

Franglo.com Launch  
Le Troquet  
The Mighty Macaron  
The Red House  
Treasure Trove  
Urbane Decay

Euro Jan 11: .776  
Euro Nov 10: .764  
Rain Days: 14  
High Temp: 45°F/7°C  
Low Temp: 34°F/1°C  
Nat'l Holidays: none

# PARIS

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## n o t e s

FEBRUARY 2005

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# MODÍ'S MONTMARTRE

By David Downie

Soulful artist Amedeo Modigliani found glory in terms of peer recognition, but it came too late

Charles Baudelaire was nineteenth-century Paris' archetypal "artiste maudit"—the tortured, sensitive, cursed poet of a city that in architectural terms had crossed in his generation from the Middle Ages to the modern age. He lived intensely and died young, his work imbued with a deep melancholy that resonates to this day.

In many ways, the Franco-Italian painter and sculptor Amedeo Modigliani picked up in the early 1900s where Baudelaire had left off. It was a dubious honor, but Modigliani's soulful artwork, like Baudelaire's poetry, is more coveted today than ever, and the story of his tumultuous, tragically short life is as moving now as it was a century ago.

A biographer of our current age might describe Modigliani as macho, womanizing, obsessive and demonic, a substance-abusing madman too handsome and talented for his own good—a kind of proto-Jim Morrison of The Doors. Like Morrison, Modigliani is buried at Père-Lachaise, the graveyard of France's great and good. I often think of the tragic pair as I take my daily constitutional among the tombs—my office is practically in the cemetery's backyard. Division 96, Avenue Transversale number three, is Modigliani's address. His simple gravestone is nearly always covered with flowers, and bears the inscription: "Amedeo Modigliani, born in Leghorn July 12, 1884, died in Paris January 24, 1920. Death snatched him from the brink of glory."

Modigliani died a pauper in an unheated garret in Montparnasse. But he had a hero's funeral, attended by fellow artists Picasso, Léger, Derain, Severini, Foujita, Utrillo and Vlaminck plus dozens of now-forgotten friends. He'd found glory, mostly in terms of peer recognition, but it came too late.

Before setting out to find the places Modigliani knew, I cracked open the art history books and was fascinated and horrified in equal measure by what I found. Modigliani's mother was French, from Marseille, while his father was Italian. Both were descended from solid, mid-

dle-class Jewish families. Amedeo grew up on the Tuscan coast and at 21 moved to Paris to study art. A freethinker, he abjured the family faith and declared to his fellow students that he wanted "a short but full life." Dashing, charming, witty and perfectly bilingual, Modigliani got his "full life" off to a galloping start—he drank heavily, smoked hashish, partied and painted



round the clock, changing addresses and lovers about as often as his clothes.

It's unclear what stage his consumption, a deadly lung disease, had reached before he arrived in Paris. It's irrefutable, though, that Modigliani was obsessed by fears of the congenital insanity that had plagued his family for generations. He dwelled morbidly on his own impending death, and as his physical and mental health declined he began flitting around Paris' cemeteries reciting lines from Dante's "Inferno" and "Les Chants de Maldoror" by le Comte de Lautréamont, the notorious adept of de Sade. Tellingly, the nickname his fellow artists gave him was Modí—short for Modigliani, of course, but pronounced exactly like "maudit," meaning damned, cursed, the spiritual heir of Baudelaire.

Modí may have lived his last years and died in Montparnasse, but you won't find his spirit there today, despite the "Terrasse Modigliani," a dreary parking lot next to the Montparnasse

train station, or the "Atelier Modigliani," his garret, marked by a plaque at number 8 Rue de la Grande-Chaumière. It's when you wander the streets of Montmartre that the tragic artist's presence seems to flit past you down the zigzagging staircases and atmospheric alleys of this loved-to-death hill capped by Sacré Cœur.

In 1906 Modí arrived from Italy by train and headed straight for what people back then called La Butte. At the time Montmartre's hilly sprawl took in vacant lots, scruffy, unpaved streets lined by crumbling two-story buildings, windmills, vineyards and orchards on the city's northern edge. Sundown on a drizzly fall weekday seemed like a good time to me to start a hunt for Modigliani—when the light begins to fade the Butte's tourist crowds thin but the parks, shops and cafés remain open. I took the Métro to the Anvers station and, swept along by a kaleidoscopic mix of Franco-African locals, made my way up the narrow Rue de Steinkerque, a straight shot to the Square Willette at the base of the staircase leading to Sacré Cœur.

A merry-go-round spun to sour-sounding music. Amid the primly dressed children and their minders sat clutches of placid winos. Modí and his painter pal Maurice Utrillo often sat in this square and sketched the city and the passersby while guzzling cheap wine. Then they'd hike up the hill on steep, plaited staircases, past the white hulk of Sacré Cœur basilica, pausing, perhaps, to stare at the skeletal silhouette of the teenage Tour Eiffel before following the dog's-leg streets to the Place du Tertre, where Modí lived.

I dodged an elephant train carrying weary tourists and poked around the souvenir stands looking for Modí. Among the Sacré Cœur snow-shower paperweights and pot-metal Eiffel Tower replicas I spotted several t-shirts emblazoned with the stylized, elongated, sad-eyed women Modí preferred. I reflected on the fact that a hundred years ago, for the current price of a t-shirt—around \$10—I could've bought several original Modigliani canvasses. He disdained money. The cost of living in his day (continued on page 7)

é Undoubtedly, you have noticed a few small changes in this issue. These changes address a challenge we faced last year; namely, really bad service from the post office. For about seven years we have been mailing Paris Notes to you using a Periodicals mailing permit (formerly called Second Class). Unfortunately, we experienced major mailing delays all year. My “seed” copy of Paris Notes, mailed about a mile from my home, was sometimes taking two weeks to be delivered; other months it would arrive a day after dropoff. After I repeatedly complained to the post office, it became clear to me that our Periodicals permit—which made it affordable to mail Paris Notes in an envelope—was making it impossible for us to guarantee on-time delivery on the first of the month.

So, we have switched back to First Class, at considerable extra cost. Because Paris Notes in an envelope weighs 1.1 ounce (which means with First Class we would have to pay for two ounces), we have to switch to the self-mailer format to get under an ounce. To enhance the letter as a self mailer, we have decided to switch to a coated paper stock. This paper will make the self-mailer a little more dirt resistant, will provide a cleaner fold and will make our photos a little clearer.

To accommodate the above changes, we also had to make a few minor editorial and design changes. However, I think you will agree that the new Paris Notes is still very much—well—Paris Notes. And it will stay that way.

I apologize for any late deliveries you experienced last year. I think we’ve made the appropriate adjustments and am confident they will result in more consistent on-time delivery. Thanks for staying with us; we appreciate it.

—Mark Eversman, Editor  
marke@parisnotes.com

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### Franglo.com Launch

“We started developing Franglo.com in earnest at the beginning of 2004, but the project has been in the making for more than a dozen years. Since I first came to Paris in 1992, it has become increasingly clear that the Anglophone community in France and the Francophile community in the U.S., and elsewhere, have had few good ways to connect.” So says Lorin Kalisky, owner and creator of recently launched Franglo.com. Kalisky hopes his site will become a “virtual ‘Centre Ville,’ where a thriving community goes to find or offer jobs, locate housing and services, and sell and trade property.” But he wants it to be more than simply a trading post: “I want Franglo.com to be a window to a community where you can share opinions and ideas, find groups to join, and connect with others. Franglo.com is great whether you’re planning to visit France or you’re just interested in what’s going on.” While Franglo.com is in the early stages of building this virtual community, and the buzz about its existence is just getting out, it appears to be an idea whose time has come. The personable and enthusiastic Kalisky, a former journalist (he was editor of a now-defunct magazine, Paris City), technologist and marketing professional, seems ideally suited to make a go of it. He invites all Paris Notes readers to stop by: [www.franglo.com](http://www.franglo.com).

### Les Halles Decision

On December 15, Mayor Delanoë announced a winner for the highly controversial Les Halles renovation competition: French architect David Mangin (see PN June, July/Aug, Sept, Nov 2004). The mayor said he chose the project that was the most “durable and realistic.” And so, the nine-month saga that was the selection process, pitting politicians against residents, dreamers against pragmatists and traditionalists against futurists, came to an end. In all likelihood, however, the fight for Les Halles has just begun. The mayor chose Mangin’s design/plan but made it clear that it would merely be a starting point. Mangin, he said, would “guide” the project but other architects as well as landscapers and designers would also participate. This means that there is much to be decided and, therefore—based on how the mayor has heretofore handled this competition—debated. To imagine Mangin’s “concept,” take a small Tuileries Garden and place it next to a large Pyramide du Louvre, take away the pyramid and replace it with a flat glass roof. What Mangin’s selection really said for the future of, perhaps, the most important piece of real estate in Paris is that monumental architecture would give way to layout,

functionality and feeling—an uplifting public “space” rather than an attention-getting, ego-driven building project. While the grandiose projects proposed by Jean Nouvel and Rem Koolhaas would have taken up to fifteen years to complete, Mangin’s should be finished in about five (beginning in 2006). Whatever the final Les Halles turns out to be, if Mangin is able to turn the “belly of Paris” (as Zola once called it) into the “heart” of Paris, he will have succeeded. Note: the website mentioned in prior issues has been shut down.

### Free Relief

Several years ago the City decided to make thirteen of its city-owned museums free to the public. This seemed ironic considering you had to pay over fifty cents to use one of its twenty-four public rest rooms (“lavatoires”), fifteen of which are located in Métro stations. Now, this injustice has been corrected; all these public rest rooms are now free. However, more work remains. There are 420 “sanisettes”—pillbox-like public toilets—in the city that cost money to use. The City has a contract with an independent company to run these toilets until 2006. When that contract is up, the City intends to remove them and replace them with 200 new, better-designed units—all will be free to use. But, this begs the question: Would you rather have double the number of pay toilets on the streets, or half the number for free? A better question: why, in such a wonderful city, is it so difficult to relieve yourself?

### Quick Notes

- The City of Paris and SAGEP—the company that purifies and distributes water in Paris—plan to launch an information campaign to promote “Eau de Paris”—or, city tap water. 30,000 carafes marked “Eau de Paris” will be offered to restaurants and hotels. The mayor promises that Parisians will also receive a carafe upon request.
- The four-year renovation of the Petit Palais, which has cost some 68E million, is due to be finished in June. It will house the City’s fairly impressive collection of nineteenth- and twentieth-century art (Picasso, Sisley, Courbet, etc.). Entry will be free, as it is for most City-owned museums.
- 2005 has been designated the Year of Brazil, so this year’s Paris Plage (a now highly popular annual event where the banks of the Seine are turned into a beach, mid-July to mid-August) will have a Brazilian theme.
- Construction continues on the future Musée du Quai Branly, designed by star architect Jean Nouvel. A new target opening date has been announced: February 2006. The museum is devoted to primitive arts.

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



Fascinated as I am by what goes on behind the scenes in restaurants, only rarely do I speak to the chef. One reason for this is obvious—as a critic who pays my own way, I want to receive the same treatment as any other diner. But there is another, more subtle rationale: in my experience I've found chefs to be likeable people, and it's much easier to give an honest critique if I haven't met the person who is putting his (or her) whole life into making a restaurant succeed.

To be fair, then, I must warn you that I am inordinately fond of chef Christian Etchebest, whose restaurant **Le Troquet** I am reviewing for Bites this month. I have written about Le Troquet before in this column, but it's one of those restaurants that not only is consistently good but also gets better each year. Best of all, the prix fixe menu remains a great value at 26€ (lunch) or 30€ (dinner) for three courses, or 37€ for the six-course menu dégustation, with supplements for dishes with luxury ingredients such as game, scallops, foie gras and truffles.

Recently, for a feature I was writing, I had the opportunity to spend a full day with Christian and his two young cooks, Guy and Benoît. In a kitchen exactly the size of my own Paris kitchen—118 square feet to be precise—they cook for up to eighty people on a busy night, and the dining room is packed most evenings. Do they yell, swear and throw pots, as chefs are rumored to do? No—in a space so small that two people can barely pass each other, the only insults I heard were joking put-downs of each other's regions (Christian is from the Basque Country, Guy is a former fisherman from Brittany, and Benoît is from the Corrèze region). They let me tackle a few menial tasks, which allowed me to become “one of the guys” for the day, and I must say that I loved it—should I be fired from Paris Notes for lack of objectivity, Christian might find me knocking on his door.

What impressed me most, besides the general harmony, was the lack of shortcuts. Christian explained to me that, to make a profit at these prices, everything must be prepared in house—terrines are made on the premises and the *lièvre à la royale*, one of the dishes with supplements in winter (the menu changes every three weeks), takes two days to marinate, assemble and cook. He makes no compromises on ingredients, either: the fish comes direct from Brittany, the meat and chili

peppers are delivered straight from the Basque region, and the chocolate (which goes into the amazing homemade ice cream) is Valrhona. Benoît, who worked at Le Grand Véfour for two years and now does all the desserts at Le Troquet, even hand-whips the egg whites for the towering soufflés by hand.

Having eaten my way through a few of savory dishes and most of the desserts in the sixteen hours I spent at Le Troquet (a normal workday for Christian and his cooks), I returned a couple of weeks later with P. and some friends to taste the ones I hadn't yet tried. The first was the Jerusalem artichoke with lime and a *rémoulade* of whelks and shrimp—the artichoke-like root vegetable retained its firm texture, while the freshness of the seafood shone through the creamy dressing. Lime juice was a brilliant touch, making the dish seem light.

Two of my friends, on my recommendation, had the *fricassée d'escargots comme ma grand-mère*—I have to wonder how many grandmothers, even in France, serve juicy escargots with capers, bacon, *mâche* (lamb's lettuce) and pistachio vinaigrette made with Banyuls vinegar. The others had a creamy red onion soup ladled over slices of pan-fried foie gras, which tasted just as good as it sounds.

For the main course, I couldn't wait to try the *cocotte de rascasse aux palourdes et sa rouille*, scorpion fish prepared simply in a cast-iron pot with fish stock, clams and preserved lemons, then served with the spicy mayonnaise that usually accompanies fish soup. Delicious as it was, it could have used an accompaniment, but that's really the only criticism I can make of this meal. Our Canadian visitors opted for a traditional Basque dish, the *axoa de veau*, a comforting stew made with thinly sliced veal, red peppers and *piment d'Espelette*. P. adored his pan-fried red mullet fillets with *tapenade* and a warm *pesto vinaigrette*.

Desserts have come into their own at Le Troquet under Benoît, who has introduced his own take on *café liégeois* (homemade coffee ice cream, whipped cream and chocolate sauce) and whips up an incredible vanilla soufflé served with cherry or strawberry jam. Pear and prune “soup” served with a little almond cake is a lighter choice, while the “*comme une crème brûlée au moelleux de chocolat guanaja*” is the most decadent of all: rich vanilla cream topped with an equally rich dark chocolate cream.

What impressed me most, besides the general harmony, was the lack of shortcuts

What about the dining room? Christian bought this country-style restaurant from his uncle in 1998. He and his wife, Pacy (who takes care of the considerable paperwork and waits tables at lunch), have slowly been adding their own touches. He ripped up the carpet and restored the 1920s tiles, and has now added wooden tables with Basque coats of arms and red-and-white Basque table runners (he loves his region). The walls are adorned with old illustrations and cooking certificates, including one from the *Hôtel Crillon*, where Christian worked with Christian Constant, Eric Frechon and Yves Camdeborde (of *La Régalade* fame) in the 1990s. The street is not the most picturesque in Paris, but it's within easy walking distance of the Eiffel Tower and St-Germain.

By now you might have gathered that I like Le Troquet. On your next trip, try it for yourself, keeping in mind that lunch is quieter while dinner can be noisier and smokier (though there is a non-smoking “section,” populated entirely by tourists on our visit).

•Le Troquet, 21 Rue François-Bonvin, 15th. Tel: 1-44-66-89-00.

Speaking of nice chefs, Jean-Pierre Vigato is another one whom I've met (when he taught a cooking class at Le Cordon Bleu in Paris), and his kitchen is known to be one of the few in Paris that welcomes women. His previously rather eighties restaurant **L'Apicius** has recently changed locations, resurfacing at 20 Rue d'Artois, 8th (Tel: 1-43-80-19-66). Fans of his very precise cooking will be thrilled to find him again in this elegant *hôtel particulier* with its own garden, but they will have to be prepared to pay about 120€ a head for the privilege.

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# THE MIGHTY MACARON

A common pastry has been transformed into Paris' sexiest sweet

The macaroon is little more than a culinary footnote in the States, but the authentic French “macaron” is one of the most ubiquitous and honored confections in Paris. And while it may be steeped in tradition, contemporary Parisian pâtisseries have elevated the modest macaron to a level of artistic expression previously reserved only for glammed-up dishes in Michelin-starred dining rooms. Recent developments, in fact, have transformed the dependable but pedestrian macaron into one of Paris' sexiest sweets. Celebrated pâtisseries, suddenly behaving like those designers of haute couture across town, turn out bold new looks and flavors every year. The unfussy, slightly clumsy-looking vanilla macaron you may have discovered on your first trip to Paris is certainly still around—and still beloved—but it now shares a shelf with some avant-garde renditions you'd hardly recognize.

With such a simple list of ingredients—sugar, egg whites and powdered almonds—one would think macarons would be easy to master, but like a great baguette, it's all in the execution. In the hands of a skilled pâtissier, the rounded cookie components of the macaron have a truly ethereal quality—delicate as eggshells to the touch—yet slightly chewy, with a hint of marzipan beneath the smooth, raised surface. The two halves are cemented together with either butter cream or ganache, creating a sandwich cookie that can be as memorable as an American child's very first Oreo. The Stateside interpretation, which will never be mistaken for the French version, tends to be rather dry, and coconut powder is often used in place of, or in addition to, the traditional powdered almonds.

Surprisingly, the macaron's roots are not French. It was actually an Italian invention of the late eighteenth century and was introduced to France by a pair of “amateur” pâtisseries. Two Carmelite nuns—the so-called “Macaron Sisters”—paid for their refuge in the town of Nancy during the French Revolution by baking macarons. It wasn't until the early twentieth century that the practice of sandwiching two pieces together developed, an innovation generally credited to Pierre Desfontaine, the grandson of Louis Ernest Ladurée, founder of the famous Parisian pâtisserie, **Ladurée** (16 Rue Royale, 8th; 21 Rue Bonaparte, 6th; other locations, [www.laduree.fr](http://www.laduree.fr)). The firm has long enjoyed the reputation as Paris' most prominent and prolific purveyor of macarons, now selling over 12,000 per day and well over 4 million—110 tons' worth—annually. Although the company takes pride in maintaining traditional practices, Ladurée has also become increasingly aggressive in marketing its own modern interpretations, which now account for approximately one-third of sales. Black licorice, lily of the valley, orange-saffron and lime-basil reflect the trend, although their traditional flavors—chocolate in particular—remain local favorites.

Typically, there are two sizes of macarons: the large, which are approximately two-and-a-half inches in diameter, and the petite (“gerbet”) version, about half that size. For anybody interested in sampling the constantly expanding variety of macarons available in Paris, the smaller cookies are the way to go. Until quite recently, all macarons were round, but in 2002 **Lenôtre** (61 Rue Lecourbe, 15th; other locations, [www.lenotre.fr](http://www.lenotre.fr)) first introduced the square macaron (their so-called “macarré”) and Ladurée created their own four-sided version in honor of a new store opening that same year. Traditional macaron flavors include vanilla, pistachio, orange and chocolate. Recently, however, the macaron has become one of the primary vehicles through which innovative pâtisseries introduce flavors that were rarely, if ever, associated with sweet confections. Today, it's fairly easy to find



macarons scented with white truffles, black sesame, violet, olive oil and green tea. Since the flavor of the cream cementing the two pieces of pastry together often differs from the cookie itself, a creative pâtissier can turn out a nearly endless number of flavor combinations. As in all culinary trends—especially those that blur the lines between gastronomy and fashion—some attempts at innovation are reckless experiments geared more toward publicity than the palate, but some seemingly absurd flavors, in the hands of a master, result in magic.

Chocolate is one of the most traditional and popular flavors, and all of the venerable macaron artisans—Ladurée, **Gérard Mulot** (76 Rue de Seine, 6th), **Lenôtre**—do an admirable job with this classic. However, true chocolate enthusiasts may wish to visit a “specialist” such as the revered **La Maison du Chocolat** (225 Rue du Faubourg St-Honoré, 8th; other locations, [www.lamaison-duchocolat.com](http://www.lamaison-duchocolat.com)), whose chocolate macaron is justifiably legendary, exuding an intense bittersweet chocolate rush. Serious chocoholics also favor the macarons created by high-end chocolatier **Jean-Paul Hévin** (231 Rue St-Honoré, 1st; other locations, [www.jphevin.com](http://www.jphevin.com)) and neighboring **La Fontaine au Chocolat** (201 Rue St-Honoré, 1st).

Nobody has caused more of a stir in the world of macarons—in all of Parisian pâtisserie, for that matter—than **Pierre Hermé** (72 Rue Bonaparte,

6th; 185 Rue de Vaugirard, 15th). His petite St-Germain-des-Prés-area shop (the original of the two) does not begin to reflect the size of his business or his impact on culinary trends worldwide. The stylish pâtisserie—more appropriately called a “boutique” in deference to his haute couture mentality—is marked by austere Asian sensibilities and was designed to suggest a jewelry box, a concept brought to life by the dazzling array of sparkling gâteaux and tartes lining the cases. He is the grand innovator, known for rolling out seasonal lines of dramatically decorated cakes—sometimes shaped as perfect globes or cubes—that generate a buzz for months. He is also constantly releasing macarons in imaginative (i.e., wild) flavors, shapes and colors that tend to drive traditionalists crazy. But nobody can underestimate his influence, as even relatively staid operations like Lenôtre and Mulot find themselves pushing the envelope just to keep up.

Hermé's innovations range from chestnut cookies filled with a Matcha green tea cream (a terrific taste sensation) to milk chocolate with passion fruit (arguably less successful) to the “Inka,” an avocado-banana-chocolate creation that's an unexpectedly delightful combination of these disparate ingredients. No matter how much we love white truffles shaved over pasta or infused into sauces, flavoring macarons with those rarefied fungi does not sound like a promising endeavor. However, by incorporating the luxurious ingredient into a cream used to cement toasted hazelnut halves together, the daring pâtissier creates a balance of flavors that renders the macaron surprisingly satisfying. Not all varieties are commercially successful, and Hermé's ketchup macaron was one of his more infamous flops. Many of Hermé's macarons tend to have a slightly denser, more al dente cookie. As a result, they keep their shape longer, yet that essential eggshell-like quality is not compromised.

One who seems to maintain a healthy balance between tradition and innovation is the understated Mulot, whose handsome shop is a few blocks from Hermé's but couldn't have a more different feel. In this more conventional setting, shelves are lined with mostly traditional varieties and a few that he labels “nouvelle” but are not particularly avant-garde. Both the pistachio, a classic flavor, and orange-cannelle (orange-cinnamon), representing a slightly more contemporary approach, are outstanding.

Asian flavors—green tea, ginger, yuzu, lychee—are among the hottest items these days on the Parisian culinary scene. Because many of Paris' most celebrated chefs, pâtisseries and chocolatiers (e.g., Hermé, Hévin, Lenôtre and Robuchon) have opened their doors in Japan, it's only natural to find a cross-pollination of French and Japanese tastes. One of the leaders in the introduction of exotic Asian ingredients is Japanese-born pâtissier **Sadaharu Aoki**, now well established on the Left Bank (35 Rue de Vaugirard, 6th; 56 Boulevard de Port-Royal, 5th). Without deviating from classic French technique, Aoki incorporates Eastern flavors into his pastries, and his black sesame macaron is a perfect piece of Parisian “fusion.”

—By Roger Grody

## The Red House

By Ellen McBreen

When Antoine de Galbert inherited a windfall fortune, he did what most of us might do: he quit his day job. Closing his struggling art gallery in Grenoble, Galbert gave up selling art and enthusiastically threw himself into buying it. He told *Le Monde* last year, however, that he also felt an obligation to do something “utile” (useful) with his newfound resources. Visitors to the Maison Rouge-Fondation Antoine de Galbert, a private non-profit foundation for contemporary art, will see that its creator’s notion of utilité was as open-ended as the galleries here: 1,300 square meters in a converted industrial space just south of the Place de la Bastille.

Maison Rouge’s size and depth of funding immediately put it on the map when it opened last June, but those factors are not the only ones setting it apart from other contemporary art centers in Paris. It is Galbert’s distinct mission—to showcase art chosen by private collectors and independent curators—that will save it from yet-another-art-space-in-Paris oblivion. Neither a state-run institution nor a wealthy collector’s vanity project (Galbert’s own collection is not at all the focus), Maison Rouge is genuinely something new.

In the U.S., where contemporary art is supported almost exclusively by private initiative, Galbert’s project might not seem so exceptional. But in France, the government takes its role as cultural patron as a given. Anyone who has enjoyed the rich panoply of France’s affordable cultural offerings knows the benefits of this “patrimoine”-friendly policy firsthand. In the realm of contemporary art, however, state support can have some blind spots, as curatorial choices are often made by committees with programmatic pressures. Private collectors, on the other hand, can take more risks. They have no constituency to educate or represent. The works they assemble speak to a singularity of vision that adds another resonant layer to the art they collect.

This difference is subtle, but it was palpable in the first two exhibitions at the Maison Rouge. “Behind Closed Doors” recreated rooms from the homes

of fifteen anonymous collectors, revealing how they live with the objects they collect. “Central Station: The Harald Falckenberg Collection” featured one of the most important—and politically provocative—private collections in Germany. (European collectors are traditionally more private than their Anglo counterparts; it is a testament to how much Galbert is respected in the art world that they are lining up to work with him.) Whatever the shortcomings of these two inaugural exhibitions, neither of them had an institutional, selection-by-committee feel. In fact, Galbert hires a new, and often very young, curator to organize each show. The Maison Rouge may be Galbert’s brainchild, but its programming will not have one dominant vision of what art should be.

Maison Rouge takes its name from the bright red pavilion at the center of the building, but Galbert also chose it to evoke the domestic origins of the art objects on display. But do not expect all the comforts of home here; some will find the exhibitions “difficult.” Galbert’s dedication to more cutting-edge artists means that the Foundation isn’t exactly catering to a general audience. It has the educational mission of a public institution without any of its responsibilities. It can (literally) afford to be a cerebral, rigorous place. Leading French intellectuals are regular guests at its ambitious lecture cycle. Galbert has even partnered with the Université Paris X Nanterre, so that curatorial students come here regularly to take their courses. Serious art fans will come for another reason—the chance to discover art they won’t see anywhere else in Paris.

•La Maison Rouge-Fondation Antoine de Galbert: 10 Blvd de la Bastille, 12th. Tel: 1-40-01-08-81. Open: Wed-Sun, 11am-7pm (Thurs until 9pm). Entrance: 6.5E. Email: info@lamaisonrouge.org. Site: www.lamaisonrouge.org.



### ▲ PARIS VISITS ▼

## Treasure Trove

By Whitney Barton

“A mermaid in gold, with eyes of chrysoptase. An Egyptian scarab ... A lyre or star, mounted as a brooch. A studded tortoise. In a word, all of them frightful,” writes French novelist Colette. In a scene from “Gigi” set in opulent fin-de-siècle Paris, Aunt Alicia, an aging society woman, advises her carefree niece on the fine points of jewelry. She urges the courtesan-in-training to resist the allure of such artful design, and to accept gifts fashioned exclusively from precious metals and gems. Given her traditional tastes, Alicia would be enamored with the Louis René Duplessy gold filigree bracelet, and she would covet the sumptuous Baroque cross dripping with diamonds now on display in the recently opened Galerie des Bijoux.

The collection occupies two rooms on the second floor of the Musée des Arts Décoratifs (the rest of the museum is closed for renovations). As a commentary on image and appearance, it appropriately complements the Musée de la Mode et du Textile and the Musée de la Publicité, located in the same section of the Louvre. From the wing’s Rivoli entrance, climb the staircase opposite the ticket counter. Enter a hushed black salon of glass cases illuminated by halogen spotlights. Sparkling gems magically levitate in the contemporary interior designed by architect Roberto Ostinelli. A poetry of texture, color and light, this dramatic setting brings together the eclectic collection, which contains 1,200 pieces from Europe and Asia, spanning the Byzantine period to the contemporary era. According to the president of the Union Centrale des Arts Décoratifs (which oversees the above museums), “Rings, necklaces, bracelets and brooches are presented within a chronologic itinerary, in parallel to a technique of savoir-faire.”

Alicia would scoff at the minuscule semi-precious stones in the exhibit’s Art Nouveau collection, and the diminished use of precious ore in subsequent decades. However, visitors may find these later works the most striking. Consider Vever’s sensuous pendant, *Le Réveil*, an ivory nude

bathing in a cascade of pale green. Two brilliantly enameled bees pollinate a thistle bouquet on a Lucien Gaillard horn comb. Lovers embrace in a René Lalique ring while balancing a lustrous pearl on their heads. Nearby, Jean Després’ geometric Art Deco brooch of engraved glass acts as counterpoint to a Modern Period organic S-shaped silver Alexandre Calder pin. Jean Schlumberger’s hat decoration, a black metal feather with five coral bows, hangs near a whimsical amethyst and lapis fish nibbling on a coral star. The second room, devoted to the Contemporary Period, contains a geometric Jean Dinh Van ring, cradling twin white and black pearls. Manon von Kouswyk’s innovative coral necklace ends in a white cotton bib, where it is transformed into an embroidered likeness.

If the value of a piece is measured by its quantity of precious materials, one wonders how Alicia would react to Thea Tolsma’s rubber inner tube necklace, or Sophie Hanagarth’s flesh colored silicone and steel collier pendant. Both pieces are wrought from mundane substances. And yet, to the jaded twenty-first-century eye, these examples of extreme design are creatively more appealing than their sparkling ancestors. The first is painstakingly shredded to a feathery texture then dramatically curved into a high collar. The second drips like water from a faucet, arrested in motion.

Perhaps it is time for Alicia to reconsider her concept of fine jewelry. This provoking exhibit is more than a retrospective. It encourages viewers to make up their own minds about what constitutes physical adornment.

•Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Palais du Louvre: 107 Rue de Rivoli, 1st. Open (can change due to museum renovations): Tue-Fri, 11am-6pm. Sat-Sun, 10am-6pm. Entrance: 6E. Site: www.ucad.fr.



# URBANE DECAY

Rusty, mossy, weathered, worn or decomposed—the “in” furnishings

At the Paris flea markets, where everything old looks new again, there is a big demand for furnishings that once—even at the markets—would have been considered past their prime. But today, “oxidation” is in style, a kind of urbane decay. Decorators and sophisticated consumers from Paris and the U.S. are seeking out furniture and objects that have oxidized (become rusty, mossy, weathered, worn or decomposed due to exposure to time and the elements) to be used as modern decorating accents. They are combing the stalls at Les Puces de Saint-Ouen for vintage French wrought-iron and stone garden furniture and ornaments, rusted metal industrial cabinets, and shelving and aged architectural fragments. (To get there, take the Métro to the end of line 4, Porte de Clignancourt, and then walk several blocks north under and past the highway.) Dealers report they have never received so many requests for these pieces, with their timeworn natural patina.

Gloria Cohen, owner of Finds in Paris ([www.findsinparis.com](http://www.findsinparis.com)), who gives tours of the Flea Markets at Saint-Ouen and helps visitors find, buy and ship unique home furnishings, explains the appeal: “Imagine one of these rough, unfinished pieces in a stark white modern interior. Or juxtapose it among beautiful polished furniture. No doubt, it creates a contemporary alternative to a more traditional ‘total look.’ And it makes a major decorating statement, which is especially appealing to affluent forty- to fifty-year-olds.”

I got a better idea of what Gloria was talking about as she led me through the alleys of Les Puces to the Marché Paul-Bert, where we found the best examples amid the stalls featuring nineteenth-century furnishings. At **Bizeul**, we saw an attractive array of weathered outdoor cast-iron and cast-stone tables, benches, bank clocks, urns and assorted garden ornaments, any of which would make a fashionable indoor accent. Gloria pointed out how the delicate patina on the stone pieces, for instance, could result only from time and nature (after something has been left outside over the years, moss grows, eventually turns black and ultimately develops into the patina); no technician can produce that subtle sheen.

At **La Petite Maison**, I was bowled over by the jam-packed yet artistic display of antique garden furniture, and industrial and decorative objects. The proprietor, Stéphane Olivier, told us he rearranges his inventory every week—a Herculean feat, considering the amount of stuff in his little house and garden. Olivier’s shop is also his home, so, in the downstairs kitchen area, ultra-modern shiny steel appliances coexist with oxidized cast iron guéridons (small pedestal tables), bistro chairs and “Medici vases” (huge urns for flowers). Somehow, everything seems

to work together. Throughout the house, front entrance and backyard garden, there are countless stone fruit baskets, stone or cast-iron animal statues—in particular frogs, squirrels and rabbits—as well as park benches, pots, fountains, bowls and an immense railroad station clock.

In the back, there are dozens of trompe-l’œil cement garden tables and chairs designed to look like wood. “Today the trend is to bring the garden into the house,” says Gloria. “What makes something desirable is less a matter of when or of what it was made, but the fact that it has not been restored and has its original patina. When a piece is good, you can mix it with anything.”

Iron and industrial furniture represent another aspect of the urbane decay trend that Gloria has seen developing in Paris over the last sev-



eral years. At **La Petite Maison**, Olivier reports that he has been selling a lot of functional pieces, especially those that can be used for storage, such as steel factory-workers’ lockers, metal post office racks, work tables, armoires, and dentists’ furniture and iron hospital chests. “Not only are these industrial items practical additions in the kitchen and home office, but those that are well manufactured with elegant riveting have a unique beauty that blends into any decorating scheme, even with more formal eighteenth-century carved wood furnishings,” he tells us.

Most sought after are iron fabrications from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and furniture made of metal, steel, lead, copper, brass or cast iron that were produced by French and Italian designers during “the thirty glorious years” between 1950 and 1980. The finish is not as important as how the piece is assembled. Painted metal furniture can be stripped, or it can simply be left in its peeling, rusty state. But the size and placement of the rivets, as well as other details—including the design of the cornice, handles, capitals, pilasters and finials—do substantially affect the value. These items do not come cheap, however: industrial metal chairs run 200E to 500E; library shelves cost in the 4,000E range; and a large rusted eighteenth-century jeweler’s safe is being offered for 25,000E.

A more affordable option involves what Gloria calls “détournement” (like “detour” in English), which means using something for a different purpose than originally intended. For instance, by transforming a broken or worthless architectural fragment into a lamp or table, you give an old object new life. I saw how this works at **Morin**, Michel Morin’s two-story shop in Marché Paul-Bert. As an expert in folk art for over twenty years, Morin and his partner Joel Lebas concentrated on selling tables, commodes, armoires and ornaments (with mountain motifs like snow) from Normandy and other provinces.

Since folk art has lost some of its appeal in Paris, Morin has recently switched over to making lamps. And what a success story. He’s selling approximately fifty lamps a weekend. For some of his creations he salvages broken furniture parts like the old claw feet of bathtubs or rusty feet from iron beds. He strips off the paint and rust, waxes the metal to reveal the natural silver gray color, and uses the part as a base for a lamp. Or he will rescue a section of gilded wood from a cornice, strip it, then mount it vertically and use it as a base. Likewise, he’ll use an old Spanish tile, or an antique wooden bowling ball, and wire it as a lamp. Prices for these lamps range from 200E to 400E.

In addition to lamps, Morin crafts furniture and sculpture from discarded architectural elements. One popular model is a table made from a wrought-iron balcony. These decorative balconies, which were prevalent around Paris during the nineteenth century, traditionally measure about sixty inches high by thirty inches wide. After being stripped down to the metal, they are topped with glass, and then placed upon a wood or iron base. Customers can choose dining or coffee table height. Even fragments with no purpose whatsoever can be converted into something beautiful. A broken handle for an urn or the remainder of a chair’s arm becomes an eye-catching sculpture; a remnant of ceiling molding is recycled into a work of art.

With urbane decay, at last we’re seeing a trend that is beneficial to society.

—By Nancy Stillpass

•Gloria Cohen’s Finds in Paris: 4 Rue Chalgrin, 16th. Tel: 6-11-89-76-29. Email: [Gloria@easynet.fr](mailto:Gloria@easynet.fr). Site: [www.findsinparis.com](http://www.findsinparis.com).

•Bizeul, Dominique Bizeul: Marché Paul-Bert, Stand 109, 110 Rue des Rosiers, Saint-Ouen. Tel: 6-08-62-19-41.

•La Petite Maison, Stéphane Olivier: 10 Rue Paul-Bert, Saint-Ouen. Tel: 1-40-10-56-69. Email: [la.petite.maison@wanadoo.fr](mailto:la.petite.maison@wanadoo.fr).

•Morin, Michel Morin: Marché Paul-Bert, 110 Rue des Rosiers, Saint-Ouen. Tel: 6-08-31-94-49. Email: [artpopulaire@wanadoo.fr](mailto:artpopulaire@wanadoo.fr).

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was only a fraction of what it is now but even that doesn't alter the equation: Modí wanted only enough for daily survival with something left over to buy his artist's materials.

I decided to have a drink at La Bohème du Tertre and do some mental burrowing backwards, down an imaginary time tunnel, to the days when Modí lived in a cheap furnished room above this venerable café, now a tourist trap. Back then the square was the center of an artists' colony—most of them authentic, serious, academy-trained artists. They chose the Butte because it was cheap yet within walking distance of central Paris. In those dying days of the Belle Époque there were already tourists a-plenty on the hill. Some were drawn by Sacré Cœur, others by the cabarets, cafés and restaurants. As I sipped my overpriced beer I was torn by conflicting emotions, at once troubled by the tour-bus hordes yet conscious of being part of them, repelled yet fascinated by the Butte's world-class kitsch. Accordions wheezed. Yellow pennants fluttered as tour group leaders gave directions through bullhorns. I wondered if an undiscovered Modí, Picasso or Foujita were among the caricaturists and other self-styled artists, most of them non-French, soliciting in the square. Modí was Italian, after all, Picasso Spanish, and Foujita Japanese. Each had made his fortune on the Butte's scuffed and littered pavements while others had fallen by the wayside.

During the months Modí lodged above La Bohème du Tertre he'd been a tired-eyed regular in the square's troughs but especially at the Clarion des Chasseurs (in business since 1790) and La Mère Catherine, where a full meal cost under a franc—the equivalent of a few dollars. Naturally, both spots charge many times that nowadays, and do a lively trade indoors (among bric-a-brac) and on shaded terraces, using their long-dead, famous artist-patrons to create a faux Bohemian setting.

Modí ranged over the Butte for three years, camping in at least five different places. The first was a ramshackle studio in a shantytown area called Le Maquis—a reference to the wild and woolly Corsican outback where thieves, murderers and renegades hid out. An elderly local woman I buttonholed seemed to think she'd heard of Le Maquis and pointed down the Rue Norvins. I came to the evocatively named Allée des Brouillards—meaning, literally, fog alley. The pocket-size front yards of freestanding houses were overgrown with flowering shrubs. Then I crossed a small square into a leafy park with another great name, Le Hameau des Artistes. A group of seniors polished their steel balls and tossed them down the gravel-and-dirt lanes of Le Maquis, which is now a “boulodrome,” the rough outdoor equivalent of a bowling alley. They barely glanced over. I understood: the Butte's inhabitants live in parallel to the tourist flows.

The boulodrome struck me as something the rebellious Modí might have liked (he often wore a red handkerchief around his neck in the style of the Italian revolutionary hero Giuseppe

Garibaldi). The artists' studios of old have been razed, but at least no high-rise apartment buildings have taken their place.

Doubling back a few hundred yards to 11 Rue Norvins I found the garden with a centuries-old house where Modí lived briefly with one of his lovers, the English journalist Beatrice Hastings. She famously described him as “at once pearl and swine.” Like her swinish lover, the man-eating Beatrice was no stranger to the bottle. She and Modí often fought and on one occasion he reportedly heaved her out of the window into the shrubbery. She was too drunk to notice, however, and the affair continued on and off for years, even after Modí moved to Montparnasse.

Nearby in a sloping residential square called the Place Jean-Baptiste-Clément, Modí painted in a studio at number 7 (it has since been transformed into a handsome residence with an ivy-clad garden wall). Unlike today, in the early 1900s the neighborhood was edgy, so Modí of-

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**She and Modí often fought and on one occasion he reportedly heaved her out of the window into the shrubbery**

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ten carried a pistol—at least, that is, when he was dressed. Apparently he enjoyed dancing naked at night in this lopsided square with his demimonde models, most of them prostitutes whom he somehow managed to transform on canvas into ethereal, Madonna-like beings.

To indulge a growing sense of nostalgia I decided to peek into the Musée de Montmartre in the Rue Cortot before it shut. With streetlights flickering and rain glinting on the cobbles, the set of weathered 1600s buildings that house the museum, separated by a yard, exuded unexpected charm. This was where Renoir lived in the 1870s, followed, in the early 1900s, by the self-taught Utrillo (and his mother, Susanne Valadon, a painter more talented than he). Modí is sure to have known the museum's mossy garden and creaking wooden floors. Though scrubbed and refitted to handle mass-market crowds, the site nonetheless manages to evoke the rough-and-ready Butte of yesteryear. One room replicates the interior of Utrillo's preferred watering hole, the Café de l'Abreuvoir, complete with bentwood chairs, wooden tables and period posters. Staring out from the museum's dusty memorabilia was the treasure I'd been looking for: a 1918 Modigliani portrait of a swan-necked, almond-eyed woman he'd doubtless loved, if only for a fleeting moment.

Up the Rue des Saules one block is Montmartre's last vineyard, a terraced reminder of the neighborhood's vinous past. Kitty corner to it spreads the small cemetery among whose toppled tombstones Modí liked to wander at midnight. But this street corner is best known for Au Lapin Agile, a café-concert open only at night. It started out as Le Cabaret des Assassins

but became known as “Le Lapin à Gill” when in 1880 a painter named André Gill created its now-famous sign showing a rabbit in a red bow-tie springing from a copper cauldron. The name eventually morphed to “the agile rabbit.” It was already an old standby in Modí's day famed for its absinthe and anything-goes atmosphere. Once, in the company of rowdy Italian friends, I spent an evening here. If you're an adept of kitsch it's a fine place to experience old Montmartre song-and-dance routines performed in roistering, smoky surroundings.

Relieved that Au Lapin Agile was not yet open, and thus preserved from temptation, I strolled back down the Rue des Saules, found the tilting Rue Ravignan and zigzagged into the compact Place Goudeau. A green Wallace fountain from the 1860s splashed water onto the cobbles under several horse-chestnut trees ancient enough that Modí surely knew them. On the square's right flank is the display case of the once-infamous Bateau Lavoir, an artist's residence. A vintage photograph shows a barebones turn-of-the-century studio. Inside I was pleasantly surprised to discover a hive of lively art students, many apparently convinced of their budding genius. Though it was completely rebuilt as a nondescript dormitory after a fire in 1970, thanks to that period photo in the window it's easy enough to picture what the Bateau Lavoir, a converted piano factory clinging to the hillside, must have been like in its heyday, around 1908. That's when Modí got himself a room, a noisy, messy cubbyhole separated by thin panels and hanging fabric from other cubbyholes where artists the likes of Derain, Juan Gris and Picasso worked. Modí disliked Picasso, the inventor of Cubism, and hated Picasso's aggressive angular art. After several violent altercations Modigliani moved across the street to a seedy rooming house (in a building which no longer exists).

Like the crown of Montmartre, the Bateau Lavoir is tame these days, an enclave of distinctly bourgeois Bohemians—“Bobos” for short. But it would be wrong to assume that the Butte's edgy quality has entirely disappeared. The last dive Modí rented was at the base of the hill, an address in the Rue André-Antoine, which, at its Pigalle end, is as malodorous, filthy and populated with marginal fauna today as it was a hundred years ago. To get there I coasted downhill to the packed cafés of the Rue des Abbesses, where Modí and his pal Utrillo would drink themselves silly. A staircase flanks the Café Saint-Jean, a local hangout with a zinc-topped bar. After tossing back a glass of rough red wine I clattered down the staircase and, several hundred yards along, found myself among transvestites, drug dealers and their clients. As I reached the neon-lit seediness of Pigalle and the Boulevard de Clichy I paused for a final glance at the Butte. I couldn't help wondering if, with his capacity to empathize and his painterly talents, Modí would be able to elevate Pigalle's modern-day denizens from gutter to empyrean. A vain thought, perhaps, but it buoyed me nonetheless.

PICK OF THE MONTH

**Hiroshi Sugimoto**

Japanese photographer Sugimoto pays homage to Marcel Duchamp as he explores the relationships between photography, science and art. Inspired by models made by the University of Tokyo as visual aids for mathematics and engineering, he photographed the fluid curvilinear forms of mathematical models and the crisp forms of mechanical models to create a spatial reconstruction of the “Bride” and “Bachelor” sections of Duchamp’s “Le Grand Verre” (The Large Glass). •Fondation Cartier. Until Feb 27. Site: [www.fondation.cartier.fr](http://www.fondation.cartier.fr).

ON THIS MONTH

**Jean Hélion**

A major retrospective that retraces the life and work of the unclassifiable French painter Jean Hélion (1904-1987): eighty-four paintings and twenty drawings, including the massive “Compositions,” show his evolution from starkly abstract to figurative. •Centre Pompidou. Until March 7. Site: [www.centrepompidou.fr](http://www.centrepompidou.fr).

**Inuit Sculptures**

The expo “Inuit: when the word takes shape” displays the work of contemporary Inuit artists from Canada. These remarkable sculptures show the richness and vitality of an Arctic people, their aesthetic and spiritual response to their harsh environment. •Musée de l’Homme. Until March 27. Site: [www.mnhn.fr](http://www.mnhn.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](http://www.imarabe.org).

**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](http://www.arts-et-metiers.net).

**Imari**

The luxurious Imari porcelain created for the Tokugawa shogun and European aristocrats from 1610 to 1760: One hundred rare treasures show how the Imari potters captivated collectors from both the East and West. •Maison de la Culture du Japon. Until March 19. Site: [www.mcjp.asso.fr](http://www.mcjp.asso.fr).

**Body Art**

Elaborate tattoos, body paintings and ornaments display African art as found in South and North America, Asia and the South Sea Islands. Masks, statues and other objects complete the show. •Musée Dapper. Until April 3. Site: [www.dapper.com.fr](http://www.dapper.com.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](http://www.musee-jacquemart-andre.com).

**Pierre Choumoff, 1872-1936**

Rodin, Stravinski, Prokofiev, Tsvetaïeva, Kisling, Foujita, Bourdelle, Zadkine, Monet, Léger, Kessel and Einstein photographed by the Russian portraitist Choumoff. •Musée Rodin. Until April 3. Site: [www.musee-rodin.fr](http://www.musee-rodin.fr).

**Food**

The biggest agricultural show of the year, the “Salon de l’Agriculture”: regional products presented by the proud farmers—lots of goodies to taste and buy. •Parc des Expositions. Feb 26-March 6. Site: [www.salon-agriculture.com](http://www.salon-agriculture.com).

**Cité Preview**

This is a preview of works that will be displayed at the new Cité de l’Architecture et du Patrimoine. Shown here are copies made during the early

nineteenth century of church frescos from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance. The exuberant colors of these meticulously detailed copies harmonize perfectly with the sobriety of the Gothic Conciergerie. •Conciergerie. Until Feb 28.

**Rare Books**

The most important annual sale of rare and antique books, posters, brochures and other printed matter. •Salon du Livre et Papiers Anciens. Espace Champerret. Feb 25-March 6. Site: [www.parisexpo.fr](http://www.parisexpo.fr).

COMING SOON

**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. May 1-30. Site: [www.musee-picasso.fr](http://www.musee-picasso.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. March 15-July 10. Site: [www.musee-orsay.fr](http://www.musee-orsay.fr).

**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. March 10-June 6. Site: [www.louvre.fr](http://www.louvre.fr).

**29th Annual Paris Marathon**

Register now to run 42.195 km through the streets of Paris. •April 10. Site: [www.parismarathon.com](http://www.parismarathon.com).

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

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

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