Paris at Christmas
Great exhibitions and entertainment in the Ville Lumière

22–27 December 2021 (MH 251)
6 days • £2,810/\\
(including tickets to 2 performances)
Lecturer: Patrick Bade

New and refurbished galleries – the Musée Carnavalet and the Pinault Art Centre in the Bourse.

The main art museums (Louvre, Musée d’Orsay) as well as lesser-known attractions.

Opera at either the Bastille or the Garnier and a concert in Sainte Chapelle, one of Europe’s most beautiful consecrated spaces.

Centrally-located 4-star hotel which was an intimate retreat for King Edward VII.

‘He who does not visit Paris regularly will never be truly elegant’ wrote Honoré de Balzac in 1830 (Traité de la Vie Élégante). His assertion goes some way to explain the allure of Paris, even at a time of deep social and political turmoil, manifested in the July Revolution of the same year. Paris, whose streets were soon to be drastically re-envisioned by Baron Haussmann into the boulevards so recognisable today, was unquestionably the place to be and be seen. Not unsurprisingly, the dazzle of the Ville Lumière and the lifestyle of its inhabitants has endured, and Parisians remain the ultimate arbiters of good taste.

Never does Paris appear more elegant than at Christmas, inevitably conjuring up the festive atmosphere of Act II of Puccini’s opera La Bohème. Led by Patrick Bade, art historian, bon vivant and part-time Paris resident, MRT aims to offer just as much fun, together with a rich cultural feast, in considerably more comfort. What better location than the Hotel Édouard VII, former love nest of Queen Victoria’s son and heir, situated on the splendid Avenue de l’Opéra?

We shall be visiting the Musée Carnavalet, museum of the history and culture of Paris, newly reopened after lengthy refurbishment; the Pinault Art Centre, the city’s newest cultural space; the dream-like Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature in a superb hôtel de ville in the Marais; and the charming Musée de Montmartre.

We take in several of the major exhibitions of the season, including Rodin at the Musée Picasso and Botticelli at the Musée Jacquemart-André.

Itinerary
Day 1. Travel by Eurostar at c. 10.30am from London St Pancras to Paris, and by coach from Gare du Nord to Montmartre. In the 20th century it was a district favoured by both avant-garde and more traditional artists, as is shown at the Musée Montmartre (exhibition yet to be announced). Then drive down to the hotel in Avenue de l’Opéra.

Day 2. By métro to the Marais, a lovely district which is home to several outstanding museums. The Musée Carnavalet, with myriad collections devoted to the history of Paris, reopens in 2020 after radical refurbishment, and the Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature displays an eclectic collection in a fine ancien régime mansion. You will have tickets for the Picasso-Rodin exhibition at the Musée Picasso, which, housed in the Hôtel Salé, possesses the greatest single collection of the artist’s works.

Day 3. Walk through the Palais Royal to the former stock exchange, which re-opens in 2021 to display the vast Pinault collection of contemporary art. Continue to St Eustache, a Late Gothic church in Les Halles. The afternoon is spent in the Louvre, which for the range and quality of its collections remains the greatest art museum in the world. Evening concert in Sainte Chapelle (programmes not yet announced), palatine chapel and apogee of French Gothic architecture, followed by dinner at Le Vaudeville.

Day 4. Christmas Day. Opulent turn-of-the-century home of a banking family, the Musée Jacquemart-André features many Italian Renaissance items among its varied collections, so is an appropriate location for an important Botticelli exhibition. A six-course lunch (and a lethargic afternoon) precedes an evening performance at either the Opéra Bastille or the Opéra Garnier with the most typical of French post-prandial refreshments: champagne and...
Day 5. The Musée d’Orsay is home to the world’s finest collection of Impressionism, and also to the contemporaneous academic tradition of painting and sculpture. In the afternoon we hope to include a further exhibition - details to be clarified later in the year.

Day 6. Free morning to pursue your own interests before the Eurostar to St Pancras, where arrival is scheduled for c. 5.30pm.

Lecturer

Patrick Bade. Historian and writer with wide-ranging art-historical and musical interests. Educated at University College London and the Courtauld Institute he was senior lecturer at Christie’s Education for many years. He has also worked for the Art Fund, Royal Opera House, National Gallery, Victoria & Albert Museum and spoken on Radio 3 and 4 and Classic FM Radio. He has published extensively on 19th- and early 20th-century painting (Ingres, Courbet, Degas, Renoir, Rops, Mucha, Lautrec, Tamara de Lempicka etc) and on historical vocal recordings. His books include *Music Wars: 1937–1945*, an account of how music was used in World War II.

Practicalities

Price, per person. Two sharing: £2,810 or £2,620 without Eurostar. Single occupancy: £3,280 or £3,090 without Eurostar.

Included: return rail travel (Standard Premier) by Eurostar from London to Paris; private coach for transfers; métro travel; hotel accommodation; breakfasts, 3 dinners and 1 lunch with water, wine, coffee; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager.

Performances: tickets to 2 performances are included, costing c. £215. At the time of going to print, programmes were not yet confirmed. Tickets will be confirmed in May 2021.

Accommodation. Hotel Édouard VII, Paris (hoteledouard7-paris.com): comfortable 4-star hotel, located on the Avenue de l’Opéra, a short walk from the Louvre. Single rooms are doubles for sole use.