

ADVENTURE & TRAVEL



7



JOURNAL CONCIERGE



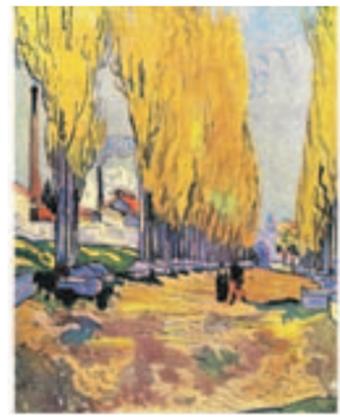
1



6



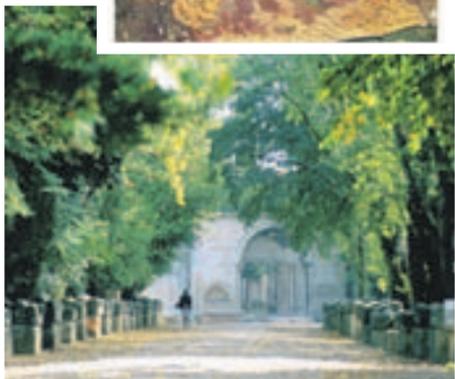
2



5



3



4

ARLES

Get your art fix in van Gogh's old French haunt

WHEN VINCENT VAN GOGH arrived in the dusty Roman city of Arles in 1888, he was so dazzled by the violent intensity of the Provençal sky that he went on to produce his major works in less than 15 months. "I'm as happy as a cicada," the artist wrote. Everything from the violet hills and wheat fields "the hues of old gold" to his little house painted "the yellow color of fresh butter outside with raw green shutters" seemed to vibrate with pure color.

Over a century later, that legendary light continues to delight visitors. Wandering through the city streets, you'll eventually wind up at the sun-drenched Place du Forum, where van Gogh painted his "Terrasse du Café le soir." (Surprisingly, Arles didn't own any of the great master's paintings until April, when the Fondation Vincent van Gogh opened (2).) Arles continues to honor its artistic traditions in other ways, too. Les Rencontres d'Arles photography festival, which kicks off this weekend, takes the city by storm each summer with 50 shows featuring works by the likes of David Bailey and Lucien Clergue (until Sept. 21; rencontres-arles.com). And if you're lucky, during your wanders you might even catch a Provençal costume parade or take in the annual La Carcade d'Or, a game that involves grabbing a ribbon from between the horns of a bull.

Living with the past with an eye toward the future, the city's most ambitious restoration project is Luma Arles, an arts center located on an abandoned industrial site. Scheduled for completion in late 2017, the futuristic Frank Gehry-designed tower was inspired by van Gogh's "Starry Night." Until then, the best way to recapture the artist's night skyscape is to walk off dinner with a stroll on the banks of the Rhône under a glittering sky. —Lanie Goodman



THE DESIGNER
Christian Lacroix
Arles-born fashion designer who opened his first boutique here



THE PATRON OF THE ARTS
Maja Hoffmann
Founder of Luma Foundation and board member of the Fondation van Gogh



THE CHEF
Jean-Luc Rabanel
Michelin-starred chef and owner of L'Atelier de Jean-Luc Rabanel and Bistro à côté (3)



THE GALLERIST
Anne Clergue
Owner of la Galerie Anne Clergue and daughter of Lucien Clergue

MEMORABLE MUSEUM // Musée Réattu. It is housed in a 15th-century priory and has a collection that goes from 19th-century Provençal painters to contemporary art. For me, the highlight is Picasso's drawings—about 50 works that were done between 1970 and 1971. 10 rue du Grand Priuré; museereattu.arles.fr

CUSTOM BOOTS // La Botte Camarguaise (7). An institution for craftsmanship. Patrick Vidal makes hand-stitched Camargue-style leather cowboy boots worn by the *gardians* who herd cattle and bulls. 22 rue Jean Granaut; labottecamarguaise.net

TIMELESS RAMBLE // La Roquette. I like to wander in the neighborhood called La Roquette, located southwest of the medieval center, known for its townhouses.

HEM'S HAUNT // The Grand-Hotel Nord Pinus Bar (4). You can still feel the presence of many ghosts here. It was a bar for famous toreadors and frequented by everyone from Hemingway and Cocteau to Ingrid Bergman and Helmut Newton. 14 Place du Forum; nord-pinus.com

TREASURE TROVE // Antiquités Dervieux. This antiques shop has been around since the 1880s and specializes in Provençal furniture. 5 rue de Vernon; dervieux.com

FOLKLORE AND FASHION // Museon Arlaten. Their collection—which includes furniture, rural tools, crafts, Provençal costumes and paintings—is dedicated to preserving the memory of the Camargue way of life. 29 rue de la République; museonarlaten.fr

NURTURING NATURE // La Chassagnette. Lunch here is very special. The chef, Armand Arnal, uses the vegetables grown right near your table in the garden. The fish comes from the La Criée market in Sète and the meat is from naturally fed bulls. Route du Sambuc; chassagnette.fr

GOLDEN WAY // Allée des Alyscamps (5). Van Gogh and Gauguin both painted this pre-Christian necropolis and it is my favorite place to walk. There is also a very atmospheric 11th-century church, Chapelle St. Honorat on the grounds.

ART HUB // Parc des Ateliers. It's the site of Luma Arles's future arts center, dedicated to the Mediterranean spirit. 33 Avenue Victor Hugo; patrimoine.ville-arles.fr

WET AND WILD // La Capelière. It is part of a natural reserve located on a scenic road near Arles. There is a tiny museum and nature trails where you can observe wild boar, ducks, flamingos and other wetlands birds. reserve-camargue.org

GO UNDER // The Cryptoporticus du Forum. An amazing underground gallery built by the Romans right under the Forum Square, still filled with mystery. You have to go down there and let yourself absorb all the strong emotions of the ancient stone. Rue Balze; +33-4-90-18-41-20

EDIBLE EDEN // The Saturday Arles Market. It's one of the biggest markets in Provence. I always go to the fish stand for the tellines. They're delicious sautéed in garlic and served with aperitifs. Boulevard des Lices, Saturday 8 a.m.-12:45 p.m.

UP IN SMOKE // Le Chiquito. It is a tiny corner bar and tobacco shop specializing in Havana cigars but also the traditional rendezvous spot after the Saturday market for an aperitif. 30 rue Président Wilson; +33-4-90-96-07-60

SLOW STROLL // Rue Ernest Renan. There's a narrow cobblestone street in Arles near the Roman arena that leads uphill to a pretty square. All the simple little houses have flowers blooming on the windowsill. It suddenly feels like time has stood still.

HOME COOKED // La Fée Gourmande. It is a small friendly bistro for lunch or dessert. Virginie Roth uses all the best natural products and puts her heart and soul into her very feminine version of Provençal dishes. 3 rue Dulau; +33 4 90 18 26 57

URBAN OASIS // La Maison Molière. The owner, Michel Montagnier, completely transformed this 18th-century hôtel particulier into a spacious 5-room B&B filled with vintage furniture and art (1). 37 rue Molière; lamaisonmoliere.fr

CHIC BOUTIQUE // Boutique Actuel B. It's a small but elegant women's fashion boutique with a great choice of designer clothes, bags and shoes. The selection is always right on target when it comes to the latest trend. 46 rue de la République; +33-4-90-43-33-01

CULTURE VULTURE // Actes Sud (6). On the banks of the Rhône, this long-established publishing house and bookstore has become the city's multicultural complex. 23 Place Nina-Berberova; actes-sud.fr

BULLFIGHTERS' BAR // Bar Le Tambourin. A lively, unpretentious place for drinks at any hour. There is always a mix of artists, toreros and locals sipping pastis. 1 rue du Palais; +33-4-90-96-48-39

MAKING SCENTS // La Parfumerie Arlesienne. This romantic little shop is run by fragrance creator Fabienne Brando, who carries unusual perfumes that you won't find anywhere else. I really like Eau d'Arles or the wild masculine scent, Eau de Camargue. 2 rue de la Bastille; la-parfumerie-arlesienne.com