

Press Release: For Immediate Release

To: General News/Lifestyle/Local fun/Entertainment/F&B/Arts and Culture – Assignment
Editors/Editors/Reporters

French May Arts Festival, French GourMay Food and Wine Festival 2024
From March to June, the two festivals join forces to forge cultural connections between East and West, inspiring Hong Kong with the best of French arts, wine and gastronomy



13 March 2024, Hong Kong ----- The French May Arts Festival (French May) and French GourMay Food and Wine Festival (French GourMay) 2024 are delighted to co-announce the launch of this year’s programmes. This year, **French May** presents over 100 arts and cultural programmes, spanning photography, circus, music, dance, and theatre. Supported by The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust alongside other patrons and partners, the festival bridges Eastern and Western cultures, nurtures local arts and cultural talent, introduces internationally acclaimed art and culture programmes and artists, as well as groundbreaking cross-cultural collaborations. Tickets of featured programmes are available at URBTIX www.urbtix.hk starting from today (13 March). The festival runs from 16 March to 30 June.

Mrs. Mignonne Cheng and Ms. Pansy Ho, Co-Chairman of the Board of French May Arts Festival, said: 'French May has been a great success bridging Hong Kong, France, and Western cultures since 1993. In recent years, the festival has taken further strides by actively engaging with local communities, particularly to foster an ongoing mission to educate young people and reach out to under-resourced communities and people with disabilities. We are delighted to continue bringing the best French creations to Hong Kong by integrating art and culture into our everyday life.'

Ms. Karena Lam, French May Arts Festival Ambassador and acclaimed Hong Kong actress said, 'I am delighted to continue collaborating with the French May Arts Festival in promoting art and cultural activities. The programmes this year shed light on connecting and engaging with

the local community. As an artist and performer myself, I would like to support those from different social strata having the opportunity to appreciate, and be fascinated by the arts.'

From 1 to 31 May, the 15th edition of **French GourMay** will also take Hong Kong and Macau on a culinary voyage, bringing delicious delights from the south of France in collaboration with the Occitanie region. Throughout May, partnering restaurants, retailers and learning centres will celebrate this region's gastronomic culture with dedicated menus, special offers and thematic workshops. Highlights include special events such as the French GourMay Markets offering an array of French delicacies at Central Market and NINA MALL.

Mr. Nicolas Boutin, Chef Ambassador of French GourMay Festival and Executive Chef at Gourmet Dining Group, said, 'Since its inception 15 years ago, French GourMay has been proud to present the best of French gastronomy in Hong Kong, contributing to its flavourful food scene and vibrant nightlife. For the 2024 edition, we are pleased to highlight the Tastes of the South of France from Occitanie, a region blessed with an exceptional gastronomic culture rooted in the diversity of its landscapes.'

French May Arts Festival

This year, through partnerships with M+, Tai Kwun, and others, French May is reaching out to the community to share the best of French arts and culture. Programmes include:



The Hong Kong Jockey Club Series: *Noir & Blanc – A Story of Photography*

Co-presented by French May and M+, in collaboration with the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF), and exclusively sponsored by The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust. As the first public presentation of BnF's collection in Asia, this exhibition features over 170 internationally acclaimed photographers and showcases more than 250 important photographs from BnF's collection, complemented by over 30 photographs from the M+ Collections. This is the first

exhibition at M+ dedicated to exploring the medium of photography and is also the opening programme of the 2024 French May 'Arts Festival.

An encounter between global music and dance styles: *Symphony of New Worlds*

Celebrating the electrifying encounter between music and movement styles from around the globe, conductor Zahia Ziouani leads France's Divertimento Orchestra and the City Chamber Orchestra of Hong Kong in *Symphony of New Worlds*, performing classical dance masterpieces from Europe, Asia, Africa, and South America. As they weave a tapestry of buoyant brand-new rhythms and smash through the boundaries of



tradition, choreographer Mourad Merzouki and his Compagnie Käfig unleash a medley of movement, fusing hip hop, breakdance, martial arts, and contemporary dance into breathtaking spectacle.



Beautiful Harmony – Piano and Flute Duo by Niu Niu and Cocomi

In this concert sponsored by the First Initiative Foundation (FIF), internationally renowned pianist Niu Niu and rising star flautist Cocomi, the eldest daughter of renowned actor Takuya Kimura and singer Shizuka Kudo, weave melodies together and presents a captivating performance. With Niu Niu's masterful interpretations of the piano, Cocomi's sensational touch on the flute, and a mesmerising poetry reading, *Beautiful Harmony* takes audience on an extraordinary musical journey, immersing them in a world of captivating melodies and the sublime beauty of poetry.

Tickets will be available soon. Please visit French May's website for the latest event information.

Two-year Hong Kong—France theatre exchange programme: *Let the Mirror Speak*

Now entering the final phase of the Hong Kong-France theatre exchange project, both playwrights and directors Wu Hoi Fai (Hong Kong) and Nicolas Kerszenbaum (France) will present their new works onstage. Nicolas Kerszenbaum's *Good Fortune* depicts the living conditions of city dwellers by interweaving folklore beliefs with theatrical imagination; while the ethno-drama *Pas de deux à Hong Kong*, which was developed from a play reading performance last year into an on-stage production this year, sheds light on the lives of the French community in Hong Kong. Altogether, these two original theatre productions present mirror notions of a city's authentic character.



Other programme highlights include *Möbius in May* at *French Rendezvous @ Tai Kwun*, exclusively sponsored by The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust, contemporary dance

LOVETRAIN 2020, jazz music performance *The Two Sides of Thierry Maillard*, and more. For further details please refer to Appendix I.

Thanks to The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust, which is supporting the festival for the 13th consecutive year, French May is also able to share the pleasures of French culture with the wider community. The 'Jockey Club Community Outreach and Arts Education Programmes', comprising outreach projects, educational talks, workshops, master classes, and free performances will enable a wider and more diverse audience to experience French arts and culture firsthand.

Partnering with LAWSGROUP, Cheung Yee Street outside of D2 Place will transform into an authentic French setting where visitors can have a day-long celebration of French culture, art, street food and pastries, and traditions. As the fourth consecutive year Chinachem Group partners with the festival to present phenomenal artistic happenings and gourmet delicacies across May and June at Central Market, NINA MALL, and Nina Park. Presented by The Hong Kong Jockey Club, *Happy French Wednesday*, at Happy Valley Racecourse, will bring together world-class horse racing with mouth-watering French food, wine, and culture.

French GourMay Food and Wine Festival

From 01 to 31 May 2024, French GourMay is celebrating **the Tastes of the South of France from Occitanie** through an extensive network of partners. From the verdant mountains to magnificent seas, this vibrant land offers a wide range of culinary specialties. As the largest wine-growing region in France, Occitanie's wines deliver a diverse palette of flavours just like the region's distinct landscapes. This region of France is also well-known for its quality agriculture, cattle, and fishing products that nurture the region's splendid gastronomic traditions. With exceptional wines and delicacies, these regional specialties will delight all gourmets in Hong Kong and Macau!



a. Restaurant offers

From casual dining to Michelin-star offers, visitors can try out carefully curated menus and promotions at participating restaurants. Culinary specialties from Occitanie such as

foie gras, Roquefort cheese, duck magret, or the region's seasonal fruits and vegetables will inspire chefs to create unique dining experiences.

b. Retailer promotions

Celebrating the festive month, numerous online and physical shops will provide special offers on French wines and gourmet products. Wine merchants, in particular, will mark the occasion with special selections of wines from Occitanie, which covers appellations from Languedoc, Roussillon, Southwestern France, and Rhône Valley.

c. Educational events

Food lovers will have the opportunity to participate in thematic wine tastings and cooking lessons at specific learning centres, where they can discover an array of aromas and flavours provided by the regional specialties from the Occitanie region.

d. French GourMay Markets

In partnership with Chinachem Group, the festival will hold a 4-day event at Central Market (2-5 May) and NINA MALL (7-10 June), where connoisseurs can shop for various French delicacies. Coinciding with this special occasion, French contemporary dance company KHAM will also take over the premises with live performances and tailored workshops for all.

For further details about French GourMay partnering region Occitanie and Chef Ambassador Mr. Nicolas Boutin, please refer to Appendix II.

More detailed information for individual programmes and activities is available on websites at www.frenchmay.com and www.frenchgourmay.com.

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Note to editors:

Appendix I - Overview of Key Programme of French May 2024

Appendix II - Presentation of French GourMay thematic region Occitanie and Chef Ambassador Mr. Nicolas Boutin

High-resolution photos: <https://bit.ly/3VfN0tw>

About French May Arts Festival

Established in 1993, French May is one of the largest cultural events in Asia. With about 100 programmes presented across two months, we showcase the most diversified art forms: from heritage and contemporary arts, paintings and design, to classical music and hip-hop dance, cinema and circus. It has become an iconic part of Hong Kong's cultural scene, reaching over 200,000 visitors each year.

French May brings the arts to everyone, not only in cultural venues, but also in public spaces, shopping malls and more, inviting everyone across Hong Kong to enjoy art in their daily lives.

In the aim of promoting accessible arts for all, French May places a strong emphasis on education through outreach programmes, guided tours, workshops, masterclasses and free performances. The festival strives to reach the widest possible audience and contribute to the education of the young and less-privileged, working closely with over 50 local institutions and organisations to establish barrier-free arts access.

About French GourMay Food and Wine Festival

Being an important part of French May since 2009, French GourMay Food and Wine Festival (www.frenchgourmay.com), organized by French Trade Commission – Business France, has been celebrating and promoting the French food and wine culture in Hong Kong and Macau. It has become in a few years, thanks to a strong communication and involvement of the gourmet community, a major food and wine festival. Every year in May, French GourMay presents a different region (Midi-Pyrénées, Rhone Valley, Provence, Burgundy, Bordeaux, Alsace, Champagne, South of France), introducing and encouraging people to experience the dining culture in French style and letting go through an authentic French gastronomic journey through a network of more than 200 local partners.

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