

Minister Douste-Blazy Visits New York

FRENCH Minister of Foreign Affairs Philippe Douste-Blazy traveled to New York City on May 8 and 9 to meet with other prominent members of the international community, notably United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan and U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. Meetings included discussions of the challenges in the Middle East, especially in Iran and Africa, particularly Darfur. The meeting was critical to advancing the international dialogue surrounding these conflicts.

First, on Monday, May 8, Douste-Blazy met with Annan at the U.N. headquarters. They discussed current issues being dealt with in the Security Council, as well as U.N. reform.

Later that day and at the invitation of Secretary of State, Douste-Blazy attended a dinner with his American, German, British, Russian and Chinese counterparts, as well as the European Union's high representative for foreign policy and common security, to discuss the Iranian nuclear issue.

Speaking about Iran and the progress made in discussions, Douste-Blazy said, "We took stock of the situation. Mr ElBaradei submitted his report to the Security Council ten days ago. Iran has not responded to the international community's request. On the contrary, she has accelerated her enrichment program. So we all agree that this attitude creates a worrying situation for the whole international community. This evening, we all agreed that what we want is the suspension of all Iran's sensitive nuclear activities. The discussion was on the way to include this requirement in the resolution." He added: "We have asked our political



Secretary Rice (left), and Minister Douste-Blazy (right), at dinner in New York City

directors and ambassadors now to formulate a resolution capable of receiving the united (...) support of the international community, i.e., the Americans and Europeans, but also the Russians and Chinese."

The Minister made it clear that "France wishes Iran to be faced with a choice. Iran has to face up to her responsibilities. Either Iran is responsive and will then have the benefits of

this, with an ambitious package, ambitious proposals, particularly in the fields of civil nuclear energy, trade, technology and why not security? Or she is unresponsive, and then deterrent measures will be proposed." "We'd like the proposals we make to be graduated, controlled and reversible, to ensure that negotiations are always possible," he explained. "More than ever, I'm convinced that the only possible path is a diplomatic one."

On May 9, Minister Douste-Blazy met with Jan Eliasson, the Swedish foreign minister and president of the U.N. General Assembly. He attended a ministerial session of the Security Council on Sudan. In his address, he saluted the agreement reached in Abuja that finally establishes the prospect for peace in Darfur. He paid tribute to the African Mission in Sudan (AMIS) which "has played an essential role; it will be given new tasks as a result of the Abuja agreement. It must also be made ready to pass the baton to the U.N."

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France Celebrates Abolition of Slavery

MAY 10 was celebrated in France as the first day devoted to the memory of slave trade, slavery and the abolition thereof. Slavery was abolished in France in 1848, and the nation's representatives voted unanimously to classify slavery as a crime against humanity on May 10, 2001. President

Jacques Chirac announced the commemorative date, as proposed by the Committee for the Memory of Slavery.

"A country's greatness lies in its acceptance of its whole history," Chirac explained. He also unveiled plans for the creation of a center for research on slavery and a national center for the abolition of trafficking and slavery.

"France paved the way for other nations: memory and justice are due to the millions of anonymous victims of slavery," Chirac said on

Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres; and Overseas Minister François Baroin. The events also included a reading of works by famous Martinique poet, Aimé Césaire.

"Through the memory of slavery and its abolition, we are also celebrating French diversity today," the president added.

Elsewhere in the city, the Louvre and the National Library of France took part in the commemorations. Events also took place in Bordeaux, where a commemorative plaque was placed, and Nantes, where "trees of freedom" were planted. Such commemorations, which took place throughout France, were the first of their kind in the European Union.

That same day, Brigitte Girardin, Minister of Cooperation, Development and Francophonie, traveled to Dakar, Senegal, to meet with President Abdoulaye Wade. They visited Île de Gorée, an island that was once the largest slave-trading post on the African coast. Now a UNESCO World Heritage site, on May 10 the island also hosted artists from Africa and the Antilles for a large concert.

"Coming to Gorée Island is a way of paying tribute to the endless list of nameless people who, for centuries, suffered from slavery and fought for its abolition. It means paying homage to Africa and to its sons and daughters, who were the first to fight against barbarity through slave rebellions that are still present in African oral memory and in numerous traditional songs. It is this memory that we must officially recognize today. And this is our duty, in all conscience, to make sure it is recognized," Minister Girardin highlighted.



Minister Girardin, center, visits Gorée Island with President Wade (left)

May 10 in the Luxembourg Gardens in Paris. He was accompanied by Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin; Minister of Culture and Communications,

FRENCH SWIMMER BEATS WORLD RECORD

On May 12 French swimmer Laure Manaudou beat the world record for the 400 meter freestyle with a time of 4 minutes, 3.3 seconds, during the third day of the French Swimming Championship in the



French swimmer, Laure Manaudou

town of Tours. Manaudou broke the previous world record of 4 minutes, 3.85 seconds, set eighteen years ago in 1988 by American Janet Evans. The 19-year-old swimmer has already been world champion and Olympic champion in the freestyle.

FRENCH MUSICIANS GET TASTE OF CHINESE MUSIC AND CULTURE

Eight French music composers began their journey throughout Shanghai last month, to learn more about Chinese traditional and modern music. These eight, who were selected from a group of 40 French composers, visited the Chinese

metropolis in search of new inspiration for their upcoming compositions. As part of a unique competition, the composers are required to use Chinese instruments and melodies for their performance at the Shanghai Music Festival next year. Experts will not be judging the competition. "It is important to create music pleasing to ordinary Chinese," according to Chinese composer Chen Qigang, director of the festival. Local residents will choose the three most popular pieces during Shanghai's Music Festival, which will later be performed in the French Festival Presences in 2008. Qigang hopes that the festival will promote Chinese music and culture.

NEWS FROM FRANCE / May 24, 2006

France Bolsters Air Forces in Tajikistan

A DETACHMENT of three French Mirage 2000 fighter jets flew to Tajikistan to support the military operations combating the Taliban in neighboring Afghanistan. The jets and aircrews arrived in Dushanbe, on May 19. They are expected to be based there for a period of four to five months. Another set of three Mirages, specializing in reconnaissance missions, is projected to arrive no later than July. They will also be based in Tajikistan until September or October. All will provide direct support to both the NATO International Security Assistance Force-ISAF and the Operation Enduring Freedom-



Mirage 2000-5

OEF, to which France contributes Special Operations Forces.

French forces have been based in Tajikistan since late 2001, when the Taliban regime in Afghanistan was ousted from power by the Afghan and U.S.-led anti-terrorist operation. France currently maintains two military transport aircrafts in Dushanbe supporting both ISAF and OEF missions. The recent addition increases the number of French military personnel in the region by one hundred, raising France's contribution to stabilization in Afghanistan to over 1,500 soldiers. 

Holocaust Museum to Help France Create Memorial

THE U.S. Holocaust Museum will aid French authorities in tracing the history of Jews held in the French internment camp at Rivesaltes during World War II, and to construct a memorial there, according to an agreement signed May 1. French Ambassador Jean-David Levitte; Christian Bourquin, president of the General Council of the Pyrénées-Orientales region; and museum representatives as well as Elie Wiesel were present at the signing ceremony in Washington, D.C.

The agreement is one of many initiatives taken by France to recognize and preserve the voices of the Holocaust. "The present and future generations must understand and feel the tragedies of the last century," commented Ambassador Levitte at the signing.

The Rivesaltes camp is located in the Pyrénées Mountains near the Spanish border. It is reported to have been the most active way station in Southern France for persecuted Jews and political opponents in France during WWII, retaining 2,300 Jews before they were eventually sent to Auschwitz. At the height of its operation, it held a population of almost 8,000, an estimated 3,000 of whom were children.

After World War II, Rivesaltes was used as a prisoner of war camp for captured Germans. Following the Evian agreement of 1962, Rivesaltes was used as a temporary

lodging facility for the *harkis*, Algerians who fought alongside the French in the Algerian War.

The project outlined by the Holocaust Museum and French authorities will create the first official Holocaust memorial in Southern France. The memorial will honor Jewish victims and survivors, the rom and sinti, the *harkis*, and the humanitarian workers who labored at the camp. It primarily forsee the restoration of the camp to its original state and the construction of various education and resource centers, which should be completed by 2008. In addition, a database will be compiled providing information on the known 256 survivors of Rivesaltes, who will hopefully be able to provide information about others who were interned there. The Holocaust Museum will provide guidance on materials to be included in these exhibits as well as technical support for the database.

These initiatives correspond with the expected opening of German concentration camp archives, which could be instrumental in tracing Jewish refugees. The German government has expressed willingness to work with the U.S. and France in order to provide historians with greater access to Holocaust files. A meeting in Luxembourg on May 16 has reached an agreement to that effect. To learn more, please visit www.ushmm.org. 

Ambassador Visits High School to Discuss Europe Day

FRENCH Ambassador Jean-David Levitte visited St. Stephens and St. Agnes High School in Alexandria, Virginia on May 15 as a part of the Europe Day celebrations. Ambassador Levitte was invited at the request of French teacher Mike Brinkmeyer and Principal Joan Holden, of St. Stephens & St. Agnes.

Levitte spoke with an audience of approximately 130 students, comprised mostly of seniors who are interested in studying political science and international affairs. He first reminded

the audience about the fundamental link between the goal of a unified Europe and its focus on peace and stability after centuries of war between European nations. Then, he highlighted the three "miracles" of the European Union: the French-German reconciliation after three murderous wars in less than one century; the successful adoption of the Euro; and the successful inclusion of 10 new member states from central and southern Europe... all at the same time.

Ambassador Levitte commended the excellent relationship that the institution maintains with a French high school in Normandy. Recalling the moving memories of American involvement in Normandy during D-Day on June 6, 1944, he emphasized the longstanding historical ties between the United States and France, and highlighted their cooperation in developing principles of freedom and liberty.

Following Levitte's speech, he addressed many of the audience's challenging questions about Iran, Turkey, recent social unrest, etc. during a question and answer session. Before leaving, Ambassador Levitte also toured the school and entertained questions from smaller groups of students. 



Amb. Levitte speaks to students at St. Stevens & St. Agnes High School



228TH ANNIVERSARY OF FRENCH-AMERICAN ALLIANCE

On Saturday May 6 and Sunday May 7th, the 228th Anniversary of the French Alliance with the United States was celebrated at Valley Forge National Historical Park (VFNHP). Throughout the weekend, Revolutionary War re-enactors familiarized visitors with the trials of the historic encampment. This encampment gave birth to the Army that won American independence and christened the enduring French-American Alliance. Visitors were invited to enter a simulated colonial-era military camp where they could learn from re-enactors portraying officers, enlisted men, women, and children, about their experiences at Valley Forge and the meaning of the French Alliance to the American Revolution. A congregational procession led by the Sons of the American Revolution Color Guard followed. The celebration was concluded with a review of the 2nd PA Regiment by Lieutenant Colonel Jean-Michel Millet, Assistant Defense and Assistant Military Attaché to the French Embassy, followed by Revolutionary era music. In his speech, Millet underlined the dynamic nature of the French American Alliance, citing the numerous theaters of operations where American and French soldiers are fighting side by side, united by the same brotherhood-in-arms that unified the Alliance 228 years ago.

Target® Partners with Paris Designer

AMERICAN retailer, Target®, has teamed up with Paris-based designer Tara Jarmon to bring the finest of Parisian style to Americans nationwide at affordable prices. Beginning May 1, the U.S. based chain is presenting an exclusive collection of young women's fashion designed by Jarmon in Target® stores nationwide for a limited period of 90 days.

The deal is part of Target's GO International campaign, which aims to bring fashion created by internationally renowned luxury designers to customers at a great value. Mrs. Jarmon is the second designer to participate in the program.

Her summer collection designed specifically for Target® features feminine details such as ruffles, bows, lace, and buttons paired with soft and silky fabrics. The



Part of the Tara Jarmon collection at Target®

designer claims the line was inspired by her early years in Paris, and that it embodies the Parisian "joie de vivre." It will include everything from skirts and dresses to jeans and shorts, as well as accessories.

Jarmon's talents as a designer were first recognized in Paris in the early 1980s, and her imaginative, yet classic, styles received instant attention. Her fashion is known for natural and elegant pieces that incorporate a whimsical element. They are often characterized as capturing a sense of freshness and simplicity, while also integrating more edgy trends to appeal to a wide range of women. As her brand celebrates its 20th

anniversary this year, Tara Jarmon owns 23 boutiques and her clothes are available in more than 80 top retailers in Europe and Asia. To learn more, visit www.target.com. 

American WWII Veterans Honored by French Government

TWELVE American soldiers were decorated with France's highest honor, the French National Order of the Legion of Honor, with the rank of Chevalier, for their bravery in the battle of Normandy during World War II. Six others were honored as well, but could not attend the event. The ceremony took place at Norwich University, in Northfield, Vermont. Congratulatory messages from both President Bush and President Jacques Chirac were read. The soldiers were decorated, in part, as a symbol of French appreciation for American aid during World War II. Since 2004, various French consulates have been seeking out American veterans who are deserving of this most prestigious honor. 



American soldiers honored for their bravery in WWII

ROMAIN GARY: RENAISSANCE MAN

New York University held a colloquium May 4 and 5 dedicated to the multitalented French author Romain Gary. Fifty years ago, Gary won the *Prix Goncourt*, France's highest literary prize, for his work of fiction *Les Racines du ciel* (The Roots of Heaven). He is the only author to win the prize twice; the second time in 1975 for *La vie devant soi* (Madame Rosa) under the pseudonym Emile Ajar. Gary's life was marked by great changes, and he took on the roles of author, diplomat, journalist and cinematographer. Born in Wilno (now Lithuania), Gary spent much of his youth in Nice, France, and also resided on both coasts of the United States. Gary served as spokesperson for the French Delegation to the United Nations in 1952 and as General Consul in Los Angeles in 1956. He also was married to American actress Jean Seberg. The NYU colloquium, which focused on Gary's literary work and life, was organized under the auspices of Tom Bishop and included the participation of Bernard-Henry Lévy; Nathalie Loiseau, Press Counselor of the French Embassy in the United States; various American academics and others. Gary, whose works also include *La Promesse de l'aube* (Promise at Dawn), died in 1980 at the age of 66.

The Cheese Nun: Fulbright Scholar and Ph.D

ON MAY 8, the Embassy of France welcomed Sister Noëlla Marcellino, Ph.D, for the screening of the new Public Broadcasting Service documentary, *The Cheese Nun*, highlighting her journey of discovery, research, and cheese. A cloistered nun at the Abbey of Regina Laudis in Bethlehem,

Connecticut, Dr. Marcellino is no ordinary Francophile. Pat Thompson's fascinating documentary chronicles Sister Noëlla Marcellino's journey from starting out as the Abbey's cheese maker to becoming a Fulbright scholar in France and world class expert on the microbiology of cheese... and a leading advocate of bio-diversity. Marcellino is not simply intrigued by traditional cheese-making techniques, but unique fungus that flourishes on the Bethlehem cheese made in her Abbey. Diversity is, in the end, Sister Noëlla's message. For example, the fungus that grows on the various cheeses she researched throughout France, is a testament to the richness of creation that Sister Noëlla discusses in her doctoral dissertation. Whether it is preserving the species of bacteria under her microscope or the species of animals in the rain forest, her vision is fixed on fighting uniformity and maintaining a world of difference and choice. For more information on the documentary whose portion of proceeds will benefit the Abbey, and the Abbey itself, please visit www.thecheesenun.com and www.abbeyofreginalaudis.com. 



Sister Noëlla (left), Pat Thompson (center) and Christian Berger, Agricultural Counselor at Embassy



The Cannes Film Festival

THE highly anticipated 59th annual Festival de Cannes is taking place between May 17 and May 27, 2006, culminating in the Award Ceremony on the evening of the 28th. This year's Festival welcomes a selection of 55 films representing 30 countries. Most of the films have never been released before.

Although not nominated for an award, the premiere of the long-awaited *Da Vinci Code*, starring American actor Tom Hanks and French actress Audrey Tautou, kicked off the official Festival. The whirlwind week of screenings, judging, workshops, and, of course, celebrity appearances ensued.

The 2006 selection included a group of already seasoned Cannes participants, as well as several anticipated new faces. Once again, 2001 winner Nanni Moretti presented a film, as did Ken Loach, and French directors Nicole Garcia and Bruno Dumont. Demonstrating the international spirit of the festival, Asian films have become an integral part of the competition, and films from China were found in all three categories of the Festival this year. Directors from Eastern countries Poland, Hungary, and Romania also presented their work for the first time - a sign of a flourishing cinematic culture in Eastern Europe.

Though the origins and styles of this year's crop of directors span a broad spectrum, several common themes emerge among the films they have contributed.

Many films endeavored to reflect the social and political movements taking place in the world today, bringing the Festival back to its political origins. For example, *Fast Food Nation* by Richard Linklater reflects a struggle with the growth of junk food in America, while several films from the countries of the former Eastern bloc grapple with the potential consequences of European enlargement. A second group of younger directors returned to the genre of futuristic films and posed provocative questions about the future of our societies. Anticipated contributions include Cannes returnee Sofia Coppola and her film *Marie-Antoinette*, as well as *Southland Tales* by Richard Kelly, which offers a glimpse at the United States of tomorrow while incorporating music and poetry. Lastly, these two trends are complemented by several films that explore the universal subject of great love. Highlights among this group include *When I Was a Singer* with renowned French

actor Gérard Depardieu.

The Official Jury is presided over by Chinese director Wong Kar Wai, and features well-known celebrities such as Italian actress Monica Bellucci, American actor Samuel L. Jackson, and English director Tim Roth.

In addition to the presentation of these films, a variety of exhibits and events take place during the period of the Festival. In honor of Europe Day on May 23, the Festival welcomed European Ministers of Culture and presented exhibitions surrounding the theme "European Films Go Global." A collection of erotic drawings by Sergei M. Eisenstein is displayed, juxtaposed with the screenings of his better-known works, *October* and *Behzin Meadow*. A Cinema Master Class was also hosted by director Sydney Pollack, at which he presented his documentary *Sketches of Frank Gehry*. Overall, this year's festival promises to continue the tradition of Cannes with a long list of impressive participants and events, and of course the usual glamour. 

THE PALME D'OR

The *Palme d'Or*, or Golden Palm, awarded at the closing of the festival, is one of the most prestigious awards in the film industry. Each year, approximately 20 films vie for the honor. In 1954, organizers renamed the *Grand Prix du Festival international du Film*, or First Prize for the International Film Festival, the *Palme d'Or* after a sketch by legendary French director Jean Cocteau. In 1955, American director Delbert Mann won the festival's first *Palme*, for his film *Marty*-the only film to have won the the *Palme d'Or* and the Academy Award for Best Picture. Since then, *Palme*-winning films have included Federico Fellini's *La Dolce Vita* (Italy, 1960), Roman Polanski's *The Pianist* (Poland, 2002), and Michael Moore's *Fahrenheit 9/11* (U.S., 2004). In the award's 50-year history, 18 of the winners have been American. Italy follows with 12 awards, and France has claimed 9. The award has also gone to directors from Japan, Denmark, New Zealand and Algeria. *The Palme d'Or* marks the truly international character of the festival.



The *Palme D'Or*

History of the Festival

THE Cannes Film Festival has come to be synonymous with glamour and prestige. It's agreeable climate, appreciation for cross-cultural art, and international reputation as a privileged venue for filmmakers are only a few of its distinguishing characteristics.

The festival's roots stem from a much more idealistic nature than people often realize. The framework for the Cannes Film Festival began in 1938 as a protest to the propaganda films sweeping the most popular festivals of the time. French, British and American jury members withdrew from Mostra di Venezia, an Italian film festival, that gave its highest award to a Nazi propaganda film by Joseph Goebbels. Later that year, critics and filmmakers successfully established the Cannes Film Festival with goal of creating a festival free of political bias and censorship. These leaders included Robert Favre Le Bret, who later became the festival's longest serving president, and Louis Lumière, who invented cinema with his brother in 1895.

The first festival held at Cannes began on September 1, 1939, but the outbreak of World War II prevented it from reaching its conclusion. The next festival was not held until 1946, when it included films from Walt Disney and Alfred Hitchcock. The following year, the festival was supported by the new National Center for Cinematography (CNC). Cinema, and the celebration of the art, was becoming increasingly important in France.

It was in the 1950s that Cannes expanded and gained the renown that it enjoys today. The festival was moved from September to May, a change that set Cannes apart from other competitions taking place in the fall. The change also

made the festival a kickoff to summer and the tourist season along the Côte d'Azur.

During that time the festival became, as a spokesperson of Cannes Film Festival said, "the privileged venue where great directors present their latest opuses." The list of attendees expanded, and the festival truly became a venue for international exploration in film. Louis Malle of France and Federico Fellini of Italy were regular attendees, as well as Walt Disney.

The scope of Cannes has continued to expand. The festival has grown to encompass seven major sections: In Competition, Out of Competition, Un Certain Regard, Cinéfondation, Critics' Week, Directors' Fortnight and Marché du Film.

The first two categories indicate simply whether or not a film will be eligible for the *Palme d'Or*, the top honor awarded at the festival. The Un Certain Regard category, the largest of the festival, was created in 1978 to promote world cinema and to incorporate several side events. While it does not offer any awards, Cinéfondation, which presents short films, does give out three prizes. Critics' week, established in 1962, is run by the Union of French Film Critics, and Director's Fortnight is open to feature-length and short films. Films, as well and foreign rights, are bought and sold at the Marché du Film, or Film Market.

From its origins in protesting political bias and censorship, the Festival de Cannes has become one of the largest media events in the world and is attended by 4,000 journalists and over 1,600 media representing over 75 countries. 



Alcatel and Phone Systems Create VoIP

PHONE Systems and Network, an alternative French operator, announced in early May the transfer of all its nationwide local and long distance network from TDM infrastructure to Voice-over Internet Protocol (VoIP). To complete this transformation, Phone Systems and Network partnered with French communications solution provider, Alcatel. Using elements of Alcatel's IP multimedia subsystem solution, Phone Systems and Network is now the first pure play VoIP alternative operator in France. Phone Systems and Network can now offer a range of advanced and competitively priced IP services to their clients by routing voice conversations over the Internet or through any other IP

network rather than using phone lines. In addition, VoIP technology not only reduces infrastructure costs, but it also integrates services with personal computers. VoIP also permits the client to talk to more than one person for an unlimited amount of time at no additional cost. The transfer from traditional public telephones lines to IP-based networks represents the next generation of communication technology. For Alcatel, the partnership with Phone Systems and Network reflects the market demand for their multimedia subsystem solutions as more transformation projects are scheduled for the future. For more information, please visit www.alcatel.com or www.phonesystems.net.

FRENCH UNEMPLOYMENT DOWN

French Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin hailed a significant decline in unemployment, citing modest reforms of the French labor market to explain the improved economic situation. The data provided by the French Ministry of Employment show a significant drop of full-time unemployment from February (9.6 percent) to March (9.5 percent). This is considered the biggest monthly drop in unemployment since 2001.

FRENCH-AMERICAN SATELLITE LAUNCHED

After seven fruitless attempts to launch, due to various technical and meteorological problems, the Franco-American satellite Calipso (Cloud Aerosol Lidar Infrared Pathfinder Satellite Observations) was finally orbited on April 28th.

The satellite, along with its partner, the Canadian-American satellite Cloudsat, was launched via Delta 2 from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California, and both are now on their way to join the three other satellites that currently make up the A-Train formation. Once in position, Calipso will begin supplying three-dimensional images of cloud formations and analyzing the aerosols and particles suspended in the atmosphere. The satellite, designed by French National Space Agency, CNES, using Alcatel Alenia Space's Proteus platform, is designed to operate for three years.

Virtual Scooter Offers Crash Course in Road Safety

A"virtual scooter" that simulates the experience of an actual scooter crash was developed by a group of students from a Parisian university. The simulator was tested for the first time this March. An eyepiece equipped with a screen on it (as shown in picture) immerses the rider in a virtual world of driving. The rider can navigate the scooter and control its speed through a handlebar that is hooked up to a computer. The view is meant to simulate reality as closely as possible with one way streets, and sometimes even unpredictable cars and pedestrians that emerge. The image can be adjusted to



Student tries simulator

simulate city roads or winding country sides that demonstrate their respective dangers for a scooter driver. In France the majority of scooter riders are the young. The project targets this age group by showing the horrors that could result from careless or reckless driving. In the event of a crash, the simulator shows intentionally graphic pictures of wounds and broken bones along with screaming children and people panicking. A woman who took part in the project commented that "it is shocking, but necessary. It is better that an accident should occur virtually rather than in reality."

Renault Invests 308 Million Euros in Powertrain

RENAULT announced that it has invested 308 million euros into the production of its new powertrain (term that describes the engine and gearbox). Renowned for its diesel engine technologies, including Formula 1 engines, the company is constantly seeking new ways to improve emission rates and the performance of its vehicles with new powertrain technology.

The newly developed powertrain consists of the new 2.0 dCi (M9R) diesel engine and the six-speed gearbox (PK4), which is being produced at the Cléon plant in Normandy, France. The engine and gearbox were co-developed with Nissan under the Renault-Nissan Alliance for the Mégane II, Laguna II, Espace IV and Vel Satis vehicle models. "Renault production of the first Alliance powertrain is in line with the strategies of both Alliance partners, who are seeking top-three ranking in key technologies among automotive groups worldwide, with each partner leading its specific fields of excellence," according to the company

In order to produce the engine and the six-speed gearbox that was specially designed to match the engine, the company has invested 308 million euros into the endeavor: 250 million euros allocated to engine production and 58 million euros for gearbox production. Renault aims to manufacture an engine

that will feature state-of-the-art technology while achieving a high standard of quality and reliability. Renault is also keen on developing a manufacturing process focused on superior safety conditions and operator ergonomics, all at a minimal cost to the environment.

To achieve its goals, Renault has built a workshop exclusively for the new engine at the Cléon site. The facility has 10 production lines that are currently producing 1,000 engines per week. The company hopes to increase output to 8,000 engines per week as its engines are integrated into more models.



Renault Cléon facility, Normandy

NEW BIODIESEL UNIT IN FRANCE

Technip, the leading European name in oil-related engineering and services, announced on April 29 that it had been awarded a contract to construct a new biodiesel unit in France. French biofuel giant, Diester Industrie (See NFF 06.02), which issued the Technip contract, plans to have Technip build the new unit in *Montoir-de-Bretagne* near *Saint Nazaire* (Brittany). This new facility is part of a national campaign launched by French authorities to develop biofuels, and reduce France's transportation-related air pollution. Technip, is already in the process of constructing two other new biodiesel units for Diester Industrie in Sète and in Compiègne. These projects mark an important step in the collaboration of the oil-engineering industry and an emerging industry working to supplement oil with biofuels. When the facility in *Montoir-de-Bretagne* is completed next spring, it will be capable of producing 250,000 tons of biodiesel a year.

FRENCH BUSINESS SCHOOL OPENS ASIAN CAMPUS

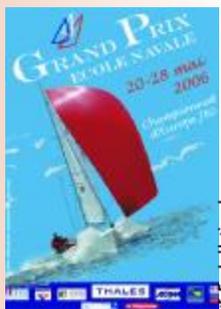
The world-renowned French business school ESSEC opened its Asian campus in Singapore on May 13. It will be ESSEC's first business school outside of Paris. "Located halfway between India and China, Singapore positions itself as the economic and educational hub of the region and, as such, it is the best location for a teaching and research center in the area," according to ESSEC. The business school's expertise is focused on luxury brands in Asia, urban management, ethics and biotechnology, innovation in services, and risk management and sustainable development. ESSEC's Asian campus will join the French campus in continuing to focus on these fields.

NEW SECURITY MEASURES IN METRO

The Paris Metro is implementing a new safety system that will connect the doors of trains to platforms. This new system is expected to alleviate 60 percent of Metro irregularities. So far, the installation of these platform doors have taken place in ten metro stations, including Les Invalides and Saint-Lazare. Three prototypes are being tested and compared. It is likely that the third prototype will become operational.

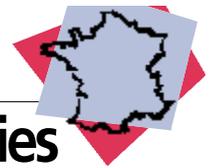
ECOLE NAVALE HOSTS GRAND PRIX 2006

The largest annual gathering of sport boats in France was held again this year in Brest for the Ecole Navale Grand Prix 2006. The fifth annual event of the Ecole Navale Grand Prix 2006 took place during May 20 - 28. The annual event is the largest gathering of sport boats in Europe. Organizers expected approximately 140 new generation monotypes and more than 500 competitors to compete in the events. The Grand Prix also featured the National Championships of



55 Ecole Navale

the Open 7.50. Because manufacturers of the Open 5.7, Open 6.5 or Open 7.5 are mostly in France, the French have an exceptional breeding ground of talented competitors for these races. This nautical race has become very popular among sailors who appreciate big thrills and a real test of their mono-hull novelties.



Internet Game Explains Budget Realities

HOW would you like to become the French Budget Minister for a game of "balance the budget?" Well, by early June you can play Cyberbudget: a new internet game launched by the French government to help teach the public about the not-so-easy game of balancing a country's books.

In a speech outlining reforms to tax collection policies, French Minister Delegate for the Budget & Administrative Reform, Jean-François Copé, announced that the new Cyberbudget game will be available online for 10,000 players to enjoy simultaneously.

Commenting on the new budget game, Minister Copé

remarked, "It is an idea which comes from Japan and we've adapted it for the public at large. Players have to take my place as budget minister, draw up the state budget and then manage it in the face of unforeseen circumstances. It should be a fun way to think about budget issues."

Speaking to *Le Parisien* newspaper, Copé commented lightheartedly, "The French want reforms but they clench their teeth whenever it is a question of cutting costs. So this is a way of familiarizing them with the budget."

The virtual ministers will control over 300 billion euros (\$370 billion) of expenditure, while balancing tax revenues, annual deficit and national debt in accordance with E.U. rules. ■ ■

Famous Sitcom, *The Office*, Moves to France

FRENCH TV network Canal+ announced the release of their new sitcom *le Bureau*, a spin-off à la française of the acclaimed British sitcom, *The Office*. Similar to the premise of its British and American predecessors, *le Bureau* takes place in the workplace on the outskirts of Paris. The French version is a hilarious adaptation of the British series that draws upon the comical aspects of the mundane white-collar workplace. Canal+ agreed to stay close to the design and the timing of the British version in order to receive the rights to create the show. However, to make the show more appealing to French audiences, scriptwriters Bruno and Nicolas, who go only by their first names, had to revise British cultural identities. For example, in the British version, much of the comic relief is drawn around a routine visit to the pub after work. In France, co-workers do not

go to the pubs after work in the same way that the British do.

Instead, Nicolas and Bruno developed comical scenes around the lunch hour, a notoriously prolonged event in the French workplace. *Le Bureau*, which aired on May 25th, includes renowned actors such as François Berléand, a common household name in France. Berléand will play Gilles Triquet, France's version of gauche boss, Micheal Scott. ■ ■



François Berléand

51 Les Films 13

The Paris Trade Fair: 102nd Anniversary

THE *Foire de Paris* at Porte de Versailles is one of the largest fairs in the world. This year's French exhibition was dedicated to the theme of consumption. The 102nd *Foire de Paris*, which was held from April 28th to May 8th, was inaugurated by Paris mayor, Bertrand Delanoë. The popular event is an inevitable destination for fanatics of high-tech and new inventions.

One of the main attractions of the event this year was the famous "*Concours Lépine*," where inventions like the ballpoint pen (1919), steam iron (1921) or lawnmower (1930) were on display. The fair showcased new electronic household appliances as well.

The Paris Fair is known for providing a venue for consumers and firms from around the world to meet. ■ ■

Paris Saint-Germain Wins 2006 Coupe de France

IN one of the most heated soccer match-ups in France, the team *Paris Saint-Germain* (PSG) beat *Olympique de Marseille* 2-1 in the final of the French Soccer Championship, the *Coupe de France* on April 29. The rivalry between *Paris Saint-Germain* and *Olympique de Marseille* is legendary, dating back to 1989 when *Olympique de Marseille* beat PSG 1-0 in the qualifying rounds of the tournament, and still remains a source of rivalry today. French television station TF1 televised



PSG, 2006 Winners of the Coupe de France

55 Paris Saint Germain

the match to over 12.5 million viewers, making this year the third largest viewing audience for the *Coupe de France*

final on record. This was PSG's seventh *Coupe de France* victory in nine trips to the finale. Following the match, hundreds of PSG fans paraded on to the *Champs - Elysées*, celebrating their victory in front of the team's official boutique until the early morning hours.

The *Coupe de France*, an annual tournament organized by the National Soccer Federation (FFF), is open to all professional and amateur soccer teams in France. Over six thousand teams participated in this year's tournament. ■ ■



Ruins of Roman Street Excavated in Paris

In the center of Paris's Latin Quarter, archeologists are excavating the vestiges of four houses and a street from ancient Lutèce. The ruins, which date back to the first and second centuries A.D., are part of the second neighborhood discovered in the ancient Gallo-roman city. The excavated street is approximately 6 meters wide and is bordered by sidewalks. The first floors of the houses, built around the beginning of the century, were constructed with cob; a mixture of clay and straw to build walls. By the middle of the century, masons began building the upper floors with large stones. Remnants of painted murals and heating systems have also been uncovered. The ruins were discovered underneath the garden of a courtyard from an ancient visitation nunnery near *la rue St. Jacques*



Archaeologists examine ruins in *Quartier Latin*

in 1910, but only today are they finally being examined. Director of the excavation team, Didier Bussion, and other archeologists from the National Institute of Preventive Archeology Research (INRAP) hope to conclude their work on the site by June 30. Later this year, a university building is set to be built on the site to help preserve the ruins. Lutèce, a Gallo-roman city founded at the beginning of the common era, extended 270 acres from the Seine to the top of the hill *Saint-Geneviève*. Archeologists have already uncovered principle prehistoric monuments of Lutèce including a forum (*rue Soufflot*), a theater (*rue Racine*), an amphitheater (*rue Monge*) and thermal baths (*boulevard Saint-Germain*). For more information about Lutèce please visit: www.paris.culture.fr/en

Inauguration for Musée du Quai Branly

A NEW museum is always an event, especially when the museum in question is the already legendary "Musée du Quai Branly," built to showcase the arts and civilizations of Africa, Asia, Oceania and the Americas in the heart of Paris (See NFF 06-05). Featuring magnificent collections that have been acclaimed as treasures of the non-European world, the new museum constitutes not one, but several major events, both from a museological and a historical perspective. Long ignored and unappreciated, or restrictively labelled as curiosities, these "faraway" non-Western cultures will be exhibited over a vast area that highlights "the full extent of their depth and subtlety" by fostering a lasting dialogue between individuals and cultures.

The Musée du Quai Branly was designed as a new type of cultural institution, with a dual purpose: to conserve and exhibit the collections, and to stimulate research and instruction. The museum will also run a program of performing arts events - theater, dance and music - designed to resonate with the wide range

of exhibits on display. This will enhance the site's role as a convivial "cultural city" of non-Western arts showcasing non-European populations: an area where cultures, civilizations and individuals meet and mingle. In addition, the museum boasts many unusual features that are sure to astound visitors: the world's largest "wall of vegetation," with 15,000 plants and ferns grown on a vertical support devoid of soil; display boxes of varying sizes attached to the wall outside the main gallery and serving as showcases for the objects on display; and the giant 16-metre diameter glass "silo" built to house the museum's collection of 9,000 musical instruments. The Museum will be inaugurated by President Jacques Chirac on June 20. More than 10,000 people are invited throughout the week to participate in the various activities that are planned. For more information, please visit: www.quaibrnaly.com

Museum Celebrates Contribution of Immigrants in France

THE *Palais de la Porte Dorée* will be opening a museum that will depict the history of immigration in France. Jacques Toubon, Member of the European Parliament and President of the National Museum on the History of Immigration, recently concluded a tour of the U.S. at the invitation of the *Délégation Générale de l'Alliance Française*. "France is the United States of Europe," Toubon stated. The mission of this museum, Toubon explained, is to celebrate the contribution of immigrants in France, and their role in constructing the country and its national identity. Personal testimonies will play an important part in capturing the voices of the past. A



Toubon, right, visits l'Alliance Française in Washington, D.C.

recording studio at the Palais is established to document the stories of those who wish to share their experiences. The building itself was chosen because of its history and its artistic influence. The 172,200-square-foot facility will combine scientific, cultural, and social approaches to include a museum; exhibition spaces; a media library; research; teaching and publication facilities; as well as general meeting areas. The palace itself represents many aspects of the history of France. It was used in the colonial fair of 1931, and once housed the Permanent Museum of the Colonies. Later, in the 1960s, it became the Museum of African and Oceanic Arts.

EUROPE DAY

In recognition of the 20th edition of Europe Day on May 9, several French



national symbols, including the Arc de Triomphe, the Senate, the National Assembly, the Quai d'Orsay and the Eiffel Tower (picture beside) were illuminated in blue, the color of the

European Union flag. This monumental day was chosen to commemorate the speech of one of the founding fathers, Robert Schuman, who established the European Coal and Steel Community. A variety of events were organized to celebrate Europe day this year: a "Europe Day" stamp was put into circulation, a variety of cultural exhibitions opened, various European countries' embassies and the Quai d'Orsay were opened to the public, and many choruses trumpeted the European anthem, Beethoven's *Ode to Joy*.

NEW MAGAZINE FOR YOUNG GIRLS

A new magazine targeting 7- to 9-year-old girls was published by Disney-Hachette on May 3. This new 52-page publication focuses on the fairyland depicted in *Peter Pan*: Neverland, and especially its main character, Tinkerbell. The magazine depicts Tinkerbell and her fairy friends: Rani, Prilla, Fira and Vidia, the bad-tempered brunette. Each issue will comprise two sixteen-page comic strips with fairies portrayed as heroes of the plots, information on fairyland and games. A poster and a gift will also be included.

FÊTE DES MAI CELEBRATED IN NICE

All throughout May, the city of Nice celebrates spring and reconnects with its traditions during *la fête des Mai*. This event is the occasion for families to go into the gardens of *Arènes de Cimiez* for picnics with *niçoise* food specialties, games for children, clown shows, concerts and more. The feast's origins stem from a time-honored myth. Traditionally, people had to cut down a pine tree, decorate it and dance around it to welcome spring. The pine represented the deity Attis, who remained dormant during winter and was woken up by the goddess Cybele at the beginning of spring. Parents and children of the region have come together for decades to celebrate the first Nice days of spring.



In Pursuit of Genius: Sculpted Portraits of Benjamin Franklin

THE Philadelphia Museum of Art will present *In Pursuit of Genius: Jean-Antoine Houdon and the Sculpted Portraits of Benjamin Franklin* through July 31. The exhibition features portraits of Benjamin Franklin by Jean-Antoine Houdon and other French artists. Some 30 works by artists such as Houdon, Claude Dejoux and Jean-Jacques Caffieri will celebrate the 300th anniversary of the newly founded United States' ambassador to France as part of a citywide celebration of the Philadelphian Founding Father.



Bust of Benjamin Franklin, Jean-Antoin Houdon, 1779

Portrait sculptor Jean-Antoine Houdon (1741-1828) was a prominent sculptor of his time, winning the *Prix de Rome* and later becoming a member of the Académie Royale in 1771. At the request of Thomas Jefferson in 1785, he left France to begin a portrait of George Washington at Mount Vernon. Houdon's sculptures of Franklin that are on exhibit have an impressive attribute about them: Houdon did not work in a studio. Instead, he worked during

public occasions, where Franklin remained characteristically calm and still.

The central piece of the exhibition is Houdon's 1779 representation of Franklin in "Quaker dress," which was the customary dress of ambassadors of the time. The exhibition also includes acclaimed sculptures of the French playwright Molière and famous philosophers of the Enlightenment such as Voltaire and Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

Houdon was one of many Frenchmen to be captivated by Benjamin Franklin during his time as ambassador. The scientist, statesman, philosopher, and architect quickly gained fame among the French population. As a dedicated Francophile, Franklin returned the admiration as an expert on French wine and the author of a much-needed French-English dictionary. The exhibition uniquely demonstrates how the pursuit of genius was a success for both artist and subject. ■ ■

French Book Art Presented at New York Public Library

THE New York Public Library is hosting an exhibition of French artist's books until August 18. *French Book Art: Artists and Poets* is a collection of books by modernist artists who infused the two arts of writing and imagery together to create a new mode of expression. Avant-Garde artists such as Picasso and Matisse sought to break away from established book publishing norms to create books in which illustration and text would play equal roles. The exhibition that consists of 126 artists' books from 1874 to 1999 has been on display since May 5.

The pieces are drawn from the Jacques Doucet Literary Library in Paris, as well as from the New York Library's own stacks and various private collections. Line drawings, watercolors, etchings, and woodcuts by virtually all the leading modernist artists are represented,

including Marcel Duchamp, Edouard Manet, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Joan Miro and René Magritte.

Portraits of the poets and artists by photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson, and American Dadaist Man Ray are also on display. The exhibit demonstrates how the forward thinkers of the past century and a half came together to create a mutually, complementary kind of art.

"The works selected for display constitute a memoir of an exceptional moment in art and literature; so exceptional, in fact, that the authors of these two modes of expression tested each other, mutually, supporting, confronting, harmonizing with each other within the unique space of the page, their only rule being the desire to invent together," said Yves Peyré, exhibition curator and director of Bibliothèque littéraire Jacques Doucet. ■ ■



The Green Box, Duchamp

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