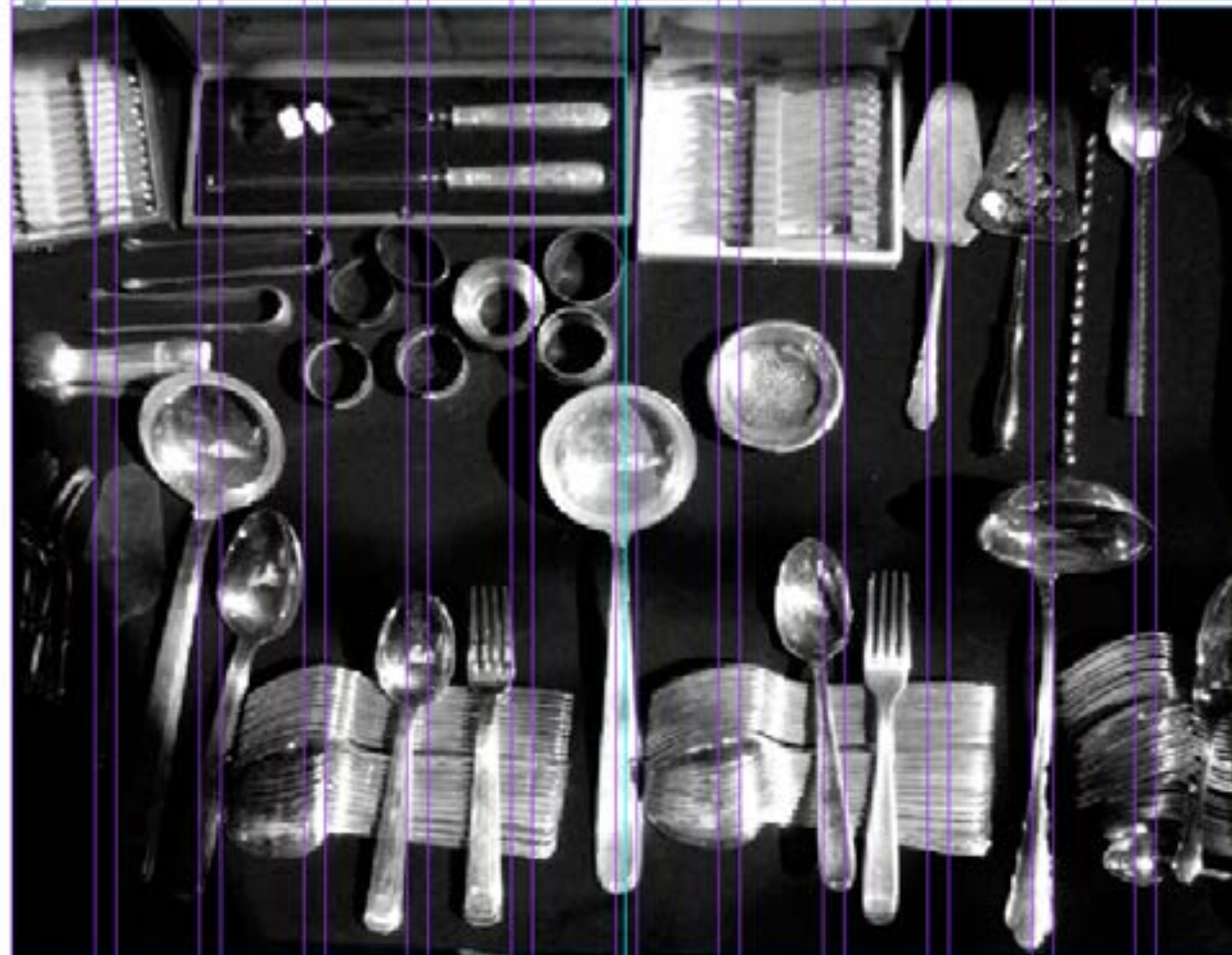


# FRANCE

ISSUE 108 NOVEMBER 2011



LES PICES DE ST-OUEN, PARIS  
PROVENCE TODAY  
L'HEURE DE L'APÉRITIF



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# FRANCE

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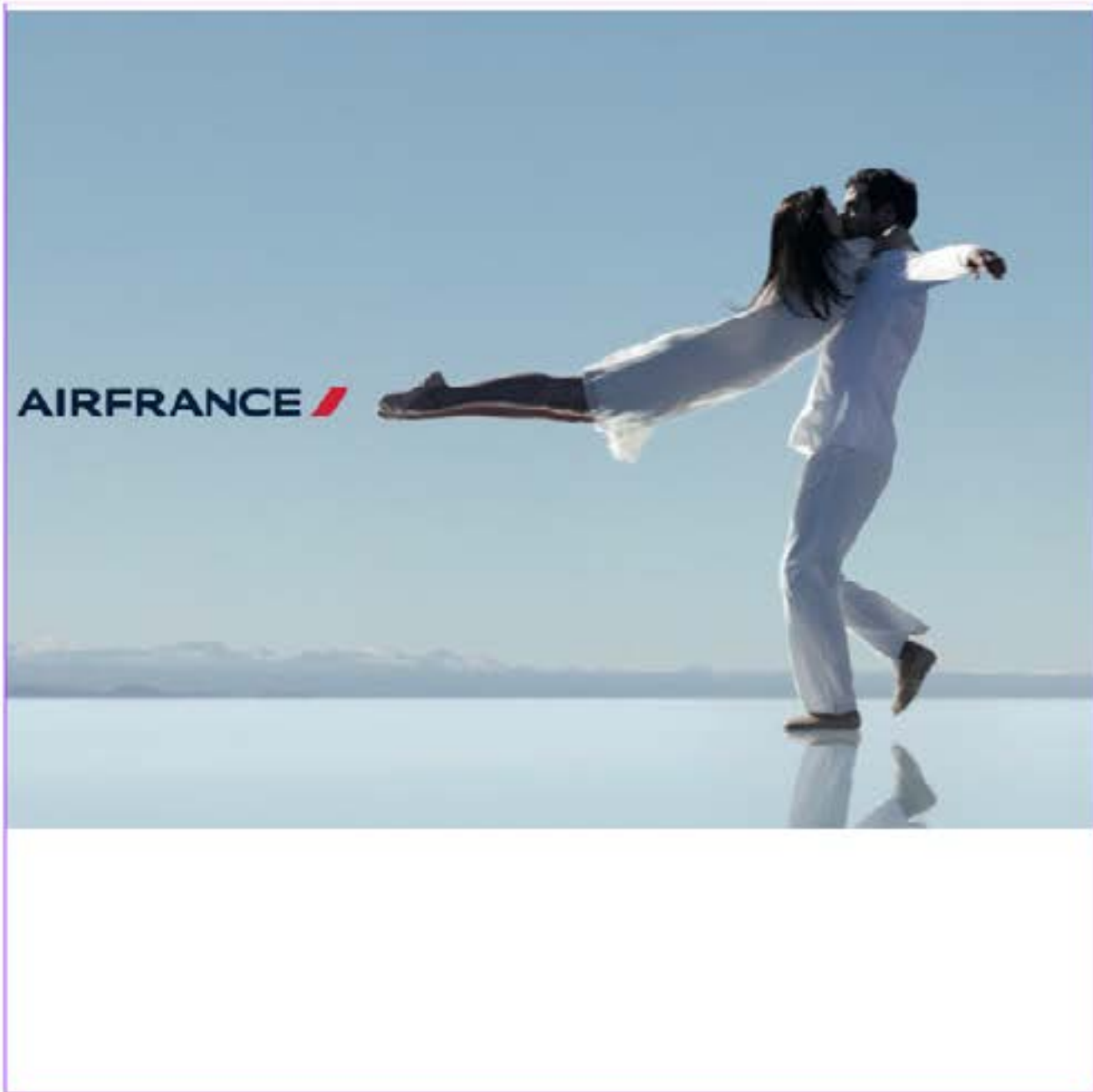
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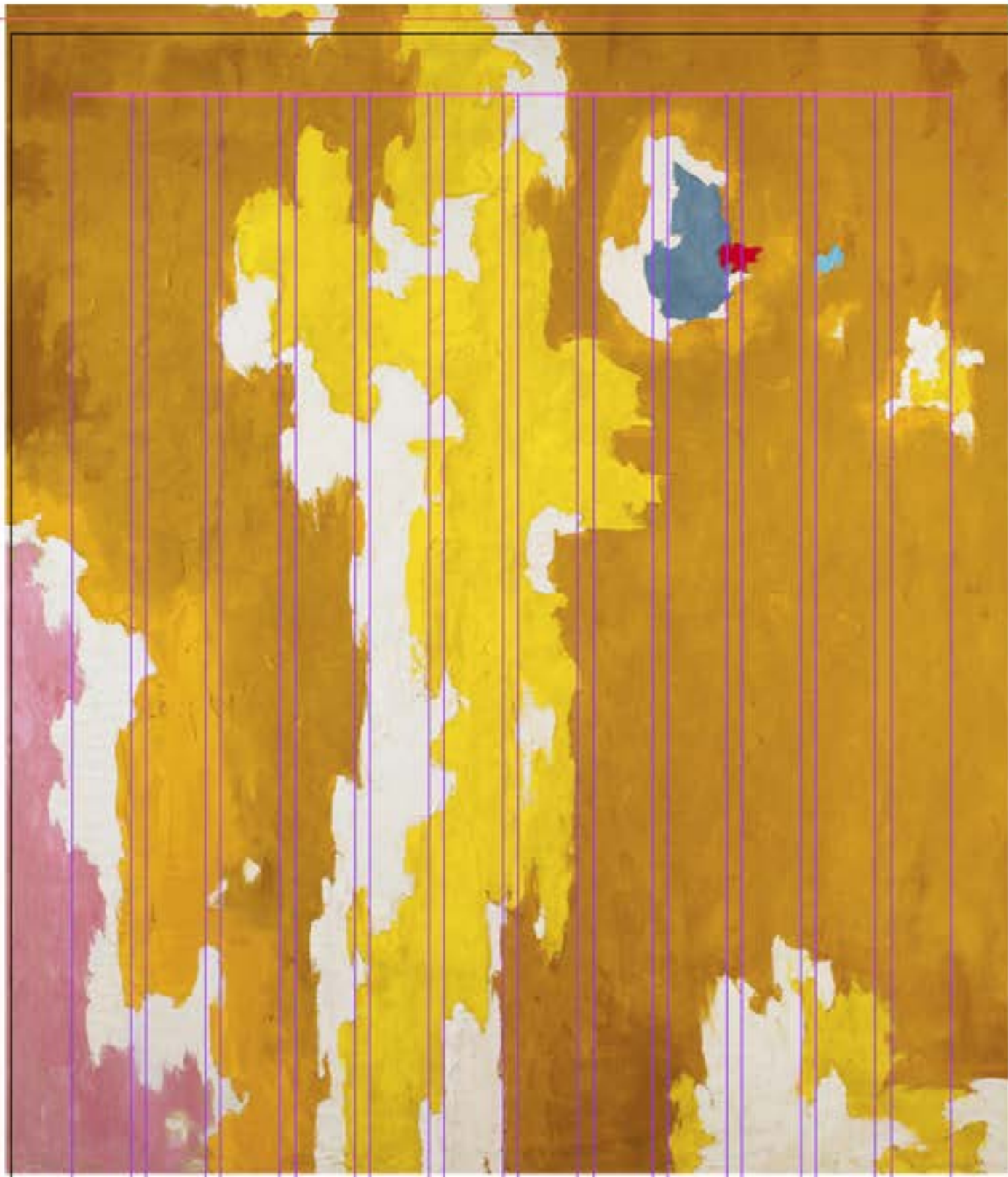
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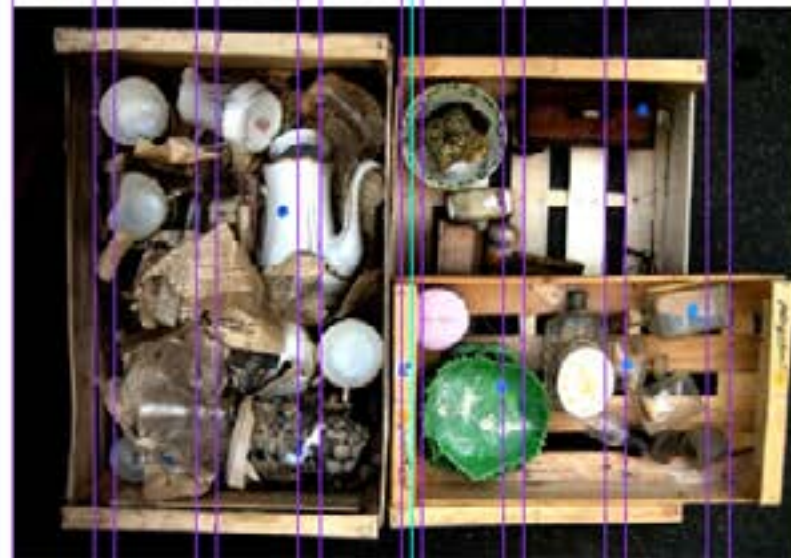
CLYFFORD STILL | MUSEUM

**POLLOCK REVERED HIM.  
ROTHKO LEARNED FROM HIM.  
AND MOST OF THE WORLD  
HAS NEVER HEARD OF HIM.**

*Uncover the mystery of America's most original artist. 11.18.11.*

# FRANCE

ISSUE 108 NOVEMBER 2011



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### *Featured Letter*

I have subscribed to FRANCE Magazine for over a year now – I first bought an issue on a chance sighting in my local newsagent. When I saw the front cover and the heading about the southwest I just had to buy it! I have a special love for the southwest and the Tarn-et-Garonne area in particular. This is due to many a fun filled holiday visiting my great uncle at his home in Auvillar, one of France's Plus Beaux Villages which was featured recently (September 2010 issue). My uncle was a wonderful storyteller and had retired there after leaving his high-flying job as a newspaper editor in London. The peace and tranquility of the village was ideal for him to pursue his love of painting and also his love of 'le bar'. We spent many a superb evening totally immersed in village life surrounded by locals drinking pastis and hearing my uncle's stories of his glory days.

In 2007, my uncle died suddenly and my world came to a standstill. It was a very

difficult time – then one day a little glimmer of light shone in the form of a will and testament found in my uncle's art box. Unbeknown to me, he had left his house and everything he owned to me. After a year of estate meetings and French red tape I finally took possession of the house in 2008.

Since then my husband and I have been frequent visitors to our little part of France and our four year old son, who sadly my uncle never got to meet, has become a true little Francophile. When I am at home I miss the village and my French life, the simplicity of enjoying freshly baked bread, daily walks to the Place de la Halle and the Sunday market. I hope one day to live there full-time but until that day I will continue to savour our holidays in la belle France. I will always be grateful to my uncle whom I loved dearly and remember as a great man who gave me the gift of France.

*Lorna Brett, Blackpool UK*



LETTERS *From Our Readers*



**PRACTICALLY PERFECT**

I would like to tell you about our holiday and to thank FRANCE Magazine in the process. I took my partner on our first French holiday last year, and we followed the advice offered in your magazine by taking the 'slow way'. We stayed in a small village called Piedelac in Brittany after a drive down from Calais broken by a wonderful stay in a hotel we had booked for the night. From the moment we landed in France we loved it. The roads were very good and driving was, for a change, a pleasure. The glite where we stayed was owned by an English couple, who upon arrival gave us a great piece of advice; "Now you are in France" they said, "be French. Don't worry about the time, have long lunches and slow down". This we did and had a fantastic time, everyone we met was kind and patient with us. The food was very good, the beaches were the best that we have ever seen. We also watched a wedding in a village where there was no light pollution. I have never seen so many stars in my life! We are going back next year and can't wait, thank you so much.

*Andrew Pink Ipswich, Suffolk, UK*

**GOOD SAMARITAN**

Last May, my husband and myself left St Pancras on Eurostar, arrived at Gare du Nord, travelled across Paris to arrive at Gare Montparnasse for our journey to La Rochelle. Our train was due to leave at 2.45pm. On our arrival there was a big protest going on stopping every train coming in or out of the station. A young Frenchman explained everything to me and he then stayed with us the seven hours we were at the station. During this time he phoned our hotel and reassured us. At 10pm that evening a train arrived that could take us to Bordeaux, our French friend then told us to board this train with him and alight at Poitiers which we did. He had previously phoned his partner to come to pick us up and drive us back to Niort where we were invited to stay the night with them. He then cooked us a meal at 12.15 AM that night. We had a lovely room and were told to treat their home as our own. In the morning when we woke up, he had already been out to buy breakfast. He then found out the train times for us, took us to North station and sorted out our tickets.

*We shall never forget the kindness of this*

man and his partner. We are both in our 70s so the adventure was good in the end. We enjoyed the rest of our holiday. His name was Gilles and he was only 40 years old.

*Valerie & Anthony Smith  
Hertfordshire, UK*

**CORSICAN DREAM**

Every year my husband and I holiday in France, but I have never been able to get him to Corsica. However, after the superb photos and journalism in the July issue, we are on our way thanks to FRANCE Magazine and Jane Gifford. Keep up the good work.

*Jo & Tony Tallis  
Torquay, Devon, UK*

**HAPPY AFFAIR**

Our Paris honeymoon in 1963 was the start of a long happy affair with France. Descending from the Caravelle we took a taxi to Hotel du Globe in Les Halles. Arriving late at night after a very long wedding day, we were shown to a room with a frankly unglamorous gray-brown decor, including a wardrobe whose door wouldn't

stay closed. We exchanged rather tired grins, determined to make the best of it, and to find something to wedge the wardrobe shut.

Breakfast however was fine, including our introduction to that delightful little cheese, Perit Suisse, mashed with sugar. Off we went sightseeing in going away suits and newish shoes - as one did in the 1960s.

Returning footsore to ask for our key, we were told that our room had been changed. To our amazement and delight we were escorted to the bridal suite - a splendid contrast to last night's accommodation. This set the tone for the rest of the week!

We always thought this lovely wedding present was the result of them finding confetti on the rug, but perhaps it was simply our body-language!

*Merci pour toujours, Hotel du Globe! No sign of it now, as most of the district of Les Halles was bulldozed in the late 1960s when the markets there were transferred to the Paris outskirts. We're left with just the very fond memory of the hotel as it was, and an abiding love of Perit Suisse!*

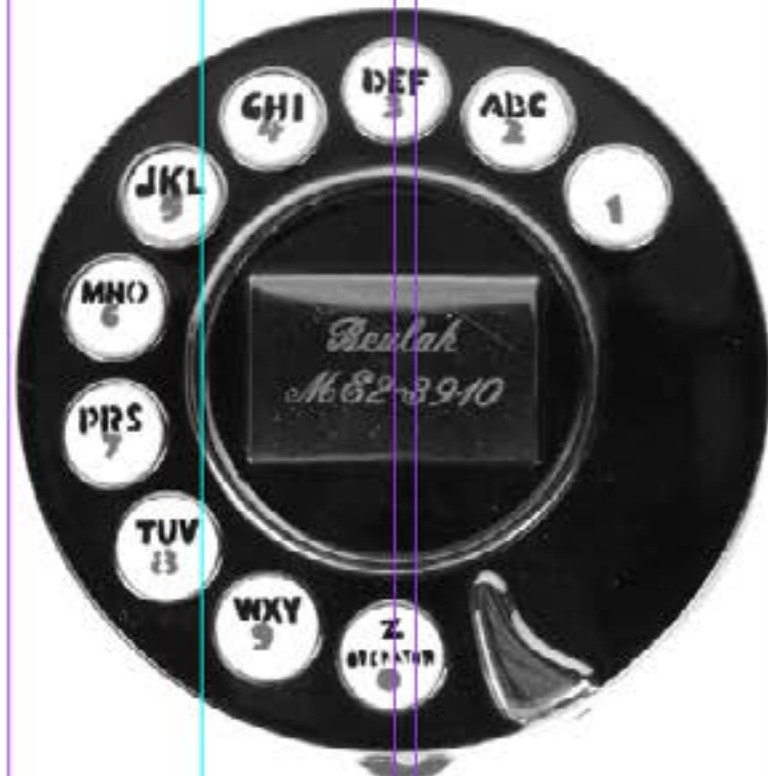
*Indulge yourself, try it with a teaspoon of miel d'acacia!*  
*Tom & Peggy Kennedy, Scotland*

**AN AMERICAN IN FRANCE**

Originally from Florida, Ryan O'Connell grew up in a French/American household and made regular visits to his mother's homeland as a child. In 2005, the family decided to move for good. Today the O'Connells own Domaine O'Vinyard, a successful vineyard and B&B in the Languedoc region.

"I live in a tiny village with an enormous name: Villemausseau. It's on the northern border of Carcassonne in the Languedoc region. When I first heard the village name pronounced, I secretly hoped that it was derived from the Occitan word for a mustachioed man or something like that.

"My favourite thing to do in France is eat. My mom's rich culinary background has always been a strong presence in our family. We spend a lot of time around the kitchen table. And it's great to live in a country that still has a respect for the long lunch. I think French gastronomy is amazing. France is such a diverse country and it has so many different environments, soil types and climates. You can find every kind of produce here (as long as it's in season!) and the quality of food is amazing.



"I'm still adjusting to France every day. And I think France is adjusting to me a little bit too. There's a large amount of history and culture in a department like Aude. But at the same time, there's still an opportunity for foreigners to preserve their own cultures while adapting to their new environment.

"To get a taste of home in France I keep in touch with friends and family through the Internet. And they all want to come and visit the vineyard from time to time, so I still get to see them.

"If I only had 24 hours to spend in France I would eat two or three really good meals with really good friends."

**HAVE YOU GOT A TRAVEL TALE TO TELL? SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS, TIPS AND MEMORIES WITH US!**

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FRANCE *Culture, Art, & Events*

CREDITS

Photographed by Marie Testine



Tony Miles and Bradley Strong graceful performance captivate their audience

KICKER

Ten years after their sold out performance, the dance troupe returns.

HEADLINE

## PARIS OPERA BALLET IS HEADED TO NEW YORK

By Amanda Foreman

Between the Frederick Wiseman documentary "La Danse" and live HD showings, the Paris Opera Ballet has been a frequent presence on New York screens in recent years. But onstage is another matter: the company hasn't performed in New York City since 1996. That absence is now being rectified: The troupe has announced that it will appear in the 2012 Lincoln Center Festival as part of its first American tour in more than a decade.

After stops in Chicago (at the Harris Theater) and Washington (at the Kennedy Center), it will take up residence in New York from July 11 to 22 next year, performing "Suite en Blanc," "L'Arlésienne," "Bohème," "Giselle" and Pina Bausch's version of "Orpheus and Eurydice." The company last visited the United States — specifically San Francisco and Los Angeles — in 2001.

FOLIO

12 November 2011

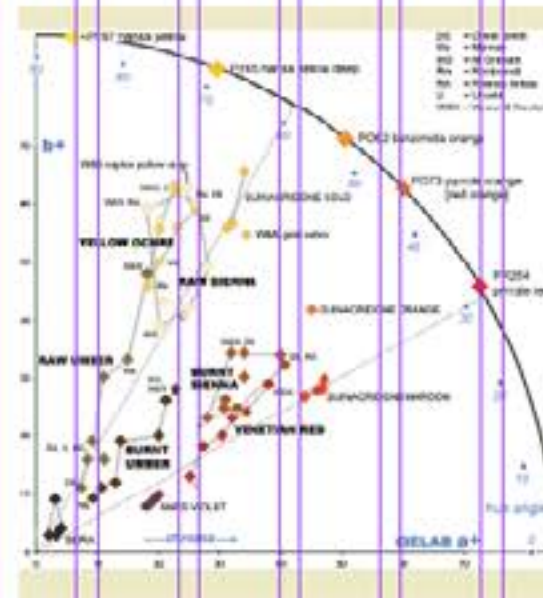
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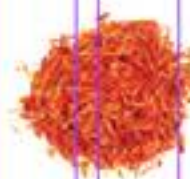
CAPTION

PULL-QUOTE

"ARTISTS HAVE EVERYTHING THEY NEED TO TURN THEIR VISIONS INTO POTENTIAL MASTERPIECES."



PANELS, BOX COPY, SIDEBARS, AND INFOGRAPHICS PANELS



Tyrian Red



Raw Umber



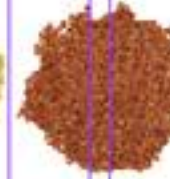
Umber



Calcium Red



Chrome Green



Burnt Umber

## THE ART OF TRUE COLOR

If, after marveling at the wealth of 19th-century paintings at the Musée d'Orsay, you'd like to prolong the experience, take a short walk down the quai to Sennelier, where many of those artists bought their supplies. Not much has changed since Cézanne, Pissarro and Bonnard last stopped in. A long wooden counter holds glass cases with paintbrushes of every size. Floor-to-ceiling cabinets are crammed with every type of pigment: watercolors, pastels, colored pencils, tubes of oil paint and gouache, powdered colors to mix yourself. Rolls of canvas lean against the walls and flat drawers hold papers of every weight, texture, size and color. On one wall hang palettes of varying sizes; in another corner, a long beige artist's smock. The narrow staircase winds up to several small rooms that stock more creative necessities; the stairwell itself is lined with faded old photographs: a 19th-century workman grinding colors, an early view of the shop looking remarkably the same.

Dominique Sennelier himself might be behind the counter, helping customers, switching easily from French to English or counting the tubes of paint a young art student has heaped onto the wooden counter. His grandfather, Gustave Sennelier, founded the business in 1887, choosing this location on the Quai Voltaire, half a block from the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and facing the Louvre. Knowledgeable about chemistry, Sennelier used mineral pigments that opened up new color palettes to artists; his fabrication methods also improved consistency and gave artists more flexibility in blending tones. With fourth-generation Sophie Sennelier now assisting her father, the family firm continues to innovate today; its colors are still prized and two more Paris shops have opened, offering artists everything they need to turn their visions into potential

*continued on page 62*

JUMLINE

FOOTER



One of the oldest of the traditional apéros is that essential ingredient of the dry martini, vermouth—in this case, Noilly Prat. Created in 1813 by herbalist Joseph Noilly, France's first dry aperitif became Noilly Prat when Joseph's son Louis created a company with his brother-in-law Claudius Prat to commercialize his father's elixir. It's still made in Marseillan, a village on the Mediterranean coast near Montpellier, and its fabrication process has remained the same for nearly 200 years. Two white wine varieties from Languedoc, Picpoul and Clairette, are aged separately, first in caves for eight months in large oak vats then, transferred to smaller oak barrels, in an outdoor area called the Enclos, where they remain for a year. While indoor aging results in 3% evaporation (called the part des anges, or angels' portion) the outdoor rate is twice that, yielding wines with lower alcohol content but more intense flavor. The maître de chai then blends the dry, full-bodied wines with raspberry and lemon liqueurs as well as a secret mixture of aromatics—bitter orange peel and some 20 herbs and spices, including chamomile, coriander and nutmeg, macerated directly in the wine. After pressing and filtration, the wine rests another six months in oak barrels before bottling, resulting in a flavorful potion that, while perfect in a martini, is well worth enjoying on its own, chilled or on the rocks.

Several decades after the creation of Noilly Prat, a new batch of French aperitifs appeared in response to a government appeal for a palatable way for troops in North Africa to absorb enough quinine—the bitter bark of the Peruvian cinchona tree—to ward off malaria. One of the earliest formulas to meet with commercial success was St Raphaël. According to company history, in 1830 a certain Docteur Juppet worked such long hours night after night to create a tasty quinine-based drink that his eyes began to fail him. Remembering

the Bible story in which the archangel Raphael cured Tobias of blindness, he prayed to the saint and was rewarded not only with the recovery of his sight but also with a winning formula that he named for his heavenly helper. The sweeter St Raphaël Rouge tempers the astringency of quinine and bitter oranges with red wine and cocoa, while the wonderfully fragrant Doré or Gold version, also called Ambre—is based on white wine and also includes vanilla. Both formulas are among the easiest of quinine aperitifs to like.

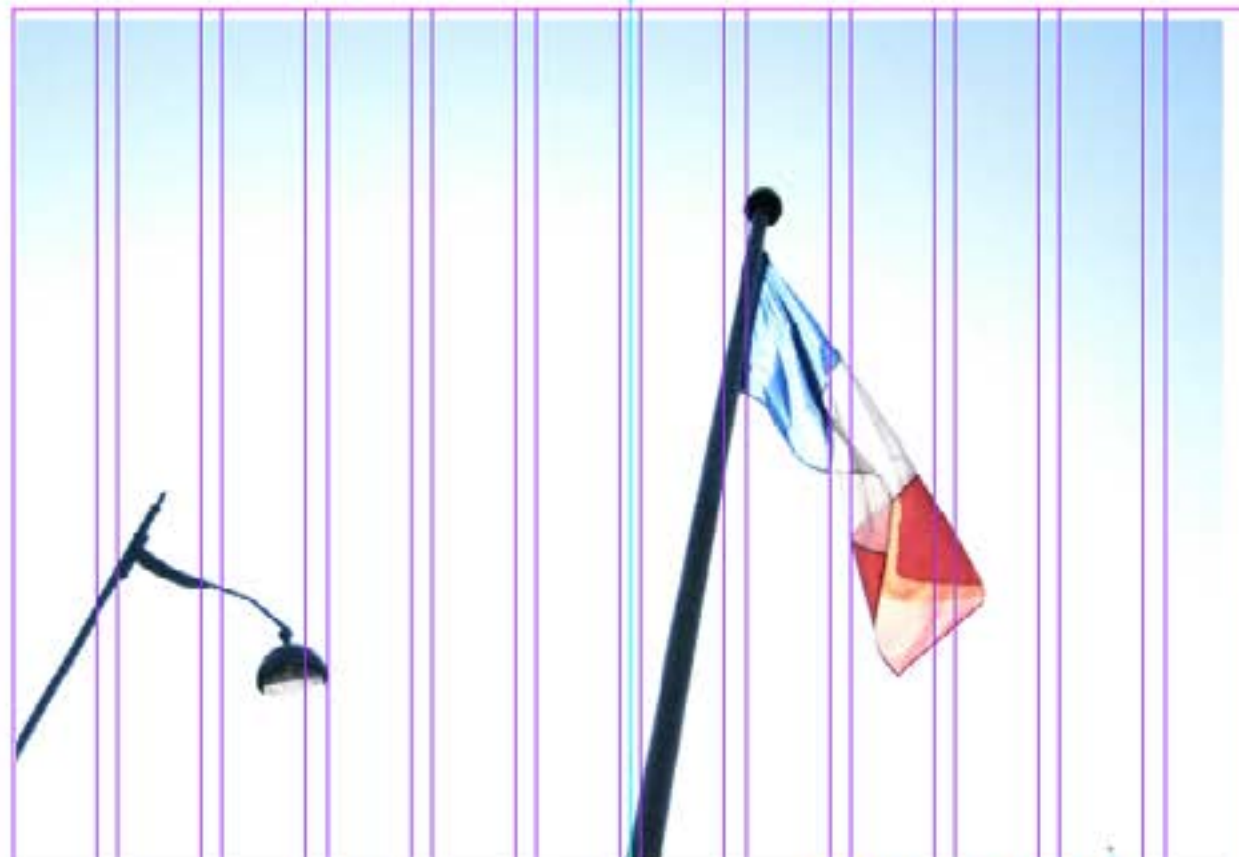
Joseph Dubonnet was another aperitif maker who quickly realized the importance of advertising. He came up with his namesake apéro in Paris in 1846 by blending quinine with orange peel, chamomile, cinnamon and other aromatics. The original Dubonnet Blanc is dry, herbal and aromatic, while the Rouge is sweeter, spicier and richer in flavor. If Dubonnet became one of the most familiar aperitif names world-wide, it's partly thanks to some memorable ad campaigns, the best known of which is the famous 1930s poster by the artist known as Cassandre, using a clever play on words—a funny little man gazing at his full glass, drinking it and refilling it—Dubo, Dubon, Dubonnet.

Byrrh (pronounced beer—which can lead to some confusion when ordering) is another red-wine-based quinine drink. Created in 1866 by Simon Violet in Thuir, near the Spanish border in the eastern Pyrenees, it was promoted as "tonic, stimulant and hygienic". Its flavor is refreshing and slightly nutty, and it's still got quite a following—some 120,000 visitors a year make the pilgrimage to Thuir to tour the company's 1892-vintage building (one of which was built by Gustave Eiffel), where Byrrh and several other aperitifs are now made. In fact, Caves Byrrh, part of the Pernod-Ricard group since 1976, is now the largest producer of wine-based aperitifs in France.

# NOILLY PRAT ST. RAPHAËL DUBONNET BYRRH







## HOW TO BE FRENCH: MASTERING THE FRENCH PUN BY STEPHEN CLARKE

I was once told a very bad French joke by someone whose excuse was that it was *une blague pour enfants* - a children's joke. If that was the case, it shows how French minds are moulded at a dangerously young age, and explains a lot about life here. The joke was simple, and I'm sorry but I have to tell it here: 'What does one do with lettuce before eating them? One kills them.'

OK, while you pick yourself up from the floor and try to mend your split sides, I'll explain. In French, a lettuce is *une laitue*. And 'one kills them' is '*on les tue*', which sounds like '*on la tue*'. And that's it. Ha ha ha (or as the French say, ah ah ah - yes, they laugh backwards, just as they call a walk *ralaie un talkewalkie*).

It may come as some consolation to know that this 'joke' will cause most French people to groan, but that doesn't really explain why they don't spend all of their time groaning as they walk the streets, read their newspapers and listen to people in cafes. Puns are as integral to French life as baguettes and short policemen.

Of course, every nation loves its puns, but France seems to need a constant fix. I recently made a study of some of the terrible puns in Parisian hairdressers' names. My favourite has to be one that you see everywhere - *Evolutif*. It is a French slang word for hair, and *evolutif* is an adjective meaning something that evolves, so this name is actually quite clever. Come here and your hair will evolve (hopefully not into a different species).

There are endless French hairdressers called *Ac'tif* (notice how they often add an apostrophe to make the pun even more obvious), *Infini'tif* (a rather rash promise there), *Inver'tif*, etc etc. Near

the nuclear power stations, there are no doubt lots of hairdressers called *Radioac'tif*. Driving through Normandy recently, I kept seeing variations on a different theme, puns on the word *coiffeur*. There's a *vero decoiffeur*, which means that something blows you away. And I saw a shop, no doubt belonging to someone called *Lorraine Dupont*, called *L.D. Coiff*, or 'she blows you away'. I groaned so much I almost crashed into a short policeman.

The puns aren't limited to hairdressers, of course. They're used a lot in political posters, probably to give the impression that if you agree with the message, you're as clever as the person who thought of the slogan. I saw some anti-banking posters after the credit crunch, for example, saying simply '*Le malheur des uns fait le bonheur des autres*', which is a pun on the proverb, '*Le malheur des uns fait le bonheur des autres*'.

In English, we talk about meat and poison, but literally this means 'one person's misfortune is another's good luck'. On the poster, the *bonheur* (happiness or good luck), had been changed to *bonus*, as in the vast sum paid to someone who has just lost all your savings. It was clever, but you had to look twice to notice it, and even then, I personally spent more time thinking about how clever it was than the message behind it. In France, though, this doesn't matter - the important thing is to show that you're clever; it's the pun that counts.

So if you're speaking French and the stupidest, weakest pun springs to mind, don't hesitate to inflict it on people. That groan you'll probably hear is one of their highest accolades. 🍷

*Masterpiece.*

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