

Travel



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Isn't it romantic?

Romancing like the stars? These are the locales celebrities are sweet on **PG 2**

Whitney in wax

Madame Tussauds unveils singer's statue **PG 5**



CELEBRITY TRAVELER

Checking out Paris

French people, places and culture still intrigue Pratt Library's Carla Hayden

BY STEPHANIE CITRON
For The Baltimore Sun

Few people can recognize the yearning to escape better than Carla Hayden, chief executive officer of the Enoch Pratt Free Library. She has spent many years helping her curious clientele explore new realms and journey to wondrous places through books. So when Hayden decides that it's time to turn the page or open a new chapter in her life, it is no wonder she favors a destination famed like no other for its *joie de vivre* — Paris. We caught up with her to chat about her Parisian adventures and her favorite hidden treasures.



Carla Hayden

What makes Paris so special for you?

My mom took me in my early 20s, telling me, "You need to experience other cultures." She had traveled pretty extensively. That first year, she took me to Paris, London and Rome.

Those are three stand-alone spectacular cities — why Paris above the others?

There was something about Paris — even though I See **HAYDEN**, page 4

At left, Carla Hayden and her mother during their first visit to Paris in 1983. They also traveled to London and Rome during their journey.



CARLA HAYDEN PHOTO



LIONEL BONAVENTURE/AFP/GETTY PHOTO

"There was something about Paris — even though I couldn't speak the language, since I had taken Spanish in school — it just captivated me, says Hayden.

Librarian enjoys checking out Paris

HAYDEN, From page 1

couldn't speak the language, since I had taken Spanish in school — it just captivated me. The people seemed to enjoy life, they had a sense of fashion, not just high fashion, but how to be stylish and creative with things. Enough to make you say, "Wow, look at how they tied that scarf" or "Look at how they put that together." They were very interested in cutting-edge things as well. That captivated me. The people were just creative.

And what entices you to return?

Since then, over the years I have had the chance to visit Paris many times, even for professional ventures. I spoke at a conference when I was working [as the library services coordinator] at the Museum of Science [and Industry] in Chicago, where I met the librarian from ... Paris' science museum. [She had come] to the United States to look at how the libraries in museums work because she was building a library for them. Then I visited her when I was over there.

She now has a publishing [house]/bookshop. It's called The Three Bears. They publish fine art books for children. They just moved into a new location — more accessible. The other [location] was in a part of Paris that you really needed to speak French to get there. So that's really neat to have developed a professional relationship that's now a friendship.

Where do you stay?

For 10 years, I've been staying at the same hotel — Hotel Brighton on Rue de Rivoli. So there's a familiarity over time that you develop that makes you comfortable there. It's nice to feel that you have a routine: You know where things are, you get on the Metro and you know the stops.

[The hotel is] right by [Rue] Saint-Honore, you know, the street with all the fashion? Right across from the Tuileries Gardens. It's what got me interested in that wild kind of gardening. It's also on the same block with [La Maison] Angelina, where you go for hot chocolate. I didn't know what hot chocolate was until I tasted it there.

What are your favorite things to do around Paris?

We've been to all the museums. You think you've seen everything, like the [Musée] d'Orsay — that's one of my big favorites — but this last time I've been able to do something that has become one of my new favorites — the Museum of Decorative Arts. A little gem that most people don't even realize is there.

How did you discover it?

It was weird, I was reading — because I'm always reading about Paris, I brought all these books with me — and it was mentioned in one. It's next to the Louvre but a separate entrance — you might not pay any attention because you'd just think it was part of the Louvre. It is wonderful.

What else do you like to do?

Of course, eat and visit all the wonderful cafes. I love a place called Le Souffle — it's really tiny. They specialize in souffles. It has been there a long time. I remember the first time I had a real chocolate souffle there. Afterward I got Julia Child's book. Well, I still have the book, but I've never made it. We go each time we visit. They know us. As my mom used to say, "Once you get a table there, that's your table." You can sit and they don't rush you.

That's the wonderful thing about dining in Paris. I was just reading "The Great Good Place" by Ray Oldenburg, where he talks about "Cafes, Coffee Shops, Bookstores, Bars, Hair Salons, and Other Hangouts at the Heart of a Community." I was originally reading it looking for libraries and book-



JEROME LEVINE/PHOTO FOR TRIBUNE NEWSPAPERS

The department store Galeries Lafayette is one of Carla Hayden's regular destinations.



CARLA HAYDEN PHOTO

A shot of the Eiffel Tower taken during Hayden's first trip to Paris in 1983.

stores, but he has a whole section about Paris' cafes.

There's a cookbook called "The French Bistro: Seasonal Recipes" that I give out to friends, all about the French bistro experience. It focuses on the tables, tablecloth, chalkboard, the smells, the ambience, the aromas ... the whole experience. They get it.

Any regular rituals in Paris?

I always go to Galeries Lafayette [the department store] and have a glass of champagne [at Bar a Bulles]. I also love Galerie Lorelei. It's on a side street not far from the d'Orsay. It's an eclectic mix of couture accessories; scarves, jewelry — even sometimes a piece of sculpture. It's just the owner, and she selects everything. Whenever I come back and someone says, "Ooh where'd you get that?" it's usually from her.

What time of year do you prefer to visit?

I like to go in late June or early July because you can sit outside without a jacket. And July is when everyone in Paris has their twice-yearly sales — everything is on sale for two weeks!

Can you share a special memory?

It was when the librarian invited us to visit the bookshop in its original location, a small neighborhood. They took us to dinner, the entire menu is in French. And



LE SOUFFLE PHOTO

Le Souffle is one of Hayden's favorite eating spots in Paris.

aside from frites, I couldn't figure out much of anything on the menu. So they ordered everything, and it was just wonderful because it was a local place. We just felt completely immersed in where the people actually live.

What is the one thing you won't travel without?

A book. I can stay up until 3 or 4 in the morning reading — I've got the lights from the Eiffel Tower coming through the window. Paris is where I read "The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo" — I stayed up all night. I like e-readers because I don't have to worry about carrying so much.

Do you have a favorite travel bag?

I'm working on that. We're getting to one bag and one carryon, with expandable sections. It's really most important to have a few good pieces, good walking shoes. And not worry so much about what you're wearing. You're there to look at them!

Any recommended reads on Paris?

"Le Road Trip: A Traveler's Journal of Love and France," by Vivian Swift. It takes you beyond Paris. She did the illustrations herself. ... And when I really need a fix, I read the Cara Black mystery series. It all takes place in Paris.

What's on your nightstand?

I have a wall of books, and a different basket for categories of books. I like to think of it as living in a treasure chest. I don't know if e-readers can totally replace that. I also keep a basket of paperbacks in my guest rooms and tell them, if you start a book you can't finish, take it with you.

If you go

GETTING THERE

While many airlines fly to Paris from Baltimore's BWI-Marshall Airport, none are direct flights. It is quicker, and often cheaper, to fly nonstop from Dulles Airport right into Charles de Gaulle Airport. Round-trip flights start around \$900. Note: When dialing any of the numbers below, add 011-33.

LODGING

Hotel Brighton, 218 Rue de Rivoli, Paris, 01-47-03-61-61; paris-hotel-brighton.com/en. Carla Hayden prefers the elegant, early-19th-century Hotel Brighton. This unexpectedly well-priced four-star hotel offers exquisite views, free WiFi and breakfast. Rates start at about \$200 per night.

DINING

Le Souffle, Rue Mont Thabor 75001, Paris, 01-42-60-27-19; lesouffle.fr. Hayden's favorite, Le Souffle offers a three-course meal from about \$47. It's about a four-minute walk from the Hotel Brighton.

Le Meurice, 228 Rue de Rivoli, Paris, 01-44-58-10-55; lemeurice.com/le-meurice-restaurant. Famed Michelin three-starred eatery of the legendary chef Yannick Alleno located in the posh Le Meurice hotel. The ideal spot for foodies seeking a sumptuous, authentic French dining experience. Entrees from \$75.

Angelina, 226 Rue de Rivoli, Paris, 01-42-60-82-00; angelina-paris.fr. Serves classic Parisian breakfast, lunch, pastries and its famous hot chocolate, made from melted chocolate bars and topped with mascarpone and whipped cream.

DON'T MISS

Museum of Decorative Arts, 107 Rue de Rivoli, 01-44-55-57-50; lesartsdecoratifs.fr/english-439. Housed in a building adjoining the Louvre, this ornate museum houses 150,000 European, Middle Eastern and Asian works, including ceramics, glass, jewelry and toys, beginning from the Middle Ages. Admission is about \$12.50.

Les Trois Ourses (The Three Bears), 2/6 Passage Rauch, 01-43-79-07-35; lestroisourses.com. A children's bookstore/learning environment specializing in fine-arts books.

Galignani, 224 Rue de Rivoli, Paris, 01-42-60-76-07; galignani.com. The circa 1801 Galignani bills itself as the first English bookstore established on the European continent.

Galeries Lafayette, 40 Haussmann Boulevard 75009, Paris, 01-42-82-34-56. Famed upscale French department store known for its fashions.

INFORMATION

Paris Convention and Visitors Office, en.parisinfo.com

Where to next?

Venice. Several people have said, "It's my favorite place ever," and when people say that, you think, "Oh, OK, I've got to see it." I like to go with my mom; she's still mobile. She says, "We should do this while I still can."