



## It's Christmas Once Again in Paris

*...the holidays in Paris are truly a magical time.*

Growing up, the local news station in my hometown had a little Christmas jingle that would play over and over again. ...It's Christmas once again in Santa Barbara... My family would always sing along, and each year at this time I still find it popping into my head, humming it as I go about my day. Eight years on the other side of the world in France and I guess some things will never change. By now though, I have managed to make some Paris holiday traditions as well, like cozying up in my favorite places across the city with friends to share a holiday hot chocolate and exchange gifts. Of course, another one includes bundling up for a stroll to see all the holiday lights and window displays making the city festive this season. And after three years of Paris Rendez-Vous now, another one of my traditions is to share a glimpse of it all for you here in my annual holiday post.

I've said it once and I will say it again, the holidays in Paris are truly a magical time. The City of Light is taken to a whole new level with twinkling lights overhead lining the charming cobblestone streets, the sapins de Noël (christmas trees) adorning landmarks, and the holiday markets on the Champs Elysées. I am especially nostalgic for Paris at this time as my second trip here was during the holiday season. I think it may have been that moment that I fell most in love with the French capital and decided to move and make a life here. I'm reminded of what that felt like each time when the weather gets cold, the lights go up, and the holiday spirit is floating around.

Everywhere you go that cozy festive feeling envelopes you and I'm soaking up every minute of it before I head back to the States to spend Christmas with my family. My first stop is always the breathtaking Place Vendôme to see how they have decorated the jewellery shops and hotels that line it. The Cartier building this year is wrapped in a giant twinkling

red bow, and inside the newly reopened Ritz is their dazzling Christmas tree! Not far away at the historic grand department stores, the shop windows are animated with miniature winter wonderland scenes of Paris and snowy villages that passersby stop to marvel at.

Just inside here at the Galeries Lafayette is perhaps the biggest Christmas tree in all of Paris, standing at almost three stories tall! At its base you'll find the Lancôme cosmetics counter in fact, all decorated for the season itself with the Paris en Rôse collection and more. If you walk past the giant ferris wheel at Place de la Concorde and up to Avenue Montaigne, the Hotel Plaza Athenée has installed the world's cutest little iceskating rink in their courtyard for guests to enjoy. Of course, in the heart of Paris in front of the famous Notre Dame, there is another massive christmas tree that gives Galeries Lafayette's a run for its money.

Across the way on the Left Bank at the Bon Marché, there are snowflakes suspended from the ceiling indoors creating a magic snowing effect for busy shoppers working through their Christmas lists.

And of course, if you haven't yet gotten through your list, remember there are gifts galore from Lancôme for any woman in your life — a few last minute ideas, perfectly paired gift sets, stocking stuffers and more, each with a bit of the Parisian Holiday spirit I'm enjoying so much this time of year of course!

