

Created by: Debra C. Argen

## France is a Work of Art

The Maison de la France, Air France, Rail Europe and the Rhone Alps Tourist Board held a cocktail party on February 16, 2006 at the Rainbow Room at Rockefeller Center in New York, to showcase France, a Work of Art.

Marion Fourestier, Director of Communications for the [French Government Tourist Office](#) thanked Consul General of France in New York, Ambassador Francois Delattre for his patronage, welcomed Mr. Hervé Savlignac, President of Rhône-Alps Tourism, who was joined by his colleagues Mr. Marc Béchart, Managing Director and Ms. Olivia Poncy, Promotions Manager, Mr. Fabrice Morel, President and CEO of Rail Europe, Mr. Marie-Joseph Malé, Vice President and General Manager of Air France, and invited guests before introducing Mr. Jean-Phillipe Pérol, Director of the Americas for Maison de la France. France had a record year in 2005 with 3 million American visitors, a 10% increase over the year 2004; this success was due in part to a strategy of quality. They are confident about this trend continuing in 2006. The theme for 2006 is France, a Work of Art, where art and culture meet filmmaking with France as the setting for two major films, the Da Vinci Code and Marie Antoinette, there will be a Paul Cezanne centennial from June - September in Aix-en-Provence, new museums will be opening, and combined with UNESCO world heritage sites and castles, Art in France is on the move as they need to please a new audience.



Ms. Olivia Poncy said that the Rhône-Alps offers 'Water and Wellness', with city spas and water bottling with over 30 types of mineral waters, Alpine lakes and water sports. As for sports, it has the world's largest ski area with 140 ski resorts, and is the second golf region in France with over 60 golf courses. It is the home to gastronomy and wine, olives, olive oil and cheeses of the Alps, Beaujolais and Rhône wines. The region hosts the Tour de France, a Dance Festival in September in Lyon the city of silk, there is a Classical Music Festival in Grenoble, and there are even Jazz Festivals.

Mr. Marie-Joseph Malé stated that 2005 was a landmark year for Air France. They were the number one global airline that experienced double-digit growth from the United States in 2005, and increased the number of routes. 2006 will be a year of celebrations with their 60-year anniversary in New York, their 20-year anniversary in San Francisco, and their 20-year anniversary in Miami. Even Air France is showcasing France, a Work of Art, with designer uniforms by acclaimed French designer Christian Lacroix, and collaboration by Guy Martin on the first class menus and sommelier Olivier Poussier selecting the wines.

Mr. Fabrice Morel stated that Rail Europe started in the 1930s in Paris, that the TGV is 25 years old, and today has over a billion passengers. TGV prices have dropped almost 50%, and discounts are available for early booking re: the French Rail Pass, and Rail and Drive packages. Not to be outdone by Air France, Christian Lacroix also designed the interiors of their new trains, and their Eurostar train is a proud partner of

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the Da Vinci Code travel package, proving that indeed, France is a Work of Art.

For more information on France, please visit [Maison de la France](#).

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