



Gala evening at Versailles

There have been many dances and formal dinner parties at Versailles, but the gala evening in honour of the 100th anniversary of Les Amis de Versailles, on 1 October, will be exceptional in many ways. Mostly because les Amis ('Friends') have been involved in acquiring enormous quantities of furniture and works of art – 100 of which will be exhibited that evening.

The spirit in which the party was conceived by Vicomte de Rohan, its President, is a glamorous thank-you to all who contributed to the spectacular revival of the Château de Versailles, 20 miles west of Paris. The gilders and mirror-makers of the newly renovated Galerie des Glaces, the restorers of the ceilings of Salon d'Hercule, the painters, cabinet makers, gardeners – all who dedicate themselves daily to this historical palace will be invited by the sponsors and 600 of the regular 'Amis', who range from the inhabitants of Versailles to the generous Rockefellers. There will also be writers who have contributed to the fame of the palace, and academician Erik Orsenna, who published a witty book on the gardens of Le Nôtre, will write a special piece on the *Métiers d'art*. Another Le Nôtre, the caterer, will prepare a royal dinner, and Pierre Celeyron is decorating.

On the gala evening, guests will be invited to proceed through the Grands Appartements and the Galerie des Glaces, where they will watch les Grandes Eaux being activated in the gardens. Dinner will take place in La Galerie des Batailles, built by Louis Philippe and decorated with 35 paintings retracing major French military



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The beautifully restored Galerie des Glaces

achievements. The evening's theme is youth, since great efforts are made to bring young Amis to the venerable institution. The gala was sold out before invitations were sent out, but if you join as an Ami, you might have a chance of a seat. **ldeG.** www.amisdeversailles.com