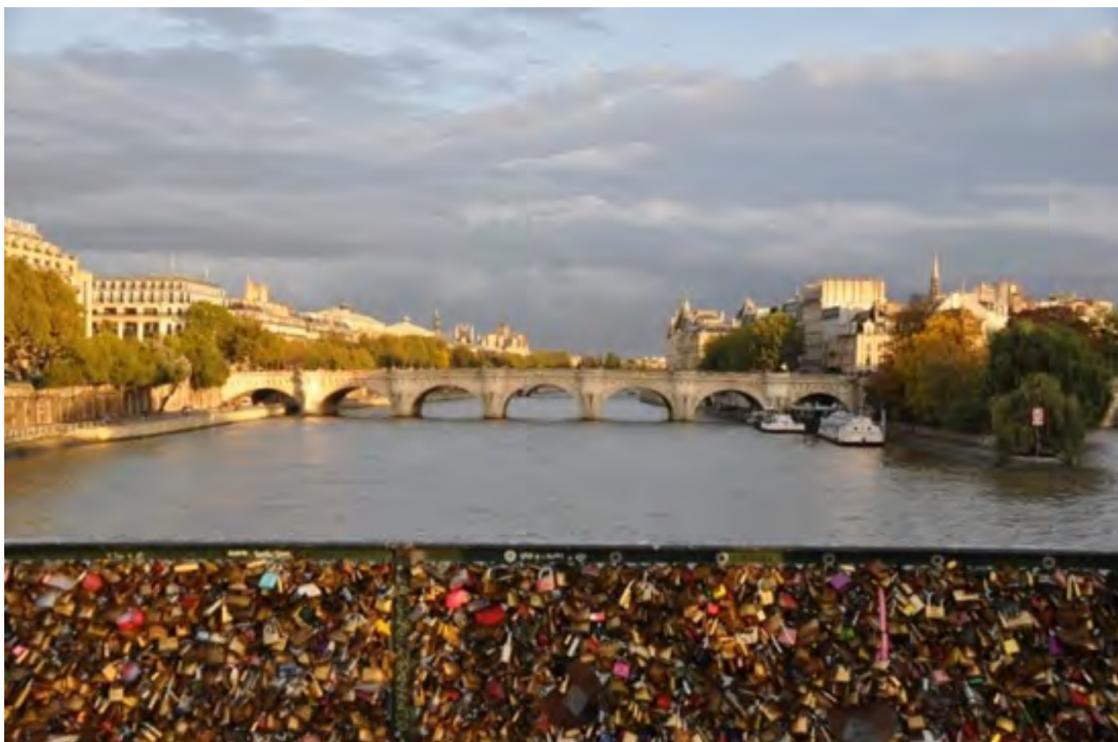


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Paris: All My Favorites

by *Vanessa Boz*

I've been wanting to do a post on Paris for ever. It's my hometown after all, and although I have not lived there in almost 20 years (20!!), I know it inside out because I love it. And I hate it. Isn't it always like this when we're in love? Paris est tout petit pour ceux qui s'aiment comme nous d'un aussi grand amour. One of my favourite movie quote, from the Children of Paradise (1945). It goes something like this in English (but really, it sounds better in French): "Paris is so little for those like us who love each others with such a great love". Instead of delaying and delaying a post on Paris until it's complete and perfect, I've decided to list here all of my favorite spots. Beware, it's a long list.

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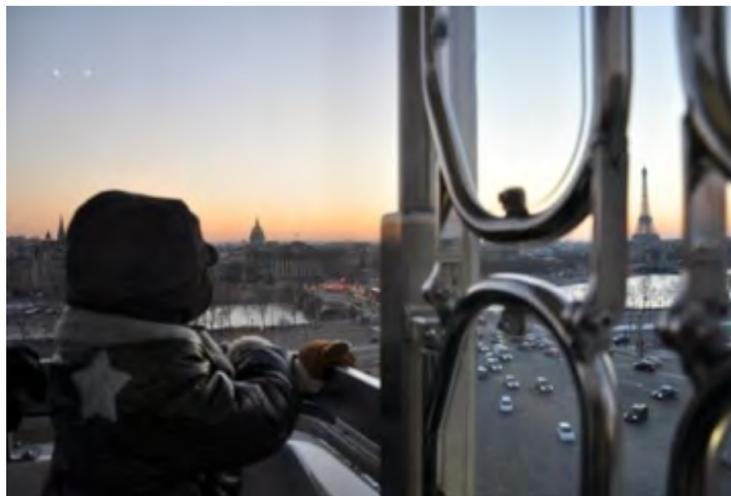
My favorite square (in Paris, in the world!): Place des Vosges. One of the oldest, a masterpiece of architectural perfection. Victor Hugo's statue is anchored right in the middle, and although it's super touristy over the week end (especially Sundays when the rest of Paris shuts down), I love seating

under the arch, listen to the jazz bands playing outdoor in free spirit, and sip a glass of Alsacian Gewurztraminer at the cafe Ma Bourgogne. Ok, since you're asking, my 2nd favorite is the Jardin du Palais Royal...



My favorite bridge: Le Pont des Arts, where couples (tourists only!) take a pilgrimage to attach a lock to the bridge and prove their love to eternity. But I just like it for the amazing views on both sides.

My favorite dinner with no reservation: Chez Omar. A dinner at this North-marais eatery is as close as you can get from a quintessential Parisian evening. The menu is a mix of brasserie dishes and North African specialties like couscous merguez & brochettes d'agneau (lamb skewers), my favourites. When I go, I reconnect a bit with some of my roots. The crowd is usually a nonchalant yet stylish mix of fashionistas, art gallery owners, a few tourists who can't speak a word of French and inevitably end up losing their turn in the queue, and bobo families from the neighbourhood.



My favorite museum: that's a tough one. For slightly off-the-beaten-track, it has to be the Musee Picasso (closed til spring 2014), in Le Marais. And Musee Rodin is top of the list too. And so is the Musee du Quai Branly, for its educational take on the many civilisations around the world.

My favorite home interior shop: it used to be Caravane in Le Marais, but they recently changed owner and I am worried they might be losing their edge. Emery & Cie near Bastille is a place I always enjoy visiting for inspiration.

My favorite bakery: The Baguette renaissance from Arnaud Delmontel, on Rue des Martyrs in the 9th arrdt, is hmmm. No surprise he won multiple awards.

My favorite cafe: I love to seat at the terrace of Cafe de la Mairie on Place Saint Sulpice in Saint Germain des Pres, and watch the Parisians go by. I usually order a croque monsieur on Poilane bread, with a Badoit to drink. I ask the waiter if I can have my croque monsieur with a slice of tomatoes, and he looks at me as if I've asked for the world. Only in Paris can we laugh at being treated poorly by the waiters, because that's the way it goes, and if they weren't, well, it wouldn't be

Paris.

My favorite fashion store: this one is a cliché but I cannot go to Paris and not check out Merci. Ok, let me then give you another address, for insiders only: Spree. Tucked away on a little street (52 rue des Abesses) in Montmartre, this is a gem, with the best merchandise selection from classic Isabel Marant to my favourite Tsumori Chisato.



My favorite shop of curiosities: Deyrolles is unique in the world. Almost 200 years old, the store is a collection of natural wonders, from animals to plants and books about all of this. When we took Marcelo and Amalya there, they could not stop their coos to ahhs.

My favorite Italian restaurant: Because in Paris, I love eating Italian food. Si! Le Petit Italien, behind the Place des Vosges is just delicious and the chef is still the same as when I was a student.

My favorite brasserie: Chez Balzar. If you want to know where Balthazar in New York (and now in London) got it all from, head to Chez Brasserie Balzar (reserve first), order the pommes dauphine, a steak au poivre and a crème brûlée, and you'll know what the real deal is about.

My favorite store for children's fashion: Again, I can tell you the obvious one, Bonton next door to Merci (on Boulevard Beaumarchais). And then, I can also tell you my 3 under the radar favorites: Finger in the Nose, Pepe shoes and Zef, all three near each other in Saint Germain des Pres. Oh, and now there's a brand new hot spot: Centre Commercial Kids, next to the parents' store. Note to self, must check it out next time around.

My favorite picnic spot: Parc des Buttes Chaumont. This is not on the tourist map. It's a quirky park on a hill in North Paris (19th arrdt), a great starting point for exploring the neighbourhood of Belleville. Another wonderfully atmospheric spot is the Canal Saint Martin, in the 10th near République, where you can seat on benches and study how the barges navigate the canal.

My favorite children museum: Le Musée en Herbe is a little gem in the heart of Paris, especially for arts, or the more established Palais de la Découverte (science museum, for older ones), with a fascinating exhibition on ants going on right now.

My favourite ice-cream spot: Berthillon, on Ile Saint Louis. Queue for an ice cream in a cone, and eat it on the stairs by the Seine river, facing Notre-Dame. It's magic.

My favorite parc: Jardin des Plantes (in the 5th arrondissement), on par with Jardin du Luxembourg (in the 6th, near saint Germain des Pres).



My favorite spot for a noisette (an espresso with a tiny bit of warm milk): La Palette, near the Beaux-arts school. Wear jeans, heels if you can and an old sweater with some holes, smoke a cigarette (or pretend), order a glass of red wine instead of a noisette, stick the children on an iphone screen, and enjoy.

My favorite tourist attraction: It's got to be the Eiffel Tower. She's so beautiful. I love her! I always will!



My favorite food market: It's not a market per say, rather a street famous for its excellent food shops, Rue des Martyrs in the 9th, especially on a Sunday morning. The neighbourhood is sometimes called SoPi aka South Pigalle to the great annoyance of the locals.

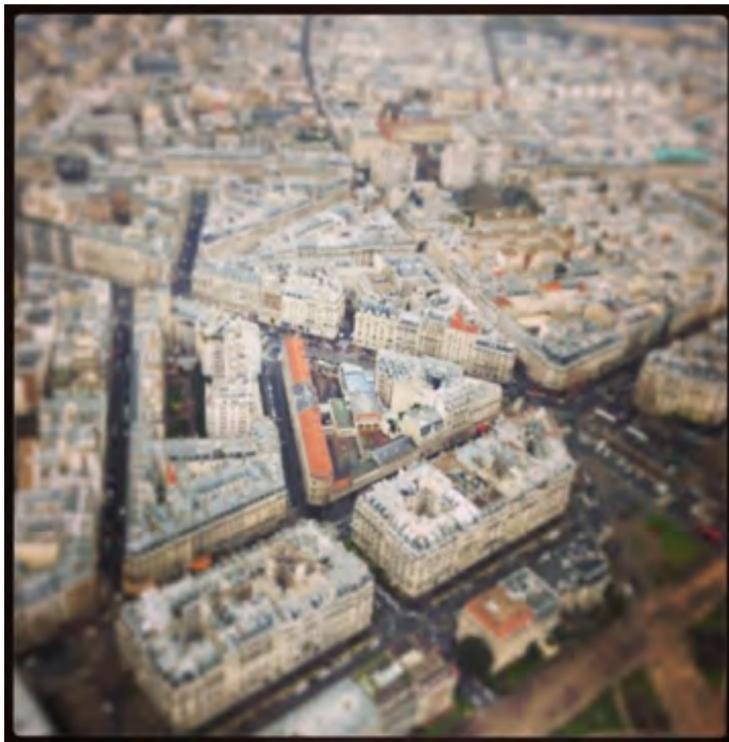
My favorite jewellery store: Not that I have ever bought anything there, but I would if I could at Marie-Helene de Taillac and also at Aurelie Biderman, both conveniently near the cafe de Flore on Boulevard Saint Germain.

My favorite playground: the one inside Jardin du Luxembourg, although it's so annoying that you have to pay to get in. Scandal! While you're at it, you might as well spend 5eur on a poney ride as the children will beg you for it anyway.

My favorite Let's make the children Super Happy on a Sunny day: at the Jardin d'Acclimatation, on the outskirts of West Paris. You won't see many tourists there, mostly Parisian families eager to spend an afternoon outdoor with the children, going on poney rides, feeding rabbits, and taking

rides on the many merry-go-round.

My favorite view: from the top of the Eiffel Tower (be sure to buy your tickets in advance online)



Vanessa Boz is the founder of the travel blog [Boz Around](#), where this post was originally posted.

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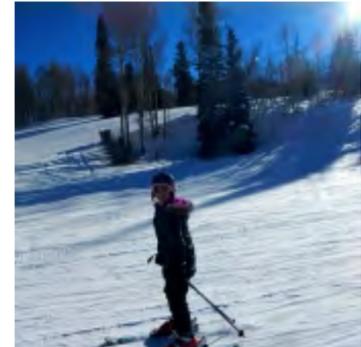
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