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TRAVEL FOR THE CONNOISSEUR

ART *Express*

THE FRENCH COUNTRYSIDE

IN THIS ISSUE • APRIL

The French Countryside..... 1 - 5
Focus French Countryside 2 - 5
Travel Bookshelf: France..... 8

ARTexpress Around the World..... 6 - 8
News..... 6 - 7
New York, Boston, Dallas...more
Great Addresses..... 6 - 7
Exhibition Calendar..... 8

Upcoming in July

Volume Seventeen, Number Three 2006
Los Angeles
London, Zürich, Palm Springs...more

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Suzanne Paulson & Constance Glenn.

ARTexpress brings you another great art safari: this time it's off to **France!** Of course you will start with Paris, where the art scene is always exciting — don't miss the *Los Angeles-Paris* exhibition currently causing such a sensation at the **Pompidou Center** through June 26, or *Henri Rousseau and the Jungles of Paris*, which is delighting everyone, ending June 19 at the **Grand Palais**. In addition, the Louvre will collaborate on *American Artists and the Louvre*, a show of 30 works from the Terra and other American institutions from June 14 to September 18. But on to the art treasures found just outside our favorite art city!

In the lush **Countryside of France**, **ARTexpress** discovered many of these gems following a recent bike trip with Butterfield and Robinson in Paris and the **Loire Valley**. We stayed at the private **Château du Rivau**, a magnificent 15th-century castle owned by the noted Paris art collectors Patricia and Eric Laigneau, located in Léméré, a few kilometers south of Chinon. Although one cannot stay at the château under normal circumstances, the spectacular art gardens surrounding the castle, designed by Patricia, are open to the public from May through October. Patricia commissioned various contemporary artists to place sculptures throughout the grounds, using themes from popular fairy tales. Giant legs by the artist **Basserode** can be seen running through the forest, aptly named *The Running Forest*, while a checkerboard of old roses can be found in the flower meadow. The lavender gardens release their scents throughout the spring and summer adjacent to *Love Park*, where there are public benches designed by artist **Ghada Amer**. Visiting this château is an unusual experience and, should you meet Patricia, who is frequently there, ask her to show the art collection inside the castle. Not far away lies another such special experience: **Château d'Oiron** (in the tiny village of Oiron), filled with contemporary art that will surprise and delight you with every corner that you turn. The 15th-century château was originally the property of a rich patron family, but in 1943 was bought by the State. Throughout the 1990s, a collection of contemporary art based on the concept of the "cabinet of curiositiés" was amassed, and is now displayed throughout the castle. As you enter the great hall, where normally portraits of noble ancestors would be displayed, there is a portrait gallery of photographs of the local school children of Oiron created by **Christian Boltanski**. **Daniel Spoerri** has transformed the Armory (the Great Hall of Kings) with his special interpretation of warriors, entitled *The Twelve Bodies in Morceis*. Other artists represented in the collection

THE FRENCH COUNTRYSIDE

French Countryside...more

are **Guillaume Bijl, Ilya Kabakov, Raoul Marek, Wim Delvoye, Anne and Patrick Poirier, James Lee Byars, Markus Raetz, Marina Abramovic**, and more. Don't miss the dazzling **Sol Lewitt** *Wall Drawing* covering the walls of the attic. We urge you to include this stop on your itinerary! Plan to spend at least two hours wandering through the castle. When hunger takes over, there is a delightful lunch spot — **Relais du Château**, right around the corner. Have their special gourmet salad. We have listed some suggestions for lodging, but a fun idea while exploring this western part of the Loire is to rent a cottage — you get endless views of the vineyards and tranquility beyond belief but stay close enough to cities, towns and excursions. **ARTexpress** found just the place — **La Blanchiere**, ideal for one or two couples, consisting of a main house and guest house. The property is owned by Karen Normandy, a charming lady who makes her home in San Francisco when she isn't in her beloved Loire Valley. The property can be viewed at www.lablanchiere.com.

Leaving the Loire Valley, we headed south towards Poitiers, where our lodging destination for the night was, again, an impressive stone-walled building with towers and turrets — **Château Nieuil**, near the town of Angoulême. (Do not confuse **Château Nieuil** with the town of Nieul located 90 km towards the city of Limoges — we did!) **Château Nieuil** is a small hotel with wonderful grounds for walking and a lovely little restaurant adjacent to the château, plus the location is perfect for the next art venue — **Château de Rochechouart**, a contemporary art museum in the town by the same name. Located on Richard Lion Heart Road, the castle, which occupies a spectacular site overlooking the rivers and valleys, is a fortress of the 12th and 15th centuries, with interior decoration of 16th-century frescoes and twisted granite columns. The rooms of the castle are devoted to exhibitions and include works by **Raoul Hausmann, Richard Long, Bruce Nauman, Tony Cragg, Rodney Graham, Michelangelo Pistoletto**, and **Stephan Balkenhol**. Be sure to climb all the way to the top-floor attic or you will miss the best! Our recommended lunch stop after this exceptional art experience is just down Highway 141 towards Limoges — **La Chapelle Saint-Martin**, a lovely manor house serving elegant gourmet food. This would also be an excellent choice for your stay in this area, as the next art venue — **Vassivière Contemporary Art Center and Sculpture Park** — is nearby. Allow a full day, take a picnic lunch, and wear comfortable walking shoes to visit Vassivière. Be aware that getting there is very tricky (have your hotel help you) and, unless the café is open, there is no place to eat. The art center, which is open

Focus French Countryside

HOTELS, INNS, RESTAURANTS

In The Loire

Hostellerie de la Tonnellerie, 12 rue des Eaux-Bleues, Beaugency, 45190 Travers, Tel. 33-(0)2-38-44-68-15, Fax 33-(0)2-38-44-10-01. A renovated wine-merchant's house set within a central courtyard for outside dining. The personnel are warm and very helpful, making this a wonderful spot from which to explore the major châteaux in the eastern region of the Loire. The rates are very reasonable.

Domaine des Hauts de Loire, Route de Herbault, 41150 Onzain, Loir-et-Cher, Tel. 33-(0)2-54-20-72-57, Fax 33-(0)2-54-20-77-32, e-mail: hauts-loire@relaischâteaux.com. This lovely 19th-century hunting lodge situated in a secluded parkland is a beautiful choice to explore the elegant châteaux. The restaurant is gorgeous, and the staff is both professional and friendly.

Château de Marçay, 37500 Marçay-Chinon, Indre-et-Loire, Tel. 33-(0)2-47-93-03-47, Fax 33-(0)2-47-93-45-33, e-mail: marçay@relaischâteaux.com. A magnificent 15th-century château that once enchanted François Rabelais. **ARTexpress** suggests you select this hotel for your base when visiting the art venues in the Loire.

Relais du Château, 17 Place des Marronniers, 79100, Oiron, Tel. 33-(0)5-45-96-54-96. This is the best spot for lunch when visiting **Château d'Oiron**. Try the house gourmet salad.

Near Limoges

La Chapelle Saint-Martin, 33 Saint-Martin-du-Fault, 87510 Nieul, Haute-Vienne, Tel. 33-(0)5-55-75-89-50, Fax. 33-(0)5-55-75-89-50, e-mail: chapelle@relaischâteaux.fr. This manor house in the countryside outside Limoges is well known for the elegant meals served here and also the spacious bedrooms overlooking the hotel's gardens. A convenient location for visiting **Château de Rochechouart** and **Vassivière Contemporary Art Centre and Sculpture Park**.

Au Moulin de la Gorce, 87800 La Roche-l'Abeille, Haute-Vienne, Tel. 33-(0)5-55-00-70-66, Fax 33-(0)5-55-00-75-27, e-mail: moulingorce@relaischâteaux.fr. Although this charming, bucolic country inn is a bit remote, it was the very favorite hotel of **ARTexpress**. The dining room is warm and full of character and the cuisine is wonderful.

THE FRENCH COUNTRYSIDE

Focus French Countryside

Château Nieuil, 16270 Nieuil, Charente, Tel. 33-(0)5-45-71-36-38, Fax 33-(0)5-45-71-46-45, e-mail: chateauNieuilhotel@wanadoo.fr. Once the property of François I, this former royal hunting palace is set in a magnificent 100-acre park. Excellent location for visiting Château de Rochechouart.

In Barbizon

Hotellerie du Bas-Bréau, 22 rue Grande, 77630 Barbizon, Tel. 33-(0)1-60-66-40-05, Fax 33-(0)1-60-69-22-89, e-mail: basbeau@relaischateaux.fr. This is the perfect place to stay while visiting *Le Cyclop*, Evry Cathedral, *Closerie Falbala*, and Fontainebleau. Plan on spending at least three days in this charming 19th-century timbered house in the heart of the cobble-stoned town of Barbizon.

La Bohème Restaurant, 35 rue Grande, Barbizon, Tel.33-(0)-1-60-66-48-65. Located across the street from the Hostellerie du Bas-Bréau, this quaint little restaurant serves marvelous prix-fixe meals.

Restaurant L'Angéus, 31 rue Grande, Barbizon, Tel. 33-(0)1-60-66-40-30. A very attractive restaurant in the heart of the Rue Grande that serves delicious fare.

Brussel's Café, 47 rue Grande, Fontainebleau, Tel. 33-(0)1-64-22-21-27. If you are hankering for moules & frites, this is the place to take a break while visiting the Palace of Fontainebleau. It is only a short walk from the palace.

In Picardy

Hostellerie de la Bellon, 51 rue Bellon, 60300 Senlis, Tel. 33-(0)3-44-53-03-05, Fax 33-(0)3-44-53-29-94. An ancient post-house located a few steps away from the town center and near the famous cathedral of Saint Pierre. The rates are reasonable and it provides easy access to the Picardy region, especially while visiting the Donjon de Vez.

A La Bonne Idee, 3 Street of the Millers, 60350 Saint Jean-au-Bois, Tel. 33-(0)03-44-42-84-09. An authentic inn in the heart of a forest in one of the most charming villages of Picardy. This is a great spot for lunch, and it also has rooms.

In Saint-Germain-en-Laye

Cazaudehore La Forestière, 1 avenue du President Kennedy, 78100 Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Tel. 33-(0)1-30-61-64-64, Fax 33-

French Countryside...more

year-'round, was conceived by the architects **Aldo Rossi** and **Xavier Fabre** and occupies an island in the center of Lake Vassiviér. It is devoted to the relationships between the visual arts and landscapes. The building itself represents a lighthouse tower used as a contemplative observation point, and it is extended horizontally by the art center building, which provides a place for the exhibitions. The sculpture park surrounds the center and is adjacent to the lake, with works by **David Nash**, **Andy Goldsworthy**, **Michelangelo Pistoletto** and **Jacques Julien**, plus many others. Leaving the center, we chose to stay at **Moulin de la Gorce** in La Roche-l'Abeille, deep in the countryside, and the most remote, bucolic and charming hotel **ARTexpress** has stayed in — although getting there does take patience. Not only is the setting beautiful, but the dining experience is simply wonderful.

Heading north to the next destination, **Barbizon**, we recommend using it as your base for visiting three very special art venues. Enroute, you could make a stop in **Bourges** to view the 12th-century **Saint Etienne Cathedral**, the largest Gothic cathedral in France, whose nave measures over 400 feet — it is quite impressive. Lunch in Bourges is always fun at the Michelin-one-star **L'Abbaye Saint-Ambroix** (60-62 Avenue Jean-Jaurés, Tel. 02-48-70-80-00), whose dining room, with its high ceilings, is situated in the former chapel of an abbey. Another interesting stop enroute to Barbizon is **Les Jardins Artistiques de Drulon**, 40 miles south of Bourges in the middle of France. This fabulous, 15th-century restored château, plus gardens and grounds, is described as the "Most Beautiful Garden in France," with 150,000 square meters of gardens and pathways, including changing exhibitions of sculpture. Each year, 40 new French artists are invited to create new sculpture as artists-in-residence at the château.

The cobble-stoned town of **Barbizon** has attracted artists for generations and it is easy to see why the landscape painters — Millet, Corot, Sisley, and Monet — treasured this corner of the Forest of Fontainebleau. It was said that "every tree was like an artist's model surrounded by a circle of paint-boxes." Barbizon is essentially one long street (Grand Rue) lined with hotels, restaurants and villas, some bearing plaques identifying the artists who stayed there. Our number-one choice is the 19th-century timbered **Hotellerie du Bas-Bréau**, made famous by Robert Louis Stevenson. It is a perfect place to stay for your art excursions in this area — one of which should include a visit to the **Château de Fontainebleau** only minutes away. The palace is filled with art treasures and decorative furniture that the French kings amassed from the 16th century to the 18th

THE FRENCH COUNTRYSIDE

French Countryside...more

century; plus it was here that, in 1814, the Emperor Napoleon appeared at the top of the horseshoe staircase to bid farewell to his troops. If architecture is your passion, we recommend making the short drive to the city of **Evry**, where the post-modern **Evry Cathedral**, designed by **Mario Botta**, dominates the city and compliments the surrounding brick civic buildings. The cathedral is also constructed of brick, a contemporary material that also has Biblical meaning — made of earth, water and fire — epitomizing the creation. We found it interesting that another element of Botta's design had Biblical significance — the 24 trees that crown the edifice stand for rebirth and resurrection, the tree of life, and the link between heaven and earth; plus the stained-glass windows, created by a Korean friar, evoke the 12 Apostles. Minutes away, deep in the forest of Milly, a strange apparition awaits you — **Le Cyclop**, a massive, twenty-two-meter-high construction of a huge cyclopean head sparkling with mirrors and mosaics and, of course, complete with a single eye. It must be traversed by stairways, footbridges, and mezzanines, enabling the visitor to explore this enchanting object. Inside, a riveting clutter of riotous machines with gears (made from scrap metal) spinning, colliding and clattering will delight you. This monumental work was constructed over 20 years ago in utmost secrecy by the Swiss sculptor **Jean Tinguely**, his wife **Niki de Saint-Phalle**, and their artist friends, such as **Daniel Spoerri**, **Arman**, **César**, **Jean-Pierre Raynaud**, and **Larry Rivers**, who were invited to join them in this great adventure. **ARTexpress** highly recommends a visit to Tinguely's mechanical universe — a monument of contemporary art. *Le Cyclop* can also be accessed from Paris, with guided visits from April 30 to the end of October on Saturdays and Sundays. Group visits are possible on Thursdays and Fridays by appointment. If you call ahead, you may be able to join a group — contact Annick Leroy, director of *Le Cyclop*, 33-(0)1-64-98-95-18 or e-mail: associationle cyclop@wanadoo.fr. Our final art excursion in this area took us to **Périgny-sur-Yerres (Val-de-Marne)**, where an extraordinary windowless structure, the **Closerie Falbala** (meaning "large waving skirt" in Spanish) can be viewed. Artist **Jean Dubuffet** built *Falbala* in 1971-72 as an anti-culture statement — it is the largest sculpture in the world. The walls are 8 meters high, the tower 24 meters, and there are 24 panels, 6 X 7 meters each, made of resin and painted white with black outlines. Walking through its freeform rooms and organic open spaces is an amazing experience. You must do this! Adjacent to *Falbala* is the **Fondation Dubuffet**, with the artist's studio and galleries filled with his works. One large

Focus French Countryside...more

(0)1-39-73-73-88, e-mail: hotel@cazaudehore.fr. Surrounded by trees and a sculpture garden, the hotel is an oasis only 25 miles west of Paris, in the domains of the French Court since the 12th century. The rooms are beautiful (ask for #27), and, if the weather permits, dining outside is marvelous. Convenient location for visiting Villa Savoye, Versailles, and Musée Maurice Denis.

ART VENUES

Château du Rivau, 37120 Léméré, Loire, Tel. 33-(0)2-47-95-77-47, e-mail: info@chateaurivau.com. The castle of Rivau is one of the largest privately owned Loire châteaux, and one of the first non-fortified châteaux built in the Tours region. Its art gardens, filled with sculptures depicting fairy tales, are the reason to visit the château, which can be found in the heart of Touraine, a few minutes from Chinon.

Château d'Oiron, rue du Château, 79100 Oiron, Loire, Tel. 33-(0)5-49-96-51-25 Fax 33-(0)5-49-96-52-56. Near Chinon, this beautiful 15th-17th-century restored château with a permanent contemporary art exhibition — linked to the château's history — was an **ARTexpress** favorite.

Château de Chaumont-sur-Loire, 41150 Chaumont-sur-Loire, Tel. 33-(0)2-54-51-26-26, Fax 33 (0)2-54-20-91-16. Between Blois and Tours, and dominating the Loire Valley, this 15th-century château hosts a garden festival with a different theme each year — many times commissioning contemporary artists to design the garden.

Château de Rochechouart (Musée Département d'Art Contemporain de Rochechouart), Place du Château, 87600 Rochechouart, Tel. 33 (0)5-55-03-77-77 or 33 (0)5-55-03-77-91, Fax 33 (0)5-55-03-72-40, e-mail: sec-museeAcg87.fr. Located between Angoulême and Limoges, the 15th-century castle has housed the Museum of Contemporary Art since 1985, with an exceptional collection of works by artists represented in major European museums.

Vassivière Contemporary Art Centre and Sculpture Park, 87120 Ile de Vassivière, Limousin, Tel. 33-(0)5-55-69-27-27, Fax 33-(0)5-55-69-29-31, e-mail: centre.dart.vassivierre@wanadoo.fr. Located on an island, Vassivière is a lovely sculpture park (with walking paths) surrounding the art center,

THE FRENCH COUNTRYSIDE

Focus French Countryside...more

designed by Aldo Rossi and Xavier Fabre. The center consists of several rooms designed for temporary exhibitions.

Les Jardins Artistiques de Drulon, 18170 Loye-sur-Arnon, Tel. 33-(0)2-48-56-65-96. Forty miles south of Bourges, this fabulous 15th-century restored château, with exceptional gardens and grounds exhibiting contemporary sculpture, is described as the "Best, Most Beautiful Garden in France." Open April through September.

Cathedral de la Resurrection, Evry, Essonne (Ille-de-France). The impressive cathedral, which dominates the town of Evry, was designed between 1992 and 1995 by Swiss architect Mario Botta.

Le Cyclop, 91490 Milly-la-Forêt, Tel. 33-(0)1-64-98-95-18, Fax 33-(0)1-64-98-95-72, e-mail: associationlecyelop@wanadoo.fr. A monumental work, erected by Swiss sculptor Jean Tinguely, his wife Niki de Saint-Phalle, and their team of artist friends, found deep in the forest of Milly.

Closerie Falbala, (The Jean Dubuffet Foundation), Ruelle aux Chevaux, 94000 Périgny-on-Yerres, Val-de-Marne, Tel. 33-(0)1-47-34-12-63, Fax 33-(0)1-43-06-79-70. *Falbala* refers to a monumental installation/sculpture by Dubuffet. Also on the property is a building housing the late artist's works. Write or fax for reservations: 137 rue Sévres, 75006, Paris.

Donjon de Vez, 60117 Vez, Picardy, Tel. 33-(0)3-44-88-55-18, Fax 33-(0)3-44-88-39-70. Located an hour from Paris (near Senlis), the dungeon is a medieval keep, with turrets, a chapel and grounds, remodeled into a contemporary art museum by auctioneer Francis Briest. Open Saturdays and Sundays from 2-6 PM. Closed November through March.

Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye, 82 rue de Villiers, 78300 Poissy, Tel. 33-(0)1-39-65-01-06, Fax 33-(0)1-39-65-19-33. The 1928-30 masterpiece that will surprise visitors who expect the pure white box from history books. The site is near Versailles.

Musée Départemental Maurice Denis, 2 bis, rue Maurice Denis, 78175 Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Tel. 33-(0)1-34-51-53-65. A former hospital converted by Maurice Denis into his home and studio is now a delightful museum housing his works and those of his friends.

French Countryside...more

room houses **Coucou Bazar**, an animated painting taken directly from the cycle of the *L'Hourloupe* performed in New York in 1973 at the Guggenheim Museum. The piece includes the costumes worn by the actors, composed of masks, hats, robes, gloves and boots, made of such diverse materials as resin, latex, etc. A video accompanies the installation. *Falbala*, along with *Le Cyclop*, can be easily accessed from Paris and each is a MUST for all art aficionados, but be forewarned... they are not easy to find.

There are several other notable art venues near Paris that we should mention as well, before bringing this French art safari to a close. **Donjon de Vez**, a medieval fortress, complete with a keep, vault, ramparts, chapel and garden — filled with contemporary art — beckons in the countryside region of **Picardy**, about an hour's drive from Paris. Built in 1360, the fortress is owned by **Francis** (a Parisian auctioneer), and **Caroline Briest**, both enthusiastic art patrons who have breathed new life into this historic site. Among the monumental sculptures on the grounds that surround the fortress are works by **Alexander Calder**, **Mark di Suvero**, **David Smith**, and **Bernar Venet**, plus the familiar giant flower pot by **Jean-Pierre Raynaud**. Inside we enjoyed a temporary exhibition of **Giacometti's** sculpture displayed in the chapel with stained-glass windows by **Daniel Burren**; while **Sol Lewitt's** *Wall Drawing* adorned a room in the keep. Landscape architect **Pascal Cribier** created a minimalist garden drawn from medieval iconography, which recently won an award from the Ministry of Culture. The site can be reached on the N324 (off the main road to Senlis), where we stayed at the delightful **Hostellerie de la Porte Bello** in the heart of town.

Villa Savoye, the 1928 avant-garde masterpiece of **Le Corbusier**, is the final destination of this French countryside adventure. Located in the Paris suburb of **Poissy**, the villa was the weekend house for Pierre Savoye, an insurance broker, and his family. It has been owned by the State since 1962, and was under restoration until completion in 1997. The house looks severe in photographs, but be sure to walk completely around it because the renowned design is visually stimulating, offering a different presence from every angle. The exterior has remained white, as is customary in Le Corbusier's purist designs, but the interior walls have been restored to the original colors of terra cotta, light blue and green. We loved it! **Saint-Germain-en-Laye** is close by, and **ARTexpress** recommends a stay at the Cazaudehore La Forestière, with its lovely art gardens, delicious gourmet food, and convenient access to **Versailles**, as well as the **Musée Maurice Denis**, for a perfect ending to your **Art in the French Countryside** adventure.

ART AROUND THE WORLD

News

Come April, **New York** is an over-the-top arts feast. With the **Whitney Biennial** still stirring things up through May 28, and a tempting menu of spring exhibitions, it's the place to be. At the top of your calendar, put the reopening of **The Morgan Library**, set for April 29. The original library, designed by **Charles McKim** of the renowned firm of **McKim, Mead & White**, was built between 1902-1906 adjacent to Morgan's mansion at 36th and Madison Avenue. The "Renaissance-style palazzo with three magnificent rooms" was elegance itself. In 1924, Morgan's son transformed it into a public institution and it has expanded significantly since. The big news is the present expansion by **Renzo Piano**, commissioned in 2000. Piano has preserved the historic buildings — the 1906 original, the 1928 Annex and the 19th-century house belonging to Morgan's son — and created three new pavilions facing 36th Street, 37th Street, and Madison Avenue. The new entrance is on Madison, and the stunning interior glass courtyard is the centerpiece of the design. For the opening, The Morgan will present masterpieces from the collection and unveil gifts, including Van Gogh's letters to Émile Bernard, accompanied by thirteen sketches. **Renzo Piano** and the always delectable Morgan should be a stellar combination. Angelenos will be interested in revisiting two of our legendary **Gaka Sheyer's Paul Klee** works (sold to the Arensbergs and on loan from their collection in the **Philadelphia Museum of Art**), on view in *Klee and America* at the **Neue Galerie** through May 22, after which the exhibit will travel to the **Phillips Collection** and then on to the **Menil Collection**, where it was organized. Be sure to have lunch in the museum's **Café Sabarsky**, elegantly appointed with original Viennese Secession treasures — light fixtures by **Josef Hoffmann**, furniture by **Adolf Loos**, and banquettes upholstered in a 1912 **Otto Wagner** design. The great **Bösendorfer** piano is played in chamber and cabaret concerts on Wednesday and Thursday afternoons and Friday evenings — and, of course, the cuisine is Viennese. In a grand **Carrière and Hastings** mansion built in 1914, it captures all the romance of the period — plus, the Neue has the highest design shop in New York. Back in the contemporary world, don't miss *Andrea Zittel: Critical Space* at the **New Museum of Contemporary Art's** temporary location in Chelsea. Keep an eye out, too, for the museum's award-winning new building by **Sejima +Nishizawa/SNAA** rising at 235 Bowery and expected to debut in late 2007 on the NMCA's 30th anniversary. *The New York Times* architecture critic, **Niccolai Ouroussoff**, has

Great Addresses

IN NEW YORK

The Morgan Library, 29 East 36th Street, Tel. 212-590-0300; www.morganlibrary.org.

The New Museum of Contemporary Art/Chelsea, 556 West 22nd Street at 11th Avenue, Tel. 212-219-1222; www.newmuseum.org.

Neue Galerie, 1048 Fifth Avenue at 86th Street, Tel. 212-628-6200; www.neuegalerie.org.

Chinatown Brasserie, 380 Lafayette Street (no phone yet). A hot new Asian eatery from Josh Pickard (formerly Time Café) and John McDonald (who brought you Lever House) in Noho in March. Try their divine dim sum.

August, 359 Bleecker Street, Tel. 212-929-4774. A Paris/Village bistro — Greenwich Village that is — where chef Tony Liu reigns over this down-to-earth eatery with its elegant little garden and superb, contemporary Mediterranean cuisine. No reservations; its popularity guarantees a line.

Café Boulud, 20 East 76th Street, Tel. 212-772-2600. This isn't just the Daniel experience at a fraction of the price. The Café has its own fan club, as it should. Less formality enhances the pleasure in many hearts.

St. Regis Hotel, 2 East 55th Street, Tel. 212-753-4500 or 1-800-759-7550. The grande dame of 55th Street has had a face lift by five-star designers Stephen Sills and James Huniford. The 1904 Beaux-Arts palace, built by no less than John Jacob Astor, is once again as glamorous as it was in the era of Cecil Beaton, Lady Mendel, and David Hicks, who all created residences here at one time or another. It's a Starwood brand and now you can even buy your own condo here.

Morimoto, 88 10th Avenue (near 15th Street), Tel. 212-989-8883. Masaharu Morimoto, one of the first Iron Chefs and the original executive chef at Nobu, has opened the eponymous Morimoto. The great news in the art world — beyond the divine eats — is that he and his partners in this ambitious project hired rave architect Tadao Ando to do the interior architecture (Ando has been heaped with praise for the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth). The walls are swathed in rippled white plaster — once you pass the exotic, red-curtained entrance — and the sushi bar, where the master himself holds forth, is elegant Douglas fir. At the rarefied *omakase* table, you'll be treated to the chef's own special Japanese fusion cuisine. On the edge of the meatpacking district, this new hot spot couldn't be in any better company than the art crowd.

ART AROUND THE WORLD

Great Addresses...more

IN BOSTON

Institute of Contemporary Art, 955 Boylston Street (until the opening), Tel. 617-266-4021; www.icaboston.org.

Salts Restaurant, 798 Main Street, Cambridge, Tel. 617-876-8444. Foodies, gather 'round. Young, talented chef Gabriel Bremer is turning out crowds in Cambridge with his organic, French-based cooking — think chicken ballotine with braised artichokes.

Excelsior, 272 Boylston Street, Tel. 617-426-7878. Renowned chef Lydia Shire — with old friend Tim Lynch (of Harvest) — surprises with the startlingly bold, luxurious Excelsior, overlooking the Public Garden. It's an Adam Tihany design (as was her ground-breaking Biba). The menu is sumptuous (read expensive), but fabulous, as always.

IN DALLAS

Dallas Museum of Art, 1717 North Harwood, Tel. 214-922-1200; www.dma-art.org.

Nasher Sculpture Center, 2001 Flora Street, Tel. 214-242-5100; www.nashersculpturecenter.org.

Trammell and Margaret Crow Collection of Asian Art, 2010 Flora Street, Tel. 214-979-6430.

Hotel Crescent Court, 400 Crescent Court, Tel. 214-871-3200. This imposing Philip Johnson-designed hotel is in the news at the moment because it is playing host to a brand new Nobu restaurant. It's a hit!

Stephen Pyles, 1807 Ross Avenue, Tel. 214-580-7000. Open just weeks and already called "the best restaurant in Dallas," the eponymous house of chef Pyles — the man who revolutionized Southwestern cuisine — is the newest venture in the crown of one of America's top talents.

Abacus, 4511 McKinney Avenue, Tel. 214-559-3111. Abacus has won every award — from "Best Restaurant Design" to "Best Chef" — and chef Kent Rathburn, continues to receive kudos far beyond Dallas, including four James Beard awards. The cuisine is called "global," and ranges from sushi, fusion "Small Plates," and divine "Big Plates," like "Grilled Colorado Lamb Rack on Horseradish-Mustard Demi and Wild Mushroom-Goat Cheese Bread Pudding," to "Sweet Plates" topped by "Godiva Chocolate Soup!"

News...more

already given the design rave reviews — it's a gorgeous stack of glass cubes — and in March, a \$60-million Federal grant (the largest of 63 provided for downtown redevelopment) was a big cause for celebration. The architects are also designing the new **Glass Pavilion** of the **Toledo Museum of Art**, due to open this spring.

Another eagerly-awaited opening is that of the new Institute of Contemporary Art, **Boston**, by **Diller Scofidio & Renfro**. The date is set for September and all eyes are on the exotic waterfront facility. With its greatly enlarged space, the ICA will no longer be a kunsthalle, but will become a collecting institution with special focus on artists with whom the ICA has worked. Gifts already include works by **Nan Goldin**, **Mona Hatoum** and **Cornelia Parker**, and, since the institution was founded in 1936, there is plenty of room to add treasures from each of the years of its distinguished history.

In **Dallas**, don't pass up "The Arts District Stroll," a private **Art District Friends** walking tour (17 blocks, over 61 acres) of the largest downtown arts area in the United States. The Stroll is offered free of charge at 10:30 AM the first Saturday of every month, or by appointment for a nominal fee. Look for the red and white Arts District Stroll umbrellas in front of the **Trammell and Margaret Crow Collection of Asian Art** at 2010 Flora Street, which is where the trained docents begin the hour-long walk highlighting the **Dallas Museum of Art** by **Edward Larrabee Barnes**, the **Nasher Sculpture Center** by **Renzo Piano**, **Meyerson Symphony Center** by **I. M. Pei**, the **Crow Collection** and more. Three years into a nine-year campaign, the **Dallas Center for the Performing Arts Foundation** has plans to increase the rich density of the neighborhood by adding two new venues: the **Winspear Opera Hall** by **Sir Norman Foster**, and a new, multi-form theater by **Rem Koolhaas** and **OMA**. A third venue housing two additional performance spaces is also in the works, as are the renovation of **Annette Strauss Artist Square**, and a new arts magnet school by **Brad Cloepfil**. Add to this grand vision the spectacular downtown **Trinity River Project** with three breathtaking, 40-story **Santiago Calatrava** suspension bridges, two lakes, hiking and biking trails and an 8,000-acre park — all by 2011 — and Dallas won't have any competition as the American center for new architecture. If you'll be in town this spring or summer, don't miss *Louis Comfort Tiffany: Artist for the Ages*, May 28-September 3 at the DMA, and its opening, on June 18, of *Modernism in American Silver: 20th-Century Design*, which will tour across America after its Dallas debut.

Calendar

Through	Apr. 16	Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam	<i>Shirin Neshat</i>
Through	Apr. 23	FotoFest2006, Houston	
Through	Apr. 27	Havana Biennial	
Through	Apr. 30	Jeu de Paume, Paris	<i>Ed Ruscha Photographer</i>
Through	May 1	Tate Modern, London	<i>Rachel Whiteread</i>
Through	May 2	Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Cambridge, Mass.	<i>Frank Stella 1958</i>
Through	May 7	Walker Art Center, Minneapolis	<i>Kiki Smith: A Gathering</i>
Through	May 7	MOMA, New York	<i>Munch Retrospective: The Modern Life of the Soul</i>
Through	May 7	Moderna Museet, Stockholm	<i>The Moderna Exhibition 2006</i>
Through	May 7	The Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto	<i>Frank Gehry, Art and Furniture</i>
Through	May 14	Museum of Fine Arts, Boston	<i>David Hockney: Portraits</i>
Through	May 14	Tate Britain, London	<i>Tate Triennial 2006: New British Art</i>
Through	May 14	Caixa Forum, Barcelona	<i>Diane Arbus: Revelations</i>
Through	May 14	J. P. Getty Museum, Los Angeles	<i>Courbet and the Modern Landscape</i>
Through	May 14	Frick Collection, New York	<i>Goya's Last Works</i>
Through	May 14	Guggenheim Museum, New York	<i>David Smith: A Centennial</i>
Through	May 14	San Diego Museum of Art	<i>American Ceramics 1884-1972</i>
Through	May 15	Louvre, Paris	<i>Ingres 1780-1867</i>
Through	May 21	Fondation Cartier, Paris	<i>Juergen Teller</i>
Through	May 21	Serpentine Gallery, London	<i>Ellsworth Kelly</i>
Through	May 21	MCA, Sydney, Australia	<i>Sam Taylor-Wood</i>
Through	May 21	Guggenheim Collection, Venice	<i>Venice: the Art Scene, 1948-86</i>
Through	May 21	Neue Galerie, New York	<i>Klee and America</i>
Through	May 22	MOMA, New York	<i>Broken Borders</i>
Through	May 23	Musée Picasso, Paris	<i>Picasso and Dora Maar</i>
Through	May 28	Musée d'Orsay, Paris	<i>Cézanne and Pissarro</i>
Through	May 28	Laguna Art Museum, Laguna Beach, California	<i>Richard Pettibone: Retrospective</i>
Through	May 28	Whitney Museum of American Art, New York	<i>Whitney Biennial 2006:</i>
Through	May 28	International Center of Photography, New York	<i>Contemporary African Photography</i>
Through	May 28	Fourth Berlin Biennial for Contemporary Art	
Through	May 28	Brooklyn Museum, New York	<i>William Wegman: Funny Strange</i>
Through	Jun. 4	Tate Modern, London	<i>Albers and Moholy-Nagy: Bauhaus to the New World</i>
Through	Jun. 4	Hong Kong Museum of Art	<i>Mark Rothko: Selections from the National Gallery</i>
Through	Jun. 11	LACMA, Los Angeles	<i>Ettore Sottsass: Designer</i>
Through	Jun. 11	Jeu de Paume, Paris	<i>Yto Barrada</i>
Through	Jun. 18	de Young Museum, San Francisco	<i>Arts and Crafts: Morris to Wright</i>
Through	Jun. 18	MCA, Chicago	<i>Andy Warhol/Super Nova</i>
Through	Jun. 19	Grand Palais, Paris	<i>Henri Rousseau: Jungles in Paris</i>
Through	Jun. 29	Whitney Museum of American Art, New York	<i>Course of Empire Ed Ruscha</i>
Through	Jul. 2	Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco	<i>Black Panther Rank and File</i>
Through	Jul. 3	Grand Palais, Paris	<i>The Italian Avant-garde 1910-1950</i>
Through	Jul. 9	Fondation Beyeler, Basel	<i>Henri Matisse: Figure, Color, Space</i>
Through	Jul. 17	Centre Pompidou, Paris	<i>Los Angeles — Paris</i>
Through	Jul. 18	High Museum of Art, Atlanta	<i>Chuck Close: Self Portraits 1967-2005</i>
Through	Jul. 23	Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgium, Brussels	<i>L'Art Nouveau</i>
Through	Jul. 30	Metropolitan Museum, New York	<i>Kara Walker at the Met: After the Deluge</i>
Through	Aug. 27	Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh	<i>Fierce Friends: Artists & Animals, 1750-1900</i>
Through	Feb. 7	MASS MOCA, North Adams	<i>House of Oracles: Huang Yong Ping Retrospective</i>
Apr. 16 -	Jul. 10	MOCA Los Angeles,	<i>Lorna Simpson</i>
Apr. 28 -	May 1	Art Chicago in the Park	<i>International Modern and Contemporary Exposition</i>
May 3 -	Jul. 10	MOMA, New York	<i>Against the Grain: Contemporary Art from the Broida Collection</i>
May 16 -	19	Art Frankfurt 2006	<i>International Contemporary Art Fair</i>
May 21 -	Jul. 30	Baltimore Museum of Art	<i>Robert Motherwell: Meanings of Abstraction</i>
May 21 -	Sep. 3	MOCA, Los Angeles	<i>Robert Rauschenberg: Combines</i>
May 30 -	Sep. 3	Musée d'Orsay, Paris	<i>Drawings by Jean-Francois Millet</i>
Jun. 1 -	4	SOFA (Sculpture Objects & Functional Art Exposition)	<i>New York</i>
Jun. 13 -	18	Liste 06 (The Young Art Fair in Basel),	<i>Switzerland</i>
Jun. 14 -	18	Art Basel 37 (Modern and Contemporary Art Fair)	<i>Basel, Switzerland</i>
Jun. 14 -	Sep. 18	Louvre, Paris	<i>American Artists and the Louvre</i>
Jun. 17 -	Sep. 17	Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco	<i>Monet in Normandy</i>
Jul. 11 -	Oct. 1	Musée d'Orsay, Paris	<i>Auguste Rodin & Eugène Carrière</i>

Travel Bookshelf: France

Guides

Sidra Stich. *Art Sites: France* (Contemporary Art + Architecture Handbook), 2000.
Sculpture Parks and Gardens, International Directory, www.artnut.com.
Relais & Châteaux 2006.
 Karen Brown. *France: Charming Inns & Itineraries*.
 Pamela Vandyke Price. *France for the Gourmet Traveler*, Passport Books.
Small Luxury Hotels of the World, 2005.
 Claire Tellier. *Eyewitness Travel Guides: France*, 2003.
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 Rick Steves, Steve Smith. *Rick Steves' France* 2006.

Art & Architecture

John Onians. *Atlas of World Art*, 2004.
 Peter Selz. *The Work of Jean Dubuffet*, Museum of Modern Art, 1962.
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 Philip Jodidio. *Mario Botta*, Taschen Verlag, 2003.
 Emilio Pizzi. *Mario Botta -Volume III: 1990-1997*, Princeton Architectural Press, 1998.
 Judith Dupre, Mario Botta. *Churches*, 2001.
 Thorston Droste, Axel M. Mosler. *Châteaux of the Loire*, 1997.
 Christiane de Nicolay-Mazéry. *The French Château*.
 Emile Rostain. *Le Château de Oiron, Renaissance: La Guerre de Troie Retrouvée*.
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 Gary Garrels. *Sol LeWitt: A Retrospective* (page 265), 2000.
 Andrew McClellan. *Art and Its Public: Museum Studies at the Millennium*, 2003.
 Jacques Michaut. *Les Mémoires du Château de Rochechouart*, 1987.
 Steven Adams. *The Barbizon School & The Origins of Impressionism*, 1994.
 George T. M. Shackelford. *Impressions of Light: The French Landscapes from Corot to Monet*, 2004.

Fiction and Fact

Princess Michael of Kent. *The Serpent and the Moon: Two Rivals for the Love of a Renaissance King*, 2004.
 Eleanor Herman. *Sex with Kings: 500 Years of Adultery, Power, Rivalry, and Revenge*, 2004.

And... strictly for fun,

Art Mysteries

Peter Steiner. *A French Country Murder*, 2003.