

France and Atlanta: Together Toward Innovation

With the aim of strengthening collaboration between France and the American Southeast, the French Consulate in Atlanta and the Georgia Institute of Technology co-presented France-Atlanta: Together Toward Innovation, from November 29 through December 12.

France-Atlanta featured over 20 events that highlighted and encouraged French-American cooperation in the fields of science, economics, the arts, and humanitarianism. Programming included scientific discussions on cancer research and public health problems in Haiti, panels of economic experts that addressed the renewable energy and logistics sectors, as well as musical performances by jazz group Trio Baptiste Trotignon and Les Eléments, a choir from Toulouse. Distinguished French delegations from the Lorraine region and the city of Toulouse — Atlanta's sister city — also participated in the series, which was presented under the high auspices of the Ambassador of France, Governor of Georgia, and Mayor of Atlanta.

"It is the first time that such an exhaustive series of events — dedicated to science, business, culture and humanitarian affairs — has been organized in the Southeastern United States. I strongly believe that France-Atlanta will strengthen the French presence in this region and promote long-lasting partnerships between our two countries," said Pascal Le Deunff, Consul General of France in Atlanta.

On November 30, Georgia Tech Lorraine, the university's campus in France, signed an official agreement creating the Lafayette Institute, a Franco-



(Left to right) Dr. Peterson, President of the Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta Mayor Reed and Consul General Le Deunff attend the France-Atlanta kickoff ceremony.

American research center in the field of optoelectronics. Georgia Tech Lorraine celebrated its 20th anniversary this summer.

For more information, please visit: www.france-atlanta.org.

French Gastronomy: the First in the World



UNESCO recognized French gastronomy with the distinction of Intangible Cultural Heritage in late November.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recognized French cuisine with one of its highest distinctions last month. The panel determined that French gastronomy, with its rituals and presentation, fulfills the conditions to be included on the prestigious list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The recognition marks the first time a country has been awarded World Heritage status for its gastronomy. "It is particularly remarkable that France is the first nation to be so honored for its genius in the arts of the table," stated French Prime Minister François Fillon.

Convening in Nairobi, Kenya, UNESCO's intergovernmental committee examined 51 applications, ranging from Armenian cross-stones to the Giong

festivals at the Phu Dong and Soc temples in Vietnam, as well as Spanish flamenco dancing, Chinese acupuncture, and Azerbaijani carpet weaving.

In addition to protecting the world's most beautiful sites and monuments, UNESCO has been charged with preserving the world's intangible heritage since 2003. To date, 213 cultural practices and traditional forms of know-how have been included on the list of Intangible Cultural Heritage, which considers "the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge and skills ... that transmit from generation to generation ... providing them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity."

The committee noted that meals in France are "a customary social practice."

The delegates placed a particular emphasis on the sense of social cohesion that meals foster, strengthening collective identity and cultural diversity. From designing a careful combination of dishes and purchasing high-quality ingredients — preferably from local sources — whose flavors complement one another, to pairing the right wine with food, the French meal should follow a specific pattern, starting with an aperitif and ending with liqueurs, with at least four courses in between.

In addition to gastronomy, France has received World Heritage Status for its *compagnonnage* system of conveying knowledge and skills in a range of traditional trades, and the craft of needle lace-making in Alençon.

INSIDE

- 2 Current Events**
Online Gambling
- 3 France & America**
Beer Competition
- 4 In Depth**
Christmas in France
- 5 Society**
Holiday Season in France
- 6 Business & Tech**
Drought Research
- 7 Culture**
Getting Down in France
- 8 France in America**
France Magazine

YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS INITIATIVE: SIXTH ANNUAL CALL FOR PROPOSALS



The Young Entrepreneurs Initiative aims to encourage and facilitate transatlantic business opportunities. The competition is open to anyone who resides in the U.S.

To promote transatlantic entrepreneurship, the Young Entrepreneurs Initiative (YEI) organizes a yearly competition to encourage business pursuits in France. The competition is open to any individual residing in the U.S. regardless of age, professional status or nationality, whose project encompasses the creation of an innovative company in France.

A French-American platform dedicated to supporting aspiring businessmen, the non-profit program helps laureates strengthen their startup projects from the U.S., and consolidate their plans for France by providing key resources and partners at a very early stage.

Between six and 10 entrepreneurs receive customized support from YEI and its transatlantic partners, gaining access to YEI's broad network of prestigious incubators, mentors, and investors. Laureates also benefit from a one-week trip to France to meet potential partners and conduct on-the-ground research.

For more information on the program and how to enter the competition, please visit www.yeifrance.com.

Current Events

France "Doubles Down" on Online Gambling

Earlier this year, the French parliament voted in favor of legalizing online gambling sites, allowing international gambling operators to enter the French market for the first time. The development allows a few select, highly rated foreign online casinos to tap into the French market. Since June 8, all online gambling operators have been required to obtain a permit from the government to operate in France.

Among other objectives, the legislation aims to "prevent excessive or pathological gambling behaviors [and underage gambling], ... assure the integrity, reliability, and transparency of gaming operations, ... and develop different kinds of online gaming with a balanced and equitable approach," accord-



A select group of foreign online casinos have been granted permission to operate in France.

ing to the new law. French officials also believe the legislation will reduce the prevalence of illegal gambling sites, as Article 3 of the new law includes measures to "prevent fraudulent or criminal [gaming] activities." Said Government Spokesman and Minister for Budget, Public Accounts, and Administrative Reform, François Baroin, "This [legislation] allows us to progressively dry up the black market in online gambling by creating a legal [avenue] that obeys the laws."

The legislation also offers a boon to the French economy. Regulation promotes higher standards and introduces a levy of 7.5 percent on online transactions, generating revenue for the state while ensuring a legal and transparent process for French users.

Kids Euro Festival Celebrates Third Year of European Arts and Culture

The third annual Kids Euro Festival successfully wrapped up on November 10. Presented by all 27 member states of the E.U. and more than 25 major U.S. arts and cultural institutions, including the Kennedy Center, the Smithsonian Institution, the National Gallery of Art, and the Library of Congress, Kids Euro Festival is the largest children's performing arts festival of its kind in the U.S., offering more than 200 free events.

Launched during France's 2008 presidency of the E.U., the month-long celebration of European arts and culture features performances in practically every creative genre, including music, performance art, theater, puppetry, storytelling, acrobats, magicians, and cinema.

"Kids Euro Festival is all about sharing," stated Roland Cetelet, Cultural Attaché of the Embassy of France. "Not only with

American children and their families all over the city, but also with the educational and cultural community, as well as with our wonderful colleagues in the European Union. We are amazed by the creativity, imagination, and commitment that everyone has poured into this venture."



Kids Euro Festival is the largest children's performing arts festival of its kind in the U.S.

In an unprecedented collaboration, each European Union member state participates, sending to Washington some of their most accomplished performing artists for children. In addition to in-school and public shows, Kids Euro Festival offers reading workshops at every branch of the DC Public Library system, performances for hospitalized children at Children's National Medical Center and the

Children's Inn at NIH, a day for special-needs children, teacher workshops, and a family cinema series.

For more information, please visit: www.kidseurofestival.org.

French in the NBA Power Forward



Frenchman Joakim Noah of the Chicago Bulls blocks a shot in a game against the Washington Wizards.

Over the past two decades, the NBA has become an increasingly international league, with a record-setting 84 foreign players taking the court for their respective teams this season. With 12

Frenchmen currently signed to American rosters, France boasts more players in the NBA than any other country outside of the United States.

The most recognizable of these players for French and American basketball fans alike include the San Antonio Spurs' Tony Parker and the Chicago Bulls' Joakim Noah. Both players have already enjoyed success in American basketball. Parker, who joined the Spurs in 2001 after two years in the French league, helped lead his team to three NBA championships in 2003, 2005, and 2007. He is also only the third French player to ever log minutes in an NBA game. Noah, the son of famous French tennis player and recording artist Yannick Noah, won back-to-back NCAA championships with the University of Florida in 2006 and 2007 before the Bulls drafted him later that year.

Other French players are also turning heads throughout the league. Nicolas Batum of the Portland Trail Blazers, Rodrigue Beaubois of the Dallas Mavericks, and Boris Diaw of the Charlotte Bobcats all look to play significant time in the coming season as they join the ranks of an ever-growing contingent of players from *L'Hexagone*.

French and Belgian Beer Rock Homebrew Competition

Traditionally, French and Belgian brewers offer a beer for nearly every season. From a *cuvée de Noël* (Christmas ale), characterized by a dark color, intense aroma, and smooth body with hints of caramelized malts, to a spiced summer ale with notes of citrus, French and Belgian craft beers celebrate and pair well with the changing weather. For the second consecutive year, this season marked a celebration of French and Belgian ale in the United States.



Kelly Kruegel awards Charlie Gottenkiency the trophy for Best of Show.

Hosted by the Rock Hoppers Brew Club based in Castle Rock, Colorado, on December 4, the second annual *Bière de Rock* homebrew competition showcased beer made in the tradition and style of France and Belgium. Contestants nationwide submitted homemade ales to the competition that fell into various categories, including farmhouse ales like Saison and Trappist ales such as Dubbel and Tripel. Kelly Kruegel, judge coordinator for the event, explained the

draw of these particular crafts, stating that they "offer depth and complexity that is unique, and we value the history of brewing in these regions."

With 118 entries from all over the U.S. in contrast to last year's 80, *Bière de Rock* organizers were "very pleased" with the increased turnout.

Certified judges and professional brewers evaluated entries under the Beer Judge Certification Program (BJCP) standards. The guidelines generally encourage faithfulness to the original styles of the beers, though the broad-based Belgian Specialty category allows for more interpretation and embellishment. The top three entries

in each category received recognition, as well as the three "best in show." Judges also selected amateur brewer Nathan Kanous, whose Saison beer won second place in the overall competition, to replicate his winning entry with professional brewer Tom Bell of Elk Mountain Brewing for submission to the Great American Beer Festival pro-am competition in fall of 2011.



Chroniques de Burgos, created circa 1400 - 1405, is on display at the Getty Museum. On loan from La Bibliothèque municipale de Besançon (France), the work was produced by Virgil Master (French, active about 1380 - 1420), Gonzalo de Hinojosa, and Jean Golein (French, about 1325 - 1403).

French Music Groups Gain American Exposure



While French groups, such as Daft Punk (above), are becoming increasingly popular in the U.S., a new service aims to bolster emerging French talent in the country.

Whether electronic, rock, or in between, French music has rarely been so popular in the United States. With well-known groups such as Daft Punk and Phoenix making waves stateside, some lesser-known groups are now hoping to gain exposure.

To help these up-and-coming talents, Frenchman Benjamin Dumazot created MyBestFrench Music, a promotion company dedicated to showcasing the talents of French music groups in the United States. Dumazot has already taken three groups under his wing — the Elderberries, Mr. Nô, and Bang Gang — and is working to get them exposure in the American market. According to Dumazot, his daily promotional tasks include talking up the groups on influential blogs and social networking sites while working to get their songs into American television shows. While rewarding, his work also presents challenges. "The most difficult aspect of the work is getting the groups to the United States, which can be very expensive ... finding venues is not really hard."

Dumazot hopes that his labor will lead to more opportunities for French artists in the U.S. He believes that although the United States already has a rich music scene, there is always opportunity for innovation. "It's really important that a space exist for French artists who want to bring something new to the table." For more information, and to hear samples of Dumazot's groups, please visit: www.mybestfrenchmusic.com.

New French Film with Louisiana Flair

A recent collaboration between French filmmaker Fabrice Cazeneuve and Louisiana natives Glen Pitre and Michelle Benoit chronicles the cross-cultural experiences of Franco-American wives after WWII. The film, *Cigarettes et bas nylon* (Cigarettes and Nylons) is a French-language film made for American television, recently screened at the New Orleans Film Festival before a sold-out audience.

Cigarettes et bas nylon follows the French wives of three WWII-era American GIs in their attempts to assimilate into American culture. The film highlights the challenges that indi-

viduals can face when adapting to life in a new country. The production, led by legendary husband-and-wife team Pitre and Benoit, used a truly transnational approach in casting and set selection. Alongside the French actors are several Americans, as well as a cast of over 100 locally selected extras. Additionally, the filmmakers shot many scenes in Louisiana. After the festival screening, Pitre and Benoit stayed for an hour to respond to audience questions. To find out more about the movie and the New Orleans Film Festival, please visit: <http://neworleansfilmsociety.org/festival>.

The high Middle Ages in France were characterized by a fascination with the past. Tales of Charlemagne, Alexander the Great, and other historical figures came alive in manuscripts with accompanying illustrations, featuring feats of heroism, strength, chivalry, and virtue. These manuscripts are the subject of the latest exhibition at the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles, *Imagining the Past in France, 1250-1500*, running from November 16 through February 6.

The exhibition, the largest ever to be devoted to the visual representation of history in manuscripts, features national treasures borrowed from 25 institutions from around the world, including the Musée du Louvre, the Cluny Museum, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Among the highlighted works are a 13th-century copy of the legend of the Holy Grail, and a priceless manuscript of Boccaccio's *Concerning the Fates of Illustrious Men and Women*.

The exhibition also features works of ivory, tapestry, metallurgy, and embroidery from England, Italy, and Spain that demonstrate the widespread influence of historical narratives originating in French manuscripts.

For more information, please visit: www.getty.edu.

Christmas in France



Santons can be representations of the Holy family as well as members of the village.

'Tis the season to be jolly, and all around the world people are feeling the holiday spirit. Christmas festivities in France trace their origins back to the fifth century. The first Christmas celebration in the country took place in 496 when Clovis, King of the Franks, and his 3,000 troops were baptized on Christmas Day in Reims. Bishop Rémi had purposely chosen the day of the Nativity for the ceremony. In the following centuries, Christmas has transformed into both a secular and religious holiday that is celebrated throughout France.

Typically, churches in France have a small nativity scene displayed inside on Christmas Eve. In some regions, it was once customary to place a live infant, symbolizing the baby Jesus, in the *crèche* (manger scene) during *la Messe de Minuit* (Midnight Mass). In Provence, many families create smaller versions of the nativity scene at home using *santons* (little saints), terra cotta figurines. Dating back to the 17th century, *santons* typically represent the holy family, the Magi, and people of the village, including the mayor, priest, baker, farmer, butcher, policeman and miller. A special *santon* fair has been held during December in Marseille since 1803, and a summer fair is also held in Aubagne.

Following *la Messe de Minuit*, many families prepare one of the largest and most important meals of the season, *le réveillon*. Specialties of the late-night supper vary according to the region. Goose is standard fare in Alsace, buckwheat cakes with sour cream in Brittany, and turkey and chestnuts in Burgundy. In Paris and the surrounding region, the menu often consists of oysters, *foie gras*, and the traditional *Bûche de Noël*, or Yule log cake. The sweet sponge cake is filled with *crème* and *chocolat* in the shape of a log and symbolizes the Yule log that once burned in the hearth from Christmas Eve to New Year's Day. In addition, the holiday feast can also include ham, wine, fruits, cake, and *boudin blanc* (white pudding). For more information on Christmas in France, including French carols, please visit: www.diplomatique.gouv.fr.

Saint Nicolas and Père Noël

Santa Claus, Father Christmas, St. Nick — the figure who brings children gifts for Christmas is known throughout the world, but when and how he comes varies as much as his name.

On Christmas Day, French children, like their counterparts across the Atlantic, wake up with excitement to discover the gifts that *le Père Noël* (literally, "Father Christmas") has brought them. However, for some of these children, this is the second time in the month of December that they have awoken to find gifts left overnight: in some parts of France, Saint Nicolas stops by weeks before Santa Claus arrives.



The tradition is celebrated on December 6, *la Saint-Nicolas* (St. Nicholas's Day), particularly in northern France. Saint Nicolas, believed to have been born in the 4th century in the small village of Patara in modern-day Turkey, dedicated his life to

the poor and the meek as a bishop. Patron and protector of children, Saint Nicolas is most famous in France for saving three children from an evil butcher, a legend popularized by a well-known children's song.

During the night of December 5-6, tradition has it that Saint Nicolas rides around on his donkey, leaving small gifts and treats for children in shoes left by the fireplace the night before. Like Santa Claus in the United States, Saint Nicolas only brings gifts for good children. For the naughty, instead of a lump of coal, he leaves those children to *le Père Fouettard* (the Whipping Father), who travels with *le Père Noël* to spank children who misbehave.

Why do Saint Nicolas and *le Père Noël* both bring gifts in December? Originally, only Saint Nicolas existed, and Christmas was an exclusively religious holiday. According to *Lexilogos*, Saint Nicolas crossed the Atlantic with the Dutch — who called him *Sinterklaas* — to America, where he came to be associated with Christmas and has since evolved into the plump jolly red fellow whose hearty laugh and sack of goodies enchant children everywhere. In the first half of the 20th century, the popular chimney-diving Santa Claus sailed a sleigh high over the Atlantic back to Europe, becoming popular in France after World War II.

form into small festivals complete with light shows and parades, as well as the scents, tastes and sounds of the holiday season.

Strasbourg, a city near the German border, is often proclaimed the "Capital of Christmas" because of its longstanding tradition of putting on the largest and oldest Christmas market in France (437 years old). History has it that the same area can lay claim to the first recorded appearance of the Christmas tree (*sapin de Noël*) in France (see NFF 06.13).

To the north, the city of Amiens, in the Picardie region, hosts the largest Christmas market in northern France, with more than 100 stalls for over 500 merchants. Here, hundreds of Christmas goods are bought and sold, including spices, ornaments, mulled wine, pies, cookies, toys, trees, clothing and more.

Winter Window Wonderland



Department stores throughout France put up spectacular Christmas displays, including Galeries Lafayette in Paris.

From small chocolate shops to the *grands magasins* (department stores), *les vitrines de Noël* (Christmas window displays) in France are elaborately decorated each year. This practice takes on extraordinary proportions in Paris, where some of the most famous department stores hire artists and designers to transform their window displays into animated scenes that capture the imaginations of adults and children alike.

This year's theme at the Galeries Lafayette in Paris is *Show Chaud Noël*. The *vitrines* on Haussmann

Boulevard feature showcases of some of the most famous comic musicals by presenting the "cast" of each show in preparation for Christmas, each modeling fashions from their era. Among the titles featured are *Mamma Mia!*, *Footloose*, and *Hairspray*. The window dressings themselves are equally festive and spectacular. The building is covered by 23,000 square feet of lights in a delicate lacing designed by Valerio Festi.

Other Parisian department stores — Au Printemps, Le Bon Marché and Le Bazar de l'Hotel de Ville (BHV) — also participate in the holiday tradition. BHV's theme is *Noël Circus*, featuring a series of animated window displays along the Rue de Rivoli designed by Olivia Ruiz and featuring many guest artists.

Christmas Markets

Markets in France can be found year-round, but are particularly widespread in the winter months, when they trans-



Shoppers visit the Christmas market in Strasbourg.

The Holiday Season in France

As winter approaches, the French channel the holiday spirit through a number of social, religious, and cultural festivities and celebrations.

The *Trêve des confiseurs*, or Christmas Truce, signifies the time between Christmas and New Year's Day where all political and professional work-related activity is encouraged to be *mise en sommeil* or "slowed down," in place of more seasonal activities. Its origins lie notably in the 1915 unofficial military cease-fire between French and German troops during World War I, when soldiers put down their weapons for a holiday exchange of hams, biscuits, wine and cognac. Today, the *trêve* is a time for family gatherings and pleasures of the table, particularly holiday sweets prepared by the local *confiseries* (candy shops) and *pâtisseries* (pastry shops).



Cartes de vœux in France can be sent through the end of January.

greeting card exchanges in the U.S.

Although Christmas has a long history in France and is the predominant holiday of the season, Hanukkah, a Jewish holiday starting in early December, and Kwanzaa, an African cultural holiday that celebrates African heritage, are also celebrated in France.

Wintery Activities

With the coming of the New Year, many French look toward the holiday season as a time of renewal, as well as one to escape the bustle of city life. For adventure-seekers, France is ideal for all sorts of outdoor physical activity during the winter months. From the Alps to the Pyrenees, France's many mountains provide a plethora of activities ranging from cross-country skiing, mushing with sled dogs, snowmobiling, spelunking (cave-exploration), and ski-joëring (skiing behind a horse in a flat field). Mountain-top cabins provide rest and relaxation to skiers after a long day on the slopes or can simply serve as an escape into the wilderness with friends and family.

For those who cannot trade the urban cityscape for a snowy rural landscape, holiday events in town can be just as picturesque and enjoyable. During the winter months, cities throughout France open public ice rinks, transforming *la grande place*, or town square, into a winter wonderland. Paris's City Hall rink, which also offers a luge course to children under 12, is one of several iceskating rinks located in the capital. Skaters in Dijon, Burgundy, glide to the scent of freshly baked gingerbread during the week-long Spice Festival in December.

The Ministry of Education provides a two-week break for students to be with friends and family during the season. Some students, use their first week off to spend time with family, taking advantage of the many wintery activities during Christmas. Many high school and college students will use the second week to celebrate the upcoming New Year by traveling with friends or attending various social gatherings.



SHARING GOSSIP FROM
A BYGONE ERA

Society gossip has long fascinated the public. *People* magazine enjoys a circulation of almost 3.7 million readers, while gossip website perezhilton.com attracts 13.5 million visitors monthly. The interest in the private lives of public personalities is not unique to the 21st century and extends far into the past. For example, in 18th century France, the often scandalous lives of celebrities shared in biographical publications, *vie privées* (literally, private lives), generated great interest.

Art historian Lauren Puzier has created a hybrid of modern and past society gossip publications with her history blog, Marie Antoinette's Gossip Guide to the 18th Century. Puzier describes the site as "a light-hearted place to read short bits about the celebrities of the past as if they were today's," while PBS called it "a history lesson wrapped up in a modern gossip column and tied with a satin bow."

In addition to juicy details about 18th century French historical figures, marie-antoinettequeenoffrance.blogspot.com also reviews current books and museum



© Joe Shlabotnik

Winter sports such as skating are a popular pastime in cities throughout France. This rink, located in front of Paris's City Hall, is frequented by both young and old.

exhibits relevant to the time period. Puzier explains the educational function of the site, which goes beyond idle gossip, "offer[ing] history lessons on the rules of society, politics and economics, fashion and costume history, music and arts, and daily life."

The blog receives between 600 and 1,000 visitors daily. Puzier illuminates the site's draw: "Visiting for just a few minutes is meant to transport the reader momentarily to the past, as if they were sitting in an 18th century café reading the latest scandal on some duke or duchess."

FRENCH HAUTE CUISINE GOES UNDERGROUND



For one week this November, commuters in Paris discovered an unexpected treat during their metro ride. In an event sponsored by the Metro transit authority RATP, French gourmet chefs performed cooking demonstrations with accompanying tastings in the underground tunnels of Paris' Miromesnil subway station. The brainchild of food critic Marc de Champérad and RATP, "Great Chefs Return to the Metro" aimed to show that French haute cuisine is not limited to the wealthy, but is accessible to all. Metro hopes that campaigns of this nature will foster a pleasant ambiance and provide an interesting experience for commuters. "We have tried to bring a spark of life back to the Metro and also give a nice surprise to the travelers," explained Sarah Arnett, Brand Manager for RATP. During the event, Michelin-rated chefs prepared some of their favorite dishes, revealing secrets of their craft while television screens magnified the demonstrations to accommodate large crowds of commuters.

THE INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION OF RENEWABLE ENERGY

Energia, the International Renewable Energies Exhibition, took place in the Southern French city of Montpellier from December 8 to 11. Reflecting both business and science, the event featured 500 exhibitors from 21 countries, and represented every sector in renewable energy, including thermal solar, photovoltaic solar, wind, hydro-electric, geothermal, biomass, and biofuels. Representatives from many sectors affected by renewable energy applications, such as building, transport, industry, and agriculture, also attended the event. Participants came from all over the world, with a particularly strong presence from countries along the Mediterranean. The exhibition also featured four foreign pavilions from Belgium, Spain, Germany, and China. "The presence of major foreign companies is good for French small and medium enterprises, offering them an opportunity to promote their products," stated Guy Haddad, the main organizer of this year's exhibition. In addition to the main exhibition, visitors attended over 80 presentations and roundtable discussions with leading experts, covering subjects such as the development of smart grids (digital electricity networks) and financial investments in renewable energy.



French scientists at the Fresnel Institute in Marseille have put the finishing touches on a new type of optical technology that will allow for considerably improved microscope performance. The recent advancement addresses an age-old problem with traditional optical microscopes. Until now, light beams used to illuminate objects under microscopes have been "one sided," meaning that the light only spreads along one axis, and therefore can produce an incomplete image for researchers. The new technology, called Isotropic Single Objective (ISO) microscopy, employs mirrors to redirect light beams and produce a spherical point of light, which spreads out along all three axes of the microscope's focus. The advancement in microscopy will allow biologists to examine cells in greater three-dimensional detail, but can also have other applications. Some believe the technology could be adapted to increase the storage capacity of DVD and Blu-ray disks, whose data is recorded with a similarly focused laser beam.

FNAC PRESENTS NEW eREADER

Whether used for business or pleasure, eReaders — devices that display downloadable, electronic versions of books — are becoming increasingly popular. Joining the ranks of the Apple iPad and the Amazon Kindle is the "Fnacbook," France's answer to the eReader trend. Released by electronics venter Fnac, the device will use the store's website as a platform for access to approximately 80,000 book titles available for download. Most French publishers have signed contracts to publish digital editions of their works for Fnac. Unlike other eReaders, Fnacbook will have an "open option," meaning that the downloaded books will be readable by the user not only on his or her Fnacbook, but also on other appliances, including laptops and smartphones. The Fnacbook has a storage capacity of approximately 2,000 books, and comes with Wifi and 3G capability. For more information, please visit www.fnac.com.

Business & Technology

A DROP of Drought Research



DROPS aims to research and create drought-tolerant, water-efficient plant varieties.

The French National Institute for Agricultural Research spearheaded the European DROPS (DROught-tolerant yielding PlantS) program, which addresses issues on the scarcity of water resources through the development of drought-tolerant and water-efficient plant varieties (corn, wheat, durum wheat, and sorghum). Bringing together 15 public and private partners from eight European countries, Australia, Turkey, and the U.S., the initiative launched over the summer during a seminar in Montpellier.

DROPS participants aim to develop new methods for identifying drought-tolerant plant strains, discern the genes affecting certain characteristics of a worldwide collection of plants, and test the comparative advantages of the different lines in various water-deficient scenarios.

Combining physiology, genetics, and modeling with field tests and phenotyping platforms in new design, DROPS will focus on several plant characteristics. Chief among them are reduction in seed abortion, maintenance of leaf growth, root system architecture, and water use efficiency (biomass/transpiration ratio). Project results will be circulated to seed growers and to a partnership trade organization, and will be published in scientific journals. Additionally, the program will include an educational component, providing both on-site and online training for students.

For more information, please visit: www.inra.fr.

Musicians and Fans Benefit from French-American Agreement

The internet's largest video platform, YouTube, signed an agreement last month with SACEM, France's largest royalty collection agency, which acts on behalf of over 130,000 members, to pay artists for use of their works on the website. A nonprofit organization that aims to represent and defend the interest of authors, composers, and music publishers, SACEM represents more than 40 million musical works.

"In France and throughout the world, YouTube is a comprehensive destination with content that ranges from the educational to the entertaining, and music is a core component. [The agreement] is yet another step in YouTube's ongoing effort to help foster the creation of French content and reward French artists for creative works available online," states SACEM.

The license agreement applies to SACEM's international portfolio, including the Anglo-American repertoire of multinational publishers, and will provide retroactive compensation dating back to the launch of the website in France, up through 2012.

YouTube welcomed the decision that will yield mutual benefits between the site and SACEM members. YouTube representative Christophe Muller asserted, "Since the launch of YouTube in Europe, we've been working hard to forge relationships that allow YouTube users to enjoy their favorite songs and discover new music on the site. We are extremely pleased to have reached an agreement with SACEM to help their members earn revenue and to enable new musical talents to emerge."

Many of the artists similarly lauded the agreement. "We've been partners [with] YouTube since 2007, and we use it every day to allow our community of fans to access our content globally," explains French DJ David Guetta. "My YouTube Channel, reaching about 350 million views, is the key element of our online commitment. I'm thrilled to take this new step with the French music industry. It's a great new adventure for artists that will help us receive greater recognition for our work."

SACEM has similar agreements with Dailymotion, Wat.tv, and more than 1,500 other Internet operators.



The agreement stipulates that French organization SACEM will collect and distribute royalties from the works of its members that are viewed on YouTube.

Getting Down to the South of France on Overnight Train



Connecting Paris and the Côte d'Azur, the train service offers a festive ambiance *qui bouge*.

every night of the week. Certain trains also feature movie ticket and t-shirt giveaways, body painting, and other special events.

The train's catch-phrase, *Le train qui bouge la nuit* (The train that moves at night), invokes both the overnight itinerary of the trip as well as the festive environment. The verb *bouger* creates a clever play on words, with a literal meaning of "to move" coupled with a colloquial usage closer to "to get down" or "to boogie." For energetic passengers that can do without sleeper cars, iDNight provides a social and cost-effective travel experience that aims to make the voyage as important as the destination.

For up-to-date information on special events, please visit <http://blog.idtgv.com>.

Mamma Mia! à la française

The popular musical *Mamma Mia!*, based on the songs of world famous pop-group ABBA, has made its way to Paris's Mogador Theatre for the 2010-2011 season. The production marks the first time that both the dialogue and the songs of *Mamma Mia!* have been translated into French for live audiences.

Audience members will recognize the iconic melodies of the 22 ABBA hit singles that compose the musical, but will have to listen carefully to the newly adapted lyrics, translated for all but two of the songs (*Waterloo* and *Dancing Queen* are performed in the original English). Some of the play's characters have even been renamed to be more recognizably French. "Sam Carmichael," for example, becomes "Sam Carpentier." Despite the changes to the original work, the critical reception for the show has been very positive, and spectators have been flocking to Mogador Theatre since the October 28 opening. Ticket sales have already surpassed 125,000 — three times the amount sold for the French version of *The Lion King* in the same time period.

When asked about the show's success, producer Judy Craymer cited the wide appeal of ABBA, whose work inspired the original show: "The story really reflects the contagious joy of ABBA's music."

For more information, please visit: www.mamma-mia.fr.

Exhibit Offers New Perspective on Authors and Photography



The exhibition explores the relationship between photography and writers, including Victor Hugo (above).

As part of the 30th anniversary celebration of the Paris *Mois de Photo* (Photo Month), the *Maison de Victor Hugo*, a museum in the preserved former residence of the author, is hosting a photography exhibition titled *Portraits d'écrivains de 1850 à nos jours* (Portraits of Writers from 1850 to the Present Day). The display includes 200 photographs representing the work of 30 photographers. The portraits' subjects include such notable French authors as Victor Hugo, George Sand, Alexander Dumas, Colette, Paul Valéry, Samuel Beckett, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Simone de Beauvoir, as well as several American authors such as Jack Kerouac.

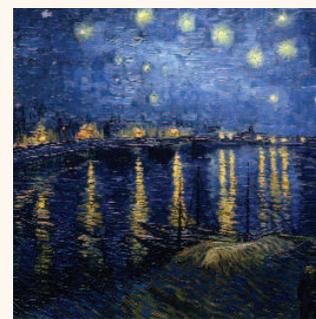
"Since the birth of photography, we've noticed that the link between photographers and writers, the complicity between the two, has always been very strong," Alexandrine Achille of *La Maison de Victor Hugo* explains. The collaborative exhibit explores this historical relationship between artists, from the origins of photography to the present day.

Containing works from *La Maison Européenne de la Photographie* and Roger-Viollet collections, as well as from the host museum itself, the exhibit will run from November 5 through February 20.

There are approximately 550 miles between Paris and the Côte d'Azur, two of France's most-frequented regions. iDTGV, France's low-cost train service designed to attract younger passengers with limited budgets, seeks to make travel between the two more enjoyable. The company offers iDNight, an overnight train with a convivial environment that runs between the capital and various cities along the southern coast of France, including Biarritz, Marseille, Montpellier, and Nice, for only 15 euros a ticket.

Travelers can choose between various cars offering different ambiances. The iDLounge is a calm but friendly space where passengers can meet, converse, and play cards, while the bar and party cars offer a louder, livelier atmosphere. The train features live DJs on Friday and Sunday nights, but the party cars play club music

SECOND WAVE OF FRENCH ART HITS SAN FRANCISCO



Van Gogh's famous *Starry Night Over the Rhone* is one of many post-Impressionist paintings on display at the deYoung Museum.

After great success this summer hosting the traveling exhibit *The Birth of Impressionism: Masterpieces from the Musée d'Orsay*, the deYoung Museum in San Francisco has welcomed a second wave of artwork from the French museum in a special exhibit titled *Van Gogh, Gauguin, Cézanne, and Beyond: Post-Impressionist Masterpieces from the Musée d'Orsay*. The current display, inaugurated by French Consul General Romain Serman in a presentation ceremony in late September, will remain in San Francisco through January 18.

In addition to the headlining painters, the exhibit includes 120 works by Toulouse-Lautrec, Seurat, and other leading artists of the era. The display seeks to distinguish the more imaginative and conceptual post-Impressionist movement from the early Impressionist pieces seen in this summer's exhibition.

"These two exhibits present Americans with a rare and unique opportunity to see the incubation and the evolution of the Impressionist movement," said John E. Buchanan, Jr., director of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. The newest exhibition, he says, is "an unparalleled visual experience, made possible because the most important collection of French art [the Musée d'Orsay] has opened its vaults."

The deYoung is the only museum in North America to host the post-Impressionism exhibit, which has already travelled to Tokyo and Canberra, Australia.

For more information, please visit: www.deyoung.famsf.org.

THIS HOLIDAY SEASON, WHY NOT
SURPRISE & DELIGHT?



Only in France Magazine: The chic new look of Calais lace.

**FRANCE MAGAZINE
 GIFT SUBSCRIPTIONS**

A YEAR OF UNEXPECTED PLEASURES FOR ONLY \$19.97.

Another unexpected pleasure: A bonus issue will be included with your gift!
 Simply enter the promotional code PR07G when subscribing online at
www.francemagazine.org.

*A beautiful gift card will be sent in your name to your recipients. Holiday gift subscriptions begin with the Winter 2010-2011 issue. Promotion expires January 31, 2011.
 France Magazine is published by the French-American Cultural Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.*

News From FRANCE

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Dana Purcarescu

EDITOR

Thomas Rottcher

WRITERS

Elodie Domenge, Mary Kate Holman
 Stephanie Joyal, Joseph Kessler

To change your address, subscribe (for free) or unsubscribe, please contact:

NEWS FROM FRANCE

FRENCH EMBASSY PRESS & COMMUNICATION SERVICE

4101 Reservoir Road, NW
 Washington, DC 20007-2182

Tel: (202) 944-6060

Fax: (202) 944-6072

E-mail:

info@ambafrance-us.org

<http://www.ambafrance-us.org>

*French Embassy Press and Communication Service
 4101 Reservoir Road, NW
 Washington, DC 20007-2182*



PRESORTED
 FIRST CLASS MAIL
 U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
 Washington, DC
 Permit NO. 4620