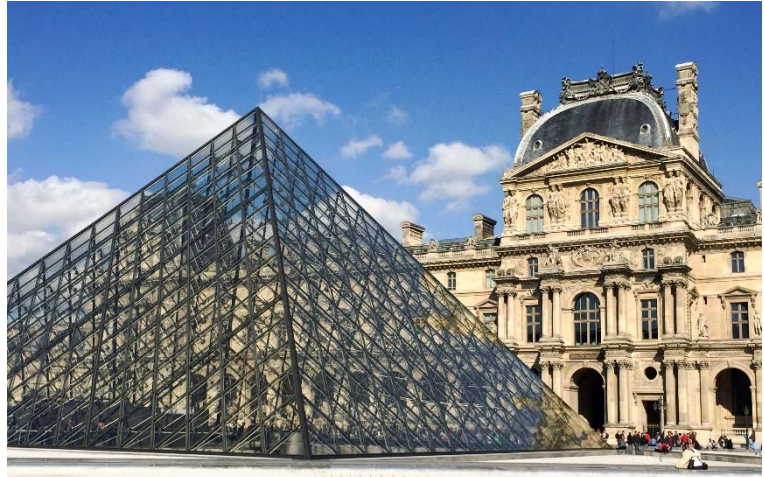


“The Pyramide du Louvre” Text & Photos by Bruce Hamilton, AIA

With all of Paris, France’s “must see” attractions, it’s difficult to narrow down which amazing sites to explore while maintaining a diverse experience of the beautiful city. Our tour group selected the crème de la crème of the city, the ultimate travelers prize -the Louvre Museum.

Commissioned by President of France, François Metterrand in 1984, the Louvre Pyramid (Pyramide du Louvre) located in Paris, France is a large glass and metal pyramid designed by



Phot of the Pyramid/Partial View of the Richelieu Wing



Inverted Pyramid in the Entrance Lobby

Chinese-American Architect I.M. Pei, surrounded by smaller pyramids, in the main courtyard (Cour Napoleon) of the Louvre Palace (Palais du Louvre) in Paris. The large pyramid serves as the main entrance to the Louvre Museum. The Louvre is constructed entirely with glass segments and metal poles, reaching a height of 71 feet. The square base sides are 112 feet and a base surface area of 11,000 square feet. It consists of 603 rhombus-shaped and 70 triangular glass segments.

Visitors entering through the pyramid descend into the spacious lobby then re-

ascend into the main Louvre building. I.M. Pei’s plan distributes people effectively from the concourse to myriad destinations within its vast subterranean network...the architectonic framework evokes, on enormous scale, an ancient Atrium da Pompeiian villa; by the treatment of the opening above, with its tracery of engineered casting and cables. Our three-hour journey through some of the world’s greatest artistic ptreasures began at the Arc du Carrousel, next to the Louvre Entrance. After spending several hours with our local tour guide, viewing and learning about some of the museum’s 35,000 artworks across eight themed galleries, we



Interior View of Lobby Staircase



"Yvonne e Christine Lerolle al Piano" by Pierre-Auguste Renoir

enjoyed time on our own to explore paintings, sculptures and architecture from 450 BC to the 19th Century. Our tour group wandered the diverse exhibits, starting with the Ancient Greek Parthenon, followed by the iconic Venus de Milo. While in the ancient antiquities gallery, we viewed the Celebrated Winged Victory of Samothrace. We then headed to the Apollo Gallery to see the opulent royal crowns of Napoleon and King Louis XV. We were able to get a taste of the French Revolution with Delacroix's painting "Liberty Leading the People" -a celebration of the 1830 revolution designed as a political poster and in the

Italian Renaissance to view the work of Michelangelo and Da Vinci's Mona Lisa.

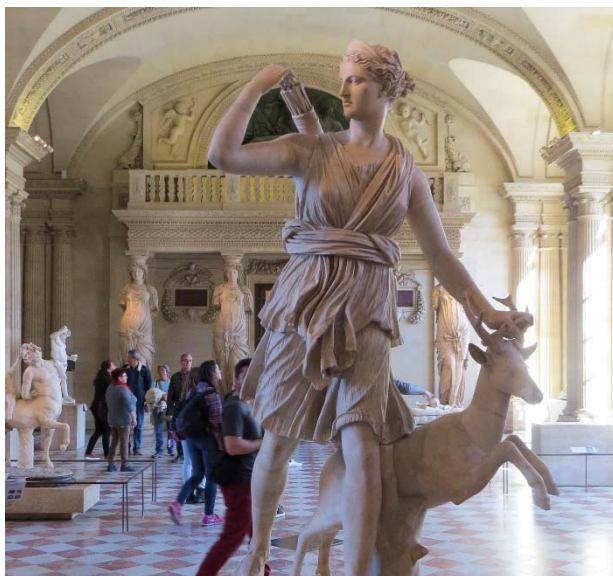
The Louvre's galleries are displayed across 652,300 square feet. The galleries are divided into eight departments:

- Egyptian Antiquities
- Sculptures
- Near East Antiquities
- Decorative Arts
- Greek, Etruscan and Roman Antiquities
- Paintings
- Islamic Art
- Prints and Drawings



"La Seine et La Marne" Marble Sculpture by Nicolas Cousteau

The Louvre - the very name conjures up scenes of art and elegance. The long halls filled with beauty and people strolling through them whispering quietly amongst the glories they are witnessing.



"Diane de Versailles" -Greek Goddess Artemis by Barthélemy Prieur

As the world's largest museum, the Louvre is unquestionable the cultural high point of Paris, a city that has long been considered the cultural center of Europe. Walk outside and you realize that the Louvre is a book on architecture from the Middle Ages to the present day.

The novel "Da Vinci Code", presented as a work of fiction by Dan Brown, goes beyond the imagination. The secrets revealed during the investigation by the main characters Robert Langdon and Sophie Neveu makes one feel that they could be actual events. Our visit to the Louvre was an opportunity to walk in the footsteps of the investigators and discover the secrets of the Priory of Sion. Our Louvre tour was the best way to see the works that appear in the Da Vinci Code from a different point of view. The museum has selected 10 works and locations

that we were able to visit, to see for ourselves and decide whether the theories in Dan Brown's book were plausible.

Paris-the City of Light -has been a beacon for centuries. As a world capital of art, fashion, food and literature, it stands as a symbol of all the fine things human civilization can offer. Paris offers sweeping boulevards, chatty crepe stands, chic boutiques and world class art galleries. Sip decaf with deconstructionists at a sidewalk café, then stop in to an impressionist painting in a tree lined park. Roam through the Louvre Museum, filled with over 30,000 works of art, a treasure trove of Western civilization. This vast museum is famous as a home to Mona Lisa and Venus de Milo -but that's just the appetizer course. You'll find Greek, Roman and Egyptian sculptures plus masterpieces from the Renaissance to Romanticism starring Michelangelo, Leonard De Vinci, Pablo Picasso and many others.

Antiquity is the first stage in our history of art. Our tour group had the opportunity to visit ancient forms and art where antiquity had a major influence on European Artist/Sculptors. The Louvre Museum undoubtedly ties antiquity/art together with modern times.