

THE VIRTUAL CONCIERGE

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The Virtual Concierge:

What does it include?

Contained here is what amounts to a concierge-in-a-box, a handy supplement to your concierge, guest relations service. It is specially designed for those guests who want to discover at a different pace and consists of:

- a shelf of books specially chosen with the help of expert authors that will give the reader a greater sense of the place, with history to give perspective, literature as your guide to the people's soul, guides and etiquette collections to help you rub along (please see attached sample list for Paris)
- a companion selection of beautifully illustrated books - each with protective covers for longevity
- a book list formatted to be print-ready - to be handed to guests or slipped into the guest directory folder
- marketing copy for the guest directory
- guidelines for set up and security tips
- the list includes a brief selection of the very best websites which will help you check out 'what's on?' when you're tempted to try out the best the city has to offer.

Where does it live?

In our experience the collection would be shelved either at the main guest relations desk, or in the executive floor reception.

What does it cost?

The concierge-in-a-box starts at £499.00 for a reading shelf of 25 books, guides and 5 illustrated books. Each city list is tailored to the location.

How does it operate?

The service is designed to operate out-of-the-box and includes set up instructions, guides for book handling etc.

For more information on the virtual concierge and to review the reading list for your city, please contact Xander Cansell on xander@ultimatelibrary.co.uk

VIRTUAL CONCIERGE - PARIS

Our France Top Ten

Books specially selected by **Joanne Harris**, acclaimed novelist and author of (among others) *Chocolat*, shortlisted for the Whitbread Novel of the Year, later made into an unforgettable film.

Instructions for Visitors –Helen Stevenson

The charming and authentic memoir of an ill-fated love affair in a gossipy French village. Beautifully-written and splendidly observed.

Best Foot Forward - Susie Kelly

Subtitled *From La Rochelle to Lake Geneva – the Misadventures of an Englishwoman*, this warming account of a woman's solo walk across France is enough to make the most dedicated couch potato reach for their walking boots!

From Here, You Can't See Paris - Michael Sanders

Les Arques. Population 169. A dying community untouched by modern life. But to Michael Sanders, researching restaurants and scouting chefs for his travels book, the sleepy little village yields unexpected riches. Delicious.

A Year in the Merde –Stephen Clarke

This book is my summer's guilty pleasure. Exuberant, vulgar and politically incorrect (if perfectly accurate), it somehow manages to be very funny as well.

Paris Boulangerie-Patisserie: Recipes from Thirteen Outstanding Bakeries - Linda Dannenberg

The loveliest baking book I've seen in years. Takes you to Paris in a matter of seconds, via thirteen of its most gorgeous bakeries.

Gourmet Shops of Paris: An Epicurian Tour - Pierra Rival, Christian Sarramon

The ultimate indulgence; lavishly described and illustrated, this is a magical tour-guide around Paris' most closely-guarded gastronomic secrets. Worth it for the pictures alone.

A Culinary Journey in Gascony: Recipes and Stories from a French Canal Boat – Kate Ratcliffe

The writer of this book lives out my perfect fantasy; travelling up the Garonne on a canal boat, collecting tales and recipes. Both are excellent.

The Rough Guide to the Loire Valley - James McConnachie

A clearly-presented and comprehensive guide to one of France's most popular regions, its food, culture, geography and sites of especial interest. Well-written, accurate and refreshingly light-hearted.

The Larousse Encyclopedia of Wine - Larousse

Hefty, but still the most comprehensive and attractive wine book around.

Madam Bovary - Gustave Flaubert

The great 19th-century classic – find out why!

Rimbaud - Graham Robb

A stunning biography of France's most mysterious and subversive literary figure, this no-holds-barred account follows the poet from child prodigy to decadent libertine, through mercenary and slave-trader to his return to France and his tragic death. The translations of his poems are excellent, too.



History

Early Modern France 1560-1715 – Robin Briggs

Written by one of the English speaking world's foremost experts on early modern France, this volume is excellent because of her ability to explain complex events with brevity and clarity. An informative book.

The Sun King – Nancy Mitford

A biography of Louis XIV. Academic types will dislike Mitford's penchant for gushing over the excess of the court but this historical novel is an entertaining read.

The French Revolution: A Very Short Introduction – William Doyle

A compelling read, this recently published account of the French Revolution guides the reader through the reasons and consequences of it.

Napoleon – Frank McLynn

A skilled biographer, McLynn provides a multi-dimensional character to Napoleon and his actions.

Sandrine's Paris: A Cultural History of the World's Most Romantic City – Sandrine Voillet

This book combines cultural history, travel and contemporary life in the most romantic city in the world. Travelling through 400 years of history we discover the extraordinary events and people who have shaped the City of Lights. Sandrine reveals and revels in the art, literature, music and architecture that are integral of Paris immortal beauty.

Paris 1919: Six Months that changed the World – Margaret Macmillan

In this ambitious narrative, Macmillan attempts to uncover the original intent and goals of the Paris Peace Process following World War I. Using the big three countries (United States, Great Britain, and France) as a starting point she brings all the participants to life.

A Traveller's History of Paris – Robert Cole

Part of the Traveller's Histories Series, this book provides a complete history of Paris, complete with chronology of major events, as well as providing an understanding of the people that inhabit the city.

Paris: The Biography of a City – Colin Jones

Written in a scholarly but affectionate tone, this book is as comprehensive as a one-volume history of an ancient city possibly can be.

The Identity of France, Vol. 1: History and Environment – Fernand Braudel

In another thrilling historical masterpiece, Braudel looks to the physical and geographical features of France to see how they have shaped the familiar outlines of the French past.



Travel Writing

A Traveller's History of France: A Passion for Life

A comprehensive guide for travellers who want more historical background.

Travellers' Tales France: True Stories – James O'Reilly

A delightful collection of stories that capture the culture, history, and spirit of the land, the food, and the irrepressible people of France.

Travellers' Tales Paris: True Stories – James O'Reilly

A compilation of writings on Paris and its sights with contributors such as Jan Morris, John Gregory Dunne, Edmund White, and Ina Caro.

Paris France: Personal Recollections – Gertrude Stein

Published in 1940 as Paris fell to the Germans, this collection captures the essence of France with acerbic observations.

A Moveable Feast – Ernest Hemingway

This account of Hemingway's early years as a struggling writer in Paris in the 1920s. It tells the story of the sweet innocence of his first years in the Rue Mouffard with his wife, the literary friendships, the cafes and the delight which he enjoyed: both in the city and in discovering his own voice.

Paris City Lit. - Heather Reyes

A brilliant collection of the best writing on and set in the City of Light with an introduction by Stephen Clarke – acclaimed author of *A year in the Merde..*

The Flaneur – Edmund White

A stroll through the paradoxes of Paris. Edmund White wanders his adopted home as a 'flaneur' - A wanderer. At ease with the city and himself, White takes you on the perfect lingering amble through the city and often into parts of Paris virtually unknown to visitors and even many Parisians.



Literary Fiction

Les Miserables – Victor Hugo

A Classic. A tale of redemption and revenge.

The Hunchback of Notre Dame – Victor Hugo

Another classic by Hugo. The story of the hunchback bell ringer of the Notre Dame Cathedral and his love for Esmeralda, a beautiful gypsy dancer.

Nadja – Andre Breton

A genuinely original love story. This Surrealist novel provides fantastic vignettes of Paris.

The Phantom of the Opera – Gaston Leroux.

Set in a turn of the century Paris opera house, this is a classic tale of love turned to dangerous obsession.

Paris Trance – Geoff Dyer

A modern version of the pastoral idyll is provided by a time-stopping trance-state, with drugged hazed twenty-somethings finding themselves (and love) among the back streets and house parties of Paris

"A book where the shimmer is so bright it hurts." - Ashley Stokes, *The Guardian*



Adventure/Thriller

Someone Else - Tonino Benacquista

Thierry and Nicolas are both in their forties when they meet over a drink and decide it is time to change their lives. They agree to meet in three years time to judge who's transformation is more complete.

Framed - Tonino Benacquista

Antoine's hand is severed in a fight with a burglar. His maverick investigation triggers two murders as he stumbles onto a case of massive art fraud in Paris.

Angelina's Children - Alice Ferney

A lyrical novel of gypsies on the outskirts of Paris. A tale of defiance and misery, of a people exiled by society.

Goat Song - Chantal Pelletier

A double murder at the Moulin Rouge. Dealers, crack addicts and girls dreaming of glory who end up in porn videos.

Paris Noir – Ed Maxim Jakubowski

A collection of dark, modern crime fiction set against the backdrop of the City of Light. Ranging from debut authors to seasoned bestselling writers, this has something to thrill every reader.



Guidebooks & Etiquette

Guides can be a very personal choice and in our experience it is always best to find what fits you rather than the other way around. However, here are a few of our wholly subjective choices:

Best illustrated –

Everyman Guide Paris
Eyewitness Guide Paris

Strong on culture –

Blue Guide France
Blue Guide Paris
Cadogan Guide Paris

Shops and Shopping

Taschen – Paris Shops
A Hedonists Guide to Paris

Culture Smart – France

The essential guide to the customs and culture of the country and useful tips for comporting yourself correctly in the contemporary puzzle that is Paris culture.

Wallpaper* City Guide – Paris

Not your standard guidebook, this is a unique travel companion, with notes, pictures of and suggestions about the hippest and best locations and insider knowledge from the people who know the place best

Markets of Paris – Dixon & Ruthanne Long

Perhaps the most pleasurable way for any visitor to feel at home in Paris—and one of the easiest ways to get to know the city—is to meander through any of its dozens of street markets. Dixon and Ruthanne Long's *Markets of Paris* catalogues every market in the city, and tempts you to visit them all.

The Best of the What's On Websites (English language versions)

<http://www.timeout.com/paris/>

<http://en.parisinfo.com/shows-exhibitions-paris/>

<http://www.a-night-in-paris.com/paris-schedule.html>

<http://www.theparistimes.com/content/whats-on>

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