JOIE DE VIVRE

Our pick of splendid things, great and small, that showcase the joy of French life, from what to buy to where to go...

LIFT YOUR SPIRITS

French Compagnie XY is known for its poetic and creative spin on acrobatics. Following its popular debut show Le Grand C in 2009, the group has toured worldwide with more than 500 performances. French Compagnie XY is known for its poetic and creative spin on acrobatics. Following its popular debut show Le Grand C in 2009, the group has toured worldwide with more than 500 performances.

WHERE TO DRINK?

For wine drinkers, there's white Burgundy and then there's Chablis. Renowned for its chalky, super-deck Chardonnays, the best place to savour Chablis is at La Chablisienne winegrowers' cooperative.

TRAVEL BACK IN TIME

Considered the heart of Burgundy, no trip to Beaune is complete without a visit to L’Hôtel-Dieu, a former hospital turned museum famous for its multi-coloured roofs and hosting the acclaimed annual Hospices de Beaune wine auction.

ON AIME

With fresh tones of lily, wood and green tea, this candle from Lola James Harper captures the essence of Bois de Vincennes park in Paris.

SHEDDING SOME LIGHT

A 6,000-year-old piece of jewellery is bound to hold secrets — but how to crack them? According to scientists at the Université Paris-Saclay, the answer lies in a special type of light technology. The ancient Pakistani amulet in question was originally made by lost-wax casting, a process still used today, but researchers uncovered new details via 'full-field photoluminescence imaging'. Shining light in the object's UV/visible range, they made a couple of amazing discoveries:

- Firstly, that it was cast whole without any soldered pieces and,
- Secondly, that it was made with very pure copper, a age of the region's advanced technological expertise.

ON ÉCOUTE

Caravan Palace debuted with their eponymous album in 2008. Leading the modern ‘electro-swing’ scene, they’ve gained popularity over the years with a number of demos and promos singles on the internet, amassing a dedicated online following.

IF YOU LIKE THIS, YOU MIGHT LIKE...


ON INSTAFRANCE

There’s something enchanting about portes anciennes and these Instagrammers have captured the most crumbly and colourful.

FROM LEFT: A wooden door in Aix-en-Provence snapped by karinkloo; a flaking set of doors in Margan from provence snapped by slhokaa; an ornate entrance in Lyon from 66albe.
Drenched in ivy, the regal Hôtel de France wears its greenery like a regal gown. It's steeped in history too, having been privately and independently owned for more than 100 years. Inside and out, the building retains its Art Deco charm with a number of traditional features, while feeling fresh thanks to an extensive refurbishment in 2014.

Found in the northern tip of the Loire Valley, the hotel overlooks La Chartre-sur-le-Loir’s main square and is ideally positioned for a stroll around the town. It also boasts excellent access to the main motorways, heading north to nearby Le Mans, south to Tours and Bordeaux, and east to Paris. Tours airport and several mainline train stations are also close by. Even if you’re not roaming far, there’s plenty to see and do locally, from visiting the famous Le Mans 24-hour circuit to following a trail through Bercé forest with its swaths of feathery bracken and grand oak trees.

After exploring the beautiful surrounding area, the Hotel de France is the perfect haven in which to unwind. There are 22 luxurious, individually designed bedrooms with classic touches and en-suite facilities, plus a heated swimming pool, garden and sun-drenched terrace for ultimate relaxation. Meanwhile, the on-site restaurant Le Relais de Ronsard welcomes guests to enjoy seasonal dishes prepared by its experienced chefs, whether it's a leisurely lunch, family celebration or candlelit dinner for two.

A retro escape in one of France’s most magical regions, the Hotel de France has earned its prestige with the likes of Steve McQueen, Sir Stirling Moss OBE, Derek Bell MBE and even President Kennedy’s family passing through its doors over the years.

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ON ADORE Tuck into these gluten-free chocolate madeleines or opt for the classic flavour with Mrs Crimble’s ‘Authentically French’ range.

www.mrs crimble s.com