



Ambassador's Activities

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Speech by HE Bernard Emié,
French Ambassador to the United Kingdom

"Le Grand Atelier" - Harrods

London, 04 June 2013

Ladies and gentlemen,

Dear friends,

I'm very honoured this evening to be inaugurating the pop-up shop Le Grand Atelier, a month-long initiative here in Harrods that showcases the very best of the French way of life.

It's a fine illustration of French economic diplomacy.

Thirty-four French artisans and other creative professionals specializing in the fields of design, decoration and gastronomy, have come together to reaffirm the resolute modernity of artisanal production.

This initiative comes in an economic context where preserving the intangible heritage and supporting creative businesses are major challenges. Artisanal production doesn't consist of artisans endlessly replicating the skills of the past: they're based on tradition and expertise, and they also draw on innovation and creativity. This combination of tradition and creativity is summed up in the fine phrase "*Patrimoine vivant*" ("Living heritage"), a label created in 2005 to distinguish French companies with top-of-the-range artisanal and industrial know-how.

Artisanal production stands at the cutting edge between the economy and culture. They bring high added value and contribute significantly to the economic life of the French regions. Living heritage companies account for nearly 50,000 jobs in France and a turnover of more than €10 billion a year. More than 74% of the companies awarded labels have an

international presence. For some 20% of them, exports account for more than half their turnover. In the UK they contribute to the good health of French foreign trade!

I thank the Harrods teams, who have believed in this project, selected the participating companies and showcased the products in an outstanding way.

The French Embassy is a stone's throw away, on the other side of Knightsbridge. So it will be easy for me to come back, and I'll do so gladly, because this is an extraordinary place. Who could imagine a finer setting to present our artisanal expertise and our gastronomy than this shop, which is the largest in Europe but which is, above all, one of the finest and most prestigious in the world? One of the symbols of London, a place where some of the best-selling products are made by the major French brands.

I also welcome the fact that Harrods, whose motto is a Latin one ("Omnia unigue omnibus" – "Everything everywhere for everyone"), insisted on giving this event a French name: "Le Grand Atelier". Our language, which in our diplomacy we strive to promote on a daily basis, is also a living heritage.

I warmly greet the artisans who have come from all over France to take on – what am I saying? to conquer! – the British market, and all those who have worked on preparing this French month: the *Institut supérieur des métiers*, which promotes the EPV or Living Heritage Company label, and of course the Ubifrance teams, who have pulled out all the stops to make this event a success.

Finally, one last word for Harrods' customers and partners, and for the journalists present this evening. I hope Le Grand Atelier gives you a taste for discovering our expertise by visiting these companies in their natural habitat, as it were – the places where they create these marvellous objects every day: in Paris of course – one of the world's most dynamic economic centres – but also throughout France, in the towns and regions, which are so full of vitality and initiative.

See you soon, then, in France!

Thank you./.