**The People’s Gift**

**An Historian Uncovers Lady Liberty’s Little-Known Past**

by John Brinagarde / GSAS ’03

The journey to the top of the Statue of Liberty is like a trip abroad. You need a ticket and an ID, and when you finally make it to your destination—a boat ride, extensive security checkpoints, and a strenuous hike—everyone speaks a foreign language.

For historian Edward Berenson, director of NYU’s Institute of French Studies, the visit was the rare research mission that didn’t require a passport. In his latest book, *A Transatlantic Story: The Statue of Liberty*, Berenson unpacks America’s most famous symbols. Behind the statue’s French origins, and traces its path as one of America’s most famous symbols.

When the statue was first conceived of in 1865, France had experienced nearly a century of revolution and counterrevolution. In the midst of Napoleon III’s authoritarian regime, a small group of liberal Frenchmen imagined a monument to the United States— which had just emerged from the Civil War a battered but still-united democratic republic—that would also serve as a rebuke to their own dictatorial government.

Berenson, who is a member of the Institute of French Studies, studied in Paris as an undergraduate and later earned his Ph.D. in French literature.

The statue, he says, was a gift from France, not to the United States government, but to the American people.

Berenson and his colleagues have written about the history of the statue, including its placement in New York Harbor and its role in American history.

**What’s the Statue of Liberty Made of?**

It’s made of copper, a material that was chosen for its durability and its ability to withstand the elements. The statue is a copper statue, not a statue made of bronze or any other metal.

**How Tall is the Statue of Liberty?**

The statue is the tallest statue in the world, standing at 305 feet tall.

**Where is the Statue of Liberty Located?**

The statue is located in New York Harbor, at the entrance to the harbor.

**When Was the Statue of Liberty Built?**

The statue was built in 1886.

**Who Designed the Statue of Liberty?**

The statue was designed by French sculptor Frédéric-Auguste Bartholdi.

**Is the Statue of Liberty Still Standing?**

Yes, the statue is still standing today.

**Is the Statue of Liberty Free?**

No, visitors to the statue must purchase a ticket and go through a security check before entering.

**What is the Statue of Liberty Made of?**

The statue is made of copper, which is why it is so bright and shiny.

**Is the Statue of Liberty a Catholic Symbol?**

The statue is a symbol of freedom, not of a specific religion.
**ISLAND GETAWAY**

In the middle of New York Harbor lies 172 gray acres that were closed to the public for more than 200 years. But now a free, seven-minute ferry ride takes urbanites to the revamped oasis every weekend. “GOVERNORS ISLAND is like a pastoral, art-filled wonderland,” says Martin (GAL ’04), author of Press). Martin is drawn to the isle closed to the public for more than 200 years. But now a free, seven-minute ferry ride takes urbanites to the revamped oasis every weekend. **BETTER the island has a more bohemian vibe, with frequent exhibitions and ranger-guided tours. Today, the park also hosts an array of stands as a national monument and a whimsical miniature golf course.**

**HOP A FERRY TO GOVERNORS ISLAND FOR SOME GREEN PEACE OR THE TRIMAY TO BROOKLYN FOR A SIP OF HUDSON VALLEY**: special events such as the Jazz Age Lawn Party, where visitors dress in 1920s attire for Charleston lessons, live music, and a vintage motorcar drive. If you’re simply looking for some R&R, head to Picnic Point, where stunning views of the harbor and Statue of Liberty may be enjoyed from three surrounding hammocks in the grass. Says Martin: “In one little boat ride, you feel like you are a world away.”

Governor Island is open Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays through May but typically offers sessions, which sometimes last until 8 a.m. The downtown dive features up-and-coming musicians who jam all night long, and just $10 buys admission to the after-hours sessions, which sometimes last until 8 a.m.

New York’s most legendary club, the Village Vanguard, has been open since 1935 and is known as the genre’s mecca. “It’s the quintessential jazz club in the basement of an old building, and it has a totally unique acoustic sound,” Schroeder explains. In fact, the triangular-shaped room allows sound waves to reverberate and project up like an opera house, which is why more than a hundred jazz albums have been recorded there, including those by John Coltrane, Sonny Rollins, and Wynton Marsalis. 178 SEVENTH AVENUE SOUTH, 212-255-4037; WWW.VILLAGEVANGUARD.COM

**NYU FACULTY, STAFF, AND ALUMNI OFFER UP THEIR FAVORITES** by Renée Alfuso / CAS ’06

**GAME ON**

Last year, 4.2 million Americans tuned in to watch the final match of the UEFA Champions League—Europe’s most prestigious soccer club tournament—and that’s not counting the hoards of fans that flocked to sports bars in New York City. “Watching a big game at a bar is the next best thing to actually being there,” says NYU men’s soccer forward Kyle Green (CAS ’13). “There’s a buzz in the air that you just don’t get watching at home—which turns into a frenzy when goals are scored.” Green, who turned 21 last fall, stops by campus hangout Jose’s Wood Bar to catch games between classes. But on weekends, he heads to Dempsey’s in the East Village to watch the European footballers duke it out on the bar’s 10 mounted plasma screens. “It allows you to watch multiple games at once, which is great for Champions League when half of the teams are playing at the same time,” Green explains. The pub also offers pool and darts to go with its beer and hot wings. And when the U.S.-Europe time difference means early-morning matches for American fans, there’s always Dempsey’s traditional Irish brunch served up, with a pint of course.

Co-founder Peter Freeman spent a year and half cleaning the long-closed Carroll Gardens drugstore but couldn’t throw away the 1940s ointment tins and medicine jars that now adorn the drugstore but couldn’t throw away. “Grunble, Grumble,” which gets you grilled cheese, soup, and an egg cream for less than 10 bucks.

**PULL A LEVER FOR A LIQUID FIX**

The stately limestone edifice, once housed in the mansion between 18th-century and 20th-century architecture historian Jean-Louis Cohen and the Frick Collection’s decorative arts curator, Charlotte Vignon, intended to pull back decades of history and survey the house’s former grandeur. The stately limestone edifice, which stands on Avenue A at East 78th Street, was built by Horace Trumbauer for James B. Duke, a tobacco tycoon whose substantial contribution to a college in Durham, North Carolina, prompted the college’s fourth name change to Duke University in 1924. Trumbauer and chief designer Julian Abele, one of the first prominent African-American architects, modeled Duke House after the Hotel Labbadie, an 18th-century mansion in Bordeaux, France. Duke’s wife, Nandine, and his daughter, Doris, donated the building to the IFA in 1958. Later that same year, the institute gave the now-famous postmodern architect Robert Venturi his first commission: the renovation of Duke House. Venturi used a light touch, retaining the classroom furnishings—desks, bookcases, and the like—from the wall, as so to leave the original paint, mold, and decorative flourishes undisturbed. Historic Ritter comments “this idea of modernizing [the space] for its new uses but also keeping the character of the old building.” Venturi’s design will allow next fall’s seminar students to examine three modern additions alongside the original architecture. They will also learn about the furnishings and art collection once housed in the mansion before its donation. Professor Cohen explains, “Part of the idea is to reconstruct the house as it was in its age of splendor.”

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