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FRANCE

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September 2014 | Issue 192

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25
of the best-kept
secrets
in Paris

PAULA RADCLIFFE

on life in Monaco
and the Pyrénées

THE SOMME

The land that bears
the scars of war

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of boating in
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+ Lyon

The foodie
capital of
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The beautiful village
that needs no fanfare

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THE LOIR BY BIKE
The *other* Loir (without
an e!) on two wheels



PARIS SECRETS

Millions of visitors throng the streets of Paris every year and, understandably, most make a beeline for the big attractions such as the Eiffel Tower, the Musée du Louvre and the Cathédrale Notre-Dame.

It might seem that there is nothing more to discover in the City of Light, but take a few steps away from the tourist hot spots and you will enter an exciting new world.

Our team of writers have used their insider knowledge of Paris to suggest 25 ideas for making your next trip

that little bit different, covering accommodation, restaurants, entertainment and places to visit.

Follow some of our ideas and you could be strolling through a 400-year-old market, sipping mint tea in a Moorish garden, eating in Paris's oldest restaurant and staying in a 1920s mansion. The choice is yours!

Carolyn Boyd, Editor

Contributors: Carolyn Boyd, Stephen Clarke, Carol Dunswater, Régine Cochrane, Paul Lameria, Lynn McBride, Zoe McIntyre

Our guide to the best kept secrets in the rest of France (May 2014, issue 188) can be accessed online by visiting <http://bit.ly/1p7eGrD>



WHERE TO GO

1 SMELLING SWEET

The aptly named Nose, in the 2nd arrondissement, is a luxury perfumery and boutique that offers an alternative to big-name brands with its stock of around 50 rare scents as well as exclusive home fragrances and cosmetics. Visitors can drop in to the fragrance bar to undergo a 'scent diagnosis', which involves answering questions to pick out your preferences and then blind-smelling a selection of fragrances to find the perfume that suits you best. ZM

Nose, 20 Rue Bachaumont, 75002 Paris

Tel: (Fr) 1 40 26 46 03

<http://nose.fr>

Métro: Étienne Marcel, Sentier

2 TAKEAWAY TREATS

Spend a Saturday morning at the Edgar Quinet market on the boulevard of the same name and next stop will be the estate agents. Shopping here and along Rue Daguerre, on the other side of the Cimetière Montparnasse, is a big part of living the Parisian fantasy. You'll need to know your onions, mushrooms and seafood because the variety of quality ingredients is incredible; pick up *mousserons des prés* (field mushrooms) to prepare with lobster or get hot *choucroute* for a picnic in the nearby Jardin du Luxembourg. On the pedestrianised Rue Daguerre the shops are permanent and the food comes out into the street to meet you. Fishmongers, grocers and wine merchants will happily help you to arrive at the perfect combination. PL

Edgar Quinet market: Wednesday and Saturday (8am-2.30/3pm)

Métro: Edgar Quinet

Rue Daguerre: Monday to Saturday

Métro: Denfert-Rochereau

3 MARAIS MARKET

Behind an inconspicuous iron gate in the Marais district lies the Marché des Enfants Rouges, Paris's oldest covered market and an atmospheric option for picking up a cheap lunch or picnic items. Created in 1615 on the site of a former orphanage, the market was named after

4 PIAF IN PARIS

Tucked away in a block of private apartments in the Belleville district, the Musée Édith Piaf is an Aladdin's cave of memorabilia. The apartment itself, accessed via two double doors, a lift and a corridor, and only by appointment, was once the home of the legendary singer, and is now owned by Bernard Marchois, who has given over two rooms to the museum and filled them with items that once belonged to 'la *môme piaf*' (the little sparrow), who died in 1963, aged just 47. The red papered walls are covered in drawings, photographs and letters, as well as gold and platinum discs. A life-sized cut-out and the many clothes on display – including her iconic little black dress – demonstrate just how tiny Piaf was at only 1m 42cm (4ft 8in).

Marchois, whose parents were family friends of Piaf, first met the legendary singer when he was 16. He was introduced to her backstage at a show at the Olympia theatre in Paris and says the moment "is engraved in my memory" despite admitting to being more interested in the music of "British Teddy Boys" at the time. Marchois is happy to pinpoint various items and how they relate to her life, including letters from singers Tino Rossi and Maurice Chevalier, as well as from Marcel Cerdan, the world champion boxer said to have been the love of her life. He was tragically killed in a plane crash in 1949. CB

Musée Édith Piaf, 5 Rue Crespin du Gast
75011 Paris

Tel: (Fr) 1 43 55 52 72

Appointment only, book by phone the week before you wish to visit.

Métro: Ménilmontant

5 GREAT NEIGHBOURHOOD

When in Paris, we stay in a residential neighbourhood in the 16th arrondissement, quite a way from many tourist attractions. So it was a delight to discover, just over the River Seine from the 16th and near the Eiffel Tower, the perfect street to *flâner* (take an aimless stroll). Rue Saint-Dominique has it all: boutiques, art galleries, great architecture and the sort of restaurants with red awnings and checked tablecloths that sum up Paris. One such place is La Fontaine de Mars, next to a fountain after which it is named (tel: (Fr) 1 47 05 46 44, www.fontainedemars.com).

The street is probably best known as the location of three eateries by star chef Christian Constant. Our favourite is Les Cocottes, a bistro where dishes are served in cast-iron pots. They don't take reservations, so go early – lunch starts at noon and dinner at 6.30pm (www.maisonconstant.com/les-cocottes). Continue strolling along Rue Saint-Dominique and take a right turn into Rue Cler, a cobblestoned, pedestrianised street that is a haven for foodies, with gourmet shops and a charming street market (Tue-Sat 10am-6pm, Sunday morning). LM

Rue Saint-Dominique, 75007 Paris

Métro: École Militaire



4



5

PARIS SECRETS



the red uniforms worn by the children. It was listed as a national monument in 1982 and is now popular with local shoppers. Enjoy Afro-Caribbean, Moroccan and Middle Eastern delicacies at the makeshift cafés, pick

your fruit and vegetables, or browse the flower stalls and antique offerings. **ZM**

Le Marché des Enfants Rouges, 39 Rue de Bretagne, 75003 Paris

Open: Tue-Thurs

8.30-1pm, 4-7.30pm; Fri-Sat

8.30am-1pm, 4-8pm; Sun. 8.30am-2pm

Métro: Filles du Calvaire

TOP TIP

For news of the latest events and free guided tours, pick up a copy of *Pariscope*, a weekly listings magazine, priced €0.50

6 GREAT ESCAPE

If the bustle of Paris gets too much, seek out the tranquillity of the Grande Mosquée. Walled off from the rest of the capital, the building is recognisable by its Moorish tower. Once inside, visitors are transported to North Africa. Moorish arches lead to a cool garden courtyard filled with exotic greenery. The constant sound of trickling water is particularly calming. There is a courtyard café where you can sip hot and very sweet mint tea with a slice of pistachio cake. **PL**

La Grande Mosquée, 2bis Place du Puits de l'Érmitte, 75005 Paris

Tel: (Fr) 1 45 35 97 33

www.mosqueedeparis.net

Métro: Place Monge, Censier-Daubenton ▶





WHERE TO STAY

7 TRIPLE CHANCE

At his beautiful bed and breakfast Les 3 Chambres, Laurent Rougier eases you into the day with a scrumptious breakfast served in the book-lined lounge of his 1830s house, between Montmartre and the *grands magasins*. The three luxury rooms are the epitome of elegance and comfort, marrying antique furniture, rich carpets and tasteful furnishings with modern trappings including flat-screen TV, Wi-Fi, iPod/iPhone deck and coffee machine. Rooms from €194 a night. **RG**
 Les 3 Chambres, 14 Rue Bleue, 75009 Paris
Tel: (Fr) 1 42 47 07 42
www.les3chambres-paris.com
Métro: Cadet

8 HOME FROM HOME

If you want a peaceful retreat in the capital, La Villa Paris is a bed and breakfast housed in a charming 1920s red-brick mansion tucked away between the Butte aux Cailles neighbourhood and Parc Montsouris. The affable hostess Marie offers three rooms with

TOP TIP
 Avoid the queues at the Musée du Louvre by using the entrances at the Porte des Lions or Passage Richelieu

an en-suite shower and a fourth with a large marble bathroom and Jacuzzi. Luxurious king-size beds ensure a sound night's sleep and breakfast is a feast. Guests have access to a kettle and fridge in the communal kitchen and are given a key to the main door. Doubles from €125. **RG**
 La Villa Paris, 33 Rue de la Fontaine à Mulard, 75013 Paris
Tel: (Fr) 1 43 47 15 33
www.la-villa-paris.com
Métro: Maison Blanche

9 MONTMARTRE TREASURE

The Paris-Oasis guesthouse, run by Héléne and Jean-Louis Bignon, is an enchanting place to stay near the Basilique du Sacré-Coeur in Montmartre. The five fully furnished flats are of different sizes to accommodate singles, couples or families, and each has a bedroom, en-suite shower room, toilet and kitchenette. African masks, paintings and statues are scattered throughout the property, and other delights include a garden and indoor swimming pool. The one-person apartment

costs €90 a night and the other four apartments are from €140 for two (minimum stay three nights). **RG**
 Paris-Oasis, 14 Rue André-diel-Sarte 75018 Paris
Tel: (Fr) 1 42 55 95 16
www.paris-oasis.com
Métro: Barbès-Rochecouart, Anvers

10 ARTISTIC STREAK

The Hôtel du Petit Moulin is a four-star boutique address in the Marais district, not far from the Centre Pompidou arts complex, and decorated throughout by the fashion designer Christian Lacroix. Combining two 17th-century buildings, the hotel has retained its 19th-century painted storefront – a nod to its past life as a *boulangerie* that included the writer Victor Hugo among its customers. Each of the 17 rooms is individually decorated with bold, clashing colours, lush fabrics, Venetian mirrors and 1960s furniture. Doubles from €195. **RG**
 Hôtel du Petit Moulin, 29 Rue de Poitou 75003 Paris
Tel: (Fr) 1 42 74 10 10
www.hotelpetitmoulinparis.com
Métro: Saint-Sébastien-Froissart, Filles du Calvaire

