



# News From France

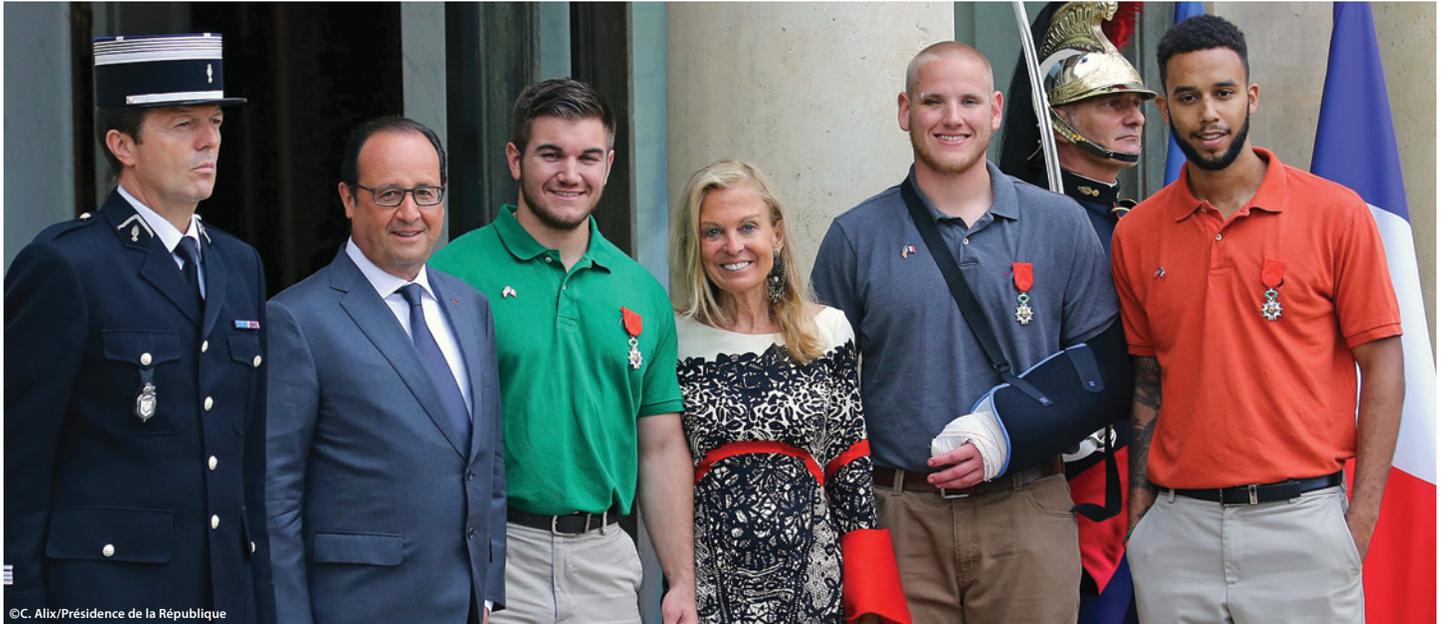
A free monthly review of French news & trends

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## On a train to Paris, American tourists become international heroes



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President François Hollande, Aleksander Skarlatos, U.S. Ambassador to France Jane Hartley, Spencer Stone and Anthony Sadler at the Elysée Palace, where the American men received the Legion of Honor.

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### A message from Ambassador Gérard Araud



Dear Friends,

Along with the arrival of many new faces at the embassy this fall, our newsletter is also adopting a different “look”—we hope you like our new style! While our design has changed, the mission of *News From France* has not, and we will continue to bring you stories on the most interesting collaborations between France and America, be it in foreign policy, culture, business or technology.

Over the past few months, the solidarity between our two countries was again made evident. On August 21, as the summer came to a close, a tragedy was averted when three Americans stopped an attacker on a train traveling from Amsterdam to Paris with the help of fellow British and French passengers. We are grateful for the actions of Anthony Sadler, Aleksander Skarlatos and Spencer Stone, who risked their lives in order to save countless others. They have been honored for it by citizens not only from their own countries, but from around the world, and we could not be more proud.

As we continue to remember these men who saved the day, officials preparing the COP21 Climate Conference in Paris are busy looking out for the citizens of the future. As host of the conference,

France is fully engaged in mobilizing government leaders, corporations, researchers, entrepreneurs, citizens and members of civil society to join in the fight against climate change, and the goal to achieve an international agreement that will limit the rise in the global temperature to less than 2 degrees Celsius. Among many initiatives, the Embassies of France in the U.S. and Canada have contributed by hosting the French-American Climate Talks throughout the past year, including a major event in Washington, D.C., on September 22. The COP21 conference was also a topic of utmost importance among world leaders at the 70th annual United Nations General Assembly in New York, which took place from September 25 to October 2.

The coming months are sure to be filled with plenty of similar important events in both of our countries. Whether performing on stage, negotiating a key agreement on climate change or simply demonstrating unique solidarity in the face of terrorism, our countries can work together even in the most unlikely of circumstances, as these past months have proven.



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# President Hollande and Minister Fabius attend the UNGA



**From left:** UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon alongside President François Hollande and Peruvian President Ollanta Humala at the 70th annual United Nations General Assembly in New York.

In his speech at the UNGA on September 28, President Hollande called for action on climate change, undoubtedly one of the most pressing challenges facing the international community. He cited three factors by which the success of the COP21 conference should be measured: the establishment of a universal accord, the ability to put this plan into action and commitments by developed countries to contribute financially to the fight against climate change. The president stressed that COP21 is merely a starting point for a global solution: “The Paris agreement must not be a destination, a conclusion, but rather the beginning of a process,” he said.

On Syria, President Hollande emphasized the need to facilitate a political transition away from Syrian President Bashar al-Assad while effectively combating Daesh (ISIL): “Assad is the source of the problem, he cannot be part of the solution.” Minister Fabius echoed President Hollande during a meeting on counter-terrorism on September 29, stressing the “absolute necessity” of fighting Daesh while noting that Bashar al-Assad’s regime could not continue. “It’s very difficult to envisage Syria’s future continuing to be entrusted to someone the United Nations Secretary-General has described as a criminal against humanity,” he said.

While in New York, President Hollande and Minister Fabius also attended the third annual Best of France festival, an event promoting French excellence in sectors such as tourism, gastronomy, business and technology. Both leaders praised the talent showcased at Best of France, and expressed pride at the diverse range of products and technologies featured there.

At the 70th annual United Nations General Assembly in New York, President François Hollande and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Development Laurent Fabius joined fellow leaders to discuss solutions to the crisis in Syria and climate change, among other international issues.

## FACTS Conference takes place in Washington, D.C.

With just over two months until the COP21 United Nations Climate Conference in Paris, the French Embassy hosted an event as part of the French-American Climate Talks (FACTS) series on September 22.

This edition of FACTS featured a panel discussion with members of the private and public sectors, including Laurence Tubiana, the French ambassador in charge of the fight against climate change, Robert Diamond, director of private sector engagement at the White House, as well as representatives of the UN Global Compact, Mars Inc. and L’Oréal USA. Bertrand Badré, managing director of the World Bank, made closing remarks. The panelists spoke about preparations for COP21, focusing specifically on how the private sector can work with the public sector to accomplish the goals set by the conference.

Ambassador of France to the United States Gérard Araud expressed the importance of motivating both sectors, saying, “We have to show the international community that there are solutions to the challenges posed by climate change.”

Lagarde, who called COP21 a “once-in-a-generation moment,” focused on the potential of carbon taxes to combat climate change. “Carbon pricing can counter damages that fossil fuel generates,” said the IMF managing director, “There has to be international coordination of carbon prices.”

All participants recognized the close relationship between climate change and the economy, as well as the need for support from the financial sector in order to counter the effects of this global phenomenon. They also discussed the necessity of a larger framework to implement sound environmental practices in the private sector.

Ambassador Tubiana, who was appointed special representative for COP21 by Minister Laurent Fabius in May 2014, said that the Paris conference would be a starting point for action on climate change: “We should work together to see what steps we should take after Paris,” Tubiana said. “Don’t think that we will stop on December 11.”

**Top:** Ambassador Gérard Araud gives opening remarks at the FACTS conference. **Bottom:** Ambassador Tubiana and panelists from the private sector address climate change issues.



# The magic of “Carmen” according to two French opera stars

When *Carmen* first premiered at the Opéra-Comique in Paris 140 years ago, audiences were captivated, and perhaps even shocked, by Georges Bizet’s provocative opera about a gypsy who boldly seduces soldier Don José in Seville, Spain. From September 19 to October 3, the Washington National Opera presented *Carmen* to eager audiences at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. The starring role was shared by French singers Géraldine Chauvet and Clémentine Margaine, who spoke with *News From France* about the production process for the show and explained why the opera is still cherished to this day.

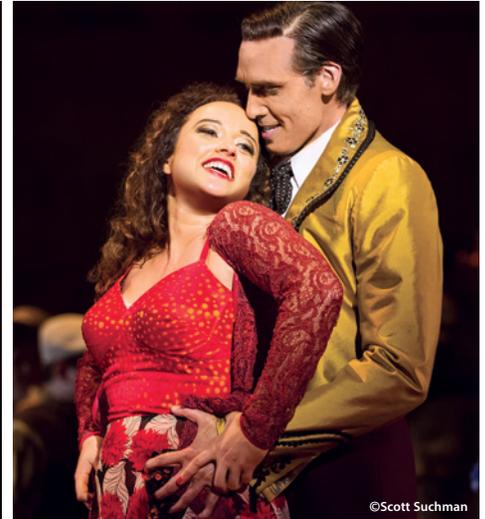
**You have both starred in *Carmen* before, performing the role in theaters around the world. What is different about this particular production?**

**Géraldine Chauvet:** For me, the difference is that we have time to delve into the details of acting, working on techniques such as stage fighting and dancing. It’s great to be able to work with people who are experts in these fields.

**Clémentine Margaine:** Here we have time to invent things, to destroy them, to re-invent, and we go deeper into the production. When it’s a love scene, for example, I believe that when you act with Don José you should look at his face and consider what Carmen would love in that face. You have the time to make this moment special, to make this particular couple different from the others. That’s what’s wonderful, having six weeks of rehearsal.

***Carmen* is a cherished opera. Are there certain ways you prepared for the role, to bring the character to life?**

**GC:** I have done *Carmen* many times. Of course, it’s always the same score, and the same general story. However, your partner is different, and you have to imagine that every night, the production



Géraldine Chauvet (pictured with Rafael Davila) and Clémentine Margaine (pictured with Michael Todd Simpson) have described each of their own styles as very different from one another. Nevertheless, they both bring *Carmen* to life on stage in a spectacular way.

is different. You may find parts on which you can improvise. You have to feel like it’s a new show every time.

**CM:** The one thing I do is spend a lot of time online, watching different productions of *Carmen*, especially those played by singers that I respect. I do this to get inspired, and with the phenomenon of the Internet, you always find new things. I use it a lot in my work. It’s true that when you find something that suits you, you become lazy and get used to the same tempo, style, etc. But it’s great to be fresh and reinvent things, because it gives you a new perspective on the world.

**When *Carmen* initially premiered in Paris, it was not well received by critics. Why do you think the public ultimately changed its mind, and the opera came to be immensely popular not only in**

**France, but around the world?**

**CM:** While *Carmen* has a humorous side, it is not a comedy. I guess this shocked a lot of people, because they saw something they were not expecting. *Carmen* is genius, I really believe that. Of course, I’ve performed and seen a lot of productions of *Carmen*. At one point, I asked myself, “Will I become bored singing the same role time after time?” But in fact, this is not the case. Each time the music starts, you can see backstage during the overture that everybody is dancing; there is life in this music.

**GC:** I also think that both Clémentine and I can identify with the story. We are not *Carmen*, but we are women who want freedom and to express ourselves, I think the opera is about this too...it’s not about the voice, it’s about becoming the character, bringing the story to the public.

## | En chiffres...

30%

The percentage by which nitrogen dioxide levels on the Champs-Élysée were lowered on September 27, which Paris declared “**JOURNÉE SANS VOITURES**,” or “Day without cars.” From 11 am to 6 pm, no cars were allowed in the 1st, 2nd, 3rd or 4th arrondissements, the busiest parts of the city.

1,372

Number of applications received for the **PARIS FRENCH TECH** Ticket, a program that seeks to attract individuals from around the world with innovative entrepreneurial projects to France. In January 2016, 50 selected entrepreneurs will go to France, where they will develop their project with the help of a €12,500 prize awarded by Bpifrance.

2°C

The limit on the global temperature increase sought by the international agreement at **COP21**, the 21st Conference of the Parties on Climate Change, which will take place in Paris from November 30 to December 11.

## On a European vacation, three American friends become international heroes



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**From left:** Christopher Norman, Anthony Sadler, Spencer Stone and Alek Skarlatos listen to President François Hollande speak during a ceremony at the Elysée Palace on August 24, during which he presented them with the Legion of Honor, France's highest civilian decoration.

**FOR CHILDHOOD FRIENDS** Alek Skarlatos, Spencer Stone and Anthony Sadler, August 21 started as a day like any other. Skarlatos and Stone, both members of the U.S. Armed Forces, had joined Sadler, a student at Sacramento State University, for a few weeks of vacation in Europe. These three Sacramento natives were among the hundreds of passengers on a train bound from Amsterdam to Paris, a route traveled often by businesspeople and tourists. But an otherwise normal day soon turned chaotic, as an armed man started shooting in the train car that the friends had boarded.

By the end of the day, the men were being lauded as heroes around the world, having averted a potential tragedy by taking down this armed attacker with the help of British passenger Chris Norman, as well as another French passenger, Mark Mooligan. As news of their courageous acts circulated around the world, the men were applauded by French officials before being welcomed home by warm supporters in the United States.

### A tragedy averted

It was only by chance that these American friends boarded the train carriage on which the attack would take place. Having initially been seated elsewhere, they moved to a different car to find a

better wi-fi connection shortly after the ride had started. Awaking from a nap to the sound of gunshots as the train passed through the French town of Arras, Stone and Skarlatos saw a man standing with ammunition and a box cutter.

As trained members of the U.S. Armed Forces, Stone and Skarlatos were well prepared to subdue a threat of this nature. Skarlatos, a member of the Oregon National Guard, had just finished up a tour of duty in Afghanistan before heading to Europe. Stone, who grew up with Skarlatos, has a similar military background, serving as an Airman 1st Class in the Air Force.

When Skarlatos heard shots fired on the train, his military instincts kicked in, and he called out to Stone, "Go get him." Stone acted immediately, joined by Sadler and Norman. Together, they successfully disarmed and tied up the gunman. While Stone sustained several severe cuts to his neck and hand, he was able to aid Mooligan, who was shot in the midst of the chaos. "Without his help, he would have died," said Sadler in an interview with the *New York Times*. When Norman talked about his decision to help the American friends thwart off the attacker, he said that the choice was obvious for him: "I'd rather die being active, trying to get him down, than simply sit in the corner and be shot."

As these four men succeeded in stopping the gunman, a wave of relief quickly washed over the train, as the attacker was taken into custody by French authorities. The men did not initially realize the significance of their actions. As it became clear that they had saved hundreds of passengers from possible death, praise flooded in from grateful citizens around the world. While this was not the European vacation that these three childhood friends had expected, it certainly turned into a trip that they would never forget.

### Men honored in France and the U.S.

Just two days after the attack, the three Americans visited the U.S. Embassy in Paris, where they met with Ambassador Jane Hartley. During a press conference at her residence, Sadler spoke about the lessons taken away from the incident, stressing that in the face of danger, "hiding or sitting back" is not an option. "I want that lesson to be learned," Sadler said. "In times of terror like that, please do something. Don't just stand by and watch."

On August 24, the four men who stopped the attacker were received by President François Hollande at the Elysée Palace, where they were awarded the Legion of Honor, France's highest

civilian decoration. President Hollande praised them, saying that their actions demonstrated that “in the face of terror, we have the power to resist,” and taught everyone a “lesson in courage, in will and in hope.” Mooligan also received this award at a later date.

Both President Barack Obama and British Prime Minister David Cameron thanked the heroes after the incident, expressing their pride following these men’s actions abroad. President Obama phoned all three of the Americans to thank them, wishing Stone a speedy recovery from the wounds he sustained in the attack, and commending the men for their “courage and quick action” during the incident. He later welcomed them to the White House on September 18, where he stated: “It’s these kinds of young people who make me extraordinarily optimistic and hopeful about our future.”

### In the U.S., a warm welcome

Upon their return home to the U.S., Sadler, Skarlatos and Stone were welcomed by grateful citizens who celebrated the good deed for which they had been lauded around the world.

Anthony Sadler was the first to return home to Sacramento on August 25, just four days after the attack. The 23 year-old recently started his final year at Sacramento State University, where the school’s president, Robert S. Nelson, said donors were ready to help the young man with scholarship money and called Sadler and his friends international heroes.

” *In times of terror, please do something. Don’t just stand back and watch.* —Anthony Sadler

National Guard Specialist Alek Skarlatos returned to the U.S. a few days after Sadler, welcomed by his parents and cheered on by members of the New York City Police Department at Newark International Airport. On ABC’s *Good Morning America*, Skarlatos spoke with Robin Roberts about the surreal turn of events, saying that the reaction of everyone around the world had “absolutely not” settled in, and that the attention from the press and the public had been “unbelievable.”

After taking time in Germany to recover from his injuries, Spencer Stone returned home to California on September 3. Stepping off a plane at Travis Air Force Base, he was greeted by a crowd of 300 service members, waving flags in celebration of his return. Master Sgt. Tanya Hubbard, Stone’s former supervisor, told *CBS*



©Consulate of France in San Francisco



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**Top, from left:** Spencer Stone, Honorary Consul of France in Sacramento Guy Michelier, Alek Skarlatos, Consul General of France in San Francisco Pauline Carmona and Anthony Sadler at the “Hometown Heroes” parade in Sacramento. **Bottom:** Skarlatos and Stone relax with President Hollande after the Legion of Honor ceremony.

*News*, “We’re just very proud of him. And it’s not really a surprise to any of us what he did. He’s got a lot of integrity. He’s just an all-around great guy.”

The three friends were honored with a parade in Sacramento on September 11 for the city’s “hometown heroes.” French Consul General in San Francisco Pauline Carmona attended the

event, where she said, “I am here, today, to tell you that the people of France, as well as the French community everywhere, will never forget what you have done.” The consul general’s sentiments have been echoed around the world by all those who found hope in this story of three friends who saved countless lives through a selfless act of bravery.



## Best of France draws thousands to New York City



On September 26 and 27, the third edition of Best of France celebrated French excellence in a wide variety of sectors with hundreds of thousands of visitors in attendance. Chaired by Paul Bensabat, president of the Foreign Trade Advisors of France in North America, and Ariane Daguin, CEO of d'Artagan, the event brought together major French associations and organizations in New York in order to promote the image of France abroad.

On September 26, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Development Laurent Fabius attended the inauguration of the event, which took place on Broadway, in the heart of Times Square. Among the stands visited by Minister Fabius was that of the French Tech village, where he spoke with representatives of a number of French startup companies. President François Hollande visited the exposition the following day.

Best of France featured a variety of stands that showcased the best the country has to offer in areas such as gastronomy and tourism; technology and innovation; arts and culture; and for the first time this year, fashion.

It included a local market, wine tasting, cooking classes, a hot-air balloon, autograph sessions, music from beloved French pop singer Dany Brillant and a performance by the world-famous cancan dancers from the Moulin Rouge in Paris.

Thousands of people turned out this year, making this event in America's most populous city a success.



**Top:** Cancan dancers from the world-famous Moulin Rouge perform at the exposition.

**Bottom left:** One of hundreds of participating vendors shows off French food products.

**Right:** Minister of Foreign Affairs Laurent Fabius attends the festival.



## Seuls en Scène festival brings French theater to Princeton University

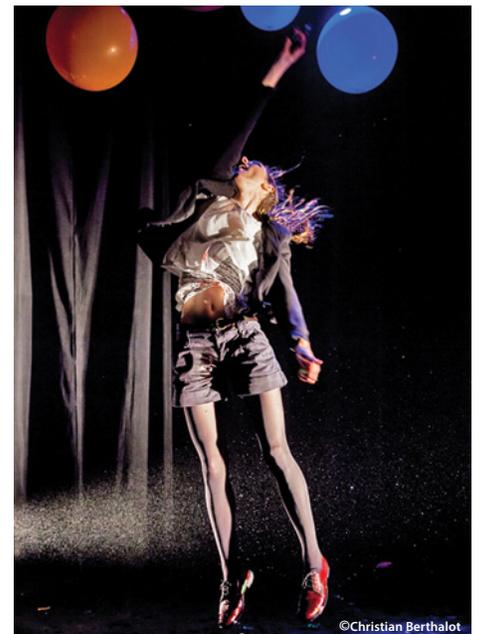
The fourth annual *Seuls en Scène* French Theater Festival, which brings celebrated French talent to a U.S. audience, began on September 24. The month-long festival, presented by the Lewis Center for the Arts at Princeton University, features a variety of classical and contemporary works, all of which are performed in French. Some are presented with English subtitles. Organized by Florent Masse, a senior lecturer in the department of French and Italian at Princeton, this year's *Seuls en Scène* lineup features pieces by highly respected European and francophone playwrights, including two plays from the 2012 and upcoming 2016 Avignon Theater Festival.

This year, several of the actors and actresses performing at the festival are recent graduates of the Paris National Conservatory of Dramatic Arts. For many of them, it is their first time performing on an international stage. These actors worked in collaboration with L'Avant-Scène, a French Theater

Workshop group at Princeton, to produce 15 different plays that are being shown to the public over a one-month period.

*Seuls en Scène* explores a wide variety of genres. From *Comme la Lune*, a lighthearted fairytale about a quirky princess, to *Jaz*, the personal story of an African woman living in an abandoned housing project, each featured work tells its own story in a different style. The individual talents of performers are highlighted in shows such as *Lac*, which presents a collection of 15 monologues representing the perspectives of several characters. Other works draw inspiration from current issues in France or elsewhere. Whether contemporary or traditional, heavy-hearted or comical, all the works featured in *Seuls en Scène* seek to engage an international audience.

The *Seuls en Scène* French Theater Festival will continue through October 24. All performances are free and open to the public.



Pauline Clément in *Comme la Lune*, a fairy tale for teens and adults.

## Airbus plant opens in Mobile, Alabama

European aircraft manufacturer Airbus inaugurated its new plant in Mobile, Ala., on September 14 with Ambassador Gérard Araud, Consul General of France in Atlanta Denis Barbet and Airbus CEO Fabrice Brégier, as well as several state officials, including Alabama Governor Robert Bentley and Mobile Mayor Sandy Stimpson.

Production has already started at the factory, which will manufacture four Airbus A320s a month and deliver the first plane in 2016. The plant is the result of a \$600 million investment from Airbus and will employ 1,000 workers, generating about 4,000 additional jobs indirectly.

Airbus is based in Blagnac, France, a suburb of Toulouse, and has facilities across Europe, mainly in France, Spain, Germany and the United Kingdom.

Mobile's connections to France span more than three centuries. The city was founded by French settlers in 1702 as Fort Louis de Louisiane and was the capital of French Louisiana until 1720. Airbus already operates an engineering office in Mobile, as well as many other facilities across the United States.

Airbus President and CEO Fabrice Brégier underlined the company's commitment to investing in the U.S. "Our commercial aircraft production in Mobile signifies two things: that Airbus has become the first truly global aircraft manufacturer, and that Airbus is now also a truly American manufacturer," Brégier said. "With the addition of our U.S. facility to our production network in



Fabrice Brégier, president and CEO of Airbus, reveals the first Airbus aircraft manufactured in the U.S. at the company's new plant in Mobile, Ala. on September 14.

Europe and Asia, we have strategically expanded our worldwide industrial base."

During a two-day visit, Ambassador Araud and Consul General Barbet attended a reception for Airbus and took a tour of the manufacturing facility.

Ambassador Araud said that beyond this Airbus project, "other French corporations will also

invest in Mobile" in the future. "We are delighted to celebrate the inauguration of this assembly line with Airbus Group and the state of Alabama, as it represents economic strength for the region," said Consul General Barbet. "We hope to celebrate other investments between France and Alabama in the years to come."

## Bolloré Group launches BlueIndy in Indianapolis



©Christine Zetzl

This electric car parked outside of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument in Indianapolis is part of BlueIndy, the first electric car-sharing service in the U.S.

BlueIndy, an electric car-sharing service operated by France's Bolloré Group in Indianapolis, officially launched on September 3.

BlueIndy is modeled after Bolloré Group's existing services in France. Paris's version, Autolib', was the first of its kind when it launched in 2011 and is the world's largest electric car-sharing operation, with more than 12,000 trips taken daily. Since Autolib' started in 2011, users have taken more than 10.5 million trips, saving 12,200 tons of carbon dioxide emissions over more than 59 million miles driven.

The first and largest 100 percent electric car-sharing service in the U.S., BlueIndy currently has 25 stations around Indianapolis. The service aims to have 500 cars and 1,000 charging stations at 200 locations in the near future. Once the system's expansion is completed, Indianapolis will be home to Bolloré Group's second-largest car-sharing service after Paris.

Customers can purchase a daily, weekly, monthly or annual membership. Owners of electric vehicles can also subscribe to a membership to use BlueIndy charging stations for their own cars.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony in downtown Indianapolis on September 2 was attended by officials from both the U.S. and France, including Vincent Floreani, consul general of France in Chicago; Greg Ballard, mayor of Indianapolis; and Cédric Bolloré, vice president for development of Bolloré Group.

Mayor Ballard expressed his gratitude to Bolloré Group for their work in launching the service, saying, "Through this investment, Indianapolis is benefiting from an innovative technology and in-demand amenities that make cities like ours a destination for today's workforce."



©Pixel & Création/normandy-tourism.org

**OFF THE COAST OF NORMANDY** rests one of France's most iconic landmarks, a looming Gothic-style abbey sitting on a rocky island, jutting out into the bay that shares its name. A UNESCO World Heritage site and French *monument historique*, Mont Saint-Michel is a marvel of architecture dating back to the 1500s, surrounded by natural beauty.

Once a popular pilgrimage site, Mont Saint-Michel welcomes over three million visitors every year to explore its nearly 500 year-old Benedictine abbey and cobblestone streets, and to witness its world-famous tides, which may withdraw as much as 15 miles from the shore and rise high enough to conceal the causeway leading to the island. Guests are invited to walk around the numerous ramparts and alleyways, stop by any of the four museums on the island and enjoy the views of the gardens and the water surrounding the small island.

For an extraordinary experience on the Mont Saint-Michel Bay, visitors can join guided hikes along the water, offered whenever the tide is low and most regularly during the spring. Though the landmark is open to the public almost every day of the year, visitors eager to walk across the bay should avoid March and September, when the strongest, highest tides take place.

After spending the day exploring the wonders of the island, it's time to enjoy the local cuisine. Some of the most popular dishes include locally-sourced lamb and mussels from the bay.

Only a four-hour drive from Paris, Mont Saint-Michel inspires and awes its visitors with its magical views and opportunities for adventure any time of the year.

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