

Chirac and Blair Celebrate Entente Cordiale

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER Tony Blair welcomed President Jacques Chirac to London for the 27th France-U.K. Summit on November 18 and 19. This annual event is an opportunity for the two countries to reaffirm their partnership and develop common positions. President Chirac was accompanied by his wife, Bernadette, and six ministers. The British and French governments maintain close ties, and officials from the two countries regularly meet with one another to discuss a wide variety of issues. This state visit was particularly noteworthy, however, as it comes at the conclusion of the year-long celebrations marking the centenary of the Entente Cordiale, which laid the foundation for a permanent alliance between France and the United Kingdom.



French President Jacques Chirac (left) and British Prime Minister Tony Blair on November 18

Signed in 1904, the Entente Cordiale put an end to Franco-British colonial rivalries and has led to cooperation in many areas including defense (the two countries have joined forces to build a new generation of aircraft carriers), education, health, research and environmental protection. An official dinner at Windsor Castle, at the invitation of Queen Elisabeth II, marked the end of the year's celebrations on November 18.

Following their meeting at Downing Street, Chirac and Blair reaffirmed the partnership between France and the United Kingdom. "Europe needs a strong partnership between the United Kingdom and France" emphasized Chirac. The two leaders indicated a number of areas in which they share a common commitment, including climate change, the fight against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, developmental aid and European defense. In a joint commu-

niqué, France and Great Britain committed themselves to providing the European Union with national and multinational task forces (numbering about 1,500 troops each) by 2007. These forces would be capable of conducting "two rapid reaction missions simultaneously." Britain and France also stressed their determination to combat terrorism and to coordinate efforts to curb drug trafficking.

The Middle East remains a region of particular concern to the two nations. The two leaders want a "stable and democratic Iraq," following the framework outlined in U.N. resolution 1546. They are also strongly pushing for a revival of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, which is an "absolute priority" according to Chirac.

Invited to speak at the prestigious International Institute for Strategic Studies in the heart of London, Chirac developed his vision of a "renewed transatlantic partnership" and of a "fairer and more secure international order." He noted that the transatlantic relationship is critical, and that the special relationship between London and Washington is therefore "a plus for Europe." ■

CHIRAC CONGRATULATES BUSH

Following the U.S. presidential election on November 2, the president of France, Jacques Chirac, sent his "sincere congratulations" to George W. Bush for his victory. Chirac wrote in his letter to President Bush that he is hopeful that Bush's second term will bring an opportunity to renew and strengthen relations between the United States and France. He stated that "it is in a spirit of dialogue, mutual esteem and respect that we must continue to expand our cooperation, our common battle against terrorism and our joint efforts to promote freedom and democracy." Michel Barnier, the French minister of foreign affairs, echoed President Chirac's tone, asserting that the elections provide the world with a "new stage" whereby both countries have the ability through mutual cooperation to "organize the world in a more stable and more peaceful way than it is today."

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U.N. Responds to Ivorian Crisis

THE U.N. SECURITY COUNCIL unanimously adopted resolution 1572 regarding the situation in the Ivory Coast on November 15. The West African country has been wracked by a civil war since September



One of the children repatriated by French forces recovers in the Charles de Gaulle airport.

2002, and hostilities have recently resumed. France, one of the resolution's seven co-authors, strongly supported its stipulations, namely an embargo on arms deliveries to the Ivory Coast (effective immediately) as well as the freezing of assets and travel bans (effective December 15) against individuals who would continue to block the implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis and Accra III peace agreements. In adopting this resolution, the Council has demonstrated that it intends to support the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (an organization that represents 53 African nations) by putting the full weight of

the international community behind their initiatives.

The French Ambassador to the United Nations, Jean-Marc de la Sablière, explained that resolution 1572 pursues a vital objective by promoting the political solution to the civil war (spelled out in the aforementioned agreements) that the Council has endorsed and consistently upheld. The Council has emphasized since the beginning that there is no military solution to the Ivorian crisis, and it has witnessed with great regret the lengthening impasse in the country, provoked by the refusal of all the Ivorian parties to comply with their own commitments. In particular, the conditions of eligibility for the office of president of the Republic have not been revised and the disarmament process has not started.

Though the French government did not call upon its citizens to evacuate the country, it ensured that all those who desired to leave would be able to. Since the resumption of hostilities on November 4, 5,434 French citizens, including 1,560 children, have been evacuated from the Ivory Coast by France's Foreign Ministry. Another 2,898 French nationals were evacuated by their companies or by other European nations, making for a total of 8,332 (the largest such evacuation ever undertaken in West Africa). France also helped evacuate foreigners, including Americans, Canadians, Spaniards, Japanese, Dutch, Filipino and Congolese nationals. ■

CHIRAC INVITES IRAQI PRESIDENT

French President Jacques Chirac invited Iraqi president Ghazi Al-Yaouar to Paris earlier this month for an official visit. The Iraqi president accepted the invitation, and a date will be announced soon. Al-Yaouar was scheduled to visit Paris in late September, but the trip was postponed after two French journalists were taken hostage in Iraq so that the French government could focus on resolving the crisis (the two men remain in captivity but are reportedly still alive).

FRENCH-INDIAN SATELLITE

The French and Indian space agencies signed an agreement early in November to cooperate in the construction, launch and operation of a satellite designed to study atmospheric conditions and provide data for weather forecasting. India's space agency will be responsible for building and operating the satellite's platform while its French counterpart will equip it with precision instruments to measure atmospheric conditions. Scientists hope that the satellite will help predict major climatic events such as cyclones, monsoons, floods and droughts.

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY WEEK

For the sixth consecutive year, the ministry of Foreign Affairs helped organize the Week of International Solidarity, which took place earlier this month throughout France. During this event, over 300 NGOs, transnational organizations and educational institutions set up shop on the streets of France's major cities to raise awareness about issues such as human rights, cultural diversity, fair trade, and sustainable development. All emphasized the important role

determined volunteers can play in an increasingly interdependent world.

MORE ATTRACTIVE MILITARY RESERVE

The National Assembly's Defense Commission proposed a series of incentives that would encourage enrollment into the French army's reserves. Suggestions included a cash bonus for enrollment as well as scholarships for young recruits (similar incentives exist for U.S. reservists). Reservists would also be able to advance up to the rank of general, and companies employing reservists would be rewarded. The proposal includes raising the maximum duration of tours of duty from 120 days to 150—or even 210—days, thereby making it easier for reserve units to participate in overseas operations.

NEWS FROM FRANCE / November 24, 2004

European Leaders Sign Constitution

The Constitution will now need to be ratified by all of the European Union's 25 members.

TWENTY-FIVE EUROPEAN heads of state and government signed the European Union's first constitution on October 29. The constitution's text was finalized during the European Council meeting held in Brussels on June 18, and in order to take effect, it must now be ratified within the next two years in all 25 member countries, either through a parliamentary vote or, as in France, by referendum. The event's momentous nature was highlighted by the fact that the signature ceremony was held in Rome, in the same hall where nearly 50 years ago France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg signed the first treaty establishing the European Community, the Union's precursor.



Credit: AP/Agence France Presse

Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin (left), French President Jacques Chirac and Foreign Minister Michel Barnier sign the proposed European Constitution in Rome on October 29.

The constitution's initial draft was prepared by the "Convention for the Future of the European Union," a committee headed by former French president Valéry Giscard d'Estaing that included delegates from the E.U. members' national assemblies and governments as well as representatives from Europe's civil society.

The constitution has three main objectives: to make the Union more democratic, more efficient, and more transparent. The constitution provides for the selection of a president of the Union, appointed for two and a half years, and for an E.U. foreign minister (the rotating presidency of the Union is currently held by a member country for a six-month period). The treaty also alters the E.U.'s voting system, removing national vetoes from some policy areas and eliminating the requirement for unanimous votes on most issues, so as to avoid gridlock in an ever-expanding Union. Finally, the treaty gives more power to the European Parliament, whose members are directly elected by Europe's citizens. Nevertheless, countries will be allowed to secede from the Union, and will continue to exercise full sovereignty over their foreign policies.



FROM MAIGRET TO MONTEIL: FRANCE'S NEW FEMALE POLICE BOSS



Photo: AFP/Agence France Presse

It's time to update the well-known image of detective Commissaire Maigret! For the first time in its history, France's top detective is a woman. Martine Monteil, known as the *dame de fer*, or iron lady, has been appointed as the central director of the Police Judiciaire for the whole of France. A trailblazer in a traditionally male field, Monteil has 30 years' experience and was the first woman to occupy the legendary office number 315 at the Police Judiciaire's headquarters in Paris, where fictional character Commissaire Maigret worked as Paris's head detective. Monteil, who is married to a senior police officer, follows in the footsteps of her crime-fighting family, as her father and grandfather were both policemen. Small, slender, and blonde, the iron lady enjoys posing for photographs with a lamp made from her father's old police-issue Luger pistol, symbolizing her dedication to being a tough and effective police officer.

Armistice Day Commemorated

Only 15 French WWI veterans are still alive

PRESIDENT JACQUES CHIRAC paid tribute on November 11 to the soldiers of World War I by placing a wreath on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, underneath the Arc of Triumph. He was accompanied by Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin, Defense Minister Michèle Alliot-Marie and the minister delegate for veterans' affairs, Hamlaoui Mekachera.



© AFP/Agence France Presse/Photo: Kluin

Defense Minister Michèle Alliot-Marie and President Jacques Chirac (center) on the Champs-Élysées during the ceremonies commemorating the 1918 Armistice.

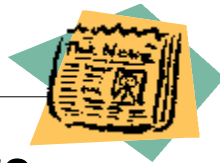
As France commemorates the 86th anniversary of the November 11 armistice, it is confronted with the imminent disappearance of the last living links to this critical period in its history. Indeed, of the 8 million French soldiers who were mobilized during the War, only 15 are alive today. The number of World War I veterans has dwindled quickly in the past few years, falling from 4,000 in 1995 to 68 in 2002.

The eldest of the 15 remaining veterans, Maurice Floquet, will turn 110 on December 25. The youngest, Mr. Navarre, is 105. Most were 18 when they began to serve, and several joined the French Resistance during World War II. In honor of their devotion to duty, they are well looked after by the State, and all have been awarded the Legion of Honor. The government is also taking steps to ensure that their firsthand accounts are recorded for posterity.

The Great War was the deadliest in France's history. Over 1,400,000 French soldiers lost their lives between 1914 and 1918, and 4,000,000 were wounded. In all, French casualties represented almost three-quarters of the country's entire combat force, a devastating rate that left France ill-prepared for World War II. America, which joined the war in 1917, lost 126,000 men of the 4,500,000 it mobilized.

For more information, please visit the Defense Ministry's Web site, www.memoiredeshommes.sga.defense.gouv.fr.





According to a recent poll administered by the monthly publication *Studio*, Julia Roberts is France's favorite foreign actress, at least among the 15- to 25-year-old crowd. The critically

acclaimed actress was followed by four other U.S. stars: Angelina Jolie, Jennifer Aniston, Cameron Diaz and Halle Berry. And the five leading foreign actors? Bruce Willis, Johnny Depp, Will Smith, Tom Hanks and Tom Cruise—all also American.

French-American Law Conference

Bar associations celebrate the 200th anniversary of the French Civil Code

THE ELITE OF FRENCH and American law came together on November 11 in Washington, D.C., to attend a conference contrasting the two countries' approaches to business law. The conference was held in honor of the bicentennial of the French Civil Code, which remains to this day the basis of France's commercial law. U.S. law, on the other hand, is very much part of the Anglo-Saxon tradition of common law, in which court interpretations and precedent play a very important role.

Opening remarks were given by French Ambassador Jean-David Levitte, Senior Vice President Robert Dañino of the World Bank, and T. Alexander Aleinikoff, dean of the Georgetown University Law Center. The discussions then involved an impressive collection of lawyers, scholars, policy-makers, and decision-makers, who gave informative and thought-provoking lectures. Also included were debate-style discussions led by both American and French moderators. The speakers addressed some of the hot topics concerning business law, such as corporate governance reform, different approaches to market regulation, and competition law in both the French and E.U. contexts. The participants agreed

that they had much to learn from each other's approaches, but that there is no single one-size-fits-all solution.

Rousing key note speeches were delivered by French deputy minister of justice, Nicole Guedj, and by the associate justice of the United States' Supreme Court, the Honorable Stephan G. Breyer. Sponsors of the event included the Georgetown University Law Center, France's Ministry of Justice, the French Embassy in the United States and the World Bank Group. ■



The Steerage, 1907.

STIEGLITZ EXHIBIT IN PARIS

Paris's Musée d'Orsay has unveiled an exhibit devoted to the works of American photographer Alfred Stieglitz (1864-1946). The 80-piece collection pays tribute not only to Stieglitz's pioneering works in modern photography but also to his pivotal role as a promoter and defender of European art in the United States. Rodin and Matisse are among the many artists Stieglitz revealed to American audiences. The exhibit runs until January. Please visit www.musee-orsay.fr.

Cinema" by Patrick Jimenez and "What to do in Florida?" by Fleurette Beaulocaux. The Haitian community, which forms Florida's largest contingent of French-speakers, can tune in to Emelyne Alexis's "Haitian Press Review." Round table discussions and interviews taking place at Miami's Alliance Française are relayed by the site as well, and those interested in perfecting their French can benefit from the stations educational broadcasts.

Webradio, which was up and running in less than six months, was designed in large part by a French intern from the University of Sophia-Antipolis in southeastern France. ■

French Radio in Miami

THE FIRST FRANCOPHONE internet radio station in America, Webradio, began airing in Miami, Florida, late last August. The station, designed to serve the more than 400,000 French-speakers residing in the Miami area, can be accessed by any Internet user through the Alliance Française's Web site, www.afmiami.org. Its daily 12-hour broadcasting program includes a variety of French songs and news about France, without any commercial breaks.

Some of Webradio's programming is provided by partner FM radio stations in New Orleans, Lafayette, Charlotte, and Miami, as well as by the French radio stations RFI and Francophonie Diffusion. However most of the programs are produced by local francophones, such as "News in French

BILL GATES MEETS WITH CHIRAC

Microsoft multi-billionaire Bill Gates visited the Elysée Palace on November 17 to discuss the idea of an international tax to combat the "digital divide" between the North and the South. Gates talked with the French president about the efforts of his Bill and Melissa Gates Foundation, whose activities in France have included recycling computers for lower-income families. During his visit to Paris, Gates also joined a UNESCO initiative aimed at reducing the digital divide and created a technological alliance with French company Dassault Systèmes.

TONY PARKER BECOMES HIGHEST PAID FRENCH ATHLETE

Tony Parker of the San Antonio Spurs secured on November 1 a contract extension until 2011. By ensuring that Parker will earn \$66 million over the next six-year period, the deal makes him the highest paid French athlete, surpassing even soccer icon Zinedine Zidane. The 22-year-old point guard helped the Spurs win the NBA championship in 2003, and Parker was subsequently voted the best French sportsman in France's main sports paper, *L'Equipe*.

PAINTING OF SUN KING RETURNS TO FRANCE

The opulent painting "The Reception of the Grand Condé at Versailles," by Jean-Léon Gérôme, will return to France nearly 130 years after it first crossed the Atlantic. The painting was bought by William H. Vanderbilt directly from Gérôme in 1878 for \$23,000, and had pride of place in his personal library. Last October the painting was put up for auction by Sotheby's, and the Musée d'Orsay in Paris outbid its rivals, valuing the painting at \$1.296 million.

ALSTOM TO FURNISH D.C. METRO WITH 120 TRAINS

The French industrial powerhouse Alstom won a contract with Washington's Metropolitan Area Transit Authority worth around \$190 million on October 27. The new cars will be manufactured in Alstom's New York State factory.

New Book Sheds Light on French Fare's Reputation

THROUGH A CLOSE examination of history, Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson's new book, *Accounting for Taste: The Triumph of French Cuisine*, delves into how France secured her reputation as a culinary giant. The book discusses the evolution of France's cuisine and provides an explanation for its mouth-watering reputation.

To fully grasp Ferguson's arguments, the reader must espouse her definition of cuisine as encompassing not only the actual meals being prepared but also the traditions and societal facets involved in their preparation and presentation. By analyzing everything from menus and cookbooks, to poems, essays, letters and films, Ferguson concludes that

the greatness of French fare lies not only in France's ideal geographical location (which is conducive to a rich and varied agriculture), but also in the high standards of cooking set forth by its aristocracy throughout the centuries.



Cover picture of Ferguson's new book

The author also emphasizes that gastronomy has served as an important unifying force for France in the past. Throughout the 19th century in particular, cuisine played an important role in giving France a dominant national character, thereby attenuating the regionalism that had until then divided the country.

Ferguson's *Accounting for Taste: The Triumph of French Cuisine* provides a fascinating and thorough account of the rise of French cuisine, and is well worth a read. ■



Le Beaujolais Nouveau

New Wine, Long History

BEAUJOLAIS NOUVEAU is part of a long tradition of drinking *vin primeur* or young wine. In the Middle Ages, for example, wine had to be put on the market only 15 days after the harvest. Due to poor storage techniques, any wine left in storage much longer became acidic and undrinkable. Until the nineteenth century, the wine market also suffered from regular shortages, and demand for wine was usually at its height by the time the highly anticipated harvest came around. Young wine was therefore always featured in the celebrations marking the end of a year of hard work.

In the Beaujolais region, the tradition of new wine was reinforced by the people of Lyon—the closest major city. As Lyon's wine stores and their customers grew impatient, the owners of the "bouchons" (Lyon's famous bistros) were forced to travel to nearby vineyards to sample the newest harvest as early as possible. The wine was

so young that it would actually finish fermenting during transportation.

The Beaujolais Nouveau phenomenon truly developed after World War II. In 1951, the French government's strict regulations on the distribution of wine were lifted and winegrowers received the right to market all of a region's wines together.

The release date for Beaujolais Nouveau has varied over the years, but since 1985, it has been set for the third Thursday in November at midnight. Since 1960, the promotion and marketing of Beaujolais Nouveau has been managed by the Union Interprofessionnelle des Vins du Beaujolais (UIVP). Thanks to its work, bistros, cafes and wine stores around the world have come to eagerly await each year's harvest.

THE GAMAY GRAPE

In 1395, the black gamay grape was banned in the vineyards of Burgundy by the duke Philippe le Hardi, who called the variety "nasty and disloyal" (it was easier to grow than pinot noir, making peasants less dependent on their aristocratic overseers). The region's southern neighbors noted this and decided to specialize in the grape. Today, 98 percent of the Beaujolais region is planted with the gamay noir, which produces a fruity wine that is best drunk young. Its preeminence in the region is largely responsible for the development of the Beaujolais nouveau phenomenon.

THE WINE OF EUROPE

Wine lovers throughout Europe eagerly await each year's shipment of Beaujolais Nouveau. A third of the bottles exported are destined for the rest of the European Union, amounting to 6,745,000 bottles in 2003:

Germany:	2,990,000 bottles
Netherlands:	1,324,900 bottles
Belgium:	628,000 bottles
Italy:	384,500 bottles
United Kingdom:	306,830 bottles
Poland:	245,800 bottles

In comparison, the **United States** imported about 3,658,530 bottles, **Canada** 374,670 and **Japan** an impressive 8,564,930!

Nouveau Beaujolais Bashes

THE PASSING OF November 18 (and the weekend that followed) left some 120 Beaujolais festivals in its wake ... and that only accounts for the Beaujolais region. Throughout the rest of France and across the globe, people unabashedly celebrate the annual release of Beaujolais



Fête des Sarmettes in Beaujeu

Nouveau. Nonetheless, every year the most notable festivals occur in the wine-producing region itself, which runs from Lyon to lower Burgundy.

Beaujeu, the capital of the Beaujolais region, kicks off all the ceremonies with its Sarmettes festival. The festivities begin at 5 pm the day before the wine's release. Epicures can sample the region's distinctive wines and march in a torch-lit procession that immediately precedes the wine's official release at midnight. The celebration continues through the weekend.

Lyon, the region's largest city, holds its "Beaujo'lympiades" which marks the midnight release of the wine with music and fireworks. Tourists and

locals alike spend the following two days sampling the newly unveiled wines. This year Tarare hosted "la Fete du Beaujolais Gourmand" which also commences the day before the unveiling and runs through the weekend. This festival showcased gourmet food and wine. Salles-en-Beaujolais holds an annual "Nouveau Hike" where people tour various cellars. Finally, Villefrance is home to "Les Calades," a festival featuring newly released music and wine.

Although physically removed from the hoopla, Americans should not despair: they, too, can partake in the party! French-American Chambers of Commerce organize several events throughout the country each year. For more information, please visit www.faccparisfrance.com.

AN ENVIRONMENT FOR WINE

The Beaujolais region has always been conducive to winegrowing. The region has two slopes that run on opposite sides of the shelf formed by the Massif Central. The eastern side, which is Beaujolais country, runs to the Saône river and the western side runs to the Loire. On the Saône side, one can see row upon row of vines, planted north to south. The placement of vines is very important in wine growing: no vines grow higher than 450 m above sea level, and all are planted on slopes.

The types of soil and bedrock are considered to be as important as the vines themselves. The area's hills have a subsoil of mineral-rich limestone, crystalline and metamorphic rock, perfect for growing grapes. Moreover, many small waterways and tributaries empty into the Saône and irrigate the vines with their plentiful water. It would seem that the region was specifically designed for vines!

Innovations in Distribution and Marketing

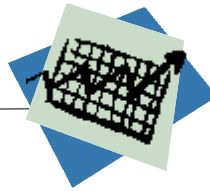
BEAUJOLAIS NOUVEAU, which represents a third of the Beaujolais region's wine production, is a *vin primeur*, meaning that it is made for rapid consumption without the timely aging process that usually characterizes French wines. The result is a fruity, fresh wine with many light aromas and flavors whose annual appearance on the market during the third week of November is eagerly awaited by wine enthusiasts around the world.

The reason for the success of Beaujolais Nouveau is the anticipation that builds around its distribution, which takes place on the same day around the world. Thanks to a highly complex system of delivery that includes trucks, boats, and planes, over 60 million bottles of the famous wine are distributed to stores and restaurants around the world over the course of just one single day.

The excitement surrounding Beaujolais Nouveau is more than what is inside every bottle, however: each



year, producers of Beaujolais Nouveau work hard on creating inventive labels for their wine, bringing in artists from around the world. Numerous promotional festivals and events, as well as advertising on TV and radio, are organized by the UIVP. The marketing buzz surrounding this wine has created an international sensation that is celebrated across the globe.



Snecma, Sagem Announce Merger

The \$9.2-billion deal will create the world's 14th largest defense company

A SURPRISE MERGER between France's Snecma, a state-owned manufacturer of aircraft engines, and Sagem, a manufacturer of electronic equipment, was announced on October 29. The 7.2-billion-euro (\$9.2-billion) deal will create the 14th largest defense company in the world, specialized in aeronautics, electronics and telecommunications, and with annual sales close to 10 billion euros (\$12.7 billion).

According to a spokesman for Snecma, "the expanded group will be a major player in the civil aviation, defense, telecommunications and electronics sectors with a robust, well-balanced profile." A Sagem executive also spoke positively of the deal, which will double Sagem's sales and marketing presence in the United States.

The French government applauded the merger, which will reinforce France's strong position in the global defense industry and consolidate the nation's research efforts in the field of

unmanned aerial vehicles. The deal will also raise cash for the French government, which has been looking for ways to reduce its budget deficit. With the merger, the government's stake in Snecma will fall from 62 to 36 percent, which will in effect lead to the firm's privatization.

No jobs will be lost when the merger occurs in May, but the companies still expect to achieve savings of 160 to 190 billion euros a year starting in 2007. The new company, the name of which has yet to be determined, will be led by Jean-Paul Béchat, currently the CEO of Snecma.

FRANCE DEVELOPS FIRST REMOTELY CONTROLLED ULTRASOUND PROBE

France Telecom and La Mutualité Française have combined forces to successfully undertake the first remotely controlled ultrasound scans in the world. Medical researchers in France performed the scans on two patients, both hospitalized in Languedoc-Roussillon. The robotic ultrasound probe was remotely controlled by a doctor, who could feel the sensations of the instrument's touch, as if he were actually wielding it in person rather than virtually. The sonograms were transmitted in real time to several experts in Paris and Nîmes, allowing for a joint analysis. The researchers hope this technology will give patients easier access to advanced diagnostic equipment and expertise.

This year's edition featured 400 participants from all over the world, and attracted about 100,000 visitors. Aside from the traditional presence of French and Belgian artisans and of companies like Nestlé, Lindt and Kraft foods, Japanese participants also made an appearance, presenting innovations such as chocolates filled with soya, lemon grass and green tea (an acquired taste, according to most samplers). Special features this year also included a fashion show on the theme of chocolate, the election of Miss Cacao, a 13-foot-high Eiffel Tower made of chocolate, as well as edible bouquets.

Despite increasing competition, French chocolate artisans remain upbeat about their future, as they are confident that the quality of their products, which use only cocoa butter rather than cheaper vegetable oil, will continue to win over discerning gourmets. In any case, the future of the "Salon du Chocolat" certainly seems bright: after exporting their concept to the U.S. and Japan, its organizers have announced that they will inaugurate a show in Beijing in 2006.

For more information, visit www.chocoland.com.

AREVA TO BE PARTIALLY PRIVATIZED

The French government announced this month its intention to sell 35 to 40 percent of the world's largest producer of nuclear reactors, Areva, in an initial public offering which could occur as early as March 2005. Most of the proceeds from this sale are expected to be used for the costly dismantling of older reactors operating throughout France. Experts expect much interest in Areva stock due to growing demand for energy and the rising price of oil. At current prices, a 40 percent share of the company would be worth approximately \$5 billion.

1 EURO LAPTOPS SNAPPED UP

A month after its introduction, the "one PC for one Euro" initiative (see NFF 04.11) has led to the sale of 30,000 laptop computers and engendered over 200,000 pre-orders from French university students. The initiative, launched by Minister of Education François Fillon, has been deemed a great success by the government, which estimates that if the current momentum is maintained, the program will have equipped in one year as many students as were equipped in all of the previous five years.

SOLAR ENERGY RESEARCH CONSORTIUM

Research institutions from France, Spain, Germany and Switzerland announced this month their plans to create a high-energy solar energy joint laboratory named SolLab. In this form of solar energy production, the sun's rays are highly focused, creating temperatures of up to 3,000 degrees Celsius that can be used to generate electricity, hydrogen, or desalinate water. The 175 scientists involved hope to bring the technology closer to becoming a commercially viable alternative to fossil-fuel based electricity generation.

LABORATORY OF THE FUTURE

The Laboratory of the Future was recently inaugurated in Bordeaux by a partnership including the specialized chemical manufacturer Rhodia, the University of Bordeaux, the National Center for Scientific Research and the Region of Aquitaine. The new laboratory will bring together experts from several different research fields in order to find innovative approaches to chemistry problems. It will also implement the use of automatic systems for the high-speed testing of thousands of chemical compounds and new computing tools for analyzing the resulting data. For more information, please visit www.rhodia.com.

Chocolate Lovers Rendezvous

FOR THE 10TH CONSECUTIVE year, the "Salon du Chocolat" opened in Paris on October 29. The Paris show signals the beginning of a season of chocolate trade



shows: New York held one from November 11 to 13, and another one will take place in Tokyo from January 28 to February 3, 2005 (both are offshoots from the original Paris

show). The "Salon du Chocolat," co-sponsored by the Ivory Coast, the world's biggest cocoa producer, is very popular in France, where 17 million people eat chocolate every day, making for a total of about 7 kilos per person each year!

Saving the French Cockerel From Extinction

FOR HUNDREDS of years, the symbol of France's fighting spirit has been *le coq gaulois*, or the French cockerel. Indeed, thanks to a semantic crossover—the Latin word "gallus" meant both rooster and Gaul—the brightly colored birds came to symbolize France. The animal was featured in royal insignia before the Revolution and is now mainly used as a sporting symbol.

Though the French cockerel continues to be prized among collectors for its brilliant red and gold plumage, French scientists at the National Agronomic Research Institute recently discovered



Picture by Thibault Laporte

that only 200 pure-bred *coqs gaulois* remain. Alarmed, they decided to turn to modern science to preserve the birds' genetic code and prevent their extinction.

For the past two years, the scientists have raised young cockerels, and they recently took sperm from 20 of the birds, cryogenically freezing it at -196 degrees Celsius. If the birds do become extinct in the future, the sperm can be used to impregnate standard hens and bring back the species. Scientists envision repeating this process for other threatened species, creating a "cryobank" to preserve them for posterity.

HAPPINESS EPIDEMIC IN FRANCE

Ninety-four percent of French people participating in a recent poll described themselves as happy, citing close families, children and good health as the reasons for their bliss. According to a TNS-Sofres poll released on October 27, nearly 50 percent are happier than they were five years ago. However, respondents were still able to list things that would increase their happiness even more. Unsurprisingly, 36 percent would like more money and 22 percent would like more free time.

STRONG SUPPORT FOR SMOKING BAN

According to a poll released on October 26 by the Alliance Against Tobacco, a strong majority of the French are in favor of a smoking ban in public places, such as shops, restaurants, cafés and clubs. In fact, only 15 percent absolutely opposed a smoking ban. This result reflects the public's concern for people with poor health and for workers who have to spend entire days in these smoky places. While business owners are reluctant to ban smoking, the poll suggested that a ban might not harm them. Indeed, a third of respondents said they would actually go to restaurants more often if a ban were in place.

DAYTIME RUNNING LIGHTS

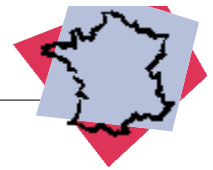
A proposed law that would require drivers to keep their running lights on during the day will be tested for the next five months in France. The voluntary measure, which is expected to increase highway safety, has already been accepted by many motorists, and has become widespread in the United States (where many new cars are equipped with automatic daytime running lights as a standard feature). If this experiment proves successful, it will likely become law next year, but motorcyclists (who had until now been the only ones to turn on their lights in the daytime) have vowed to oppose it, as they fear that drivers will no longer distinguish them from other traffic.

CHAMPS-ELYSEES: ONLY LUXURY SHOPS NEED APPLY

A recent study by a London-based real estate firm has confirmed that Paris's Champs-Élysées is the most expensive place in Europe to set up shop. Retailers pay an average of 6,287 euros per square meter for their stores along the famous avenue. Only Fifth Avenue in New York, where rents average 8,406 euros per square meter, is more expensive. Causeway Bay in Hong Kong, Oxford Street in London and Grafton Street in Dublin rounded out the top five.

November 24, 2004

NEWS FROM FRANCE



Gay TV Channel Hits France

THEY'RE HERE, they're queer, and they have a TV station! The first ever French gay and lesbian TV station, Pink TV, went on the air on October 27.

The announcement was just another indication of an ever growing support for tolerance and openness to alternative lifestyles in Europe. The launch party was held at Paris's Palais de Chaillot museum, chosen by the station's head, Pascal Houzelot, "because it is dedicated to human rights." Over 2,500 guests attended the party, including actors, athletes, and politicians from all over the world.



Some examples of programs that the channel will feature include the 1970s hit "Wonder Woman," Showtime channel's "Queer As Folk" and the British "French and Saunders" show. Documentaries about musician Freddy Mercury and AIDS will also be featured, and the channel will strive to delve deeper into issues of interest to the gay community than mainstream media outlets have. Sports coverage will be brought to viewers by Brigitte Boreale, a tall transsexual sporting a skirt and heels. Sex will also have a place in the program lineup, but the channel hopes to reach out to a wider variety of viewers in order to promote mutual understanding. For more information, please visit www.pinktv.fr.

French Firms Support Limited Affirmative Action

LATE LAST OCTOBER, 35 major French firms signed a "charter for diversity" proposed by the Montaigne Institute, a French think tank. With the full support of the French government, these firms, among them Airbus and supermarket chain Casino, have pledged to combat racial discrimination in the hiring of employees and to boost the amount of ethnic minorities in the workplace. The recent charter follows Finance Minister Nicolas Sarkozy's call for affirmative action, but feelings continue to be mixed about a system based solely on ethnicity, with many fearing a system of quotas.

The charter's sponsors do not seek rigid quotas, but a more flexible and adaptable system, which would still move beyond simple statements of good will. Indeed, recent studies have shown that the expression of good will by employers toward minorities is still producing an ethnically lopsided work force, with discrimination probably occurring during the recruitment process. Possibilities include letting candidates voluntarily indicate their ethnicity on their resumes, in order to establish a more accurate picture of a company's

labor pool, which could then be compared to its actual labor force. The Institute also recommends that companies actively look for talent among minorities, and focus more on a candidate's skills rather than on his or her degrees.



2005 TOUR DE FRANCE PROMISES EXTRA SUSPENSE!

The 2005 Tour de France route was revealed on October 28, and it will differ significantly from the 2004 course. Modifications to the 3,584-kilometer course include kicking off the race in the Vendée region (with a time trial) and more moderate climbing stages leading up to the Alps and Pyrénées. Next year's Tour was designed in order to spread out the challenging stages throughout the race, thus making it more difficult for any one rider or team to dominate. The 2005 Tour is scheduled to take place from July 2 through July 24, and because of the route changes, it promises to be an exciting, intense and possibly surprising race. America's Lance Armstrong, winner of the past six Tours, has not yet announced whether he will ride in the 2005 edition. For more information, visit www.letour.fr.

Napoleon's Legacy Reinvigorated



IT HAS BEEN 200 years since Napoleon's reign, but his memory is alive and well in cities and villages all over Europe. Towns that were marked by the emperor, such as



Napoleon's statue in Ajaccio

La Roche-sur-Yon (which is a prime example of First Empire urbanism), Ajaccio (Napoleon's birthplace in Corsica), or Jena in Germany (where a famous battle took place), have come together to create an association dedicated to preserving their Napoleonic heritage. The European Federation of Napoleonic Sites and Cities will officially come

into existence on December 3, linking around 15 places in France, Belgium, Germany, Italy and Poland, among others.

A flurry of activity has already characterized the creation of the association, including a colloquium organized by the Prefecture of the Vendée region in late October and entitled "Around Napoleon's City." The association hopes to expand its membership and wants to do more than simply generate tourism by strengthening the ties of common heritage that unite its member sites. Charles Napoleon, deputy mayor of Ajaccio and also a direct descendant of Napoleon's younger brother, stated that "this is a new and original way to reinforce our European commitments and also to delve into our shared memory in order to establish our future together."



Literary Prizes Galore

Femina Prize celebrates 100th anniversary

WITH ABOUT 15 different prizes awarded from the end of October through November, now is the season of literary awards in France. This November was particularly noteworthy, as it marked the 100th anniversary of the Femina prize, which was created in 1904 by a group of women to counter the "misogynistic" Goncourt prize. Though the Femina's jury is composed entirely of women, more often than not, it awards its top prize to a male writer. Indeed, this year's winner was Jean Paul Dubois for *Une Vie Française*. A journalist for *Nouvel Observateur*, Dubois has been greatly influenced by American literature, in particular by the works of John Updike and Philip Roth.

Announced at the same time as the Femina prize, this year's Medis prize was awarded, on the other hand, to a woman, Marie Nimier. She takes a look at her relationship with her father Roger Nimier, a famous French novelist, in *La Reine du Silence*. The prestigious Académie Française attributed its prize, worth \$10,000, to Bernard du Boucheron, a 76-year-old retired businessman, for his first book, *Court Serpent*. In a highly unusual move, the Renaudot prize was this year award-

FOUND WW2 NOVEL BECOMES HIT

The latest best seller in France is a novel written by Jewish author **Irène Nemirovsky**, who was captured by the Nazis in southern Burgundy in 1942. She, her husband, and her two daughters fled Paris in 1941 to seek refuge in the south, where Nemirovsky started her work describing life as a Jew in France under the Vichy regime. Before being deported to Auschwitz (where she died), she left a briefcase with pictures, letters and the book to her daughters, who managed to avoid deportation by moving from safe-house to safe-house. Thirty years later, her daughters read the book, expecting a memoir, but finding instead a novel, which they published. *Suite Française* tells the story of several Jewish families forced to flee the north of France during the German invasion. It highlights the treatment of Jews during that time, giving an honest account of the confusion and despair felt by France's Jewish population. Nemirovsky's surviving daughter Denise hopes that "this book will do justice to what she was above all else—a writer," and not just another victim.

ed posthumously to Irène Nemirovsky for *Suite Française*, which was hailed as the literary sensation of the year in France (see accompanying article). Finally, this year's winner of the Goncourt prize, France's most acclaimed literary award, was Laurent Gaudé for *Le Soleil des Scorta*. ■

PARIS LIBRARIES LAUNCH WEB SITE

October 12 marked the official launch of a new online catalogue for Paris's 55 lending libraries. Bibliographic information has been collected in this user-friendly database as part of an effort to modernize the libraries' resources and facilitate research. After a year and half of preparation, information on the more than 3.7 million documents, including books, music, videos and CDs, is now readily accessible on one centralized Web site, www.bibliotheque.paris.fr. The site is already running 5,000 searches a day, a number that will certainly rise as word of this new service spreads.



© JC Bourcart
Courtesy: Maison Européenne de la Photographie

"MONTH OF PHOTOGRAPHY"

This November, 74 photography exhibits in Paris were part of the 13th edition of the "Month of Photography." Jean-Luc Monterosso, director of the Maison Européenne de la Photographie, began this biannual event in 1979 to increase public awareness of French photography. Since then, it has grown in both size and popularity. In 2002, over 500,000 people visited the exhibitions and even more were expected to come out this year. In addition, 35 cities around the world have been inspired to start similar programs of their own. For more information, please visit: 2004.photographie.com.

SAINT-MALO CELEBRATES COMIC BOOKS

Bandes Dessinées have long been hugely popular in France, so it should come as no surprise that over 30,000 visitors flocked to Saint-Malo for the 24th annual comic book festival, held October 29-31. Known as the "Quai des Bulles," the popular festival featured 230 authors, 11 exhibits and 12 animated films, as well as conferences and debates. This year's honorees included Sergio Toppi, whose work was highlighted in a retrospective, Jean-Pierre Gibrat, who received the "Grand Prix," Daphné Collignon, who at 27 won the "Ballon Rouge" award for young authors, and Olivier Jouvray, who received the "Petit Robert" prize for writers. For more: www.quaidesbulles.com.

State-Owned Contemporary Art and Design Exhibit

EVER SINCE the Revolution, the French state has practiced a policy of buying art and design objects from living artists. Now, the French public will be able to view—



The Culture Design Exhibit in Paris

for the first time and only until January 20—some of the government's vast treasure trove of modern artwork and design. The body in charge of purchasing and preserving the works, the National Fund for Contemporary Art (FNAC), is displaying 2,000 works of modern art (representing half of its purchases since 1981) in the Porte Dorée exhibit hall in southeastern Paris. The works range from television receivers to sofas, from pressure cookers to lamps, and include items

designed by famous artists such as Philippe Starck, Jean Nouvel and François Bauchet.

A related exhibit, in the same exhibition hall, displays some of the unique furniture intended to embellish presidential and public offices. From recent works selected by the National Furniture Research and Design Workshop to King Louis XIV's furniture collection, the installations are intended to showcase the ingenuity of French design techniques while also contrasting modern fixtures with the regalia of France's past. One of the objects on display is the desk President Jacques Chirac sits at when making major televised addresses. For more information please visit (in French only) www.fnac.culture.gouv.fr. ■



"L'Empire du bureau", Bruno Rozenzweig, 1982

From Ashes to Art: the Renaissance of Funeral Art

A GROUP OF ARTISTS, concerned about the "sad uniformity" of burial places, has recently created a haven near Metz where architects, sculptors and others can freely express themselves in the funerary arts. The movement, called "Les Arts Derniers" ("The Last Arts"), was founded by Pierre Aubert, who feels that funerary art lacks its former creativity. Inspired by Niki de Saint-Phalle and the sculptor César, Aubert's goal is to attract other artists from all over Europe to the Center for Modern Funerary Art (which opened its doors on November 2) in hopes of generating a full-blown renaissance.



Urns and Tombstones on display at the Center for Modern Funerary Art

Several works are already on display, including a burial slab in loud colors topped with a cubic arch by artist Gio Caillet. "The arch symbolizes a door, a passage, because one day or another, we must all pass through it," he explains. Artist-in-residence Marguerite Noirel's latest creation is an urn made with recovered metal ("I wanted to show that an urn that holds ashes can also be a piece of art"). With almost half of the French now wishing to be cremated instead of buried, works such as Noirel's might begin to see a surge in popularity, and cemeteries may begin to resemble art museums! Aubert announced that a 27-country funerary art exhibition will be held at the Center for All Saint's Day in 2005. ■



Erratum: In last issue's article on the "Art of Ethnography" (page 8), the artist's name should have read Charles Cordier, and not Charles Didier. We apologize for the mistake.

Art Deco: Shaping the Future

A new exhibit in Boston explores the multiple facets of the French Art Deco movement

THE FASCINATING and glamorous world of Art Deco will be on display at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston until January 9, 2005. The exhibition, "Art Deco: 1910-1939," follows the emergence of the style in the early 20th



1935 Auburn 851 Speedster, designed by Gordon Buehrig

Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston - Photo Michael Furman

century. Art Deco began in Paris around the turn of the century, where it grew in popularity until reaching a climax in the United States in the 1930s, especially in style-conscious Manhattan. While



Courtesy, Musée de la Ville de Paris, Paris - Photo: E. Frennet

Lotus dressing table, by Jacques-Emile Ruhlmann

the movement flourished in the U.S., Art Deco remains a French creation, and the term Art Deco was derived from an exhibition held in 1925 in Paris called the "Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes."

The style of Art Deco had many typical characteristics such as the use of streamlined forms as well as abstract and geometric motifs. The materials, as well as the forms, featured in the Art Deco style are also unique and easily recognizable. Plastics and metals, along with lacquer, chrome, glass and hardwood made up the main materials used to make Art Deco designs.

At the height of its popularity, the movement was synonymous with progress, modernity and technology. The modern and stylized nature of Art Deco manifested itself in many forms during its dominance, including in the traditional arts like painting, sculpture and architecture and in applied arts like the design of jewelry, fashion and home furnishings. However, the style is possibly best conveyed by the skyscrapers built during the Art Deco era, such as the Chrysler Building.

The exhibition "Art Deco: 1910-1939" highlights some of the most important works from the time period, with over 240 items on display. They include French jewelry designs by Jean Fouquet, Raymond Templier and Cartier and French fashion from Jeanne Lanvin and Coco Chanel. Luxury items like cigarette holders, diamond encrusted pendants and cocktail shakers are intermingled



Courtesy, Musée de la Ville de Paris, Paris - Photo: E. Frennet

Mahogany writing desk by Britain's Edmund Maufe (displayed in the 1925 Paris Exhibition).

with photographs and sculptures throughout the exhibit. "Art Deco: 1910-1939" even features the *Grand Salon* of the *Hôtel d'un Collectionneur*, a reproduction of a collector's room presenting Jacques-Emile Ruhlmann's *Pair of Armchairs* and *Spider Table* works, a lacquer *Cabinet* by Ruhlmann and Jean Dunand, and *Les Perruches*, an erotic painting by Jean Dupas. Also of note is the 1935 Auburn 851 Speedster automobile, a magnificent automobile featuring a streamlined form and an Art Deco hood ornament.

The exhibit's stop in Boston will be the last on its worldwide tour. Visit www.mfa.org/exhibitions/artdeco for more details.



Courtesy, Musée de la Ville de Paris, Paris - Photo: E. Frennet

Dress - "Coq de Roche" by Madeleine Vionnet (c. 1930).

Vase by René Buthaud
Courtesy, Musée de la Ville de Paris, Paris - Photo: E. Frennet



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