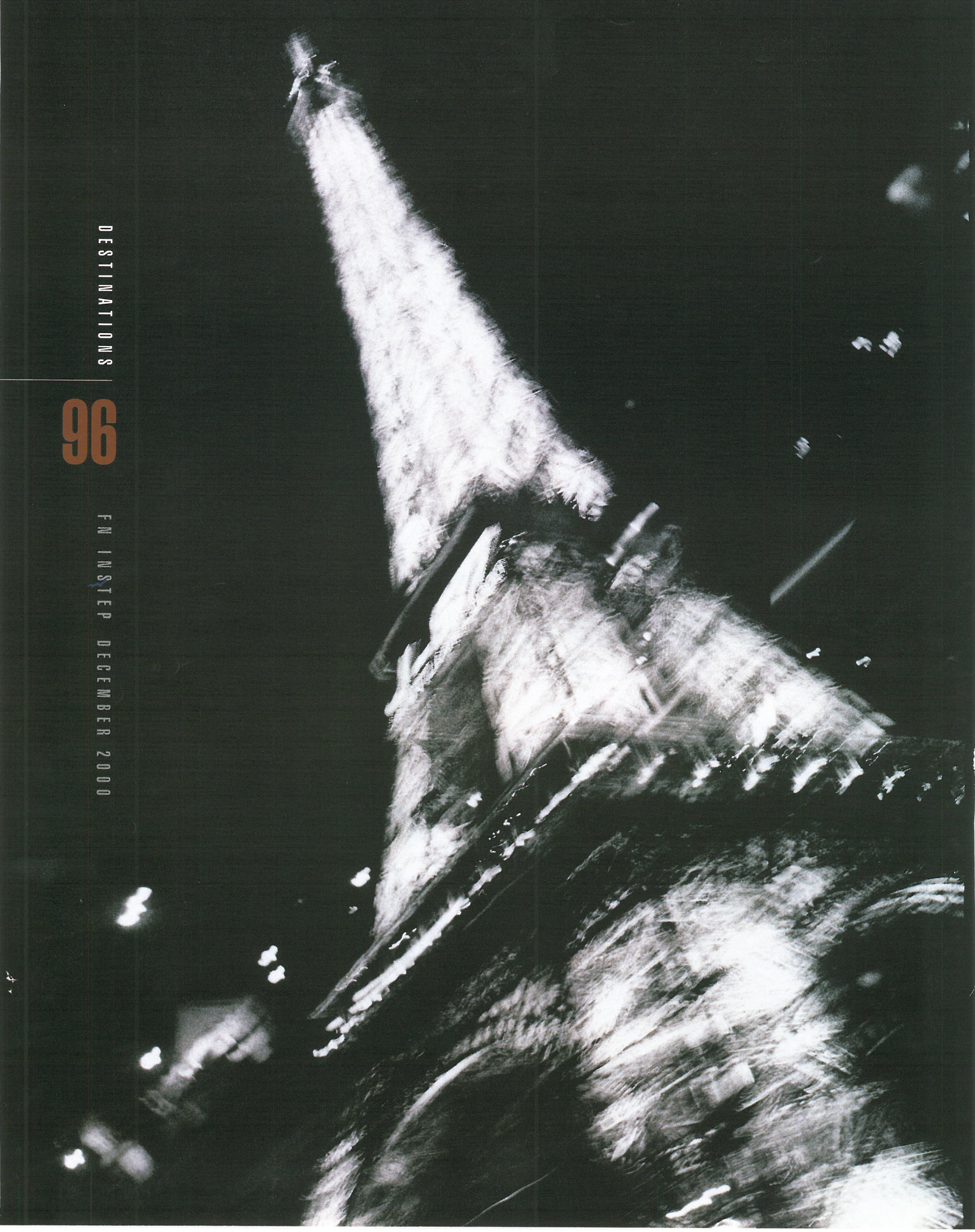


DESTINATIONS

96

FN INSTEP DECEMBER 2000



Opposite page: The Eiffel Tower at night.

Right, top: Shopping in the trendy Marais, a chic Parisian woman wears blue jeans, lime-green socks and white pumps with leaf appliqués.

Luc Berjen's charming shop on Rue du Cherche Midi sells super-cool casual shoes for men and women.

Bottom: Colette on Rue St. Honoré is a fashionista's haven, filled with cutting-edge shoes and clothes from designers such as Jil Stuart, Prada and Narciso Rodriguez.



FRENCH DRESSING

April in Paris has never been this good for the shoe obsessed.

In a popular Cole Porter song, a stylish woman lets her date get a little fresh as long as he showers her with the French favors. "If a Harris pat means a Paris hat, OK." If that's the case, then what kind of behavior would a pair of Robert Clergerie purple stiletto boots let Mr. Harris get away with?

These days, most women would agree that succumbing to the advances of a rich old geezer isn't the best way to stock your closet with scrumptious French fashions. Most ladies can afford to buy their own Paris trinkets, thank you. And what a good time it is right now for Paris trinkets.

Whether you're looking for a cool walking moc from one of the city's up-and-coming designers or a pair of made-to-order d'Orsay pumps from one of the exclusive couture shops, Paris has got you covered. From the tony shops lining the cobblestone streets in the Saint Germain des Prés to the bustling department stores and luxury houses scattered all over the Right Bank, the city's shopping scene is more enticing than it has been in years. Over the past few months, a variety of stores have opened on either side of the Seine. Miuccia Prada recently christened her new Prada and Miu Miu stores, shoemaker Rodolphe Menuudier has just opened a flagship, and—following in the footsteps of the wildly successful fashion emporium Colette—trendy boutiques such as Beauty by et Vous are popping up faster than you can say prêt-à-porter. This proliferation of stores has pushed the city back into the fashion limelight and reintroduced the concept of Parisian chic to a new generation of shoppers.

LEFTIST VIEW

What could be better than finding yourself strolling across the Pont-Neuf, a French baguette tucked under one arm and a Fendi baguette hanging from the other, heading toward the Left Bank for an afternoon of shoe hunting? Funny, but we can't think of anything, either.

If you're obsessed with footwear, brace yourself for a near-religious experience as you head to Rue du Cherche Midi. This narrow cobblestone street is lined with dozens of shoe stores, many of them tiny, charming shops with exclusive merchandise. Although **Miu Miu** recently closed its doors here and moved to a bigger location on Rue de Grenelle, the strip remains home to the creme de la creme of cobblers, from the posh labels to the trendy Eurocomfort brands. Among the prestigious names are **Yves Saint Laurent**, whose gem of a store displays sexy shoe and bag combos side-by-side on shelves like works of art. **Robert Clergerie's** sleek, museum-like space, with its spare white exterior, houses the French designer's sultry slingbacks and boots. On the same block, the chic luxury label **Givenchy** sits next to Spanish brand **Camper**, famous for its hip rubber-bottom casuals.

Along Rue du Cherche Midi you'll also find **Joseph Fenestrier**, a tiny men's store whose pricey, sophisticated footwear is packaged in sleek silver shoe boxes. Two other must-visits on this strip are **JB Martin**, whose classic riding boots, loafers and Mary Janes are showcased on wrought-iron tables and fixtures, and **Carel**, which sells exquisite shoes and bags in fine leathers. **Lundi Bleu** peddles everything from calf slip-ons with fringes to rubber-bottom driving mocs.

Down the road at **Fausto Santini**, edgy men's and women's shoes feature quirky details like contrast trimming, raw stitching and combinations of leather and stretch materials. Among the standouts are buttery slippers and wood-bottomed flats, both stylish yet comfortable. While you're browsing along Rue du Cherche Midi, don't forget to visit the lavender-painted **Myma**, which displays a broad selection of feminine Mary Janes and T-straps on terracotta shelves. Look for fanciful posters done by the illustrator who does the Henri Bendel ads back in the States. Another great pitstop is **Luc Berjen**, which features comfort-casual looks for guys and girls, and an outpost of **Bottega Veneta**, famous for its woven handbags and ultra-feminine shoes.

It will be difficult to break away from this shoe lovers' haven, so before you leave Rue du Cherche Midi, make sure to take a break at Le Feuille Thé, an elegant tea salon, or pick up some delectable edibles at Poilâne, an exquisite little bread shop. After you've fueled up, head over to Rue de Sèvres, where you will find **Le Bon Marché**, the oldest department store in Paris and the only one left on the Left Bank. Bon Marché is famous for its French labels and European designer collections. And don't miss the amazing food ►



FRENCH DRESSING

hall, renowned for its gourmet treats to go.

While you're on the Left Bank, a visit to the new Miu Miu flagship on Grenelle is a necessity. The store is nestled in the upscale Saint-Sulpice shopping area, on a block that is home to cheese shops, florists and cult fashion favorites such as **Martine Sitbon**, **Christian Louboutin**, **Sergio Rossi** and **Sonia Rykiel**. Designed by Roberto Baciocchi, the two-floor, 4,500-square-foot-store features bright-red walls and silver fixtures and of course, all of the brand's ready-to-wear, footwear and accessories under one roof.

RIGHT ON

If the refined opulence of the Right Bank is more your style, make a beeline for one of the city's hippest strips. Now known as NOSH, the area north of Rue St. Honoré has been transformed from a "ladies who lunch" spot into a trendy shopping destination. **Gucci** just finished renovating its store there, and the area also boasts several classic footwear shops, including **Venise par Kallisté**.

Of course, anyone who loves shoes must pay a visit to fashion editors' huntingground **Colette** on Rue St. Honoré. Since it opened three years ago, the lifestyle boutique has influenced a new generation of shoppers with its of-the-moment ready-to-wear and footwear offerings from hot designers like **Jill Stuart**, **Narcisco Rodriguez** and **Red**. The store also features a beauty department stocked with luxury brands such as Kiehl's and Nars, as well as a chic basement eatery called Flower Bar, perfect for light lunches and gourmet teas.

In the exclusive area on or near Rue Royale, shoe fanatics will not be able to resist the **Chanel** store in Le Village Royal mall, not to mention the nearby **Lolita Lempicka**, **Stephane Kelian** and **A. Testoni** stores. These days, the hottest haunt for fashionistas is **Beauty by et Vous** on Rue Royale. The three-floor style emporium boasts an amazing selection of offbeat fashion labels, including Trace by Koji Tatsumo, Sharon Wauchob and Jade Jagger. On a recent excursion, shoe brands included Marc Jacobs, Jimmy Choo, Gianni Barbato and Helmut Lang. The colorful shop, whose models look as well put together as the store's mannequins, also features an international assortment of beauty and skincare products.

One could spend a week shoe shopping on the Right Bank, hitting such classics as the **Jaime Mascaro** boutique on Avenue de l'Opéra, which features sophisticated slingbacks, pumps and bags from the Spanish designer and his daughter, Ursula. Shoe shopping is also a treat on nearby Avenue de l'Opéra, home to the renovated **Charles Jourdan** flagship, as well as one of the city's several **J.M. Weston** shops for men and women. You'll find **Michele**

Perry's pretty-in-pink boutique, featuring his sexy stilettos and ready-to-wear, on Rue des Petits Péres.

Prada recently made big Right Bank news when it opened its new flagship on Avenue Montaigne. So did **Rodolphe Menudier**, who opened his first freestanding shop this fall on the Rue de Castiglione. Aside from carrying the designer's sexy, hard-edged shoes, the shop sells Menudier's new hosiery line, foot jewelry and limited-edition footwear stamped "14 Castiglione."

Rue Etienne Marcel is another footwear paradise. Here you will find such trendy shops as **Kabuki**, which carries a wide range of prestigious international brands such as Miu Miu, Prada, Barbara Bui, Acteur Mode Paris and Rodolphe Menudier. **Gas Paris** is a younger shop that carries hip brands including Olivia Morris and Norman Smitherman. Rue Etienne Marcel is also home to retail superstar **Barbara Bui's** shop, filled with her modern, streamlined clothes and shoes in muted colors, as well as Bui's cafe, just down the street. Nearby on Rue Tiquetonne, **Sylvia Rielle** stocks glam-rock motorcycle boots at her fast-forward shop, while **Patrick Cox** and **Clone** continue to attract loyal followings.

In the Marais, the city's oldest existing quarter, a mix of tiny boutiques and chain stores makes the neighborhood a popular shopping destination. The main drag is Rue des Francs-Bourgeois, home to footwear shops like **Jean-Claude Monderer**, known for its athletic-inspired casuals; **Mare**, popular because of its funky, ready-to-wear inspired shoes; and **Parallele**, a tiny shop that carries an eclectic assortment of women's looks, from preppy flats to sexy slingbacks. Off the beaten path, on Quai de Valmy in the 10th arrondissement, you'll find the pastel-painted **Antoine et Lili**, which houses a fashion boutique, a housewares and gardening shop and a cozy tea salon. The small footwear assortment includes Far Eastern-inspired thong sandals and Antik Batik slippers decorated with faux jewels.

Of course, a visit to the Right Bank is incomplete without a stop in one of the department stores on Boulevard Haussmann. Even with the increasing competition from the high-end boutiques surfacing on their side of the Seine, these huge stores are still a must-see for those seeking a dose of real Parisian style.

Printemps, housed in a building classified as a national monument, remains the ultimate destination for top women's labels, plus it has an awesome perfume department. Next-door neighbor **Galleries Lafayette** still stocks some of France's most interesting designers — from Jean-Paul Gaultier to Thierry Mugler — under its Belle Epoque ceiling. With the 10-percent tourist discount, you'll have enough left over for a trinket or two.

—M.L.





ARCHES DE TRIOMPHE: Clockwise from opposite page, bottom left: In Paris, anything goes, including a pair of canary-yellow ankle boots with white cuffs. A few steps from its Far Eastern-inspired merchandise, Antoine et Lili's fanciful tea salon is an ideal resting spot for weary shoppers. Decorated in feminine shades of blush, Michele Perry's cozy shop on Rue des Petits Pères is a must-visit for shoe lovers. Patrick Cox's store features a minimalist interior and exclusive offerings of the designer's sleek shoes and boots. At Beauty by et Vous on Rue Royale, a clever window display features cutting-edge designer merchandise, well-dressed mannequins and a harmless tiger or two. Clone, an edgy comfort line, has its Paris flagship on the Right Bank. Luc Berjen's flagship store on Rue du Cherche Midi carries the brand's super-cool casual shoes for men and women.

