



**SHEETAL MUNSHAW**  
Director, Atout France India

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635 French exhibitors and 813 international tour operators from 62 countries. It was attended by 68 American travel professionals, representing both boutique enterprises and larger companies. The travel show boasted around 26,000 business meetings, where the firms reconnected with suppliers and learnt about new offerings.

**THE CITY AS THE STADIUM**

Paris 2024 will mark the centenary for the Summer Olympics making a comeback to the capital city. The modern Olympic Games were founded in France, and this is indeed a historic milestone that the country is keenly looking forward to and has been the leitmotif in France. Writing a new chapter in sustainability, the opening ceremony will be

held in the city centre and at the very heart of the city along its main artery, River Seine allowing for more visitors to take part in the celebration and accommodate spectators in a convivial atmosphere and that too at no admission fee is a major first! “Using 95 per cent of its existing or temporary venues, the Paris Games seek to be efficient and environment friendly. Many events will be held in existing well-known stadiums whose facilities are perfectly suited to an event of this magnitude: the Stade Roland-Garros, Parc des Princes, Accor Arena, Stade de France, Golf National as well as the Vélodrome National,” **Sheetal Munshaw**, Director, Atout France India, said. The organisers have introduced innovative solutions for food, venues, transport, energy resources, and digital services to

# Green sports extravaganza

The 17<sup>th</sup> edition of Rendez-vous en France, held in Toulouse this year, set the tone for Paris Olympics 2024 with a stellar lineup of gastronomy, games, and cultural experiences.

By **Lipla Negi**

A colossal hangar filled with authentic aircraft taking you in and around past as well as future—the iconic Aeroscopia Museum played host to the opening gala dinner for the 17<sup>th</sup> edition of Rendez-vous en France. This year, France’s most popular B2B trade made headway into the city of Toulouse, the capital of France’s southern Occitanie region. The trade show was an opportunity to showcase the riches that make France one of the world’s most popular destinations. The evening witnessed an engaging night where travel professionals from across the world conversed over a multi-course menu served with a dash of entertainment with musicians, singers and aerial dancers. The two-day event was all about networking and exploring the new dimensions of France and its tourism offerings—or as **Christophe Decloux**, Director General, Paris Region, put it, “We want to go from the first destination in the world to the best destination in the world. We aim to be the best destination in eco-friendly and regenerative tourism as well.”

The event was organised by Atout France, the France Tourism Development Agency. It witnessed





**TOULOUSE – RUNWAY FOR LEARNING**

1

Home to Airbus, the SPOT satellite system, ATR, and the Aerospace Valley, Toulouse, is a must-visit city for aviation enthusiasts.

2

Cité de l'Espace, the theme park offers an immersive exhibit called LuneXplorer replicating the experience of an astronaut on a mission to the moon.

3

La Halle de la Machines, a street theatre company, combines theatrics with huge machines like a giant minotaur, mechanical spider, or a makeshift orchestra made with recycled objects.



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reduce the carbon footprint around Olympic sites. All these sites are accessible by trains, which is expected to reduce the environmental footprint.

**CHAMPIONING SUSTAINABILITY**

The country is taking action by rebuilding and reimagining tourism with sustainability at its core. From staff training in energy-saving to waste management measures, these establishments are going green like never before. Imagine staying in a hotel that rejects usage of single-use plastics, serves local produce, and provides bikes for guests' use. "Over 190 French accommodations boast the EU Ecolabel, while 640 proudly wear the Green Key initiative badge, setting the bar high for responsible travel," Munshaw said. France cherishes its vibrant

outdoors, boasting 11 national parks, 54 regional parks, and 47 Grands Sites attracting 32 million visitors yearly. Protecting 16.7 million hectares of lush forests, including the National Forest Park in Burgundy—biodiversity is a top priority. "In the majestic mountains covering 25 per cent of the country, ski resorts such as Châtel and Chamonix-Mont Blanc champion sustainability with the 'Flocon Vert' label, reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions through renewable energy use," she added.

**BEYOND FRENCH RIVIERA**

From games to gastronomy, cuisine to culture—France is all geared up to take global tourists beyond the French Riviera or Paris. "While the Olympics take centre stage, visitors will find many motivations to visit France this year as we celebrate 150 years of Impressionism, the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the D-Day, and the reopening ceremony of Notre-Dame de Paris to name a few," Munshaw asserted. Clearly, the country is expecting more than 100 million global visitors from around the world for the various sports events throughout the year. Raising the bar, the next edition of Rendez-vous en France is scheduled to take place from April 1 to 2, 2025 in Léon. ➔