New Contribution for Development Aid Approved

The Council of Ministers approved on November 23 a new levy on airplane tickets, the proceeds of which will be used to help finance development aid. The French parliament will now examine the project, and is expected to approve it in time for the contribution to go into force starting on July 1, 2006. The French government estimates the levy will bring in 200 million euros a year ($236 million), which will serve above all to finance the fight against AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, and other deadly diseases. Some of the funds will also be earmarked for the International Finance Facility (IFF), a British initiative in which rich countries borrow money to increase their contributions to developing countries.

The levy will vary between 1 euro ($1.18) for economy class tickets from France to other European countries and 40 euros ($47.20) for long-haul first class tickets. Economy class passengers will never pay more than 4 euros ($4.72)—the proposed levy on flights to non-European countries—and passengers in transit will be exempt.

"After a considerable effort, we are now capable of putting in place a solidarity contribution on airplane tickets that could bring in up to 200 million euros a year," declared French President Jacques Chirac during the ministerial meeting. "It has been designed to affect neither the competitiveness of French airports nor the level of employment in the aeronautics sector."

Chirac, a keen proponent of the need to increased third world aid, first mooted the idea of an increased level of employment in the aeronautics sector. "After a considerable effort, we are now capable of putting in place a solidarity contribution on airplane tickets that could bring in up to 200 million euros a year," declared French President Jacques Chirac during the ministerial meeting. "It has been designed to affect neither the competitiveness of French airports nor the level of employment in the aeronautics sector."

Chirac, a keen proponent of the need to increased third world aid, first mooted the idea of an international solidarity contribution during the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, in January (see NFF 05.01). Since then, almost 80 countries have offered their support. In particular, the French initiative is backed by Algeria, Germany, Brazil, Chili, Spain and the United Kingdom. Chili will implement a similar levy on airplane tickets starting on January 1, and British authorities will redirect the proceeds of existing levies to the project. Chirac called on other countries to follow suit, ahead of a February conference on the subject in Paris. According to government estimates, the contribution could bring in up to 10 billion euros a year if it were implemented on a global scale.

SENATOR DOLE RECEIVES LEGION OF HONOR

Former U.S. Senator and presidential candidate Bob Dole received the French Legion of Honor in recognition of his service in the liberation of Europe during World War II. On November 17, French Ambassador to the United States Jean-David Levitte presented Dole with the prestigious award that dates back to Napoleon’s era.

The Senator served in Italy, but Levitte said that his liberation efforts were felt throughout Europe and that Dole is “known all over France” for his service. During the presentation, Levitte also stressed the ongoing strength of the relationship between the U.S. and France, which, despite occasional disagreements, is held together by the common values of liberty, equality, and democracy. France and the U.S. continue to work closely together on resolving international issues, such as those involving Iran’s nuclear activities and the Middle East peace process. Indeed, Levitte praised Dole for his efforts in one such cooperation—the Dayton Accords of 10 years ago, which negotiated peace in Bosnia.

UNESCO Turns 60

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) celebrated its 60th anniversary in Paris on November 16. UNESCO was founded through the collaboration of 37 countries in 1945 to develop “the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind” and with the intention of “build[ing] peace in the minds of men” following World War II. These nations hoped a culture of peace would help prevent another devastating World War, and the organization used the occasion of its 60th birthday to renew its call for world peace and respect for diversity.

Koichiro Matsuura, the director general of UNESCO, led an official ceremony in recognition of the event, in which he was joined by government representatives, including French Foreign Affairs Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy. Matsuura expressed concern that the objective of attaining peace has not been met, as more men and women have died in violent conflicts around the world during the past 60 years than perished in battle during World War II.

When the celebrations wound down, a two-day conference took place in Paris, attended by around 60 historians, anthropologists, and philologists from all over the world, who sought to determine the direction that international scientific collaboration and research should take over the next five years.

Today, UNESCO has 191 member countries and its goals continue to be to promote peaceful international cooperation, to help its member nations build their institutional and human capacities and to open up dialogues that reflect shared values and a respect for the diversity of cultures. The organization recently adopted a landmark treaty on the protection and promotion of cultural diversity (see NFF 05.12). To learn more, visit www.unesco.org.
France Tackles Discontent in "Banlieues"

For the two weeks following October 27, when two teenagers accidentally electrocuted themselves in Clichy-sous-Bois, near Paris, as they tried to avoid a police checkpoint, France has experienced unprecedented unrest in the poor suburbs (known as banlieues) of several of its cities. The government immediately made it clear that this violence was unacceptable. By mid-November, 3,000 people had been arrested, 640 of whom were jailed. The government implemented a 1955 law, which gives mayors the ability to enforce curfews.

Now that order has been restored, the French government has begun a long-term effort to address the deep roots of the discontent. With most of the rioters hailing from North and West Africa, integration is indeed at the very core of the crisis. The government will reinforce the fight against discrimination, giving the High Authority on the Fight against Discrimination and for Equality (see NFF 04.11 and 05.03) more powers to tackle this problem. The activities of mayors, associations and neighborhood police forces will be reinforced to create stronger community ties.

Unemployment is also an important factor, which will be addressed by the establishment of a voluntary civil service to help disadvantaged youths find work. Thirty thousand positions will be created next year, before reaching a total of 50,000 in 2007. Since education is central to the integration process, the government is determined to better help deserving young students from the banlieues. The government also launched an important housing project, including the renovation of apartments, which will improve residents’ living conditions.

Islam played no role in the clashes, which involved a relatively small number of male youths. Indeed, Islamic religious leaders were among the first to call for an end to the violence. Seventy-five to 80 percent of the people who were arrested were already known by the police as delinquents. They had no political or religious agenda.

New Natural Reserve in French Antarctica

France will designate all 230,000 square miles of its Southern and Antarctic Lands as a wildlife reserve, which gives the territory the strongest protection available in French law. Much stricter than the rules governing a national park, they specifically forbid any type of development. Ecology Minister Nelly Olin announced the decision on November 2 during a joint meeting of the three National Assembly commissions in charge of the country’s 2006 budget.

Designating these lands as wildlife reserves is part of France’s National Strategy for Biodiversity. The goal of this strategy, which was announced in February 2004, is to preserve the diversity of species in territories under French control, including creatures as small as bacteria as well as those traditionally given more attention—plants and animals. The new wildlife reserve in the Southern and Antarctic Lands, for instance, will go far to protect the world’s largest colonies of marine birds and to control fishing in the area. French authorities are especially keen on ensuring that non-indigenous species are not introduced onto the islands, which would prove disastrous to their fragile ecological systems.

To date, 154 wildlife reserves exist in France and its overseas departments and territories. However, the vast majority of these reserves are small, making the current proposal for the Antarctic lands a significant step in the protection of biodiversity.

The chosen area covers the Kerguelen and Crozet archipelagos, the islands of Amsterdam and Saint-Paul and France’s section of Antarctica, Terre Adélie, as well as their territorial waters.

France, Italy, to Jointly Develop Multi-Mission Frigates

France and Italy have teamed up to build 27 new multi-mission frigates to enhance their countries’ naval capabilities. The two NATO allies finally signed the 11 billion-euro construction deal, initiating the biggest naval program in Europe, after three years of negotiations. Italian budgetary problems delayed the program, even after its October 4 approval by French President Jacques Chirac and Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi at the 24th French-Italian summit in Paris.

Of the 27 FREMM frigates that will be built, France will receive 17. The vessels will measure 466 feet by 65 feet and will be outfitted with highly advanced detection and defense equipment. Weighing 5,600 tons, they will be able to reach 27.6 knots at full speed and will carry a helicopter. They are slated to enter service between 2011 and 2020.

In her announcement to Parliament, French Defense Minister Michele Alliot-Marie spoke about the many benefits of this new program. She said it “will allow the renewal of the largest part of the national marine fleet.” In addition, the deal will create many new jobs. It is “excellent news for several thousand workers,” Alliot-Marie said. Visit www.defense.gouv.fr to learn more.
New Orleans Mayor Nagin

In her stimulating new book, Paris à New York, Intellectuels et Artistes Français en Exil (1940-1947), Emmanuelle Loyer has captured the lives of French intellectuals and artists who were living in exile in New York during World War II. All were staunch anti-fascists who supported the Free French and believed in an Allied victory.

Loyer provides a realistic and detailed image of the famous exiles: Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, Jacques Maritain, André Maurois, Jules Romain, André Breton, Benjamin Péret, Jean Malaquais and naturally Claude Levi-Strauss. Their stories embody a determined spirit and a forgotten era. Donnedieu de Vabres honored Mary Young, Ursula Cliff, and Catherine Cheremeteff Davison, three members of the board of the French Cultural Foundation, with the Order of the Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres. Her book is a magnificent read because Loyer provides more than just the facts, she sheds light on the lives of the exiles, who succeeded in transplanting their Bohemian lifestyle to their new, temporary home. Loyer describes the impact these French intellectuals and artists had on American life, and, inversely, the influence America had on their thinking.

Culture Minister Meets With New Orleans Mayor Nagin

French Minister of Culture Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres met with the mayor of New Orleans, C. Ray Nagin, during his four-day visit to the United States (see NFF 05.12). The two discussed France’s Katrina relief efforts, and future joint projects that will help make New Orleans better than ever. Donnedieu de Vabres emphasized the value of culture, in both France and Louisiana: “If we understand the achievements of the European Space Agency, he hopes for more international cooperation in space.

Lights! Camera! L’Oréal!

French cosmetics company L’Oréal has signed an unprecedented marketing deal with the Weinstein Company, an American film studio, in what is the most wide-reaching deal ever between Hollywood and a cosmetics manufacturer. The Weinstein Company is led by Bob and Harvey Weinstein, brothers who became Hollywood giants while running the independent film house Miramax, and L’Oréal is the largest cosmetics producer in the world.

According to the terms of the multi-year agreement, L’Oréal will provide beauty products for use in film production, and L’Oréal’s name will appear in the Weinstein Company’s movies. L’Oréal and the Weinstein brothers will also co-host premieres and other special events, including Academy Awards parties.

"The film world is a great source of inspiration for L’Oréal," said company president Carol Hamilton, "and we’re thrilled to continue our tradition of working with extraordinary talent." Visit [www.lorealusa.com](http://www.lorealusa.com) to learn more.

FORD TO SELL FIRST HYBRID CARS IN FRANCE

Ford Motor Company said it will sell hybrid ethanol / gasoline versions of its Focus cars in France to fleet buyers by the end of 2005, and it hopes to make the entire line hybrid by the end of 2006. At a recent news conference, Ford France Chairman Eric St-Frison discussed the first step. “We plan to apply this technology, which costs 350 euros extra per car, to 300 Focus salon cars and Focus C-Max, carriers intended for local authority or corporate fleets,” he said. "Cars using biofuel emit 70 percent less carbon dioxide than equivalent gasoline-powered vehicles, although they use 25-30 percent more fuel than conventional ones. Visit [www.ford.fr](http://www.ford.fr) for more information.

U.S. STUDENTS SEND POSTCARDS TO FRENCH TROOPS

During high-profile wars, such as the one in Iraq, it is sometimes difficult to remember that there are soldiers still stationed in many other parts of the world as well. One group of American students has long remembered. French students, however, remembered that troops everywhere sometimes need a little boost in morale, especially during the holiday season. Last year, the French Club from Providence High School in Charlotte, N.C., decided to try to lift the spirits of French troops stationed in Coët d’Ivoire and contacted the French Embassy in Washington, D.C., to help deliver their cards to the troops. The students sent the cards last December and January, and were thrilled when they received replies from the soldiers participating in Operation Licorne, as well as a picture of the unit and a letter from the Ministry of Defense in Paris. They were able to see first-hand the positive effect such a small gesture can have on troops stationed abroad.

THE POLISH CONNECTION

Jacob Sibilski always had a passion for space. But it was a chance meeting with a four-star French Air Force General at Cape Canaveral that motivated him to pursue French and German and learn more about foreign cultures. Indeed, it turned out that General Wolzynsky’s parents lived only 50 km from Sibilski’s parents’ residence in Poland! Inspired by the encounter, young Sibilski has gone on to intern for NASA and apprentice for SHARP. Noting that the achievements of the European Space Agency, he hopes for more international cooperation in space.

JACQUES LORAY

Loyer provides a realistic and detailed image of the French intellectuals, the stereotypes, the misunderstandings and the other forces that colored this turbulent period. The book is a magnificent read because Loyer emphasizes the friendships, the mistakes, the misunderstandings and the other forces that colored this turbulent period. The book is a magnificent read because Loyer emphasizes the friendships, the stereotypes, the misunderstandings and the other forces that colored this turbulent period. The book is a magnificent read because Loyer emphasizes the friendships, the stereotypes, the misunderstandings and the other forces that colored this turbulent period. The book is a magnificent read because Loyer emphasizes the friendships, the stereotypes, the misunderstandings and the other forces that colored this turbulent period. The book is a magnificent read because Loyer emphasizes the friendships, the stereotypes, the misunderstandings and the other forces that colored this turbulent period. The book is a magnificent read because Loyer emphasizes the friendships, the stereotypes, the misunderstandings and the other forces that colored this turbulent period.

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Jacob Sibilski (far left) and his sister Agnes pose with Gen. Wolzynsky (2nd from right), and French astronaut Michel Tognini (2nd from left) during high-profile wars, such as the one in Iraq, it is sometimes difficult to remember that there are soldiers still stationed in many other parts of the world as well. One group of American students, however, remembered that troops everywhere sometimes need a little boost in morale, especially during the holiday season. Last year, the French Club from Providence High School in Charlotte, N.C., decided to try to lift the spirits of French troops stationed in Coët d’Ivoire and contacted the French Embassy in Washington, D.C., to help deliver their cards to the troops. The students sent the cards last December and January, and were thrilled when they received replies from the soldiers participating in Operation Licorne, as well as a picture of the unit and a letter from the Ministry of Defense in Paris. They were able to see first-hand the positive effect such a small gesture can have on troops stationed abroad.

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The Nose Knows

JUST AS A MUSICIAN needs a good ear, a perfumer needs a good nose. Their profession demands that their olfactory organ be superbly trained and highly aware. They must also be inventive and have a good grasp of chemistry. Creators of fragrance, who are known as Nez (literally, "Noses"), are held in the highest esteem in the perfume industry and they have the final say as to whether or not a fragrance is acceptable.

The main requirement for becoming a Nose is, naturally, a keen olfactory sense. Perfumers must not simply be able to distinguish the fragrance of a rose from that of a tulip blindfolded, they must also be capable of detecting the precise amount of each substance that makes up a mixture of 100 or more ingredients.

They must be able to recognize the qualities of various raw materials and have a flair for blending them together. The Nose has his or her counterpart in the wine industry, where the skilled expert can tell in an instant the region, type of grape, and vintage of the wine he or she is sampling.

There are approximately 1,000 perfumers in the world but less than 50 of them are “Noses,” that is, perfumers whose creativity and originality are such that they are able to launch real trends. He is both artist and technician and his nose is more accurate, “Noses,” that is, perfumers whose creativity and originality are such that they are able to launch real trends.

Creating a Perfume: An Alchemy of Art and Science

PERFUMERS are artists, craftsmen and designers all rolled into one because you need all three talents to create the perfect perfume. Like music, a perfume creation consists of a unity in which three different notes combine to form a fragrant whole: the top note, the middle (heart) note, and the base note.

The top note is formed of unstable, short-lived components that last under two hours. The middle note most often comprises flower extracts and lasts for around four hours. Nowadays, the base note takes its durability (from 1 to 24 hours, and up to three months on an isolated dipstick!) from very long-lasting fixatives or base raw materials such as oak moss and patchouli.

From his formula, the perfumer creates a compound which will become, depending on its level of concentration, either a perfume (about 20 percent of concentrate), eau de toilette (10 percent of concentrate), or eau de cologne (5-6 percent).

Once the fragrance is created, a bottle is designed to reflect the character and mood of the perfume.

PERFUME FAMILIES

There are several perfume families that help perfumers classify scents and create new blends. They include the Florals, which are primarily fresh flowery scents, such as rose, jasmine, ylang-ylang, tuberose and carnation. The Leathers, which are more masculine, evoke smells such as tobacco, smoke and leather. The Chypres are oak mosses accompanied by floral and fruity notes. The Ferns describe woody notes such as Vetiver, a combination of vetiver, cypress, cedar and amber. The Ambers include powdery floral fragrances combined with warm oriental scents. The Spices are characterized by the heady notes of cloves, cinnamon, nutmeg and juniper. The Citrus family consists of fresh, fruity notes based on bergamot, lemon, orange, neroli and petitgrain. Lastly, the Aromatics are perfumes based on bay, thyme, rosemary, verbena or lipia citriodora, clary, mint, natural and hybrid lavenders. These families are mixed and matched to create new, innovative scents that enchant and hypnotize.

INSTITUT SUPÉRIEUR INTERNATIONAL DU PARFUM, DE LA COSMÉTIQUE ET DE L’AROMATIQUE

Located just outside of Paris, the Institut Supérieur International du Parfum, de la Cosmétique et de l’Aromatique (ISIPCA, the Advanced International Institute for Perfume, Cosmetics, and Aromatics) is a haven for students aspiring to the perfume business. The school was created in 1970 by perfumer Jean-Jacques Guerlain. A small school, the ISIPCA accepts only 380 students per year. It also serves as a center for those already in the business to come and learn the most recent techniques and innovations in the sector. Naturally, the professors at ISIPCA are well qualified, with 80 percent having worked in the professional sector.

Students entering ISIPCA have a choice between several different programs, all of which take the form of apprenticeships. Most students already have a background in chemistry before entering the school. One program, however, is designed for students who do not have such an educational background: the Fragrance Academy. After a general introduction to perfumery, students there eventually learn how to identify fragrances as well as how to develop a fine fragrance product.

Visit www.isipca.fr for more information.

Profile of a Nose: Jean-Michel Duriez

JEAN-MICHEL DURIEZ knew at the age of 10 that he wanted to become a perfumer. Fascinated with scent since childhood, Duriez eventually entered the School of Perfumery of Roure in Grasse in 1984. He went on to create perfumes for Lacoste and Yamamoto (among others) before he was contacted and asked to become the fourth perfumer of the Jean Patou house.

Although marketing often dictates the creation of a perfume, Duriez composes for the fragrance itself and the marketing follows. “Jean Patou is a brand of perfume, not an image,” he says. Not all Nez have this luxury. As a house perfumer, Duriez also has as much time as he needs to create a fragrance—one to two years—instead of having to work within a restricted timeframe. During the past eight years, Duriez has created Un Amour de Patou, Paname de Patou, 2000 en Patou, and Enjoy.

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From his formula, the perfumer creates a compound which will become, depending on its level of concentration, either a perfume (about 20 percent of concentrate), eau de toilette (10 percent of concentrate), or eau de cologne (5-6 percent).

Now, Duriez plans to create couture perfumes, that is, perfumes on demand. To aid Duriez compose a unique fragrance for a client, he and his client will visit Paris, dropping by bakeries and flower shops, discussing the client’s lifestyle. A large flask, accompanied by a travel flask in a personalized vanity case, would cost about 50,000 euros.

One thing about being a Nez frustrates Duriez: he cannot wear a fragrance when he goes to work!
**French Startup Helps Make Cheaper, Cleaner Solar Panels**

A FRENCH STARTUP, Emix, has recently industrialized a cleaner and cheaper manufacturing process for the silicon ingots used in photovoltaic cells (more commonly known as solar panels). The technology, developed by the Elaboration par Procédés Magnétiques (EPM) laboratory of the National Center for Scientific Research, may help make solar-generated electricity more widespread.

By using electromagnetic forces to prevent the molten silicon from contacting the crucible, the new process avoids pollution from the container, resulting in extremely pure silicon. The use of cold crucibles also allows the production of silicon ingots in various shapes, and prevents the loss of any material. Where previously the induction melting, solidification, and silicon forming were separated into three steps, EPM’s process for producing silicon ingots has now combined them into a single step.

Emix owns an exclusive worldwide license for the process, and has just opened its first factory near Limoges, France. Plans for a second and third furnace are already under way, as skyrocketing demand is far outstripping current production capacity. In fact, demand is growing at a rate of 30 to 40 percent annually, 20 times higher than their initial capacity. For more information, visit www.emix.fr.

**New Nanostructure Promises Better Hard Drives**

Researchers from the National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS), the University of Paris and the Polytechnic School of Lausanne presented a new magnetic nanostructure that is capable of storing 4,000 billion bytes per square centimeter, an increase by a factor of 200 compared with the most advanced hard drives currently in existence. To achieve this feat, researchers deposited cobalt atoms onto a crystalline gold surface, which caused the atoms to spontaneously rearrange themselves into a network perfectly suited for the high-density storage of information. The researchers note, however, that much work remains to be done before their discovery is commercialized.

**Renault’s Clio III Named “Car of the Year 2006”**

Renault’s Clio III was named “Car of the Year 2006” by 58 motoring journalists from 22 European countries. The Clio III has been commercialized in Europe since mid-October. Renault beat out Volkswagen’s Passat and the new Alfa Romeo from Fiat. Six-time winner Renault previously won this prestigious award in 1966 for the Renault 16, in 1982 for the Renault 9, in 1991 for the Clio I, in 1997 for the Scénic Mégane, and in 2003 for the Mégane II. For more information, please visit www.renault.com.

**CNRS Awards Gold Medal to Physicist Alain Aspect**

The CNRS has recently honored physicist Alain Aspect, director of research at the Optical Institute of Orsay in Paris, with its 2005 gold medal for his research on photons in the field of quantum mechanics. Aspect, now 58, has been working in quantum mechanics since 1975, when he first started to investigate the debate raging between Albert Einstein (who considered quantum theory incomplete) and Niels Bohr. With his colleagues, Aspect helped prove Bohr right by demonstrating the existence of pairs of correlated photons (which remain linked no matter how far apart they are from one another). This strange property now forms the basis for research in quantum computers and cryptography.
New Look for "Le Monde"

The revamped version of the venerable daily Le Monde appeared on newsstands on November 7.

Readers were greeted with an airy presentation, featuring a new typeface, fewer articles, and more photos. Publisher Jean-Marie Colombani says that the new design is intended to "adapt and renew our contact with our readers, responding to [their] criticisms, reproaches, and wishes."

Indeed, the influential newspaper has faced declining circulation in recent years, as readers increasingly turn to the Internet and free dailies. The 2003 best-seller The Hidden Face of Le Monde contained harsh criticisms of the paper and its management, hurting the paper’s image. While Colombani does not accept the book’s allegations, he has taken readers’ comments and concerns into account.

Le Monde is now divided into three sections: "news" treats time-sensitive national, business, and international stories; "decoding" is a forum for analysis and opinions; and "rendez-vous" features lifestyle articles catering to the new expectations of today’s readers.

With the rise of the Internet, newspapers have been forced to redefine and reposition themselves. Le Monde’s new format aims to appeal to its faithful readers while attracting new ones. It is already read by an estimated three-quarters of France’s opinion leaders, and by a quarter of their European counterparts. For more information, please visit www.lemonde.fr.

Rival newspaper Le Figaro (www.figaro.fr) has reported initial gains after introducing a new design this October (see NFF 05.11).
"Joyeux Noel" Nominated for Oscars

French Nomination for Oscars Recalls Unique Moment of Fraternization During World War I

After the success of Un Long Dimanche de Fiançailles by Jean-Pierre Jeunet, French film maker Christian Caron has just released another movie dealing with the Great War. Joyeux Noel (Merry Christmas) recounts the fraternization of French, British and German soldiers over a soccer match during Christmas Day in the early months of World War I.

On Christmas Day in 1914, soldiers from the two sides of the battlefield met for a few hours, smoking cigarettes, exchanging chocolate and other victuals and burying their dead, before resuming battle the next day. The film is based on an actual historical event, which was long covered up by authorities concerned about morale and stories of fraternization with the enemy. It was shot after lengthy investigations and much historical research.

New Book Celebrates Women Chefs

French food writer and critic Gilles Pudlowski's book Elles Sont Chefs (English title: Great Women Chefs of Europe) debuted in Paris on November 7 in the presence of the 35 female chefs celebrated in the book. Nineteen French chefs and 16 European ones grace its pages, which also feature colorful photos by Maurice Rougemont of their tempting creations. In showcasing these chefs, the book shows that women are succeeding in the world of gastronomy, a sphere traditionally dominated by men.

Some of the chefs featured have already secured their reputation, such as Hélène Darroze (Paris) and Anne-Sophie Pic (Valence), who have each earned two stars in the venerable Michelin Guide. Others are on the cusp of gourmet success, and are receiving much deserved recognition. Not only does the book contain original recipes directly from the stoves of gourmet chefs, it also gives readers a peek at what happens behind the scenes, as the women show off their kitchens and invite us along when they go shopping in local food markets.

Buren Piece at Tours Castle

One of the castles of the Loire now has its own piece of art from Daniel Buren. After his exhibition at the Guggenheim Museum in New York, the famous French artist, known for his columns at the Palais Royal in the heart of Paris, was given a free hand to enhance the castle of Tours. The result is an impressive in situ piece, “Plus grand ou plus petit que?” (“Bigger or smaller than?”).

The triangular and colorful artwork transforms the way visitors see the medieval castle, both from inside and outside, by remodeling the shape of the building and its inner spaces. Both structures are intimately intermingled, so much so that some may wonder whether the display is really art. Daniel Buren himself leaves open the question of how the public should appreciate his work. According to him, what is most important is not always the artwork but what the artwork allows one to see. Indeed, in the exhibition, which can be viewed in Tours until February 26, 2006, Buren invites visitors to ask themselves whether the castle exhibits the display or whether it is the display that exhibits the castle.

For more information, please visit www.ccc-art.com.

INTERALLIÉ FOR HOUELLEBECQ

The 2005 Prix Interallié was awarded to Michel Houellebecq for La Possibilité d’une île. He is the 70th recipient of this prize, which is usually awarded to journalists. His controversial novel deals with the obsessive fear of aging and the dream of eternal youth as seen through the eyes of a cynical comedian. This prize was created in 1930 by members of the press who were waiting for the result of the Prix Fémina at the Cercle Interallié club, hence its name.

THE FORCE IS STRONG AT THE CITÉ DES SCIENCES

Fans of the George Lucas saga can discover many secrets behind the creation of Star Wars through more than 150 original objects on display at the Cité des Sciences in Paris, including costumes, excerpts from the six episodes, sketches, and models. Since its opening, over 300,000 people have visited. The exhibit will continue through August 27. For more information, visit www.cite-sciences.fr.

"SMOOTH REVOLUTION" AT AMIENS MUSEUM

Admired by Degas, Van Gogh, and Picasso, Puis de Chavannes is the star of an exhibition at the Picardie Museum in Amiens. Through 150 paintings and sketches by the artist, the evolution of his unclassifiable art (apparently traditional but subtly innovative) will be depicted. The exhibition is on display until March 12. Visit www2 amiens museum fr/museedepicardie for more information.

JOHN LENNON EXHIBIT

Twenty-five years after his death, an exhibit celebrating Beatles legend John Lennon is on display at the Cité de la Musique in Paris. Organized with the help of Yoko Ono, the exhibition “John Lennon: Unfinished Music” coincides with his 65th birthday. It will run through June 25, and features costumes, drawings, posters, videos, objects and, of course, musical instruments. For more information, visit www.cite-musique.fr.
**Félix Buhot: "Impressions of City and Sea"**

**ÉLIX BUHOT** (1847-1898) was known for his Impressionist artwork, in particular his innovative methods in re-creating effects of weather such as fog, mist, rain, and snow. An exhibition featuring his work is on display at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., and has an impressive collection of over 150 Buhot prints and drawings, some of which are rare and have never been seen before. About 60 prints and several drawings showcase his experimental techniques through two frequent subjects: the sea and the city.

He found inspiration for his city prints from Montmartre, Paris and from the grand public squares and streets of London. His sea prints include the sea’s passing tempests, ominous skies, and persistent melancholy. Buhot, like many of his contemporaries, was interested in searching for new ways of depicting atmospheric effects. Etching was the first technique Buhot learnt, but he moved on to other media afterward. Indeed, in certain prints he combined different techniques such as etching, drypoint, aquatint and even photo-mechanical reproduction. In these experiments, he used several different types of inks and papers.

The exhibit runs through February 20, 2006 (www.nga.gov).

**"Adorning the World: Art of the Marquesas Islands"**

**KOWN AS** Paul Gauguin’s final refuge, the Marquesas Islands, located to the northeast of Tahiti and part of French Polynesia, play host to the most gifted traditions of sculpture and decorative art. Featuring nearly 80 exceptional examples of Marquesan art from museums, libraries, and private collections—many of which are rare and have never been seen before—the exhibition explores how art portrayed and enhanced the central themes of secular and religious life in these Pacific islands.

Marquesan artists ornately decorated nearly every type of object they use. The objects were richly decorated with anthropomorphic and geometric motifs. They used various materials such as wood and stone, as well as the most sophisticated tattooing in the Pacific. Many pieces in the exhibit date from the late 18th century to the late 19th century and range from three-dimensional creations in wood, stone, and ivory to feather work and tattooing.

The exhibit, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, runs till January 15. For more information, please visit www.metmuseum.org.