

Curiosities of Paris: An idiosyncratic guide to overlooked delights... hidden in plain sight

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Francophiles and Paris buffs will find something new and fascinating in this timeless guidebook, filled with sites, passageways, hotels, shops, and more

What if-walking around Paris-instead of seeing only the Paris of 2017, you glimpsed Paris in Revolutionary times? Or Paris when it was home to 80,000 horses; or Paris lit by gaslight; or medieval Paris? What if-walking down a block in Paris-you recognized the signs, mosaics, pieces of hardware, and architectural details as relics of many centuries that have stories to tell of past eras? This is what Curiosities of Paris reveals.

Each of the book's 800 photos of unique locations and architectural oddities-as well as utilitarian objects whose functions have long been obscured with the passage of time-discloses a previously unnoticed city. Even those who know Paris well might never have registered the thousands of details on every street that testify to the enduring presence of the past: the solar cannon at Invalides, street signs with the word "saint" and all fleur-de-lys removed; the unique features of Parisian street lighting. You'll never look at an elm tree the same way again. And, with Curiosities of Paris as your guide, you'll feel very in-the-know as you walk down the Champs-Élysées past all the auto dealerships.

Organized by subject-including fountains and wells; centuries-old shop signs; vestiges of wars and ancient Egypt; hotels of legend; remarkable trees; sundials and meridians; equestrian Paris; romantic ruins; unusual tombs, stairways, and passageways; religious relics; mosaics; public barometers and thermometers; and hundreds more urban elements and anachronisms-the book also includes three themed walks (along the city's ancient walls, in the steps of Quasimodo, and through the French Revolution), as well as an index of street names.

This absorbing compendium is an essential addition to the library of the armchair traveler and flâneur alike.

Dominique Lesbros is a journalist and the author of many books about Paris, including Paris Quiz, also published by The Little Bookroom.

Simon Beaver grew up in the south of England but moved to Paris nearly forty years ago and now lives in Brittany. For three decades he has been adapting books, television and movie scripts, songs, and biographies into English; writing subtitles; and recording voice-overs. Recently, he has added another string to his bow: concocting French versions of the HP Lounge app's humorous pop-star gossip."Lesbros's delightful guide to Paris...will entertain and educate nearly every step you might take in the City of Light....A fun, informative, and entertaining way to explore Paris, especially for those who enjoy their travels off the beaten path." -Library Journal

"...this [book] is for the hardcore Paris aficionado, or the 'interstitial tourist,' who the book defines as someone who prefers to 'explore the nooks and crannies of the urban landscape rather than its more aristocratic facets'...Smaller than a coffee-table tome but more robust than a pocket guide, Curiosities of Paris offers up more than 800 photos accompanied by captions that, while brief, pack a punch." -The Paris Blog

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