



Bois de Boulogne

The Bois de Boulogne, on the western edge of Paris, became a fashionable destination as soon as it was opened to the public in the late 1850s. One of the great projects of Baron Haussmann's reorganization of the French capital, these 845 hectares of 'artistically mondaine nature', as Émile Zola described them, would fill on weekends with Parisian high society parading in landaus, broughams and barouches. Inspired by English parks and gardens – Napoleon III, who commissioned it, was obsessed with London's Hyde Park

– the Bois was originally planted with nearly 400,000 trees, and had 100 kilometres of sinuous paths and roads, 16 lakes, a 14-metre-high waterfall, two horse-racing tracks, and a zoo (whose animals were later eaten by hungry Parisians during the Siege of 1870). The park – where, in January, Juergen Teller shot a selection of the photographs that feature in this Métiers d'art booklet – also has a particular place in literary history: it is where a nine-year-old Marcel Proust is said to have suffered his first asthma attack.

