



**Paris Decorators
Designers & Interiors
March 2000**

Paris: Decorators, Designers and Interiors

Artisans and The Silk Industry in Lyon

*Paris Tuesday March 21 – Tuesday
March 28, Lyon Tuesday March 28 –
Thursday March 30*

Paris is a very private world, its allure resting in the fact that it is hard to penetrate its inner life. But through a series of long time friendships and relationships we take you into a variety of private homes that demonstrate the talent of the top decorators of the moment. In addition we see outstanding private collections, and apartments of leading gallery owners whose refined eye demonstrates how different periods can be mixed. Not only do we explore taste, but also the complexity of lifestyles that intertwine to create the rich fabric of Parisian lifestyle.

What we learn through study of the decorative arts, both contemporary and traditional, is that the tradition of fine craftsmanship in France did not disappear with the fall of the *ancien regime*. In fact, Napoleon encouraged the decorative arts and France's reputation as the leader in taste and fashion persisted throughout the 19th century into the 20th century. With Art Deco and Art Moderne new shapes, new forms and materials challenged the workshops where generations of artisans had trained. France rose to the occasion answering new ideas with the same distinction and perfection as artisans of the past. This tradition carries on into the present.

The program will explore the secret resources known only to insiders of the Paris antique and decorative arts trade. Who are the best cabinetmakers? Which dealers specialize in a particular period and who is known for having the finest pieces? Where can you find the workshop for the best panelwork and where can you find hand-stamped leather to cover walls or serve as book fronts? Where do people, from all over the world, send their linens to be ironed? Where can you find the art of the florist elevated to pure sculpture? Who creates the finest silk passementerie and fringes which adorn curtains such as those at Versailles? Where can you find artisans who carve and gild as finely as in the 18th century? For lovers of porcelain, silver, gold boxes, wristwatches, antique jewelry, paintings and prints, one of Paris' great antique dealers will guide you through the flea market and show you how to determine

quality. We are also led through workshops where artisans still produce inlaid marble tables or create lacquer-work that equals the finest of Japanese screens. These are some of the subjects we address as we traverse the city to visit places you would never find on your own.

Then there are the decorators whose flair, sumptuous elegance, or minimalism has spoken to us from the pages of interior design magazines. We stay at the *Hotel Trocadero Dokhan's* on the right bank, exquisitely decorated throughout by **Frederic Mechiche**. Other names such as **Jacques Grange, Didier Gomez, Jacques Garcia, and Christian Liaigre** become familiar to us as we learn the distinct nature of their style. Besides private homes we select the top restaurants of the moment decorated by these famous decorators, such as Ledoyen decorated by Jacques Grange.

In this program we also view the new approach to flowers and organic material that is sweeping Paris as we spend a morning visiting important florists and an atelier where silk flowers are produced that are more beautiful than their real counterparts.

In the city of Lyon we stay in the midst of the old city, which is a mix of The Middle Ages and Renaissance buildings. Our hotel is the *Cour des Loges*, an authentic mansion dating from the 14th century now restored to a luxury hotel and spa. From here we step into the charm and splendor of the old city which remained aloof from the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries in France. In Lyon we visit the silk factories to see how the finest of silks are woven, and view silk textiles made for royalty, explore the Decorative Arts Museum and visit Le Quartier Auguste Comte which is a village within the city comprised of antique stores and artisan studios. But perhaps what makes Lyon so memorable is that it is regarded as the capital of the world when it comes to gastronomic delights and we dine here on the finest menus of some of the most outstanding chefs in France.

This is an unusual program and one we will not be able to repeat in the near future because of the entrée to private homes. In Paris one has to respect favors that are extended and we cannot impose ourselves on any of these resources. The fee for the Paris segment of the program, which includes five star hotel accommodations, is \$6,100 for doubles per person with a \$500 single supplement. The fee for Lyon, which includes transport to and from Lyon (though participants can fly directly home from Lyon), is \$1,200 for doubles per person with a \$200 single supplement.

A group airfare is being offered through Kon travel for this program with participants flying from their city of origin to Paris and returning from Paris or Lyon.

Day One: Tuesday, March 21st

Check in to the five star Hotel Trocadero Dokhan's situated on the right bank and decorated throughout by Frederic Mechiche. We gather in the late afternoon for tea in the beautiful sitting room, decorated in the manner of an 18th century salon but with the freshness and unusual palette that is a hallmark of Mechiche's work. In these luscious surroundings we see why Paris is known not only for its chefs but also for its confectioners. We then enter the 18th century with a well illustrated lecture on patronage as we cover taste in France from Louis XIV to Napoleon Bonaparte. Our speaker is the French decorative arts specialist and author of the recent book "Versailles, the American Story," *Emmanuel Ducamp*. The lecture is followed by a short journey to a private apartment on the left bank where we step into the early twentieth century and see the strength of statement made by collecting the finest designers in a particular period. We will end our day dining on typical French cuisine prepared by an outstanding chef at Tante Marguerite on the left bank.

Day Two: Wednesday, March 22nd

Morning visit to the gallery Didier Aaron, one of the most renowned galleries in Paris and decorated by Jacques Grange. First we will be greeted by the owner, *Mr. Didier Aaron*, who will discuss the gallery's collection. *Bill Pallot*, renowned author and French furniture specialist, will then take us through the history of the chair and the evolution of the decorative arts in France in the 17th and 18th centuries. Lunch is in the Palais Royale at the famous restaurant Le Grand Vefour, known both for its exquisite interior as well as its fine cuisine which ranks it amongst the best in Paris. We will then visit a jewel-like interior executed with delicate trompe l'oeil paintings by a talented conceptualist known for his mystical style. This is followed by a visit to a private apartment where the collector's intellectual appreciation of the historic nature of his surroundings and location is reflected in the fine restoration. The series of collections assembled by the owner give a clear picture of life in the Palais Royale in the 18th century. One of the features of the apartment is the excellence of the panelwork and its design. The designer of the panelwork discusses the challenges he faced with adapting a former 16th century paneled room to this historic interior. We then visit the designer's studio where we are treated to a variety of paneled interiors that come from chateaux all over France. We have a demonstration on how gilding is done just as it was in the 18th century, as well as carving by an artisan trained in the finest workshops in France. We end our day at an apartment in the center of Paris, located in a Renaissance Revival building built in 1890, which belongs to a prominent antiques dealer. The apartment's interest lies in its coffered ceilings, its unusual use of space and functioning of each room, and its décor which is a mix of Second Empire with outstanding Louis XIV pieces such as a cabinet with

bouille marquetry. The richness of style brings to mind the Rothschild residence at the Château de Ferrières.

Evening free

Day Three: Thursday, March 23rd

We transfer to the left bank to the Musée d'Orsay for a morning session with curator Marc Bascou on the move towards modernism, ending with Art Moderne. He will take us into the late nineteenth century and show the variety of influences impacting France as well as the techniques perfected in workshops of the period. We study the various forms of Art Nouveau and then go into detail on the work of Pierre Chareau, Jean Michel Frank, Le Corbusier, Jean Dunand and Edgar Brandt. Lunch at Le Club des Polytechniciens situated in one of the oldest buildings on the grounds of the Ecole Polytechnique, the most prestigious school of engineering in France. We visit a series of dealers specializing in the 20's, 30's, 40's, and contemporary periods. At the private home of one of the dealers we see unique pieces from a variety of countries from the 30's and 40's, set against a dramatic paneled Gothic backdrop. Elsewhere we have concentrated study on the work of Ruhlmann. In a contemporary gallery we see the very latest designs in a variety of materials executed by leading French artisans. We study the work of Jean Royère at a gallery which specializes in his surrealistic shapes. We end the afternoon at an 18th century building in St. Germain-des-Près in the stately rooms and garden of a private home belonging to a young couple, who are both from aristocratic families and one is the descendant of Daisy Fellows, have decorated their house with both eccentric charm and exceptional objects. We visit the young owner's gallery known for its highly unusual pieces. Our afternoon walk will include a stop at the best bread shop in Paris. Dinner will be at one of Paris' most famous restaurants, La Grande Cascade in the Bois de Boulogne. The restaurant decorated in the Belle Epoque style was once a hunting pavillion. Chef Jean-Louis Nomicos prepares French cuisine with inventive combinations such as macaroni and black truffles, foie gras and celery, and mullet with candied eggplants.

Day Four: Friday, March 24th

We explore the Marais and Bastille areas where we visit a series of artisans and ateliers in order to view the luxury trades. Amongst the things we see is how marble is cut and inlaid, leather tooled and stamped, the ironing of linens, the restoration of embroidery, the creation of fine silver for the table, and making of objet d'art from shagreen. Lunch in the Marais area.

We drive into the countryside to a chateau which is the private home of decorator Jacques Garcia. The chateau was built in 1656 and belonged to the family of Alexandre de Crequi.

Jacques Garcia has made the chateau a showcase of antique sculpture, furniture, tapestries, and porcelain from the 17th and 18th centuries and has pieces from the period of Louis XV. In short, it is a miniature Versailles with lush fabrics, trompe l'oeil effects and mirrored walls. In the private apartments of Mr. Garcia we will visit a bedroom once created for a Duchess which includes a bed from the period of Louis XVI. Another bedroom is in the oriental style and shows examples of the silks made in Lyon in the 18th century. The interior swimming pool is designed with the motifs of *A Thousand and One Nights*, and is surrounded by columns that were brought from Rajasthan. The adjacent changing room includes a bed made of silver as well as several portraits of maharajahs which continue the theme of the Far East. In these magical surroundings our hosts invite us to an eighteenth-century dinner in the main salon, with period place settings and with staff dressed in the costume of the time. In this room, which glimmers from the candlelight, and resounds from the strings of a harpsichord, we take a nocturnal journey through time into the 18th century.

Day Five: Saturday, March 25th

Paris is famous for its flowers for these are not flowers but heavenly bouquets. We visit three of the top florists and each talks of what has brought them to the current mode of feeling for the organic which is sweeping through Paris. We then visit a resource, known only to decorators, where the most fabulous flower arrangements in silks and other materials can be found. These creations are assembled in glass containers that defy the imagination and suspended in a resin material that resembles water. We end the morning at a private collection in a garden apartment that is surrealistic and truly eclectic in décor. It is nestled in greenery and overflows with majolica depicting snakes, insects and strange sea life. Lunch on the left bank and afternoon free.

We assemble in the early evening for a visit and cocktail reception at the apartment of a rising young star on the Parisian scene who has already had his apartments published in several magazines. As we shall see, his work is distinctively Parisian but with a dazzling and startling approach that combines old and new. Dinner at the Hotel Montalembert decorated by Christian Liaigre, features French cuisine in a chic left bank ambience where book editors, art and antique dealers, and politicians come to dine.

Day Six: Sunday, March 26th

We visit the flea market with a leading antique dealer and collector. He takes us on a walk through the different markets, as he himself sets about discovering a “find”. We watch how he approaches the showrooms of higher priced dealers or pulls out cardboard boxes from under tables at the open-air markets. He explains what draws him to a piece and how he

knows what the price should be. Participants are then given assistance as to which flea market they wish to explore, direction to shippers, and to particular dealers.

Lunch on own and rest of afternoon free.

Dinner at La Durée in the Salon Chocolatrice – a beautifully decorated private room. The restaurant which is also one of the most famous tearooms in Paris was decorated by Jacques Garcia.

Day Seven: Monday, March 27th

Visit to the mansion of one of the most respected and prestigious families in Paris. Here is housed the very finest collection of French furniture of the *ancien regime* and includes pieces that once belonged to French royalty. This is a rare opportunity to learn about the great cabinetmakers of the 18th century and to be received in a spectacular home. We end with a before lunch reception. Lunch is at Le Soufflé. Visit to one of the finest jeweler's in Paris who designs for Chanel and Dior and also has his own line which is entirely different to anything else one sees in Paris. We are then taken on a dreamy journey by Frederic Mechiche to a home he has executed which bears the distinct stamp of his style and his penchant for crisp striped fabrics mixed with antiques. He will discuss how he re-imagines the past, presenting it to us with the freshness it would have had for the people who lived in that period. Farewell dinner at the restaurant Lucas Carton.

Tuesday, March 28th

Morning departure for those doing Lyon segment only.

We depart by fast train for Lyon and check into the luxurious **Hotel Cour des Loges**. The hotel is an authentic mansion dating from the 14th century. After we check into the hotel we will have a gastronomic lunch in the old city and then depart on a guided tour to discover the Lyon of the 15th and 16th centuries. It is one of the largest and finest Renaissance districts to be found anywhere in Europe. After our tour of the historic section of the city we will continue to the Musée Des Arts Décoratifs to explore the historic tradition of art and textiles in Lyon. The museum was dedicated in 1890 exclusively to the museum's impressive collection of textiles from a variety of historical epochs including works from Persia, Byzantium, as well as silks and embroideries from France, Italy, and Spain. The museum also has an extensive collection of furniture from various periods and Aubusson tapestries, which adorn the museum to create a unique ambience in which to explore the spectacular collection of textiles. Before eating at one of Lyon's most renowned restaurants, Paul Bocuse, we explore the Gallo-Roman amphitheatre. At the restaurant on the outskirts of the city, we dine

on the revolutionary cuisine which has earned chef Bocuse the title of the most famous chef in history by Gault/Millau.

Wednesday, March 29th

We spend the day exploring the silk factories of Lyon where reproductions of ancient fabrics are produced along with new ones. We will be able to view the manner in which silk was woven in the 17th and 18th century on traditional looms. We will then go to St. Etienne, a small village outside of Lyon where we will visit the atelier of a passementerie specialist. We return to Lyon for lunch in a famous brasserie before exploring the area of Saint Jean for artisans who restore paintings, statuary, and works of art for museums all over the world. We then visit select antique dealers and end the day with an after hours viewing of the silk museum. We will have dinner at La Tour Rose in the old quarter of the city. The restaurant is known for its chef Philippe Chavent as well as its Renaissance décor.

Thursday, March 30th

Departure either for Paris or to airport.