

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Friends,

I am very pleased to welcome you this evening, along with Joël Orgiazzi and Daniel Boulud, to the Consulate General of France for the opening night of the *Grande Décoration / French Art de Vivre* exhibition.

It is in fact New York that you chose for exhibiting the French elegance and luxury this year, through pieces of art and artisanal creations. The exhibition – an initiative of both the Comité Bellecour of Lyon and Prestige & Tradition of Paris – will undoubtedly attract a great number of visitors during the three following days.

The excellence of our savoir-faire in these fields is, as of now, well established here in New York. The French companies, which elaborated the artifacts on display here at the Consulate especially for this occasion, fully contribute to the reputation France enjoys in the field on this side of the Atlantic. Utilizing both modern and traditional techniques, they have been able to export top-quality, innovating products worldwide.

The Consulate thus opens its doors with great pleasure to these French ambassadors, whose work is in fields as diverse as fashion, design, decorative arts, tapestry, couture and jewelry, as well as gastronomy.

I would like to congratulate first and foremost the organizers of this initiative. Joël, you are the President of Comité Bellecour, as well as an accomplished iron craftsman. You have in fact received the prestigious title of Finest Artisan of France (*MOF*). It has been several years now that you are settled in Lyon, promoting France's, and your region's artisanal savoir-faire.

As to you, Daniel, you too are a great defender of Lyon's traditions. Honorary President of Comité Bellecour, you represent the excellence of a very *French* specialty – Gastronomy. Your restaurants are renowned in New York and the world for the marvelous dishes they serve and for the warm hosting they reserve for the diners. It was only natural you were declared Chef of Year in 2011 by the Culinary Institute of America, and were made Chevalier in the French Legion of Honor.

The city of Lyon is celebrated this evening, for it is the hometown of many of today's exhibiting artists and artisans. Let me recall it is listed as a World Heritage site. Throughout the centuries it has been attracting and nurturing a great number of talents, and we are fortunate to have several of them with us tonight.

I wish to praise the American presence of the jewelers Joia and Jeito, the exhibition's designer Pierre Court, the sculptor Jean Charles

Maina, the silk manufacturers Tassinari & Chatel, the Charles Jouffre tapestries, Expo Marbre and the bridal couturier Max Chaoul. I have no doubt other Lyon brands and names, such as Bon Chic, Bon Chien, the jewelers Tournaire and Roure and the sculptor Rouveure Marquez, will also obtain fame here soon. I congratulate, of course, all the other participants in this exhibition as well.

Finally, allow me to express my gratitude to UbiFrance, the sponsor of the event, and also to thank the various partners of the exhibition: the city of Lyon, le Grand Lyon, Lyon Vision Mode and Vins Guigal. With no further delay, I hand over the microphone to Joël Orgiazzi and wish you all an excellent evening.