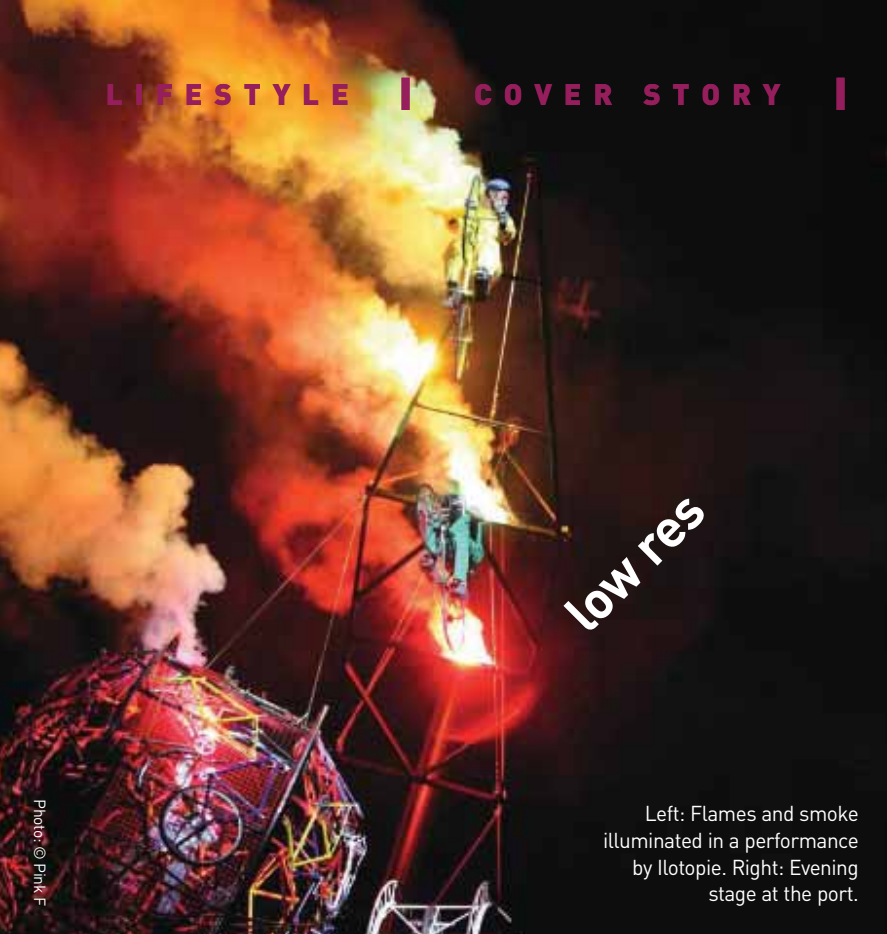
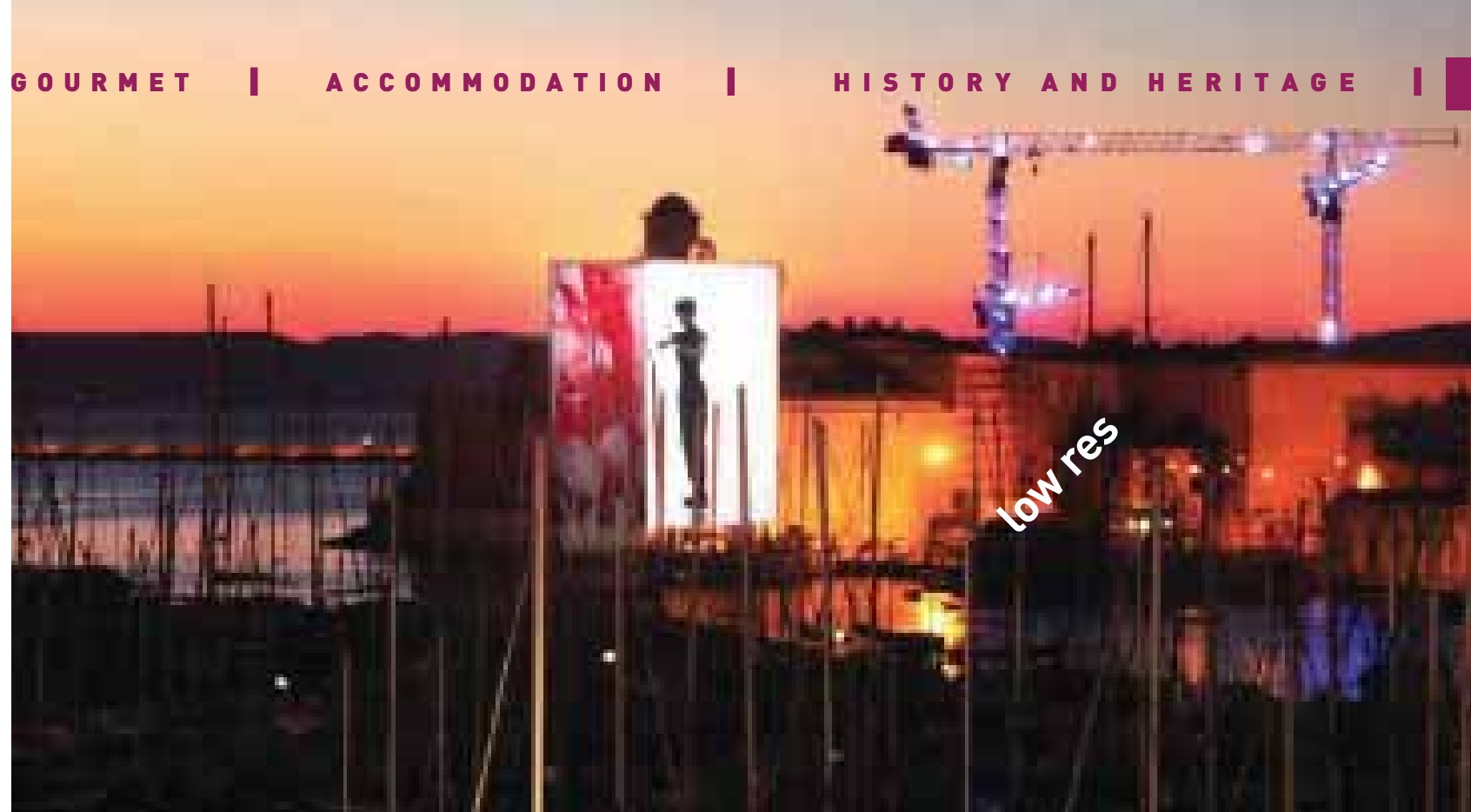




Left: Flames and smoke illuminated in a performance by Ilotopie. Right: Evening stage at the port.



Reignite Window to the WORLD

BATHED IN SOUTHERN SUNSHINE, **MARSEILLE** IS FRANCE'S LARGEST MEDITERRANEAN CITY AND PORT, AND IS ABOUT TO GAIN STAR-STATUS WITH A DYNAMIC DESIGN OVERHAUL. BY RUBY BOUKABOU

Known to date as a slightly run-down yet vibrant port city, Marseille is geographically blessed. It has sunny summers, mild winters, an enormous port, a stunning coastline and is just a breeze away from the rest of Europe and North Africa. Its much-anticipated urban renewal project, unveiling in 2013, will transform it into a diamond of a city.

But before diving into the future, first visit the past. Take a walk uphill towards the golden Virgin Mary, glowing above the most famous landmark in Marseille – the Basilique Notre Dame de la Gard. Look out to sea and allow yourself to be transported to the world of Alexander Dumas's *The Count of Monte Cristo*, set right here. Take a ferry ride, savour fresh seafood and a crisp glass of rosé in a portside restaurant, and relax in the quaint old town, imagining adventures past.

Design destinations

The Mediterranean climate beckons one outdoors in Marseille, so flitting between the galleries, museums and other design attractions is pleasant by bicycle – try the user-friendly Le Vélo public bike scheme. Begin at the tourism office to design your itinerary, or start with these destinations.

First stop is the internationally renowned MAC (Musée d'Art Contemporain), where you can browse the works of Daniel Buren, William S. Burroughs and Nan Goldin, to name a few. www.lesartistescontemporains.com/macmarseille.html

For your fix of Picasso, Dufy or César, the Musée Cantini is one of France's best modern art museums. It reopens in October 2012 after an extensive overhaul.

The spectacular MuCEM (Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilisations), designed by Rudy Ricciotti, opens its doors in 2013 with permanent collections and

a busy schedule of exhibitions, seminars, theatre, cinema, concerts and festivals. In the meantime, you can catch exhibitions in the historic Musée du Fort Saint Jean, which will lead to the new museum via walkway. www.mucem.org

The Centre Design Marseille, established in 2003, is managed by a collective of local design professionals who organise various projects throughout the year. In 2013, the centre will exhibit '100 reasons to love Marseille', in which design students were given a carte blanche to create graphic, urban, culinary, industrial or sonar designs on this theme. www.designmarseille.org

Cultural rebirth starts January 2013!

Alongside its urban renewal, Marseille will be the European Capital of Culture 2013, with events kicking off on the weekend of January 12 to 13. The program is a cross-

Clockwise from top right: Looking up at the Virgin Mary of Basilique Notre Dame de la Gard; Urban art installation, Marbre d'ici, by Stefan Shankland; Aquatic performance by Ilotopie.

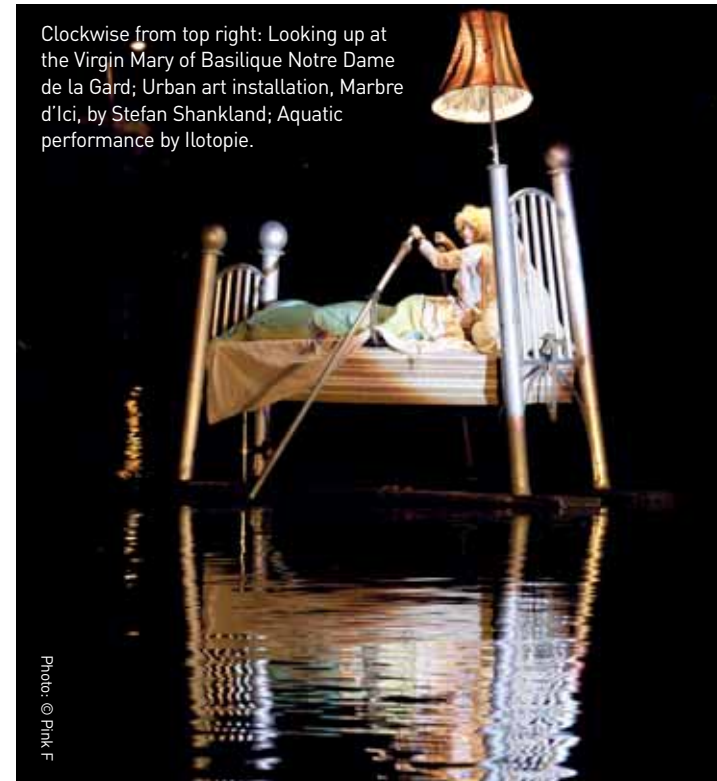


Photo: © Pink F

MARSEILLE CITY PASS Keen to see more of the city – and pay less? The tourism board's one or two-day passes (costing 22€ and 29€ respectively) give visitors access to 14 museums and other attractions in Marseille.

Book in advance through the website: www.marseille-tourisme.com/en/to-organize-your-stay



Photo: © Sylvain Dufrard

disciplinary cultural festival encompassing 400 events: around 60 exhibitions, and hundreds of concerts and events during 2013. Many artistic adventures are to be had under the banner of Marseille-Provence 2013, or MP 2013. Some highlights:
■Circus: Various events planned, including by the national centre for circus arts, and shows involving students and young artists from European and Mediterranean countries.

■ Literature: To celebrate the 100th anniversary of Albert Camus' birth, there will be year-long reading room and accompanying events.
■ Cinema: A new festival celebrating Marseille's North African and Mediterranean influences, with a focus on Arab and Mediterranean film.
■ Street art: Exhibitions to value and promote street culture and arts. Visit www.mp2013.fr for all information.

► FURTHER INFORMATION

Marseille Tourism Office
4, la Canebière
+ 33 826 500 500
www.marseille-tourisme.com