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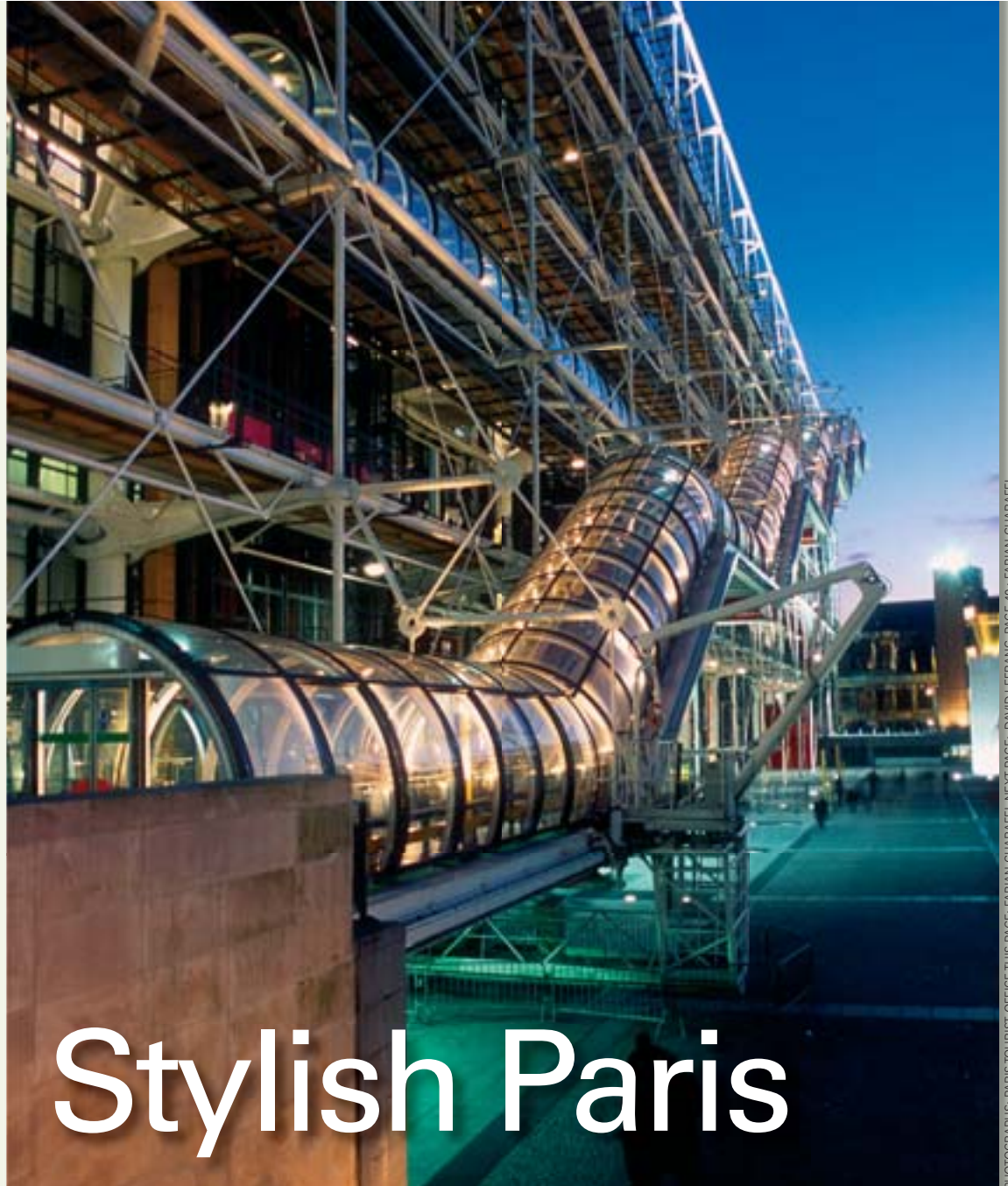
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Stylish Paris

PHOTOGRAPHS: PARIS TOURIST OFFICE THIS PAGE; FABIAN CHARAFFI, NEXT PAGE; DAVID LEFRANC, PAGE 40; FABIAN CHARAFFI

There is much to see and do in Paris, given its historic, artistic and cultural heritage. AMY BAKER finds out what language travel students might get up to.

Parisian schools are certainly a proud bunch. They are all keen to extoll the virtues of their city as a must-see destination. Volodia Maury-Laribiere at Silc exclaims that "Paris is the city that you have to see once in your life". At Eurocentres, Ivo Haefliger, Head of Sales, says, "Paris is one of the top destinations in the world".

He continues, "A lot of students would like to spend some time in this great city to visit the world famous sites, museums, galleries and to get an idea of Parisian life with its sidewalks and great shopping."

For the many reasons to go to Paris, there are as many language schools to choose from, and most take the time to introduce students to their locale as well as the French language. Haefliger says, "Students are informed about the city

and what to do. We offer after-school activities, but also additional 'typical' French or Parisian activities such as wine tasting, history of French movies, fashion and perfume design and cooking lessons."

At Education en France, Laura Medina Merino, Marketing and Operations Manager, relates that they make considerable effort to offer a range of activities that are interesting and innovative. "We work very hard every year to suggest new activities and different options to visit the same place with, for example, 'safari photos' at Sacre Coeur(1)," she says, detailing that they also offer an evening activity programme. This gives students a chance to sample "the Parisian nightlife but in a safe atmosphere", she explains.

At France Langue, Jean-François Vouilloux says they employ a full-time teacher to organise the social programme each term. "We offer guided tours with a teacher, a cruise on the Canal St Martin (2), wine tasting, cooking lessons and weekend excursions to [places such as] Champagne and Mont St Michel," he says.

As well as school activities, there really is a myriad of activities on the doorstep for students to discover in their free time, with the famous Louvre Museum (3) worthy of several visits just to see all the

art within. Made even more famous by the book *The Da Vinci Code*, the Louvre Museum is situated on the rue Rivoli, and is at the heart of the Parisian attractions.

Close by is the Jardin des Tuileries (4), which connects the Louvre museum complex with the Place de la Concorde (5). With several fountains, sculptures and small museums (including the reopened Musée de l'Orangerie with works by Monet), the Jardin des Tuileries has itself much to explore. By contrast, the Place de la Concorde is a space to reflect on the French revolution, with a fountain, statues and a large open space marking the epicentre of this uprising in French history. Once called Place de la Revolution, 1,119 people were beheaded here by guillotine, including Marie-Antoinette and King Louis XVI.

There is a lot to explore in Paris, but Vouilloux says that favourite places for students to check out are: "the Eiffel Tower (6), Louvre Museum, Versailles Castle [close to Paris], Montmartre (7) and Sacré Coeur, Notre Dame Cathedral (8) and the Pompidou Centre (9), dedicated to modern and contemporary creation".

The Eiffel Tower is one of the best-known landmarks in Paris and France and the most visited paid monument in the world, according to *Le Monde* newspaper. It was originally planned as an entrance arch for the cultural festival *Exposition Universelle* [now known as World Expo] that took place in 1889. Views of Paris from the top are worth the walk up!

Paris is renowned for its history, monuments and tourist attractions, but matching this is a passion and culture for shopping displayed by the local people. José Roest at Home Language International, which offers home tuition programmes in Paris, says that "shopping and sightseeing" are the two favourite free time



Louvre Museum
The Louvre Museum is situated in a former royal palace and its famous glass pyramid, which was built in 1989, forms the main entrance. The museum holds over 380,000 pieces of art and sculpture

activities for their clients. Merino points out that there are 17,000 boutiques in the city. Alongside these are large stylish department stores including Galeries Lafayette and Printemps, both of which are situated on the same road as Education en France; boulevard Hausmann. >>>

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Agent viewpoint

"Mexican students (especially Cosmo Educacion students) like to go to Paris for many reasons, first of all it's the capital of France, and they can easily travel during the weekends to Paris, Brussels and London with the Eurostar now. Mexicans love to travel during the weekends. They also like to live in a city which has everything: museums, art galleries, cinemas, you can buy the *Telescope Weekly* to see what is going on in Paris. They can also travel easily with the Carte Orange, which you can buy at any metro station, and you can have access to the metro

and buses all over Paris – so the transport is very easy. The schools we represent are in the centre of Paris, for example, Eurocentres is in the heart of the Latin Quarter. Parisians are much friendlier than their reputation for aloofness suggests."

Lucia Mellone, Cosmo Educacion, Mexico

"Paris is the number-one destination for our clients and this past summer we had just under 30 per cent of our teens attending a residential programme. When students return they are usually full of compliments and great memories. This is a city that actually looks like the postcards and seldom disappoints. The only

complaints are that it is very expensive, too many businesses are closed in August and that the queue to see the Mona Lisa is too long!"

Jodi Hosking, The Learning Traveller, Canada

"In Paris, our students enjoy the best of culture, history, attractions, gastronomy and great nightlife. Paris is trendy with a unique lifestyle. The city is also a shopper's dream, with great discounts during sale times. Paris has a good transportation system which is important for students while they are studying, with easy access to other cities [too]."

Marcia Mattos, STB, Brazil

The so-called Golden Triangle – encompassing avenue Montaigne, avenue George V and the Champs-Élysées – has stores that are home to some of the biggest and most well known names in fashion, while rue de Faubourg St Honoré is also a haunt of high-end shoppers. Elsewhere, rue Oberkampf and the area of Montmartre is a cheaper and trendy destination for students.

Paris also has many events and spectacles organised each year for Parisians which language travellers can enjoy. These include Paris Plage – when sand is shipped in to the banks of the Seine and a beach is created in the city – outdoor cinemas and *La Nuit Blanche*, an all-night celebration of art and culture, with free admission to all galleries and museums and performances staged around the city.

With so much on offer for students, recommendations from school staff are useful. Summing up the range of choices, Merino says, "Personally I think that a first-time visitor should go to the Louvre museum, see a setting sun on the Île St Louis and go to Montmartre and enjoy the work of artists in Place du Tertre."

Vouilloux is sure that students leave the city with a love for Paris after getting to know it for a while. They remember their stay "in one of the most romantic cities in the world," he says, underlining that it is the French character, cuisine and style of life that enhances the experience. "I think [students] will remember the French way of living: good wine, excellent food and a good experience with the French people," he says.

Les Halles Concorde

This underground mall extends three floors and houses a multiplex, various clothing chains, a swimming pool and the Forum des Créateurs, a section dedicated to up and coming Paris designers



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