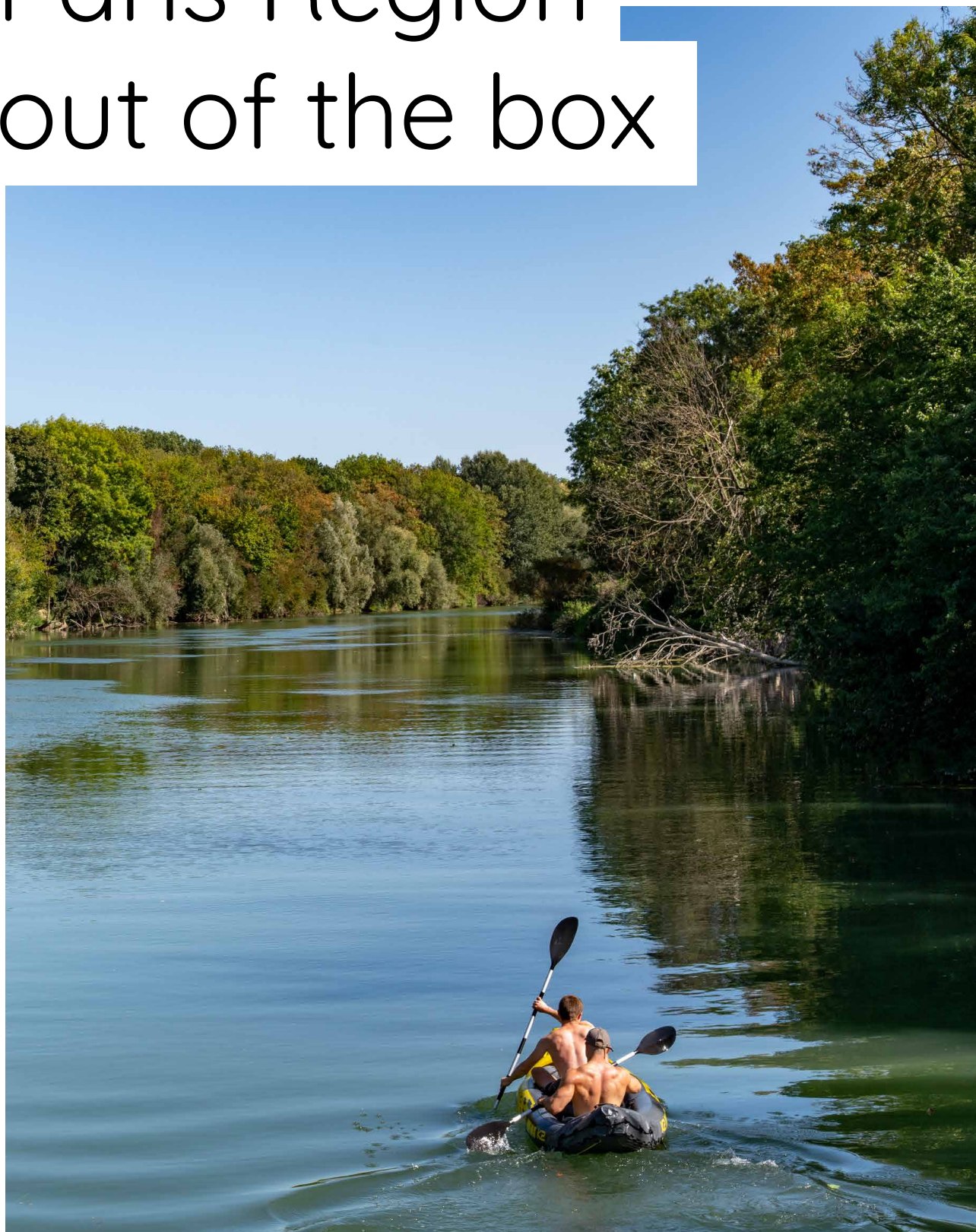


Paris Region out of the box

2024

EDITION



CULTURE

The treasures of Greater Paris

SPORT

Go paddle-boarding around Paris

LIFESTYLE

Where to go along the ring road

NATURE

Forests, Paris Region's number one tourist destination

FOOD

Boulogne, the city for good food

*Enlarge
your Paris*



PARIS REGION OUT OF THE BOX

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Paris*



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Why not get off the beaten track?

The Eiffel Tower, the Louvre, the Musée d'Orsay, Notre-Dame, the Arc de Triomphe... so many sites that make Paris and Paris Region famous worldwide. However prestigious they may be, they do not in themselves sum up what Paris Region has to offer in terms of tourism and leisure activities. With its four regional nature parks covering an area almost 30 times the size of Paris, its vast forests such as Fontainebleau and Rambouillet, its five World Heritage sites (the palaces of Versailles and Fontainebleau, the medieval city of Provins, the banks of the Seine in Paris and Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye in Poissy) and its former wastelands that have become party venues, Paris Region is full of surprises that are often little-known to the locals themselves. This is what Enlarge your Paris, an independent local media, Choose Paris Region and Visit Paris Region will reveal in this magazine "Paris Region Out of the Box". Happy discoveries!



Culture





The future Paris Region Centre Pompidou will open in Massy in 2026
© PCA-STREAM

The Centre Pompidou will open in Massy in 2026

Following in the footsteps of the Centre Pompidou Metz, a new site for the famous Parisian museum will be built in Massy, Essonne, in 2026. Designed to house our many collections, it will also be open to the public. Deputy General Manager of the Centre Pompidou, Charlotte Bruyere gave Enlarge your Paris a sneak preview.

How did the project to create a Paris Region Centre Pompidou in Massy come about?

Charlotte Bruyere : The Centre Pompidou boasts one of the world's largest collections of contemporary art. In recent years, however, the collection's growth has accelerated. Today, the Centre Pompidou's collection includes over 140,000 works, compared with half that number twenty years ago. As a result, we have to rent additional space to store them.

So it was important for us to own a building. We took advantage of this situation to come up with a new type of venue: a hybrid building used for conservation but also accessible to the general public. In 2018, we therefore launched a call for expressions of interest aimed at local authorities.

Was it necessary to get out of Paris? Will this help make contemporary art more accessible?

We needed to get out of the capital to buy a quality space, but without

going too far. Moreover, this was in line with the Centre Pompidou's strong desire to reach out beyond its walls to an audience that doesn't necessarily come to Paris to see an exhibition. The idea was to imagine a new kind of venue that would show the public how a collection is formed, highlighting new acquisitions as well as the little-known professions that work around works of art and collections. Ultimately, our aim is to make access to contemporary art and creativity easier, through a building that we want to be as hospitable as possible.

What about the arrival of the Picasso museum on these same premises?

The Picasso Museum will also have its collections in the building. This means that there will be two national public establishments sharing a single location for the conservation of their collections. That's quite uncommon. This means that the Picasso Museum will be able to participate in cultural projects. Even if nothing has been decided yet, we'll be exploring avenues of collaboration.

The opening of the site will coincide with the temporary closure of the Centre Pompidou in Paris. Is this a coincidence?

It's a lucky coincidence. The new venue will open just a few months after the Parisian site closes in 2025. But that doesn't mean that the Massy site is a transitional one! It will be at the heart of the Centre Pompidou's operations.

Obviously, the closure of the Paris site will put the spotlight on this new venue.

The Paris Region Centre Pompidou will be part of a region that is already richly endowed with cultural venues...

The cultural ecosystem surrounding the site, in Essonne and nearby towns, is very attractive. This obviously weighed in Massy's favor! The presence of the opera, the Longjumeau theater, the Paul B concert hall and the Plateau de Saclay made us want to work in this area. While waiting for the site to open, we have launched a number of prefiguration initiatives, including cultural programming with the Chamarande estate, the Massy opera house and the University of Paris-Saclay. In addition, from March to June 2024, we will be going outside Essonne to present a photographic exhibition at the L'Onde art center in Vélizy (Yvelines).

You live outside Paris and have worked for the Cergy-Pontoise urban community for over twelve years. How do you see Greater Paris?

The areas around Paris need to be highlighted. The energies that are present in these areas sometimes lack visibility compared with projects based in Paris. These are often very young areas, and young people need this momentum. And it seems to me that we sometimes dare to do more in Greater Paris than in more traditional venues.

Interview by Virginie Jannière

Find out more about Paris Region Centre Pompidou at centrepompidou.fr





Galleria Continua near Coulommiers

I visited the most remote art gallery in Greater Paris in the middle of the fields

© Oak Taylor-Smith

Just a few pedal strokes from the Coulommiers train station, you can stroll through an internationally renowned XXL contemporary art gallery located in a closed-down factory: Galleria Continua. Virginie Jannière, journalist for *Enlarge your Paris*, went for a taste of art.

Unless you consider cheese to be an art form, it's rare to hear Coulommiers referred to as a hotbed for contemporary artistic expression. Yet Galleria Continua, an art gallery nestled in a stretch of countryside on a former industrial site, lies just a few kilometers from this charming town in the Seine-et-Marne department. Founded in San Gimignano, Tuscany, over thirty years ago, Galleria Continua now has branches in Beijing, Havana, Rome, São Paulo, Paris and Dubai, and displays works by the world's leading contemporary artists. And Coulommiers is no

exception. That's all it took to make me want to take the P line all the way to its terminus and have a look.

A closed-down factory in the middle of the fields

I have to admit it: I was expecting to make some easy puns about misery. Because getting to Galleria Continua is a bit trickier by public transportation than by car. After stowing my bike in one of the spaces provided on the brand-new 100% electric train, I set off for an hour's journey. Once there,

I mounted my trusty steed for a 4-mile ride through the fields.

Fifteen minutes later, I was standing on the edge of the world in front of what looked like an abandoned factory in Boissy-le-Châtel (Seine-et-Marne). A young woman who seemed to appear out of nowhere greeted me and introduced me to the premises. Galleria Continua is housed in former wheat mills that later became paper mills, wooden furniture factories and plastic factories. While the machines have disappeared, the walls are

still much the same. As I strolled through these gigantic spaces, I discovered the three temporary exhibitions on display as well as works that have been on display here for several years, such as Daniel Buren's colorful frescoes and stained-glass windows.

I have a confession to make at this point: without mediation, I wouldn't have understood much about these works. There's no such thing as an unguided tour here, and that's a good thing. No smugness either: you're allowed to ask the dreaded "stupid questions" and know nothing about art. Thanks to the guides, I was able to perceive all the nostalgia contained in an assemblage of radiators and flowers by the artist Sislej Xhafa, or the humanist scope of the work of Michelangelo Pistoletto, a figure of Arte povera. As the visit unfolded, I discovered here and there the site's industrial past through the discreet presence of an old time-clock or old trade union posters still hanging on a wall. A few minutes later, as I walked through the 14th-century vaults, I took in the bucolic view of the Grand Morin, the river that runs alongside the mill.

Giant works of art and an artistic skate park

Once again, I got back on my bike to ride across the fields to the second site: the Sainte-Marie mills. I could also have walked through the woods along the river and followed the sensory trail which retraces the mills' industrial past (olfactory stations are scattered along the riverbank). Once again, the venue is XXL. Before going through the umpteenth rusty door to discover the last exhibition - the rather disconcerting one by Indian artist Subodh Gupta - we walked with the guide past an artistic skate park, giant baby carriages by Nari Ward, a gigantic work by Anish Kapoor, and other "long-term" art installations that seem to be

keeping a benevolent eye on the young guard of contemporary art. Finally, it was time to go home. On my bike, I was humming Michel Legrand's *Les Moulins de mon cœur*, happy to have had a taste of art as well as a breath of fresh air.

Virginie Jannière

Galleria Continua, 46, rue de la Ferté-Gaucher, Boissy-le-Châtel (77), open Wednesday to Sunday, from noon to 6 pm. Free admission. Access: Coulommiers station (line P), then 8 minutes by express bus or 15 minutes by bike. You can take your bike on board SNCF Transilien trains free of charge only during off-peak periods: Monday to Friday, before 6:30 am, between 9:30 am and 4:30 pm and after 7:30 pm; Saturday, Sunday and public holidays with no time restrictions. Find out more at galleriacontinua.com

WHERE TO EAT IN COULOMMIERS?

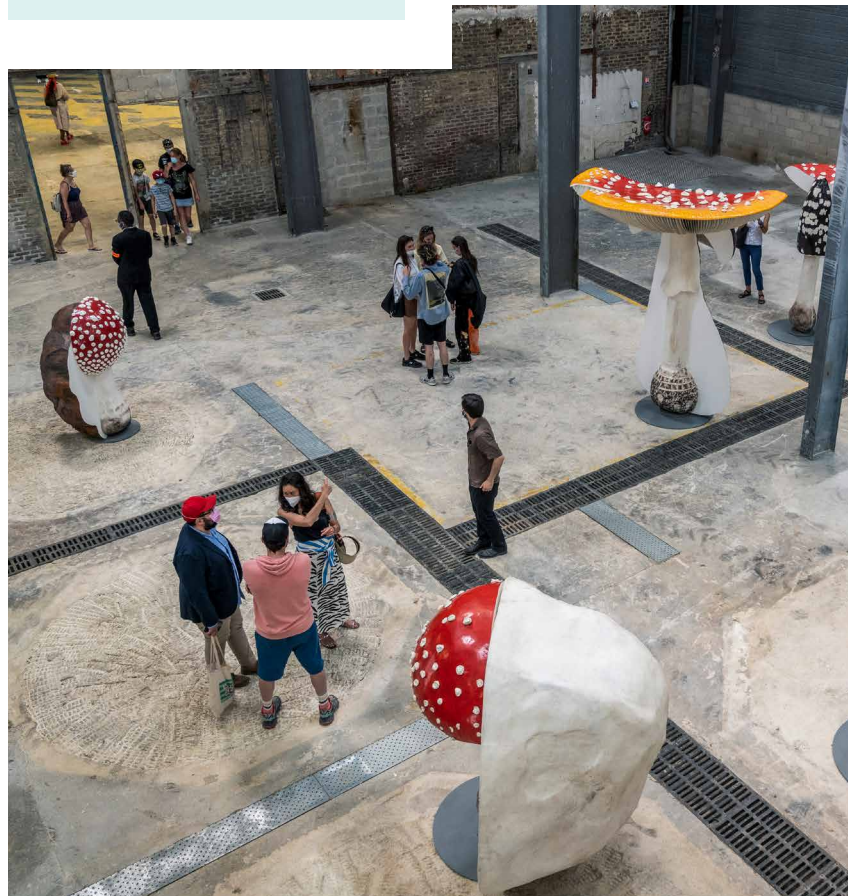
Before or after your visit to Galleria Continua, why not head to Happy Time in Coulommiers (Seine-et-Marne), a casual café-restaurant covered from wall to ceiling in vegetation, with hanging wicker armchairs and even menus with positive messages on the tables. Try the beef avocado millefeuille (a beef tartar topped with guacamole) and the Happy Time poké (with lots of fresh, healthy ingredients).

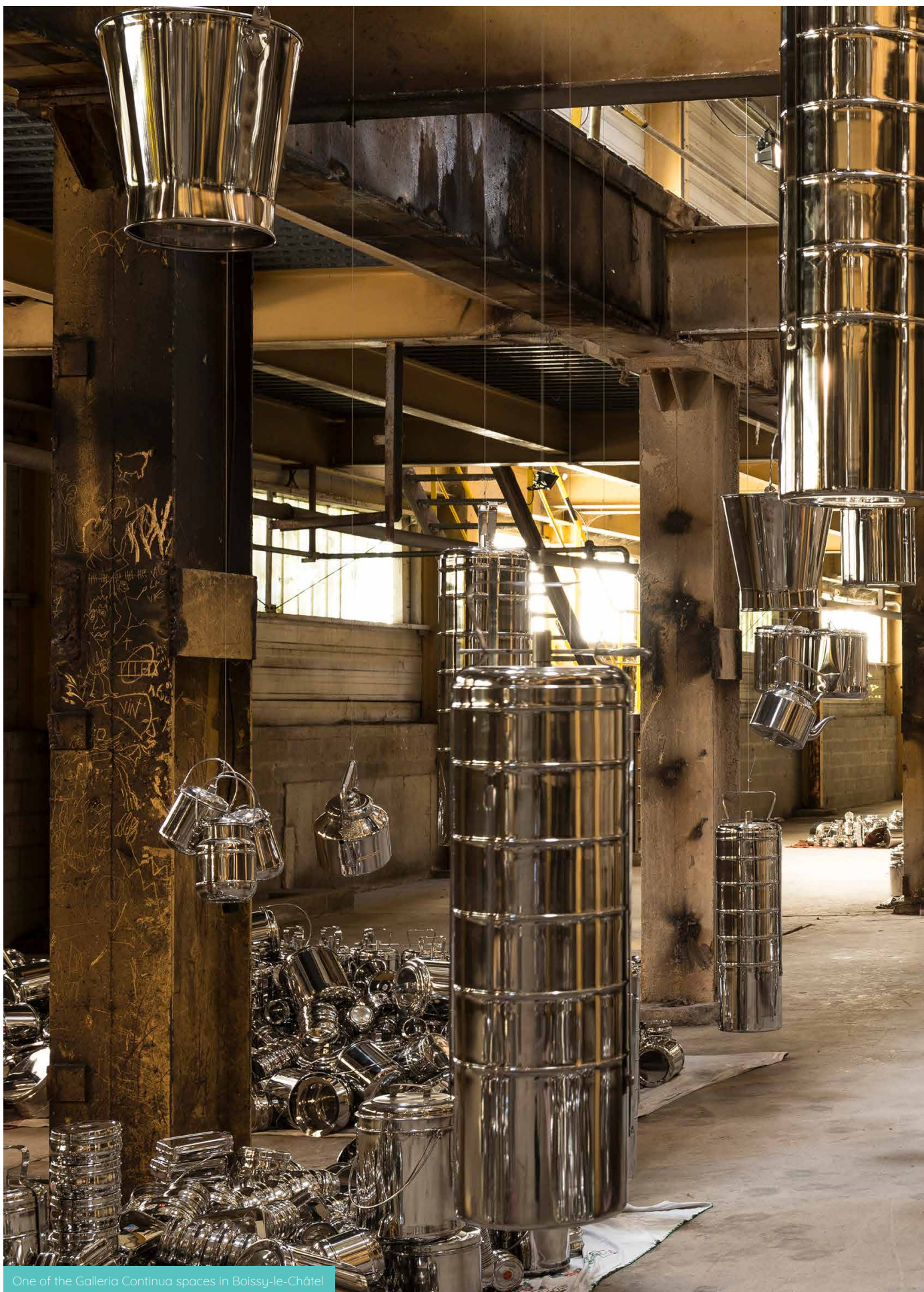
Happy Time, 13, place du Marché, Coulommiers (77). Open Tuesday to Saturday, 12 am to 2 pm and 7 pm to 9:30 pm.

Tel: 01 64 03 58 60.

Access: Coulommiers station (line P).

Find out more on Facebook





One of the Galleria Continua spaces in Boissy-le-Châtel





Château de Monte-Cristo in Port-Marly

In search of the treasures of Greater Paris

© Julie Gourhant for Enlarge your Paris

With some 1,700 historic monuments and 200 museums and exhibition venues, Seine-et-Marne, Yvelines, Val-d'Oise and Essonne have a lot to offer. In 2018, to better showcase these features, we produced a *Cultural Atlas of Greater Paris* presented by two of its authors, Amélie Rousseau and Séverine Albe-Tersiguel, urban planners and researchers at the Paris Region Institute.

Have you ever heard of the Château de Monte-Cristo (Yvelines)? Have you ever visited a contemporary art exhibition at the Abbaye de Maubuisson (Val-d'Oise)? Have you ever been to the Musée-Jardin Dufet-Bourdelle (Seine-et-Marne) or the Domaine de Saint-Jean-de-Beauregard (Essonne)? Don't any of these places ring a bell? Yet they're all in Paris Region!

Aside from a few emblematic monuments and leisure venues that dot the region, most visitors and Paris region residents alike are unaware of the region's rich diversity. Every year, French and foreign tourists spend around 45 million days in Paris Region, but 75% of them stay within the inner suburbs. And yet, in addition to the Musée d'Orsay, the Louvre, the Versailles estate and Disneyland Paris, there are

almost 9,000 cultural, tourist and heritage sites in Paris Region, all of which contribute to the region's vitality, appeal and identity. As the summer vacations approach and the temperature rises, why not head off to the countryside, a few dozen miles from the concrete of Paris, and discover, on foot, by bike or even on horseback, some of the treasures that surround the capital?

Over 1,700 historic monuments in Greater Paris

Greater Paris' assets are often overlooked and under-valued. And yet there are many major places of interest. There are over 1,700 historic monuments, as well as some 200 museums and exhibition venues, and more than 300 concert halls...

Inter-municipalities, which have often been reconstituted following the adoption of the NOTRe law in 2015, have allowed Paris Region to create territories on a scale that is perfectly suited to cultural activities. Of course, these public establishments for intercommunal cooperation in Paris Region are fairly new, and not all of them have clearly positioned themselves in the cultural field. However, experience gained over the last ten years or so has shown that intermunicipal communities offer a relatively accessible scale for residents (provided they are sufficiently well-covered by transportation or have a car), and allow for a wider range of activities and facilities beyond the municipality, in rural areas as well as in the heart of the urban community.

Intermunicipalities can intervene in the cultural sphere by managing facilities (mainly media libraries and amateur art centers, but also theaters and cinemas) or by organizing cultural events, with the aim of broadening audiences while reinforcing the local identity. In addition to facilities and entertainment, these areas, which are sometimes created from scratch, may be in search of an identity. History and heritage – built, natural or intangible – allow for the construction of a narrative that conveys memory and identification. Some intermunicipalities, such as Gâtinais Val du Loing or Provinois, are marked by their medieval heritage, or by the presence of royal and imperial estates, such as Saint Germain Boucles de Seine. Others, such as Paris Vallée de



The Château de Fontainebleau, one of five Unesco World Heritage sites in Paris Region

Credit: © Olga Khomitsvich

la Marne, are marked by their industrial past and potential for innovation, or by their scientific and technical culture, such as the Paris-Saclay urban community. Depending on the field, however, the local distribution is not always uniform, and some areas are more poorly endowed than others.

An Atlas for discovering Greater Paris

The Cultural Atlas of Greater Paris, the fruit of a partnership between DRAC Paris Region, Paris Region and the Institut Paris Region, aims to highlight the region's cultural and tourist attractions in a comprehensive, cross-disciplinary way. Primarily aimed at elected representatives and stakeholders in the cultural and tourism sectors, it is designed to help them gain a better understanding of their local area and that of their neighbors, build a common narrative and develop their cultural strategies. For Paris Region residents, or for a wider public (whether institutions, associations or the general public), it can be a means

of making discoveries just a few dozen kilometers from home during weekends or vacations. It's also a way of taking ownership of the region and changing the way people look at the Greater Paris area, which is often underestimated and little-known.

The Atlas is available online: institutparisregion.fr

The gold room in Marie-Antoinette's private apartments



A visit into the intimacy of Marie-Antoinette

© Chateau de Versailles - T. Garnier

After years of research and study, Queen Marie-Antoinette's private chambers have reopened to the public. An opportunity to discover the hidden secrets of France's most famous queen on guided tours in small groups.

It's like going through the looking glass. As crowds of visitors stream into the main courtyard of the Palace of Versailles (Yvelines) to visit the Hall of Mirrors and the rich royal apartments, our guide leads us past a security rope and opens a modest door beneath the "Queen's Staircase" with a large key that looks like something out of a cloak-and-dagger film.

Will we be allowed in? Not at all. Since June 2023, guided tours of Marie-Antoinette's private chambers have been available to the public. After crossing small deserted courtyards and

climbing a few flights of wooden steps, we and nine other curious onlookers enter these mysterious rooms, which the sovereign annexed in 1774 after the death of Marie Leszczyńska (Louis XV's wife) in 1768. Well concealed behind the famous and sumptuous State Apartment, these rooms reveal a modesty that would be unimaginable in the heart of the Sun King's palace.

A restitution rather than a restoration

Our guide warns us right away: this is more of a restitution than

a restoration, since rearranging these timeworn rooms required years of research and cross-checking the memoirs of the queen's entourage with the order books of her suppliers and existing plans. The museum evokes Marie-Antoinette's life and personality, from her coronation to her last days, through the use of design and furnishings.

First, we discover the second floor. For a queen with little interest in reading, the library is impressive. Nevertheless, everything is well thought out: the shelves are mounted on racks and pinions

(a gadget according to our guide), the drawers are topped with the Queen's initials and – a little provocation – the drawer handles are in the shape of a double-headed eagle, a reference to Marie-Antoinette's native Austria, which was at odds with France at the time. Then there's the "Meridienne room", all purple and green, innovative colors at the time, designed while the young woman was pregnant with her first child. The abundance of amorous symbols and the presence of a restful alcove bear witness to this.

A funny moment: the guide opens a hidden door right next to the queen's bed, revealing our presence to the myriad tourists visiting her bedroom. When the door closes, you can feel the relief the sovereign must have felt when she found herself out of the court's sight.

A queen that valued her privacy

The queen may have slept only in the bed of her official bedchamber, but it was in these hidden, narrower rooms that she liked to spend her days with her children, relatives and chambermaids. *"Few people actually knew about these places, only the most intimate circle penetrated them,"* explained our guide. In her gold room, refurbished and redecorated in 1784 by the architect Richard Mique (known for his work on the Queen's Hamlet and part of the Petit Trianon), the Queen spent between one and three hours a day playing music. While these rooms have now been refurnished with recent acquisitions by the palace, and the work on the upholstery fabrics on the second floor is impressive, the second floor is even more in touch with the sovereign's intimacy.

A succession of small rooms testify to the daily life of her "inner circle", first and foremost her first chambermaid, Madame Campan, her closest friends and her children. One room was probably reserved for the Count de Fersen, the queen's probable Swedish lover, as suggested by the commission for a Scandinavian stove. The "Billard Room" reveals Marie-Antoinette's taste for this game, even though it was "unworthy" of a sovereign, according to her entourage. Here and there, objects testify to the highlights of her life, such as a layette chest, probably donated by the City of Paris on the occasion of the birth of the dauphin Louis-Joseph in 1781, some colorful (and gold, of course) tableware and a simple backgammon set.

Last but not least, the *toile de Jouy* used on the walls of all these rooms is remarkable for the quality of the workmanship of the craftsmen at the nearby Jouy-en-Josas factory. A special mention goes to the fruit-patterned tapestry in the dining room, a kind of final bouquet of color and finesse. The tour ends with depictions of the Queen on horseback (wearing pants!). Our guide explains: "Indeed, this would have angered her illustrious mother, Marie-Thérèse") and showcases containing some of her personal belongings, such as her gloves and a replica of the necklace that led to the famous "necklace affair". In the end, Sofia Coppola's colorful, pop portrayal of the queen in her film *Marie-Antoinette* doesn't seem so far off the mark. One thing's for sure: the transgressive Marie-Antoinette is still the talk of the town.

Virginie Jannière

Guided tour of Marie-Antoinette's private chambers at the Palace of Versailles, Place d'Armes, Versailles (78). Closed on Mondays. Reservations required and guided tours only. Admission: €29.50 (full price: includes admission to the palace + guided tour), €10 (under the age of 26 and palace ticket holders). Access: Versailles Château-Rive gauche station (RER C). Information and reservations on chateauversailles.fr



The Meridienne room





The Thumb sculpted by César is one of the many works of art on display on the La Défense square

A treasure hunt to discover the works of art at La Défense

The free Paris Region Aventures app offers some forty treasure hunts for the whole family to discover Paris Region's heritage. This is what Enlarge your Paris journalist Mélanie Rostagnat put to the test when she went among the towers of La Défense to unearth the works of art on display on the main square.

There are certainly more bucolic destinations than La Défense (Hauts-de-Seine). But for the urban art enthusiast in me, there's no doubt that this excursion to the esplanade on the Paris Region Aventures app will allow me to unearth some treasures (potentially 70, i.e. the number of works of art scattered around the main square, whose surface area is the equivalent of 5 soccer fields). As soon as I get out of the metro, I head for the starting point of this

1.25-mile treasure hunt through this open-air gallery. With my smartphone in hand, I set out on my first mission: to find "a weird bench" between the Bassin Takis and the Grande Arche. I soon come across this XXL work by Lilian Bourgeat, from which I could admire the view all the way to the Arc de Triomphe. The application's geolocation and image recognition technologies allow me to scan the installation and confirm my answer. That's one point!

No sooner said than done, I set off on the second leg of my journey: "a large sculpture made of colored rods, like straws". On the way to this monumental work by the artist Raymond Moretti, I spot "The Sleepwalker" by Henri de Miller. All these works of art scattered among the office towers are a sight to behold!

Eight missions to accomplish

One mission follows another;
I let myself be guided by the clues

and get caught up in the game. From Yaacov Agam's monumental Fountain to Portuguese street-artist Vhils' *Scratching the Surface* fresco, Joan Miró's *Fantastic Characters*, César's *Thumb* and even *The Red Spider* by Alexandre Calder, I discover an incredible exhibition of contemporary art. With each mission I complete (there are eight in all), I learn more about the history of the district and the artists selected. With no time to spare, I reach my destination in just over an hour: the Paris La Défense Arena (home of the Racing 92 rugby team, and a regular venue for numerous shows throughout the year). I leave with a different view of the business district and the desire to come back and stroll along the esplanade, which hosts a number of artistic events and festivals.

Launched in 2020 by the Paris Region Tourism Committee, the Paris Region Aventures app offers some forty fun treasure hunts (8 new adventures are available since July 7: the banks of the Seine, the *street art* around the BNF, Etampes, Nemours, L'Isle-Adam, Yerres, Issy-les-Moulineaux and Château-Landon) as well as a home-based virtual adventure dedicated to Olympic and Paralympic sports. The idea is simple: you choose a site on a map to explore (each site takes around 90 minutes to

complete), and complete missions (7 on average) to find clues and collect up to 300 characters. Catch them all, like in Pokemon!

Mélanie Rostagnat

Free Paris Region Aventures application available on visitparisregion.com



The giant bench designed by the artist Lilian Bourgeat

Giant street art frescoes on the "Boulevard Paris 13" in the 13th district of Paris

How the 13th arrondissement has become an icon for street art over the past 10 years

In 2013, one of the 13th arrondissement's buildings slated for demolition was transformed into a temporary work of art by a hundred artists. About a decade after the "Tour Paris 13", street art gradually spread to the walls of the arrondissement, giving rise in particular to "Boulevard Paris 13", an open-air art gallery along Boulevard Vincent Auriol. Founder of the Itinerrance gallery specialized in urban art and initiator of these projects, Mehdi Ben Cheikh looks back on over ten wild years for Enlarge your Paris.

Eleven years ago, under your leadership, 108 street artists tackled a tower block in the 13th arrondissement and created a major ephemeral exhibition. Can you tell us more about this event?

Mehdi Ben Cheikh: As the director of a gallery (Galerie Itinerrance, editor's note), I had already started commissioning street artists to paint walls in the 13th arrondissement.

For me, it's important to work both inside and outside the gallery. The thing was, the proposals were pretty conservative. And that's normal: when you work in the public space, you don't want to offend people. You're not going to create a huge nude, for example. I always used to say to the artists: "You're only here for a week, but the people in the neighborhood will have to live with your work in front of them every day!"

"Still, I wanted something more exciting, more freedom. So I thought that a building due to be demolished might be a good place. So I started contacting landlords. ICF La Sablière was receptive, and so was Jérôme Coumet, the arrondissement mayor. They gave me the opportunity to work on the facades of 9, rue Fulton, on the banks of the Seine. So we started painting huge orange drops on it.

In the course of our work, we realized that the tenants were all gradually moving out of the building. So we asked if we could work in the empty apartments. For seven months, we both "intercepted" international artists passing through Paris and offered local artists the chance to participate. Each had a room that allowed visitors to enter their world. The venue opened for a month in October 2013, before the tower was demolished in April 2014.

How did the 13th arrondissement come to be known as the arrondissement for street art?

It happened gradually and began before the Paris 13 tower. I met the arrondissement mayor, who is a real art enthusiast. Then we moved forward. And the 13th arrondissement has assets not found in other arrondissements. Elsewhere in Paris, there's a lot of Haussmann buildings that can't be touched, and that's fine. But in the 13th arrondissement, on boulevard Vincent Auriol for example, there are all these housing projects from the 1960s. This allowed for the creation of "Boulevard Paris 13": 26 works between Place d'Italie and Quai de la Gare. With line 6 of the metro overhead in this section, you can actually cross an exhibition without leaving your wagon. This is all the more important considering that there is no major museum in the 13th arrondissement. There's the whole district around the BNF, but that's it. These *street art* projects have added cultural value to the arrondissement. It's a source of pride for local residents and brings in tourists. It's also encouraging for the artists, since we're giving them a place where they have the authorization and means to create. In a way, this reassures them in their choices.

This street art project is also an opportunity to link the 13th arrondissement with Ivry and Vitry, where the discipline is very present... And so, in a sense, to break down the ring road boundary.

In my opinion, it's a great educational tool. For several years, I was an art teacher in all the disadvantaged schools you can find. And it seems to me that, before taking local children to the Louvre or Orsay, it's not a bad idea to stop off at the *street art*. Because it appeals to them. And because a museum can be intimidating. In the 13th arrondissement, you're outside, but you also see art and get out of your neighborhood. Because, as we all know, even if you come from a suburb close to the capital, there's still a psychological barrier in place that makes you dread the idea of going to Paris. You feel like you're going to get lost. Boulevard Paris 13 is roughly between a half to 1.25-mile stroll, so it's pretty compact. At the same time, it makes an impression.

More and more operators are proposing that street artists take over a building while it's being renovated, just as you did with the Paris 13 tower project in 2013. Does that annoy you?

Why would that annoy me? Quite the contrary! I think it's great that this type of experiment is being conducted elsewhere. I have been actively involved in supporting the street art movement, so the more the better! I have been paddling alone long enough to be glad that others are joining the adventure!

Interview by Joséphine Lebard

To stroll along Boulevard Paris 13, find the map and information about the works on boulevardparis13.com



A video game museum is coming soon to Bussy in Greater Paris

A video game museum is due to open in Bussy-Saint-Georges in 2026

There are an estimated three billion gamers in the world. In France, according to the Global Video study carried out by Médiamétrie between October and December 2022, gamers aged over 50 are even more numerous than 15-24 year-olds. Yet there's still no museum in France to celebrate this new facet of culture. To address this, a project led by YouTubeur Tev and the town of Bussy-Saint-Georges completed its participatory financing at the end of last year, setting a new European record with 2.2 million euros. Fabien Goupilleau, local councillor in charge of digital life and communication, tells us the story of this project, which is due to be completed in 2026.

How did this video game museum project between YouTubeur Tev and Bussy-Saint-Georges (Seine-et-Marne) come about?

Fabien Goupilleau: Like in every municipality, it's a real challenge to attract young people to municipal activities. When I joined the municipal team in 2020, since I had worked in the video game sector for a few years, I suggested to the deputy mayor

in charge of youth affairs that we use video games to try and unite young people and thus revive the teen club. During the pandemic, we launched e-sport tournaments. At the end of October, we attracted almost 1,000 visitors to our tournament! At the same time, I'm a Tev subscriber. When I saw his video in which he explained that he was looking for a location for his video game museum, I jumped at the chance and spoke to the mayor about it, because we

were in the middle of thinking about creating an entertainment hub at the city entrance. I wrote to Tev, who replied the next day.

Does Tev know Bussy?

Not really! He has lived in Japan for over 15 years. But our town has the advantage of being located at the crossroads of the A4 and A104 highways, two RER stations away from Disneyland Paris. 30 or 40 years ago, Bussy had a population of 500.

Today, the number is 30,000. Since we're an "operation of national interest" city, the government has imposed a growth target of 40,000 by 2030: the government is asking us to build housing and a few private companies, but nothing related to leisure. We have negotiated the reservation of 861,113 sq. ft. at the entrance to the town, just off the highway. Then we launched a call for expressions of interest. The idea is to integrate the Tev project into this future leisure center.

Previous video game museums have all failed...

In France, there have been two museum attempts. In the early 2010s, a museum opened in La Défense's Grande Arche. Over 100,000 people came in one week, but the infrastructure was inadequate. The Grande Arche tenants filed a complaint because the crowds were preventing access to the offices! The museum was forced to close. A second museum opened in Schiltigheim (Bas-Rhin) in 2018. It was housed in a 2,153 sq. ft. house, but at the time of the pandemic the museum had to close for health reasons. Since then, its initiators have opened another in Brussels, which has been a success.

What makes your project different?

Since it is well known that a museum is inherently unprofitable, living almost exclusively on subsidies and donations, the idea was to associate it with a group of companies. In concrete terms, the idea is to create a "Japanese village" with restaurants, stores and fun activities surrounding the museum. It is this "Japanese village" that will financially support the museum.

The fact that Emmanuel Macron supported the project in a video gave it a real boost...

On September 20, we launched a crowdfunding campaign on KissKissBankBank. Within 48 hours of the president's support, a further 500,000 euros were raised.

Ten days later, we reached 1 million euros and closed the online campaign on November 5, after having raised 2.2 million euros - a new European record! Out of almost 36,000 donors, almost all were private individuals.

This shows that video games are not a niche culture...

Far from it! 70% of the population play video games regularly - once a month or more. It's a culture that's denied, yet one that everyone knows about. I think prejudices are hard to break...

How did Emmanuel Macron find out about this project?

When I saw the success of the crowdfunding, I shared my joy on LinkedIn. Some government officials follow me on this network and came to see me. I didn't contact them.

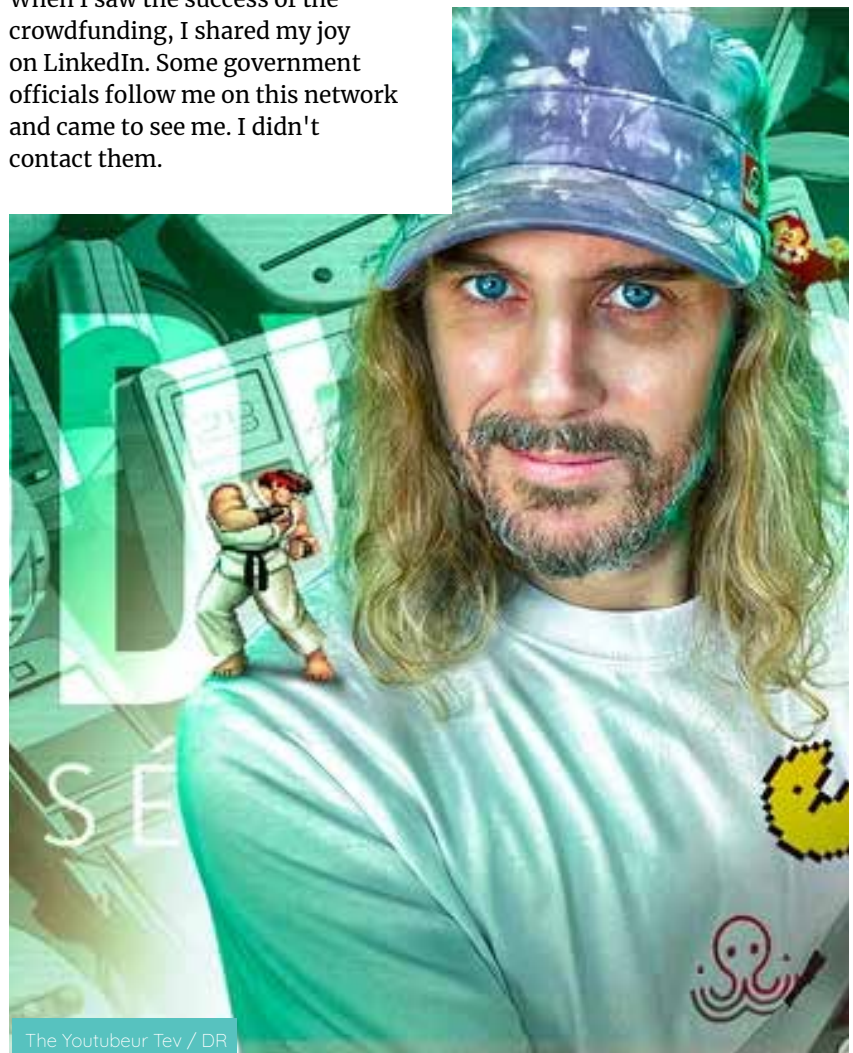
What does a "high sponsorship" by the President of the Republic entail?

It's a kind of token of the president's support, which makes it easier to obtain public subsidies or loans, or to find private investors. It's a sign of seriousness that the president rarely grants, no more than two or three times a year. It is an honorary distinction that does not entail any financial commitment on the part of the government.

You're not far from Disneyland, and this project sounds like a fairytale...

In concrete terms, how is it progressing on the ground?

It's true that, at the time, it was hard to believe! But now the land is blocked and has been sold to



"SINCE IT IS WELL KNOWN THAT A MUSEUM IS INHERENTLY UNPROFITABLE, LIVING ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY ON SUBSIDIES AND DONATIONS, THE IDEA WAS TO ASSOCIATE IT WITH A GROUP OF COMPANIES. IN CONCRETE TERMS, THE IDEA IS TO CREATE A "JAPANESE VILLAGE" WITH RESTAURANTS, STORES AND FUN ACTIVITIES SURROUNDING THE MUSEUM."

the developer. We've launched the architectural competition and are due to announce the winner at the end of March, followed by the submission of plans, building permits and so on.

The museum is scheduled to open in 2026.

What are the advantages of locating the museum in Greater Paris?

The museum's floor area will measure 43,055 sq. ft., with the possibility of several floors. It takes a lot of hard work to find this kind of building in Paris at a reasonable price. But we're still close to Paris! Bussy is 25 minutes from Châtelet by RER. The advantage of being in Greater Paris is that we're located at the crossroads of all the roads: all of France can come easily. Tev had had other opportunities in the provinces, but the access was more difficult for everyone. According to forecasts, the museum could attract over 100,000 visitors a year, who will also spend money in Bussy's shops. From an economic point of view, it's very good for the city. We are also planning a conference room where we can bring in specialists and organize "subscriber meetings" for YouTubers. Adjacent to the museum will be a 1,000-seat "Game Arena" for e-sport tournaments.

Tev's main aim is to showcase Japan. But video games are not only a part of Japanese culture...

Yes, video games are closely linked to Japan, where they were democratized after being invented in the United States. Video game enthusiasts are often passionate about Japan. It was appropriate to link the two worlds, but of course we'll be expanding to include other cultures. In fact, we already have over 2,200 consoles at our disposal, including the first American consoles. Partnerships have already been signed with French video game publishers. Frankly,

we're better at designing games than we are at building consoles!

Interview by Virgin Jannière

Find out more about the project on the crowdfunding page on kisskissbank.com and on Tev's YouTube channel. Find out more at bussysaintgeorges.fr

Inside the
Impressionist
House

Impressionism is causing a stir at Claude Monet's house in Argenteuil

Before moving to Giverny with his family, Claude Monet, the most famous of the Impressionist painters, lived in Argenteuil in the Val-d'Oise, during which time he painted some 250 works. Long closed to the public, this peaceful house has now reopened. Enlarge your Paris visited it. Impressions.

An elegant pale-pink bourgeois house, with green shutters and Swiss chalet-style woodwork, stands proudly just a short distance from the Seine. In the courtyard, a photo of the creator of *Water Lilies* and a colorful tribute to the painter by street artist C215. Welcome to the Impressionist House in Argenteuil (Val-d'Oise), where Claude Monet lived with his family from 1874 to 1878. These four short years in the "pink house with green shutters" were nevertheless enough for Monet to paint 259 works, over 150 of them depicting Argenteuil and the surrounding area.

And don't bother looking for them: most of these paintings are hanging on the walls of major museums around the world. People come here to savor the atmosphere. After four years of renovation, the Argenteuil town council has succeeded in restoring the atmosphere of this house, which was bought by the town in 2005 after being inhabited (or nearly so) ever since Claude Monet and his family moved to Giverny (Eure).

An interactive tour

First pleasant surprise: you dive straight into the 19th-century ambiance from the very first room,

with period bourgeois furniture sourced by the Laca agency, the inventive architectural studio behind the Atelier des Lumières in Paris (11th). The tour is interactive, with backlit reproductions of paintings, audio commentaries, handwritten letters and period posters stashed in furniture drawers. The aim: to visit a house rather than a museum.

It's moving to discover Claude Monet's son painted standing on the parquet floor that you're walking on. You can almost catch a glimpse of an umbrella outside from the charming wrought-iron

winter garden, where Monet used to sit and paint his wife, Camille. With the exception of an extension built by one of the owners, all the rooms in the house have been preserved, as have the three floors, through which you can move freely.

Argenteuil or the story of the suburbs' industrial transformation

From one room to the next, we discover the extent to which Argenteuil influenced the work of the most famous of the Impressionists. Although the painter's daily life is barely sketched, we can nevertheless trace the city's recent history, which is profoundly linked to the industrial transformation of the banks of the Seine. Photos and reproductions of paintings with smokestacks smoking in the distance attest to the rapid spread of heavy industry at the end of the 19th century. The somewhat nostalgic visit ends with a (re) discovery of the sailboats that once sailed the Argenteuil basin, the flower-filled banks and poplars lining the towpaths and vineyards.

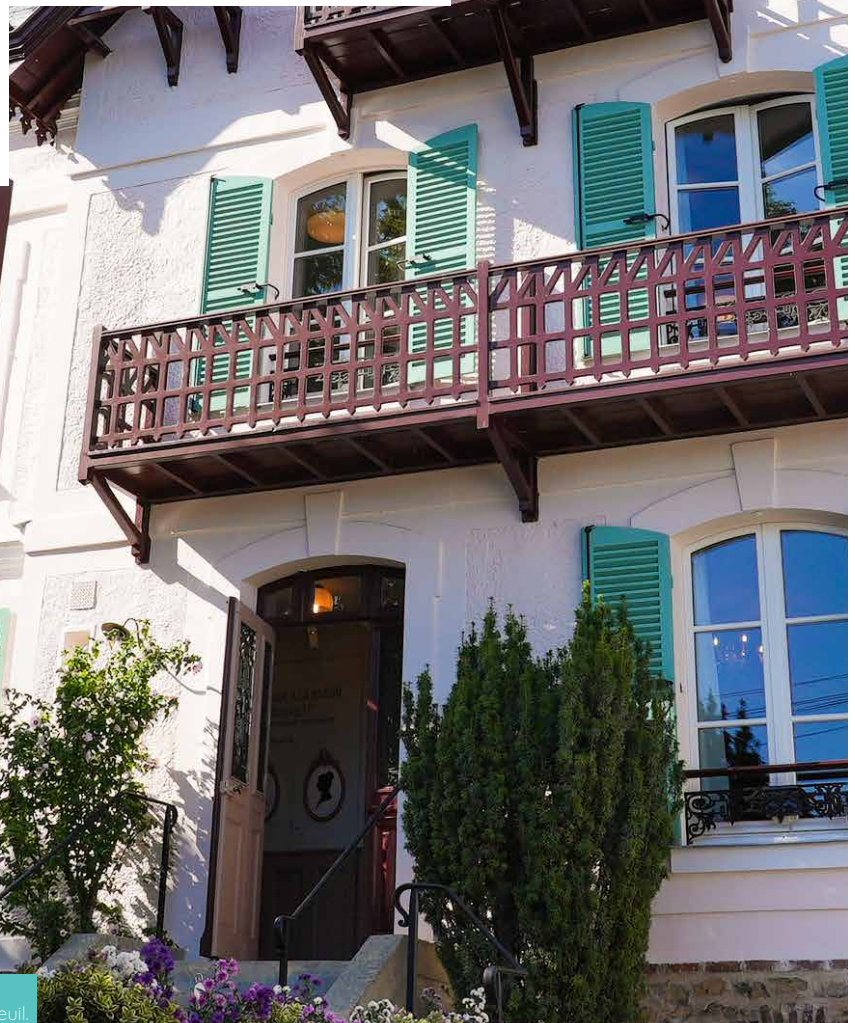
A special mention goes to the reconstruction of the painter's studio boat. You can try out an olfactory display system that evokes the place (not the most convincing, but it's still fun) and a digital painting that allows you to paint part of the famous work *Regatta in Argenteuil* yourself.

Having become an industrial and working-class town specializing in automobiles and aeronautics, the artist and his family eventually moved away from the town, no doubt frightened by the encroachment of the poppy fields. But we discover here that this was not the only reason: despite the success of the famous *Impression, sunrise*, Claude Monet was struggling to pay the rent and had to move further away from the capital. In the end, nothing has really changed in two centuries.

Virginie Jannière

The Impressionist House, 21, boulevard Karl Marx, Argenteuil (95).

Open Wednesday and Saturday from 10 am to 6 pm, Sunday from 2 pm to 6 pm. Admission: 5 € (full price), 3.50 € (reduced price). Access: Argenteuil station (line J). Find out more at maisonimpressionniste.fr



The Impressionist House, where Jean Monet lived, opened after 4 years of renovation work in Argenteuil.



The skate park under the A6 highway in Arcueil/ © Jérôme Designy for Enlarge your Paris

Sport



A cyclist creates a cycling map of Greater Paris



Cyclists on the roads in Paris Region

© Jérôme Derigny for Enlarge your Paris

A Grand-Paris cyclist for 25 years, Adrien Laplanche came up with the idea of creating a map to help you enjoy Greater Paris by bike and on foot. Another way to explore the region.

Where did you get the idea to create a map of Paris's surroundings specifically for cycling and hiking?

Adrien Laplanche: Like any suburban dweller, when I started my higher education, I took out a subscription to the public transportation network. But after a month, I gave up the metro for my bike, in a bid to avoid rush hour and the eternally repetitive monotonous landscape of the RER. Getting around by bike requires a completely different approach to the local area. At the end of the 1990s, there were only a handful

of us commuting by bike. Let's not forget that, until 1999, bicycles weren't even allowed on bus lanes! In 2008, 20 mph zones were introduced, allowing cyclists to drive against the flow of traffic. I then realized that the old Parisian roads, as opposed to the boulevard network, constituted a good traffic system, generally quite protected from cars since they are slower. These roads are well known to historians, architects, urban planners and even Parisians. But these roads are overlooked by public policymakers, who prefer to develop bike lanes on major roads.

Today, there are more and more cycling infrastructures. What's the point of your map?

For me, cycling is all about freedom! It's a freedom you don't find when you're cycling behind other riders on the protected bike lane on boulevard de Sébastopol. In reality, there are two traffic systems in Paris, piled one on top of the other, and no one talks about the second one for soft mobility, those ancient roads, some of which cross Paris while others go around the old city walls. They are not only interesting for cycling, but are

also of great heritage interest. At first, I drew up a little map for my own use, but then, being a true commuter, I decided that I couldn't stop at the gates of Paris. I then enlarged the map to include a radius of almost 25 miles around Paris, from the Parc Naturel du Vexin (Val-d'Oise / Yvelines) to Rambouillet (Yvelines), via Ermenonville (Oise), Brie-Comte-Robert (Seine-et-Marne) and Verneuil-l'Étang. (Seine-et-Marne).

What are the special features of the map you've designed?

Usually, maps take a very "motorist" view of a region: first you see the main traffic arteries, then the rest. This map changes the way you look at the local area. First you see the quiet itineraries: a map designed for soft mobility. It takes into account the topography - i.e. the relief - as well as old and new architectural interests. I wanted to paint a portrait of a region and its heritage. This approach to the suburbs is not well known. In Paris, and in every town and village, there's a logical network of historic routes that lead directly to the points of interest. Using these roads is a way of showing a real interest in the areas we cross.

Does your project have a political dimension?

Yes, because while I'm delighted to see cycling on the rise, it's a shame to build so many bike lanes on roads that were designed to connect people, to get them from one point to another, on roads that confine cyclists to pure commuting. Cycling above all allows you to get away from the traffic network, to rediscover the living countryside, which also means becoming aware of our heritage and history.

Interview by Joséphine Lebard

The "Map of Paris and its surroundings, cycling and hiking" is available on odos. guide for €25.



© Climb Up

I tested one of the world's biggest climbing gyms in Aubervilliers

Climb Up has opened one of the world's largest climbing gyms in Aubervilliers

Opened in 2022 in Aubervilliers, the Climb Up gym has become one of the world's biggest indoor climbing facilities. Enlarge your Paris journalist Joséphine Lebard went to try it out.

I walk briskly along the canal in Aubervilliers (Seine-Saint-Denis). The weather is nice, which for a month of January was not to be expected, and the sun is beautifully reflected in the water. Behind me, my Wednesday sidekick - 14, soon to be 15 - is dragging his feet a little. Firstly, because teenagers are rarely crazy about walking, and secondly, because they hate surprises. I never told him where we were going.

- *Tell me! Come on, tell me!*" he whines, dragging out the syllables like his sneakers.

- *We're going to Climb Up, the world's largest indoor climbing gym. Is that okay with you?*

- *That's fine with me," replies my son, "but how are you going to do that, since you're afraid of heights?*

Oh yes, that's right... I hadn't thought of that at all. Granted, I'm not the kind of person who's uncomfortable sitting on a stool, but I'm also not the kind of person who races to the top of the Eiffel Tower. I shrug, but we'll see... Especially since at Climb Up, we've decided to put comfort before effort.

A kitchen that's close to the top

It's lunchtime, so we sit down at the Climb Up Kitchen, the restaurant headed by chef Zak,

who wanted to meet climbers' demand for healthy yet fun food. My son chooses the chicken burger with its crisp, clearly homemade breading. I choose a fresh Cobb salad, which is generously served. Great, Symples drinks are also on the menu: iced herbal infusions that don't contain too much sugar. Now, we're in a climbing gym, and the idea is to eat without putting a strain on our stomachs or wallets.

A little lighter than when we arrived, we leave the vast hall where climbers with food cravings live side by side with, coworkers who are happy to find a nice place to put their computer, and grandparents looking for

a nice place to have lunch with their grandchildren..

53,820 sq. ft. dedicated to climbing

Let's face it: 75,347 sq. ft. of floor space, of which 53,820 sq. ft. is dedicated exclusively to climbing, is a real eye-catcher. You might even be tempted to call it a climbing cathedral, with routes that go right up to the ceiling. How you get to the top is up to you, with bouldering on the one hand relying more on arm strength and flexibility, and routes on the other calling more for endurance and technical skill. At Climb Up, there are 500 routes - renewed every three months by the openers - and 558 feet of linear bouldering, which change every month and a half.

Since we are complete beginners, we decided to start with the *fun climbing* which, as its name suggests, is a recreational area. You can choose to climb Jack's beanstalk, a reproduction of the game Tetris, or giant balloons. "*Come on, first one to the top!*", orders our teenager. But at a height of 13 or 16 feet, I start to feel dizzy. I come back down and manage to miss my "landing": even though I'm roped in, I crash to the floor like a big marshmallow... I can hear Laura Pausini's hit *La Solitudine* echoing in my head. The teenager is already far away, testing out an exciting slide. Then he's off again to climb a series of small ladders. I wonder if it's the same one I had to literally hoist out of the air to go hiking this summer in Savoie...

We then head towards the routes for a private lesson with Jérémie. Right next to us, a group of disabled children are having the time of their lives climbing the 33-foot wall. I realize that climbing is ultimately a very inclusive sport, where you come across very different kinds of people.

People don't always raise their heads and look at each other," Jérémie explains. Here, if you look at someone, it's not to judge them, but rather to see what they're doing, to learn from them. We all remember the "better" climber who helped us at one time or another."

Search and find your way

That's exactly what lies in store for us: being able to work as a climber/belayer pair on the wall. So we learn how to tie a figure-8 knot and how to belay. The teenager tackles the 33-foot wall and begins his ascent. I belay him, with Jérémie as a *back up*. I have to admit that I'm not very confident as he climbs: I've only got one son, and I'd hate for him to end up like a pancake... But gradually, I relax. There's something really nice about the relationship between the climber and the belayer: everything happening with just a glance and a few words. "*There's a lot of interaction*", Jérémie agrees.

I then realize that climbing is a field rich in metaphors and images that speak to me in particular: the rope that connects me to my son, and the role of belayer that has to be there, strong, but in the background.

The way he literally has to "find his way" on the wall, which is strewn with dozens of colored grips, to make his way.

On the way back, as we walk along the canal, he slips his hand into mine. "*That was really cool*", he repeats, for at least the third time. I have the impression that this afternoon, besides the climbing session, something else has happened that's both a little intangible and moving.

Joséphine Lebard

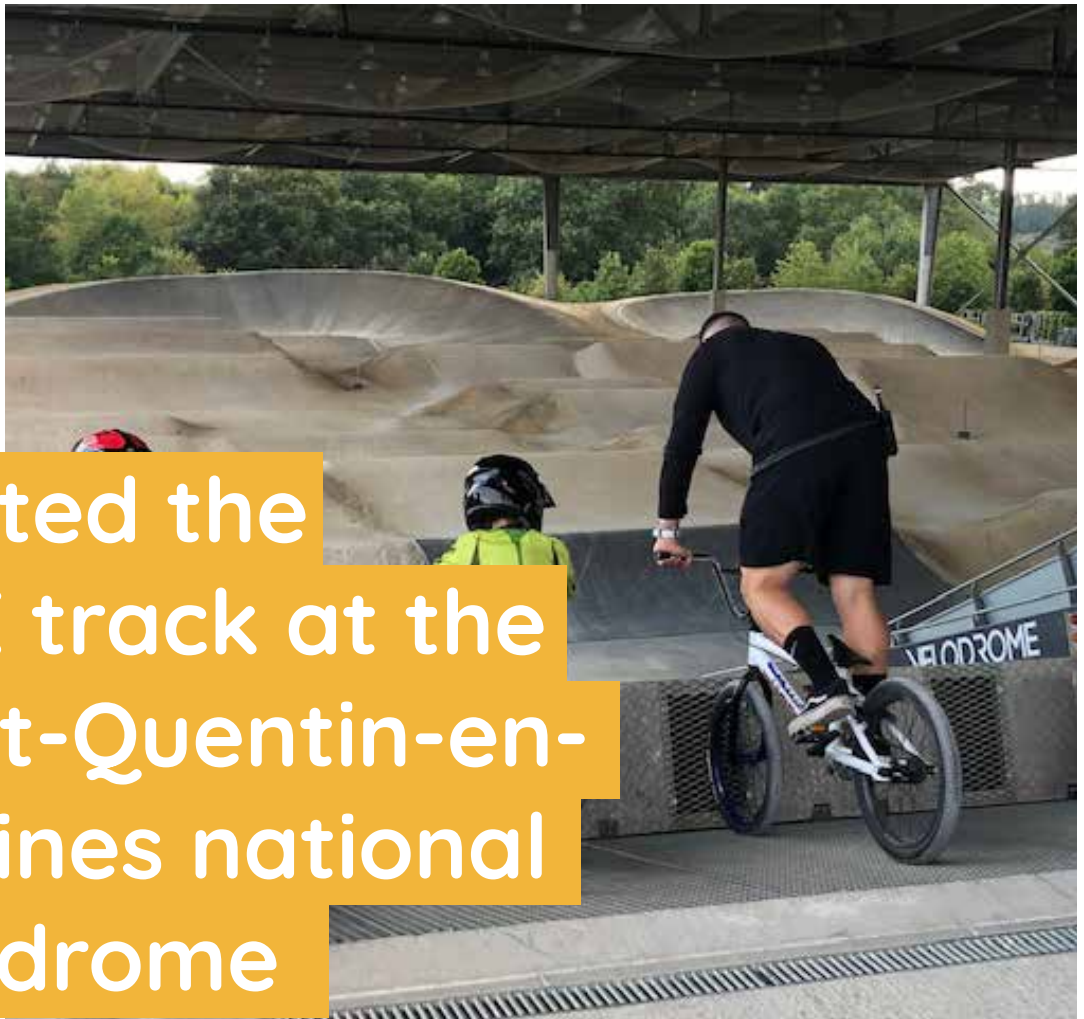
Climb up, 111, avenue Victor Hugo, Aubervilliers (93). Open daily from 8 a.m. to midnight. Access: Aimé Césaire metro station (line 12). Find out more at Aubervilliers.climb-up.fr



Climb Up offers 500 new routes every three months



The BMX stadium at the Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines national velodrome



I tested the BMX track at the Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines national velodrome

© Steve Stillman

438 yards of bumps and hollows, that's what awaits you on the BMX track at the velodrome national de Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, which Enlarge your Paris journalist Gaspard Guérin tried out for the first time.

It will host the Paris Olympic Games this summer. However, the national velodrome in Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines (Yvelines) is by no means elitist, and welcomes cyclists of all levels. To be inducted into the kingdom of the bicycle, all you have to do is sign up for an introductory ride, either on the speedway with its steep, wall-like bends, or on the BMX track with its perfectly designed bumps.

For this first time, my eight-year-old son and I chose the BMX. The sky is dark but the roof is there to protect us if need be. The 438 yard track looks like

a sea in heavy weather, with a succession of dips and bumps that we're going to have to tame. But before we enter the arena, Charlie, our captain and former speed champion, equips us from head to knees and then invites us to do a few laps on a flat surface to become familiar with our machine.

Stand upright and don't pedal

For the next hour, we're going to have to stand on the pedals and give up the comfort of the saddle (a comfort that would have been precarious anyway, given the hilly nature of the route). After a few

trips back and forth, it's time to hit the *pump track*, a straight line - as bumpy as it gets - for an introduction to BMX technique. The aim is to follow the contours of the terrain as closely as possible, standing on your legs on the way up and flexing them on the way down, all without turning the pedals and keeping them horizontal. A reflex which seems harder to get rid of after a certain age. On the other hand, whether you're 43 or 8, the pleasure is the same, and smiles soon appear beneath our helmets.

Then it's time for the real thing. We're going to spot each of the four straight tracks with Charlie, before hoisting ourselves onto the 13-foot-high ramp (another is over 26 feet high), the take-off runway for the entire circuit. However, to avoid taking off uncontrollably on the first bump, Charlie tells us to brake hard on the descent. This will be the one and only time.

Within an hour, our cheeks had time to take on new colors. We were smiling from ear to ear the whole time. The initiation comes to an end, leaving us with a furious desire to come back. That must be what we call the BMX hump.

Gaspard Guérin

Introduction to BMX at the National Velodrome, 1 rue Laurent Fignon, Montigny-le-Bretonneux (78). Wednesdays and Saturdays. For ages 5 and up. Price: 30 € per one-hour session (including equipment). Book here. Access: Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines station (lines N and U, RER C). Find out more on velodrome-national.com





"Parisians have a romantic view about swimming pools"

The Pontoise swimming pool in Paris

© Zéphirine (Wikimedia commons)

While a journalist from the *New York Times* published a report at the end of 2023 on swimming in Parisian pools, Enlarge your Paris spoke to the instagrammer Nageuse parisienne, who has been testing the capital's pools for the past two years.

What did you think of this American journalist's account of Paris municipal swimming pools in the *New York Times*?

Nageuse parisienne: The way she approached it spoke volumes to me. Because when it comes to discovering a city, swimming in the local public pool is a great idea. You get a wealth of information about the architecture and aesthetics of the site, as well as the pool's atmosphere, the welcome and the behavior of the swimmers. That's why I always carry my swimsuit in my bag, and whenever I travel in France or elsewhere, I go swimming!

"Tell me the pool you use, and I'll tell you who you are?"

For me, swimming is more about pleasure than sociology! But beyond the personal pleasure of a swim, the pool says a lot about us, and I'm not just talking about the building and its history. It's fascinating to see how we share this very intimate space with strangers: we shower almost naked next to men and women we don't know. And yet, thanks to everyone's tact, this moment comes very naturally!

In your daily activities as a Parisian swimmer, do you agree with what the journalist from the *Times* said about Parisians' contradictions and incivilities?

What spoke to me most was her description of the egos in the swim lanes. She described swimmers with a bit of bad manners who won't pay attention to others or let themselves be overtaken; it's very French, and maybe even a bit more Parisian! I swam in London and the rules are very clear depending on the lanes. Each swim speed is indicated in front of each lane.

There's no room for subjectivity, unlike in French swimming pools, where there's still a somewhat romantic view that rules aren't necessary. It's clear that this doesn't work! In France, we let everyone choose their own speed. I'll let you imagine the extent to which some people are not clear-headed... In fact, one day I'd like to be able to publish a guide to "swimming together" so that I can come up with a few rules, based on mutual respect. This could improve everyone's experience. However, we shouldn't make generalizations either: last week, for example, I swam in the Château des rentiers pool (13th arrondissement), and the courtesy between the swimmers blew me away!

Talking of which, how far have you got in discovering Parisian swimming pools?

When I started in 2021, I thought it would take me a year to discover the 41 municipal pools that are currently open in Paris. I became so passionate about this subject, and especially the documentation part, that I went much further. That's not a bad thing, because I'm almost starting to dread the moment when I'll have visited every swimming pool in Paris! More specifically, I've written about 24 municipal swimming pools in Paris. I occasionally run special editions on private pools such as Molitor (16th arrondissement) or Annette K (15th arrondissement). Every time, I discover that each pool is an inexhaustible source of stories. I don't know when I'll finish, but one thing's for sure: the last Parisian pool I'll be talking about is the Suzanne-Berlioux pool at Les Halles (1st); I'm working in descending order of arrondissements, and above all, it's great!

Your Instagram account has grown in two and a half years... What do your followers like about you, apart from your pool tests?

Of course, my community includes a lot of regular swimmers, as well as - and this really surprised me at first - people who hate swimming! In fact, the pool is a little theater, an excuse to tell all kinds of stories. In this setting, which recurs again and again - the showers, the swim lanes - you can find recurring characters and secondary characters, varied stories, multiple interpretations around unknowns, not to mention the stories of the swimmers, the architects... Many people also write to tell me that the pool crystallizes memories, both good and bad. Sometimes, it's even a place of anxiety. Some of us don't have the best memories about the pool, but it's always intense. I'm so happy when my stories make people want to go swimming again...

What about your willingness to swim in the pools of Grand Paris?

From now on, I will be swimming outside the city! I went to Pantin (Seine-Saint-Denis) and Courbevoie (Hauts-de-Seine). These pools are less crowded than the Parisian ones, so it's a breath of fresh air for me every time. Once I've finished talking about Parisian pools, I'm planning to take a closer look at the ones on the outskirts of the capital. I'm all the more looking forward to it, as they usually have fascinating stories. Talking about swimming pools will certainly keep me busy for the rest of my life!

Do you have any plans for publications?

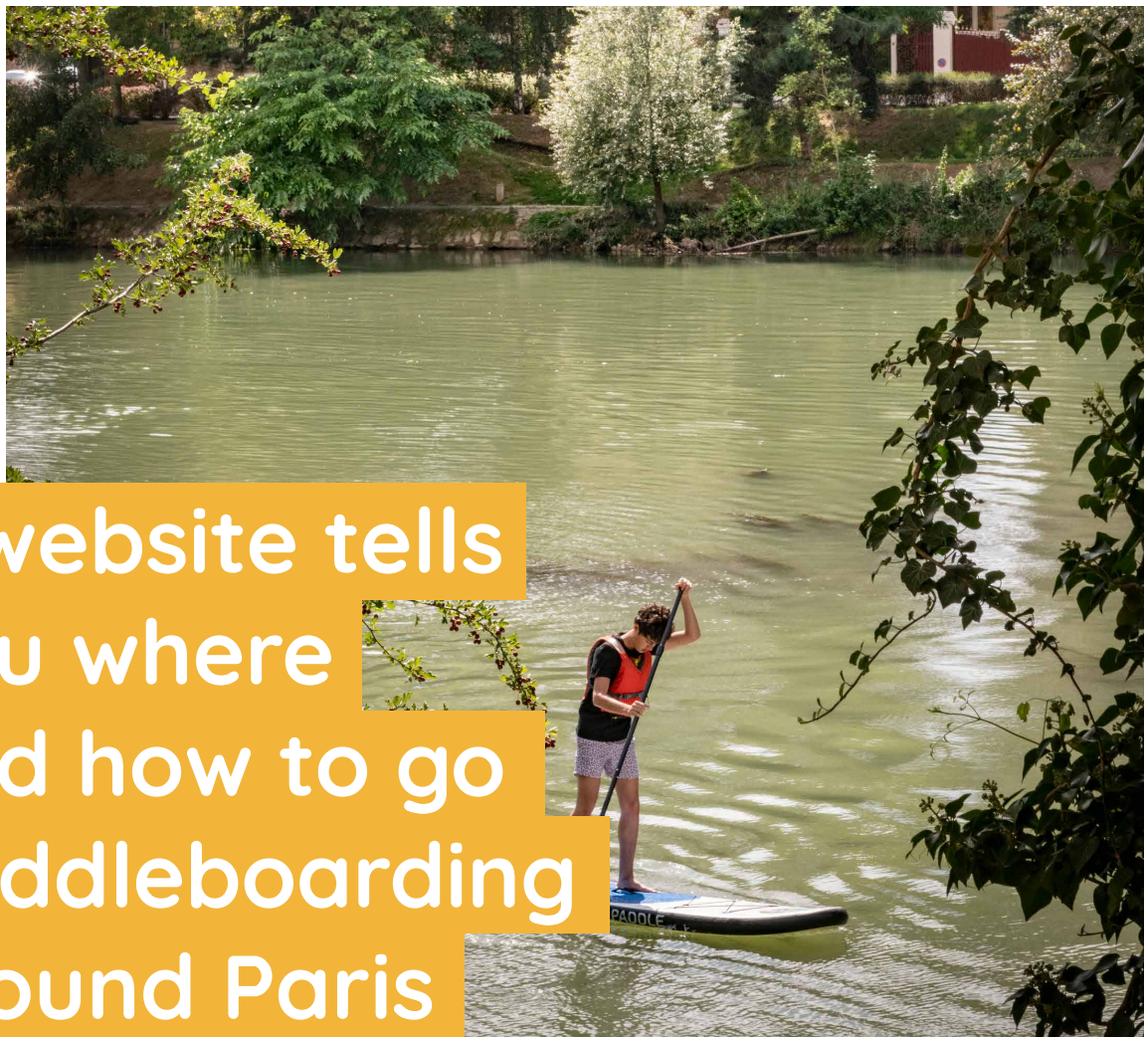
I recently self-published a notebook entitled *La Mémoire de l'eau* under the pseudonym Napa, a diminutive of my name on Instagram. It's a very intimate object that speaks of my relationship with water and swimming, and is based on personal photos. On my Instagram account, I remain anonymous and don't say much about myself. In this notebook, I reveal a little more about myself. Doing all this work on swimming pools has allowed me to realize that my emancipation came through water. As for my texts on swimming pools, I'm currently thinking about putting them on paper, but nothing has been decided yet.

Interview by Virgin Jannièrè

To follow the aquatic-historical adventures of Nageuse parisienne, go to Instagram

Paddle on the Marne at Champigny-sur-Marne

A website tells you where and how to go paddleboarding around Paris



© Jérôme Derigny for Enlarge your Paris

Fond of nature outings, Bastien Hugues created the site paddleparis.fr with his partner Sarah during the first lockdown, where they share their recommendations and itineraries for paddleboarding around Paris.

Why paddleboarding? What attracted you to this sport?

Bastien Hugues : Several things. First of all, I'm not originally from Paris Region. Although I've lived in the region for 15 years, I wanted to get out and about in Paris Region, to get to know it better. Paddleboarding is a great way to visit. Recently, I went to Auvers-sur-Oise (Val-d'Oise). This allowed me both to go paddleboarding and to discover Vincent Van Gogh's village. And it's not just the Seine or the Marne! The region has many rivers

and even a few lakes. All the more so since you see the landscape differently on a paddleboard. And it's an activity that everyone can do. You can do it at your own pace, for a leisurely ride or a more athletic activity.

When did you come up with the idea for the site paddleparis.fr and the Facebook page?

During the first lockdown. With my wife Sarah, who is also a paddleboarder, we realized that there was very little reliable information available. To pass

the time, and also to meet this need, we created the website. It also forces us to get out of our comfort zone and try out new rides. And then we answer more "regulatory" questions that people may ask: is a lifejacket compulsory? Do you have to go paddleboarding in pairs? Are there any clubs?

Another question is: is the water quality in Paris Region good enough for paddleboarding?

Frankly, the water in Paris Region's rivers is pretty good. Of

course, you shouldn't drink it! But, the quality is decent, especially upstream of Paris. And then there's the fact that you don't fall much on a paddleboard. You need to start with a short, wide paddleboard that allows for better balance. Beginners can also go to recreational islands, which often offer initiations that last an hour or two on their waterways. There are also clubs like the Grand Huit in Joinville-le-Pont (Val-de-Marne).

You list a wide range of itineraries throughout Paris Region. But there are none in Seine-Saint-Denis. And yet there's the Ourcq canal...

Paddleboarding on the Ourcq is only possible from the Sevran lock (Seine-Saint-Denis). Before that, it's forbidden. Just as it's forbidden to go paddleboarding in Paris or on the Canal Saint-Denis. But for Parisians looking for spots not too far away, there's Boulogne-Billancourt (Hauts-de-Seine), Créteil and the Marne islands (Val-de-Marne), Saint-Maur-des-Fossés (Val-de-Marne) and Joinville-le-Pont (Val-de-Marne).

Paddleboarding still seems to be a sport for the privileged, and not very mainstream...

I don't see it that way at all. That may have been the case in the early days of the sport, but that changed with the advent of the inflatable board in the 2010s. Initially, we only had rigid boards, which were expensive and required storage space. Inflatable paddleboards have helped democratize the sport. Today, you can get one for 500 or 600 euros.

There are even *low cost* brands which sell them for 200 euros; but while the price is low, the quality is not really good. So, of course, it's still an investment. But first it's long-lasting. And remember, once you've bought a board, it costs nothing to get out on the water. Apart from, perhaps, a metro or RER ticket...

Interview by Joséphine Lebard

You can find all the itineraries tested by Bastien Hugues, as well as practical advice, at paddleparis.fr and on Instagram and Facebook



Paddleboarding on the Marne at Saint-Maur-des-Fossés





Lifestyle



One of the Maison du rocher's unusual accommodations in Seine-et-Marne

A typical places to stay around Paris

Bubbles in the trees, a country house in a new town, a guest house on a permaculture farm, a tiny house in the middle of a meadow... Enlarge your Paris has selected a few unusual accommodations around Paris.

The Maison du rocher, a bubble of greenery

There are some scenes you just can't imagine in Paris Region. Just like the Maison du rocher in the Fontainebleau forest at Noisy-sur-École (Seine-et-Marne). As soon as you pull into the parking lot, you wonder what parallel universe you've stepped into. In the air, zip-lining Tarzans fly overhead, while on a soccer field two llamas graze serenely at the foot of a giant multicolored elk. A setting that Stéphane Durocher, the Willy Wonka of the place, has been nurturing for many years. It all began when he bought his house in this natural setting.

A lover of the great outdoors, this native Quebecer gradually enlarged his "garden" by buying up parcels of forest all around. And, rather than make it his own, he decided to imagine an oasis for city dwellers in search of calm and greenery, who hadn't given up their childhood dream of sleeping in trees. Stéphane offers to make this dream come true in bubbles surrounded by vegetation up to 66 feet high (some of which can be accessed via a climbing wall). Ideal for contemplating the stars and letting your imagination wander... A Robinson's life that's not without its comforts: meals are delivered directly to the foot of the bubbles,

and a sauna and Nordic bath allow for maximum relaxation. There's also a beach volleyball court, a swimming pool and even four tree-climbing courses, as well as the chance to take a walk with a llama. Travel is not just a question of distance.

La Maison du rocher, 11 bis, chemin des Prés, Noisy-sur-École (77). Rates: from €190 per night, including dinner and breakfast baskets, brazier and wood to keep warm, and access to the swimming pool.

Tel: 01 60 39 54 34.

Information and reservations at maisondurocher.com

A gîte at the heart of a permaculture farm on the edge of the Fontainebleau forest

Martine and Jason moved from the 19th arrondissement to a 200-year-old farmhouse in Chevrainvilliers (Seine-et-Marne), south of the Fontainebleau forest. Since then, they have been slowly renovating it using traditional, environmentally-friendly materials, and are also working to improve the soil quality with a view to planting a food forest. They are not doing it alone, because all year round they welcome *woofers* who want to learn about permaculture and green renovation. In the heart of this farm with chickens, cats and delicious vegetables, they offer a gîte for up to four people. A getaway that offers much more than a night in the green: the desire to change and the certainty that it's possible. And if you want to take advantage of the Fontainebleau forest, Martine and Jason rent out climbing mats and bicycles.

Ecological guest house in Chevrainvilliers (77). Price: 85 € per night (3 nights minimum). Information and booking on airbnb.fr

A Normandy getaway in Evry

When you hear Évry (Essonne), you don't immediately think of a bucolic getaway. The bankers actually grimaced when Koffio came to talk to them about her project. She proved them wrong. That's the magic of the Marquise. The charm of this beautiful half-timbered Normandy-style guest house, set in 43,055 sq. ft. of wooded parkland, is immediately apparent. And for maximum relaxation, there's an outdoor swimming pool (open from May to September) as well as a Jacuzzi and sauna.

Marquise Barbot guest house, 7, avenue de Beauvoir, Évry-Courcouronnes (91). Prices: from €125 per night. Access: Évry-Val de Seine station (RER D) then 1.3 km on foot. Information and booking on marquise-barbot.fr

Domaine de Mona, an old country house in a new town

Tucked away in the forest, just a few yards from the entrance to the Ile de Loisirs in Cergy-Pontoise (Val-d'Oise), Luc and Maryse Tricart's family estate (three generations!) is a treasure trove. With five bedrooms, including three in the old barn and two in independent pavilions in the heart of the park, Domaine de Mona combines charm and elegance. In summer, you can take a refreshing dip in the pool, while in winter you can enjoy the fireplace in the imposing dining room. As a member of the Axe majeur association, Luc will be happy to tell you all about the long history of this rather crazy architectural project which began in the 1980s, and give you a thousand tips and useful addresses to help you make the most of your stay in Cergy. When you wake up in the morning, a delicious breakfast awaits you, with homemade bread and jams, pastries... By the end of the day, you'll have just one thing on your mind: to come back very soon!

Domaine de Mona, 14, rue de Neuville, 95000 Cergy. Double room from €120, breakfast included. Tel: 06 60 32 59 38 or 06 10 49 11 66. Access: Cergy-Préfecture station (RER A, line L). Find out more at ledomainedemona.fr

Gaspard Guérin and Joséphine Lebard



A suspended bubble at La Maison du Rocher

"THERE ARE SOME
SCENES YOU JUST CAN'T
IMAGINE IN PARIS REGION.
JUST LIKE THE MAISON
DU ROCHER IN THE
FONTAINEBLEAU FOREST
AT NOISY-SUR-ÉCOLE"

La Pagaille, a recycling center and solidarity restaurant in Ivry



Our favorite alternative spots in "Ivrytry"

© Virginie Jonnière

A restaurant under the ring road, an urban bazaar in a former mirror factory, an electrifying big top at the foot of a former EDF power station... The editors of *Enlarge your Paris* and urban trailblazer Julie Gourhant, aka *Le Grand Paris vu de ma Mini* on Instagram, reveal six alternative spots in the Siamese twin cities of Ivry and Vitry, or "Ivrytry".

La Bretelle, when the ring road takes a new turn

Opened between the 13th arrondissement and Ivry (Val-de-Marne), at the "noodle dish" formed by the ring road's ramps, La Bretelle restaurant is one of those wastelands, like Jardin21 or Kilomètre25, that are now springing up at the foot of the ring road, whose 50th anniversary is being celebrated this year. As a journalist for *Enlarge your Paris*, Joséphine Lebard was there to take in the atmosphere. Read the report in the art of living section.

La Bretelle, 9, rue Jean-Baptiste Berlier, Paris (13th). Open Mondays and Tuesdays from midday to midnight, Wednesdays to Fridays from midday to 2am and Saturdays from 3pm to 2am. Reservations via resalabretelle@gmail.com. Access: metro Bibliothèque François Mitterrand (line 14) or streetcar T3a stop Avenue de France. Find out more on Instagram

La Pagaille, a recycling center and free canteen

Although the name of the place might suggest a cheerful bazaar,

La Pagaille recycling center offers bargain hunters a place that's actually very well organized. In the warehouse, second-hand items are scrupulously classified by category (clothes, tableware, furniture, toys...) in clearly identified areas and shelves. A great way to shop for a handful of euros. New since last year is a line of accessories "made in La Pagaille", designed entirely in-house, from conception to production, by the volunteers. Mini-collections made up of unique pieces including bags, fanny packs, snoods, bobs, hats and other ultra-trendy upcycled nuggets. At lunchtime, you can

also enjoy simple dishes for free (!), which you can share on large tables and get to know your neighbor.

La Pagaille, 15, rue Ernest-Renan, à Ivry-sur-Seine (94). Open Tuesday to Saturday, 1 pm to 6 pm. Canteen Tuesday to Saturday from 12 to 2.30pm. Access: Mairie d'Ivry metro station (line 7), Vitry-sur-Seine train station (RER C). Find out more on la-pagaille.org and Facebook

The Kilowatt, an electrifying wasteland

Crossing the Ardoines industrial zone in Vitry (Val-de-Marne) is a disconcerting and unexpected experience, as illustrated by this large red and yellow tent set up in the immediate vicinity of a huge power plant that has now been shut down. Its name: the Kilowatt. People come here for electro mass events (like this Saturday, October 14), big rock concerts (or more intimate ones with Manu Chao Acoustic, for example) or to dance on the dancefloor of a small 70s mobile discotheque. Stay tuned now that you know...

The Kilowatt, 18, rue des Fusillés, Vitry-sur-Seine (94). Access: Ardoines station (RER C). Find out more on lekilowatt.fr

Pavillon 31, a country house in the city

Pavillon 31 is a pure corner of the countryside near the RER station in Vitry-sur-Seine (Val-de-Marne), a vestige of the "Canadian neighborhood" of wooden houses. "Sharing nature in the city" is the motto of the site, which is surrounded by a huge garden featuring a vegetable patch and a mini-farm with chickens and rabbits. The idea of Vick, president of the Maq'Image association, which runs the project: "We want members to have the opportunity to get involved in the site, either by making a donation or by sharing a skill (singing, sewing, gardening, cooking...) to bring this green space to life in harmony

with the city. Pavillon 31's motto is "I participate so I can enjoy". Every Sunday, you can attend free Vietnamese monochord lessons (in the morning) and sewing workshops (in the afternoon). Proof that tiny houses aren't just found on the prairies.

Pavillon 31, 31, rue George-Sand, Vitry-sur-Seine (94). Access: Vitry-sur-Seine station (RER C). Find out more on Facebook

The food truck "Une friterie à Vitry", a heavyweight in Belgian-style fries

Burgers and fries. Is there a better combo for winning over kids aged 12 and under? Of course not. But then again, you have to find quality ones. Stop right there, you can find that in Vitry-sur-Seine (Val-de-Marne) at the foot of the food truck of Samir Guédon. Smash burgers and double-cooked fries with beef fat are on the menu, as are a number of possible sauces that would make any French fry shop in the Hauts-de-France region green with envy. To be enjoyed "behind the truck", among the regulars who, of course, all have their fill of French fries! Read the report in the Art of Living section.

Food truck Une friterie à Vitry Wednesdays and Thursdays from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. at the Place Jean-Vilar in Vitry-sur-Seine (94). Access: T9 Tram stop Mairie de Vitry. Access: Vitry-sur-Seine station (RER C). Find out more on unefriterieavitry.com or on Instagram

La Miroiterie, an urban bazaar

In the Ivry Port district (Val-de-Marne), on the never-ending boulevard Paul Vaillant-Couturier, La Miroiterie and its yellow and red colors are a real eye-catcher. Opened in 2019 in this great bustle, it is at once a "POP studio", an urban bazaar and a cultural café that thrives on barroom chatter. Artists, craftspeople and locals meet here for a program of workshops, exhibitions, debates, shows, aperitifs, thrift parties, book sales and happenings of all kinds, all led by Stéphane and his team. Note that on October 21, the first edition of the "Loud Market" will be held from 5pm to midnight, in partnership with Loud Collective. On the program: DJ sets, vinyl sales, solidarity thrift shop, designer market (jewelry, accessories and upcycled clothing). La Miroiterie reflects the times.

La Miroiterie, 110, boulevard Paul Vaillant-Couturier, Ivry-sur-Seine (94). Mairie d'Ivry metro station (line 7), Vitry-sur-Seine train station (RER C). Find out more on la-miroiterie.org or on Instagram

Joséphine Lebard, Virginie Jannièrè, Julie Gourhant and Renaud Charles



La Miroiterie, an urban bazaar in Ivry



La Miroiterie in Ivry



These Parisians who go camping without leaving Paris Region



© Huttopia

The Huttopia campsite, in the heart of the Rambouillet forest

A weekend in the countryside close to home? This is what more and more Paris Region residents are doing: families, cyclists, walkers, telecommuting employees, as well as a fair number of those who are curious about life in the great outdoors... Camping in Paris Region no longer seems to be reserved for tourists just passing through.

"It was like being in Snow White, with the atmosphere of waking up to little birds.", recalls Eugénie of her family weekend at the Huttopia campsite in Rambouillet (Yvelines). While she admits that camping is "not really her thing", this mother from the 93 department of Paris appreciated the fact that she didn't have to carry tents and stoves on the Transilien train. *"The comfort factor is what makes glamping so attractive. We just brought a few victuals and marshmallows to enjoy by the fire. We were able to concentrate on the forest walks and the teenagers were able to play ping-pong in the*

campsite". Ana, who lives in the 19th arrondissement of Paris, admits she likes to spend a day at Huttopia. With her husband and son, she regularly meets up with friends to enjoy the swimming pool and the calm of the "tamed" nature. *"Our son can let off as much steam as he likes in the middle of nature, and the place is safe. We know he can't get lost, which is reassuring.",* she explained

A place to relax... and cool off

Many people come here for the peace and quiet of nature, as well as to enjoy a cooler environment.

"At the end of August, I had to go to Paris. The thermometer in my car showed 80 degrees on the ring road, when it dropped to 70 at the campsite by the water," says Jérôme, owner of the ecological campsite on the Ile de Boulancourt (Seine-et-Marne). Unlike Huttopia, this campsite doesn't offer a swimming pool, but reservations are nevertheless coming in fast. *"We're even going to have to buy more bikes, as they're being snapped up by weekend campers. Others come by bike from their homes and take the RER." The same is true of the Rives de Paris campsite (Seine-*

Saint-Denis), on an island in the Marne river. : *"We welcome many Paris Region residents who come here to enjoy a natural site and the freshness of the waterside. And cycling is a great way to discover the banks of the Marne. In the summer, we have many cyclists who come just for the weekend!"* says a delighted Houssine, the campsite receptionist.

Just like Eugénie and her family at Huttopia, a number of Paris Region residents turned to this type of weekend in 2020, when it was still impossible to travel more than an hour from their homes. Today, the obligation has been lifted, but the cliché of an ungreen Paris Region is gradually fading.

A changing image of camping

While a number of campsite managers in Paris Region are delighted with the increase in bookings, the French National Federation of Open-Air Hotels (FNHPA) confirms this trend. Post-covid effect or a change in mentality? "Between the health crisis, the price of gasoline, ecological awareness and the sometimes unbearable temperatures of the very mineral cities of Greater Paris, Paris Region residents are turning more readily to this type of weekend," explains Benoît Decagny, chairman of the FNHPA's Paris Region branch. According to this camping professional, the trend was already underway in the 2000s, but the health crisis and increasing number of heatwaves have only accelerated the situation.

According to the FNHPA, the image of camping has also changed, particularly among those from higher socio-professional groups, who used to go for more comfortable accommodations in hotels or rented homes. *"Even companies now hold their seminars at Paris Region campsites!"*, says Benoît Decagny. With the proliferation of bungalows, the development of campsite

infrastructures and the boom in cycling, *"We can see that all social classes are turning to this type of vacation and weekend. In the end, we haven't invented anything, but we've rediscovered the spirit of the 20s and 30s, when we used to go out for a weekend on the banks of the Marne, the Oise or the Seine"*.

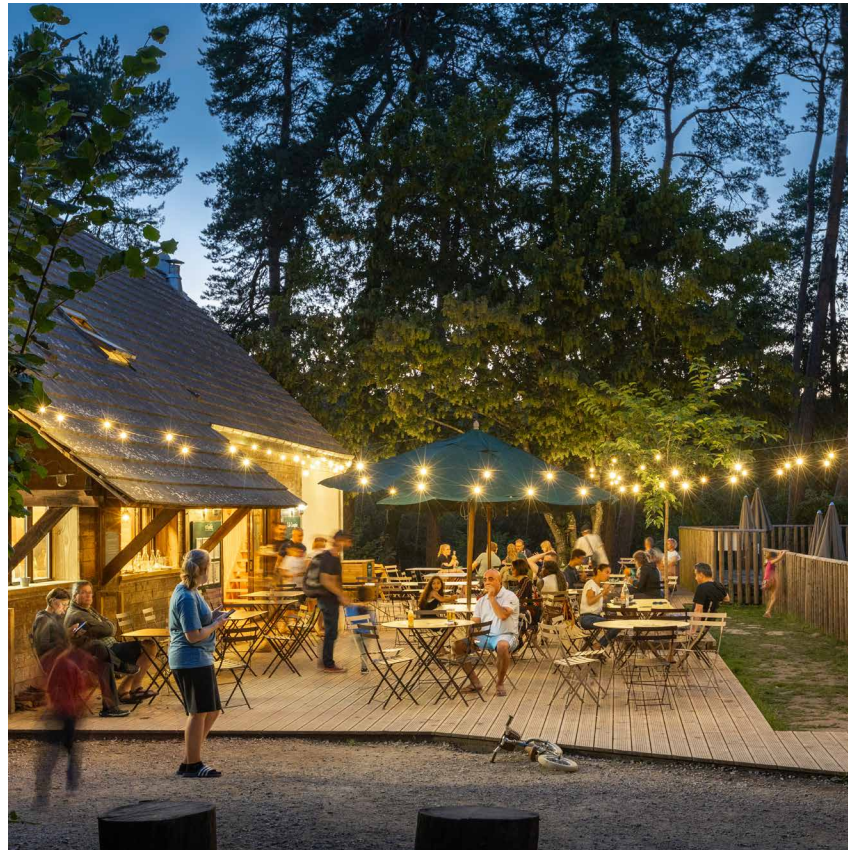
A village atmosphere

While camping is associated with the great outdoors, it also allows people to get together, as Jérôme from the Ile de Boulancourt campsite explains, noting an upsurge in single-parent families: an opportunity for children to enjoy a wide range of sports in the great outdoors, and for single parents not to feel isolated in a rental property or hotel. At Rives de Paris in Neuilly-sur-Marne (Seine-Saint-Denis), planchas and a few weatherproof tables have been set up. *"Inevitably, you talk to your neighbors, affinities are created and solidarity is always present among campers."*, explains Houssine.

Next to the campsites, more and more farms are welcoming campers, as is the case for Jean-Baptiste, owner of Ferme des 4 étoiles near Rambouillet (Yvelines): *"We opened the farm to campers in 2022 and installed a summer kitchen and comfortable sanitary facilities. We're now well referenced, and a lot of cyclists, van owners and families on outings stop by spontaneously or when the campsites are full. Last weekend, a young mother from Plaisir (Yvelines) came to camp with her two daughters; a last-minute booking prompted by a sudden desire to extend the summer."* Take your pick, but don't wait for nice weather, make your reservations now...

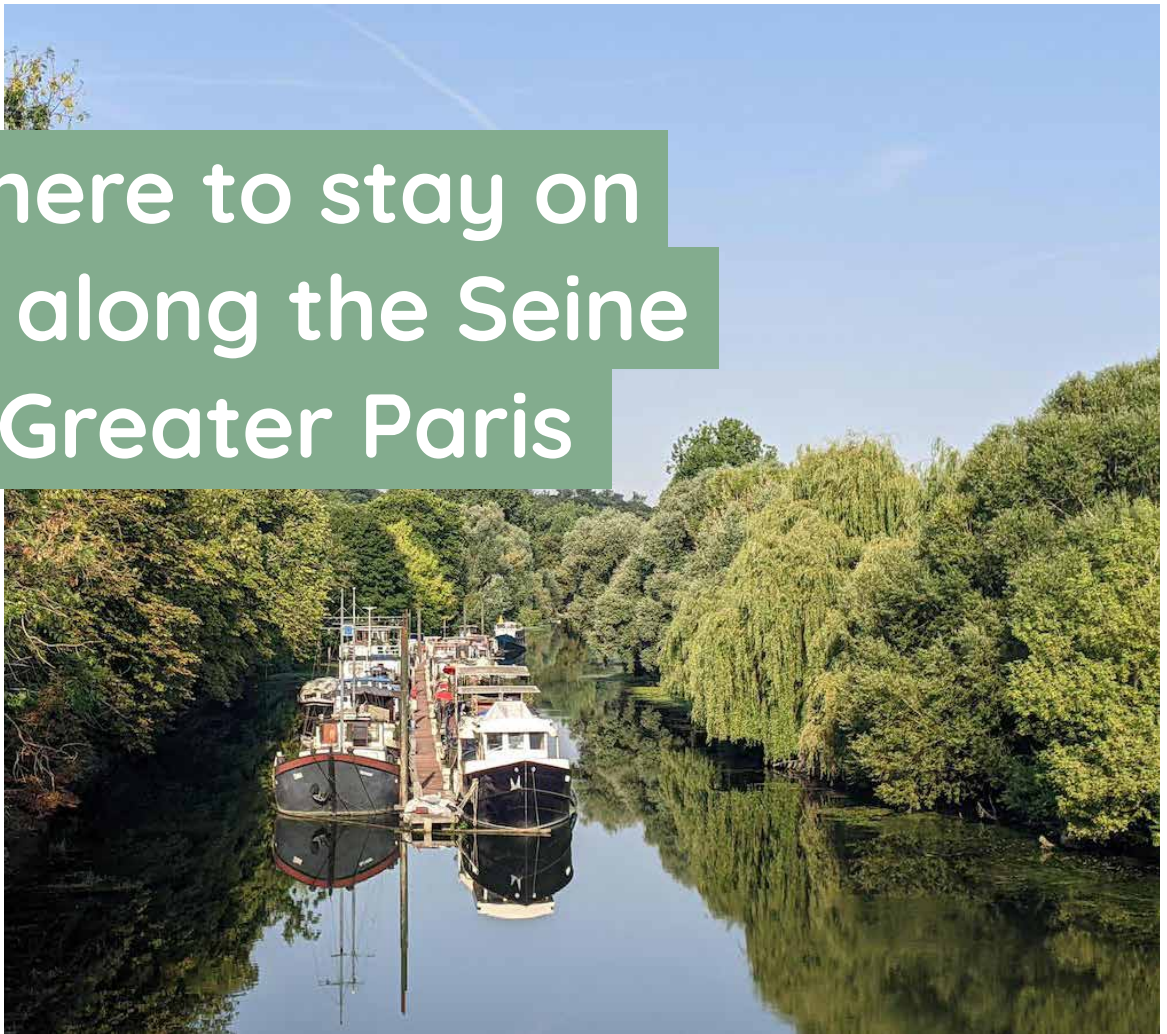
Virginie Jannière

Find the list of campsites in Paris Region on campingfrance.com



Where to stay on or along the Seine in Greater Paris

The Seine between Villennes-sur-Seine and Poissy in the Yvelines department



© Rémi Belot for Enlarge your Paris

In a duplex on an authentic Freycinet barge, aboard a *houseboat* or in a floating hotel in the heart of Paris, the editors of Enlarge your Paris have unearthed a few excellent addresses on and along the Seine, where life is like a long, peaceful river.

... on a barge

A few hundred yards can sometimes change everything. Indeed, it's hard to imagine that you're going to spend a quiet night on the banks of the Seine in Juvisy-sur-Orge (Essonne). Yet the further you walk along Quai Jean-Pierre Timbaud, the more the scenery changes. When we reach the Canala, an authentic Freycinet barge (the Freycinet gauge is a European standard which governs the size of locks on certain canals, established by a law of Charles de Freycinet's program dated August 5, 1879, according to Wikipedia), the atmosphere

is suddenly less urban. On the opposite bank, the Le Port aux Cerises leisure island, with its 200 hectares of greenery, stretches out all along its length. An impression of exoticism that only grows stronger once you're aboard the barge. Welcomed by the host himself - Benoît, who has lived here for 15 years and with whom we could easily imagine embarking on a long-distance crossing - we find ourselves immersed in a 1076 sq. ft. duplex with, the icing on the cake, a bed and even a bath facing the Seine. And all this in complete peace and quiet. Enlarge your barge!

Péniche Canala, quai Jean-Pierre Timbaud, Juvisy-sur-Orge (91). Price: 119 € per night for 2 (maximum 6 people). Information and booking on [airbnb.fr](https://www.airbnb.fr)

... on a crazy barge

A pair of swans frolicking, a police speedboat speeding by, a barge taking its time... This is the spectacle that awaits you from your room window at OFF Paris Seine, a floating hotel moored on the Quai d'Austerlitz (13th arrondissement) and exuding an unsuspected serenity. While the atmosphere is reminiscent of a boat, it's by

no means a rehabilitated barge. Designed around two hulls topped by a structure made of wood, zinc, copper and glass, the OFF has 58 cabins-style rooms served by a magnificent glass roof. And, to brighten up your still crossing, the OFF also houses a bar-restaurant with a two-level terrace, a mini-pool and even a marina from which you can depart for a "breakfast cruise" or an "aperitif cruise". The OFF is really in.

OFF Paris Seine, 86, quai d'Austerlitz (13th). Access: metro Gare d'Austerlitz (lines 5 and 10) / Gare d'Austerlitz (RER C). Rates: room overlooking the Seine with breakfast starting at €222 per night.

Tel: 01 44 06 62 65. Find out more at offparisseine.com

... in a legendary home

Legend has it that the Belgian king Leopold II had it built for one of his muses. Others claim it belonged to a fake local baroness. One thing's for sure: the Domaine de la Corniche in Rolleboise (Yvelines) is sure to be a sight to behold, with its sumptuous panoramic views over the Seine and the Vexin countryside. For a century now, the site has been home to a charming hotel, with the added bonus of a Michelin-starred restaurant that favors local produce. There are also two swimming pools, one of which is indoor, a cinema, a sauna, a steam room and a spa open from 7 a.m. to midnight, seven days a week.

Le Domaine de la Corniche, 5, route de la Corniche, Rolleboise (78). Rates: starting at €135 per room. Tel: 01 30 93 20 00. Access: Mantes-la-Jolie station (lines J and N) then bus 02B to Mairie de Rolleboise. Find out more at domainedelacorniche.com

... in a studio with a private rooftop on a barge

If you're coming by RER, you'll first have to walk along the Seine on a footpath. With Évry-Courcouronnes (Essonne), one of Paris Region's largest cities, on the other side of the river, the urban frenzy seems paradoxically miles away. Here you are in Étioilles (Essonne), in a stretch of countryside with a curtain of trees blocking your view of the concrete. Even the sounds of the city no longer reach you. This feeling is confirmed once you've climbed onto Lauriane's barge, where, although you're floating, you feel immersed in nature. Before that, chances are the family cat has welcomed you. On board, you'll have your own woodsy studio, and even your very own private rooftop. No, you're not dreaming...

Studio on a barge in Etiolles (91).

Price: 140 € per night. Access: Évry Val-de-Seine station (RER D) then a 20-minute walk. Information and booking on airbnb.fr

... in a floating house

"Our house, in the middle of our street", sang Madness in the 1980s. In Sèvres (Hauts-de-Seine), Philippe Audoin has created a sort of aquatic remake with his "houseboat in the middle of the river". His Megalight II, moored in the water park on the Ile de Monsieur, looks like a floating house on the Seine at the foot of the Parc de Saint-Cloud (bigger than Central Park, incidentally), with the towers of La Défense in the distance. On board: three spacious bedrooms with en-suite bathrooms and king size beds and a terrasse. Just the thing to let time flow by like a long, peaceful river...

Houseboat Megalight II, 16, rue de Saint-Cloud, Ile de Monsieur water park, Sèvres (92).

Rates: starting at €135 per night in a kingsize bed with breakfast.

Tel: 06 63 14 49 99. Access: tramway T2 stop Musée de Sèvres. Information and bookings on megalight2.com

Virginie Jannièrè and Gaspard Guérin



View of the Seine from Domaine de la Corniche in Rolleboise, Yvelines





The open air Kilomètre25 under the ring road at Porte de la Villette in Paris

Where to go along the ring road

© Leviet 1

With the Paris ring road celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2023 and talk of transforming it into an urban boulevard to limit nuisance, Enlarge your Paris takes you on an eight-stage tour of the site.

Cirque électrique short-circuits codes

Entering this tent is like stepping into a parallel universe. Set up on the ring road at Place du Maquis du Vercors (20th arrondissement), Cirque électrique short-circuits the codes of the star circuit. Everything is more punk, more destroy, more gothic, more erotic. Don't be surprised if you're greeted by a shot of friendship on the night of a performance, before being served a big glassful of thrills. Don't be surprised to see the artists waiting tables at the Nouveau tigre, the on-site guinguette. Don't be surprised to learn that Cirque électrique is also home to a circus

arts school for children aged 2 and over.

In short, don't be surprised if you're pleasantly surprised.

Le Cirque électrique, place du maquis du Vercors, Paris (20th). Access: Porte des Lilas metro station (lines 11 and 3 bis), T3b tram stop Porte des Lilas. Find out more at cirque-electrique.com

L'Espace périphérique, at the heart of street art

A residency center for circus and street arts in the Parc de La Villette (19th arrondissement), Espace périphérique decided to open its doors to the public in 2019. This is

the case every year at the Freestyle festival at the end of May, with the following programme *battles*, concerts, *street art*...

L'Espace périphérique, 2, rue de la Clôture, Paris (19th). Open to the public according to events. Access: Porte de la Villette metro station (line 7), T3b tram stop Ella Fitzgerald - Grands Moulins de Pantin. Find out more at espaceperipherique.com and on Facebook

The Philharmonie's secret view point

The Philharmonie de Paris (19th arrondissement) is not only a cultural mecca for the Greater

Paris region, but also boasts a breathtaking view of the entire city. For that, head for the 9th floor. There's no refreshment bar or big debate, just the postcard. But it's not every day you can admire the ballet of cars, whether in a freeze frame (during rush hour) or in an accelerated version as soon as night falls.

The viewpoint of the Philharmonie de Paris, 221, avenue Jean Jaurès, Paris (19th). Open Wednesday to Sunday, 12 am to 8 pm, Friday night until sunset, April to mid-September. From mid September to October, from 12 noon to sunset. Free admission. Access: Porte de Pantin (metro line 5, tram line T3b). Find out more at philharmoniedeparis.fr

Jardin21, the magical ring road vegetable garden

Not quite Pantin (Seine-Saint-Denis), but not quite Paris. Bordering the canal and at the foot of the Paris ring road, this 19,913 sq. ft. oasis of greenery is home not only to an exquisite "Canteen", a restaurant that blends fresh produce with hyper-local products, but also several bars and an educational vegetable garden. Open as soon as spring arrives in the capital, it also features a lush program of concerts, sports classes, yoga and open-air dance, gardening and recycling workshops, plant sales, lectures, thrift shops... "It's an ex-tra-or-di-nary garden! C'est un jardin ex-tra-or-di-naire", Trenet would have sung.



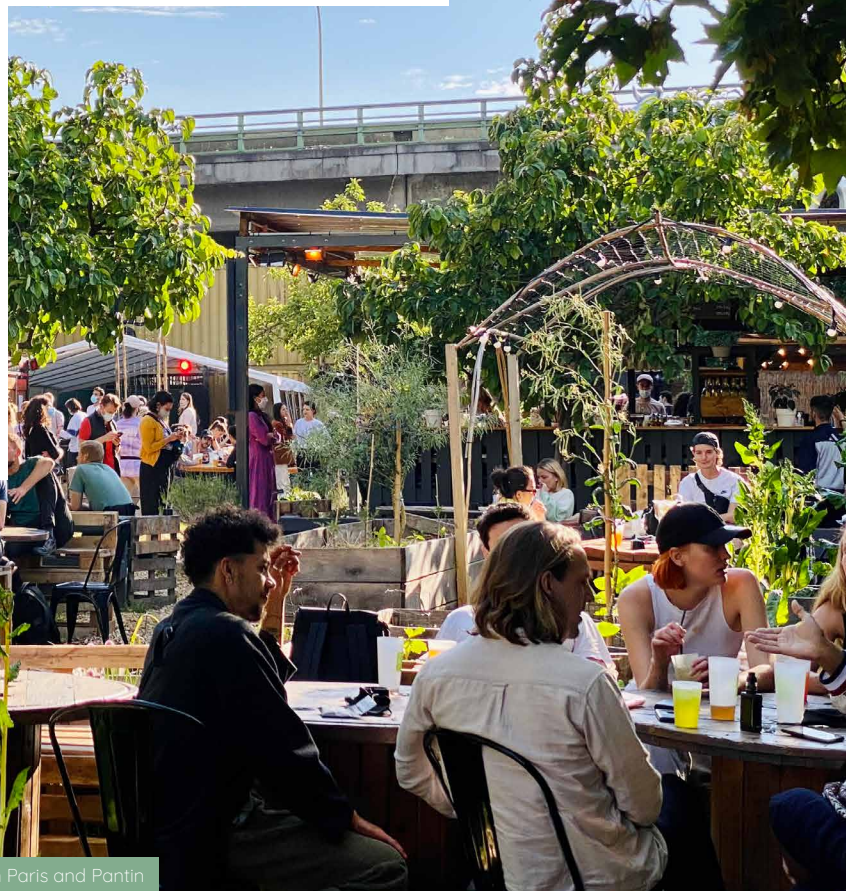
Jardin21 on the banks of the Ourcq Canal between Paris and Pantin

Jardin 21, 12, rue Ella Fitzgerald, Paris (19th). Open starting April. Access: Porte de Pantin or Hoche metro stations (line 5), Pantin station (RER E). Find out more on jardin21.fr

Kilometre25, to circle the dial

A gigantic 21,528 sq. ft. open-air venue run by the Glazart and Jardin21 teams near Porte de la Villette (19th arrondissement), Kilomètre25 has already seen the likes of Jeff Mills, Ellen Alien, Dave Clarke, Sonia Moonear, Ben Klocke... As soon as the sun comes out (or rather, at night!), since Kilomètre25 only closes at 7 a.m., you'll have the satisfaction of going to bed at a time when traffic is just beginning to pick up on the Paris ring road.

Kilomètre25, 8, boulevard Macdonald, Paris (19th). Reopening in May 2024. Access: metro Porte de la Villette (line 7) and Porte de Pantin (line 5), T3b tramway stop Ella Fitzgerald. Find out more at www.kilometre25.fr



Solar Wind, the sun's live pulse

This is one of the most popular works of art in France. Built into the ring road between Porte d'Ivry and Porte de Bercy (12th arrondissement), *Solar Wind*, by the artist Laurent Grasso, projects color fluctuations onto two 131-foot-high concrete silos, translating solar activity in real time from data supplied by the French space agency (CNES). Come and admire it every day at dusk.

Solar Wind, 45, rue Bruneseau, Paris (13th). Daily projections at dusk. Access: T3a tramway station Avenue de France. Find out more on paris.fr



"THE CITÉ INTERNATIONALE
UNIVERSITAIRE IN PARIS
(14TH ARRONDISSEMENT) IS THIS
ASTONISHING CAMPUS LOCATED
BETWEEN THE PARIS RING ROAD
AND PARC MONTSOURIS, MADE UP
OF 43 HOUSES THAT REPRESENT
AS MANY COUNTRIES OR REGIONS."

The Gare des Mines station, an indie temple

While the Gare des Mines station has existed since 2016 in a former SNCF coal depot at Porte d'Aubervilliers (18th arrondissement), since 2021 it boasts an outdoor space, called Station Nord. Run by the MU collective, the Station defines itself as "a laboratory dedicated to the musical and artistic margins", with a strong penchant for indie music and creation.

The Gare des Mines station, 29, avenue de la porte d'Aubervilliers, Paris (18th district). Access: Porte de la Chapelle metro station (line 12), Rosa Parks station (RER E). Find out more at lastation.paris

Around the world in four restaurants at the Cité Universitaire

The Cité internationale universitaire in Paris (14th arrondissement) is an astonishing campus located between the Paris ring road and Parc Montsouris, made up of 43 houses that represent as many countries and regions, and home to 12,000 students, artists and researchers. Visitors can stroll through the 43-hectare eco-responsible park, enjoy the theater and even dine in. In fact, many of the houses are home to restaurants from all over the world, such as Café Zaïm, Tunisian street food or the elegant Comptoir coréen, or the well-stuffed tortillas at Colegio de España.

Cité internationale universitaire, boulevard Jourdan, Paris (14th). Access: Cité Universitaire (RER B or Tramway T3a). Find out more at colesp.org

Joséphine Lebard, Virginie Jannière and Gaspard Guérin

The Greater Paris wastelands to visit head-on



The Vive les Groues! wasteland at the foot of the La Défense towers in Nanterre

© Vive les Groues!

They are an integral part of the Greater Paris landscape. To find out which wastelands you should try out, Enlarge your Paris asked a specialist, Arnaud Idelon, co-founder of the Ancoats agency and of the Sample wasteland in Bagnolet, for his opinion.

The Station - Gare des Mines, off the *mainstream*

"This is really a must-see wasteland, open since 2016 in a former SNCF coal depot at Porte d'Aubervilliers (18th arrondissement).

The venue is designed to be festive, with concerts and festivals. But it has also developed a real social project, which is less well known. It is home to l'Air de repos, which opened in 2021, a space dedicated to welcoming young people in exile situations, with a luggage storage service as well as a drop-in center and discussion groups."

Station-Gare des Mines, 29, avenue de la Porte d'Aubervilliers,

Paris (18th). Access: Porte de la Chapelle metro station (line 12), Rosa Parks station (Tramway T3b and RER E). Find out more at lastation.paris

L'Éclair, love at first sight

"This is the latest project from the Soukmachines collective, which we've already seen in Pantin, Saint-Denis and Le Pré-Saint-Gervais (Seine-Saint-Denis). So we've been eagerly awaiting their latest coup: here it is! These are the former laboratories of the Eclair group, in Épinay-sur-Seine (Seine-Saint-Denis). This splendid heritage site has been reinvested and is home to a meadow and even a forest!"

L'Éclair, 8, avenue du Maréchal de Lattre de Tassigny, Épinay (93). Access: Tramway T8 stop Lacépède. Find out more on leclair-epinay.com

The Sample, the big mix

"This is the Sample's fourth year in Bagnolet (Arnaud Idelon is one of the co-founders of the Sample, editor's note)! With its large 21,528 sq. ft. garden, it's one of the few green spaces in the area other than Parc Jean Moulin-Les Guilands. We also offer our visitors a picnic area and an *open barbecue*. All the more reason to come and enjoy the cultural program!"

Le Sample, 18, avenue de la République, Bagnolet (93). Access: Gallieni metro station (line 3). Find out more at lesample.fr

Vive les Groues, a green oasis at the foot of the La Défense towers

"Let's face it: when it comes to third places, eastern Paris has a tendency to take the lion's share. All the more reason to mention the existence of Vive les Groues, the wasteland developed by Yes We Camp at the foot of the La Défense towers in Nanterre (Hauts-de-Seine). In this horticultural nursery, you can take boxing classes or English lessons, relax or have a party, although there aren't many of the latter due to the presence of housing. Nevertheless, when we party at Vive les Groues, we party hard!"

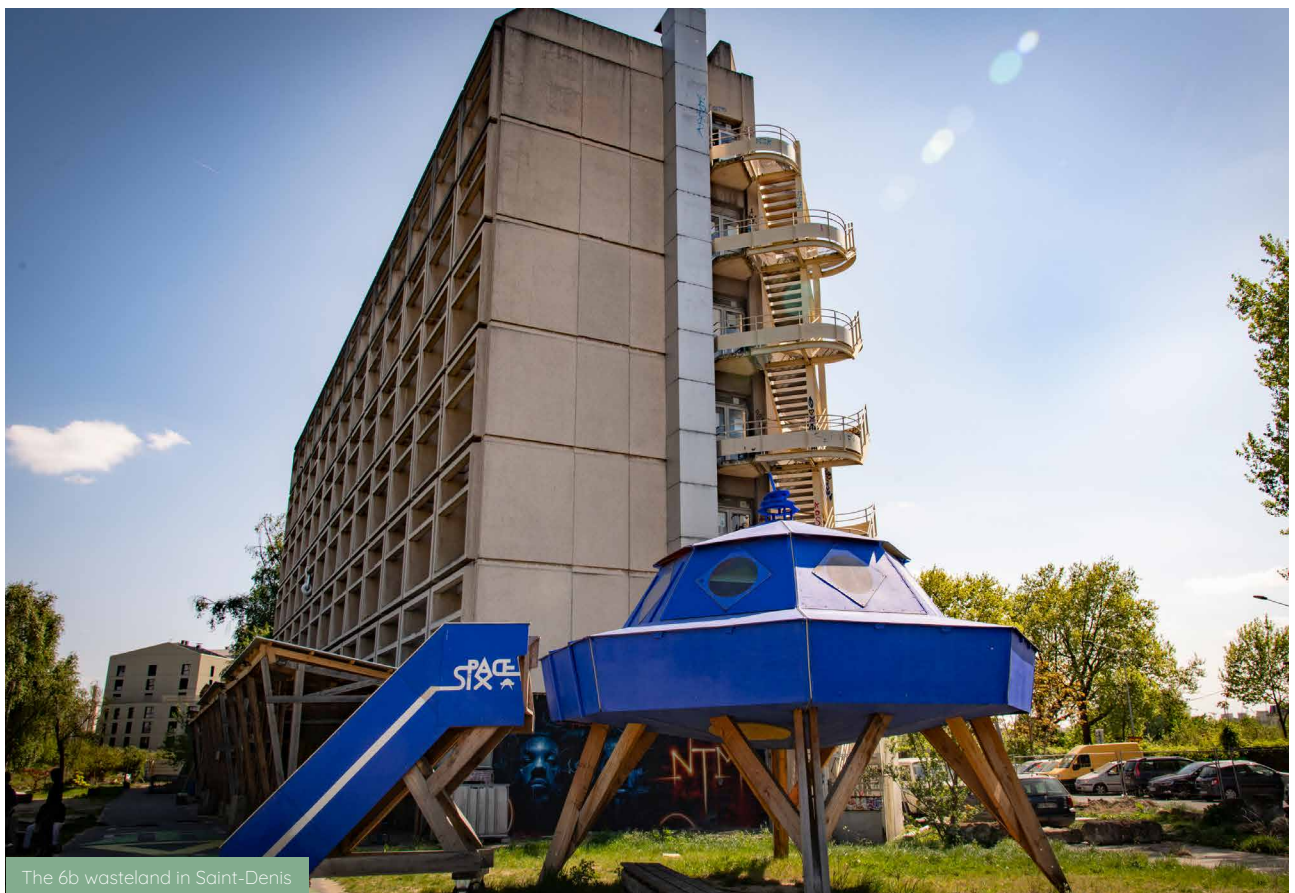
Vive les Groues !, 290, rue de la Garenne, Nanterre (92). Access: Nanterre-Préfecture station (RER A). Find out more at vivelesgroues.org

6b, a trailblazer for 14 years

"It's already been fourteen years that 6b has opened in a former office building in Saint-Denis (Seine-Saint-Denis). There are always some great programs put on by the Greater Paris collectives. And even a beach in summer."

Le 6b, 6-10, quai de Seine, Saint-Denis (93). Access: Saint-Denis - Porte de Paris metro station (line 13) / Saint-Denis train station (RER D, line H) / tramway T8 stop Saint-Denis - Porte de Paris. Find out more on le6b.fr

Interview by Joséphine Lebard



The 6b wasteland in Saint-Denis




The Kilowatt in Vitry

"LET'S FACE IT: WHEN IT
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IN NANTERRE"



Nature





Denecourt, inventor of the world's first signposted trails in the forest of Fontainebleau

Twice the size of Paris, the forest of Fontainebleau is a hiker's paradise.

© Jérôme Bon (Creative commons / Flickr)

A pioneer of green tourism in the forest of Fontainebleau and creator of the world's first signposted footpaths in the 19th century, Claude-François Denecourt is a little-known figure today, as Jean-Claude Polton, historian and member of the Friends of the Forest of Fontainebleau association, tells us.

Who was Claude-François Denecourt?

Jean-Claude Polton : Born in 1788, Claude-François Denecourt was originally from the Haute-Saône region of France. He first worked as a valet before enlisting in Napoleon's army in 1809, then as a concierge at a barracks in Versailles, where he sold wine to the soldiers and made a small fortune. He learned to read and write only later, with the help of his niece, whom he had taken into his home. At the same time, he became politicized and

Republican. After several years in Versailles, he was again appointed concierge, but to a barracks in Fontainebleau, where he was later dismissed for his republican ideas. He set off on a tour of France to convince the French to revolt, but without much success. He came out depressed and discovered the forest of Fontainebleau. He was 44 years old when he wrote in his autobiography "the forest saved me". From then on, he made a point of sharing his attachment to the massif by publishing maps and travel guides and creating the world's very first signposted trails.

What was the tourist of the era to whom these guides were addressed like?

In the first half of the 19th century, tourism was just beginning to emerge in the forest of Fontainebleau. It mainly concerned the bourgeoisie, who found it a way to escape the city. It was difficult to access the forest. In the 1843 edition of the Denecourt guide, we learn that to reach Fontainebleau from Paris, travelers had to be patient and allow at least eight hours for the steamboat journey. More affluent

visitors could also get there by car, but it wasn't until the arrival of the railroad at Avon in 1849 that the Fontainebleau forest became more accessible. However, the destination remained out of reach for the workers, who, on a wage of 3 francs a day, were unable to afford the trip. At the time, a train ticket cost 6 francs and a Denecourt guide about 3 francs.

How did Denecourt mark out the forest?

Claude-François Denecourt was used to walking. As well as being a man of the countryside, he took part in the Napoleonic wars, where it was common to walk 25 miles a day. Although his first maps were designed for horse-drawn carriages, he gradually encouraged walkers to discover the forest on foot. From 1842 onwards, he began to map out footpaths. Without realizing it, he created the world's first marked trails, the blue trails. He painted large blue arrows, much to the chagrin of painters who saw him as an oddball who was ruining the forest. He also took the opportunity to name certain trails and points of interest with names drawn from Greco-Roman mythology or his own pantheon, made up of heroes who marked France's social, political and cultural history. Denecourt even went so far as to build fountains and grottoes in the forest, as well as an observation tower now known as the Denecourt Tower.

How did he finance his actions in the Fontainebleau forest?

Denecourt was a formidable businessman. Thanks to the money he earned selling wine, he was able to invest. The improvements he undertook were also financed by the sale of his guides. Every new element was an occasion to publish a new guide. There's even one on the murder of a woman, with a signposted walk to the murder scene. For the construction of the tower, he launched a subscription campaign in exchange for

including the names of the patrons in the guidebooks.

How was he perceived?

Although his early days were rather controversial, due to accusations that he was denaturing the forest, he finally won over public opinion in the 1850s. In 1855, a collection was published to pay tribute to him, including an original text by Théophile Gautier comparing him to "Sylvain", a Roman woodland divinity. At the height of his fame, he was given an article in the Larousse, praising his work and the way he brought the forest within everyone's reach. His ego grew to such an extent that he even wrote to Alexandre Dumas and other writers, suggesting that they take walks in Fontainebleau with him.

What happened after his death?

After Denecourt's death in 1875, Charles Colinet and his wife Maria took over and doubled the number of trails. After the Second World War, however, the question arose as to whether or not to maintain these 186 miles of trails, which had not been maintained and where nature had reclaimed its rightful place. In the end, we decided to preserve them. Maintenance is carried out on a voluntary basis by the Friends of the Fontainebleau Forest association, of which I am a member and which was founded in 1907.

How has tourism evolved in the Forest of Fontainebleau?

The most significant development was in climbing, which began in 1900 and became popular in the 1960s and 1970s. The integration of mountain bikers, who use the same trails as walkers, was more problematic and led to conflicts of use and further erosion of the trails. In addition, the high profile of the Fontainebleau forest sometimes leads to over-visiting in certain areas. However, the domain is gigantic (25,000 ha, i.e. 2.5 times Paris, editor's note) and there are

many places to explore. So don't be afraid to dive into a map and leave the most popular hiking trails behind.

Interview by Joséphine Lebard

Jean-Claude Polton is the author of a biography published in 2011 entitled "Claude-François Denecourt, 1788-1875, l'amant de la forêt de Fontainebleau." Find out more about the Friends of the Fontainebleau Forest association at aaff.fr and fontainebleau-tourisme.com.

Discover the forest of Fontainebleau on donkeyback

The Fontainebleau association offers outings with donkeys in the Fontainebleau forest.



© Virginie Jammère for Enlarge your Paris

Venturing into a forest twice the size of Paris can be intimidating. To overcome any apprehensions, Virginie Colboc has launched Fontainebleau and offers donkey rides.

It's a trio made up of Marguerite, Hironnelle and Laios. Marguerite, 17, abused at a young age, is already a survivor but has a lot of love to spare. Hironnelle, at just five years old, likes to get off the beaten track, and sometimes even try something adventurous. As for Laios, he has just turned 2 but is already dreaming of the great outdoors. No, we're not talking about the three protagonists of a new Netflix series, but about Virginie Colboc's donkeys. This long-eared equine enthusiast from Achères-la-Forêt (Seine-et-Marne) offers outings in the forest of Fontainebleau in the company of her friendly companions.

When we arrive with my 9-year-old companion, Virginie invites us to groom the donkeys, as a way of getting to know them. Then it's time for the explanations, and off we go for an hour's walk in the forest. The idea is simple: the donkeys carry the picnics, water bottles and other packages while you enjoy the scenery and the moment. Depending on your level, age and inclination, you can choose between the "White Mountain tour", a short, uneven hike open to everyone aged 9 and over, the "Cailleau Rock tour" (aged 12 and over), which allows you to enjoy a beautiful panorama as well as a few more challenging sections, or the "Cathedral Rock", a hike lasting at least 3 hours with uneven

sections (not recommended for children under 14).

Donkeys to feel at ease with nature

Since Virginie is not a qualified riding instructor, she does not offer donkey rides. She accompanies hikers, especially to help with disobedient donkeys. Because, let's face it, each one has its own character. She also shares a few anecdotes about the forest's rich history, and the importance of preserving it.

We therefore walk to the rhythm of the donkeys' steps. It's not the same depending on the beast, or the moment. We can already see your

wicked tongues: why "burden" yourself with such a beast when you can carry a backpack? "Most visitors don't dare go into the forest alone. The donkey is a reassuring animal, which adds another dimension to the ride. Donkeys also smell other animals, helping us to sharpen our senses and occasionally spot a deer or a doe," explains Virginie. During the walk, she talks about her desire to offer new concepts: "My husband is a sculptor, so we came up with the idea of hiking and carving wooden objects from the forest. In the near future, we will also be offering yoga and hiking." Virginie Colboc's children also seem very involved in the adventure: "My daughter gave me the idea of organizing "donkey discovery" tea parties for younger children, aged 4 and over. "

Hiker by day, engineer by night

But Virginie isn't just a "tour guide"; she's also a sound engineer. She's bathed in music by night and enjoys the peaceful atmosphere of the forest by day. "I believe that being a sound engineer by night and walking in nature by day are actually two very complementary activities. The whole makes up my balance. And I love meeting people", she explains. It all began when the Colboc couple moved to Normandy a few years ago: "My husband offered me a donkey ride.

Shortly afterwards, we decided to adopt one, then two, as they are gregarious animals and become unhappy if they live alone." All the more reason to go and meet them.

Virginie Jannière

Fontânebleau in Achères-la-Forêt (77). Prices: 1h to 4h tours from €15 to €30 per person (6 people maximum). Hike and sculpture in the forest package: 65 € per person. Donkey discovery + snack (ages 4 and up): 15 per child. For reservations contact Virginie Colboc: 06 12 93 52 67 or fontanebleau@gmail.com. Find out more at fontanebleau.wixsite.com

Virginie Colboc,
Fontânebleau founder





The Parc de Sceaux, eight times larger than the Jardin du Luxembourg in Paris

The five largest parks in Greater Paris to try out

They are up to 37 times larger than the Jardin du Luxembourg.

A review of the major picnic parks in Greater Paris.

Jardin du Luxembourg = 22 hectares / Central Park = 341 hectares

37 x the Jardin du Luxembourg = the park of the Palace of Versailles (Versailles, Yvelines)

We could also have said more than twice Central Park. Because, with its 815 ha compared with 340 ha for Central Park, the park of the Palace of Versailles is the champion of all categories. This makes it an inexhaustible land of exploration. For instance, you can venture to the end of the Grand Canal and its almost 1.25 miles to picnic on the grass and admire the view. Or take a stroll along the banks of the Pond of the Swiss, a pure marvel that runs alongside the King's Kitchen Garden. One thing's for sure: there's more to come.

Park of the Palace of Versailles, access via the Queen's Gate, boulevard de la Reine, Versailles (78). Open daily. Free admission. Access: Versailles Rive droite station (line L). Find out more at chateauversailles.fr

21 x the Jardin du Luxembourg = the Parc de Saint-Cloud (Saint-Cloud, Hauts-de-Seine)

460 hectares of greenery at the gateway to Paris: that's what awaits you in the Parc de Saint-Cloud, designed by one of the architects of the Palace of Versailles, Jules Hardouin-Mansart. As well as beautiful lawns on which you can relax, the area

offers unexpected views over Paris, and is home to several restaurants to make your stay as pleasant as possible.

Domaine national de Saint-Cloud, 1, avenue de la Grille d'Honneur, Saint-Cloud (92). Open daily. Access: Pont de Sèvres metro station (line 9), Sèvres - Ville-d'Avray train station (lines L and U), T2 tramway stop Musée de Sèvres. Free admission for pedestrians, €3 for motorized two-wheelers, €5 for cars Find out more at domaine-saint-cloud.fr View of Boulogne and Ile Seguin.

19 x the Jardin du Luxembourg = the Parc Georges-Valbon (La Courneuve, Seine-Saint-Denis)

We know it thanks to the Fête de l'Huma (which has been relocated to the former Brétigny-sur-Orge air base in Essonne since 2022). Parc Georges-Valbon, also known as Parc de La Courneuve, covers 410 hectares of beautifully landscaped grounds, including three hectares of children's playgrounds and one of the finest open-air sports facilities in Greater Paris, on the banks of the main lake. Another of its special features is that it is home to our very own Clinamen urban shepherds, who have set up their sheepfold here.

Parc Georges-Valbon, 55, avenue Waldeck-Rochet, La Courneuve (93). Open daily. Access: La Courneuve-Aubervilliers station (RER B), then bus 249 to Cimetière de La Courneuve. Find out more at parcsinfo.seine-saint-denis.fr

9 x the Jardin du Luxembourg = the parc du Sausset (Villepinte, Seine-Saint-Denis)

Along with Parc Georges-Valbon (see above), it is one of eight departmental parks in Seine-Saint-Denis. The 200-hectare Parc du Sausset is an idyllic cocoon for families. Just a short walk from the RER station, it features a large playground to keep children exhausted, while parents can work up a sweat on the muscle-strengthening facilities. You can also take advantage of the refreshment bar terrace with its view of the pond, its ducks and its beautiful, unafraid black geese.

Parc du Sausset, avenue du Sausset, Villepinte (93). Open daily. Access: Villepinte station (RER B). Find out more at parcsinfo.seine-saint-denis.fr

8 x the Jardin du Luxembourg = the parc de Sceaux (Sceaux, Hauts-de-Seine)

Spanning 180 hectares, the Parc de Sceaux (which is celebrating the centenary of its opening to the public this year) succeeds in bringing together three

great Paris Region classics: the Palace of Versailles, the Bois de Boulogne and the Parc Montsouris. To convince yourself, you just need to look at its main features: formal gardens lined with paths with Versailles-style perspectives that lead to a château, a wood criss-crossed by paths with Boulonnais-style charms, and large lawns where you can bask in the spirit of Montsouris, without the risk of having to stand too close to your peers. The list of delights doesn't end there. There's also a magnificent wooden playground designed by the children themselves, a large open-air swimming pool, a canal for carp and roach fishing, and several food kiosks. The icing on the cake is that the cherry trees will soon be in bloom...

Parc de Sceaux, avenue Le Nôtre, Sceaux (92). Open daily. Access: Parc de Sceaux station (RER B). Find out more at domaine-de-sceaux.hauts-de-seine.fr

Gaspard Guérin



Parc Georges-Valbon, 19 times larger than the Jardin du Luxembourg in Paris

Forests are Paris Region's number one tourist destination

The forest of Versailles



© Jérôme Derigny

How do Paris Region residents perceive the region's forests, and how often do they visit them? These are some of the questions asked in a survey conducted by ViaVoice in spring 2022 for the French National Forestry Board, the results of which were recently published. Michel Béal, Director of the ONF-Paris Region West branch, explains.

Why did you decide to conduct this survey on Paris Region residents' relationship with their forests?

Michel Béal : When you manage public forests, like the ONF, you have to combine three major functions: a social function, an environmental function and a timber production function. First and foremost is the social function. We work with elected representatives and local associations to meet the demand for the green lungs that forests represent. That's good, but it's also interesting to look at the public's

side of the equation to better assess their needs.

52% of Paris Region residents say they visit a forest at least once a month. That's a pretty high figure. Does it surprise you?

Rather than surprise, I'd call it confirmation of an idea. Thanks to surveys, we know that there are around 80 million visitors a year to Paris Region's national forests. And the numbers were even higher after covid. Nowadays, we get around 90 to 100 million visitors a year. This makes our forests the

number one tourist destination in Paris Region.

Nevertheless, we can see that the inhabitants of Seine-Saint-Denis are somewhat the "underdogs" in this affair. 19% say they never go to the forest...

Because the closer you are to a forest, the more you go. If you look at an aerial map of Paris Region, you'll see that the density of forests is highest in western Paris and south-eastern Val-de-Marne. Seine-Saint-Denis has no national forest at all.

The survey shows that forests have a very positive overall image. On the other hand, 41% of those surveyed said they don't go more often because they're reluctant to walk alone. It even arouses fear and anxiety in around 20% of 18-24 year-olds... How do you interpret these results?

We can already point out that, among those surveyed, there are obviously no children or young teenagers for whom the forest represents a place of adventure and discovery. And it has to be said that older teenagers are an age group that comes to the forest less often. We find them later, once they're married, with children. In any case, there are very few assaults in the woods. While the forest may seem ominous, in the end it's more a matter of the collective unconscious. Stories we were told as children, filled with wolves and danger. But I can tell you that, for example, walking in the forest at night is absolutely magical. But the weight of our childhood stories weighs heavily on our shoulders...

The survey also shows that, while Paris Region residents love their forests, they don't know them very well. They don't necessarily know who manages them; 45% think they're untamed...

I'd like to start by mentioning another figure that came as a pleasant surprise: 74% of Paris Region residents feel that they are fairly or very well managed. In other words, a rather satisfied silent majority covered by a critical and noisy minority. But there is indeed a gap that we managers need to close.

We have a lot of work to do in terms of teaching and passing on information. In short, we need to strengthen the forest/society dialogue. Even though we've done a lot in the last five years, we need to go even further. After all, the public

doesn't come to the forest just for a stroll. They discover things, ask questions. So it's up to us, along with local authorities and associations, to act as intermediaries. We already receive thousands of children a year. This is a very important educational dimension. Because the more a human being understands forests, the more inclined he or she will be to protect them.

One of the trickiest questions is how to cut the wood. It's clear from this survey that it's not necessarily understood. 63% of people think that cutting wood to market is a bad idea...

The public understands that logging is good for society. But there's a bit of the Dogmatix syndrome: people just can't stand it happening in front of their eyes. And yet, they see the importance of operating on short circuits. Moreover, to keep the forest alive and attractive, it is necessary to cut down and market the wood so that it can be used. This is another area where we need to step up our communication. We're not going to rest on our laurels; we're going to continue this mission of teaching and education.

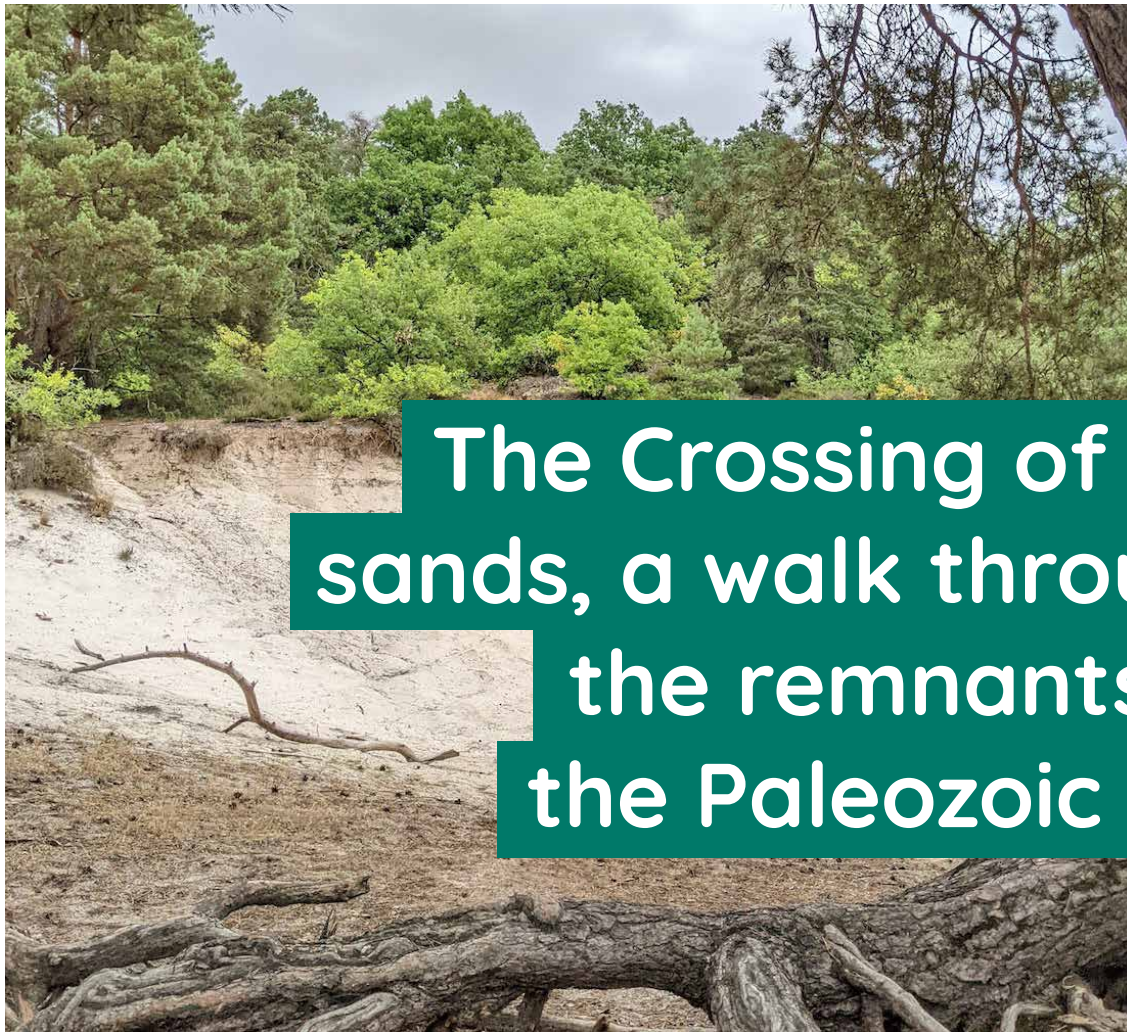
Find out the results of the survey conducted by ViaVoice for the ONF on onf.fr

Interview by Joséphine Lebard

WITH ITS GOLDEN DUNES AND
FRAGRANT PINES STANDING
PROUDLY AMIDST OAK TREES,
PARIS REGION SOMETIMES HAS
A HINT OF THE BASQUE OR
LANDES COASTS, BRINGING
BACK CHILDHOOD MEMORIES
OF SUMMER CAMPS.



The Butte blanche sand pit in Essonne



The Butte blanche sand pit in Essonne

The Crossing of the sands, a walk through the remnants of the Paleozoic era

© Rémi Belot for Enlarge your Paris

Millions of years ago, the Paris Basin was covered by the sea. To find out more, Enlarge your Paris journalist Rémi Belot took the "Crossing of the Sands", a 12-mile route in Essonne between the Ferté-Alais and Étréchy railway stations.

With its golden dunes and fragrant pines standing proudly amidst oak trees, Paris Region sometimes has a hint of the Basque or Landes coasts, bringing back childhood memories of summer camps. Indeed, it's in the heart of Essonne, just a short distance from the small village of Boissy-le-Cutté, that you'll find this almost maritime landscape. This is both surprising and totally logical: some 30 million years ago (and since the Paleozoic era, some 400 million years ago), the Paris Basin was a little more than a basin, since it was home to a sea... As the quartz decomposed, it left behind the fine sandy

expanses that can also be found near Fontainebleau, among other places.

This astonishing geological curiosity has its own hike: the Crossing of the Sands. A 13-mile stroll through the fields from La Ferté-Alais station. After a few miles, the first climb emerges just outside the village of Huison-Longueville. We climb up to the Butte Hébert in the woods on a well-shaded path. A gentle 3% gradient over a distance of around 1.24 miles brings us to a plateau that lets us rest our thighs and calves. While our legs relax,

our eyes take in the panorama: clearings and fields as far as the eye can see, with the melody of the wind in the vegetation as the soundtrack. Better than a session of relaxation!

Sand in sight!

As we enter the forest again, we come face to face with a pretty rocky chaos. Huge sandstone boulders mark the edge of a small cliff from which you can see the roofs and church of Boissy-le-Cutté. What a view!

The descent to the village is steep via a small sandy track that

slaloms through trees and ferns. And it's just past the village of Boissy, at the foot of the Butte blanche, that you discover the beautiful stretches of sand that give the trail its name. It's time to leave your hiking boots behind – momentarily – and hit the dunes barefoot. An invigorating little treat!

The end of the trail may lack sand, but it doesn't lack salt. The route passes through the Butte du Puits geosite, a 20-foot-high former quarry. Just nearby: the Sarrazin hole, a small cave carved out of the rock. All that's left to do then is to take a beautiful stroll through the woods and cross the calm green waters of the Juine before reaching the Étréchy train station. The sandman shouldn't be long in coming tonight...

Rémi Belot

"The Crossing of the Sands", a 13-mile walk in Essonne between La Ferté-Alais station (RER D) and Étréchy station (RER C). Itinerary available on essonnetourisme.com



The Juine River



"The Crossing of the Sands" in Essonne



The Randopolitain, the map of long-distance hiking trails in Paris Region and how to get there by train

Eleven long-distance hiking trails criss-cross Greater Paris. To better visualize them, Enlarge your Paris journalists and data visualization specialists Wedodata designed a map inspired by the metro and Transilien: the "Randopolitain". It follows the routes laid out by the French Hiking Federation (Fédération française de la randonnée pédestre) and the Paris Region Hiking Committee (Comité régional d'Paris Region de la randonnée pédestre), with the added bonus of showing the location of stations and metro lines to reach them.

Since 2022, Enlarge your Paris, in partnership with Transilien SNCF and the French Hiking Federation in Paris Region, has been organizing a series of 100 hikes leading up to the Olympic Games.

GR1, Tour of Paris

After the GR3, from La Baule to Mont Mézenc, this is France's second long-distance hiking trail. The GR1 is a 335 mile loop around Paris, starting at Porte Maillot (16th). assess your needs.

GR2, Along the Seine

It leaves Dijon for Source-Seine, where the Seine originates, and then follows the river to Le Havre. 533 miles in all, with Paris Region landscapes including the Vexin français nature park (Val-d'Oise) and the village of Samois... sur-Seine (Seine-et-Marne).

GR11, Paris Region Grand Tour

Over 400 miles, the GR11 links Paris Region's four nature parks: Haute Vallée de Chevreuse, Vexin français, Oise-Pays-de-France and Gâtinais français.

GR13, from Fontainebleau to Burgundy

Before crossing the Morvan from one end to the other, the 263 mile GR13 begins with a warm-up in the forest of Fontainebleau (Seine-et-Marne).

GR14, Ardenne Trail

Departing from Porte Dorée in Paris, the GR14 ends at the Belgian border after 360 miles and a beautiful walk along the Marne River at Saint-Maur (Val-de-Marne).

GR22, from Paris to Mont-Saint-Michel

The GR22 links two tricolored icons, the Eiffel Tower and Mont-Saint-Michel, along a 351 mile route that takes in the landscapes of the Haute Vallée de Chevreuse nature park (Yvelines).

GR26, from the Yvelines to Calvados

From the banks of the Seine at Villennes (Yvelines), the GR26 winds its way 190 miles to Deauville.

GR32, from the Seine to the Loire

The GR32 starts on the banks of the Seine at Saint-Fargeau-Ponthierry (Seine-et-Marne) and runs for 84 miles through the Gâtinais Natural Park, straddling the departments of Essonne and Seine-et-Marne, before reaching the Loire.

GR75, Tour of intramural Paris

Nominated for the 3rd edition of the "GR préféré des Français", voting for which will take place this November, the GR75 is a 100% Parisian route created with a view to the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

THE RANDOPOLITAIN

MAP OF LONG-DISTANCE HIKING TRAILS IN PARIS REGION AND HOW TO GET THERE BY TRAIN AND METRO



Enlarge your Paris with WEDODATA

Itineraries © Fédération française de la randonnée pédestre

GR111, Tour of Essonne

The 98 mile long GR111 offers the chance to get to know the landscapes and scenery of the Essonne region, such as the Château de Dourdan and the Chapelle Saint-Blaise des simples painted by Jean Cocteau in Milly-la-Forêt.

GR655, Via Turonensis

This is one of the four hiking trails that leads to Santiago de Compostela and crosses Paris Region from north to south.

The Editorial Team

Le Randopolitain, a map produced by Enlarge your Paris and We Do Data with routes provided by the French Hiking Federation, the Paris Region Hiking Committee and the Institut Paris Region.

Find all the information and itineraries on ffrandonnee-idf.fr



Food



© Jérôme Derigny for Enlarge your Paris

Boulbi, “the place to eat”? Journalist Tina Meyer was supposed to try out three new addresses. Once there, surprise: from discovery to discovery, no less than eleven tables seduced her. Here’s what she has to say to wet our appetites.

Pepe Boulogne, a world champion pizza

Since March 2023, this new wood-fired pizzeria has been churning out generously topped pizzas with crisp, plump pizza crusts. In charge: Giuseppe Cutraro, world pizza champion in Naples in 2019 and 2020 (and in Las Vegas in 2021!) When it comes to *antipasti*: *arancini* with truffles; beef meatballs in a tomato sauce with ricotta and basil; or burrata extra served on a carpaccio of fresh artichokes with lemon. Generous desserts.

Pepe Boulogne, 102-104, rue du Point du jour, Boulogne (92). Open daily. Pizzas from €11.70 to €20.

Access: Marcel Sembat metro station (line 9)

Bonnotte, a big favorite

A lively bistronomic spot, launched last October and quickly spotted by our Fooding colleagues. Like the famous potato, chef Antoine Guichard comes from Noirmoutier (Vendée). Supported by his partner Manon Negretti, former chef at Lasserre, Semilla and Ineko in Paris, he has 25 years' experience in Michelin-starred establishments, from Martinez in Cannes to Les Airelles in Courchevel, the George V and the Peninsula Paris. For lunch? Beet - kohlrabi - kumquat salad with a hazelnut vinaigrette for a perfect

sugar/acidity balance. Then a masterful leg of lamb flanked by mashed potatoes, crunchy fennel and rosemary juice.

Bonnotte, 1, rue de Billancourt, Boulogne (92). Open Monday to Friday for lunch and dinner. Lunch: set menu at €29, full menu at €38. A la carte dinner (64-84 €/pers). Tel: 09 83 44 29 35. Access: Boulogne Jean Jaurès metro station (line 10). Find out more at bonnotte-restaurant.fr

Ye's Bistrot, we can't say no

Trained in two Michelin-starred restaurants in the 8th arrondissement (L'Arôme and



Ye's Bistrot in Boulogne

L'Écrin de l'hôtel Crillon), and for a time at the piano of the natural wine bistro Le Verre Volé (10th arrondissement), chef Shiqi Ye took the plunge in August 2022 with this first restaurant of his own. Asian-influenced cuisine (Chinese, Thai, Japanese...) Very good homemade *gyoza*, meltingly tender pork belly simmered in the style *dong po*, shiitake mushrooms, grilled leeks and Thai rice... A real treat!

Ye's Bistrot, 108, rue du Vieux Pont de Sèvres, Boulogne (92). Closed on Sundays. At lunchtime, a stunning 19 € menu and a full menu at 23 €. In the evening, "tapassiettes" to share (€8 to €14 each). Tel: 01 58 17 04 04. Access: Marcel Sembat metro station (line 9). Find out more at yes-bistrot.fr

Osabak, who would have thought?

Les Tontons du Tartare, a mono-maniacal catering service run by two friends, was created to revisit this culinary classic, using products and combinations that were little-known to the general public. Hit hard by the covid crisis, the two guys decided to reinvent themselves, and last June opened their own venue: Osabak, or "the uncles" in Basque. The result is a cellar for eating and drinking that's right in tune with the times.

Osabak, 50, rue Escudier, Boulogne (92). Closed on Mondays and Sundays. Lunchtime: starter/main course or main course/dessert for €25, starter/main course/dessert for €29. Dinner: dishes from €9 to €24. Tel: 01 40 96 07 80. Access: Boulogne Jean Jaurès metro station (line 10). Find out more at osabak.fr

La Machine à coudes, tailor-made seasonal cuisine

Since last September, Polish chef Piotr Korzen, ex-Sur mesure (Thierry Marx's Michelin-starred restaurant), has renewed this

historic address, one of the first in Paris Region to believe in natural wine. Market-fresh cuisine, which evolves according to seasonal produce, with a strong plant-based inspiration. A high level behind the apparent simplicity.

La Machine à coudes, 35, rue Nationale, Boulogne (92). Open Tuesday to Friday for lunch and dinner and Saturday evening. Three-course surprise lunch menu at €36.50 (€51.50 with wine pairing). Six-course dinner at €60 (€90 with wine pairing). Tel: 01 47 79 05 06. Access: Marcel Sembat metro station (line 9). Find out more at lamachineacoudes.fr

Breizh Café, the crepe that doesn't roll you in flour

After conquering Japan, Brittany and Paris, serial restaurateur Bertrand Larcher has planted the Corsican flag in the suburbs. Since November 2022, this refined gourmet crêperie has been elegantly optimizing sweet and salty crepes! With a wealth of exceptional products: stone-ground organic flour, Bordier butter, Roëllinger spices... To drink: artisanal ciders and quality wines.

Breizh Café, 1, rue Anna Jacquin, Boulogne (92). Open daily. Salty crepes from €11.80 to €21, sweet crepes from €5.90 to €14.50. Lunch menu at €19.80 (weekdays). Tel: 09 54 85 45 02. Find out more at breizhcafe.com

Mano, a restaurant with a difference

Market-day cuisine in a casual mode. Jeune Talent Gault&Millau 2020, chef Max Kuzniar launched his business right in the middle of lockdown, at the start of 2021. He was soon spotted by the TV show *Très Très Bon* by culinary critic François-Régis Gaudry on Paris Première. On the menu: shepherd's pie generously drizzled with meat juices and served with a salad, prawn risotto with shellfish bisque and vegetable shavings, and above all the now

famous ceviche (fish varying according to the catch of the day) served with a sweet potato purée.

Mano, 46, rue de l'Ancienne Mairie, Boulogne (92). Closed Saturdays and Sundays. Lunch: set menu at €27; lunch menu at €34. Tasting menus (surprise): four courses (€51); seven courses (€69). Tel: 07 88 62 81 49. Access: Marcel Sembat metro station (line 9) or Boulogne Pont de Saint-Cloud metro station (line 10). Find out more on manoboulogne.com

Holi, veggie coffee shop

This veggie and organic coffee shop is as cute as can be... and also delights vegan and gluten-free palates! From breakfast to lunch to afternoon tea, this is a healthy and tasty way to go.

Holi, 30, rue d'Aguesseau, Boulogne (92). Open from 9.30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday to Friday. Starters €6; main courses €13.50; sandwiches €9; desserts €4-6. Special menus at €12.50 and €18; set menu at €23. Tel: 09 83 56 72 65. Access: Boulogne Jean Jaurès metro station (line 10). Find out more on Instagram

Mother, completely Asia-mutated

Former Masterchef Nathalie Nguyen opened this exotic brasserie nearly three years ago. Burgers with fries and satay sauce or Chateaubriand with crying tiger sauce: "Asia-mutated" classics made with organic or sustainable produce.

Mother, 101/103, boulevard Jean Jaurès, Boulogne (92). Open daily. Brunch €29 (Saturday, Sunday and public holidays). Menu (lunch and dinner): starters from €10 to €17; main courses from €21 to €29; desserts from €10 to €18. Tel: 01 42 37 12 02. Access: Marcel Sembat metro station (line 9). Find out more at mother-restaurant.fr

BURGERS AND FRIES WITH SATAY SAUCE OR CHATEAUBRIAND WITH CRYING TIGER SAUCE: "ASIA-MUTATED" CLASSICS

Tambouille, the wine of wine

After more than 15 years in the high-end hotel and restaurant business, Pierre Jung and Michèle Cosma set up their own restaurant in October 2020. The menu is simple but comforting, ranging from French classics like rib steak with fries and salad to a hearty Aubrac beef burger, with a few World Food touches here and there, like the creamy shanklish (Lebanese cheese with zaatar, tomato and parsley). Bonus, the wine list: Anthony Thevenet's brouilly; Stéphane Montez's saint-jo, condrieu and côte-rôtie... Gulp!

Tambouille, 40, rue de Meudon, Boulogne (92). Closed on Mondays and Sundays. Starters €8-16; main courses €18-36; desserts €9-10. Tel: 09 75 42 87 81. Access: Marcel Sembat metro station (line 9). Find out more at tambouille-restaurant.fr

Fanande, mischievous and generous

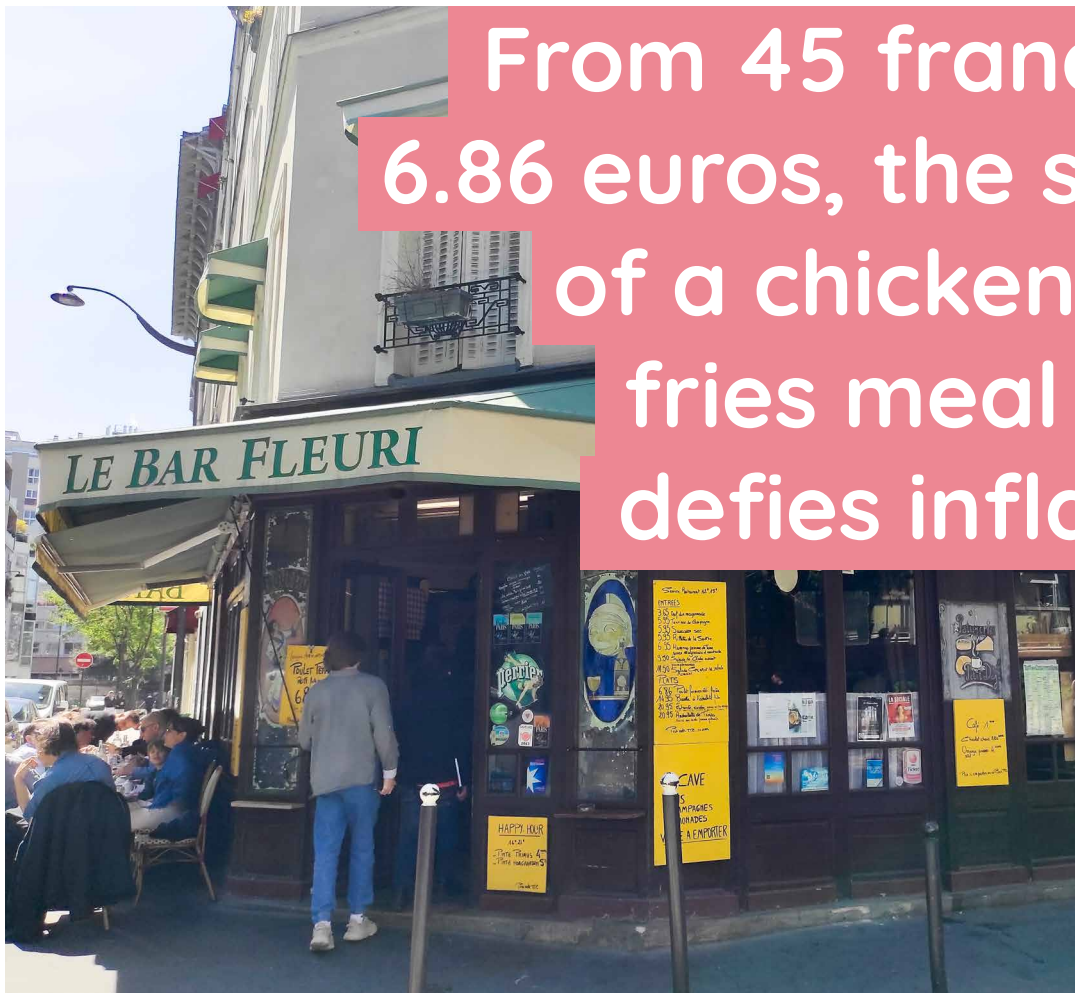
This French wine bistro was launched at the end of June 2020. A member of ASOM (Association for the preservation of the egg and mayonnaise), he describes his restaurant as "a place for sharing, where lovers of the terroir, devotees of taste and supporters of happiness all come together".

Fanande, 13, rue Mollien, Boulogne (92). Open from Monday to Friday. Platters €14; starters €9-13; main courses €18-38; desserts €10-12. Tel: 01 55 60 74 30. Access: Boulogne Jean Jaurès metro station (line 10). Find out more at fanande.fr

Tina Meyer

From 45 francs to 6.86 euros, the story of a chicken and fries meal that defies inflation

© Joséphine Lebard for Enlarge your Paris



Since 2022, the Bar Fleuri in the 19th arrondissement has offered chicken and French fries at the unchanged price of 6.86 euros.

Since 2002 and the changeover from the franc to the euro, the Bar Fleuri in the 19th arrondissement has not changed the price of its chicken and French fries, which has gone from 45 francs to 6.86 euros. This is what Joséphine Lebard went to see in order to believe.

It was to be expected: at the beginning of May, when spring seems to have finally sprung in the capital, the terrace of the Bar Fleuri in the 19th arrondissement is overrun. The turnout was no doubt due in no small part to the fine weather, and also... to the chicken and French fries. Because at the Bar fleuri, this dish is available at an unbeatable price of €6.86.

Flashback: in 2002, at the time of the changeover to the euro, the bosses converted the price of the dish from francs - 45 francs in this case - to euros. The result is €6.86, which obviously hasn't been affected by inflation in 20 years. In terms of produce, the free-range

chicken comes from Normandy, while the fries are homemade.

"I'll have the flank steak with shallots", announces my eternal partner, currently on school vacation and ready to do some gastronomic tests in a flurry.

- No, but you don't get it," I reply. The idea is to taste the chicken and French fries.

- Ah, but I don't give a damn (yes, the binomial has a slightly loose lexicon), you're the one who's working. I'll eat whatever I want!

- Yes, well, the flank steak is €14.95... It's not the same price... "

A sauce that's a hit

Because, of course, the chicken and French fries is a draw card. The rest of the menu (rib steak, brandade with pollack, fillet of beef with morel mushroom sauce, andouillette de Troyes...) offers much more classic fare. But what about this famous chicken? Well, very, very decent, generously served and not dry, all the more so as it's spiced up with a sauce that you make sure you leave nothing behind with the help of your bread.

"The potatoes are really crispy", says our sidekick, who knows a thing or two about crunchy potatoes, having just told us how

he recently ordered a pizza in a pizzeria... topped with French fries. In front of our appalled look, he tries to temporize: "Nah, but I thought they'd be served separately too..." And when we tried to explain to him that beyond the gastronomic sin, there was also a slight dietary problem (pizza plus fries, how can I put it?), he tried to distract us: "Ah, look, how funny, they do take-out!"

In fact, many customers leave with a box containing the famous chicken and French fries, no doubt to be enjoyed on the lawns of the Buttes-Chaumont, just a three-minute walk away. Greenery, sunshine and a dish for less than seven euros. What if this was the right price for happiness?

Joséphine Lebard

Le Bar fleuri, 1, rue du Plateau, Paris (19^e). Open Monday to Saturday, 6.30 a.m. to 8.30 p.m. Access: Buttes-Chaumont metro station (line 7bis) or Jourdain metro station (line 11). Tel: 01 42 08 13 38.



Bar fleuri's chicken and French fries



These restaurants that control Pantin's taste buds

Issam Khouaja,
the friendly
manager of
Chawachine in
Pantin

© Tina Meyer for Enlarge Your Paris

From a restaurant tucked away in a building lobby to a restaurant in a former secondary school, from a brewer's canteen in a pretty courtyard to a temple of chabatti, Enlarge your Paris has teamed up with Bonjour Pantin to bring you "the" places to eat in Pantin.

Hannibal, Dallas or Mystery...

Chabatti is the quintessential Tounsi lunch! Nothing to do with Indian chapati. It's a round, flat roll filled with a whole host of goodies: omelette, crumbled tuna, potatoes, harissa, olive oil, onions, chopped parsley, cheese... enough to satisfy even the hungriest of appetites. And Chawachine is its temple! Since 2015, this shop, whose walls are studded with lucky bills and old photographs of Tunis, has been busy. Issam Khouaja, the friendly manager, has a lot to do with it. The other great local specialty: jwajem. A sort of calorific (but too good) smoothie that would make a fashion blogger choke:

fresh fruit blended (three kinds, to choose from), customized with hazelnuts, walnuts, honey, date paste or colorful sugared almonds. No chairs or tables in the house. Only two outdoor stand-up tables. Friendly tip: take it to go and sit on a bench in the nearby Square Lapérouse!

Chawachine, 63, avenue Édouard Vaillant, Pantin (93). Open daily from 11:30 a.m. to 1 a.m. Chabatti and fruit juices: 5 €.

Tel: 06 62 82 09 41. Access: Aubervilliers-Pantin-Quatre Chemins metro station (line 7) / Pantin station (RER E). Find out more on Facebook

Gangnam, like in Seoul

It's a Korean restaurant like you wouldn't expect to find just a short walk from the Église de Pantin metro station. You'll come here for the must-try bibimbap and kimchi, or to share a generous BBQ of spicy marinated meat with friends, in a "bling" but chic decor that reflects Seoul's upmarket district: Gangnam (the "under the river" that inspired the first global hit of the YouTube era, Gangnam Style). An unsuspected bonus of the avenue: the terrace overlooking the wooded park of a former tobacco factory.

Gangnam, 140, avenue Jean Lolive, Pantin (93). Open Monday to Sunday, noon to 2:30 pm and 7 pm to 10:30 pm. Tel: 09 81 90 45 33. Access: Église de Pantin metro station (line 5). Find out more at gangnamparis.com

La Cantine Pas si loin, or the new life of a middle school

Nestled in the courtyard of the former Jean Lolive middle school, now called Artagon and dedicated to supporting the emerging arts scene, the Pas si loin canteen association has established itself as one of Pantin's finest restaurants. The dishes, made from local, seasonal produce, are cooked by local residents who are working their way back into society. The menu changes daily and is available in vegetarian or meat versions. It offers a free-price solidarity menu for local residents. Younger visitors can also sit back and enjoy a free glass of syrup in exchange for a joke (outside lunch and dinner times).

La cantine Pas si loin, 34, rue Cartier Bresson, Pantin (93). Open Tuesday to Friday, 11 am to 11 pm and Saturday, 11 am to 6 pm. Vegetarian starter-main course €12, meat menu €14. Tel: 09 53 20 37 63. Access: Aubervilliers-Pantin-Quatre Chemins metro station (line 7) / Pantin station (RER E). More on [Instagram.com](https://www.instagram.com)

Lakshmi, a neighborhood canteen with curry sauce

You could easily walk past it without paying any attention in this street teeming with shops of all kinds. A big mistake. This Indian restaurant is a very good idea in the neighborhood. At lunchtime, Lakshmi offers four different menus for €10.50, served in large stainless steel trays. On the menu: chicken curry, tikka or tandoori, dahl, basmati rice, pakora... Two other menus for €11.50 and €12.50 are also available for lunch. The food is tasty and generously served in an atmosphere provided

by the couple who run the place and provide the show between the dining room and the kitchen.

Lakshmi, 37, rue du Pré-Saint-Gervais, Pantin (93). Open Monday to Saturday, noon to 2.15pm and 7pm to 10.45pm. Tel: 01 48 95 28 36. Access: Hoche metro station (line 5). Find out more at laksh mipantin.com

Café CinqSens, you are about to get a taste full

When the CinqSens bakery opened its doors in Pantin, the town's spine tingled. The famous flan or pavlova signed by chef Nicolas Paciello now belonged to the residents of Pantin! In addition to the bakery, a café has now been set up on rue Méhul. A classy interior where you can relax from breakfast to afternoon tea. For lunch, two set menus - certainly not in "low-cost" mode - for €25 and €34. When we passed, after a slice of focaccia moistened with olive oil as an appetizer, we were able to taste a delicious beef *tataki* served with boiled potatoes. We confess, we've ate it all up...

Café CinqSens, 18 rue Méhul, Pantin (93). Open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday to Friday, Saturday from 9 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. At lunchtime, the kitchens close at 2:30 p.m. Tel: 01 48 91 00 87. Access: Église de Pantin metro station (line 5). Find out more at cinqsensparis.com

Brasserie Gallia, at the heart of the empire

There's no need to introduce Gallia beer now that the brand has extended its empire beyond Greater Paris. But did you know that it was brewed in Pantin, and that it also had its own bar and restaurant? It's on rue Méhul, with chef Geoffrey Bertrand at the helm, offering a lunch and dinner menu featuring local producers. Our favorites: the breaded chicken breasts with *panko* and black

sesame, my mother's terrine and *halloumi* buns. Otherwise, rumor has it that the chef is working on a menu based on food and beer pairings. Gallia's not done making a splash yet.

Brasserie Gallia, 35, rue Méhul, Pantin (93). Restaurant open Tuesday to Friday, noon to 2:30 pm and 6:30 pm to midnight. Saturdays from noon to midnight. Sundays from 3 pm to midnight. Tel: 01 57 14 56 72. Access: Église de Pantin metro station (line 5). Find out more at galliaparis.com

Burchi's, the restaurant hidden at the end of a building lobby

Featured in the Guide Ultime, Burchi's cooks homemade burgers and tenders in the back of an apartment building in Pantin. At the end of a hallway with schoolyard-style tiling, on the left there's a row of red doctor's waiting-room-style chairs and on the right, a small booth overlooking a kitchen where the menu is displayed. Black Angus steak, melted cheddar and home fries will satisfy even the toughest appetites. As for the burgers, a special mention goes to the Louisiana fried chicken: the marinade is delicious and the breading not as plain as it often is. At Burchi's, your hunger will return to the basement.

Burchi's, 36, rue Delizy, Pantin (93). Open from 11.30 a.m. to 2.30 p.m. every day except Friday and Sunday, and from 6 p.m. to 10.30 p.m. daily. Access: Pantin station (RER E). Find out more at burchispantin.fr



La Cantine Pas si loin in Pantin's former Jean-Lolive Middle School

Les Pantins, the art of detail

Beneath its false air of a neighborhood bistro, with its zinc, half-curtained windows and duck-blue skai armchairs, Les Pantins goes about its business in disguise. But the details don't fool you. The cuisine is inventive. For example, the celery remoulade is spiced up with tandoori spices and served with a soft-boiled egg, while the tiramisu is made in minutes with popcorn and salted butter caramel. In summer, the terrace offers a breathtaking view of the spectacular façade of the National Dance Center.

Les Pantins, 6, rue Victor Hugo, Pantin (93). Overt Monday to Saturday, 12 am to 2 pm and 7:30 pm to 10 pm.

Tel: 01 57 14 38 74. Access: Hoche metro station (line 5) or Pantin station (RER E). Find out more at lespantin.fr

Jardin21, street food +++

On the opposite bank, a huge barge delivers cement blocks. Behind you, the silhouette of the Moulins de Pantin can be seen. It's in this industrial landscape along the Ourcq Canal - on the border between Pantin and Paris - that Jardin21 (19th arrondissement), a vegetation and cultural wasteland, has reopened for its sixth season until September 30. In addition to the bar, you can sit down and enjoy dishes from the canteen. At the helm are Richard and Dylan, who are dedicated to serving *street food* +++. Au menu: hot-dogs, nachos, *poke bowl* and even a plant-based chickpea effiloché with a pleasant smoky taste. And to help you digest, take a stroll along the canal, which can be extended to the Prairie du Canal wasteland, 2.5 miles away.

Jardin21, 12A, rue Ella - Fitzgerald, Paris (19th). Access: Porte de Pantin metro station (line 5) or Porte de la Villette metro station (line 7) / T3b Tramway stop Ella Fitzgerald / Gare de Pantin (RER E). Find out more on jardin21.fr

Enlarge your Paris and Bonjour Pantin

Spotted by the street food influencer The Ultimate Guide, Burchi's is set up in the lobby of a building in Pantin



With the Bretelle in the 13th arrondissement, the ring road takes a new turn

© Joséphine Lebard for Enlarge your Paris



La Bretelle restaurant at the foot of the ring road in Paris's 13th arrondissement

Opened between the 13th arrondissement and Ivry, at the "noodle dish" formed by the ramps of the ring road, the restaurant *La Bretelle* is one of those wastelands, like *Jardin21* or *Kilomètre25*, that are now sprouting up at the foot of the Paris ring road, whose 50th anniversary was celebrated in 2023. Joséphine Lebard, a journalist for *Enlarge your Paris*, went there for a bite to eat.

Warning! Because of "school exams", classes are canceled and our Wednesday accomplice finds himself with us on a Monday. And it's all accompanied by a great deal of family misery: friends are either not available or not allowed to go out. And our son has a sulky face.

Concerned about his well-being, I make a suggestion:

"How about lunch under the ring road?"

- What kind of plan is this again? sighs the teenager who, it should

be remembered, has already eaten at the at the far end of a Pantin building lobby, tried chicken and French fries cheaper than a Spritz on a terrace, and nibbled away a kebab behind a gas pump.

No sooner said than done, we're on our way to the extreme boundary between the 13th arrondissement and Ivry (Val-de-Marne). More specifically, in the "noodle dish" of the 13th arrondissement: the ring road and several ramps that were opened a few years ago. It's under this tangle of lanes that *La Bretelle* has set up shop, an address we were given by le Grand Paris vu de

ma Mini a restaurant co-founded by Nicolas Spinola and Nina Fashahi, with Maxime Huillo in the kitchen, who has also worked at *Fulgurance*. "The idea was really to offer festive cuisine, explains Nicolas Spinola, with a canteen at lunchtime, after-work evenings and cultural programming on weekends."

Garden or ring road

We're in canteen mode. There are several options for seating: the garden side with its honeysuckle, apple tree and wisteria - "we thought of the place as an oasis in a fairly mineral neighborhood."

continues Nicolas Spinola; then there's the interior, housed in an authentic pool bubble adapted to the restaurant; and finally, the exterior alongside the ring road. We chose the third option, attracted by the feeling of having lunch in front of a giant Hot Wheels circuit. *"It's true that these new ramps are quite stylish."*, agrees Nicolas Spinola. Even so, we're a little sceptical: aren't we in danger of breathing in fine particles? *Less than on a normal terrace in Paris,"* explains Nicolas Spinola, *"where you're on the same level as the cars. Here you are below..."* And with the noise barriers, it's relatively quiet.

As for the menu, it's a more streamlined offering that leans towards fusion. We start with a cream of zucchini, peas, chilli oil and spring onions (€7), ideal for hot weather. The cream is enhanced by the crunchy peas and the cebette, which gives the dish

a touch of acidity. Then we both opt for the Thai salad (€14). Filled with coriander and well-roasted peanuts, it is served generously. As far as I'm concerned, it's a little too spicy, but my sidekick doesn't mind.

For dessert, castagnoles with ricotta cheese: these round Italian doughnuts (reminiscent of the castanets to which their name alludes) are served with an apricot and rosemary compote that's neither too acidic nor too sweet and adds a little kick. There's also a sandwich bar for those with a lower budget. A new chef will soon be arriving to take charge of the evening tapas menu, with dishes ranging from €8 to €12.

A digestive and architectural stroll through the heart of the Left Bank industrial zone

On the way back, we take advantage of being near the

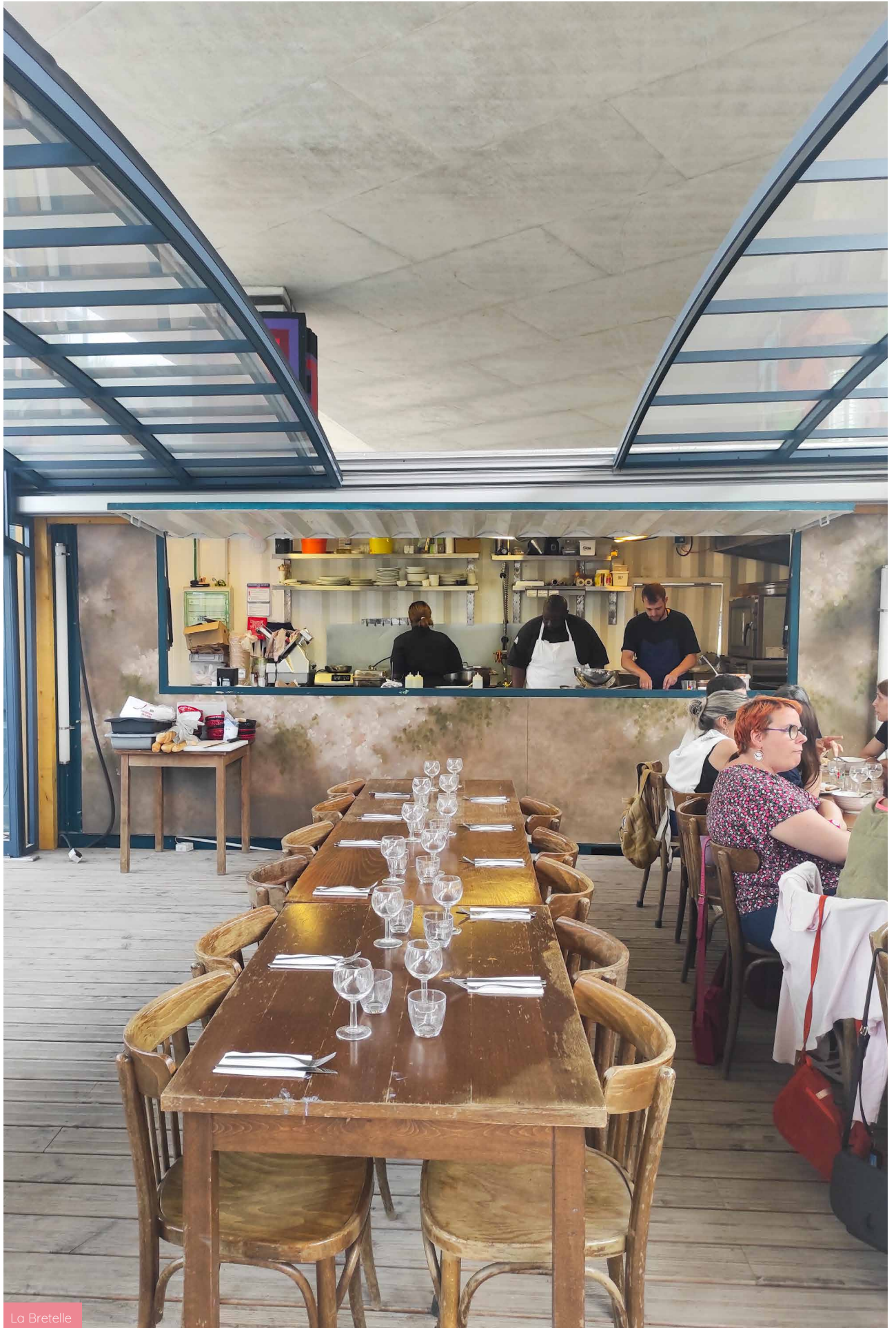
Rive gauche industrial zone and continue our architectural tour. After lunch at La Bretelle, with a view of Jean Nouvel's Duo tower, we take a detour to the Biodiversity Tower, with its green façade designed by Édouard François, at the corner of avenue du Général d'Armée Jean Simon and rue Albert Einstein (13th). Then there's the Grands Moulins campus of Université Paris-Cité (13th arrondissement), part of which is set up in the former Grands Moulins de Paris and has been rehabilitated by Rudy Ricciotti. To deepen our knowledge of Ricciotti, we turn off onto Avenue de France (13th), on sections 115-131, to contemplate his imposing "Nest", home to strange human birds.

Before entering the Austerlitz metro station (13th arrondissement), we watch the skaters at the foot of Le Monde's imposing bridge-building, designed by the Norwegian agency Snohetta. The sun beams down on the façade's glass panels, offering a thousand shades of reflection. Let's be honest, the teenager couldn't care less about our architectural presentation: *"Are we going home or are you taking us on an excursion now?"* Still some work to do to make him aware of the beauty of concrete...

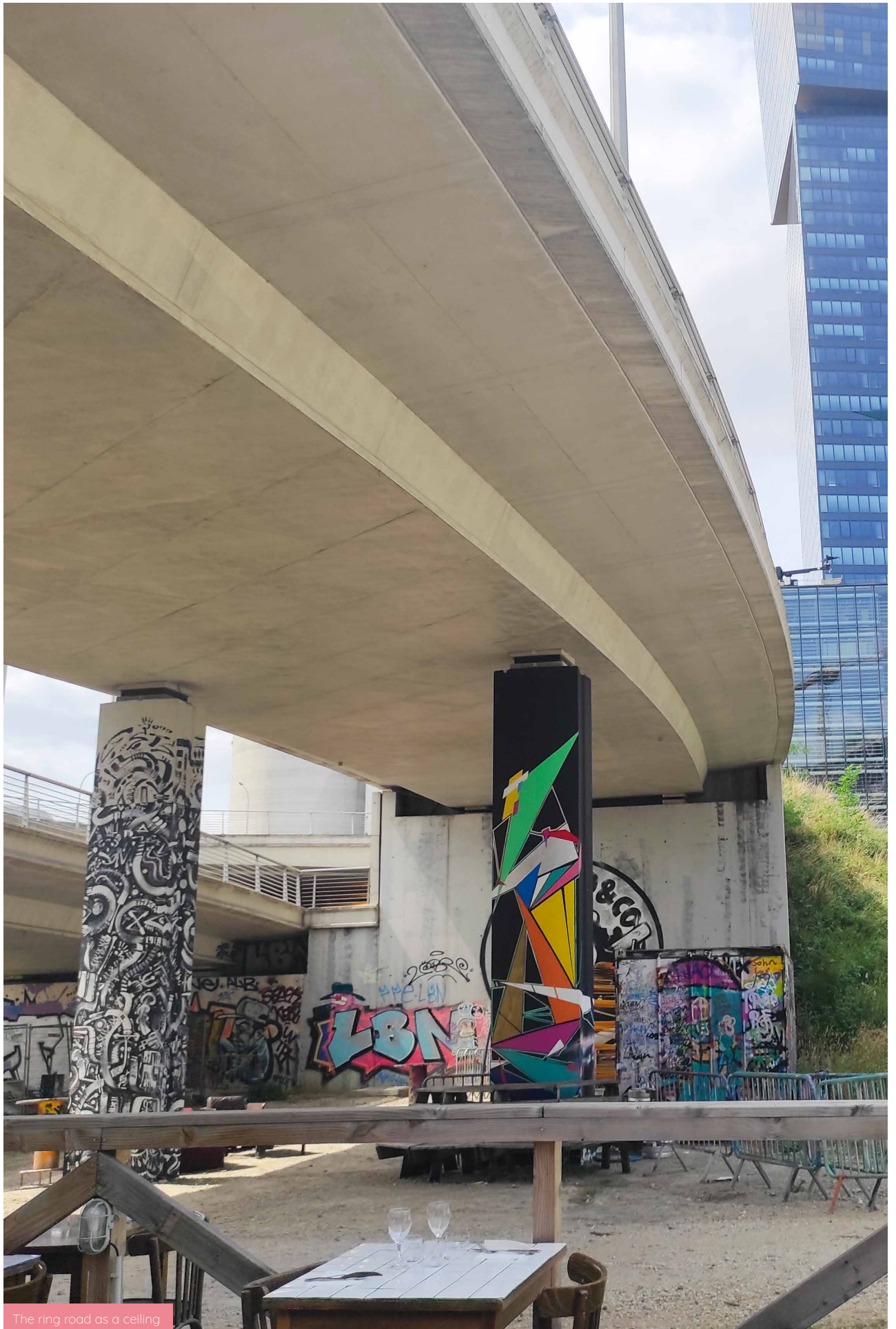
La Bretelle, 9, rue Jean-Baptiste Berlier, Paris (13th). Open Mondays from noon to 3 pm, Tuesdays and Wednesdays from noon to midnight, Thursdays and Fridays from noon to 2 am and Saturdays from 3 pm to 2 am. Reservations via resalabretelle@gmail.com. Access: metro Bibliothèque François Mitterrand (line 14) or streetcar T3a stop Avenue de France. Find out more on [Instagram](#)

Joséphine Lebard

"HOW ABOUT LUNCH UNDER THE RING ROAD?"



La Bretelle



The ring road as a ceiling

A former dancer creates an artisan bakery in a container



A former dancer, Sébastien Lefrançois has opened a bakery in a container at 6b in Saint-Denis.

© Joséphine Lebard for Enlarge your Paris

A former dancer and choreographer, Sébastien Lefrançois changed his world completely when he set up the artisan bakery La Belle Façon in a container on the 6b cultural wasteland in Saint-Denis.

Finding La Belle Façon, Sébastien Lefrançois' bakery, is easy: when you see the blue flying saucer, turn left. You're necessarily in the 6b wasteland in Saint-Denis (Seine-Saint-Denis). So it's hardly surprising to come across a few oddities in the landscape...

This being 6b, it's hardly surprising that the bakery is housed in a container. Sébastien, a former dancer and choreographer, opened the bakery last September, accompanied by Denis in the bakery, Florence in administration and Abdellah on delivery using a carrier bike. As for Sébastien, he describes himself as an

"alternos" baker. He buys his flour from small cereal growers such as Cyrille Renault, based in Champagne-Ardenne, who makes a point of promoting ancient wheat - varieties that predate the two world wars - and peasant wheat. *"A wheat that adapts to its terroir and therefore becomes stronger and stronger over the years."* Flours that are also lower in gluten. For Sébastien, making good bread is a whole: *"It has to be beautiful, but also healthy and virtuous, since we defend the cereal growers we work with."* Another factor in the fight against gluten: the dough is kneaded by hand. *"It's not simply boboism, nor is it a way of attracting*

tourists. But in the mixer, the flour meets the water violently, which fortifies the glutes." Fermentation lasts more than eight hours, which allows the sourdough to *"predigest sugar, then the gluten"*.

"Crazy breads" to replace Viennese pastries

In the container, 440 lbs of dough is produced every night. Only bread comes out of the oven. *"We have to accustom people differently"*, argues Sébastien.

Our bread takes 10 to 12 hours to make. So we decided not to go overboard with the Viennese pastries. This is the guarantee of

remaining an artisan. This may seem like an inconvenience to the customer, but in fact it's for their own good". To delight sweet tooths, twice a week he offers what he calls his "crazy breads", such as "brichoute", a kind of oil pump topped with preserved lemons, and cocoa bread. For us, we choose a solid bread (half-rye, half-wheat) with a nice amber taste. As for the buckwheat bread, it's full of character and has a slightly honeyed flavor. As for the "punchy", it's perfect for an afternoon tea with dates, blackberries and other pumpkin seeds.

For the moment, Sébastien Lefrançois isn't kidding himself: his clientele is made up of people from all walks of life.

"Our prices are high, he admits. My double loaf, equivalent to two baguettes, costs €3. On the other hand, it stores better, is more nourishing, and has a lower glycemic index. These are the parameters that

come into play when you think about what you're buying." As a former choreographer, he plans to apply his artistic processes to baking. Or even, just as there is cultural mediation, food mediation: "This popular education around food no longer exists. There's no one to tell you about it." Local municipalities have already contacted him to see how he can offer his bread to schoolchildren. A first step and "a little bit of pride.", he says with a smile.

Joséphine Lebard

Bakery La Belle Façon at 6b, 10-16 Quai de la Seine, Saint-Denis (93). Open Tuesday to Friday, 3 pm to 11 pm (to order, but also with some breads available over the counter). Access: Saint-Denis station (RER D, line H and T1 Tramway).

Find out more at la-belle-facon.fr

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Jean Dubuffet's Tour aux Figures in the Île Saint-Germain park in Issy / France © Jérôme Derigny for Enlarge your Paris

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