



“ I could knock you up a sofa in an afternoon ” [Jeremy Clarkson](#)

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## TRAVEL

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### 10 chic new places to stay in Wales

The author of the Lonely Planet guide to Wales reveals his pick of the best new places to stay around the country



### Hôtel des Academies et des Arts, Paris

Do hotels reflect art or art reflect hotels? George Sivell sought the answer in Montparnasse in a new art-filled establishment

## WINTERSPORTS >>



### Head to head: best ski videos (Part 2)

The wintersports editors of The Times and Sunday Times present their second selection of the best ski videos online

- > Head to head: best ski videos (Part 1)
- > Video: fresh from Austria as ski season starts



### Snow for the whole ski season

It's been a glorious start to the season, but will it stay? Here's the lowdown so you can be in the white place at the right time

### 10 ice skating rinks in London

Swallow your pride and mulled wine then head out on the ice at London's top rinks

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## THE SUNDAY TIMES



December 5, 2007

## Hôtel des Academies et des Arts, Paris

Do hotels reflect art or art reflect hotels? George Sivell sought the answer in Montparnasse in a new art-filled establishment

George Sivell

I have never been trusted with a work of art before, let alone slept with one, but that is what happened to me in Paris.

The place – Montparnasse, and the Hôtel des Académies et des Arts, a new boutique hotel in rue de la Grande Chaumière. The street is famously intertwined with the threads of French art history winding back to the French Revolution. Surrounding houses were home to Paul Gauguin, the artist (when he wasn't painting in Tahiti) and Amedeo Modigliani, painter of the voluptuous female curves who died a sad excessive Montparnassien death in 1920 aged 36.

The original Grande Chaumière (large thatched house) was a watering hole where a particularly vigorous Polka dance became the notorious Can Can. Hôtel des Académies et des Arts is a 150 year old town house converted from a one-star hotel by its current owners Laurent Inchauspé and his wife Charlotte, who have lovingly maintained the area's artistic tradition.

The art – delivered in each of 20 beautiful rooms by one-time street artist Jérôme Mesnager, known for his characteristic black and white silhouette paintings of human bodies on walls and open spaces around the world. Sophie de Watrigant, the French sculptress, has furnished the hotel with numerous white figures, invariably climbing model ladders.

### MULTIMEDIA

- Art where they invented the cancan

### BACKGROUND

- Paris kicks off
- Gordon's gastro tour de France
- 'Modigliani' left in airport toilet
- Of all the gin joints in all the world...
- Paris is not just for romance ... embrace the city's culture

Her most spectacular work "joins" the basement to the fifth floor of the hotel in the vortex of the spiral staircase. The lift offers a progressive view of a giant Mesnager stretching a similar distance.

Rooms at Hôtel des Académies come in one of four themes which can be specified on reservation. I soaked up the ambience in a Man Ray room, with a black and white interior styled in tribute to the famous photographer, but would recommend any of the alternative themes available. Parisienne represents classic French city living in cream and taupe,

Comedienne, as the French word for actor/actress implies, invokes the red of French theatre, and La Ruhlmann where the rooms were inspired by the luxurious textiles used by one of the most famous French art deco designers.

Cost per double room is from €210 to €270, which seems to me to be good value for a boutique hotel in the Paris arrondissements, especially a trendy one, such as the sixth. Also some very interesting extras. The hotels offers a range of cultural visits in addition to seeing the studios used by Jérôme Mesnager or Sophie de Watrigant. A personal shopper can be hired for a half day tour of the deluxe boutiques in the sixth arrondissement or a full day shopping trip which combines, compares and contrasts the best of the sixth arrondissement with the delights of the Palais Royal area in the deluxe right bank first and second arrondissements.

### TIMES RECOMMENDS

- Summer celebrations in Mongolia
- Head to head: best ski videos (Part 2)
- Hôtel des Academies et des Arts, Paris

### TRAVEL NEWS

- Strikes threaten holiday flight chaos
- Acrobatics on snow lead to rise in deaths and injuries

### VIDEO: THE ICEHOTEL



### Stay in the Arctic

Ginny McGrath meets the artists building Sweden's Icehotel, where the first rooms opened this weekend

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- Sunday Times smugshots
- 10 ice skating rinks in London
- Head to head: the best ski videos (Part 2)
- The wandering bears

### SPACE TRAVEL



### Seeing shooting stars

This coming week's Geminids meteor shower should be spectacular. Where to go to see them

### YOUR WORLD



# QUATRO

**Client:** The Rockwell Hotel  
**Source:** [www.timesonline.com](http://www.timesonline.com)  
**Date:** December 2007

The hotel has no restaurant, usual for such hotels in Paris, but I did enjoy a breakfast of fruit, yoghurt, bread, pastries, coffee and a surprisingly cosmopolitan range of teas. Choice of surrounding restaurants, however, is excellent. The hotel is minutes (literally one, two or three minutes) walk from the famous Montparnasse brasseries of La Coupole, La Rotonde and Le Dôme. I chose La Coupole, because of the additional art deco paintings to be seen at the top of each pillar on the giant ground floor. I squeezed in – without reservation – just before 8pm on a busy Saturday with only a 20 minute wait. The meal was excellent, I really pushed the boat out, but still only spent €67.

The surrounding area is classic Left Bank Paris. It is near (five minutes walk) a quiet, less frequented corner of famous Jardins de Luxembourg. Stepping out of the hotel in the other direction gets you onto what is now known as the Place Pablo Picasso, the junction of Boulevard Montparnasse and Boulevard Raspail. From there, and in all too brief a time, I squeezed in a walk to the fascinating Jardin Atlantique, an oasis of deliberately wild garden built behind the Gare Montparnasse (one of the bigger railway stations in Paris), Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson, Montparnasse Cemetery (quick homage at the tombs of Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Camille Saint Saens and Charles Baudelaire among other cultural notables) and the Fondation Cartier. I would have visited the vast subterranean catacombs in the nearby Place Denfert Rocherau but they are closed until end February 2008.



## Road to Samarkand

Mike Aston in Uzbekistan, plus 1,800 stories in [Your World](#), touring the globe with BMW + win a Bruges break

## YOUR WORLD >>



## It's Your World

Mark Frary explains how to make the most of Your World