

Title:

Prestigious Address For The Graves

Word Count:

534

Summary:

Le Pere Lachaise is a beautiful and historic cemetery. For a grave-hunter, it is a vital stop on a trip through Paris.

Keywords:

Paris hotels,hotels in Paris

Article Body:

Le Pere Lachaise is a beautiful and historic cemetery. For a grave-hunter, it is a vital stop on a trip through Paris. It is most probably the worst-laid-out cemetery. But, in spite of the frustrating layout, it is an amazing place to visit.

The Cimitière du Père Lachaise, which occupies 44 hectares on the eastern border of Paris, is one of the city's less noticeable attractions, yet features on many a visitor's itinerary. The cemetery is named after the Jesuit priest Père François de la Chaise, who was confessor to Louis XIV. It became the most prestigious burial ground in the whole of the city, due to its location and royal connections. Created on the orders of Napoleon in 1804 by the famous architect Alexandre Broignart its design is based on that of an English park and features not only many large trees, but also sculptures and monuments by illustrious French artists. Some 70,000 graves adorn the site, with famous names including writers, such as Molière, La Fontaine, Honoré de Balzac and Oscar Wilde, singers Edith Piaf and Maria Callas, composer Frédéric Chopin and impressionist painter Camille Pissarro. Jim Morrison's grave invariably attracts the most attention, despite attempts by the authorities to discourage the cult atmosphere that can threaten to disturb the otherwise respectful ambience. Père Lachaise is the largest green space in Paris and the peaceful surroundings make it a popular place to escape the bustle of the city.

The gravesites at Père-Lachaise vary from a simple, unadorned headstone to towering monuments and even elaborate mini chapels dedicated to the memory of a well-known person or family. A lot of the tombs are about the size and shape of a phone booth, with just adequate space for a mourner to step inside, kneel to say a prayer, and leave some flowers. It's a beautiful and tranquil place-full

of history and death, yet somehow strangely uplifting.

The cemetery manages to compress an increasing number of bodies into a restricted and already crowded space. One way it does this is by combining the remains of multiple family members in the same grave. At Père-Lachaise, it is not uncommon to reopen a grave after a body has decomposed and add another one. Some family tombs contain dozens of bodies, often in several separate graves.

Although the tombs of Père-Lachaise date back as far as 200 years, they are not all equally well maintained. Each family or estate is in charge for the upkeep of its own monuments, and while a few are in excellent condition even after centuries, many have not been touched in decades. So it is very common to see tombs that have collapsed or otherwise fallen into disrepair. Often the engravings are completely worn away, making it impossible to tell who was buried there or when; maps of the cemetery show only the most famous occupants. In recent times, Père-Lachaise has adopted a standard practice of issuing 30-year leases on gravesites, so that if a lease is not renewed by the family, the remains can be removed, space made for a new grave, and the overall deterioration of the cemetery minimized.