

Golf and spas have become twin amenities for any self-respecting luxury holiday resort. On first glance, this marriage is obvious: What have women done all these years while their husbands are out putting? However, this is also indicative of not only women increasingly taking to the game, but men increasingly taking to the pampering.

According to the International Spa Association (ISPA), men now make up more than 30% of all spa-goers. With a heightened awareness of the value of healthy living, stress levels sky-rocketing and a global boost in disposable income, men are increasingly recognising the benefits of a relaxing massage and even “man-i-cures”.

“It is important for men to feel comfortable in a spa environment. Because of this, spas offer separate

changing and waiting areas for male and female clients. The men’s waiting areas often feature men’s magazines and TVs, and treatments for men typically use scents that are more ‘manly’ instead of feminine,” said ISPA executive director Lynne McNees.

The spas in golf resorts range from offering fitness and training facilities that include massages, to full-spectrum offerings including body treatments, salon services and spiritual and wellness guidance. Often large spas also include restaurants with a healthy alternative to the generally high-calorie and cholesterol-rich offerings of the traditional hotel eatery.

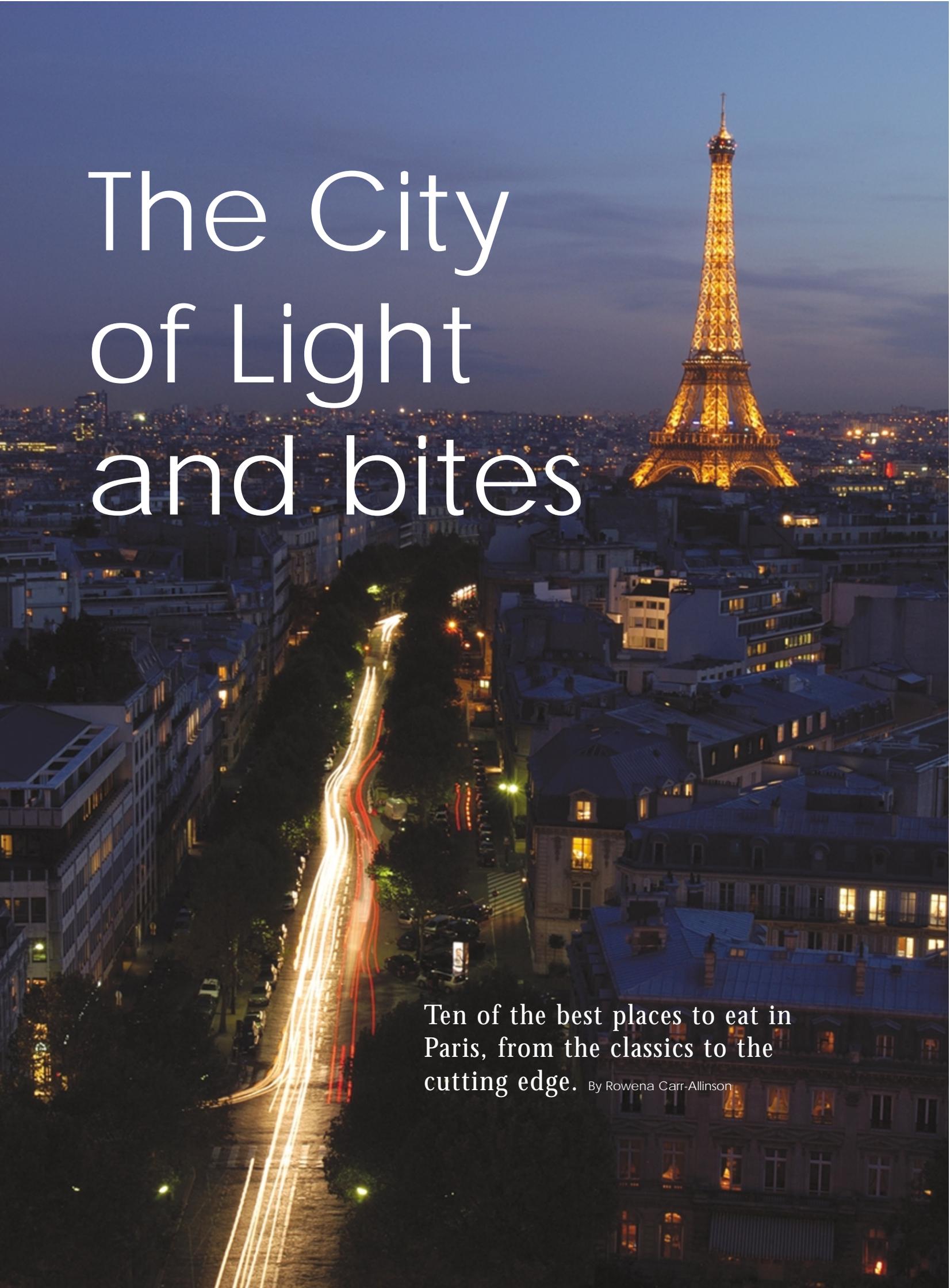
On the other end of the scale, women are the fastest growing sector in the world’s fastest growing sport – golf. According to Betsy Clark, vice president of professional development for the Ladies Professional Golf Association, there

is currently a surge in women playing golf that just wasn’t there five years ago.

A number of factors contribute, not least the increased number of teenage girls taking up the sport as opportunities for college scholarships and prize money offered to female professionals rises. Older women have begun to see it as a way to spend valuable time with their partner, as well as a beneficial business tool – the golf course remains the unofficial boardroom table.

Such is the cross-pollination trend between golf and spas, that America’s high-end golf capital – the Scottsdale-Phoenix resort corridor – now also boasts the highest concentration of spas worldwide. It makes sense really, for any gender: A gruelling round of golf, possibly interrupted by a light healthy snack, and definitely followed by a relaxing rubdown for tired and strained muscles ♦





The City of Light and bites

Ten of the best places to eat in
Paris, from the classics to the
cutting edge. By Rowena Carr-Allinson

Everybody loves Paris. The City of Light has a rich history, a romantic atmosphere and a certain *je ne sais quoi*. But more than that, Paris's incredible cuisine has made it the undisputed gourmet capital of the world. The combining presentation, taste and quality ingredients has the rest of the world flocking to sample the latest innovations on classic recipes.

For the view: Le Jules Verne

Dining on the Eiffel Tower is a must. On the second floor of the most famous Parisian landmark, Le Jules Verne rests 125 metres above the ground. This unique view over the city is complemented by chef Alain Reix's Michelin-starred food. Be sure to treat yourself to his exquisite lobster fricassee.

True to its location, sleek grey metallic décor by designers Loup and Slavik, create the mood of the early 20th-century's brave innovations. Not enough to quell the romantic spirit though. Thanks to the food, view and the dimly lit atmosphere this restaurant is a favourite spot to propose. Do remember to book well in advance.

For dining al'fresco: La Gare

Once the Passy la Muette station built in 1864 and used until 1980, the well-heeled crowd of the 16th arrondissement love this converted station. The fashionably classic restaurant with a huge outdoor terrace for al fresco dining was born in 1996. Smooth interiors, funky paintings and a slightly superior staff generate its atmosphere. >

Left: Unveiled in 1889, the Eiffel Tower remains one of the world's premier tourist attractions

Below: Le Jules Verne, on the second floor of the Eiffel Tower, is a favourite place to propose





The menu sticks to farmhouse classics with rotisserie chicken, meats a la plancha and steak tartare. Try the more exotic truffle risotto or the seabass with artichokes for original and tasty fare.

For the authenticity: Brasserie Flo

This charming old-world style brasserie is a staple favourite for locals and tourists alike. Located in a tiny street that looks like you've taken a wrong turn, opening the doors to the brasserie is a fantastic surprise.

Dating back to 1896, the original Brasserie Flo has hardly changed since it was opened. It's quite a step back in

time. Take in the authentic Belle Epoque decor, the oversized stained mirrors, the gilt and fading paintings, and soak up the raucous *bon vivant* atmosphere that hangs over the place.

The food is traditional but imaginative. Push the boat out and go for a classic plateau de fruits de mers or a slice of foie gras maison, followed by a delicious canard confit or a succulent Chateaubriand steak. Don't miss the giant cheese platter and classic desserts like the de rigueur profiteroles, mousse au chocolat or simple crème brulee. All delicious.

For the culture lover: Le George

After a stroll around the Pompidou Centre, don't miss Le George on the sixth floor. With clean lines and semi-industrial design, the restaurant is sleek and in total harmony with its post-modern surroundings. High ceilings, views over Notre Dame and aluminium sculptures remind you that this restaurant is the baby of Thierry Costes, of Costes Hotel family-fame.

The food is fusion cuisine. Go for classics like mi-cuit foie gras (semi cooked), prawn ravioli or duck with coconut sauce. At night the music switches to

The combining presentation, taste and quality ingredients has the rest of the world flocking to sample the latest innovations on classic recipes.



Far left: the name "City of Light" was first applied to Paris at the end of the 19th century, when it became the first city in France with electricity

Left: The ultra swish Murano Urban Resort Restaurant is the perfect setting for Sunday brunch

techno DJs, adding to the trendy and slick vibe.

For something different: Sur un Arbre Perche

For something totally different book a table at the inspired Sur un Arbre Perche. Wooden cabanas and swings hang under trees, like something out of a fairytale. Settle into your private booth and try the crayfish, the fresh goat's cheese lasagne or the deep-fried camembert with truffle sauce. Finish off with the lovely moist chocolate cake before nipping into the backroom for a treat: a Shiatsu massage.

For history buffs: Le Procope

Dubbed the oldest café in the world, the Procope was opened in 1686 by Francesco Procopio dei Coltelli. It's famous for being the meeting point of the literary world for two centuries. The likes of Voltaire, Rousseau, Balzac, Verlaine and Hugo were all regulars. The place is oozing with history: Robespierre, Danton and Marat met here during the Revolution and even Napoléon Bonaparte was a patron in his time.

While you are sampling delicious duck with morilles mushrooms or the classic coq au vin, take time to enjoy the

captivating paintings and engravings that line the ancient walls.

For the fashion conscious: Costes

If you love seeing and being seen as much as you love food, then head to the Restaurant Costes. Achingly hip, the hotel's restaurant and bar boast uber-cool clientele including visiting celebrities such as the Rolling Stones, Madonna and Kylie Minogue. Costes has become legendary for its glamorous aura, sleek decor and beautiful people.

It's not only the clients who are beautiful, even the waiting staff looks like it just >



Above: The charming old-world style Brasserie Flo draws locals and tourist

Right: The epitome of French chic, La Table du Lancaster is a top-notch gourmet hideaway

stepped off a catwalk, and unfortunately that also means the service isn't always up to scratch. Sample the fusion cuisine, wander out onto the patio or drop by the Chinese-style bar for a cocktails and shoulder-rubbing with the in crowd.

For the hip: The Murano Urban Resort Restaurant

The Murano Urban Resort is unlike anything else in the city with private bedroom pool terraces and fingerprint room entry. Ultra swish and trendy, it appeals to those who like to stay on the cutting-edge. Ideally located in the Marais neighbourhood, its restaurant features changing lighting and a stylish designer look.

As for food, it's the perfect place to stop off for brunch on Sunday with exotic dishes like spicy avocado and crab cream setoise, Mediterranean taboule and oysters. There's also entertainment

from magicians and a live jazz band. Very snazzy.

For the connoisseurs : La Table du Lancaster

Just steps away from the Champs Elysees, there's a gourmet hideaway that is the epitome of French chic, despite its totally un-Parisian Zen garden.

The Table du Lancaster is run by internationally renowned chef Michel Troisgros and the original menu is split into different culinary adventures ranging from the "sprit of tomatoes" to the "tingle of spices" and the "burst of citrus". Delicately presented, each course is a masterpiece.

Opt for fresh tuna tartare followed by a compulsory Sole Meuniere with scrumptious cepes mushrooms and capers. And, unlike in so many other Parisian establishments, the service is impeccable – and with a smile ♦

