

My Town: Francophile Elizabeth New on where to find France in Dallas

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By KIM PIERCE / Special Contributor to The Dallas Morning News

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Although Elizabeth New is a Dallas native, her heart belongs to France, specifically to Paris and Provence, where she spends as much time as possible.

"In my former life, I was a professor of French" at the University of North Texas, she says.

To combine the best of classroom experience with real-life appreciation for France, she created French Affaires, a company "celebrating travel, culture, language and *l'art de vivre*," according to the Web site (www.frenchaffaires.com).

The practical application is running the Web site, e-publishing a newsletter, or "plog, short for Paris and Provence blog," helping people plan travel in France, leading tour groups, hosting a book club and giving seminars in Dallas about all things French. We caught up with her during one of her stateside stays in East Dallas.



What's the best place to find other Francophiles in Dallas?

Probably the Beaujolais Wine Festival, which is the largest in the United States. It's a major deal.

Where do you go in Dallas for French food and wine?

I love to go to L'Ancestral in Travis Walk. They have wonderfully authentic French food. The French onion soup is one of the best on this side of the Atlantic. For my birthday, we started with Champagne, had a nice red Bordeaux with lunch and finished with a lovely glass of calvados [the apple-based spirit]. The pastries at Rush Patisserie are authentically French. And the Cultured Cup, which has Mariage Frères [tea]. In Paris, you can go to one of their boutiques.

What's the closest thing to Paris shopping in Dallas?

Going downtown to Neiman's, which has so many European imports. I've been a couple of times to Betty Reiter in Preston Center. She has a Paris fashion sense.

Where do you go in Dallas when you want to hear French conversation?

The Dallas International School. It's so impressive that Dallas has that.

What do you miss about Dallas when you're in France?

I miss the openness of the people here, and I miss how easy it is to do things here. There's still a lot of bureaucracy in France. I also miss friends and family and corny dogs at the State Fair of Texas.

What's the best place in Dallas to keep up with French news and events?

I think we still have room to go on that. The French-American Chamber of Commerce has a business focus. And Alliance Française [du Nord du Texas] focuses on language and shows films. Southern Methodist University does a few things. But we don't have something like a French institute that pulls it all together.

Paris in three words:

Breathtaking. Human-scale. Light.

Dallas in three words:

Friendly. Cosmopolitan (in its way). Can-do.

Where do you go to find a little bit of France in Dallas?

The Reves Collection at the Dallas Museum of Art. This wing recreates several rooms from Villa La Pausa, the house of Wendy and Emery Reves in the south of France that was originally built by Coco Chanel. It is a French experience in 3D with beautiful furniture, porcelain, sculptures, paintings and objets d'art.

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