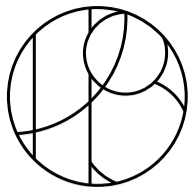


Winter 2017

vol.01 Descents, climbs, Take-off.



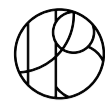
We do not talk about the mountain, but rather mountains. A plural, like their number of sides, the mountains are multi-faceted. Both terrifying yet magnificent, cold yet welcoming, dark yet glimmering with their glaciers and their endless snow. At the foot, the valley - a product of these exceptions. Although it has already withstood the passage of many centuries, crystallised between the rocks and ice, one thing is sure: Chamonix Valley is still being

chiselled into shape. Ever-changing like the mountains that stand tall over it, the valley is constantly reinventing itself. First a refuge for believers, it became a landmark for the aristocracy, has captivated scientists, opened its arms to mountaineers and provided a playground for athletes. An infinitely rich history that guarantees it an equally abundant future and a passionate present, that is worth taking the time to discover.

# L'ÉCHAPPÉE

A H8 COLLECTION NEWSPAPER





EDITO VOL.01



**HOTEL MONT-BLANC**  
CHAMONIX



Understanding the world around us - such is the reason for travel. It is therefore logical, in order to get to the heart of the story, to push our understanding to the point where it becomes truth, to constantly travel, to go where nobody expects you to and to discover the unexpected. That is the role of this issue (and those to come) of "L'Échappée", to offer you the chance to take your journey that much further, from the comfort of your bedroom, or to provide you with a starting point to explore in detail the environment you have chosen for your stay.

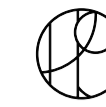
You hold the entire Chamonix Valley in your hands. Or rather, the side of the valley you won't find anywhere else. The favourite restaurants of our hotel staff, the history of a thousand-year-old valley, its gourmet delights and its expertise, the contemplation of an inconstant mountain that is both affectionate yet menacing.

Although we describe and decipher the mountains, Chamonix and its valley, if we have learnt one thing in preparing this issue, it is that the journey is not in the words of the narrator, but in the eyes of the traveller.

*"Some think that they make a journey, whereas, in fact, it's the journey that makes, or breaks, you"*  
Nicolas Bouvier, Genevan author.

Jean-Philippe Cartier, CEO of H8 Collection

*Jean-Philippe Cartier*



REPORT

# SAVE THE DATE

*November & December*



Grand & Petit Palais, until January 15<sup>th</sup>, Paris 08.

Whether you're a big kid or an eternal youth, the Grand Palais and Petit Palais museums are putting on two exhibitions that will bring out your inner adolescent. The first is the Hergé retrospective dedicated to the "creator of European comics" and Tintin, of course. The second, at the Petit Palais, retraces the life and works of Oscar Wilde, a fluent French-speaker and an ardent Francophile, through a collection of over 200 previously unseen pieces.

Grand Palais, 3 Avenue du Général Eisenhower,  
Petit Palais, Avenue Winston Churchill

Penti Samallahti, December 7-24<sup>th</sup>, Arles.

Having toured the world as a photographer since the 70s, his work on Africa is currently on display in Arles until 24 December. Fascinated by the pureness and beauty of nature, his work is an odyssey that leaves none unchanged.

Abbaye de Montmajour, Route de Pontvieille

Christmas Market, December 16-30<sup>th</sup>, Chamonix.

Spending winter in the snow is always a magical occasion, and even more so when it involves the Chamonix Christmas Market. But it doesn't stop there: once the Christmas festivities are over, head to the Hotel Mont Blanc to celebrate the New Year and delight in the surprises the team has in store.

Hôtel Mont-Blanc, 62 Allée du Majestic

Royal Christmas in the châteaux  
of the Loire Valley.

The grandest châteaux of the Loire Valley put on exceptional events for the festive season. Unique exhibitions and spectacles... ask at reception for a full programme during your stay.

*January & February*

La France d'Avedon, October 8<sup>th</sup> - February 22<sup>th</sup>, Paris 13

Renowned photographer Richard "Dick" Avedon has forged strong ties with France over his career. The exhibition retraces the ties he established between the United States and France thanks in particular to his technique. Iconic in more ways than one.

Bnf, Quai François Mauriac

24<sup>th</sup> Truffle week-end, 13-15<sup>th</sup> January, Uzès.

The black diamond par excellence. How often have you put your senses to the test when it comes to truffles? Why not give it a try at this 3-day market! Sniff, taste, touch, weigh and who knows... Succumb!



La Grande-Odyssée Savoie Mont-Blanc,  
January 8<sup>th</sup>, Morillon.

The world's most spectacular sled dog race is being held, for the 5th year running, at the Morillon ski resort. A thrilling display, notably under the aegis of Nicolas Vanier, the "traveller of the cold", who will doubtlessly be in his element.

Delacroix Orientalist. Journey to Morocco,  
December 19<sup>th</sup> - February 27<sup>th</sup>, Musée des beaux-arts  
de Tours.

Can a journey change your life? Yes. As proven by Delacroix and his journey to Morocco, which turned his artistic approach upside down. Surrounded by other, more Orientalist artists, you will discover the explanations for this new perspective in a variety of forms: readings, paintings, sketches, etc.

18 Place François Sicard



*March & April*



Saut Hermès at the Grand Palais,  
March 7-19<sup>th</sup>, Paris.

A fashionable and socialite event, in addition to the races, this hat parade is one not to be missed. A technical feat for the riders and their mounts, and an aesthetic feat for the guests - plenty to entertain the crowds.

Rodin : The Centennial Exhibition,  
March 22<sup>th</sup> - July 31<sup>st</sup>, at the Grand Palais, Paris.

Before Braque, Picasso, Matisse and so many others, Rodin incorporated the "accidental" into his work and invented the unfinished piece, the partial figure, assembly and collage. Rediscover the artist on the centenary of his death.

Grand Palais, 3 Avenue du Général Eisenhower.



Abrivado des plages, March 4<sup>th</sup>, Grau du Roi  
Port Camargue.

The Abrivado des Plages is held every year on the first Saturday in March. In the late morning, after the roussataio (passage of the mares and foals), the bulls, escorted by Horse Guards set out across the beach from the right bank to the rapturous applause of the spectators. At the end of the performance, everyone (yourself included!) heads to the main square to share in the festive atmosphere. Heritage!

Garrigue en fête, March 28-29<sup>th</sup>, Pont-du-Gard.

Farm picnics, local markets, exceptional restaurants... if you are staying at one of our hotels in the south of France at this time of year, make sure you immerse yourself in the local culture, especially its culinary delights.

Driving Luxury = Le luxe en mouvement.  
Consommations en cycle mixte des Nouvelles BMW Série 7 Berline et Limousine : 2,0 à 8,5 l/100 km.  
CO<sub>2</sub> : 45 à 197 g/km selon la norme européenne NEDC. BMW France, S.A. au capital de 2 805 000 €  
722 000 965 RCS Versailles - 3 avenue Ampère, 78180 Montigny-le-Bretonneux.



Le plaisir  
de conduire



# DRIVING LUXURY.

## NOUVELLE BMW SÉRIE 7.

DÉSORMAIS DISPONIBLE EN VERSION HYBRIDE RECHARGEABLE.

La meilleure façon de prédire l'avenir, c'est de le créer. En puisant son origine dans l'excellence artisanale et la tradition, la Nouvelle BMW Série 7 introduit des avancées majeures dans tous les domaines : design, confort, technologie, efficacité. Elle se positionne ainsi comme l'une des automobiles les plus innovantes au monde. Découvrez notre interprétation du luxe contemporain sur [bmw.fr/serie7](http://bmw.fr/serie7).

H8 COLLECTION



HOTEL GROUP

CONQUEST

# TAKE A WALK ON THE *white* SIDE

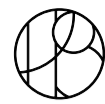
Mont-Blanc and the entire surrounding mountain range gaze down on us from Chamonix,  
but there's a lot more to it than that. Alongside it stand 10 centuries of history and a remarkable destiny that looks upon us.  
Here we take a look behind the legend.



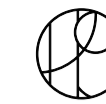
WINTER 2017

©Yanis Ourabah - Getty Images

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The Italian building surveyor Pietro Alaria discussing the construction works of the Mont Blanc Tunnel with the Alpine guide Ubaldo Rey. Valle d'Aosta, August 1962  
©Giorgio Lotri/Mondadori Portfolio via Getty Images



## IN THE SHADOW OF GIANTS



« Lever de soleil sur les Grandes Jorasses », Oil on canvas by Gabriel Loppé, painter and mountaineer, 1862-1872. ©Les Amis du Vieux Chamonix

The peaks gradually become higher and higher as they rise above the banks of the Arve, their profiles swelling from proud to simply enormous. The undulating roundness of the initial foothills give way to rugged crests, with sharp, needle-like formations and extremely steep slopes. It stands there, unexpectedly, before us, immense and Dantean in its presence, as if drawing an eternal breath... THE mountain, the glacier, the 'Mont Maudit' ('Cursed Mountain'), the 'roof of Europe'... Mont-Blanc. We don't know quite what to make of it. We are overcome with fascination, and awe.

You won't find a single Chamonix resident that doesn't have a look of fear in their eyes at the mere mention of the colossus that has towered over their very existence since the day they were born, but any Chamonix resident will strongly maintain the exact opposite. Nurturing, benevolent and prolific, it is a truly captivating sight with its icy slopes, arousing a sense of fervour, and it certainly gives back as good as it gets. There is no stronger evidence of this than the fact that it has given birth to a whole valley that boasts great talents, history and tales and offers endless splendour right there at its feet, within its icy embrace. The first impression is one of a valley whose inhabitants are as generous and sincere as the welcome they extend to travellers passing through.

Chamonix has plenty of surprises up its sleeves, whenever and wherever you may find yourself. Whether you are travelling a mountain pass and take a moment to truly appreciate the stunning landscape in all its beauty and the sheer majesty of its scale or simply crossing the threshold of a doorway that at first appears cold and austere but ultimately leads to the unexpected crackling of a fireplace, the smile of a local, or the comforting sweetness of a hot drink, its very nature and the fact that it lies tucked away between these stone giants could easily lead one to think of Chamonix as being closed off from the rest of the world, huddled in search of, and indeed to save, any form of warmth, in a place where the elements appear to be as insurmountable as the surrounding mountains, but this couldn't be further from the truth.

Since it was founded in 1091, at a time when 'Chamouny' was still just a priory, trade has always been the only means of subsistence. This being the case, people travelled to Geneva for a number of centuries to sell local specialities, including honey, lambs, wool, rye and oats, in exchange for other essential foodstuffs. The people of Chamonix therefore got to know 'the world' through its rich men and women, its customs and its protocols. The presence of the road (which would remain in disarray until the late 19th Century) meant that people could travel to Geneva much more easily and willingly than if they had had to climb Mont-Blanc.

In fact, over the course of the 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries, various legends emerged surrounding the *Monts Aeffreux* ('Dreadful Mountains') and the *Monts Maudits* ('Cursed

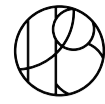
Mountains'). Rumours were spread that divine spirits hid there, some of them evil, and that anyone who dared to disturb them as they rested or to get too close to them disappeared. The chamois hunters disappeared, as did the crystal-smiths, or were sometimes struck by immediate blindness (obviously caused by the glare of the snow). Climbing and safety conditions relentlessly and almost inevitably made for an unfortunate fate. The slow waves produced by the glaciers carried with them frozen bodies that were a more terrifying sight than death itself. The *Monts* instilled a sense of fear, as did the surrounding dense, dark, abrupt forests and the avalanches, rock slides and predators found there and believed to cast spells on those brave enough to venture there, creating an even darker picture and leaving families in mourning.

It would be 1741 before two travellers, who were also scientists and anthropologists - wearing multiple hats was, of course, common at the time -, discovered the priory of Chamouni. William Windham, Richard Pococke and their profound curiosity, fuelled by the extensive legends that surrounded the place, decided to go there.

With no sign of any monsters or other ill-intentioned spirits, what they found instead was a beautiful landscape, a palette of colours changing with the passing of the clouds, a welcoming village, of course, but first and foremost the glacier - those huge, glistening, snow-covered blocks of blue ice so imposing in their presence, running right down into the valley. An unbelievable spectacle that may previously have been observed in more distant lands, but not in France! Not in a neighbouring country. Stepping foot onto its cold, immaculate, fragmented crust, the 'waves' that it formed inspired one of the two curious travellers to name it the 'Ice Sea'.

Back in London, the two told of their expedition in the country's newspapers, and in the space of a few years Chamonix became a leading destination for those looking to push the boundaries of science, the body and indeed the mind. Visits to the area would be combined with cutting-edge meteorological experiments but mostly people would set their sights upward and to the summit, although very few ever attempted it. And so mountaineering was born. It was in 1786, before the French Revolution had even happened, under the impetus of Genevan scientist Horace Benedict de Saussure, who had promised a reward for anyone who could clear his way to the roof of Europe, that Jacques Balmat and Michel Gabriel Paccard achieved the unachievable and set foot where no man had ever set foot before - on the summit of Mont-Blanc.

The ascent followed a number of aborted attempts, and although it was really something special, it would fail to achieve the recognition it deserved. Jacques Balmat and Michel Gabriel Paccard were just a couple of villagers - one a doctor, the other a crystal-smith - whose achievements barely resonated outside of the alpine region. Only the following



Souvenirs from the valley.  
Chamonix Medals (guides) and postcards.  
©Les Amis du Vieux Chamonix

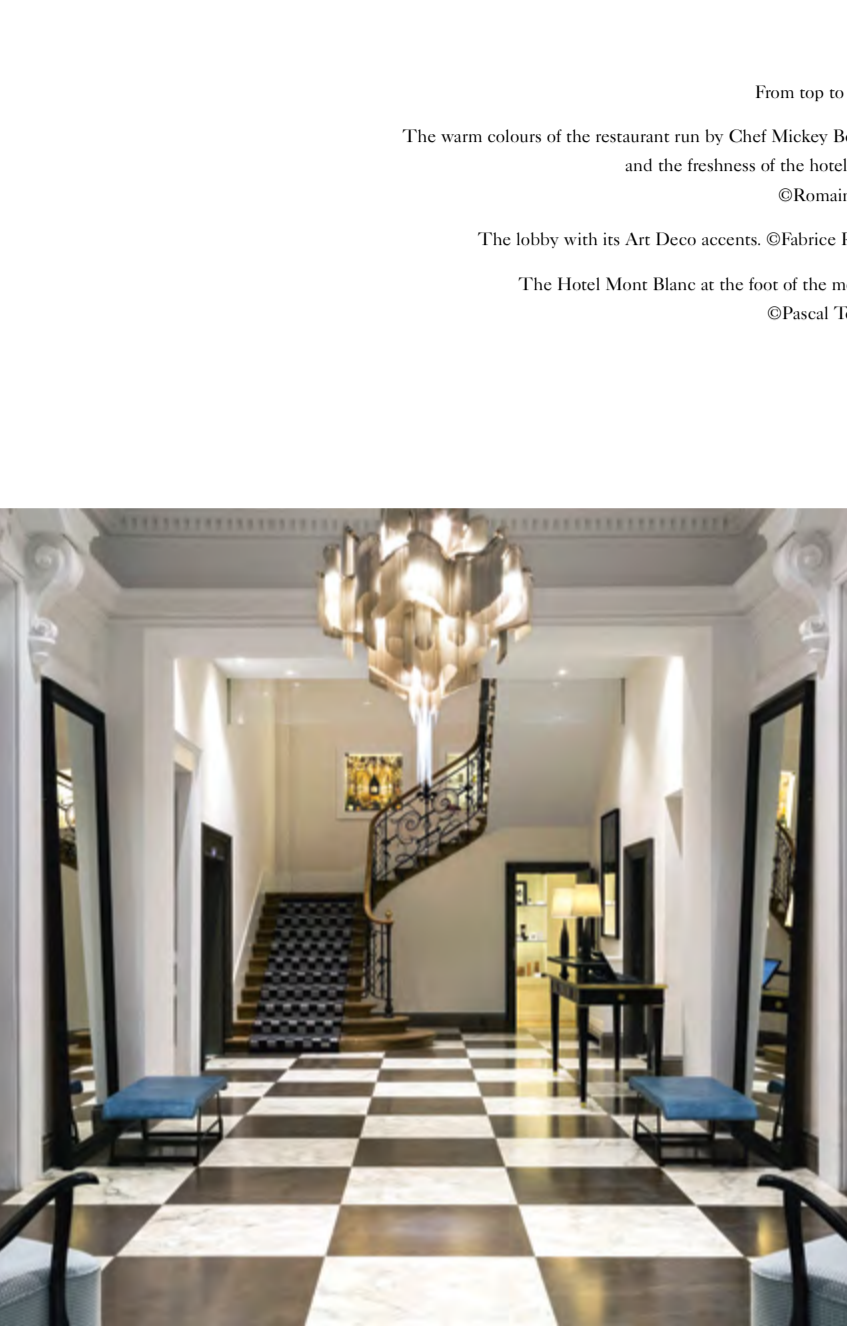
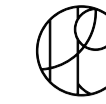
year, when eminent scientist Saussure, who was renowned across the continent, scaled the mountain, would this news reach and be recognised much further afield. From then on, people flocked from all over the world, with hotels opening by the dozen and the population doubling or even tripling. The valley was reborn, with stage-coaches making their way through the crinolines as the high-society visited the area to behold what rose above them. In 1812, Philippe-Xavier Leschevin, an officer in the 'Powders and Saltpetres' of the city of Dijon, wrote the following when passing through Chamonix: «The hotels there are infinitely better appointed than those to be found in a number of major cities, and one of the greatest surprises that this journey has to offer is to be treated better and with greater care amid the mountains of Savoy than in most of the hotels in Lyon and Geneva». Chamonix's hotel tradition was starting to establish itself.

It would take a major historic event, however, for the town to really boom and to experience its heyday. In 1860, as a result of the Treaty of Turin, Nice and Savoy were returned to France following a number of years under the yoke of the Kingdom of Sardinia. Napoleon III, his wife, the Empress Eugénie, and their court, resembling a small army in terms of its size and resources, visited Chamonix in order to definitively validate the acquisition. A number of luxury hotels had been built under Sardinian rule to host the first tourists to the area, who were of course well off and curious about the mountain range and the new developments surrounding it, but the Hôtel Royal would be built for this imperial occasion. The latter was a veritable little palace, the name of which, alongside those of the Emperor and the town itself, would resonate right around Europe. With crowds of wealthy tourists flocking to the area, the town had to be able to offer the facilities that the leading figures of the world expected. Whilst an initial Hôtel Mont Blanc was opened in the town centre in 1849, it would be very short-lived, with a devastating fire in 1855 ravaging part of the town centre, leaving nothing but ruins and ashes in its wake. But it was difficult to imagine Chamonix without its 'Hôtel Mont-Blanc', and another building a few dozen metres down the road opened in 1857 under the management of the Cachat family. Driven by its success, this same family would very soon open another, larger Hôtel Mont-Blanc, in 1869, which currently houses the tourist office. With demand growing as a result of the desires of the Roaring Twenties, among other things, it would very soon be expanded, in 1890, giving it its definitive form as it still stands today and taking the name *Grands Hôtels Cachat du Mont-Blanc*.

Times, and indeed the clientèle, have changed somewhat since the start of the 20th Century, with winter sports drawing large number of visitors to the area, as a result of which you are far more likely to come across a sports enthusiast in modern-day

Chamonix than you are an emperor! The Hôtel Mont-Blanc Chamonix, however, has managed to move with the times, growing and improving year upon year. Nowadays, maintaining every inch of its old-world charm from one year to the next thanks to its typical Chamonix architecture, the Hôtel offers guests modern yet historic surroundings that reflect the cold of the winter outside and the comfort of its lounges, the altitude of Mont-Blanc, its unchanging enormity and the firmament of the hotel's 5-star rating. At the helm of restaurant Matafan (which takes its name from a local potato pancake that suppresses hunger (*mate la faim*), chef Mickey Bourdillat serves up some amazingly inventive cuisine that is sophisticated yet unpretentious. Reflecting the very nature of this valley, which continuously presents us with wonderfully serendipitous surprises, the flavours he introduces and the way in which he skilfully incorporates an element of Chamonix into each of his dishes are perfectly matched. Topping things off in perfect harmony with its location, the hotel also boasts a spa, offering the most relaxing of treatments that will allow you to unwind in the ultimate bliss.

Return of an expedition to Le Brévent, 1908. ©Collection Bernadette Tsuda



From top to bottom:  
The warm colours of the restaurant run by Chef Mickey Bourdillat and the freshness of the hotel lounge.  
©Romain Ricard  
The lobby with its Art Deco accents. ©Fabrice Rembert  
The Hotel Mont Blanc at the foot of the mountain.  
©Pascal Tournaire



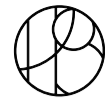
The valley and the mountain passes of Chamonix are undeniably teeming with unexpected splendour, forged by a gripping history that is itself shaped by some of France's finest moments. It would take far more than these few lines will allow to fully explore the area, so it is up to you to find out for yourself what the real Chamonix has to offer, to climb the whole area, or 'simply' Mont Blanc, and to stay at the hotel named after it, for a truly unique experience and an exceptional stay.

*The Les Amis du vieux Chamonix ('Friends of Old Chamonix') association.*

The Les Amis du vieux Chamonix association has been working to preserve the history and heritage of Chamonix since 1969. Guide and secretary of the association Christine Boymond Lasserre, who met with us for the purposes of producing this report, also organises often-quirky tours of the town which can be booked directly through the reception or at [www.visites-guidees-74.fr](http://www.visites-guidees-74.fr) or by calling +33 (0)6 07 21 51 90.

Hôtel Mont-Blanc Chamonix\*\*\*\* – [www.hotelmontblanchamonix.com](http://www.hotelmontblanchamonix.com)  
62 Allée du Majestic, 74400 Chamonix-Mont-Blanc





# CRAFTS OF EXCELLENCE



## Rossignol: at the top of the downhill ski game

It may have been around for 108 years, but it is still one step ahead. With his first pass of the plane Abel Rossignol, a carpenter and ski enthusiast, unknowingly shaped an entire sport, transforming a valley and a multitude of destinies.

A sign of the brand's importance, the great moments of the kit supplier's history correspond to the turning points in the history of modern skiing. Because what sets Rossignol apart, and what always has done, is its ability to reinvent products and to place itself at the service of performance. Each of its innovations was inevitably followed by dazzling victories and an invaluable success. As of 1937, Emile Allais went down in history alongside Rossignol when he became four-time world champion with a pair of Olympic 41 skis. Henri Oreiller followed suit in 1948, winning the title of the first French Olympic downhill champion. In 1960, Jean Vuarnet also won gold at the Winter Olympics in Squaw Valley, equipped with the first metal skis. Then came the "Strato", made entirely from fibre glass. A tremendous capacity for flexibility, combined with the resistance of fibre and above all its light weight; as Jean-Claude Killy left the others in a trail of powder, the legend soared and Rossignol with it, to become the world leader in ski equipment that it is today.

But it is only when you visit the "racing" workshops in Sallanches, where competition skis are manufactured, that the real reason for this success really hits home. The blades are designed in the research and development stage by former professional skiers, for whom the sensations outweigh the technical sophistication of the product. The assembly, on the other hand, is carried out by passionate professionals, able to detect an imperfect curve or a dulled edge at a glance. Before selecting the ideal pair, an average of seven others are eliminated. For downhill competition skis, no fewer than 19 layers of different materials are assembled, resulting in a maximum production of approximately forty pairs per day. Each ski that comes out of the workshop is the culmination of incredibly precise and controlled gestures that result in what is essentially a break with the laws of physics. A wealth of expertise and technologies, but one that would mean nothing if it were not guided by the unique spirit of Rossignol. The brand places great importance on working with its racers, listening to their ideas, training them, often from a young age, and providing them with technological advances to enhance their performance which in return helps Rossignol forge further ahead. And the result is tangible, given the track record of Martin Fourcade, to name just one of many, alongside the brand over many years, with 2 Olympic gold medals and 10 world championship titles.

Laying of one of the 19 layers that make up a ski. ©Romain Ricard  
Emile Allais selecting the perfect pair. ©Collection Rossignol / Dr  
Cutting out the soles after assembly. ©Romain Ricard



Backed by this symbiotic spirit combining technical excellence and design, passion and authenticity, Rossignol is coming down from its mountain to enter our everyday lives with a svelte, dynamic, understated and of course timeless clothing range. The materials are carefully selected, not only thanks to the brand's experience in so-called "technical" clothing, but also its desire to use natural fibres with proven benefits. But what appeals most in this collection is the mastery of the production. Once again. Nothing is left to chance, from the manufacturing to the designs, everything has a story, everything is justified. The clean lines, bright colours, and the fitted and bold cuts that they do so well in Italy, where the templates are designed. A genuine transalpine adventure. Finally, the pieces in this collection are a reflection of their skis - composed of successive layers, invisible at first glance but that make all the difference in the quality of the product. No carbon or fibre glass, but consecutive strata of aesthetics, quality, heritage, innovation, ambition and performance: everything that has made the invincible emblem that is Rossignol so successful for 180 years.



©Blade Jorgensen



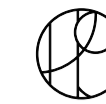
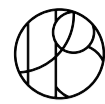
## Maison Arpin: the stuff heroes are made of

Nowadays often replaced by clothing made from synthetic materials, the "Drap de Bonneval" fabric is associated less and less often with the greatest achievements of mountaineering. And yet it is partly thanks to this fabric and the Maison Arpin that many mountain adventurers were able to scale the highest peaks and make mountaineering what it is today.

Founded in 1817, the Maison Arpin is one of those great names that does not shout its existence from the rooftops and yet has survived the test of time. Doubtlessly because resistance and robustness are two of the natural fibres of this mill. The methods have not changed since the days when Pierre Blanc, known as "the Pope of Bonneval", a mountain guide and purveyor of his region, brought fame to the fabric that has since born its name, the "Drap de Bonneval". A material with revolutionary properties for its time when it was produced in the 19th century. Water-repellent, resistant and thermo-regulating, the Drap de Bonneval fabric used to make guides' jackets allowed them to withstand the extreme climatic conditions, as well as the tragic torments of the mountains in that era. This fabric was thus naturally and rapidly adopted by the Compagnie des guides de Chamonix and its illustrious names. Paul-Émile Victor wore it during his greatest exploits, no doubt giving him the slight advantage in comfort needed for a victorious expedition. Today, in addition to clothing, the Maison Arpin also offers a wide array of variations of household linen, all woven using the historic looms of the spinning mill, some of which are listed as French national historic monuments. An expertise unequalled to date.



From top to bottom:  
Pierre Blanc, known as "the Pope of Bonneval". ©Maison Arpin  
The carding, sorting and winding stages.  
©Joseph Melin



# THE GREAT MOUNTAIN GUIDES



August 15<sup>th</sup> celebrations of the Compagnie des Guides de Chamonix, probably around 1940.



## Charlet: learning the ropes

When you sit down at a table with Jean-Claude Charlet, you instantly understand that his story is unlike any other. Yet being in the same room as him goes beyond just words. The souls, ghosts and passions of an entire family, a valley and its company can be detected at once. His family chalet in Argentière is the first illustration. And so we gladly accept to lose ourselves in his ice-blue expression, the crevasses of his face and the comforting melody of his voice.

His surname (Charlet) is a legend here, an echo that constantly resonates between the walls of the valley, and in order to better understand this legend, we need to take a look back at several years of history and turn to the man known to all the Alps: his father, Armand. He is one of those beings who defies the unchangeable, who goes against everything we have ever known. Before him, mountaineering would never have been considered a pastime. The mountains inspired fear; they were a place people went on a "mission" but not for pleasure. Thanks to his physical strengths and the continual refinement of his technique, he opened up a number of new routes, mostly on the Aiguille Verte which he scaled 100 times. A rock climber without equal and a gifted glacier climber, he has no fewer than 3,000 ascents and 1,200 treks under his belt between (just) 1924 and 1938. But above all, it is to him that we owe the invention of the "passion" of mountaineering, a democratic mountaineering that everyone, with the right training and equipment, can take part in.

In other words a legend that would appear difficult to live up to. But if anybody could follow in his footsteps, it would naturally be his son, Jean-Claude Charlet has all the attire of youth: a full bill of health, an unwavering mindset and an exuberant impatience. But as many experiences to the contrary have shown, conquering the summits rarely goes hand in hand with haste. He who thought himself talented as a paternal entitlement, realised that he needed to go back to school to "relearn" what he had never really learnt. His efforts finally paid off and a new-found respect was forged between the two men when Jean-Claude Charlet scaled the Aiguille Verte solo - a summit that his father knows all too well - as though it was nothing more than a simple geological formation. He asks himself, "how can we surpass perfection?", that shown by his father on each of his expeditions. Perhaps it is quite simply impossible, or perhaps it is not what matters. In the end, each guide has their own approach to mountaineering, their own relationship with it and their own personal experience. Some climb Mont Blanc over five hundred times, while others whose experience is five hundred times more intense do not feel the need. As Jean-Claude Charlet explains, everything is levelled by the mountain, it is the last connection to what is tangible, the last contact with reality; nothing could ever be as awe-inspiring. Only one thing could ever be above it, and nobody knows if that thing exists. Young, old, rich, poor, novice or experts, none of that matters when it comes to taking the next step, one that could be the last. Consequently, his battle lies elsewhere. Chairman of the Compagnie des Guides de Chamonix from 1990 to 1994, he has recently been reinstated for a second term of office. Here lies his true challenge. Guiding the Compagnie to help it adapt to the changes in mountaineering, changing practices and to the new challenges that rule it.

This is the philosophy he has passed on to this son Zian, 34. More than just a philosophy, they share the same piercing and reassuring expression, a sign of those at peace with fate and what it holds for them. Zian himself admits that this was not always the case. A troubled adolescence, a lack of vision when it came to his own future. He needed to gain some perspective. It was his father who took on the task, taking him into the mountains aged 17 to gain confidence and rise to greater heights, both literally and figuratively. From that moment Zian was destined to become a guide, like his father and grandfather before him. Family pride? A foregone conclusion? Or simply doing what comes naturally? Driven by a thirst for performance in his young(er) years, he too has matured. Today, part of the reward for him is his clients' smile and the experience he passes on. A passion that will ensure the continuation of the guide tradition in the Charlet family for many years to come.

- 1- Rock climbing specialist
- 2- Specialist in climbing on glacier

From top to bottom:

«Climbing at Night.» Ten Scenes in the Last Ascent of Mont Blanc, 1853.  
Lithograph J.D.H. Browne/Bridgeman Art Library

Armand Charlet, first mountaineer to climb the Aiguille du Diable, circa 1940.

Looking at the mountains looming over us, our bodies and minds stand stupefied in a mix of admiration, solemnity and fear. An image of the mountain guides immediately springs to mind, imagining what life (or survival) must be like at the top of a summit that stands kilometres high. It was in aid of the families of those who never returned that the Compagnie des Guides de Chamonix was founded. On 15 August it celebrated its 195th anniversary at the Hôtel Mont-Blanc Chamonix, in keeping with the tradition of its first years of existence.

Founded in 1821, under the Sardinian governance of the Savoie region, it began as a simple relief fund, and it was not until 1824 that it was given its definitive title by order of the Turin Chamber of Deputies. The Compagnie des Guides de Chamonix began its quest with 34 guides, the most famous among whom was Jacques Balmat, the first man to complete the ascent of Mont Blanc in 1786. It was based on three fundamental pillars: the possibility to choose to "climb"; equality between guides; and solidarity in the event of an accident, thanks to the relief fund (originally replenished thanks to the Guides Festival held on 15 August).

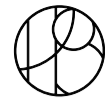
In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, expeditions were mainly made to the Mer de Glace or the Aiguille du Midi. Few guides took on the risks of the high mountains. It was only in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century that treks became more daring. The Compagnie and its guides pushed back the frontiers of mountaineering, reaching more and more summits in the Alps and beyond. Louis Lachenal scaled Annapurna (8,000m) in 1950, Lionel Tèray wrestled with Makalu (the 5<sup>th</sup> highest mountain in the world at 8,463m), while Christophe Profit took on the north faces of the Eiger, the Matterhorn and the Grandes Jorasses. That is what makes this company unique: its ability to move past borders and nationalities, to welcome foreign guides and to set out to discover the summits of the planet, opening up new routes and laying down new gauntlets.

And the world's first Mountain Guide company still has plenty of challenges ahead of it. Although most of the world's summits have nowadays been conquered, the nature of mountaineering is changing. More accessible, more open, its popularity is increasing as fast as its practice is being disrupted by climate change. That is one of the true roles of the Chamonix guides today: raising awareness of and sharing important ecological issues with their clients, thanks to the unique perspective that comes with each ascent. But although the challenges are changing, they are still in keeping with the company's values that have remained unchanged for 195 years.

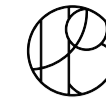


Jean-Claude and Zian Charlet in their uniforms, July 2016.





View over The Lac Blanc. Photograph: Romain Ricard



GANACHE

# JULIA GOLDBY

That penetrating gaze, chin held high, voice firm - Julia is the personification of efficiency. Nothing is left to chance, given that she alone guarantees the satisfaction of the hotel's clients. With 3 years experience as Client Service Manager, she has learnt how to discover Chamonix thanks to the locals' secrets.



EXCURSIONS

Chamonix and its lakes

Stunning views, a reinvigorating blast, bracing altitude, fishing and water sports... ask Julia for excursion ideas to match the season and the weather. Lac des Gaillands, Lac Blanc, Lac de Chavants... there's a lake to suit everyone.

Lac des Gaillands, Lac des Chavants and Lac Blanc, ask for a route map at reception.

LIBATIONS

Élévation 1904

Everything moves so quickly when you're hurtling down the ski slopes. So take the time to get to know the people you pass on the slopes at this institution where guides, skiers, tourists, in short the entire valley gathers to debrief on the events of the day.

259 avenue Michel Croz  
Chamonix, 74400

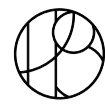
INSPIRATIONS

VIP visit

If you're looking for something to admire during your stay other than the monolithic magnificence of the mountain range standing tall before you, book a tour of Chamonix and discover its less well-known yet equally spectacular aspects with passionate tour guide Christine Boymond-Lasserre.

[www.visites-guidees-74.fr](http://www.visites-guidees-74.fr) – 06 07 21 51 90





RETURN OF TRACK

# LIGHT, PURITY AND SERENITY.

In a landscape on first-name terms with the summits, the Spa by Clarins welcomes you to facilities that are both timeless and extraordinary, extending a genuine invitation to relax and recharge body and mind. Heated winter and summer alike, the outdoor pool and Jacuzzi tub summon you to admire the breath-taking view of the Mont-Blanc mountain range.

250 m<sup>2</sup> entirely devoted to well-being and relaxation forms the heart of the hotel. The indoor pool and hi-tech fitness facilities have all you need to keep your body firm and fit, while the hammam, sauna and "experience" and Scandinavian showers will ensure you stylishly wind down in the experienced hands of the Spa's competent staff.

Designed for you according to the Clarins Method, the treatment menu respects the beauty brand's golden rule: gentle skin treatment thanks to skilled staff and formulas rich in plant extracts and essential oils. A unique, blissful experience for all of the senses.



spa by  
**CLARINS**



*Massage High Mountain  
Ski Special*

Winter sports enthusiasts will appreciate that taking on the mountain requires high-quality support. The targeted and invigorating Clarins Haute-Montagne Spécial Ski massage is the perfect miracle remedy to a hard day on the piste. Particular attention is paid to those parts of the body that have taken the brunt of your day's skiing in order to relieve tension in the muscles and ease the pressure on the joints. The warm, plush ambience of the spa is designed to ensure complete relaxation and well-being, leaving you feeling invigorated and ready to get back out on the piste the next morning!

1h45 mn - Care 1h30 mn / 170 €  
1h15 mn - Care 1h / 120 €



## Double Serum

Traitement Complet Anti-Âge Intensif.

La jeunesse  
n'a pas d'âge!  
(Elle a Double Serum.)

Laissez-vous porter par le temps, Double Serum prend soin de votre jeunesse. Inspirée par la nature, sa double formule unique et universelle concentre 20 extraits de plantes rigoureusement sélectionnés pour leur capacité à stimuler les 5 fonctions vitales de la peau et réveiller sa jeunesse. Dès la première semaine, votre peau est plus éclatante, plus ferme et paraît plus jeune\*.

Disponible sur clarins.com, en parfumeries et grands magasins.

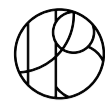
\*Test de satisfaction, 74 femmes.



Cang zhu  
+  
Katafray  
Kiwi  
Pin maritime  
Oxydendron  
Quinoa  
Banane verte  
Macadamia  
Rosier musqué  
Périlla  
Thé vert  
Bocoo  
Arnica  
Avocat  
Avoine  
Bardane  
Houblon  
Pistachier lentisque  
Thym citron  
Guimauve

Vous, avant tout.

# CLARINS



## MAS DE LA FOUQUE\*\*\*\*

## The Camargue



Notre-Dame-de-la-Mer church, Saintes Marie de la Mer

The unmissable Notre-Dame-de-la-Mer (Our Lady of the Sea) church in Saintes Maries de la Mer gazes out across the region and surprises visitors with its unusual bell tower. At the heart of the town - take the opportunity to explore the surrounding streets on your way there.

## Tour of the ramparts &amp; le Boem restaurant, Aigues-Mortes.

Built in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, magnificent shops have replaced the arms caches and visitors are now more than welcome. If you want to explore some more, don't miss Le Boem restaurant with its exotic setting and cuisine.

253 Ave Pont de Provence, 04 34 28 42 30

La Digue à la mer.  
Hiking at the heart of the Camargue.

The changing colours in all seasons give this area a constantly renewed and wild feel by bike. Don't forget to bring refreshments with you, as places to buy them are few and far between.

Informations on [www.arlestourisme.com](http://www.arlestourisme.com)

## La Chassagnette restaurant, Arles

A vegetable garden at the heart of the Camargue, where Chef Armand Arnal adds a touch of unique creativity to your trip and your meal to achieve perfection. If you go for lunch, why not take a stroll in the vegetable garden after your meal to aid the digestion.

Route du Sambuc, 04 90 97 26 96

## LE VIEUX CASTILLON\*\*\*\* &amp; LA MAISON D'UZÈS\*\*\*\*\*

## The Gard and the Provence



Yvon Lambert Collection, Avignon.

The collection retraces the artistic developments of the major trends since the 60s and the avant-garde. The exhibitions presented are regularly renewed, meaning there is always something new to discover.

5 rue Violette, 04 90 16 56 20

## Musée Calvet, Avignon.

More classic than the Lambert collection, the Musée Calvet encompasses the fine arts, decorative arts, archaeology and ethnography. Housed in a stately manor, it is a must on the list of things to see, as Stendhal recounted in his "Memoirs of a Tourist" in 1838..

65, rue Joseph Vernet, 04 90 86 33 84

## Bucolic picnic.

The fresh air, the scent of the soil beneath your feet, the desire to dig your fingers into the earth and feel its richness. Explore the vineyards in a horse-drawn carriage and sample the local gastronomy on a picnic; make sure you don't miss out on a single drop or crumb thanks to Christophe Ducros, Chef at the Michelin-starred restaurant La Table d'Uzès.

Booking: [www.tourismegard.com](http://www.tourismegard.com) or 04 66 36 98 12

## L'Ouvre boîte restaurant, Arles.

Restaurant run by Alexandre Arnal, Armand's younger brother (see "La Chassagnette"), he prepares homegrown cuisine, often served in delicious dishes and accompanied by gourmet wines.

22 Rue du Cloître, 04 88 09 10 10



Le Galoubet restaurant, Arles.

Both typical and local, Le Galoubet is a relaxing, intimate Arlesian restaurant, with delicious food and a delightful terrace on summer days.

18 Rue du Dr Fanton, 04 90 93 18 11

## La Famille restaurant, Uzès.

Opened in tribute to his family of actors, the bistro run by Roman Kolinka (son of Marie Trintignant) welcomes you in the simplicity of the best restaurants, at the heart of Uzès, the fiefdom of the Trintignant family. Take the opportunity to enjoy an after-meal stroll through the Place aux Herbes.

9 Place aux Herbes, 09 72 83 90 76

## Musée municipal Georges Borias, Uzès.

All too often forgotten, the Municipal Museum is becoming the place everyone is talking about. Firstly because it is housed in a 17<sup>th</sup> century building, and secondly because other than the permanent collections covering the town and its origins, the temporary exhibitions often turn out to be pleasantly surprising, like the David Maes exhibition on display until 31 December.

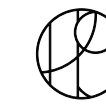
Place de l'Évêché, 04 66 22 40 23

## Galerie Saint-Julien, Uzès.

The venue itself is a work of art, but it conceals many more. An institution in Uzès, a visit is guaranteed to stir your emotions. With numerous periods and schools represented, you are sure to find inspiration for your inner artist.

30 boulevard Charles-Gide, 04 66 03 19 36

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## DOMAINE DES HAUTS DE LOIRE\*\*\*\*

## The Loire Valley



Musée des Beaux Arts, Tours.

The history of the place merges with that of the works it contains. The French gardens of this former episcopal palace alone are worth a visit. Last but not least, the collections include major works from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

18 Place François Sicard, 02 47 05 68 73

## Discovering the kitchens of Chambord.

Restored in April 2016, the kitchens are now accessible to the public for the first time in history. No more need for imagination, you can see with your own eyes. Step into the shoes of a guest of Francis I and take a seat at his table to savour the dishes of the era. Virtual reality and historic re-enactments complete the experience.

Château de Chambord

## Nobuki restaurant, Tours.

If you like doing things differently, try this Japanese restaurant unlike any other. Here, original dishes, finesse and flavours await. Don't just stick to the sushi and the maki. Reservation by telephone only.

3 Rue Buffon, 02 47 05 79 79

## Le Lion d'Or restaurant, Candé-sur-Beuvron.

Jérôme Lechat and his cooking pots get their creative juices flowing to serve up gourmet food from Wednesday to Sunday. Add to that the extensive wine list and the impeccable staff, and the setting is perfect. A restaurant simply not to be missed for connoisseurs.

1 Route de Blois, 02.54.44.04.66



Fondation Galeries Lafayette, Paris 4.

Pledging its support to artists and designers, the Fondation Galeries Lafayette stimulates creative emulation in addition to being an exhibition venue. With the opening of its building restructured by the OMA architectural firm, both the location itself and the works are worth admiring.

46 rue Sainte-Croix-de-la-Bretonnerie, 75004 Paris and rue du plâtre starting 2017

## Tropical agricultural garden, Paris 12.

Far from the overly exposed gardens, here you step into not only a garden but a page in history. It is here that the remainders of the 1907 Colonial Exhibition are displayed. Asian bridges, tropical greenhouses and monuments covered in vegetation; go explore!

45bis Ave de la Belle Gabrielle, 01 49 57 15 15

## Philharmonie de Paris, Paris 19.

With its exceptional architecture designed by Christian de Portzamparc and Jean Nouvel, the Philharmonie de Paris is the capital's new cultural hub. Its 3 concert halls, its museum and its media library mean it has everything you need for a day out.

Cité, 221 Avenue Jean Jaurès, 01 44 84 44 84

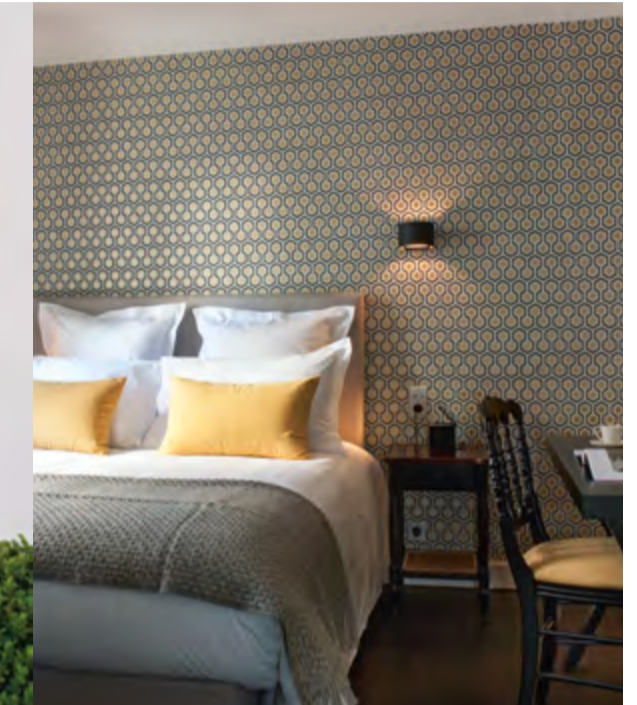
## Château de Fontainebleau.

Often forgotten in the shadow of Versailles and Vaux le Vicomte, the Château de Fontainebleau is just as remarkable, with its extensive furnishings and the last visible Imperial theatre which was recently restored.

77300 Fontainebleau

## HOTEL MATHIS\*\*\*\*

## Paris



Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris 16.

Raised out of the ground by the architect Frank Gehry like an arch reaching towards tomorrow, the Fondation supports contemporary artistic creation. During your visit, don't forget to admire the magnificent panoramic views of Paris from the building's terraces as well as the works themselves.

8 Avenue du Mahatma Gandhi, 01 40 69 96 00

## Le Loulou restaurant, Paris 1.

Inspiration is always on the menu at Loulou, the restaurant at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs. A prestigious setting at the heart of the Louvre, it certainly has great appeal. The à la carte menu features Mediterranean cuisine that flirts between the French and Italian Rivieras.

107 Rue de Rivoli, 01 42 60 41 96

## The Beef Club Ballroom, Paris 1.

The Beef Club is a must for meat lovers and amateurs of good wine. And since the evening will have gone so well, you can continue it in the "Ballroom", the restaurant's secret bar run by the mixologists from the Experimental Group and open every evening until 4am.

44 rue du Louvre, 09 54 37 13 65

## Abri restaurant, Paris 9.

With just 20 covers, make sure you get a table at Abri to sample the culinary surprises prepared by Chef Katsuki Okiyama. Herbs, flowers and unexpected associations that seem impossible to tire of.

92 Rue du Faubourg Poissonnière, 01 83 97 00 00

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DESIGNED BY PIERRE CHARON - 03 86 947 342 - 2016 - CRÉDIT PHOTO: PATRICK SOROLLET

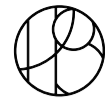
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ROOM 42

# MATHIS REPORT

Unbridled elegance and tailored service, the Hotel Mathis Paris and its bar bring sparkle to your evenings. Discover them at [www.hotelmathis.com](http://www.hotelmathis.com)



*White suit,  
Black suit,  
Black olives,  
White  
nights.*



*Bel  
de Nuit*

*Cachaca Parati,  
white vermouth  
Bel Professore,*

*Lime,  
Red house fruit  
syrup,*

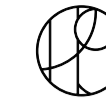
*Kewra water  
& bitter end curry*



*Walking all day,  
up and down,  
back and forth,  
but tonight  
she dances.*

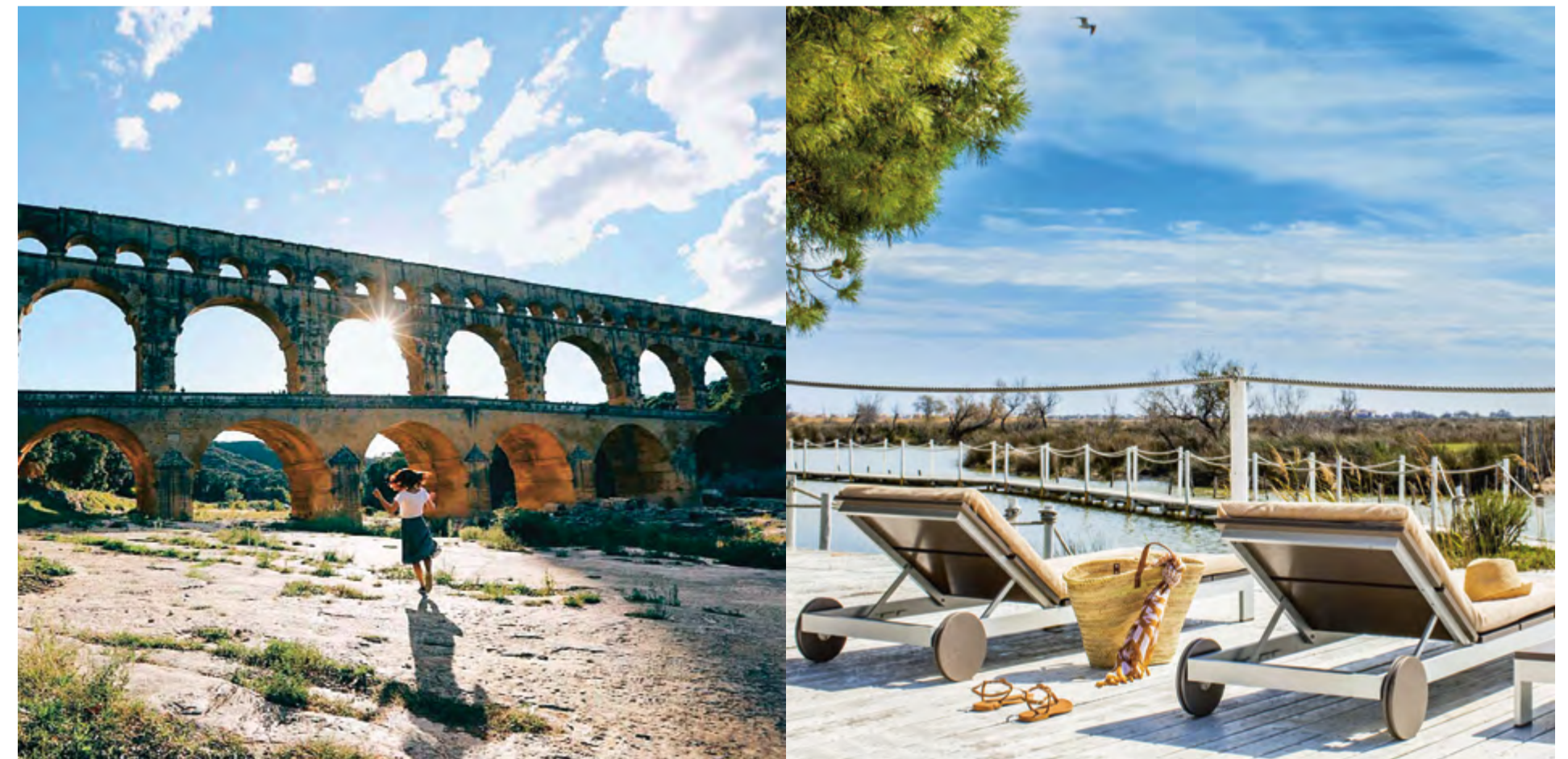


Drawings ©Thomas Baudre - thomasbaudre.fr



## SPEND YOUR NEXT GETAWAY...

... on wooden jetties and the Pont du Gard aqueduct, relaxing in your guest room and by the poolside, and watching the sun rise and set. Next summer we're heading south.



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CHAMPAGNE



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■ REIMS FRANCE ■

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