



Paris

after dark

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buchwald

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Paris
after dark

BY

ART BUCHWALD

Illustrations by
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A Small Handbook to Paris Night Life
and Restaurants by the Entertainment
Editor of the European Edition of the
"New York Herald Tribune".

SPRING 1950

TO MY EXPENSE ACCOUNT

without whose thoughtful understanding and helpful padding, this guide could have never been written.

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FOREWORD

For over a year, as regular reader of the European Edition of the New York Herald Tribune are well aware, Art Buchwald has been delving into Paris night life. This slim volume represents the crystalization of his experience thus far. Mr. Buchwald would be the last person to pretend that it is a definitive work on what happens in Paris when the sun goes down. It is one of the pleasant characteristics of Paris that no work of this sort could ever be definitive: the city is a living community and what may be true of some details of its many-sided life at one moment has altered in color, texture, or degree the next moment.

I feel however that I can recommend Mr. Buchwald's volume as a handy and knowing introduction to fun in Paris. Paris can be a life-time study, and Mr. Buchwald is looking forward to expanding his store of Paris lore in years to come. In the mean time, as you who read will quickly discover, he has made a fine and bright beginning.

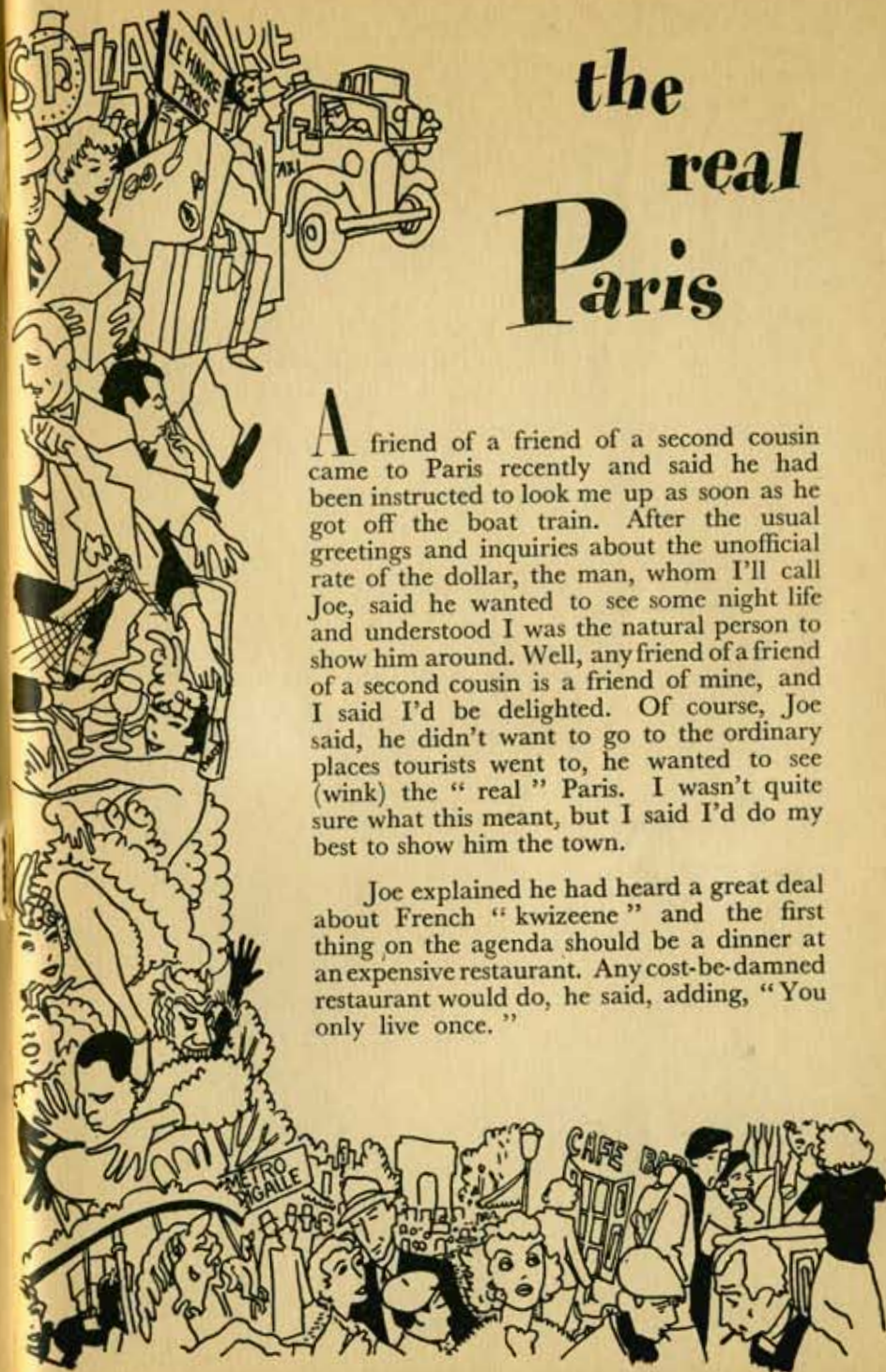
Now, get going. Have a good time.

Geoffrey PARSONS jr,
Editor, European Edition
New York Herald Tribune.

the real Paris

A friend of a friend of a second cousin came to Paris recently and said he had been instructed to look me up as soon as he got off the boat train. After the usual greetings and inquiries about the unofficial rate of the dollar, the man, whom I'll call Joe, said he wanted to see some night life and understood I was the natural person to show him around. Well, any friend of a friend of a second cousin is a friend of mine, and I said I'd be delighted. Of course, Joe said, he didn't want to go to the ordinary places tourists went to, he wanted to see (wink) the "real" Paris. I wasn't quite sure what this meant, but I said I'd do my best to show him the town.

Joe explained he had heard a great deal about French "kwizeene" and the first thing on the agenda should be a dinner at an expensive restaurant. Any cost-be-damned restaurant would do, he said, adding, "You only live once."



We went to the Tour d'Argent, a famous cost-be-damned restaurant, and ordered. When the waiter brought the tournedos rossini, a thick tender steak topped with goose liver and truffles, you could tell Joe was impressed. But something was missing. Finally, in exasperation he called the waiter and said: "Garkon, where the hell's the catsup? You can't expect a man to eat a steak without catsup. I thought you French knew something about cooking. If you did, you'd know it was the catsup that gave the steak its taste."

The horrified waiter brought the catsup and Joe commenced to drown his steak in the red sauce. It wasn't Texas beef, he admitted, but it was pretty good, though he seemed perturbed that they wouldn't serve him coffee with the main course.

The sommelier suggested a very good Burgundy and after some argument Joe consented. But when the wine waiter brought it, my friend raised a rumpus. "Why, that's the dirtiest bottle I've ever seen. What's all that dust on the bottle for? Get me a clean jug of wine, before I call the manager. A high class joint and they don't even wash off the outside of the wine bottles."

Joe wanted to finish off his meal with apple pie. When the maître d'hôtel informed him that the restaurant did not serve apple pie, had never served apple pie, and didn't plan on serving apple pie, Joe left in a huff while I paid the cost-be-damned check.

After dinner we went to the Bal Tabarin, in the hope that the wink had something to do with multi-costumed floor show. But Joe was morose.

"What's this got that Broadway hasn't?"

"Bosoms, Joe," I said with a wink.

"Ah, so what. A lot of music, dancing girls and entertainment. I didn't come three thousand miles to see that. Let's get out of here and see the real (wink) Paris."

I tried the Rose Rouge on the Rue de la Harpe, an interesting club, specializing in Sengalese drummers, African fire dancers and hot jazz music. I hoped Joe would like it, but I was wrong again.

"Got the same thing in Harlem," he complained, as he sipped a Martinique punch. "This ain't nothing new. Besides, there's a tourist over there."

Joe was right and we left immediately.

I took him to Montmartre, but he said it looked like Broadway. Montparnasse reminded him of Greenwich Village. The Champs Elysées was out of the question, and although it pained me, it looked as if Joe would leave France without seeing the real Paris.

In desperation I took him by taxi to the Bastille area. On a dark, dirty street we passed a bar that caught his eye. Joe went in. The liquor was bad, the women were ugly and the rough-looking men were full of wine.

"This is what I meant by the real Paris," yelled Joe, throwing a \$10 bill on the bar. "Drinks on the house for everybody." Because it was four o'clock in the morning, and since my friend of a friend of a second cousin was happy, I left him there with his new-found friends. I haven't seen him since, but I wouldn't be surprised if his body came floating down the Seine one of these days.



GORDON HEATH'S BAR — 6, rue de l'Abbaye. (Across from the Saint-Germain Church.)

Heath is a tall man with a deep voice and a satchel full of folk songs. He sings to the breathless young American set, and has acquired a loyal following among the French people. There is a candle-light concert at midnight, when requests are made and candles blown out one by one after each song. A good place for a midnight "fine."

CLUB DU VIEUX COLOMBIER — 21, rue du Vieux-Colombier — LIT. 22-53.

Hot and always ear-splitting. Another of the student caves with the kids raising the roof and the adults sitting in discomfort to watch them do it. Membership is 500 francs.

CAVEAU DE LA BOLÉE — rue l'Hirondelle, off Place St-Michel. (Closed Mondays.)

An interesting cave that at one time was part of the old Saint-André-des-Arts monastery. During the centuries it served as a convent, a prison, a secret meeting place for French revolutionists and a literary club frequented by Oscar Wilde, Gabrielle d'Annunzio, Paul Verlaine and Francis Carco. At present it is a tavern reeking with atmosphere. You can hear old French ballads, poems and stories. The smoke is thick, the singing strong and drinks are inexpensive.

ROSE ROUGE — 55, rue de la Harpe — ODE. 44-00.

Not to be confused with the other one of the same name. This club features Sengalese dancers and drummers and an assortment of Left Bank characters. Has a Gold Coast atmosphere. The seats are close together and in the summer it gets hot.



the Swizzle Stick

It is regrettable that in a world of vast communications, great mediums of information and highly educated societies there still exists so much misunderstanding about the champagne swizzle stick.

The swizzle stick has become an important part of French night life and it is a question whether nightclubs could continue if the government confiscated all swizzle sticks as a hickory conservation measure. Champagne swizzle sticks have strayed far from their original purpose. Now they are used to keep time to music, to chew on during a dull act or to be held in reserve as a protective weapon against an over-zealous escort.

People take swizzle sticks for granted. But those who do think about them have definite ideas on the subject, and are divided into two schools of thought. There are those who maintain that champagne would not be champagne without swizzle sticks. Others insist that champagne is no longer champagne when you use one.