

City of Light, capital of love and centre of gastronomy, Paris offers a bewildering variety of pleasures, but what if you only have a day to discover it all?

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It was 9am, and I had just one dizzily short day ahead of me to discover the sounds and sights of the world's most romantic city. How should I make the best of my limited time?

For an instant trip into the soul of this conurbation, which was founded by the Parisii in 2,500BC, I headed for Paris Story ([paris-story.com](http://paris-story.com)), an exciting interactive museum where a holographic image of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* author Victor Hugo whisked me away on a tour of 2,000 years of history in the City of Light.

Now that I'd had a bird's eye view of Hugo's city, it was time to zoom in on some of those celebrated sites, so I hopped on a Segway ([segwaysightseeing.com](http://segwaysightseeing.com)). This innovative and eco-friendly personal transportation device was ideal, taking me on an effortless two-and-a-half-hour tour of the city's key landmarks, from the buzzing Latin Quarter with its flower and bird markets, to the Conciergerie where famous prisoners like Marie Antoinette and Robespierre were held during the French Revolution.

After lunch at L'Avant Comptoir (9 carrefour de l'Odéon), a cosy bistro serving delicious grilled mushrooms, local cheeses and other snacks, I was feeling more energetic.

Setting out with Paris Bike ([paris-biketour.net](http://paris-biketour.net)), I spent an hour discovering the cobbled nooks and crannies of the Left bank whilst my guide fed me historical anecdotes and cultural tidbits en route.

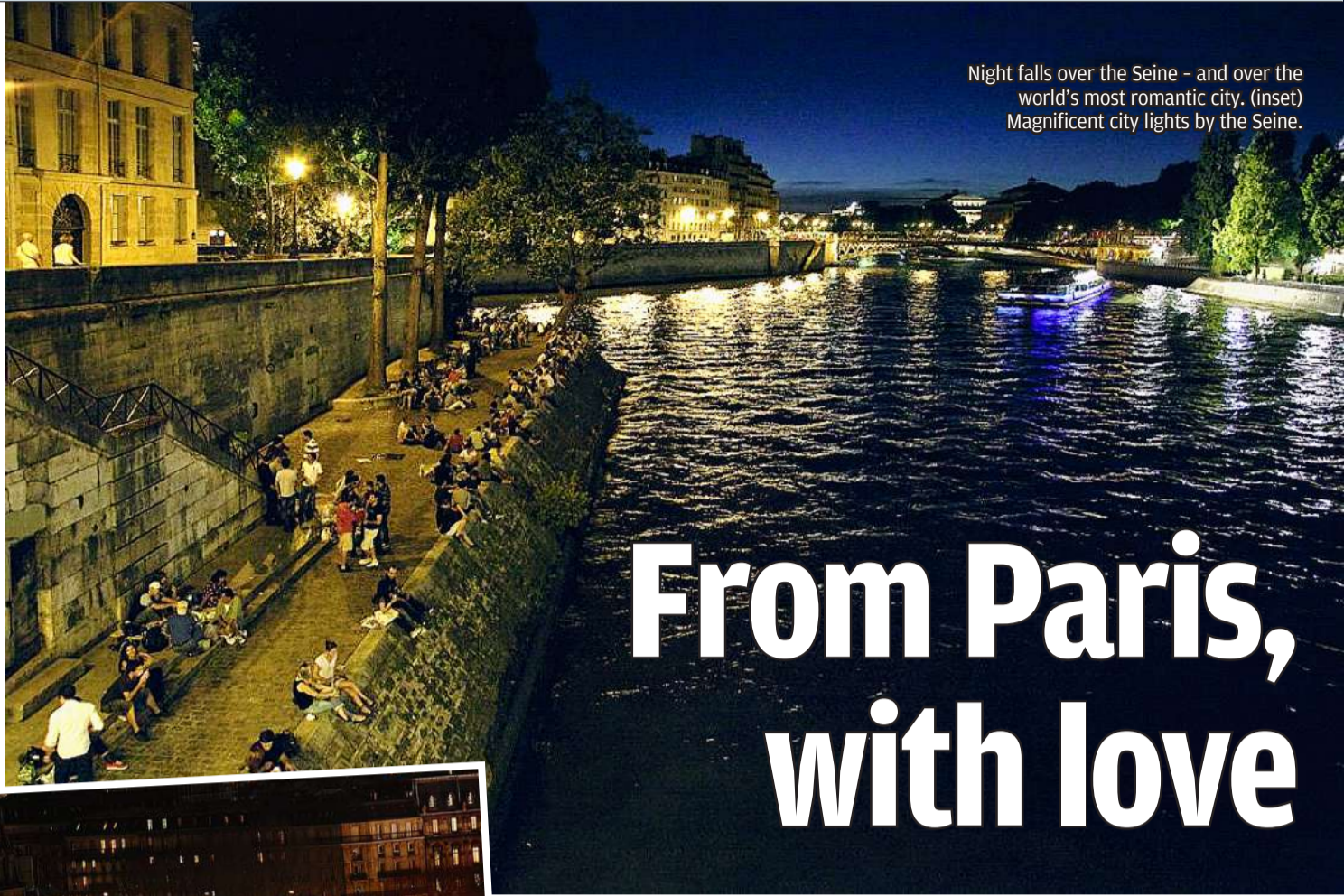
Paris, home of haute couture, is all about style, so perhaps it was time I learnt to dress like a Parisian, whilst paying insider prices for my Chanel, Vuitton and Dior.

Joining a Chic Shopping tour ([chicshoppingparis.com](http://chicshoppingparis.com)), I followed my expert guide Samantha, who took me on a glittering tour of resale shops that sell haute couture at rock-bottom prices.

"These are the prices that most of us Parisians pay – otherwise, how could we afford to look so good?" she confided as I left her an hour later, carrying elegant bags full of fashionable buys.

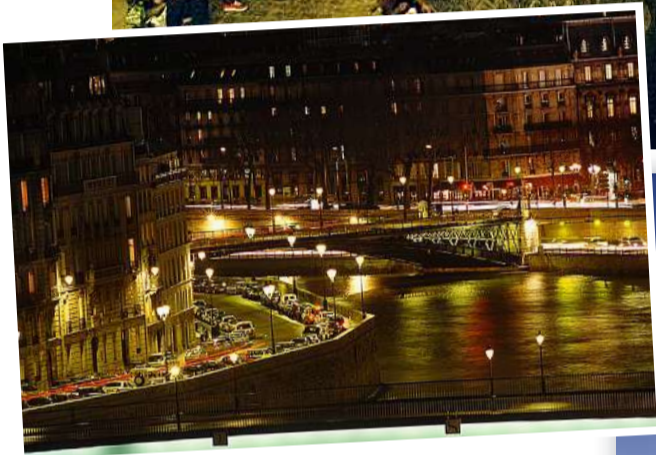
Now, I just needed an elegant perfume to match my stylish garments – after all, some of the world's top perfumes were created right here in Paris.

Joining Neela Vermeire's Perfume Paths walking tour ([perfumepaths.com](http://perfumepaths.com)), I visited the stores of top scent manufacturers – Guerlain, Hermes and Fragonard – then, learnt to pick out the best fragrance to suit my own style and personality.



Night falls over the Seine – and over the world's most romantic city. (inset) Magnificent city lights by the Seine.

# From Paris, with love



By now, night was falling over the Seine river. It had been an enjoyable day, but also a very long one. So, now, it was time to relax.

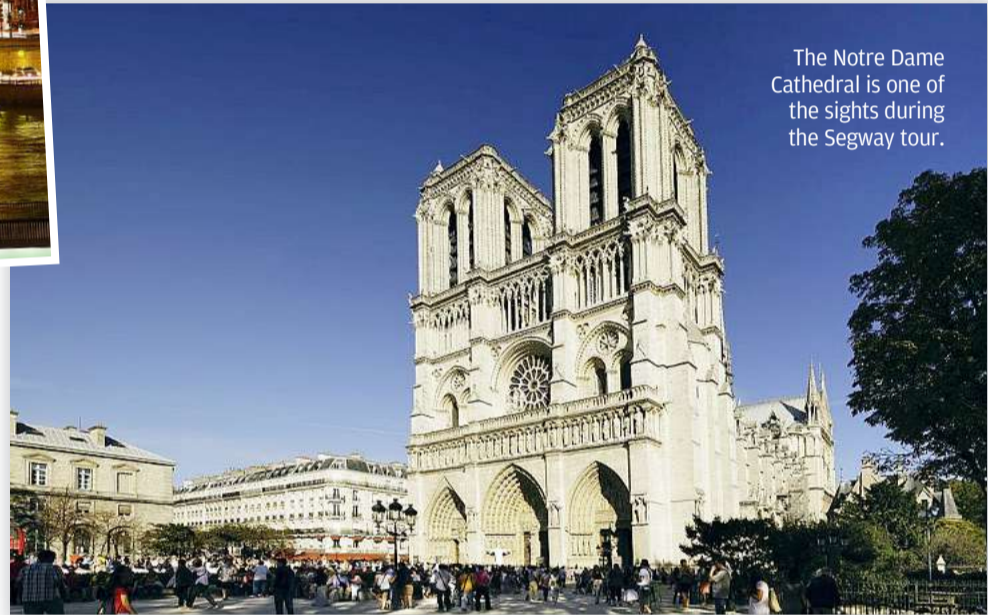
Eager to experience the quintessential French dining experience, I headed for Le Meurice ([lemeurice.com](http://lemeurice.com)).

In this glamorous, Michelin-starred restaurant just opposite the Tuileries gardens, I dined on scallops marinated in seaweed oil and spit-roasted pigeon with apple juice, before heading out to enjoy more of that Gallic razzle dazzle with an after-dinner Paris by Night Illuminations Tour ([viator.com](http://viator.com)).

After visiting all the illuminated sights, monuments and squares, I ended my sparkling day at the spectacular Moulin Rouge, home of the French Cancan for over a century.

I was wowed by the sumptuous sets and sequin-costumed beauties of this world-famous show which contains all the glamour, history and excitement of France's incomparable capital city.

■ For a classic way to get around, buy a Paris Pass ([parispass.com](http://parispass.com)) and get free travel on inner city transport, free entry to the city's main attractions and exclusive deals in restaurants and shops.



The Notre Dame Cathedral is one of the sights during the Segway tour.



The Segway offers an exciting new way to explore an old city like Paris, with its many classic sights. – Filepic



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Haute cuisine is served at the glamorous Le Meurice, which overlooks the Tuileries gardens. – Filepic

## Five more ways to discover Paris like a Parisian

- > MEET the French at work ([meetingthefrench.com](http://meetingthefrench.com)). From glovemakers to restaurants owners, you can take a behind-the-scenes tour of some of Paris most famous businesses.
- > Stay in a local home. From a private villa on the charming Ile St Louis to a barge on the fast-flowing Seine, Hôtes Qualité Paris ([hqp.fr](http://hqp.fr)) offers unique bed-and-breakfast accommodation with city residents.
- > Dine with locals ([epiculinary.com](http://epiculinary.com)). Over a four-course meal in the home of an English-speaking Parisian family, you will get to know the French on a personal level.

- > Become a Paris gourmet. Indulge in the Paris Chocolate and Pastry Food Tour ([viator.com](http://viator.com)). Led by an expert food guide, you visit some of Paris' top confectionery shops, including the store where actress Juliet Binoche learnt to make chocolate before starring in the eponymous film.
- > Sign up for a chauffeur driven 2CV Paris Tour ([4roues-sous-1parapluie.com](http://4roues-sous-1parapluie.com)) and enjoy panoramic views from the well sprung back seat of this legendary vehicle, which featured in *The Revenge of the Pink Panther*, and was originally designed as a cheap run-around for French farmers.