormous financial value. Rather, the situation is explained by a sign at the entrance. Posted by the owner of this one-woman shop, Catherine Domain, it declares: "You cannot find anything by yourself ... Non-formatted bookshop with only one search engine."

What may seem to be an ominous and intimidating warning is actually an invitation for you to get acquainted with the owner and for her to get acquainted with you—itself a rarity in Paris. Librairie Ulysse is Catherine—and has been for 34 years—so you either accept an exchange with your host or you stay away. Indeed, one senses that she is prepared either to embrace you as a fellow traveler and book lover or to kick you out. "I can be very disagreeable," she says, and I believe her. Yet I've heard her apologize to a woman looking for a practical map of Lyon, saying that the only one she had was a hundred years old. I've listened to her laugh at herself for having once refused to sell a book to an individual she didn't think would appreciate it enough. And, I've engaged her in an insightful conversation that led her to recommend (and to allow me to purchase) the work of one of her favorite authors (Swiss writer Nicolas Bouvier). Altogether revealing in Catherine is a fascinating mix of human curiosity with antisocial brusqueness, which makes for both a tenacious merchant and a good traveler.

Catherine's tale as a bookseller begins in 1971, when, after 10 years of

travels around the world, she decided it was time to make a living. She soon discovered that a bookshop named Librairie Ulysse was for sale. It wasn't a travel bookshop at the time. The previous owners had named it for James Joyce's "Ulysses" rather than for the hero of The Odyssey, but Catherine saw that as a good omen.

Catherine sells new, used and hard-to-find travel books and travel narratives (most are in French), along with some basic guidebook collections (some in English), old and new maps, and old or collectable magazines. Having handpicked the books and visited many of the regions they explore, she can knowledgeably steer an inquisitive visitor well beyond the famous Bertillon ice cream stands on Ile St-Louis. She considers her shop as kilometer zero of the world "because from here travelers go in every direction." (Kilometer zero of France, meanwhile, is one island over, in front of Notre Dame.)

It's difficult to think of the inhabitants of Ile St-Louis as islanders, since from here you're always within 100 yards of a short bridge to the mainland. However, Catherine takes her status as an islander seriously and professes to rarely leave the island except to travel far. Through her Club Ulysse she promises local favors to anyone who lives on an island whose circumference can be walked around in under 24 hours and has fewer than 3,000 inhabitants. By my own calculation, a walk around Ile St-Louis takes 20 minutes when alone, 30-40 minutes with a friend, and an hour or two when in love.

•Librairie Ulysse: 26 Rue St-Louis-en-l'Île, 4th. Tel: 1-43-25-17-35. Open Tue-Fri, 2-8pm; otherwise by appointment. Site: www.ulyссе.fr.



FORTY SOMETHINGS

With its many creative movements, the 40s style is back in fashion

For the past several years, the “style 1940” has been making its mark on Paris. Walk into any of the city’s more chic hotels or cafés and you are likely to encounter elegant chairs, tables, screens and lighting fixtures either original to or reminiscent of the era. Considered worthless as recently as a decade ago, creations by top French designers of the years spanning 1937 to 1950 are demanding big bucks today—especially at dealers in New York and Los Angeles.

Gloria Cohen, a Paris insider and owner of Finds in Paris (www.findsinparis.com), gives tours of the Flea Markets at Saint-Ouen and helps visitors find and buy unique home furnishings. “Since I’m constantly walking around Paris, I tend to observe fashions being born,” she says. She noticed that when many Paris hotels started renovating in the mid-nineties, their designers began adding 40s touches, such as chandeliers, lamps and metal doors, to accent their stark white interiors. About this time, Yves Gastou, an antique dealer on Rue Bonaparte (6th), who is credited with rediscovering the 40s, began exhibiting furniture by the most important decorators of the period. He helped create a new demand among the avant-garde for works by André Arbus, Gilbert Poillerat, Jacques Adnet, Jean Royère and Marc du Plantier, among others.

“What is desirable about pieces from the 1940s,” explains Gloria, “is that despite a shortage of materials during the war, this was the last era in which quality French furniture was hand-produced by master cabinetmakers, carvers, glassblowers and metal smiths. And, though the “crème de la crème” designs are becoming scarcer, it is still possible to locate some great finds, if you know where to look.”

For the best buys, Gloria recommends visiting the Flea Market in Saint-Ouen (Marché aux Puces de Saint-Ouen: take the Métro to the end of line 4, Porte de Clignancourt, and then walk several blocks north under the highway). There, head to the Marché Serpette and Marché Paul Bert, where, among the booths and stalls that feature 19th- and 20th-century furnishings, you will find dealers who specialize in merchandise from the 40s. At Christian Saper’s booth in Marché Paul Bert, Gloria and I got an up-close and personal look at period furniture and decorative objects that could be destined for a celebrity’s home, or perhaps a period piece movie set—as many of Saper’s pieces are.

Next we called on Ralph Könnemann, whose huge warehouse behind his booth, Art et Design Galerie in Marché Serpette, is bursting at the seams with stuff from the 40s. Könnemann, who sells to galleries and decorators in the United States, Canada and Australia, as well as to the movies, confessed he used to discover amazing bargains in unexpected places, such as at garage and family sales. No more. Currently, the cost of

a 40s piece of furniture can range from 1,000E to 100,000E and up, which makes them harder than ever to find.

For a little less money, you can make a fashion statement with a 40s light fixture. Gilda Saiman at Compagnie Moderne et Contemporaine in Marché Malassis showed us a stunning array of Murano glass chandeliers, sconces and standing lamps from the 40s, which sell in the range of 500E to 5,000E.

So what exactly defines the 40s style? According to Alain Elcabas, another of Gloria’s sources and owner of Modernism, “The 40s is a pe-



riod, not a style. And within this period there are many creative movements—neoclassical, baroque, modern and simple—each one completely different depending on the artist.” André Arbus and Jacques Quinet, for example, designed and decorated in the neoclassical manner, while Gilbert Poillerat, who worked in wrought iron, and Emilio Terry had a baroque approach. Jean Pascaud, Jacques Adnet and Jean Royère were forerunners of the modern movement, while Marc du Plantier created pure, simple, almost feminine, forms evocative of those by Jean-Michel Frank, one of the most influential designers of the 30s.

Materials vary, too. Since exotic, imported woods and most metals were not available during wartime, designers compensated with creative alternatives. In place of bronze, they relied on wrought iron; instead of rosewood and ebony, they carved local woods, such as French oak and sycamore. They employed decorative techniques and ornamentation such as color, lacquer and gilding to produce a luxurious effect.

Obviously, these creations were not for the masses. While intended for a well-heeled clientele, few pieces were actually signed by the designer—although all bore a stamp with a serial number. The phenomenon is similar to the distinction between couture and prêt-à-porter. When a piece of furniture or a decorative object was custom-made for a specific client, it was signed. A short time later, less intricate, less expensive renditions of that model were produced in the atelier in multiples; these were stamped. Gloria explained that a signature does not always have a major impact

on the value of a 40s designer piece, because everything produced in the same workshop demonstrates the same standards of quality, craftsmanship and attention to detail.

After a day at Les Puces, I began seeing furniture in a whole new light. Besides design, materials and ornamentation, you must consider the issue of finish. The most desirable finishes are subtle, with a delicate patina that reveals—rather than overpowers—the innate beauty of the piece. A too-thick finish adheres to the veneer and can cause damage during stripping, which will substantially decrease the value. What’s more, nothing signals “fake,” “copy” or “inferior workmanship” like a too shiny polish. (Think of it as heavy make-up trying to hide blemished skin.) On the topic of fakes, I also picked up this good advice: As an “insurance policy,” be sure to ask for a detailed invoice describing exactly what you are buying (especially if you are shopping in the Flea Market), since you often never know you’ve bought a fake until you try to sell it. Go to the Flea Market with someone like Gloria, who knows what to look for.

Where else to search for fabulous 40s furniture besides the Flea Market? You’ll find the best examples in several sections of Paris, says Gloria. On the Right Bank, the Louvre des Antiquaires; on the Left, Le Carré Rive Gauche in the 6th, the square between Rue de Seine, Rue Bonaparte, Rue du Bac, Rue de Beaune and Rue de Lille; and Rue des Saints-Pères, Rue de l’Université, Rue de Verneuil. And in the 7th arrondissement along Quai Voltaire.

What pieces are most in demand among Americans? Big, comfortable low armchairs, tables, sideboards, dining tables and chairs, and chandeliers—elegant furnishings that give a home a stylish look that could only come from Paris.

—By Nancy Stillpass

•Gloria Cohen’s Finds in Paris: 4 Rue Chalgrin, 16th. Tel: 6-11-89-76-29. E-mail: gloria@easynet.fr. Site: www.findsinparis.com.

•Christian Saper: Marché Paul Bert, Allée 6, Stand 81, 110 bis Rue des Rosiers, Saint-Ouen. Tel: 1-40-12-29-12. E-mail: paulbert@parispuces.com.

•Art et Design, Ralph Könnemann: Marché Serpette, Allée 3, Stand 19, 110 Rue des Rosiers, Saint-Ouen. Tel: 6-60-74-35-45.

•Compagnie Moderne et Contemporaine, Gilda Saiman: Marché Malassis, rez-de-chaussée, Stands 112 and 113, 142 Rue des Rosiers, Saint-Ouen. Tel: 6-61-75-47-50.

•Modernism, Alain Elcabas: 115 bis Rue des Rosiers, Saint-Ouen. Tel: 1-40-12-55-22. E-mail: aecabas@hotmail.com.

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though it may be in silver Spandex.

After the cancan, the show fast-forwarded through history, from Parisians celebrating the Liberation with the boogie-woogie to a Michael Jackson-style number with girls in silver boots and bikinis. The finale was an orgy of over-the-top costumes, the most spectacular being the fountains of hot pink plumes worn with lit-up headdresses and wings that turned the dancers into glittering butterflies.

We left dazzled, making our way through a lobby packed with the crowd waiting for the second show. When Susie stopped on the boulevard to take a photo of the windmill, I could almost picture Ewan McGregor and Nicole Kidman emerging onto a balcony, holding hands and singing under a beaming moon.

Despite its modern touches, the Moulin Rouge, with its long history and Gallic charm, is definitely about nostalgia. Not so the Lido, where I headed two weeks later with a friend. What I found was a sleek modern showroom on the Champs-Élysées and a show that seemed more Vegas than Paris.

Larger than the Moulin Rouge, with 1,150 seats as opposed to about 800, the current Lido opened in 1946 on the site of a once-popular nightclub named for the beach in Venice. When we arrived on a rainy Monday for the 9:30pm drinks-only show it was about three-quarters full with the dinner-show crowd. A few couples were heading back to their seats after a spin on the dance floor, and just as I was wondering how I was going to see past the chandelier-like lamp shedding its light on our table, the house lights dimmed and the lamp sank slowly out of sight. The entire front section of the showroom also lowered a bit, providing perfect sightlines for everyone in the place.

Obviously, the Lido has enthusiastically embraced modernity, and its current show, "Bonheur," opened last December after months of theater renovations. A laser light display accompanied the opening act, in which the lead singer descended onto the stage in an egg-shaped chariot to emerge, a winged vision in white and silver, in the midst of "Les Oiseaux de Bonheur" (the birds of happiness). And beautiful birds they were, their bodies splashed with vivid parrot colors of scarlet, orange and indigo, beaked caps on their heads, and spectacular six-foot feathered wingspans.

The theme running through Bonheur is a woman's quest for happiness, and its four tableaux, besides featuring the Lido's Bluebell Girls and Boy Dancers, star two talented performers. Lead singer Sabine Hettlich, perhaps because of her German origins, was especially good in the "Rêves d'Étoiles" segment, where she vamped through a great version of "Mein Herr" from "Cabaret." And the lead dancer, the tall and elegant Sabrina Jacquier-Parr, radiates star quality.

The Lido spent some 3 million euros on Bonheur's 600 costumes (some of which weigh over 40 lbs), and it shows. Sabine's gowns were hand-embroidered by the Lesage workshop, with

1,000 hours of work going into each crystal- and sequin-encrusted frock. As for special effects, I liked the Oriental temple festooned with dancers, and Kushi, the life-like elephant that rose from the stage; however, my favorite was the Paris-Bonheur flight, where Sabine arrives on stage in a private jet under a sky sparkling with a thousand fibre optic stars.

The between-the-tableaux acts, two acrobats and a nightmarish white statue with two heads, were less appealing than those at the Moulin Rouge, but an attractive figure skating couple did an excellent routine on the stage's tiny rink. And the purple-and-silver finale was a real crowd-pleaser, with Sabrina wearing a towering pouffe of violet feathers on her head, and the entire troupe dancing to a "Finalement, le Bonheur" (Finally, Happiness) ending.

If the Lido has spent a fortune to costume its half-naked dancers, the Crazy Horse prefers

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to bathe its beauties in light. For years I'd heard that "the Crazy" had the most beautiful dancers in Paris, and that it was the sexiest show in town. Finally I got a chance to check it out for myself. What I found was something completely different from the first two shows—smaller, simpler and sexier by far.

The Crazy Horse, located on the upscale Avenue George-V, is an intimate showroom, with just 275 seats, so everyone in the red-and-gold auditorium sits close to the stage. I didn't need the little opera glasses I'd bought at the Lido—even without them I could see that the Crazy Horse dancers are very, very beautiful.

As for apparel, there's not a feather in sight. While I caught the sparkle of a few rhinestones, costumes usually consisted of rainbow-colored wigs, a few leather straps, vertiginously high heels and kaleidoscopic light patterns.

The new show, "Taboo," which opened last December, is fast-paced and fun. Part of its magic is the lighting, a unique effect thought up by the theater's founder, Alain Bernardin. This former antiques dealer and amateur artist surprised everyone when he opened up a basement striptease joint in 1951. Fascinated by the myth of the Wild West, he named it the Crazy Horse. (Oddly enough, several days after I saw the show, Alfred Red Cloud, chief of the Oglala Sioux, wearing a fringed jacket and feathered headdress, presented a letter to the show's management asking that the name be changed out of respect for the descendants of the famous victor of Little Big Horn—no response so far.)

At first Bernardin presented standard solo striptease acts, but by the sixties he'd moved into group performances and "tableaux vivants." Refining his ideas over the years, he renovated the theater to accommodate sophisticated light-projection techniques, eventually creating a revue in which lighting plays the same role as costumes in the other shows, enhancing the women's beauty and creating gorgeous theatrical effects.

From the very first number (one of my favorites), the Crazy Horse draws you in to its playful sexiness. "God Save Our Bareskin" is an amazing drill routine performed by the entire troupe of 12 dancers. While a gruff male voice shouts out drill commands, the girls appear dressed like erotic toy soldiers, wearing huge bearskin shakos on their heads; vibrant red lipstick; the collars, buttons, epaulettes and belts of a British guardsman (but nothing covering their breasts and little on their derrières); black stockings; and black leather boots. Striped with red light, they march and goosestepped across the stage in a rousing opening that's one of the best numbers in the show.

The seductive "Leçon d'Érotisme" was a striptease performed by one dancer (Zula Zazou—the names themselves are fun) slithering around on a red velvet couch shaped like a giant pair of lips. Between acts, each dancer did a short routine inspired by a sign of the Zodiac, with a voice-over in French touting the qualities of women born under that sign. And while "Lola" was a Latin-inspired pole dance, and there was plenty of old-fashioned bumping and grinding, the routines never slid over the edge into vulgar. The show's subtitle, after all, is "The Art of the Nude."

Ever since the "French Cancan" was banned in Britain, Paris has been attracting foreigners to its naughty revues, so even if "le tout-Paris" isn't lining up for tickets as in Toulouse-Lautrec's day, the shows remain a time-honored Paris tradition. Each one offers a terrific evening's entertainment—the Moulin for old-time showmanship, the Lido for glitz and glamour, and the Crazy for good-natured sexiness. My only regret is that it took me so long to see them.

•Moulin Rouge: 82 Blvd de Clichy, 18th. Tel: 1-53-09-82-82. Open: daily, with shows at 9pm (95E) and 11pm (85E) with half-bottle of champagne. Dine before the show at 7pm with set menus (135-165E). Site: www.moulin-rouge.com.

•Lido: 116 Ave des Champs-Élysées, 8th. Tel: 1-40-76-56-10. Open: daily, with shows at 9:30pm (80E) and 11:30pm (60E, Sun-Thu; 80E, Fri-Sat). Dine before the show at 7:30pm with set menus (140-200E). Site: www.lido.fr.

•Crazy Horse: 12 Ave George-V, 8th. Tel: 1-47-23-32-32. Open: winter schedule (until March 31), Sun-Fri at 8:30pm and 11:00pm; Sat at 7:30pm, 9:45pm and 11:50pm. Watch from the bar (no reservations required): 49E with two drinks. Seated: 69-90E with two drinks or 110E with a half bottle of champagne. Packages for show with dinner at nearby restaurants are available. Site: www.lecrazyhorseparis.com.

PICK OF THE MONTH

Statue of Liberty

This timely expo traces the conception and building of the Statue of Liberty—the massive copper and steel statue that personifies “Liberty Enlightening the World”—offered to the United States by France in 1885 as a symbol of Franco-American friendship. Original models and contemporary photographs show the difficulties faced by the sculptor, Auguste Bartholdi, during the long process of fabrication. •Musée des Arts et Métiers, 3rd. Until March 19. Site: www.arts-et-metiers.net.

MUST SEE

Veronese

Paulo Calari, known as Veronese (1528-88), is presented here in all his Cinquecento glory: sumptuous silvery colors (cool yellows, silky blue-blacks and warm umbers) and intricate decorative detail. The emphasis here is on his “profane” paintings—those depicting the demurely sensuous buxom beauties and noble personalities able to pay for his work—rather than on his religious paintings, judged “irreverent” by the thought-police of the Inquisition. This exhibition is too perfect to miss. •Musée du Luxembourg. Until Jan 30. Site: www.expoveronese.com.

Ukiyo-e

Various described as pornographic, poetic, hedonistic or sublime, these 217 masterworks evoke the everyday lives and little pleasures of 18th-century Japan. Included are works by Utamoro and Suzuki Harunobu, as well as those of lesser-known artists from the rarely seen collections of the Musée Guimet. •Grand Palais. Until Jan 3. Site: www.rmn.fr.

Turner/Whistler/Monet

A truly glorious show, splendid in concept, presentation and design. This exhibit neatly shows the relationship, influence and parallel thinking of these innovative artists and their preoccupation with, and perception of, the light and changing colors of the water and the sky. The first paintings Monet did of the Thames in 1871, as well as those from 1899 to 1901, are shown here alongside those of Whistler and Turner that influenced his work. •Grand Palais. Until Jan 17. Site: www.rmn.fr.

Son et Lumière

An ambitious expo that explores the complex relationship between music and the plastic arts in the 20th century. The abstract films of Victor Eggeling, Oskar Fischinger’s “Visual Music” and the “Sorcerer’s Apprentice,” as well as Paul Luka’s “Fantasia,” are shown alongside works by Picabia, Kandinsky, Mondrian, Pollack and Duchamp inspired by the music of Arnold Schoenberg, John Cage et al. •Centre Pompidou. Until Jan 3. Site: www.centrepompidou.fr.

Napoleon

The “Treasures of the Napoleon Foundation,” from the opulence and grandeur of the Imperial Court to the ignominy of exile: 200 paintings, arms (including his hunting gun), personal knick-knacks and memorabilia of Napoleon’s private life. •Musée Jacquemart-André. Until March 4. Site: www.musee-jacquemart-andre.com.

Music and the Third Reich

Paintings, stage sets, musical scores, posters

and films from German archives show the importance attached to music by the Nazi regime. This provocative expo poses questions concerning censorship and propaganda in general, and government interference in the arts in particular. •Musée de la Musique, 19th. Until Jan 9. Site: www.cite-musique.fr.

WORTH A VISIT

Jean Puy

Although classified as a “fauve” after the 1905 Salon d’Automne, Puy’s work seems more intimate and muted than that of Matisse, Derain and other fauvists. The harmony of colors and forms in his paintings is very pleasing. •Musée Marmottan-Monet. Until Jan 30. Site: www.marmottan.com.

Silk and Gold

Textiles from China, Japan, India and Indonesia woven in silk and gold thread are shown alongside objects and prints using the same motifs. The aim of the exhibit is to show that in Asia textile design and creation are as equally important as the other arts. •Musée Guimet, 16th. Until Jan 25. Site: www.musee-guimet.fr.

Making Waves

The sea is the theme of the exhibit “The Sea: Terror and Fascination.” Photographs, maps, manuscripts and graphic arts drawn from the national library’s archives illustrate man’s imaginative conception of the sea, from ancient mapmakers, Hokusai and Jules Verne, to the most recent photos of submarine research. •Bibliothèque Nationale de France-François Mitterrand. Until Jan 16. Site: www.bnf.fr.

Decoration

This expo is drawn from the Forney Library’s incredibly rich collection of decorative and interior arts (industrial and artisanal)—wallpaper and fabrics in particular. This is a sprightly, well-documented and pleasingly presented show of wild and wonderfully fanciful design. •Bibliothèque Forney, Hôtel des Archevêques de Sens. Until Dec 31.

Body Art

Elaborately colorful tattoos, weird and wonderful body paintings, and other strange and enchanting art forms are shown here in an exotic display of African art as found in South and North America, Asia and the South Sea Islands. •Musée Dapper. Until April 3. Site: www.dapper.com.fr.

The Pharaohs

Works from the Louvre, the Cairo Museum and Tutankhamon’s tomb, as well as the fabulous jewels known as the Treasure of Tanis, recount the grandeur and mystery of the Pharaohs—the kings, priests, temple builders and military rulers of ancient Egypt. •Institut du Monde Arabe. Until April 10. Site: www.imarabe.org.

Alfred Stieglitz

This show focuses on Stieglitz’s participation in the New York art movement. •Musée d’Orsay. Until Jan 16. Site: www.musee-orsay.fr.

Imari

A comparative study of European and Japanese tastes in the decorative arts is displayed here: the luxurious Imari porcelain created for the Tokugawa shogun and European aristocrats from 1610 to 1760. •Maison de la Culture du Japon. Until March 19. Site: www.mcjp.asso.fr.

Petites Notes, continued from page 2

smoking in restaurants; 62 percent said the same for cafés; and 30 percent said they would eat more in restaurants if they were smoke free.

Circus Time

Parisians love their circuses. The one they love the most is the Cirque d’Hiver Bouglione (110 Rue Amelot, 11th, www.cirquedhiver.com), which just opened its latest show, “Bravo.” It is the only circus in France with a fixed location. The Cirque d’Hiver takes place in an odd-looking round building built by Hittorf in 1852. In 1938 after several different incarnations (including a Temple to Art Nouveau) the Cirque d’Hiver was bought by the four Bouglione brothers, whose family (12 are involved with the show), now sixth generation, still runs the operation and performs as well. The Bougliones have had their ups and downs. In 1984, they left the Cirque d’Hiver and hit the road with their show, performing all over the world, shuttling from country to country in a 747. In 1999, they came back to the Cirque d’Hiver, and are now attracting 330,000 spectators a year—their season runs from October until March. Tickets are easy to book on the Internet; they range from 21.50E to 38.50E. There are shows Thurs-Sun (multiple shows on Sat and Sun).

Rodin

This is Rodin’s personal collection of paintings, engravings and drawings that he either purchased or received from other artists in exchange for his own work. Displayed for the first time, these works are shown alongside documents and letters, as well as his photographs. •Musée Rodin, 7th. Until Jan 16. Site: www.musee-rodin.fr.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Christmas Decorations

Five streets will have special “designer” Christmas decorations as part of the annual “Paris Ville Lumière” celebration: Rue de Rivoli, 1st; Rue Mouffetard, 5th; Blvd St-Germain, 6th; Ave de St-Ouen, 18th; and Blvd de Belleville, 20th. •Until the end of Jan. Site: www.paris.fr.

Ice Skating

Skating rinks will be installed in front of the Hôtel de Ville, 3rd; and in front of the Gare Montparnasse, 15th. •For the winter. Entrance is free; skates may be rented for 5E.

New Year Celebrations

The New Year’s Day Parade, with floats, music, marching bands and general merrymaking, will run along the streets of Montmartre (18th). •Jan 1. Site: www.parisparade.com.

Sales

Annual post-Christmas sales take place in most shops and department stores. •Starts Jan 2 and lasts for six weeks.