

CRUISING
ON THE
RIVER SEINE

PARIS REUNION

In a **luxury apartment** in the sixth arrondissement, there will be champagne and tears

By ANNELIZE VISSER

I set out from the Rue des Saints-Pères with two goals on the Thursday morning. The first was to reach the Sainte-Chapelle before the crowds. The second was to buy some *pain au chocolat*: I was expecting my sister for breakfast.

My first objective took me to the Quai Voltaire and along the River Seine, where the book vendors were just arriving to unlock their stalls, to the Île de la Cité, the teardrop-shaped island that is the centre of Paris. I was too late: a queue of tourists already stretched from the entrance to the Palais de Justice (where gendarmes search your bags) down the length of the Boulevard du Palais. This 13th-century Gothic chapel is world famous for the stained glass windows in the upper chapel: to see their fragile beauty you must get up early or be prepared to wait.

Deciding to start earlier on the Friday, I headed back to Saint-Germain-des-Prés, getting lost but still ending up on the Rue de Buci, famous for its outdoor market. Found a bakery, pointed at the *pain au chocolat*, held up two fingers, fumbled with the euros. Then I hung over the balcony overlooking the Rue des Saints-Pères, waiting to catch a glimpse of my sister.

We would eat our pastries, not in a tiny hotel room or on a park bench, but at a vast round table in the dining room of 'my' Paris apartment. My first visit to Paris since I was 12; her birthday – the third since she moved to France.

The eager but unruly gods who'd contrived this reunion had made some unusual arrangements, of which the apartment was one. Its three bedrooms, two bathrooms, dining room and what I had no objection to calling my 'salon', took up an entire floor in one of Paris' most fashionable arrondissements. The luxurious furnishings included curtains that could've kept Scarlett O'Hara in ball gowns for a year; three flat-screen TVs and a Miele kitchen that could do everything. If you pressed the right button, it even made very good coffee for washing down your *pain au chocolat* and the slight headache that invariably follows the discovery of a complimentary bottle of Veuve Clicquot in the fridge.

The Veuve had been the second surprise waiting for me at the top of the red-carpeted stairs;



ON THE
STEPS OF THE
SACRÉ COEUR



LUNCH IN
MONTMARTRE

the first had been the charming Perumal, a foreign student who works for Haven in Paris as a 'greeter', making arriving guests feel at home. The family-sized apartment was the last one left in the Haven in Paris portfolio when they rallied to my aid two days before I arrived, and so it turned out that I would spend two nights in Paris in perfect splendour and the third (since I was flying out from Nice) on a train.

My sister and I didn't stay on the Rue des Saints-Pères long on Thursday morning: in our one day together there were dozens of memories to go in search of and a birthday to celebrate. There was a Metro to catch to Montmartre for the Sacré Coeur Basilica and a sidewalk lunch of crepes and onion soup served by a cocky waiter; another Metro to the Notre Dame; a walk to Rue Bonaparte where we took pictures of ourselves in front of number 40, our childhood address; a last beer at a café on the corner; then she caught the train back to her village and I sat down in the church of Saint-Germain-des-Prés. And cried.

I knew my apartment was close to La Grand Épicerie: it was close to everything. And yet, allowing myself to get lost in the vicinity of the Rue de Sèvres that evening, I was surprised to find myself outside the famous food hall of that venerable Paris department store, Le Bon Marché.

I took my time picking out the food for my supper. It cheered me up to think about the gas hob in my Miele kitchen. The leftover Veuve in the fridge. The *macarons* on the dining-room table, placed there by Perumal. And the Sainte-Chapelle in the morning...

Self-catering is an excellent way to experience a city through the eyes of the locals. Haven in Paris offers short-term apartment rentals through their website, haveninparis.com, and tips and insights for visitors on their Hip Paris Blog. Want to know how to flirt in French or shop for lingerie? The answers are at hipparis.com. To rent my apartment on the Rue des Saints-Pères costs between 4 700 and 5 500 euros per week. That's between R47 000 and R55 000 per week, but it's meant to be shared among six or seven and at the luxury end of their offering. There are also studio apartments that sleep up to three from around 700 euro per week, and a range of options in between, all in the coolest parts of the city. Their service is highly conscientious and thoughtful.



OSCAR DE
LA RENTA?
TICK.



NYC
TIMES
SQUARE



OUTSIDE
LONDON'S
FOODIES
FESTIVAL

TWO BAGS AND A HOT DATE

Annicia Manyapelo knows what she wants – and where to find it in London and New York

I'd decided to take some time off work and indulge in great food and fabulous fashion. For food I headed to the London Foodies Festival at Battersea Park next to the Chelsea River to marvel at Michelin-starred chefs like Gary Lee of London's famous The Ivy whipping up some magic, taste cuisine from all over the world, listen to live music and drink some champagne.

Although I had vowed not to shop until I got to New York, I couldn't help myself, so I headed to Old and New Bond streets and bought my very first Chanel bag. I'd been coveting this bag for a while, so I beamed from ear to ear on my way back to my hotel in South Kensington.

During my short stay in London, I met amazing people, lunched with a good friend and even managed to meet someone, flirt and go on a hot date. I was sad to leave so soon, but excited to show off my brand new Chanel in New York.

Here, the plan was simple: fashion and shopping. With my heart still in London, I checked in at The Hilton New York Fashion District, one of the city's most fashionable new hotels and the perfect launch pad for my mission. It's located at 152 West

26th Street, around the corner from the Fashion Institute of Technology on Fashion Avenue and Parsons The New School of Design on 5th, and a short walk from the bright lights of Time Square.

First on the agenda was 5th Avenue, New York's famous shopping street where you'll find Fendi, Salvatore Ferragamo, Tory Burch, Banana Republic, Michael Kors, Victoria's Secret, Chanel, Burberry, Dior, Armani, Gucci, Valentino and, of course, Louis Vuitton, where I added to my LV bag collection, before heading for the top floor of Saks on 5th – the shoe level. In shoe heaven, I fell for a pair of fabulous Oscar de la Renta heels, but spent most of my dollars at BCBG Max Azria. Favourite purchases: the Astria sheer maxidress and sky-high espadrille wedges.

I also found colourful sheer skirts, tops and belts at American Apparel and a beautiful Alice + Olivia shift.

Colour-blocking and short shorts were the order of the day in the sweltering New York heat. With brightly coloured jeans from Guess and short shorts from Banana Republic, I was ready for spring/summer 2011.

Getting caught in a downpour on the way back to the hotel, I stopped at Madison Square Garden for a Cuban music concert in the rain – incredible. And because a girl should not just look good, but stay stylishly connected, I spent an evening at Apple on 5th Avenue and played with my brand new toys.

I spent my last day in Central Park, enjoying spots I recognised from *Friends*, *Sex and the City* and *The Wedding Planner*. This was my second trip to New York and it won't be my last: I will definitely be back for some more retail therapy.

DRIVING LESSONS

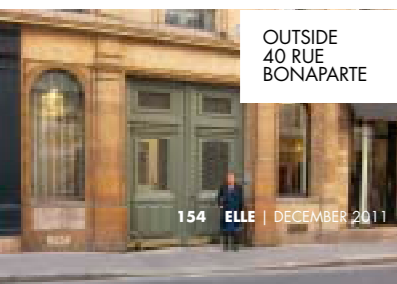
Cheska Liackman hits the road from Wales to Liverpool in the new Range Rover Evoque

Pretty much the only thing I knew about Wales was that Prince William and Kate Middleton used to live in Anglesey. What I knew of Liverpool, despite not watching soccer, was their football team and Anfield (thanks to my brother-in-law who's an overenthusiastic fan). But after driving a Range Rover Evoque from Anglesey (okay, I will admit that upon landing I was on the

lookout for a certain prince) all the way to and around Liverpool, here is what I learnt:

1. Don't touch the GPS. Let's just say I saw a whole other side of the Welsh coastline than intended

LESSON 1: 'DON'T TOUCH THE GPS.'



OUTSIDE
40 RUE
BONAPARTE