

Triumphal year

#PARIS2024

It's a big 12 months for the French capital, but there's more than just the Olympics to look forward to, says **Caroline Harrap**

Ah, Paris – the romantic city's allure never seems to fade. According to tourist office Paris je t'aime, the number of visitors to the French capital increased by 6.8% last year to 36.9 million. The trend points decidedly upwards for 2024. The

Olympics alone is set to attract 15 million visitors in July and August. That's not to mention the 'Emily effect'; love it or hate it, the hit Netflix show *Emily in Paris* has only heightened the pull of the city. And in this landmark year, there's a raft of openings for your clients to discover too. ➤

PICTURE: Philippe Millereau/KMSP

DESTINATIONS

SHORT BREAKS | PARIS



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Olympic beach volleyball arena; Villa-des-Prés; Bloom House Hotel & Spa; Le Grand Mazarin PICTURES: Gaëlle Le Boulicaut; Paris 2024; Adrien Ozouf; Vincent Leroux; Paris je t'aime/Stéphane Laure



CITY DEVELOPMENTS

While the Olympics may be dominating the headlines, there's more than just sport on the agenda.

The Games have accelerated infrastructure projects such as the expansion of the Paris Metro. Notably, Line 14 will stretch from Paris-Orly airport in the south to Saint-Denis Pleyel in the north. As well as directly connecting Paris's secondary airport with the city centre, this will make it possible to reach the Olympic district in Saint-Denis – which will be transformed into a new neighbourhood after the Games – in just 40 minutes.

The addition of cycle lanes also continues apace – a new 60-mile network will connect many of the Olympic competition sites – and the current city-wide figure stands at almost 650 miles. Even the Seine is set to be swimmable soon, with three public bathing spots set to open by 2025.

The coming year will also be important in other ways. It's the 150th anniversary of the impressionist movement, with a major exhibition

at the Musée d'Orsay featuring works by artists such as Monet.

The year will end on a high with the much-anticipated reopening of Notre-Dame Cathedral on December 8, following restoration work in the wake of the 2019 fire.

HAPPENING HOTELS

A raft of hotel openings is planned ahead of the Olympics. According to Paris je t'aime, the number of hotels in the city has increased by 6% since 2019 to 2,184.

For those arriving by Eurostar – which celebrates its 30th anniversary this year – Bloom House Hotel & Spa is not far from Gare du Nord. Opened in September, the stylish four-star property is notable for its impressive bar and swimming pool.

Located in Saint-Denis, in the heart of the Olympic district, the H4 Wyndham is a 40-storey tower with almost 700 rooms, which is set to open on April 1. Its indoor pool on the top floor will be the highest in France.

For something more classically Paris, Villa-des-Prés is the hot new

address in leafy Saint-Germain-des-Prés. Imagined by interior designer Bruno Borrión as a stylish set of Parisian apartments, it offers 34 elegant rooms and suites – some with private terraces or balconies overlooking the chic district.

Another desirable opening is the five-star Hôtel Hana. Situated close to the Opéra Garnier, this boutique hotel is a fusion of French and Japanese culture.

And, if the magic of the medieval Marais district calls, Le Grand Mazarin is a luxurious haven that opened in September. Located in a 14th-century building, this five-star hotel was inspired by the great houses of the aristocratic era.

NEW ATTRACTIONS

The former home of late singer-songwriter Serge Gainsbourg opened in September. As well as its own museum, there is also a much-hyped cafe-cum-piano-bar in which to sit and sip for a few hours.

An important reopening late last year, following a five-year renovation project, was the city's

ASK THE expert

Corinne Menegaux
managing director,
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tourist office

“The Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games offer an unparalleled experience to immerse oneself in the vibrant spirit of the city. With more than 25 celebration sites all over Paris, many of which are free, Parisians and visitors can come together to watch the transmission of the competitions, participate in fun cultural and sporting activities and fully embrace the electrifying atmosphere.”

national maritime museum. Culture lovers, meanwhile, will enjoy Quai de la Photo, a new floating art gallery on the Seine dedicated to contemporary photography.

Naturally, sport will be in the spotlight as well. The Louvre will host an exhibition about the origins of the Olympics, while SPOT24, near the Eiffel Tower, will showcase the Games' latest disciplines, such as breakdancing – a new event for 2024 – and their links to urban life.

And for those who don't manage to get tickets to any Olympic events, there will be 26 fan zones with screens broadcasting the games across the city. For sports and non-sports fans alike, this year is certainly an exciting time to explore Paris. **TW**

BOOK IT

CroisiEurope's four-day Short Break in Paris cruise on the Seine starts at £413 for departure dates between March and December. The price includes meals and some excursions, but excludes travel from the UK and drinks. croisiereurope.co.uk