

BONJOUR TO A FRENCH HOLIDAY

The fashions, the flavors all add up to a perfect Paris

By Claire Rosenfield
 First Place, Feature Writing
 Division: Middle School

'Bonjour madam!"
 "Bonjour! Une creme glacee de chocolat. Merci monsieur!" (Or, in English, "Hello! One chocolate ice cream. Thank you sir!")

The rich, creamy, but refreshing chocolate gelato trickled down my chin in petite droplets of heaven.

My taste buds now felt as I did — alive, yearning to jump and skip and frolic about! My head turned this way and that, taking in all of the scenes before me.

A man sporting a black beret and cliche curled mustache strutted down the cobble street, taking his time, absorbing the beauty of the wonderful city around him. His eyes flitted to a

lofty, very slender girl who quite resembled a walking pole.

She was a la mode (French, for "in the fashion.") in skin-tight skinny jeans that emphasized her in-style body. Her peep-toe shoes were at least 5 inches tall in a popping magenta. Her long, straight ebony hair and smoking cigarette lazily hanging off her manicured hand completed her smoldering look.

The "mustache man," as I had christened him, then shifted his gaze to a slightly heavy but healthy looking middle-aged woman wearing a very ordinary dress. I grinned to myself, adoring the way the men in Paris observed the women here like works of art, things to look at, cherish, and show off to friends. (Unlike in the States, where I felt if a guy looked at me, or any other female for that matter, he was taking in her flaws, scrutinizing her every roll, blemish, and unflattering piece of clothing.)

I licked the last sticky traces of my decadent gelato from my fingers and admired a light chiffon shirt in the window of a boutique named Enchante. Wishing that there were more euros in my pocket, I passed the shop by gloomily. I looked across the River Siene and

gazed at the majestic, haunting Notre Dame. It's ebony black spire spiraled up in the deep cerulean sky looking like something out of a fairy tale.

From across the river I could barely catch a glimpse of the breathtaking stained-glass windows in stunning shades of purples, pinks, and reds. I looked down onto the river and saw a covered boat loaded down with a rainbow of races of people. I smiled and waved down at them, and most of them returned the gesture. I tracked the boat as it lazily meandered down the river.

My stomach made a noise resembling a yawning lion. I suddenly realized it had been eight hours since I had eaten anything beside gelato. I strolled down the avenue

relishing the exquisite scenery passing by a picturesque apartment with buttercup yellow pansies and matchbox red geraniums grinning down broadly at me over the curly-cue iron worked railing. The balmy sun streamed through a gap between two buildings and onto my face, warming my countenance. With my face aglow with a smile, I began. My search was not a difficult one. My friend had recommended a bistro to me before I left on my trip.

When I arrived at the bistro, I immediately knew that this was the place I had to eat tonight. It was a quaint, petite building draped with ivy. The door was obviously a very old antique, with distressed wood and a wrought iron handle; and centered in the middle of the door was a stained glass dove surrounded by delicate vines.

A waiter adorned in a tuxedo welcomed me into the restaurant and showed me to a table directly underneath a large poster of a woman draped in satin fabrics and feather boas beaming out from the gold-plated frame.

I ordered the herb-crusted fish with a lemon cream sauce. I could just imagine — a medium-sized fillet of fish with a magnificent skin



Claire Rosenfield poses in front of the Notre Dame cathedral.

Claire Rosenfield of Vacaville creates her own version of the famous Mona Lisa during a visit to France, which she wrote about at length in her feature writing entry for The Reporter's Campus Star student journalism program. Her article earned her first-place honors in the middle school division of the feature writing category.

of herbs and breadcrumbs blanketed with a blond sauce spilling over the sides of the fish. When it arrived I was immediately taken aback. Instead of the healthy-sized fillet I had imagined, there was an entire fish, complete with head, glistening scales, and vacant eyes staring up at me. The herbs lay atop the shiny scales. I looked up at the waiter in complete bewilderment.

"Is this what I ordered, monsieur?"

"Yes, madam. It eez zee herb-crusted feesh with lemon cream sauce."

"Oh, umm, thank you then ..."

Only in a foreign country, I thought. The waiter continued on to another table. I gawked down at the dish before me with an entire

fish on it. A sudden rush of bravery gushed through me, so I picked up my fork and lifted up the fish's skin. I took a bite of the white, flaky meat and submerged it into the pale yellow, velvety sauce drizzled around it. The delicate, rich taste mushroomed inside my mouth, causing my taste buds to tingle.

After I ate every last bit of my delectable fish, I beckoned the waiter over and requested the dessert menu. Despite the fact that I was gorged with food, I ordered the dark chocolate mousse.

The waiter arrived hauling a bowl the size of the Eiffel Tower. When he came up to the table, I saw that the bowl was filled with chocolate mousse so dark it more

looked like a bowl of tar. He picked up my plate and plopped a heaping mound of mousse the size of a baby's head onto my plate. My eyes grew enormous at the spectacle on my plate.

I was well known at home for being a helpless chocolate addict. I feverishly tucked into the mountain of mousse and groaned in pleasure. The rich, creamy dessert was not too heavy but not too fluffy. It seemed to float away in my mouth, creating a vision of chocolate clouds in my mind.

This, I thought, is the way to end a perfect day in Paris!

The author was an eighth-grader at Green Valley Middle School when this entry was submitted to competition in February 2008.

Design-an-Ad winner



This ad for Nugget Market, designed by Nathan Nicholas Archuleta, earned him an honorable mention in the Design-an-Ad competition of The Reporter's Campus Star student journalism competition. Nathan was a fourth-grader in Mrs. Gustafson's classroom at Vacaville Christian Elementary School when this was submitted in February 2008.

Puzzles, Games winner

Animals

- dog
- cat
- hog
- chicken
- gorilla
- mouse
- rat
- fish
- tiger
- zebra
- elephant
- lion
- bird
- horse
- pony
- worm
- catapillar
- snake
- cheetah
- cougar
- bobcat
- deer
- fawn
- raccoon
- packrat
- chipmunk
- monkey
- turtle
- crocodile
- alligator

m c a t a c b o b c a y i
 e o h e r a g u o c s h u
 c t s i p t m g i y n o p
 n e u q m a n o o c a r f
 h e u r u p c a u h k s i
 g n l m t i m k h s e e s
 g o r i l l a u r p e y h
 n i b t d l e r n a e a e
 a l l i g a t o r k t l r
 o w g g r r c b n e g a e
 c m o e o d e o e i l t r
 u d e r o z m h r f a w n
 r d c t m i c h i c k e n

This word search puzzle featuring more than 30 different types of animals earned Austin Hart an honorable mention in the 3-4 Grade Division of the Puzzles and Games category of The Reporter's Campus Star student journalism contest. Austin was a third-grader in Laurie Brunke's classroom at Foxboro Elementary School in Vacaville when this was submitted in February 2008.