

2 cultures points of view

She Said . . .

Adrienne Montes, like Kevin Gaumard, boarded a flight with an open mind and an excited spirit, but unlike her Parisian counterpart, Montes flew from Houston to Paris.

"By traveling abroad, not only are you opening yourself to new experiences, but you also take a part of that culture back with you," the Texas A&M sophomore international studies major said.

Once she arrived, she realized that many of the American stereotypes about the French were untrue.

"During my three months in Paris, I ran into very few rude people," Montes said. "Contrary to many beliefs, people in Paris are just as nice as any other big-city dweller."

The pace of life is much slower in France than it is in the United States, as Montes said she quickly learned.

"I appreciated the ability to do absolutely nothing and watch the world go by," she said. Montes said one of her favorite things

was sitting on a bench for hours, just relaxing "without a care in the world."

"The French people value their free time and guard it heavily," she said.

When Montes wasn't people-watching, she traveled all over the city and surrounding areas. Her favorite place to go in Paris was the Latin Quarter. There, she and her friends hung out at restaurants, bars and shops.

Montes also took day trips to the Loire Valley, the Palace of Versailles, and Euro Disney, but her favorite trip was to Monet's gardens in Giverny. Montes said as she walked across the famous Japanese bridge, she felt like she was in one of Monet's paintings.

She says it's important to study abroad because "we must be able to communicate with people who are different from us."

Montes said she would love to study abroad again in Italy or Spain.

"Once you travel to a foreign country," she said, "you get addicted to it and then you want to find out anything and everything possible about everywhere around the world."

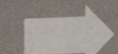
— Story by Carly Adam

He Said . . .



Pictured left: Parisian Kevin Gaumard became an Aggie when he came to Texas A&M to study and earned a master's degree.

Paris



Texas

When Kevin Gaumard boarded the plane in France on his way to College Station, he knew he had to arrive with an open mind. As a participant in a partnership program between his school in Paris and Texas A&M, he recently received a master's degree in civil engineering from A&M.

After arriving in the United States, Kevin saw that the French stereotype of Americans was fictitious.

"Americans, especially Texans, have a bad reputation in France," he said. "The French think of Americans as narrow minded and racist, but I have seen that it is not true and a lot of them are very open-minded and helpful."

Compared to the French, Americans are competitive and "they all want to be the best," he said. But at the same time, he said he appreciates how many Americans are willing to go out of their way to help others.

Gaumard has studied English

since he was 12 years old and recommends that American schools also teach more structured foreign language programs.

"It is a shame that many people don't know how to speak any other language besides English," he said.

Gaumard said the United States is not much different from France, but College Station is vastly different from Paris. Gaumard said that's why he enjoyed visiting New York City.

"My favorite place in the U.S. is New York," he said. "It is like Paris, and there is always something new and interesting to do."

Gaumard plans to stay in the United States and work.

"It is a lot easier to find a job in the U.S. right now than in France," he said.

However, Gaumard does plan to return to France in the future because, as the adage goes, "There's no place like home."

— Story by Carly Adam

Pictured right: Texas A&M sophomore Adrienne Montes spent a semester studying abroad in Paris.



Passport

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