

Paris in the Autumn





Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	5
DAY 1	6
SATURDAY, 7 SEPTEMBER	6
PERE LACHAISE CEMETERY	6
PLACE DE L'HOTEL-DE-VILLE	7
RUE DE RIVOLI	8
DAY 2	9
SUNDAY, 8 SEPTEMBER	9
PALAIS DU LUXEMBOURG	9
LEFT BANK	13
DAY 3	14
MONDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER	14
THE RITZ – BAR VENDOME	14
GUERLAIN	16
PALAIS ROYAL	17
DAY 4	18
TUESDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER	18
MUSEE D' ORSAY	18
SHAKESPEARE AND COMPANY	21
SAINTE CHAPELLE	23
THE CONCIERGERIE	24
DAY 5	25
WEDNESDAY, 11 SEPTEMBER	25
MUSEE RODIN	25
LES INVALIDES	27
DAY 6	28
THURSDAY, 12 SEPTEMBER	28
GIVERNY	28
PALACE OF VERSAILLES	30



DAY 7	31
<hr/>	
FRIDAY, 13 SEPTEMBER	31
ARC DE TRIOMPHE	31
PETIT PALAIS	33
DAY 8	34
<hr/>	
SATURDAY, 14 SEPTEMBER	34
MUSEE DE L'ORANGERIE	34
JARDIN DES TUILERIES	35
THE LOUVRE	36
NAPOLEON'S APARTMENT	37
MICHELANGELO GALLERY	38
GENERAL EXHIBITION	39
DAY 9	40
<hr/>	
SUNDAY, 15 SEPTEMBER	40
PALAIS GARNIER (OPERA HOUSE)	40
DAY 10	42
<hr/>	
MONDAY, 16 SEPTEMBER	42
LE TRAIN BLEU	42
DAY 11	44
<hr/>	
TUESDAY, 17 SEPTEMBER	44
DAY 12	45
<hr/>	
WEDNESDAY, 18 SEPTEMBER	45
MUSEE DE L'ORANGERIE	45
RIVER SEINE CRUISE	46
EFFEL TOWER	47
DAY 13	48
<hr/>	
THURSDAY, 19 SEPTEMBER	48
CANAL ST MARTIN CRUISE	48
APPENDIX	50
<hr/>	



APPENDIX 1	50
CAPSULE TRAVEL WARDROBE	50
APPENDIX 2	58
SOCIALS	58



Introduction

In September 2019 I was blessed to spend two glorious weeks in Paris.

Ever since I can remember, I have wanted to visit the City of Lights. To leisurely explore the narrow winding lanes, eat in small cafes and boulangeries, and browse the window displays as I wander up and down the wide boulevards.

- To practice my (incredibly) rudimentary French, which I learnt in a “French for Travellers” course three months prior to my departure.
- To drink Champagne in the middle of the day and pretend this is real life.
- To watch stylish Parisian women on bicycles, in impossibly high heels and no helmets.

Paris in the early Autumn is glorious. The days were warm, much warmer than expected, and the rain held off except for about an hour on the second day. The trees hadn't started turning yet and provided much needed shade from the heat on my frequent rests.

Thankfully for me, Paris was everything I wanted her to be. Everything I dreamed she would be.

The commentary from each day, is an adaptation of emails I sent home to family and friends. I sat up in bed every night nursing a glass of wine and sore feet.

“

Paris is not a city; it's a world.

King Francis I

Day 1

Saturday, 7 September

Today I learnt two things.

1. I am spatially challenged.
2. Handsome French men ride motorcycles

Pere Lachaise Cemetery

Perhaps the first one I already knew; I just haven't had to admit it for quite some time. Using navigation apps is certainly different from using a good ol' fashioned map! After a false start, where I stopped and asked a waiter for directions, I did eventually find the Pere Lachaise cemetery. Once inside the gates, the map I printed was extremely difficult to read. Essentially useless.

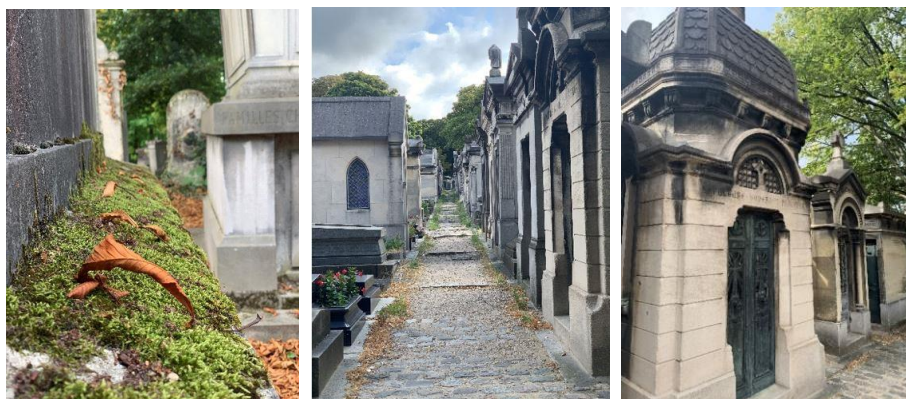
The cemetery, while incredibly beautiful and serene, is made up of narrow paths that twist and turn and make no sense at all. There are few right-angles. Straight lines are practically non-existent. For someone who struggles to know their left from right, I had very little chance of navigating to specific grave sites.

Making me feel a little better about my predicament, it seemed I was not the only one challenged by the map. There were lots of other people wandering around looking lost. Content, but lost.

I did find the resting place of Jim Morrison but only because that was the grave closest to the entrance I came in, and I attached myself – at a distance – to the one couple who seemed to know where they were going.

All the other graves I wanted to visit? Well, I didn't. It was simply too difficult. I did go looking for Pissarro because it was supposedly close by, but I just couldn't find it. The others (Edith Piaf, Maria Callas, Marcel Proust and Chopin) were at the other end of the cemetery, and I didn't stand a chance.

Once I admitted defeat and accepted my search was futile, I made the most of the experience. Simply wandering the meandering cobblestone paths is enough. I sat on a bench in the sunshine for an hour and watched other people enjoying the peace and tranquillity.



At lunch I managed to successfully order chicken with vegetables, and a small carafe of white wine.

I smiled a lot and believe that helped. For under 20 Euros, it was more than I could eat and drink. I had been told to expect excellent value lunches and I certainly wasn't disappointed on this occasion; my first lunch in Paris.

I allocated 50 Euros per day on food, but now that seems ridiculous and way too much, perhaps except the days I am eating at the Ritz and le Train Bleu.

Dinner most nights, I expect, will be crackers, wine, and cheese purchased from the grocery store on the ground level of my apartment building, and enjoyed while propped up in bed, reading and writing my journal. There are so many gluten-free options to choose from, it's quite overwhelming, and such a wonderful thing to see.

Place de l'Hotel-de-Ville

After lunch - which was a late and long affair - I visited Place de l'Hotel-de-Ville; an amazing building which now houses Paris Tourism and other city administration functions. Initially know as Place de Greve, it was the location of many early public executions and beheadings.

I also visited Place de la Bastille, which is where the Bastille prison was located until the storming of the Bastille in 1789. The July Column (Colonne de Juillet) which commemorates the events of the July Revolution in 1830, stands at the centre of the square.



Rue de Rivoli

The Rue de Rivoli was hosting a market, and like any market, there were wonderful antiques, rugs, old maps and beautiful furniture and jewellery. There was also lots of cheap, plastic rubbish. I chose not to buy anything, although I did fall in love with a four-piece silver tea service but couldn't figure out how to get it home, or what to do with it if I could get it home. It remained where it was.



Day 2

Sunday, 8 September

I started the day by crossing to the Left Bank and visiting the Palais du Luxembourg and its surrounding gardens. The day - weather wise - was glorious, with a few cooler patches and a few drops of rain.

Palais du Luxembourg

The Palais itself was surrounded by fencing and protected by police wielding machine guns, however, the gardens were access all areas and surrounded the palace on three sides. There were hundreds of people taking advantage of the sunshine and either strolling the grounds, sitting in one of the many available deck chairs, sailing miniature boats on the small lake, practicing Thai Chi, or running.



Throughout the grounds and flanking the major pathways are statues of all the female queens of France and other famous figures.

The palace was initially built for Marie de Medici, the mother of King Louis XIII, and widow of King Henry IV of France. After the death of Henry IV in 1610, Marie de' Medici, became regent to her son, Louis XIII and decided to erect a palace for herself.

In 1750, the palace became a museum, the forerunner to the Louvre, and was open two days a week until 1779.

From 1799 to 1805, architect Jean Chalgrin transformed the palace into a legislative building.

During the German occupation of Paris (1940–1944), Hermann Göring used the palace as the headquarters of the Luftwaffe in France, taking for himself a sumptuous suite of rooms to accommodate his visits to the French capital.

From 29 July to 15 October 1946, the Luxembourg Palace was the site of the Paris Peace Conference

Today the Palace is owned by the French Senate.

The grounds were spectacular and the flowers, mainly in various shades of pink, stunning.



After walking the grounds for over an hour, I headed back the way I came, turned left, and wandered the (almost) full length of Boulevard St- Germain. A lot of the stores were closed, but I found a couple of lovely clothes stores to wander around as well as a shop that sold the most beautiful umbrellas I have ever seen. I happened upon it, just as a light drizzle started.



“

To know Paris is to know a great deal.

Henry Miller

The window display was gorgeous and very appealing, so I went in and was greeted in perfect English by the lady working in the store. She knew Melbourne very well and mentioned she has clients who visit her every year.

She handed me an umbrella in pale blue to hold and said it matched my eyes. It had a lovely frill around the bottom and a tasselled platted rope to put over your wrist. I did feel fancy, but at 1,090 Euro, I gave it back. My \$12 umbrella does the trick.

Lunch was a bit fancier than yesterday, but not ridiculously expensive. The waiters (all men) wore white shirts, black trousers, ties and olive-green aprons, with slits for the tie so they don't fall in your soup! I presume. They had an English menu so ordering the chicken and mashed potato, followed by Creme Brulee was much easier than yesterday. The Creme Brulee was the best I've ever had.

Again, I ordered wine and again it came in a half bottle, which is just too much for a normal person to drink, if you want to walk - not stagger - out afterwards. But it was lovely, and I drank what I could.



Left Bank

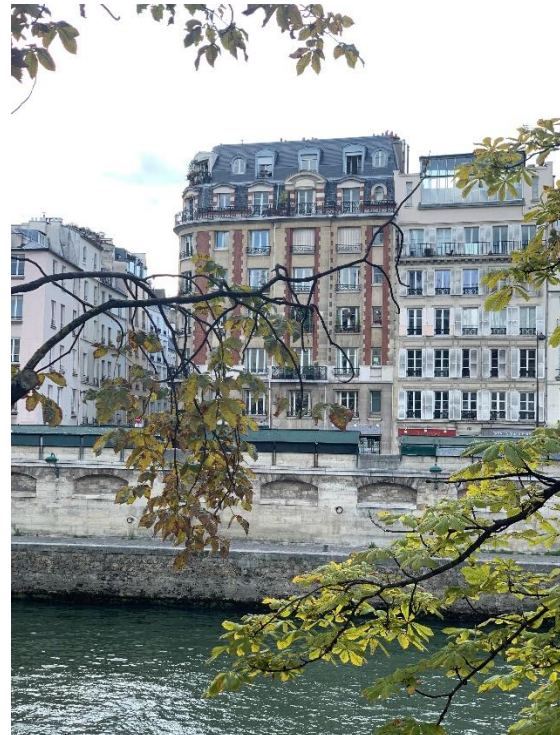
At the end of St-Germain, I took a hard right and walked back along the river admiring the barges and buildings lining the Seine. I often think as I walk, that I hope the French remember to look up. Do they realise how beautiful their city is? The Haussmann apartments are gorgeous and so typically French.

I am trying not to live my holiday through my camera, but it's hard not to take hundreds of photos.

I passed the Louvre but didn't venture in; that is for another day.

I did purchase three small baked tiles with a French scene on each. The river is lined with artists selling their wares and it's hard to decide who to purchase from. I loved the idea of painting on tile. They should also travel well. I thought paper might be a bit fragile.

I wandered over to the Ile de la Cite and past Sainte Chapelle and Notre Dame, but again, they are for another day. Notre Dame is fenced off and it appears no one can get particularly close, but I'll investigate that on the day I have earmarked to visit there.



Day 3

Monday, 9 September

The Ritz – Bar Vendome

Bar Vendome is situated in a beautiful atrium, shaded by what look like Plane trees that reminded me of home. The sun was out, but it wasn't overly warm. In fact, in the morning, I had worn a scarf to protect me from the chill, but with the sun, the glass, and the champagne, I warmed up quite quickly.

The food was delightful, the service impeccable. I finished the salad for entree and the caramel tart for dessert, but only managed half of the club sandwich. The staff were fabulous and spoke beautiful English.



“

Breathe Paris in. It nourishes the soul.

Victor Hugo

While resting between main course and dessert, two ladies walked in and were seated a couple of tables away from me. One looked relatively normal (bear with me) and the other not so much. She had platinum blonde hair that couldn't – and didn't – move and was styled in a manner reminiscent of the 80s (and I love the 80s!). Her makeup didn't fare much better; she wore brown lip liner with pink lipstick and her mascara was so thick and clunky, she looked like she had only four eye lashes.

She was wearing a far-too-pink jacket (I love pink) and was dripping in Van Cleef and Arpels jewellery. She had three necklaces, a huge butterfly brooch, rings on almost every finger, two bracelets on each hand, and a watch. I can't imagine the dollar value, but I'm surprised she didn't come with a security guard.

After about ten minutes, an extremely overt man in a bright yellow jacket and matching Hermes bag entered the restaurant waving his arms about the place and drawing attention to himself, which I assumed is exactly what he wanted. He air-kissed each of the women three times - as is the French custom, I believe - and pulled a sequined stuffed animal from his bag. A fox or cat, I think. The toy was placed on the vacant chair, where I presume, it was as much amused by the conversation and goings-on as the rest of the diners, who discretely looked on.

I happily sat for over two hours and thoroughly enjoyed the entire experience.



Guerlain

After lunch I wandered back down the Rue Saint-Honoré and came across a Guerlain store. I have worn Samsara since I started working my first job at seventeen. Back then, the cost of a bottle felt like a King's ransom, but in all these years I don't think the price has risen too much. I ran out about two or three months ago but didn't purchase any because I knew I wanted to buy it in Paris. Today I got that opportunity.

Entering the Guerlain store is like walking into a fairy tale. There are flowers and colourful decorative bottles everywhere.

I was able to choose the colour bottle I wanted (red) and have it engraved with my initials, which could be in either gold or silver. I chose silver. What a beautiful experience. The ladies were wonderful and very helpful.

It happened four times today, but as soon as I said "Bonjour" everyone replied "ah, you speak English". Is my French really so bad??!!

In Guerlain, I apologised for not being able to speak French. Another customer (French) was really lovely and said, "don't worry, the French language isn't good at the best of times" and had a great laugh at her own joke. She then asked where I was from and was really interested in having a chat and finding out how long I was staying and what I was planning to see. We had a wonderful conversation while we were both waiting for our purchases.

Not one person has taken offence to my English. I greet everyone in French, but they know immediately I am not French and instantly switch to English. If they are swearing at me under their breath, well that's another story, but everyone has been very gracious and kind.



Palais Royal

On my way back to the apartment, I passed the Palais Royal, built in 1628 for King Louis XIII. While I am neither a monarchist or a republican, it is no wonder the French revolted and ousted their royal family. There is a palace on every corner. Or so it seems.

However, they do provide wonderful viewing and I'm certainly not sorry they were built, so I could come along one day and follow in their footsteps.



Day 4

Tuesday, 10 September

It is exactly three kilometres from my apartment to the Musee D' Orsay.

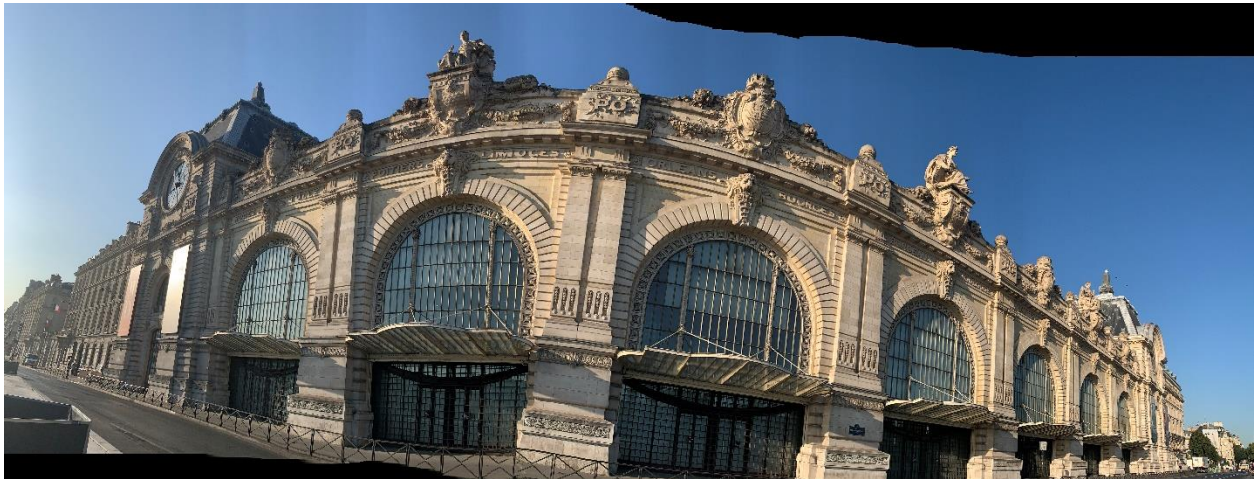
Musee D' Orsay

Initially built between 1898 and 1900 as the Gare D'Orsay, the Musee D'Orsay operated as a railway station and terminus for southwestern France until 1939. At this time, the platforms became unsuitable for the longer trains now in service.

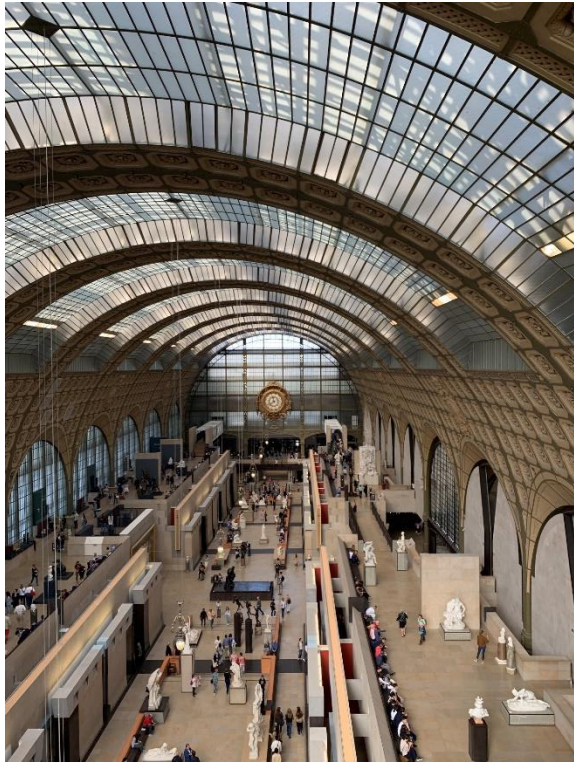
Due for demolition in 1970, Jacques Duhamel, Minister for Cultural Affairs, saved the station. In 1978 a competition was held to convert the historic building into an art gallery. It opened to the public in December 1986.

The Musee D'Orsay houses the most extensive collection of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist masterpieces in the world and includes works by Renoir, Degas, Monet, Gauguin Cezanne and Van Gogh.

I arrived just after 9:00am and a long line was already starting to form. Thankfully I had pre-purchased my ticket, and this line was considerably smaller.



I maintained a slow wander throughout the museum, only stopping when something caught my eye. If I had known, I would have gone directly to the Impressionist section before the crowds. But I did this last, and the number of people was overwhelming. There were some works of art I couldn't get close to. I'm all for taking photos - and I do - but when people stand directly in front of the picture to take selfies, that's just unacceptable and selfish.



It was a beautiful 23 degrees and wandering along the Seine was perfect. I went in search of Shakespeare and Company and, after one wrong turn, found it. I can't consider it a wrong turn though, because I found the most beautiful antique jewellery shop, I've ever seen. It was run by two lovely old ladies, I would say in their eighties, and they were wonderful. Their English was immaculate, and they were very helpful. So helpful in fact, I walked out with a tiny, but beautiful pair of mid-nineteenth century coral and crystal earrings.



“

Secrets travel fast in Paris.

Napoleon Bonaparte

Shakespeare and Company

When I got to Shakespeare and Company, I have to admit I stood there and cried. I was so overcome with emotion.

Arguably the most famous bookstore in the world, and there I was. Having always been an avid reader (thanks Mum!), it was a dream come true.

The store comprises many small rooms over two levels. Each room is filled to the brim with people and books, and the staircase is narrow and well-worn. I could try to retell the story of this magnificent store, but it's best done by reading the [History](#) page on their website. I cannot do it justice.

I bought a book called "Sleeping with the Enemy." Like most people, I had heard rumours of Chanel's affair with a German soldier during WWII, but this book goes further and provides compelling evidence she was a German collaborator, and in fact had an affair with a member of the Gestapo.

I spent almost an hour and a half browsing the shelves and could have purchased many more titles. But, thinking of my luggage allowance, and the reality that I'd just spent almost 200 Euros on a pair of earrings, I left my card in my wallet.



I had lunch at a lovely little restaurant right next door to Shakespeare and Company. A waiter who saw me struggling with French menu offered me the English one. He asked if I was American and when I said Australian, he said, "Oi Oi Oi". How funny.

I received excellent service. The French do seem to love Australians. I have been shown nothing but kindness since my arrival.

After a very long lunch, I crossed the road to get a view of the Notre Dame (which is directly on the other side of the river), but you can't get close at all. It is surrounded by scaffolding and fencing and is completely out of bounds.

Instead, I went to Sainte Chapelle, which was amazing, and to the Conciergerie. Both are breathtaking buildings full of history.

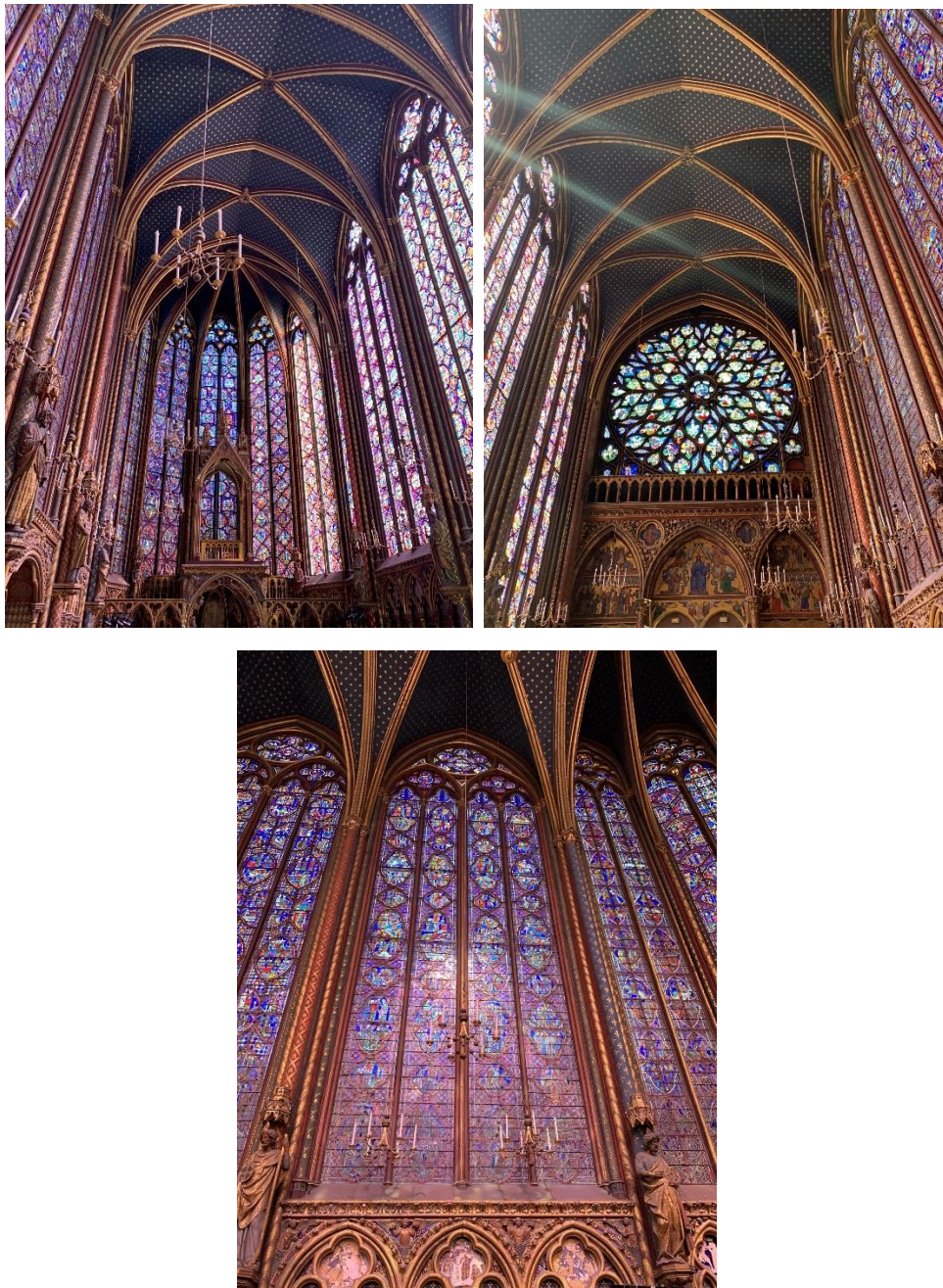


Sainte Chapelle

Sainte Chapelle is royal chapel built in the Gothic style.

Constructed between 1238 and 1248, it was commissioned by King Louis IX of France to house his collection of Passion relics, including Christ's Crown of Thorns, which were later moved to Notre-Dame until the fire in 2019.

Damaged during the French Revolution, Sainte Chapelle was fully restored in the 19th century and boasts one of the world's most extensive 13th century stained glass collections.



The Conciergerie

The Conciergerie, a former prison is now used primarily as law courts. Initially known as the Palais de la Cite, it was the main palace of the medieval Kings of France.

In the 14th century, Charles V abandoned the palace and moved across the river to the Louvre Palace. The Conciergerie continued to serve an administrative function and home to the French parliament.

During the French Revolution, The Conciergerie became the central jail and prisoners included Marie Antoinette, Madame du Barry and Robespierre.



Day 5

Wednesday, 11 September

People in Paris scoot.

They drive, cycle and ride as well, but I've never seen so many people scoot. The scooters are electric and zip along without any sound. They are silent, quick and dangerous. If I were brave enough, I'd scoot too, but I don't understand the road rules. If in fact there are any road rules. I have seen no evidence.

Musee Rodin

Musee Rodin was beautiful. I shouldn't play favourites, but perhaps I've liked it best of all the places I've visited so far. The grounds are beautiful, and statues are thoughtfully placed and hidden amongst trees and down little lane ways.

Housed in the building formerly known as Hotel Biron, Musee Rodin is the only privately funded museum in France, and relies solely on donations and patronage from private citizens. The Hotel was built (as a private home) between 1727 and 1737 for the wealthy financier Abraham Peyrenc de Moras, in the Rocaille style.

During the 18th and 19th centuries, the mansion had several owners and, when it was put up for sale in 1905, tenants were allowed to occupy the rooms until a buyer was found. Famous tenants included the writer Jean Cocteau, painter Henri Matisse and the dancer, Isadora Duncan.

Auguste Rodin rented four south-facing rooms in 1908 for use as a studio. These rooms faced the terrace and gave access to the gardens where he placed many of his statues. From 1911, he occupied the entire building.

In 1916, the mansion became Musee Rodin

Glimpses of the Eiffel Tower are possible as I wander this neighbourhood, but that is for another day.





Les Invalides

Initially built as a home and hospital for aged and unwell soldiers, and completed in 1676, Les Invalides now houses the Musee de L'Armee, the Dome des Invalides - the tallest church in Paris - as well as the tomb of Napoleon Bonaparte.

I spent a few hours learning a little about French military history, visited the tomb of Napoleon, as well as the army cathedral, which is breathtaking. It is no longer used as a place of worship, but I - along with many others - sat and listened as classical music played quietly over hidden speakers. Along the top of the walls hang the Standards of defeated armies. There are quite a few.

Lunch was at a lovely cafe not far from Les Invalides on the corner of quite a busy intersection. I sat outside with the smokers, but was up-wind, so it was perfectly fine. Women in suits and high heels ride by on bicycles and no one wears a helmet. French women, I presume, don't want helmet hair.

I have noticed that the people of Paris are not particularly any better dressed than those of us from Melbourne. I'm not sure what I was expecting, but certainly not everyone walks around in Louis Vuitton or YSL. And women do wear black. All black. Head to toe. I had read they don't.



Day 6

Thursday, 12 September

Giverny

Monet's Gardens were breathtaking. I have no words.

The garden is in two parts. A flower garden call Clos Normand and the Japanese-inspired water garden on the other side of road, accessed via a short tunnel.

Monet did not like ordered or constrained gardens. He planted according to colour but beyond this, left the flowers to grow freely.

He purchased many plants during his lifetime and once commented that "all my money goes into my garden."

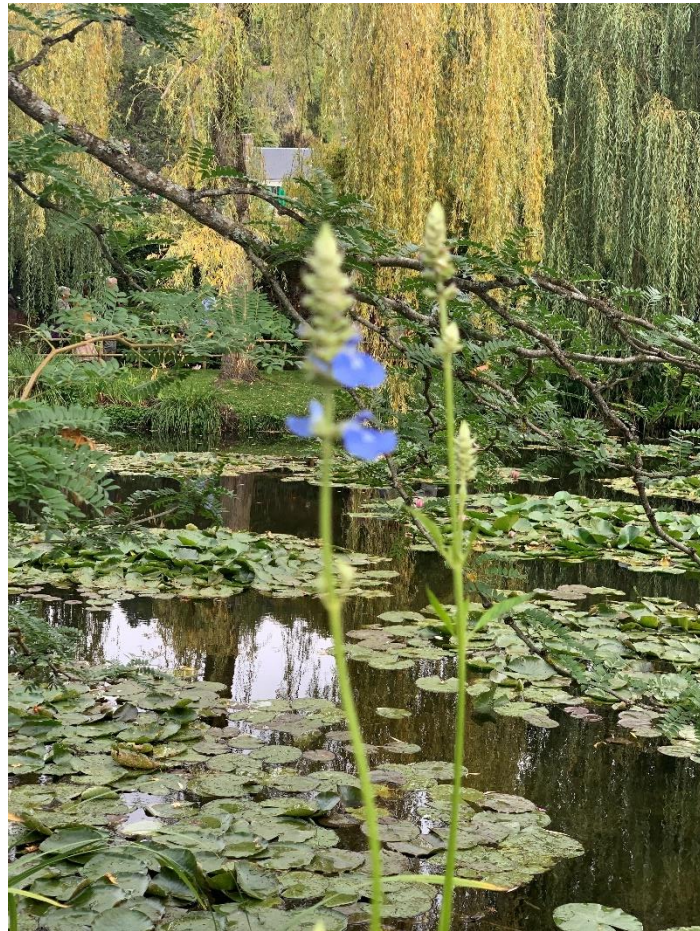
The Japanese garden started taking form in 1893. Opposed by his neighbours, who thought the strange plants would poison the water, he persisted, taking inspiration from the many Japanese prints he had collected.

I wandered for two hours admiring all the different varieties of flowers and plants. Despite the grounds being overrun with tourists, everyone was respectful and polite and let others pass, or waited while we all took pictures.

I must have taken over one hundred photos. It is the most incredible sight I've ever seen. It is a work of art and a labour of love.

There are two Japanese bridges, which I hadn't realised. One covered, the other not. They face each other and are perhaps a couple of hundred metres apart. My photos don't do them justice at all. But, oh, the people!





Palace of Versailles

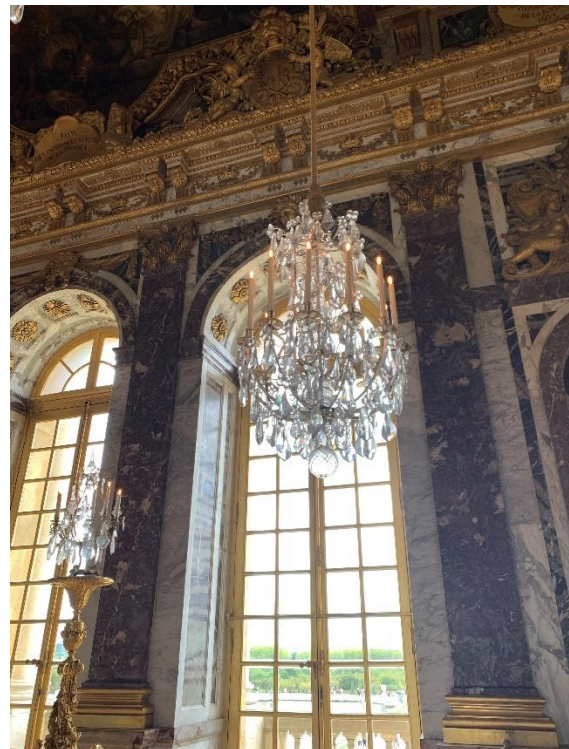
The Palace of Versailles was over the top, opulent, extravagant, beautiful, but not my cup of tea at all. I'm glad I visited but it's too much. I loved the Hall of Mirrors and some of the chandeliers and soft furnishings, and while I can appreciate the art, I just don't like it.

The Palace sits on the original site of a simple hunting lodge, built in 1623 by King Louis XIII, 19km west of Paris. Later replaced with a small chateau in 1634, King Louis XIV expanded the chateau between 1661 and 1715.

During the French Revolution, the Palace was abandoned and relieved of many of its contents before Napoleon Bonaparte began using it as a summer residence between 1810 and 1814.

In 1783, the Palace was the site of the signing of the last two (of three) treaties of the Peace of Paris which ended the American Revolutionary War. On 3 September British and American delegates, led by Benjamin Franklin, signed the Treaty of Paris, granting independence to The United States

Lunch was at a lovely little water mill, off the beaten track, but known by all the tour companies. It was crowded, but they pumped out three courses in just over an hour. I have never eaten so well as I have here in France. Thank goodness for all the walking, or I'd come back the size of a bus!



Day 7

Friday, 13 September

Arc de Triomphe

The Arc de Triomphe is located at the centre of Place Charles de Gaulle, a glorified traffic island where five roads meet. Access to the Arc is via an underground tunnel. An important feature so as not to get run over!

The climb to the top is steep and narrow and 284 steps, of which I felt every single one. Golly, what a view though. All of Paris is laid out before you.

The Arc, completed in 1836, honours those who fought and died for France in the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars.



After admiring the view for almost an hour, I stopped for lunch at one of the many bistros on the Champs-Elysees. I took a table outside at Bistro des Champs and saw a man have Creme Brulee for entree. And yes, he did then order a main course. That's living!

As I was wandering back down the Champs-Elysees toward the Louvre, I was propositioned by a man who thought I had a good body. He asked me if I wanted to have sex. I politely declined. Perhaps it was how he asked, perhaps it was the fact he had no teeth. Perhaps it was because I had other things to do!

How do I know what he was asking for? When I didn't answer him in French, he reverted to English. I wonder how many women say yes. Perhaps it's a numbers game.

“

When good Americans die, they go to Paris.

Oscar Wilde



Petit Palais

As I was approaching Place de la Concorde, I found myself in the middle of some sort of police or military event. At least twenty armed vehicles, filled with men and women in black, and armed with machine guns, pulled up quite close to me.

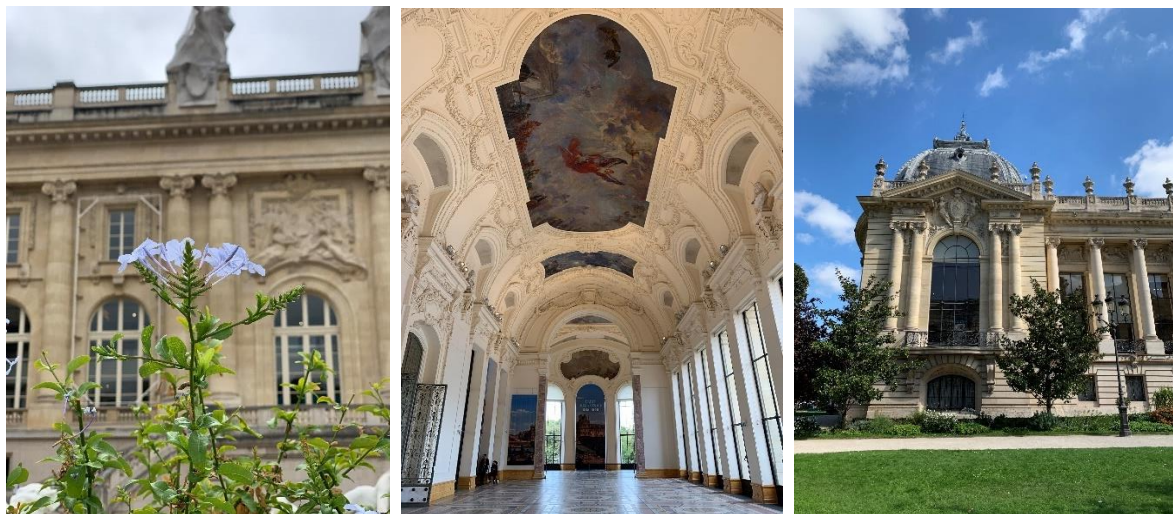
I took a detour on the Avenue Winston Churchill and happened upon the Petit Palais, which is located opposite the bigger and more opulent Grand Palais.

Built for the 1900 Exposition Universelle, construction began in October 1897, and was completed at total cost of 400,000 Euros.

The Petit Palais, which is not really petit at all, was hosting an exhibition called Paris Romantiques. Entry price was a very reasonable 12 Euro.

The walk back to the apartment via Rue de Rivoli was very slow and relaxed. It runs behind the Louvre, and plays host to a number of art galleries and shops that sell expensive looking sculptures, crystal and works of fine art.

I stop and admire the windows displays guessing most of the art probably costs the same as a small house. But it's very beautiful to look at.



Day 8

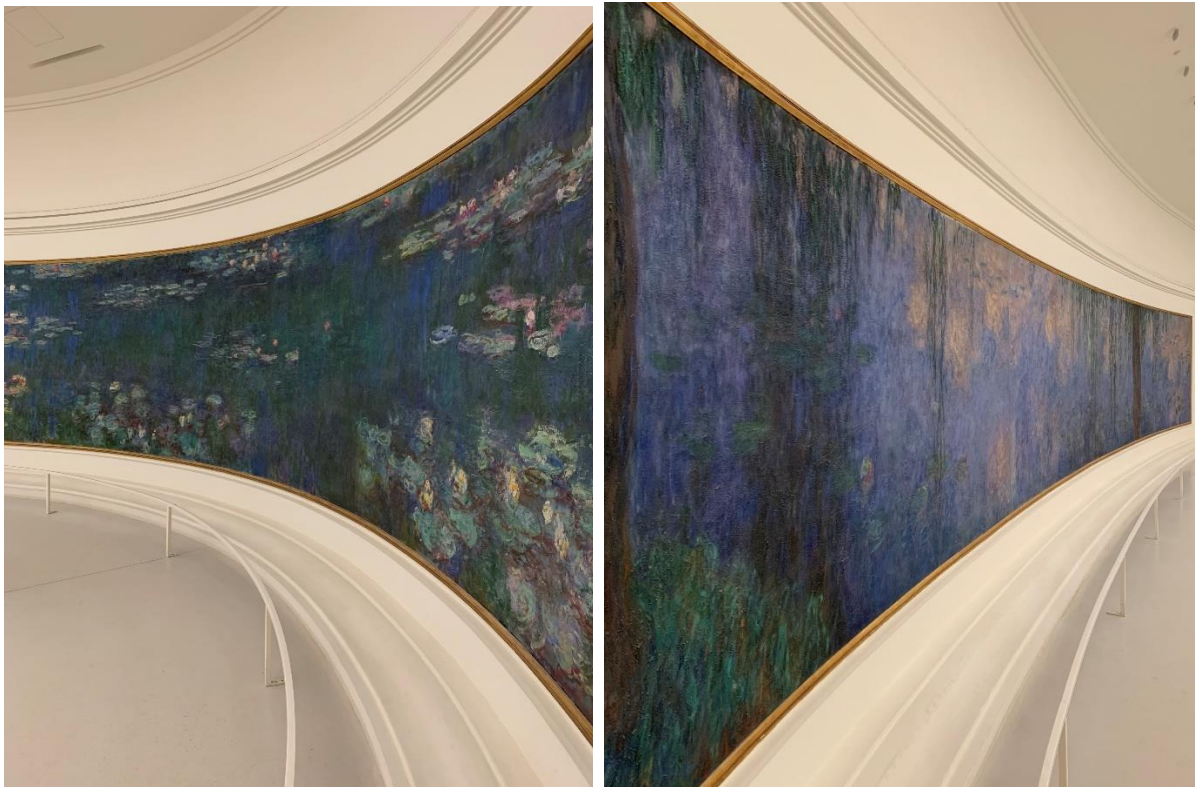
Saturday, 14 September

Musee de l'Orangerie

The l'Orangerie was built by Napoleon III in 1852 to house and protect the Tuileries citrus trees from the cold Paris winters.

Since 1927 it has been the permanent home to Claude Monet's Water Lilies. Once again, as on so many other occasions, I was lost for words. The paintings span all four curved walls in two rooms. Eight paintings in total.

My photos don't do true justice to their beauty. For over half an hour, I sat transfixed admiring the detail and visible brush strokes.



Jardin des Tuileries

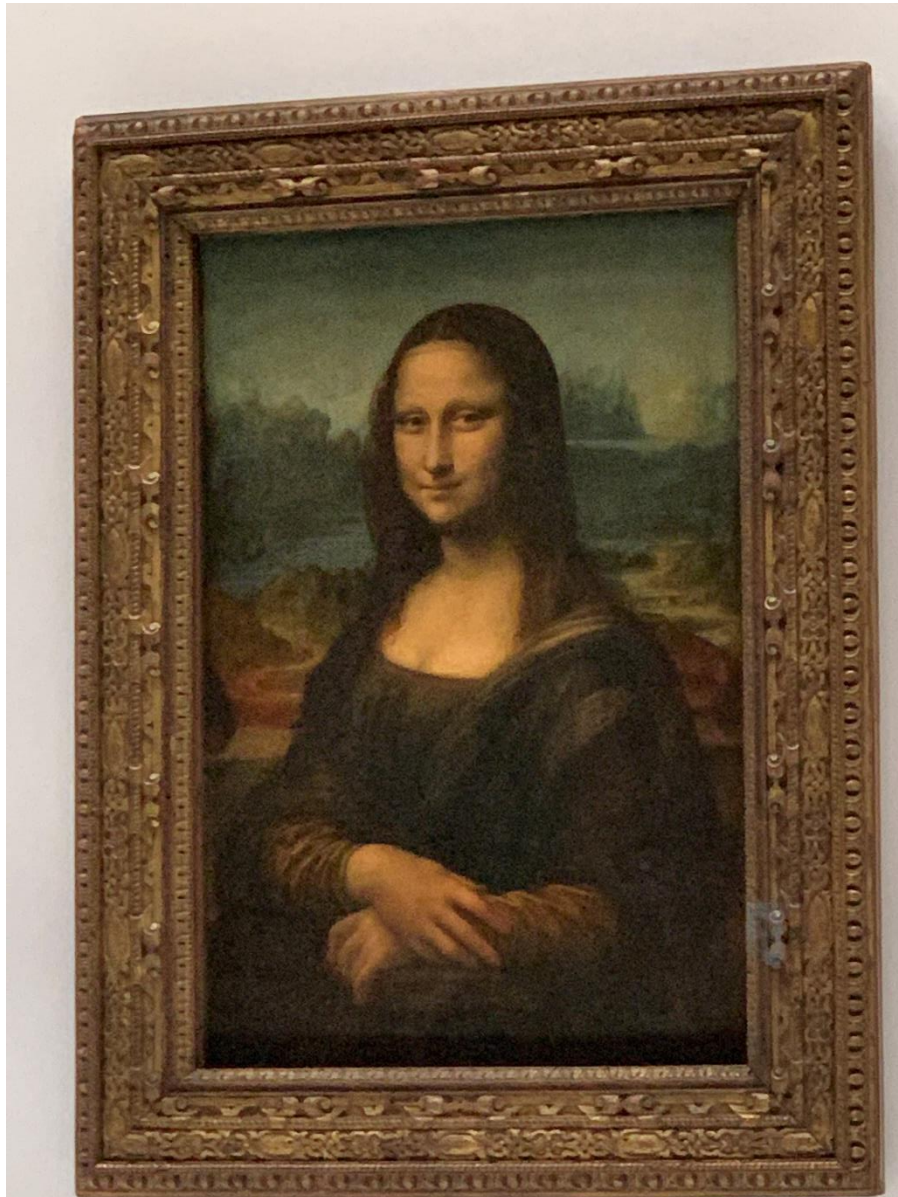
I had a pre-booked ticket to the Louvre and just over two hours to kill after leaving Musee de l'Orangerie. I chose to spend this time sitting in the Tuileries watching people with their dogs, and just admiring the view. I appreciated the quiet time, which I haven't much of this holiday.

As with the Palais de Luxembourg, there are city provided chairs in the gardens, so you just claim one and get comfortable. Lots of people were enjoying the sunshine and either jogging, eating gelati, or just sitting around people watching, like I was.



The Louvre

I entered the Louvre at my allotted time and joined the queue for the Mona Lisa. Cliche, I know, but I had to do it! It took about thirty minutes, which I didn't consider too bad at all. Some people are disappointed when they see her, but I wasn't. I thought she was lovely and I'm glad I met her.



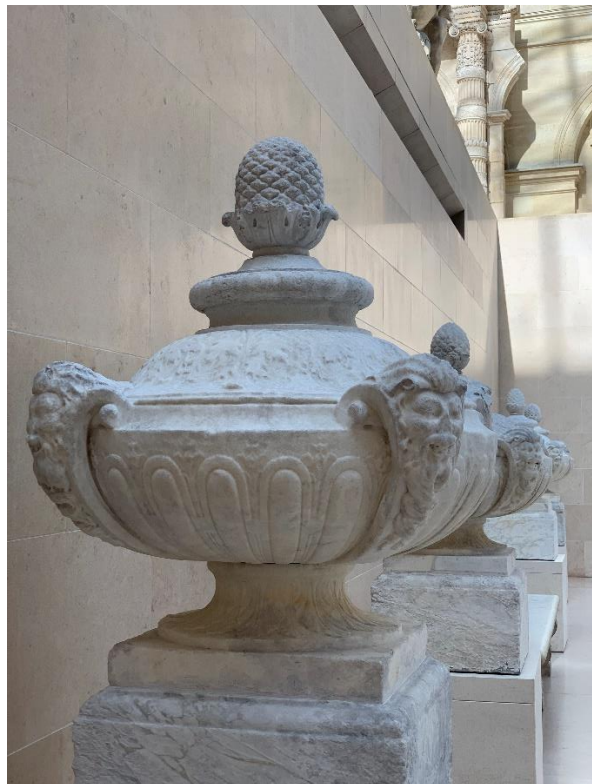
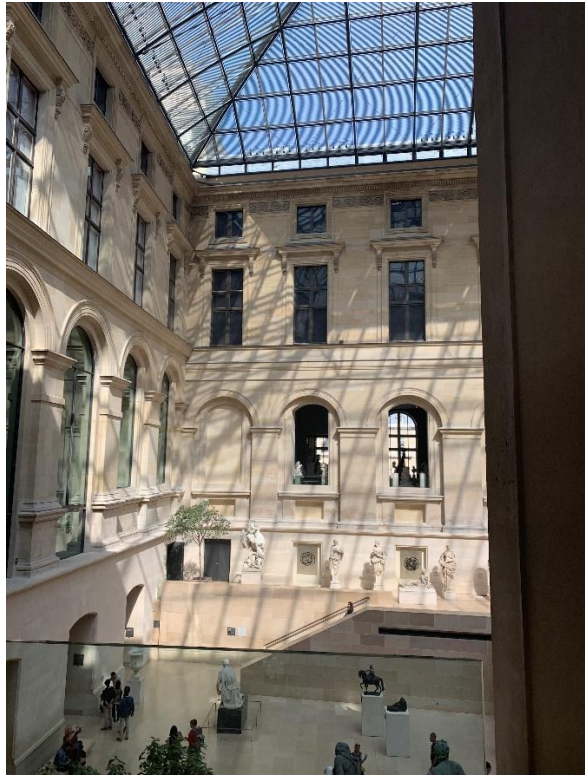
Napoleon's Apartment

The real highlight was Napoleon's apartment. The Grand Salon is a sight to behold, an enormous room full of sumptuous furniture, huge potted palms, and incredible works of art.

I was completely in awe, and I liked these rooms very much. I know it's sounds odd because I didn't like Versailles at all. I have no reason for liking one and not the other, but there was an atmosphere and feeling about these rooms that just wasn't at Versailles.



Michelangelo Gallery



General Exhibition



Golly, what a day!

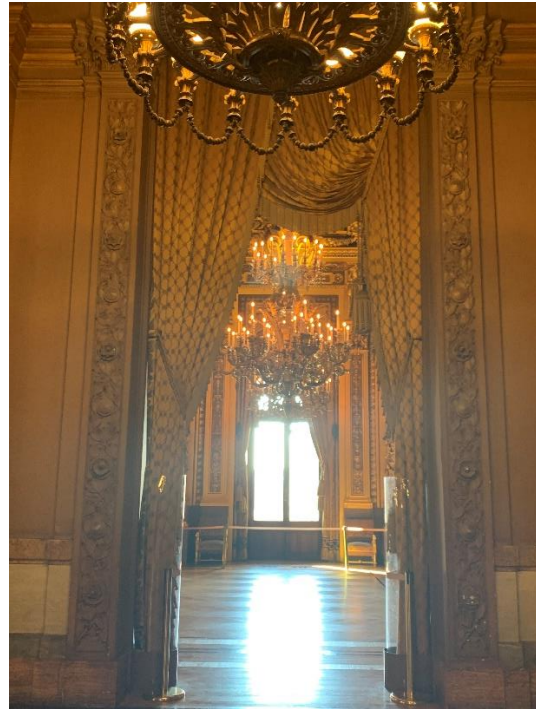
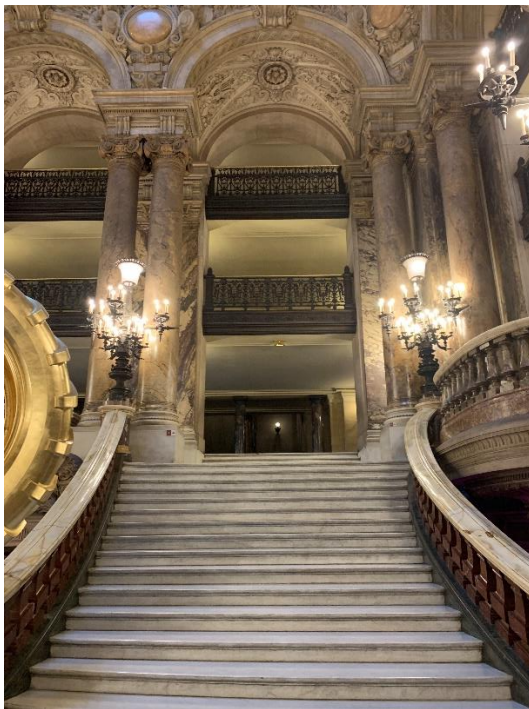
Day 9

Sunday, 15 September

Palais Garnier (Opera House)

Palais Garnier (the Opera House) was built between 1861 and 1875, at the behest of Napoleon III. It is the setting for Gaston Leroux's novel *The Phantom of the Opera* and is one of the most expensive buildings ever constructed in Paris.

It is truly magnificent, with the main theatre holding 1,979 seats. I imagined women in gowns and jewels and men in tuxedos wandering the halls during interval, drinking champagne or cocktails and talking about the weather and how their horse ran at Ascot (or the French equivalent!!).





I had lunch at the wonderful Bistrot Vivienne which I'd passed earlier on my way to the Opera House.

As I sat outside enjoying a glass of champagne waiting for my food order, an American couple from Scottsdale, sat down at the table next mine. They were lovely and, would you believe, were staying at the Ritz! They spend five months during the warmer months in Malta, where they "keep a yacht." On the way home, they always stay in Paris for two weeks, enjoying the hospitality and atmosphere of The Ritz.

They were happy to chat, and the time passed very nicely. They are retired now, but the husband worked in technology and used to travel to the Hunter Valley regularly for work. He was very interested in Australian politics, particularly the era of Hawke, Keating and Howard.

As I finished my meal, they asked if I'd like to join them for another bottle of champagne. I thought it rude to decline!

Being Sunday in Paris, not much is open, so the afternoon was spent slowly meandering the streets taking photos. I had planned to go to Montmartre but ran out time. I was also a little tipsy after three glasses of champagne.

“

*I like the Eiffel Tower because it looks like steel
and lace.*

Natalie Lloyd

Day 10

Monday, 16 September

Le Train Bleu

Le Train Bleu is a beautiful old restaurant at the Gare de Lyon train Station built as part of the major building program for the Paris Exhibition in 1900. It is built in the Belle Epoque style and is another magnificent example of over-the-top glamour and opulence.

Diners at the restaurant are an interesting mix of people. Travellers (in very casual clothes loaded with suitcases), to businessmen and women in suits, and I guess, tourists like me.

I was seated next to a family of three, a couple and their adult son. The elder gentleman asked where I was from and when I said Melbourne, he indicated his wife and said she travels to Melbourne every year for the Australian Open. He and his wife have been regulars at Le Train Bleu for over forty years, eating there every Monday.

It's amazing who you meet when you travel, and I think it's especially true when you travel alone. People are curious and ask questions and want to know why you travel alone and if it's by choice.

I don't eat a lot of red meat, but my friendly neighbours recommended the lamb, which Le Train Bleu's specialty. I wasn't disappointed. It was served with potato au gratin and was delicious.

The chocolate bar I had for dessert was the one of the best desserts I've ever had. I couldn't finish it, but I certainly tried.

I do like the French concept of lunch. No one is in a hurry and two hours seems standard.





Day 11

Tuesday, 17 September

Today was a free day, with no planned activities. I got up early for no reason at all and enjoyed a leisurely breakfast consisting of a croissant with strawberry jam, a deconstructed hot chocolate made with thick gooey melted chocolate and a pot of hot milk, and a glass of orange juice. I sat on the pavement watching people walk or scoot by on their way to work.

I wandered the streets of la Marais, my local district, and then sat for an hour in the Tuileries and admired the view of the Louvre. It really is a spectacular building. The two end towers, are completely different colours and I overheard a tour guide say one was built in the 17th century and the other in the 19th century. It makes sense, the one built in the 17th century is a lot darker, which I have put down to pollution, however, it might just be a darker stone.

I had lunch at a little restaurant a few doors down from my apartment called Sacre Frenchy!, which I've been meaning to go to since I arrived. The Mille-Feuille was so delicious, and now ranks as the best dessert I've had in Paris. So far.



I did a little bit of shopping and purchased two t-shirts, to accommodate the surprisingly warm weather, a brooch from Swarovski, and a pair of espadrilles.

I could have done a lot more damage, but I'm happy with what I have. I also must think about my baggage allowance on the way home.

Back to the apartment to finish *Sleeping with the Enemy*, and to paint my nails.

Day 12

Wednesday, 18 September

Today started like no other.

In the lift on my way out of the building, I had a lovely encounter with an incredibly handsome French man who smiled and said Good Morning. Then, when I stepped into the street, I saw a gentleman walking two Dachshunds. One a long-haired red and the other a short-haired black and tan.

I was still grinning like an idiot when I turned the corner into Boulevard de Sebastopol and happened upon yet another man walking a Corgi and a Dachshund. Life is good, and my thoughts immediately turned to Gatsby, who I miss dreadfully, but knew was having a wonderful holiday himself, with my parents.

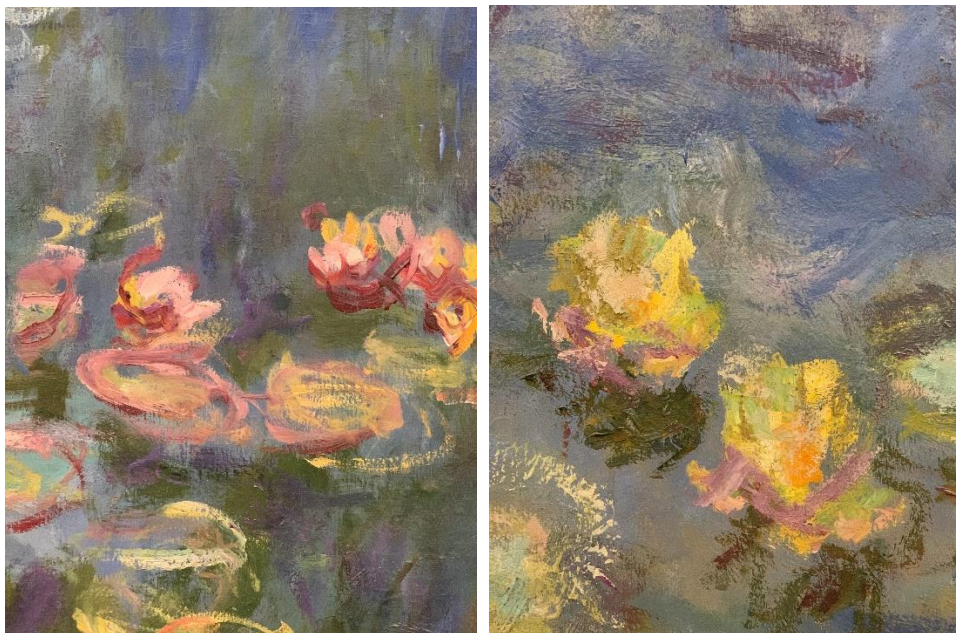
Musee de l'Orangerie

I made my way to the l'Orangerie, so I was there when it opened at 9:00am. This time, I knew to walk through the first room and straight into the second room, which I had to myself for about ten minutes.

I sat on bench provided in the silence and contemplated how someone could be so talented, when I can't even draw a stick man. Them's the breaks. The Water Lilies are the most beautiful paintings I've ever seen.

I sat in awe for about thirty minutes, but knew I had to move on. I had places to be and other sights to see!

When I exited the l'Orangerie, I immediately saw a woman in bright yellow floral trousers walking a wire-haired Dachshund. How lucky can one girl get? Four sausage dogs in one day. In about two hours, actually.



River Seine Cruise

The walk to the Eiffel Tower is approximately 4km from the l'Orangerie.

The one-hour Seine River cruise was excellent, and a really relaxing and beautiful way to see Paris. The day was cooler, only 21 degrees, and sitting on the top deck of the boat, was cold. But the view was incredible and made up for the temperature. I met a lovely lady from New York (my other favourite city) who treated herself to this trip for her fortieth birthday, which was on Monday. It was a last-minute booking encouraged by her daughter. She goes home on Friday, as do I.

We went past Notre Dame, and she looks to be doing fine. I would say she's in very good hands and is being well cared for. Most of the building is covered in scaffolding, but there are parts you can still see. I totally understand why the French nation came together when she burned. What amazing and irreplaceable history.

Construction began in 1163 and was completed in 1260. During the French Revolution, many of Notre Dame's religious artefacts and imagery were desecrated or destroyed. It is estimated that approximately twelve million visitors walk through her doors every year, making her the most visited monument in Paris.

I had lunch in a lovely little restaurant called Cafe Gustave. At the table next to me were a family with a young child, who kept crying. When my food arrived, I offered them my bowl of chips, and sure enough, the child stopped crying. I've never met a potato I didn't like. And it seems the same can be said for the young boy.



Eiffel Tower

I was nervous about the trip to the top of the Eiffel Tower. I am both claustrophobic and scared of heights. Not a great combination. The elevator ride was quick, but very wobbly. I squeezed my eyes closed and prayed.

I went as far as the second floor, but not the third. Baby steps. Next time I'm in Paris, I'll brave the third level!

The view is really interesting. Paris is very greige (grey \ beige), but today there seemed to be more trees, more colour. The Hausmann buildings, synonymous with Paris, are truly beautiful. They were built in the time of Napoleon I.

The Eiffel Tower was initially red and considered ugly by the residents of Paris. In later years, it was painted yellow, and only relatively recently, in 1968, was it painted its current colour, "Eiffel Tower Brown", which actually serves the purpose of keeping rust at bay.

The tower is painted every seven years, by a group of painters known as acrobats. It takes approximately eighteen months to paint the tower as they use brushes (not spray).



Day 13

Thursday, 19 September

Canal St Martin Cruise

A gentle cruise on the Canal St Martin was a wonderfully relaxing way to spend my last day in Paris. Travelling through nine locks, and rising twenty-seven metres, the cruise takes you from just outside the Musee d'Orsay to the 19th arrondissement, 4.6km away.

Commissioned in 1802 by Napoleon Bonaparte, his vision was for the canal, and others connected to it, to become a supply route bringing in food, fresh water and other commodities into the heart of Paris.

The canal was completed in 1825, and at one point, runs under the Place de la Bastille, almost directly beneath the column. Despite being claustrophobic, it was a calming experience, and the soft blue light is quite magical. It's also very quiet.

At the conclusion of the cruise, I caught the metro back to the Louvre, and again enjoyed lunch at Sacre Frenchy!

I took one final opportunity to wander the streets and laneways of la Marais. The shops were full of gorgeous Autumn and Winter fashions in deep green and burgundy. I could have purchased a number of items but decided against it.

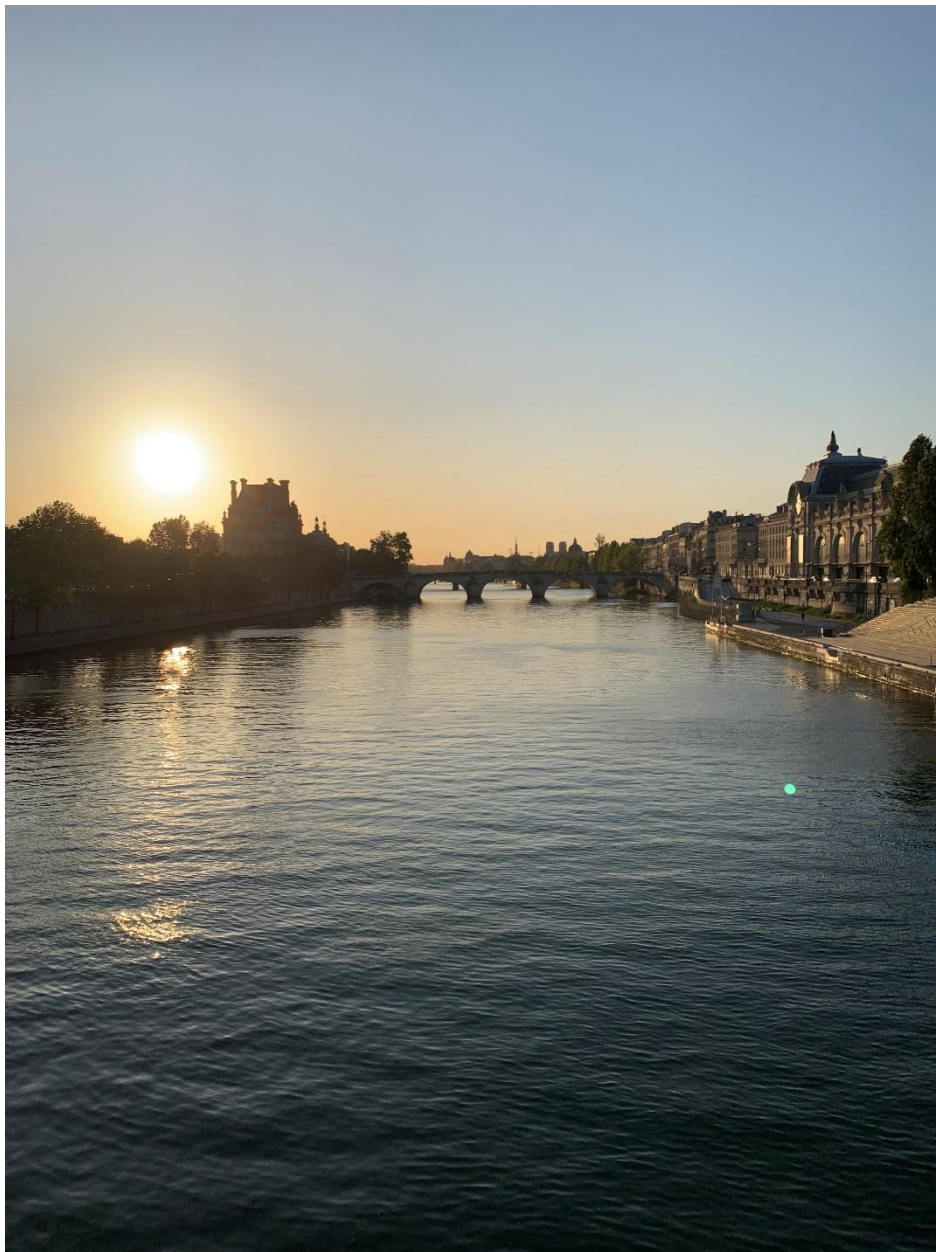
My final meal, in my apartment, was finishing a bottle of red wine and the last of the cheese and crackers.



“

Paris is always a good idea.

Audrey Hepburn





Appendix

Appendix 1

Capsule Travel Wardrobe

Packing for a holiday sometimes inspires feelings of dread and overwhelm. It does not have to this way.

Travelling inspires us, leaves us breathless, and encourages us to experience opportunities we may not be brave enough to try in our day-to-day lives.

Packing a Capsule Wardrobe for your holiday will save you space (in case you want to purchase a couple of new items), and time (you won't spend so long packing).

When you are on holiday, you don't want to waste precious minutes deciding what to wear each day. Aim to head out the door as quickly as possible, with as little fuss as possible.

Quick and effortless style is your goal.

Below is the list of items I packed for Paris.

Clothes

- Jeans (two pairs)
- Black 7/8 Cropped Trousers
- Trench Coat
- Denim Jacket
- Tops (six pieces)
- Walking Shoes

Accessories

- Studs
- Cross-body Bag
- Watch
- Tennis Bracelet
- Umbrella
- Scarf
- Belt



Makeup

As a professional make-up artist, I love makeup. But I don't wear a lot, and I don't own a lot.

The 'keep it simple' philosophy I apply to my wardrobe, I also apply to colour cosmetics. The seven items below fit perfectly in a small cosmetics bag.

- Fit Cover Powder Foundation and application brush
- Mascara
- Lip Liner, Edge to Edge (Mac)
- Lipstick, Cream Cup (Mac)
- Eyebrow Pencil
- Pencil Sharpener

Skin Care

Again, simplicity – in my opinion – is best. A few good quality products are all that's needed.

- Cleanser
- Toner (I use a Rosehip Spray)
- Day Cream, with SPF
- Night Cream
- Eye Cream
- Serum



Hair Care

Before I left home, I confirmed with the owner of the Airbnb apartment where I was staying, if a hair-dryer was supplied. Thankfully one was. These are often large, bulky and heavy items to pack, so it's worth confirming before you leave home.

Shampoo, conditioner and hairspray can be purchased inexpensively from a local supermarket or hair salon.

- Comb
- Brush
- Hair Volumising Powder

“

An artist has no home in Europe except in Paris.

Friedrich Nietzsche

Outfit Combinations

Sailor Jeans



Black 7/8 Cropped Trousers





Cropped Jeans



Accessories

Simple accessories are often the best. Choose elegant, classic pieces that can be worn with any outfit.



“

To err is human. To loaf is Parisian.

Victor Hugo



Appendix 2

Socials

Follow The Lifestyle Cooperative on social media.

