



ARTS & CULTURE

Paris Booksellers Return to the Seine River

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As COVID-19 restrictions come to an end, foreign visitors have been returning to Paris.

And outdoor booksellers called “bouquinistes” have now made their return to the neighborhood near city’s famous Seine River. Many thought the pandemic would end their businesses and tradition of selling by the Seine River, which dates back over 500 years.

Rachid Bouanou is a former sailor and fishing boat **mechanic**. He is now a bookseller. He opened his large, green wooden container of used books, placed on a wall overlooking the river in the heart of Paris. He sells the **secondhand** books to visitors as they pass by.

He smiled as he said, “I used to be a sailor ... but I always loved books, beautiful books, and I thought why not share this **passion** and share the books and authors I love with other people. We're helping people discover books, new authors.”

The city council recently approved Bouanou and 17 other new riverside booksellers, the first since 2019. This brings the total number of booksellers along the three-kilometer stretch of the river to 230.

Jan and Maria-Aida Vandemoortele are visitors from Bruges, Belgium. They enjoyed looking through the old books and newspapers for sale.

68-year-old Jan said, “It's only in Paris you get these **stalls** with wonderful books. We just saw Time magazine from when we were born, so someone kept this for 60 years, my goodness, it's wonderful.”

The booksellers' riverside spots are highly sought-after. The Paris city council permits the spots to be used for five years. The booksellers do not pay **rent**, but they must stay open at least four days a week. In normal times, profitable summers help with the slower sales of the winter months.

Jerome Callais is the head of the booksellers' association. He said that life is finally normal again after two years of pandemic restrictions, which **paused** their activities. "...Now **tourists** are returning and new booksellers are settling in."

The Seine bookstalls are not only for tourists however. Parisians also love to walk along the river and look through the booksellers' offerings.

Kubilai Iksel is a 27-year-old Parisian. "It's very **encouraging** (that new sellers have arrived), it's (a) sign that it's not going to disappear. It's one of the most wonderful things about Paris."

I'm Faith Pirlo.

Manuel Ausloos wrote this article for Reuters. Faith Pirlo adapted it for Learning English.

Words in This Story

mechanic – *n.* a person who repairs machines (such as car engines) and keeps them running properly

secondhand – *adj.* not original; taken from someone who was not directly involved

passion – *n.* a strong feeling of enthusiasm or excitement for something or about doing something

stall – *n.* a small open counter or partially enclosed structure where things are displayed for sale

rent – *n.* a payment to use someone else's property

paused – *v.* halted; stopped

tourist -n. a person who travels to places for pleasure and not for business

encouraging - *adj.* causing hopeful feeling

Would you like to visit Paris and look through the old books of the Seine booksellers?

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