

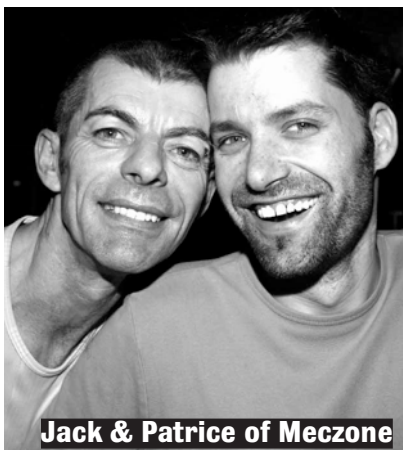
**Cassandre
& Nicolas of Full Metal**



Gilles & Bertrand of Micman



**Rumuald & Pascal
of Le 48 Condorcet**



Jack & Patrice of Meczone

PARIS

Coupling an inimitable cultural heritage with an open embrace of modernity, Paris truly is a place where tout est possible

Michael Thompson

Paris will put determination in your step. This busy and industrious city combines old with modern, formal with relaxed, to create lifestyles quite particular to this place. Friendly and sincere, serious at their work, Parisians play with gusto during leisure time and have an astute appreciation for quality in all things. Secure in their own culture, they're also curious and open to useful or interesting customs, gadgets, and art forms from abroad. Many things American in particular have thus been adopted as their own, often with a Gallic twist. Such receptiveness has produced a dynamic, ethnically diverse, and richly endowed gem of a metropolis, offering most anything and everything an urban center can, with a population that will engage, intrigue, and enchant any visitor who'll open up, even a little, to the seductive possibilities.

The artifacts of French history and civilization draw hordes of tourists to walk the halls of the Louvre and Pompidou Center, to sample the lavish and sublime pleasures of French cuisine, and to enjoy more ordinary amusements such as a stroll along the banks of the Seine to browse the booksellers' stalls, or through formal parks such as the Gardens of Luxembourg. From the heights atop Montmartre or the Eiffel Tower the city can be appreciated as a vast and complex tapestry. Shopping options are legend, from hypermarkets

to tiny boutiques, from *haute couture* to bargain basements. Paris also offers the joy of a sidestreet discovery: finding some little thing, and sharing a common passion with the shopkeeper behind the counter. In such simple pleasures this city shines.

Writers, poets, artists, and exiles have long found stimulation, vindication, sanctuary, and one another in Paris. Along with their intellectual or artistic endeavors, individuals could also rediscover personal respect and hospitality, perhaps in keeping with those revolutionary French ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity. From black American singers, musicians, and writers, to dispossessed Russian aristocracy, many have obtained refuge and affirmation in Paris. Some died here, including the Irish writer and playwright broken by British gay scandal; Oscar Wilde's grave can be found at the Père Lachaise Cemetery, and it's a Mecca for an international steam of visitors who leave lipstick kisses on his tomb.

Most visitors come in warmer months, but winters here are not severe, with daffodils in bloom by January's end. Besides the traditional attractions, there are bountiful offerings of theater, concerts, and film festivals to choose among. Fewer tourists mean less jostle, and greater hotel availability. Combined with seasonal price breaks (and drastic January retail sales) it makes all seasons appealing — although Parisian springtime and fall are legendary for good reason. In

August, the city all but shuts down as the population heads out to the countryside and beaches, *en masse*.

Don't let tales of high prices or poor exchange rates discourage you. With advance planning, decent rooms can be found off-season for as little as 35 euros per night. Besides a splurge or two for some truly memorable meals you can keep costs down by sampling from an abundance of inexpensive food options: from Asian take-out to simple but delicious omelets at brasseries, or wedges of quiche, pastries, or delicious crusty fresh sandwiches from the ubiquitous bakeries. Sidewalk crepes, spicy Middle-Eastern fast food, and many other nibblies will more than sustain you for just a few euros a day.

A short hop on the metro can introduce you to whole new neighborhoods, where real Parisians live and don't pay tourist prices. But even at the center, for a couple of euros and a tip, buying *un café* will give you a seat among the many splendid sidewalk cafes for refreshment, a chat, or just to watch the many-faceted nuances of Parisian street life go swirling by your table.

Le Marais

For gay visitors this *quartier* of narrow streets that epitomize old Paris is the grail. Lined with cafes, restaurants, bars, boulangeries, patisseries, boutiques, theaters, and museums, the Marais has been *très gai* for years, and many come to shop, cafe-sit, cruise, or just to watch the parade. The Marais's central artery is la rue Sainte Croix de la Bretonnerie, where motor traffic is restricted, giving room for a calmer and more pedestrian pace.

Right on this main drag, **L'Open Cafe** (17 rue des Archives) is classic Marais, and classic cafe. *Les garçons* here are very cute and quite playful as they hustle to serve a gorgeous club crowd. Both inside and out on the sidewalk terrace (under heat lamps) the seating can get scarce as it's a high-volume crossroads in this gayest and most fashionable district. This great place to meet friends, watch the passing throng,

take a coffee break, or have drinks before doing the later night spots is also a good option for a light meal to tide you over until dinner.

Around the corner, **Le Raidd** (23 rue du Temple) has signature nude shower shows that range from discreet to quite explicit depending on the dancer of the night or his mood. Their handsome crowd goes shoulder-to-shoulder all night at the mostly standing-room only ground level, but downstairs they have a lounge to sprawl comfortably. Their amazing barstaff often go shirtless, displaying hard and chiseled good-looks that rival those of the performers in their stripper/shower shows. Open from 5 a.m. for happy hour, Raidd has a line at the door on weekend nights, especially after 11.

The nearby **Le Mixer Bar** (23 rue Sainte Croix de la Bretonnerie) has a hot crowd and the music is cool. They have Sunday afternoon tea dances here, too.

A bit further on, **Le Central** (33 rue Vieille-du-Temple) is a Marais original just below the landmark Hotel Central Marais, with engaging, often bi-lingual barmen—much like their customers. Also here is the **Amnesia Cafe** (42 rue Vieille-du-Temple), a large bar serving cool music and light fare to a stylish, handsome crowd, popular at cocktail hours.

There's nothing like knowing your customers, and the conversationally-gifted barmen at the long-popular **One Way** (28 rue Charlot) know them well. This April 11, they'll celebrate their 18th anniversary. Many here are longtime regulars, and the ceiling is jammed with a gallery of souvenir customers' caps. The bar opens daily at 5 p.m., doesn't take long to get crowded, and goes until a closing time of 5 a.m. on weekends. In the wake of new regulations, One Way accommodates Parisian tobacco habits with a smoking bar featuring a modern air filtering system.

Other local, mostly guys' bars include the older **Le Duplex** (25 rue Michel le Comte) with a recent face-lift, a youthful late-evening crowd, dark walls adorned with artwork and a mix

of house and jazz music; the newer **L'Enchanteur** (15 rue Michel le Comte), with a comfortable pub ambiance; **Le Feeling Bar** (43 rue Sainte-Croix-de-la-Bretonnerie), a hole-in-the-wall neighborhood bar that's been a local fixture for years; **Le Scarron** (3 rue G. Langevin), a small piano bar with congenial conversational interludes; and **Zebaar** (41 rue des Blancs Manteaux), a flamboyant but convivial little bar and restaurant on two levels, each with its own atmosphere.

A bit further out, **Le CUD** (12 rue des Haudriettes) is a men's bar with a modern upstairs bar and an attractive downstairs grotto with arched stone ceilings where a mixed audience comes to dance later, after midnight.

Some gay favorites near Hotel de Ville include: **Cox** (15 rue des Archives), which opens onto the sidewalk during good weather, and where the crowd spills out into the street; **Le Quetzal** (10 rue de la Verrerie), a long-popular men's bar that remains one of the must-see gay spots in the Marais; and **Tout Arrivé** (16 rue de la Verrerie), a small bar with downstairs dance floor.

Les Halles and beyond

From Le Marais to Les Halles (just west of Pompidou Center) is a few minutes walk. Paris's central marketplace in centuries past, the center of Les Halles is today a teeming modern indoor subterranean complex of shops and restaurants, and even a stylish public pool. It's surrounded by streets filled with boutiques, cafes, bars, card shops, discount leather and shoe stores, porn stores/arcades, sex boutiques, internet cafes, plus American fast-food joints. This bustling area extends down the pedestrian streets of Rambuteau, St. Denis, and beyond. The district is also home to several of Paris's most popular gay establishments.

Banana Cafe (13 rue de la Ferronnerie) is a Paris icon where go-go boys dance and strip on a small table and atop the bar in the middle of the always-crowded main room. Turn it up again downstairs where the crowd

PARIS

BARS & CLUBS

- 22) Le Banana Cafe**
13, rue de la Ferrière
- 1) Le Banque Club**
23, rue de Penthièvre
- 7) Bears' Den**
6, rue des Lombards
- 20) Blue Square**
8, rue Brantôme
- 30) Entre Deux Eaux**
45, rue de la Folie Méricourt
- 26) Les Bains Douches**
7, rue du Bourg-L'Abbé
- 5) Le Central**
33, rue Vieille du Temple
- 34) Le CUD**
12, rue des Haudriettes
- 2) Le Depot**
10, rue Aux Ours
- 8) Full Metal**
40, rue des Blancs Manteaux
- 4) L'Impact**
18, rue Grenéta
- 13) Keller's**
14, rue Keller
- 10) MecZone**
27, rue Turgot
- 11) Le Mic-Man**
24, rue Geoffroy-l'Angevin
- 19) Le Mixer Bar**
23, rue Ste-Croix-de-la-Bretonnerie
- 12) One Way**
28, rue Charlot
- 39) L'Open Cafe**
17, rue des Archives

- 35) Le Palmier**
16, rue des Lombards
- 9) QG**
12, rue Simon Le Franc
- 14) Quetzal Bar**
10, rue de la Verrerie
- 3) Le Raidd**
23, rue du Temple
- 47) Le Transfert**
7, rue de la Sourdière
- 6) Le Vagabond**
14, rue Thérèse

RESTAURANTS

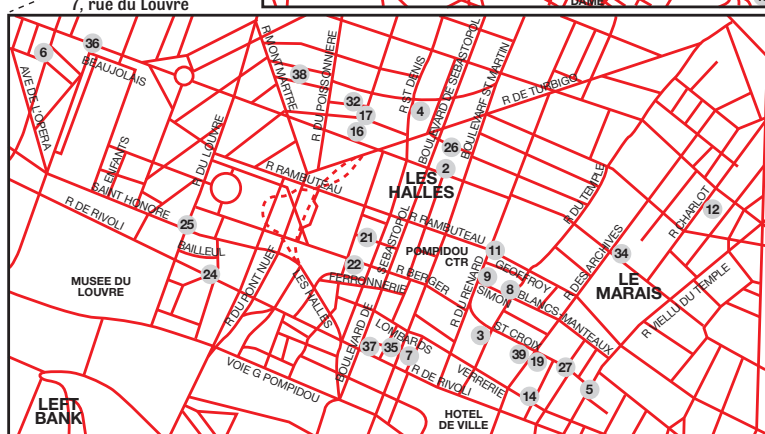
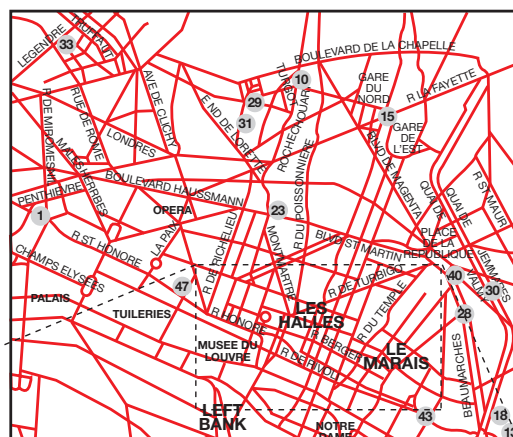
- 29) Le 48 Condorcet**
48, rue Condorcet
- 31) Coté 9eme**
5, rue Henri Monnier
- 43) O2F**
4, rue du Roi de Sicile
- 17) Pigs'z**
5, rue Marie Stuart
- 32) Stuart Friendly**
16, rue Marie Stuart
- 16) Aux Trois Petits Cochons**
31, rue Tiquetonne
- 6) Le Vagabond**
14, rue Thérèse

HOTELS

- 28) Hotel Beaumarchais**
3, rue Oberkampf
- 5) Hotel Central Marais**
2, rue Ste-Croix-de-la-Bretonnerie
- 36) Hotel Louvre Riche-lieu**
51, rue de Richelieu
- 40) Hotel Mondia**
22, rue du Grand Prieuré

OTHER

- 18) Atlantide Sauna Hamman**
13, rue Parrot
- 21) Boxxman**
2, rue de la Cossonnerie
- 23) IDM Sauna**
4, rue du Faubourg Montmartre
- 1EM** (2 locations)
01.42.74.01.61
- 24) 43, rue de l'Arbre Sec**
- 27) 16, rue Ste-Croix-de-la-Bretonnerie**
- 15) Key West Sauna**
141, rue Lafayette
- 33) King Sauna**
21, rue Bridaine
- 37) Projection Video**
21, rue des Lombards
- 25) Gym Louvre and Sauna**
7, rue du Louvre



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packs in and starts to sweat. The wonderfully affable DJ Jean-Phi sets the pace with his dance beats, and swirling lights play through the fog and across the hot and glistening bodies of dancers in motion. Staff here is young, delightful, and charmingly unaffected. They dance among themselves and with customers and strippers as they work. Let your hair down; it's easy to join in the fun. After midnight the piano bar crowd gathers downstairs with *chansonniers* of every nationality chiming in.

Le Bears' Den (6 rue des Lombards) presents a warm and welcoming ambiance on another of the area's busy pedestrian thoroughfares. Like bear bars the world over, the guys who run this place, and those who frequent it, will put you immediately at ease. The large crowd overflows, drinks in hand, from the wall-to-wall inner throng, into the heated terrace area, spilling into the street beyond at cocktail hour. Bears' Den has frequent theme nights, and they also have dancing downstairs. It qualifies as a cruising bar because while not in plain view, there is a secluded area for more private encounters.

Le Wolfbar (37 rue des Lombards) is another men's bar to check out nearby, and **Le Tropic Cafe** (66 rue des Lombards) has a reliably beautiful crowd, a great terrace, and extra-late hours. Also on this street **Le Palmier** (16 rue des Lombards) is a *bar de nuit* pulling a chic set and open until 6 a.m. for night people. They also have tables overlooking the street from their heated terrace.

Near the Palais Royal, **Le Vagabond** (14 rue Thérèse) offers cocktails, dinner, and camaraderie. It's one of the city's most revered resto-bars, dating back to 1956. The menu features traditional French cuisine, and the atmosphere is intimate.

Le César (4 rue Chabanaise), a chic bar and restaurant near Metro Pyramide, once among the most popular in the '60s, has returned to its gay roots.

Near Bastille, the neighborhood bar **Interface** (34 rue Keller) is open afternoons with a mellow ambiance that



**Thomas
of Le
Raidd**



Arnaud of Le Raidd



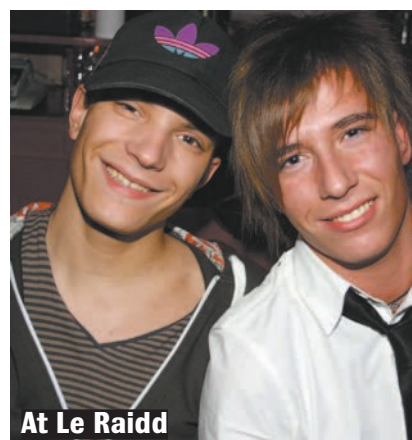
Guillaume & Thierry of Open Cafe



At Le Transfert



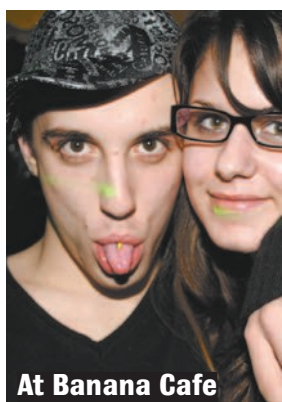
Mickael of Banana Cafe



At Le Raidd



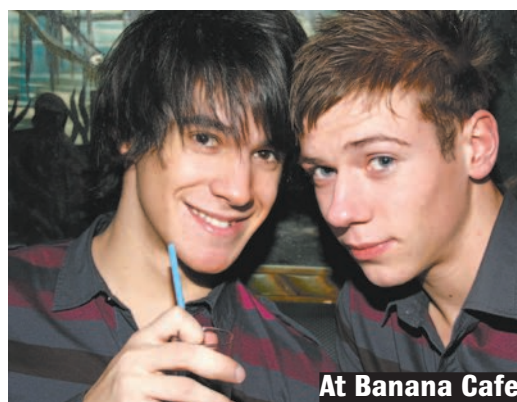
Fabien & Jules of Open Cafe



At Banana Cafe



At Banana Cafe



At Banana Cafe



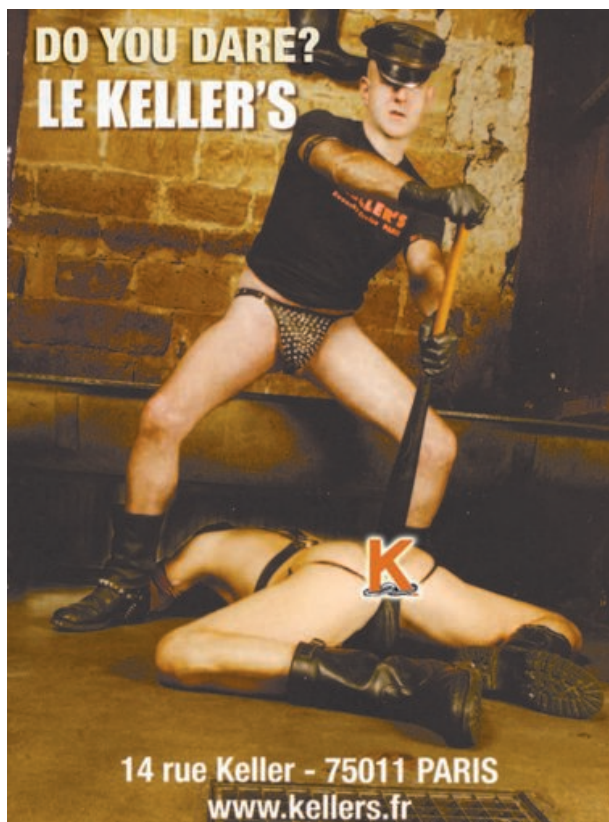
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shifts to techno and house later in the evening, and showcases emerging artists' work. **Le Baxo** (21 rue Juliette Dodu) is a new gay-friendly restaurant and bar near Place Colonel Fabien, with elaborate American-style Sunday brunches and dancing after that.

Rex (5 Boulevard Poissonnière) is a famous Paris music and performance venue with an international reputation in a beautiful old cinema setting. Their mixed alternative crowd includes trend-setting young gay people.

Backrooms and cruising bars

The French enjoy sex as much as a good discussion on politics or religion over good food and wine. Sex in public venues or in private clubs has a long history in Paris with many a dark nook and subterranean cranny providing discreet areas for sexplay for as far back as memory goes, with little official interference. The numerous and varied sex bars here provide a wide variety of options for many tastes in addition to the action in the city's many saunas. Among small ancient stone cellar rooms with arched-ceilings the mood is set with low lighting, the flicker of fuck videos, and the close proximity of other men in hot and heavy sex play. Slings, glory holes, cabins, and piss benches are often provided.

Some bars have signature themes, like always totally naked or regular fist-fighting events. Others alternate between such events and others, like nights for piss aficionados, skinheads, or sneaker sniffers. Some have showers (most don't) but most have afternoon parties on weekends.

For early starters **Bar Le Mic Man** (24 rue Geoffroy l'Angevin) is directly across from the Pompidou Center with opening hours from midday. The bar's many regular customers come for libation (usually a draft beer), peanuts, and a chat with the barman, and then disappear to le cave the funky downstairs cruise spot. Guys vanish for much longer than they need to pee, perhaps because the toilets are right next to the



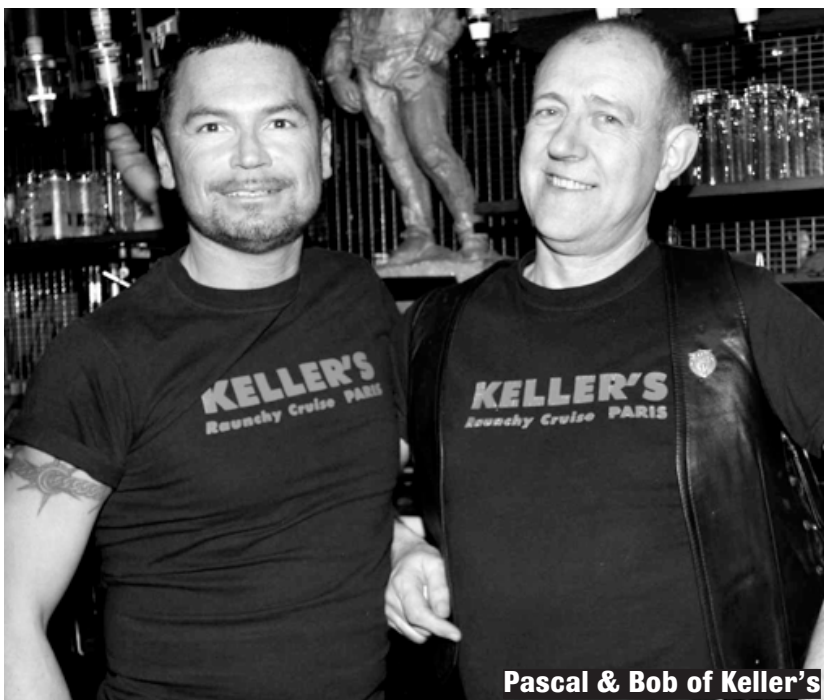
Fabrice of One Way



Jean & Jean-Marc of Bears' Den



David, Guy, & David of Boxxman



Pascal & Bob of Keller's

main playroom where hard-core videos provide the light. There's steady traffic here from noon to 2 a.m. Bruno, the boss himself, works regular day shifts during the week and they boast the best happy-hour drinks values of any Paris bar.

Full Metal (40 rue des Blancs Man-teaux) is another cellar cruise bar with military-style netting, slings, jails, private booths, and a locally renowned piss bench. The testosterone-charged atmosphere here is hot, with an ambient temperature usually warm enough to go shirtless – which hosts Cassandre and Nicolas often do when serving the frequently crowded house. Enter Full Metal on the street level where the *vestiaire* and *toilettes* are located, and head downstairs to find the action.

Behind the secured doors of **QG** (12 rue Simon Le Franc) patrons must observe a dress code of leather, latex, or a uniform (or at least, jeans with t-shirt). And as with some of the other cruising bars, there's a shower for raunchy sex pigs who wish not to offend public sensibilities upon leaving. Saturdays and Sundays afternoons here are nude from 1 to 8 p.m.

L'Impact (18 rue Greneta) has been one-hundred percent naked for years with a mix of tourists, French out-of-towners, and locals. On Sundays at 9 p.m. they offer a free buffet spread.

Le Deep (80 quai de l'Hotel de Ville) is a sex club on three levels that admits women, but where the hottest action is between men.

Le Depot (10 rue aux Ours), known as “the big one,” features a dance floor, Europe's largest backroom, total black-out areas, and lots of corridors, mazes, skin-flick displays, and cabins throughout their multi-level complex. Depot pulls a big crowd with a wider range of ages than most sex bars, and on Sunday afternoons in particular for their Sunday tea dance from 5 p.m., the crowd is at its youngest and prettiest.

Next (87 rue St. Honoré) is another Les Halles sex cruising complex with labyrinths, cabins, and video screens; open every day from noon, and non-stop on weekends.

First among celebrated male cruising bars located elsewhere in the city is the famous **Le Keller's** (14 rue Keller), open daily from 10:30 p.m. to 2 a.m. (till 4 a.m. weekends). This highly evolved playspace was conscientiously designed to provide optimal lighting, warmth, and drainage (the latter for events like their piss parties) for patrons' comfort and stimulation. First and third Sunday afternoons feature Fist Parties, with the more extreme Deeper Fist coming first – get there before 5 p.m. On second Sundays each month they feature Golden Shower parties. Keller's ambiance is congenial, but the dress code here leans to leather or military, and requires a minimum of jeans and a t-shirt, with absolutely no colognes allowed! Shower facilities are included, but bring your own screw-on showerhead/douche if you plan to wash up. Consult the bar's web site, Kellers.fr, for tips on hardware, upcoming parties, and other details about this 32-year operation.

Quintessential Paris is said to be in the neighborhoods surrounding Sacre-Coeur, the famous icon sitting atop one of the city's few hills. A historical marker here tells how the area has been continuously inhabited since the time of the Druids. At the base of the funicular is the red-light district of Pigalle, a distinctive neighborhood of many bargain stores, bars, and restaurants.

Among the bars is a local gay favorite, **MecZone** (27 rue Turgot; Metro Anvers), celebrating 17 years of excellence. Its independent reputation (this gang views its location outside the crowded Marais as an asset) is built on friendliness, personified by its barmen who are full of zest and bilingual charm. The action stations downstairs are where you'll find slings and a *cabine collective* (as in “group action”). Open daily from 9 p.m. until 5 a.m., MecZone has naked parties on weekends, starting at 2 p.m.

Another jewel has been described with a certain amount of pride as “*le plus trash de Paris*.” **Le Transfert** (3 rue de la Sourdière; Metro Pyramides) is where, in times past, Paris's sex dogs would “transfer” to after the other bars

closed, sniffing their way to the good stuff. Now, of course, many sex bars are open well past 2 a.m., but that hasn't changed the appeal of this well-used bar, where all the action is at ground level, so you enter directly into it. Le Transfert does not have a shower, so customers will often bring a change of clothing. Regular hours are midnight until dawn, with various special nights, and there's never a cover.

Just off the Champs d'Élysées, **Le Banque Club** (23 rue de Penthievre; Metro Miromesnil) is open seven days a week (until 5 a.m. on weekends) and has several floors of solid, clean fun with just the right lighting. The marble stairs leading up to the reception area and down to the new vault are the only vestiges of a former incarnation as a bank. The young staff gives a professional, courteous greeting at the bar-reception area, and there's big screen cinema if you need to surface for air from time to time. They have showers, too, with towels available at reception. Sunday afternoons are totally nude from 3 to 8 p.m.

Entre Deux Eaux (45 rue de las Folie Méricourt; Metro Oberkampf) is the other always-totally-naked Paris bar that's snugly warm with comfortable seating and pleasant illumination; a cozy space that just invites you to take off all your clothes and join in with the regulars here. This fairly recent arrival to the bar scene attracts a very hospitable local group of guys who love to hang out here among friends. They quickly welcome newcomers with a gregariousness to get you to feel comfortable, relaxed, and make you hot for some back room action. E2E is open daily from 4 p.m. to 2 a.m.

The Glove (34 rue Charlot; Metro Filles du Calvaire) has wooden beams and wrought-iron elegance at the street-level bar, with a downstairs dedicated to the art of fisting. There's a sling room, several dark alcoves in a maze, and a shower. Second and fourth Saturdays here are devoted to piss and latex – from 5 to 10 p.m. Glove opens Wednesdays through Sundays until late with a strict leather, rubber, and uniform dress code.



At Open Cafe



At Banana Cafe



At Banana Cafe



At Open Cafe

Time out in
the lounge,
downstairs
at Le Raidd

At Le Raidd



C'est toujours fun at Banana Cafe

Guillaume
of Le Raidd



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Bunker (150 rue Saint Maur; Metro Goncourt) is another popular sex club, open daily from 4 p.m., with 38 private cabins, five slings, glory holes, prisons, a St. Andrews Cross, and four big video screens. Americans may be surprised by some of the goings-on here that locals take quite for granted.

TX (40 rue Godefroy-Cavaignac; Metro Voltaire) is another backroom bar with dark rooms, group-sex bed, sling, mood-setting movies, and cabins for those too shy for group activities.

Les boîtes de nuit

Paris's dance clubs, or *les boîtes de nuit* generally open around midnight and go until dawn. A check of local gay magazines, or a look at the flyers distributed in the Marais, will keep you well posted on upcoming dance events.

In the Les Halles area, **Bains Douches** (7 rue du Bourg L'Abbé) is a dance club, bar, and restaurant. It's very popular with a young crowd, as long lines outside the doors will attest, and gayest on Saturdays. That's when they play trance and house in the downstairs dance club and hip hop in their restaurant/lounge. There's after-hours dancing here on Sunday mornings from 6 a.m. to noon.

Blue Square (8 rue Brantome), located just off the Quartier de l'Horloge and near the Pompidou Center, has a gay Sunday night tea-dance with drag shows, and they also have cinema, private stand-up cabins with porn videos, and a bar with big-screen video. Wednesdays here feature karaoke, and on Sunday mornings from 4 a.m. they have an "Oriental" afterhours bash that'll keep you dancing.

Le London (33 rue des Lombards), is another dance club for both young and old to go dancing and drinking and to have some playful fun in the darkened alcoves.

Two *boîtes* near the Palais Royal are **Club 18** (18 rue de Beaujolais), a small dance club usually filled to capacity open Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays from midnight until 5 a.m.; and the nearby **L'Insolite** (33 rue des Petits-

Champs; enter through the back courtyard), a true classic with an international crowd dancing to '80s disco music.

The small and exalted house-techno dance club **Le Queen** (102 avenue des Champs Elysées; Metro Georges V), after being discovered by a straight crowd, is still gay-friendly but gayest now on Sunday nights.

La Loco (90 Boulevard le Clichy; Metro Blanche) hosts black/white/ Arab Sunday tea dances from 6 p.m. to just after midnight with R&B, Rai, and Rap; the dancing here is more serious than the cruising. Late Sundays it segues into a transvestite/transsexual affair.

Follie's Pigalle (11 Place Pigalle) also does a gay tea-dance on Sundays from 6 p.m., hosted by Bitchy José.

Under at Club 79 (22 rue Quentin Bauchart) is the venue for a weekly Sunday morning afterhours dance party from 6 a.m. to noon for the crowd that wants Saturday night to never end.

At **La Boîte à Frissons** (13 rue au Maire) they do periodic gay dance parties called **Tango**.

Saunas

France's first gay gym is a high-tech facility with more than 70 Panetta machines, cardio and free weights, and on-site training coaches. **Gym Louvre** (7 rue du Louvre; Metro Louvre-Rivoli) also has free wi-fi internet and video entertainment, and they offer (non-sexual) massage. In their basement are showers, a sauna, and a steam bath; for recreational sexual relaxation there are 40 large private cabins and a darkroom glory hole area. It's brand new, clean, and attractively designed – also efficiently run by very friendly and helpful staff. Snack foods and drinks are available at their bar. Gym Louvre opens every day from 9 a.m. (noon on Sundays) until 2 a.m., and they offer guest tourist passes, too.

IDM (4 rue du Faubourg Montmartre; Metro Grandes Boulevards) is popular with the after-work crowd, with action in the maze of upstairs hallways, and featuring a whirlpool, two saunas, steam, XXX video, cubicles,

snack bar, and weight room.

Nearby you'll find the venerable **Euro-Men's Club** (8-10 rue Saint-Marc). It's open limited hours, but offers complete facilities, including a small basement pool, on three levels.

King Sauna (21 rue Bridaine; Metro Rome), intimate and immaculate, is situated near the bustling Place de Clichy. Le King is classified as a night sauna, open from 1 p.m. to 7 a.m. every day. The other sauna with night hours is **Le Tilt** (41 rue Sainte Anne), near Le Palais Royal. It's Paris's oldest with hours of operation from 6 p.m. until 7 a.m.

Key West Sauna Club (141 rue Lafayette; Metro Gare du Nord) has sparkling clean facilities including a pool, large hammam, steam room, sling room, and a sports and fitness room.

Other saunas include the richly-appointed **Bastille Sauna** (4 Passage Saint Antoine; Metro Ledru Rollin), open daily; the large facility at **Sun City** (62 Boulevard Sebastopol), with bar, sauna, pool, jacuzzi, and massage; **Le Riad** (184 rue des Pyrénées), a big hammam with full facilities, bar, and exotic decor; and **Bains D'Odessa** (5 rue d'Odessa) in Montparnasse, another big and full-service sauna, pool, and cinema facility with bar and massage.

Atlantide Sauna (13 rue Parrot; Metro Gare de Lyon) is in a category all its own. This intimate, clean, exceptionally well-run facility not only welcomes men and women, transvestites, all clients gay and straight, but its international staff is often multi-lingual and really nice! Women are a small part of the clientele here, but that in no way constrains the sort of sex practiced, or with whom, which will pop more than a few American prejudices. Be prepared for sex as fun recreation rather than major drama. Their busiest times are late afternoon to early evenings.

Le Steamer (5 rue Dr. Clémenceau) is a funky little sauna on the Left Bank, and out in Vincennes (take the RER A train or the Metro number 1 line) find **Bains Montansier** (7 rue de Montreuil),

Continued on page 50

Jean-Michel & Olivier of Banque Club



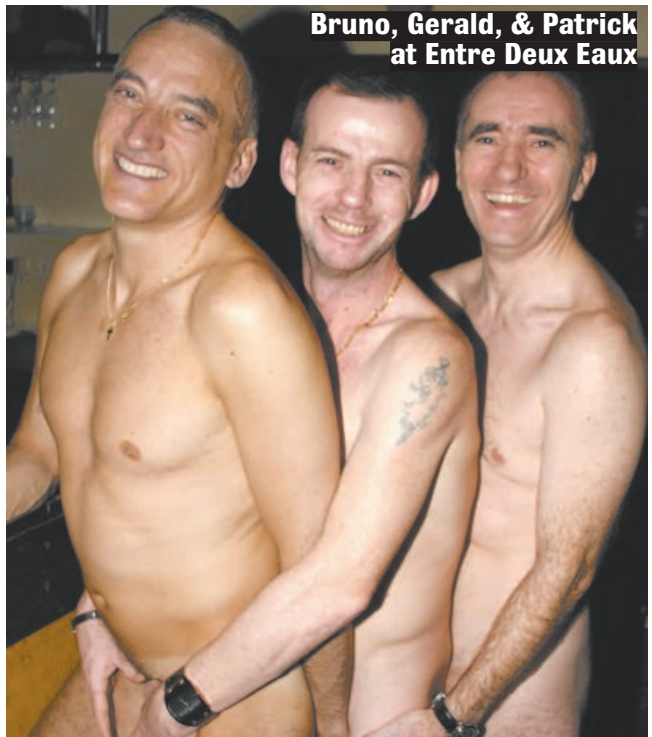
Johnny & Hervé of Gym Louvre



Staff of Aux Trois Petits Cochons



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NEW LOOK

Continued from page 47

a full-feature sauna facility that caters especially to bears and their friends, open daily until 8 p.m.

Restaurants

Just north of Les Halles there's a remarkable group of cafes and restaurants to discover amid the many small vendors of flowers, fresh breads and pastries, fish and fowl, and fruits and vegetables that distinguish the district of Montorgeil. Here an *epicerie* resembles a boutique but with quality and abundance rather than pretentiousness. A store filled with chocolate delicacies has pictures of Queen Elizabeth, no less, sampling their wares.

Aux Trois Petits Cochons (31 rue Tiquetonne; Auxtroispetitscochons.fr) is quite at home amid this sumptuous array, and has a large picture window framed by flowers that invites you inside to enjoy one of the greatest of Parisian pleasures: classic French cuisine and superb service in the traditional manner. An international reputation for quality brings guests back again and again. Frédéric, Thierry, and their dedicated staff are open for service every evening from 8 p.m. to midnight, and their website gives specific information about their menu and wine selections.

Their neighbor across the street, **Le Loup Blanc** (42 rue Tiquetonne), projects a lighter ambiance and specializes in grilled entrees. You'll find **Pig'z** (5 rue Marie Stuart; Pigz.fr), Cochons's sister operation, one street away. The atmosphere here is classic Paris, but modern and relaxed, and the food is French but with an original twist.

The nearby **Stuart Friendly** (16 rue Marie Stuart) is a bright place with clear Plexiglas and stainless-steel accents. They're open for lunch and dinner, and as a *salon de thé*, which means they're open longer hours and serve those who want something light, like tea and conversation, during off-hours. Host Philippe here knows his food!

In the same area **Lézard Café** (41

rue Tiquetonne) is mixed but gay-friendly and has a large and year-round sheltered and heated terrace.

In Les Halles, **L'Exotikal** (20 rue de la Raynie) is a restaurant and tapas bar with daily *service non-stop* from noon to 3 a.m. and Sunday brunches noon to 4 p.m. For brunch options any day of the week, the American restaurant **Le Diable des Lombards** (64 rue des Lombards) takes care of all of us late sleepers, serving it up from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

In the Marais, Chef Frank is the inspiration at the intimate **02F** (4 rue du Roi de Sicile) where they serve delicious traditional favorites. Also in the Marais are **L'Alivi** (27 rue du Roi de Sicile), featuring Corsican cuisine, and **Le Carré** (18 rue du Temple), an attractive bar and restaurant serving from noon to 1 a.m. with a street terrace and Sunday brunches from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The terrace at **Café Beaubourg** (43 rue St. Marri) offers another well-situated vantage point to watch the passing Marais throng.

At the foot of Sacré-Coeur at Montmartre, **Le 48 Condorcet** (48 rue Condorcet; Metro Anvers) has intimate dining rooms where you might have the feeling of being at someone's home, with both ground-level and basement salles. As with so many successful businesses in Paris, this is a labor of love for Pascal and partner Romuald who know a great deal about food and wine. Relax and enjoy, they'll take good care of you. They also have a fine collection of broom-riding French *sorcières* flying about their ceilings that give the restaurant a distinctly rustic and homey ambiance.

Fred, formerly of Restaurant Au Tibourg, now has his own location at **Coté 9ème** (5 rue Henri Monnier) not far from Place Pigalle, serving excellent French cuisine in an atmosphere that's pleasantly relaxed.

Boutiques

Les Halles is famous for its sex shops and peep shows, particularly along rue St. Denis. Many display rainbow decals in their windows or advertise gay erotic

materials, but for the real thing go to **Boxxman** (2 rue de la Cossonnerie), the sex shop with a little something extra, including basement peeps for cruising. David and Guy are your hosts, who make it all feel very comfortable; there's constant traffic through the store. They stock a large selection of DVDs including some unusual ones not found elsewhere, plus lubes and gadgets. You can buy time on the internet at unfiltered internet stations on their upstairs level.

Projection Video (21 rue des Lombards) has long been popular for its projection cabins, a huge and varied selection of DVDs for most any taste in sex videos, plus lubes, aromas, toys, and a friendly and helpful sales staff.

With two stores in the Marais/Halles area, **IEM** (16 rue Sainte-Croix-de-la-Bretonnerie and 43 rue de l'Arbre-Sec), offers a large selection of European and North American videos and DVDs, plus gadgets, lubes periodicals, books, and calendars.

Party and clubbing attire is sold at **Boy'z Bazaar** (5 rue Sainte-Croix-de-la-Bretonnerie) by a sales staff that's as cute as their customers.

For something a little kinkier **Rob@Zone 2** (8 square Sainte Croix de la Bretonnerie) stocks all the leather and rubber items long associated with the famous Rob stores. **Rex** (42 rue de Poitou) is a small shop for serious fetishists, with leather and latex wear, body enhancements, toys, and accessories.

La Pharmacie du Village (26 rue du Temple) is the gay pharmacy open until 8 p.m. in the Marais, and **Space Hair** (10 rue Rambuteau) is the always-crowded hair salon where the styles are cutting edge and the music rocks.

The erotica at Madame Canet's **La Galerie Au Bonheur du Jour** (11 rue Chabanais) includes classic photos and drawings from the 19th and 20th centuries. Alternatively, Olivier Cerri and Patrick Sarfati are behind ArtMenParis (ArtMenParis.com), photographic collections celebrating the male body.

There are two area gay bookstores. **Les Mots à la Bouche** (6 rue Sainte-Croix-de-la-Bretonnerie) is the long-

standing gay bookstore in the Marais with mostly written word at ground level and a superlative selection of graphic and photographic tomes filling their basement to bursting. The windows here are an education to many passers-by. **Blue Book Paris** (61 rue Quincampoix, just off Rambuteau) is another gay bookstore, gallery and coffeeshop, a bit smaller in Les Halles, but worth a browse with a good selection of books and magazines.

Accommodations

The **Hotel Central Marais** (2 rue Sainte-Croix-de-la-Bretonnerie; Hotelcentralmarais.com) is above the bar Le Central, but their door is around the corner. Staff here is bi-lingual and very sweet, and rooms are simple and comfortable, two per floor, with a single gabled room on the fifth floor, and toilets and showers in the halls. Breakfast is served until noon. The only exclusively gay hotel in Paris, they have a long-standing and well-deserved reputation among their many repeat guests.

The charming **Hotel Louvre Riche-lieu** (51 rue de Richelieu; Louvre-riche-lieu.com) is clean and comfortable, and within easy walking or metro distance to most any gay attraction in the city. Host Joel can help in English and many other languages with just anything you'll need. It's centrally located, close to shopping at the Galleries Lafayette, the Paris Opera, and of course, right next to the Louvre. They offer internet here, either at a terminal in the lobby, or by wi-fi, and breakfast is available, too.

At the smartly decorated **Hotel Beaumarchais** (3 rue Oberkampf; Hotelbeaumarchais.com) all 31 rooms come with private toilet and bath or shower, air conditioning, and color-cable TV. The hotel also rents "junior suites" for those who prefer more space.

Hotel Jacques de Molay (94 rue des Archives; +33-01-42 72-68-22) is a gem of a hotel with exposed beams, a small gym, and a breakfast area open through the glass ceiling to the sky.

The upscale **Villa Mazarin** (6 rue des

Archives; Villamalraux.com), part of the Big Ruby's group of Key West, is an elegant option right between Le Marais and Les Halles, close to the Hôtel de Ville.

The **Hotel Mondia** (22 rue du Grand Prieure; Hotel-mondia.com) is a classic, located near Place de la République, with room rates that are attractive.

Furnished apartment rentals in the area provide convenience and privacy, often for no more than hotel rooms. Two local agencies can hook you up. **Parisian Home** (12 rue Mandar; info@parisianhome.com) manages over 220 centrally-located fully-furnished apartments with prices ranging from budget to deluxe that you can look over online. **Marais Flat** (8 bis rue Marie Stuart; Maraisflat.com) also offers upscale apartments in Montorgueil, Les Halles, and the Marais.

For special getaways, only an hour and a half outside Paris in Normandie, **Le Pilier Vert** (Le-pilier-vert.com) is a pleasant option. Each of their 14 rooms has its own bath, and rates are surprisingly low. Gourmet meals are prepared using world-renowned local fresh produce of Normandie as well as the tempting cheeses and *crèmes fraîches* of the region, and their *cave* is stocked with some of France's finest wines. The hotel's glass covered garden area looks out to the castle of William the Conqueror just across the street, and the Normandie-Maine National Park is close-by, too. Private excursions are available from here to Brittany, Mont Saint Michel, and the Chateaux of the Loire.

Resources and Events

Paris gay life is well covered by two local free publications: *2X* (2xparis.fr), with two weeks of bar and events schedules and reviews, and *Agenda Q* (Agendaq.fr), more sexually graphic, with emphasis on the fetish/leather/sex club scene. *Tribu Move* (Tribu-move.com) and *Sensitif* (Sensitif.fr) are glossy gay general-interest giveaways. *2X* also distributes useful free gay maps that cover places of interest across the whole city, organized by district and by

type of establishment. Pick these up at many of the businesses listed above.

Têtu (Tetu.com) is the sumptuous glossy French gay magazine that for years has set a visually high standard for the genre, with essays, reviews, and dazzling photo spread. Their online site has a guide to all the big dance and circuit party events; click on "clubbing."

Getting around is easy, the metro will take you most anywhere. The trains run frequently and buses supplement the rail routes and schedules. Machines sell tickets (at 1.50 euro per trip within the center) and single or multiple-day passes can be purchased, too. The Metro does stop running around 1 a.m. (2 a.m. on weekends), so you'll have to use night buses or taxis in the wee hours. The official site Ratp.fr has English language information.

Sturdy modern bicycles can be rented from self-service sidewalk stands with a swipe of a credit card and returned to another similar location – another good way to get around.

For tickets to the sights and the museums you can usually pre-purchase (and avoid long lines). Your hotel may sell them, otherwise try one of the tourist offices or go direct online to a site such as Louvre.fr. General passes can also be purchased for the museums: see Parismuseumpass.com for details.

Parismarais.com has helpful information about the gayest Parisian neighborhood, and they can arrange furnished apartment rentals in Le Marais and hotel bookings, too.

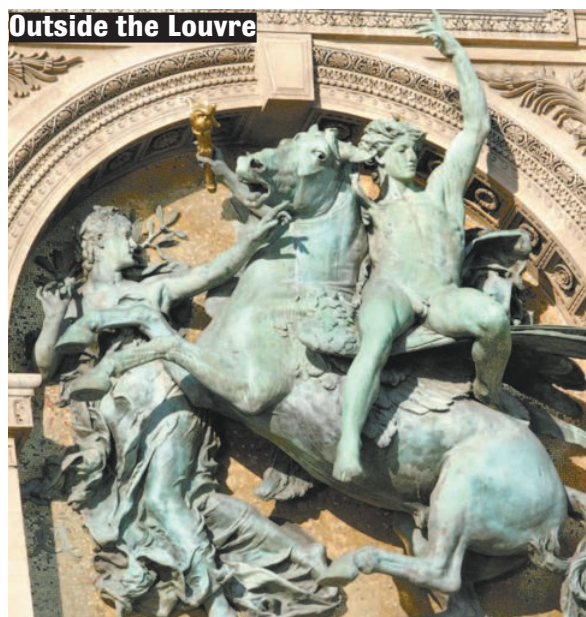
Paris-gay.com is another useful online resource with listings and other general information.

The French love cinema, so there are plenty of screens showing films from all around the world, in many languages, and from many periods. For some upcoming programs consult Forum des Images (Forumdesimages.fr). Paris's gay film festival (Myspace.com/ffglp and Ffglp.net) takes place in November.

Paris has a full schedule of pride events (Gaypride.fr) at the end of June each summer. ▼



Ce n'est pas une tour



Outside the Louvre



In Louvre Gardens



On the Seine



The gayest corner in Le Marais, at L'Open Cafe



L'Hôtel de Ville

An American Returns to Paris

And he changes his mind

Frank Laterreur

I first came to Paris in 1962. I visited several times in the '60s and '70s, and again about 12 years ago. On that last trip, I was with an American friend on his first trip abroad. We stopped for a glass of wine at a terrace bar we encountered in the Left Bank. Random selection of restaurants or cafes is not a good idea in Paris

— two glasses of wine cost us over \$40. Though living in Europe recently, sometimes changing planes at Charles de Gaulle, I avoided Paris since, because I remembered it as always expensive, off-putting, and just too large.

But I tried again this year. In the meantime, I'd picked up some French, which was a big help. Paris surprised, even overwhelmed me with its amazing vitality and variety. It was like suddenly seeing individual trees and stands of pine instead of a huge undifferentiated dark forest. And I found that if I was careful, Paris doesn't have to be expensive either. Even in Paris's choice *quartiers* (Les Halles, Marais, Rive Gauche, Pigalle, Bastille), it's possible to find a good supper (*steak-frites* and *coquilles St. Jacques* are my favorites) for under \$10, and an excellent glass of red wine for less than \$3. And there are also hotels scattered about for under \$50 a night.

This time, I noticed all the smiling, curious people who look you in the eye and even strike up conversations now and then. Yes, Parisians are rude in the Metro. They shove and push even more

than New Yorkers, and cut in front of you at subway doors that slam shut dangerously fast. But they are not aloof or arrogant, and are actually often quite promiscuous in their sudden intimacy with strangers in the street. As I eyed

the always delicious array of pastries in a bakery, a young woman struck up an animated conversation about

the different varieties of chocolate

eclairs. Outside a butcher's, two boys told me I could find better cuts at another shop up the street. Both of these situations led to further conversation — about the neighborhood, French and American differences, hip-hop music, and the art world.



Staff of life

The pictures: they're true!

One thing struck me immediately — how many of the people looked as though they had stepped out of the 1930s postcards available at all the shops: their exaggerated facial expressions, arched eyebrows, and alternately pouty and erotic lips — and also their dress. The

fat, double-chinned old men in high black turtlenecks. The elderly women arm-in-arm in long, brightly checkered coats. The sleek young women in elegant gowns. The young men in berets and sweaters, and others in ties and double-breasted suits. And everyone with a foulard, a long scarf wrapped loosely around their necks and hanging down or flipped over a shoulder.

The children, too, are from such postcards. In the working-class building where we took an apartment for a week (a fairly cheap and comfortable way to stay in Paris), there seemed to be an ad hoc nursery in a woman's home, two or three winding flights above us. (The building has eight stories and no elevators!) Every morning and evening what seemed like dozens of children, with layers of colorful sweaters and scarves, waddled up and down the stairs, accompanied by either moms or dads coming to and from work. One must not neglect to mention the omnipresent little boys proudly carrying huge baguettes home to *maman*, another image that has changed very little over a century or more.

Every neighborhood I visited was a treasure of sights and sounds and smells. Bakers, butchers, poultry shops, fruit and vegetable stands, as well as jewelers, carpenters, potters, and basket makers. The apprentice system is at once noticeable to Americans: young people, outfitted in costumes, getting started as fruit-sellers', bakers', and shopkeepers' apprentices. Many of them hawk their masters' wares with little songs or dances.

One fishmonger's assistant in *la rue Montorgueil* (a street that is a hive of commerce from early morning till nine or ten at night) was especially dramatic. With curly, dark blond hair, he literally seduced women of all ages to buy his fish by offering a board with some particularly fresh, silvery samples before him. Simultaneously, he'd thrust his pelvis while performing a little dance step, so that it was unclear what exactly he was proffering. Again and again he lured the women in to complete a sale.

QUEER,
THERE &
EVERYWHERE

Around every corner lies a surprise. Just off the busy Rue Montorgueil, one block up Rue Marie Stuart, one finds the ornate, centuries-old Passage du Grand Cerf, a long arcade of shops with buttons, bottles, Indian cloth, Buddhist religious paraphernalia, and every kind of curio.

The way of all flesh and fur

At the Cimetière du Père-Lachaise, we joined a motley crew of pilgrims to visit the tombs of Chopin, Balzac, Edith Piaf, and Oscar Wilde, among other notables. There, we found characters who appeared to be right out of some old French film.

One was Fifi, a sweet lady of at least 75, wearing a lovely pink silk scarf over her threadbare coat. She feeds the cemetery's many cats, whose numbers are diminishing with a campaign by the city fathers to neuter them. ("Not a bad idea, you know," Fifi said sagely.) She helped us find Proust's grave, which is a challenge. There, someone had placed a fresh flower and another had left a fancy card with his signature and the date. "Such a waste, you know," Fifi said, "but that is the way people are – sentimental!"

Paris has possibly a dozen sleazy red light districts. You'll find one not far from Les Halles, along Rue St. Denis between Sebastopol and Berger. I counted at least 20 sex shops with peep shows in that stretch alone. Several were busy with cruising, sex available in



At dusk along the Seine

the booths, sometimes for a few euros, sometimes just for fun. Frequenting them were all types of men, from prim middle-aged business types to Gypsy and Arab youth. Among the sex dens are tattoo parlors, piercing emporia, and used leather and clothing shops, popular with guys of every ethnicity and class. One very tall Arab youth of 20 perused the coats, but also the other clientele, to whom he smiled seductively. A couple of long-haired, cherubic French *garçons*, checked out earrings and coats as they affectionately touched each other. The ambiance reminded me of Chicago's Loop, Times Square, or the Boston Combat Zone of 30 years ago – a world that has vanished elsewhere, but seems wonderfully sustained in Paris.

The several gay districts, such as the Marais, are packed with handsome French men from early afternoon to the

wee hours of the morning. Chic cafes or drag bars are mostly devoid of the attitude one might expect. They are friendly and inviting to men of all ages, the elderly as well as the young.

There are indeed many foreign tourists in Paris, and, yes, the Americans. One hears American-accented English far more in Paris than in most other European cities these days. But somehow this seems appropriate, too – it has long been so in Paris. And none of this detracts from the uniquely and seemingly ageless French atmosphere of this amazing city.

I've obviously changed my mind about Paris. I've decided all those romantic novels and travelogues are right: Paris is still Paris, eternal and vibrant, an experience not to be missed by anyone seeking relief from today's repressed America. *Vive la différence!* ▼



Fish for sale?



Fifi

