


JOIE DE VIVRE

Our pick of splendid things, great and small, that showcase the joy of French life, from what to buy to where to go...

INSPIRATIONS



LIFT YOUR SPIRITS

French Compagnie XY is known for its poetic and creative spin on acrobatics. Following its popular debut show *Le Grand C* in 2009, the group has toured worldwide with more than 500 performances. *It's Not Yet Midnight...* is the circus troupe's newest production, celebrating unity, teamwork and the highs and lows of an acrobat's daily life. The show comes to London, from April 10 to 23. www.ciexy.com

ON AIME With fresh tones of lily, wood and green tea, [this candle from Lola James Harper](#) captures the essence of Bois de Vincennes park in Paris. lolajamesharper.com



Little black book



France Today contributor **L.M. Archer** shares her favourite places in Burgundy

TREND-SETTING CITY

Situated in southern Burgundy, Mâcon boasts some of the most dynamic winemakers around, including rock-star sibling team Christophe and Sandrine of Domaine Thibert Père et Fils, scions from André René Thibert's winemaking family. www.domaine-thibert.com



WHERE TO DRINK?

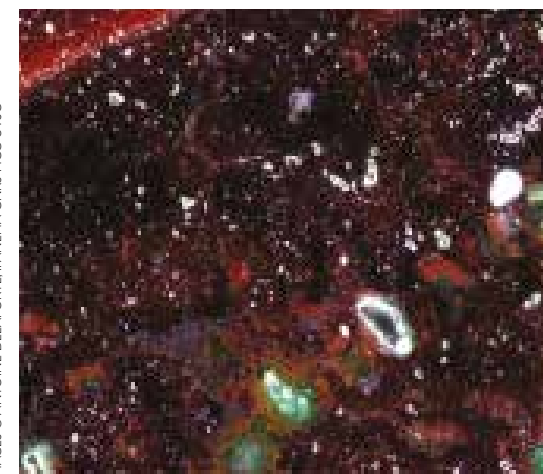
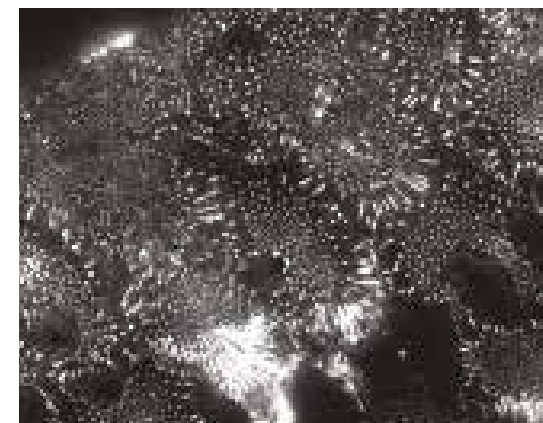
For wine drinkers, there's white Burgundy and then there's Chablis. Renowned for its chalky, super-sleek Chardonnays, the best place to savour Chablis' many flavours is at La Chablisienne winegrowers' cooperative. www.chablisienne.com



TRAVEL BACK IN TIME

Considered the heart of Burgundy, no trip to Beauce is complete without a visit to L'Hotel-Dieu, a former hospital turned museum famous for its multi-coloured roofs and hosting the acclaimed annual Hospices de Beauce wine auction. hospices-de-beauce.com

IMAGES © DAVID LEVIENE, L.M. ARCHER



IMAGES © ANTOINE DELAPORTE, IPANEMA CNRS MCC UVSO

Mesmerising and galaxy-like, the photoluminescence (top) and optical microscopy techniques used by Université Paris-Saclay

MATERIAL SCIENCE

SHEDDING SOME LIGHT

A 6,000-year-old piece of jewellery is bound to hold secrets – but how to crack them? According to scientists at the Université Paris-Saclay, the answer lies in a special type of light technology. The ancient Pakistani amulet in question was originally made by lost-wax casting, a process still used today, but researchers uncovered new details via 'full-field photoluminescence imaging'. Shining light in the object's UV/visible range, they made a couple of amazing discoveries: firstly, that it was cast whole without any soldered pieces and, secondly, that it was made with very pure copper, a sign of the region's advanced technological expertise. Fascinating! www.universite-paris-saclay.fr/en



ON ÉCOUTE

CARAVAN PALACE

Electro-swinging, toe-tapping genius



Seven-piece Parisian band Caravan Palace debuted with their eponymous album in 2008. Leading the modern 'electro-swing' scene, they've gained popularity over the years with a number of demo and promo singles on the internet, amassing a dedicated online following.

Fusing swing and jazz with house and hip-hop influences, their sound is a distinctly funky marriage of old and new. Combined

'Caravan' nods to the band's gypsy side and Duke Ellington's classic hit, while 'Palace' refers to a nightclub in Paris

with often unusual videos and a striking robot mascot, it's easy to see why this up-and-coming bunch are turning heads.

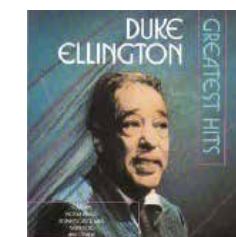
Perhaps their most famous tracks are *Suzy* (2009), *Dramophone* (2012) and *Lone Digger* (2015), but each of their three studio albums to date offers superb listening, from the vibrant and manic to the beautifully *mélancolie*.

Caravan Palace are Zoé Colotis (vocals), Arnaud Vial (guitar), Hugues Payen (violin), Camille Chapelière (clarinet and saxophone), Charles Delaporte (electronics), Antoine Toustou (trombone) and Paul-Marie Barbier (percussion).

IF YOU LIKE THIS, YOU MIGHT LIKE...



DJANGO REINHARDT
Belgian-born French jazz guitarist and influence for Caravan Palace.
The Best of...
Chestnut Music Traders Ltd



DUKE ELLINGTON
Another influence is the pianist, composer and overall jazz legend.
Greatest Hits
Sony Music



VITALIC
An inspiration for the band, Vitalic is a French electro-dance musician.
OK Cowboy
Different Recordings

INSTA FRANCE

The beauty of France on Instagram. This issue: #portes

There's something enchanting about *portes anciennes* and these Instagrammers have captured the most crumbly and colourful. From left: A wooden door in Aix-en-Provence snapped by **shlokaa**; a flaking set of doors in Margon from **karinkloo** and an ornate entrance in Lyon from **66albe**.



UNIQUE RETREATS

GLEAMING GREEN

Drenched in ivy, the regal Hôtel de France wears its greenery like a regal gown. It's steeped in history too, having been privately and independently owned for more than 100 years. Inside and out, the building retains its Art Deco charm with a number of traditional features, while feeling fresh thanks to an extensive refurbishment in 2014.

Found in the northern tip of the Loire Valley, the hotel overlooks La Chartre-sur-le-Loir's main square and is ideally positioned for a stroll around the town. It also boasts excellent access to the main motorways, heading north to nearby Le Mans, south to Tours and Bordeaux, and east to Paris. Tours airport and several mainline train stations are also close by. Even if you're not roaming far, there's plenty to see and do locally, from visiting the famous Le Mans 24-hour circuit to following a trail through Bercé forest with its swathes of feathery bracken and grand oak trees.



After exploring the beautiful surrounding area, the Hotel de France is the perfect haven in which to unwind. There are 22 luxurious, individually designed bedrooms with classic touches and en-suite facilities, plus a heated swimming pool, garden and sun-drenched terrace for ultimate relaxation. Meanwhile, the on-site restaurant Le Relais de Ronsard welcomes guests to enjoy seasonal dishes prepared by its experienced chefs, whether it's a leisurely lunch, family celebration or candlelit dinner for two.

A retro escape in one of France's most magical regions, the Hotel de France has earned its prestige with the likes of Steve McQueen, Sir Stirling Moss OBE, Derek Bell MBE and even President Kennedy's family passing through its doors over the years.

● **Hôtel de France**, 20 Place de la République, 72340, La Chartre-sur-le-Loir, France +33 (0)2 43 44 40 16 www.lhoteldefrance.fr

ON ADORE Tuck into these gluten-free chocolate madeleines or opt for the classic flavour with Mrs Crimble's 'Authentically French' range. www.mrskrimbles.com



3 ways with... GALLERIES

Step away from the flurry of Parisian streets and enjoy quieter moments in some of the capital's hottest exhibitions.



IMAGE © FREDDY REITZ

SPOILT FOR CHOICE

Fortunately for art fans, there are two LUMAS art galleries in Paris: one in Saint-Germain-des-Prés and the other in the Marais. LUMAS features numerous works capturing French life, such as bold and dramatic fashion photography by Pamela Hanson and the fun, splashy collages of Freddy Reitz. www.lumas.com



A TRIBUTE TO RODIN

The Grand Palais is holding *Rodin: the Centennial Exhibition* to mark 100 years since the pioneering sculptor's death. Showcasing more than 200 of his works, it takes place March 22 to July 31. www.grandpalais.fr/en



CLASSIC COLLECTION

Master painter Rembrandt always has a home in the Louvre. The impressive collection comprises several well-known self-portraits as well as the celebrated *Bathsheba at Her Bath* (1654). www.louvre.fr/en