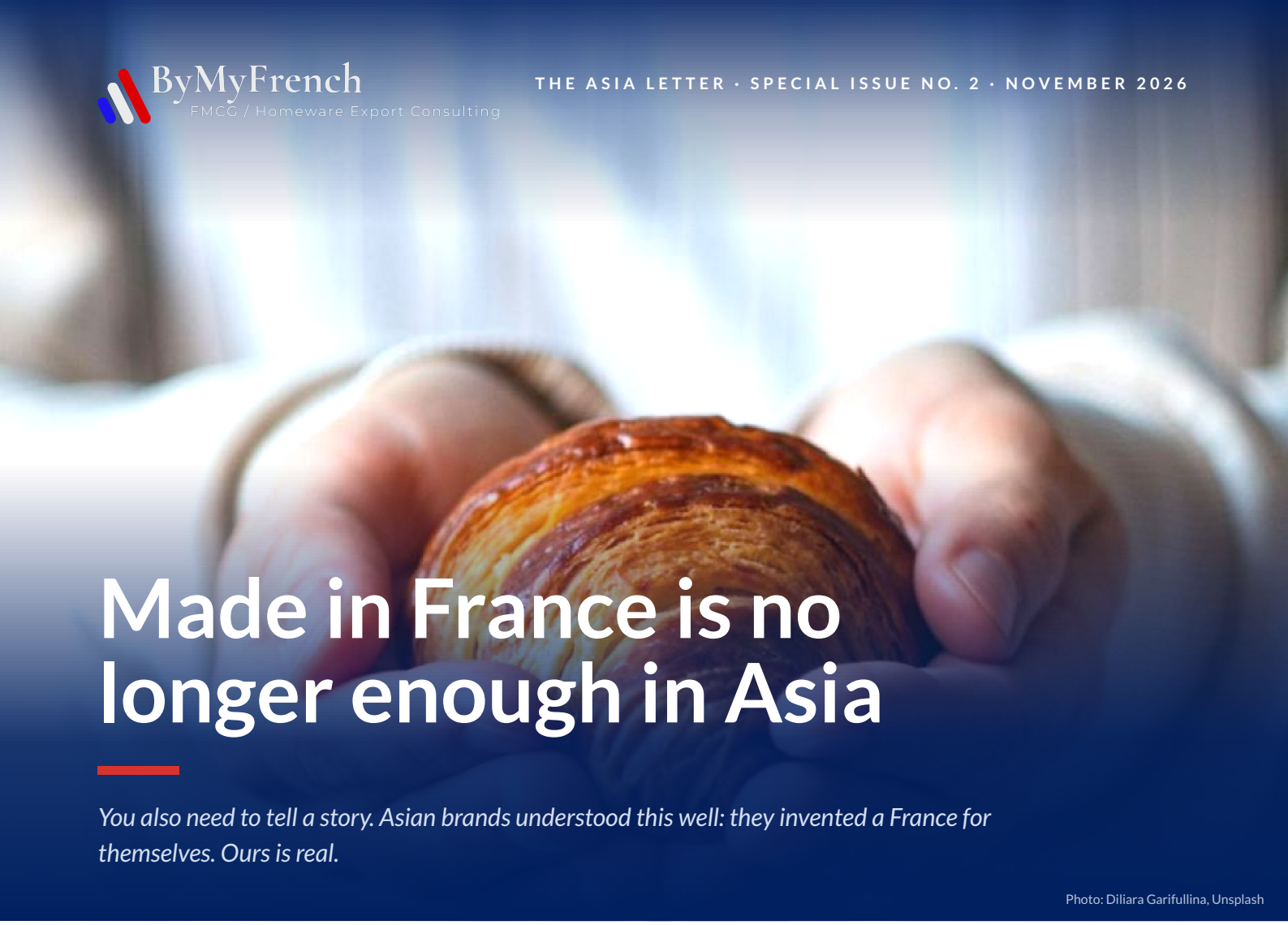


Made in France is no longer enough in Asia

You also need to tell a story. Asian brands understood this well: they invented a France for themselves. Ours is real.

Photo: Diliara Garifullina, Unsplash

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Dear reader,

A few years ago, my Asian clients asked me for a certificate of origin. Today, they want to hear the product's story. Made in France remains essential: it opens doors. But on its own, it no longer convinces. This second special issue shows how three French brands succeeded in Asia thanks to their story, and how Asian brands invented a France for themselves in order to sell. Our edge: our heritage is real.



Maxime
de Fougeroux
Founder, ByMyFrench

AT A GLANCE

This special issue in six lines

THE SHIFT	The flag, the certificate of origin, labels such as Origine France Garantie or Entreprise du Patrimoine Vivant: they open doors, but they don't tell the product's story. Yet the 1,300 EPV companies make 53.7% of their sales abroad.	p. 3
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NUMBER OF THE MONTH

41.7%

of Chinese consumers cite "emotional value" as their first reason to spend more. Price and quality are no longer enough: customers also buy a story.

Source: CCTV, Chinese household consumption trends 2026.

SIGN OF THE TIMES · CHINA

At Double 11 2023, Chinese brand Proya overtook L'Oréal Paris as Tmall's top-selling beauty brand, the first Chinese brand to do so in six years. It kept the top spot in 2024. Foreign origin no longer guarantees preference: it has to be brought to life.

Sources: Syntun via CosmeticsDesign-Asia (11/2023); Jing Daily (11/2024).

01 · THE SHIFT

Made in France opens doors. On its own, it no longer convinces.

In Asia, French origin is still a mark of quality. But on shelves shared by Japanese, Korean and European brands, it no longer makes the difference by itself.

Essential labels

The certificate of origin, the French flag, labels such as Origine France Garantie or Entreprise du Patrimoine Vivant reassure importers and buyers. They prove where the product comes from. They don't say why anyone should love it.

Customers who buy a story

Asian consumers travel, compare and collect. They want to know where an object comes from, who has been making it and since when, and where it will fit in their lives.

Essential for export, these labels prove the origin. They do not yet tell the product's story.

Logos: marques-de-france.fr

WHAT MAKES THE DIFFERENCE IN ASIA TODAY

ORIGIN

An origin story

a date, a place, a craft

ICON

An iconic product

recognisable at first glance, even without its logo

RITUAL

A ritual of use

the moment it is served, given or collected

FRENCH CRAFTSMANSHIP IN NUMBERS

1,300

EPV-labelled companies, with 59,000 jobs and €14.2bn in sales

53.7%

of those sales made through exports

1 in 2

says the label makes it easier to hold its prices

8th / 50

France's rank in global nation-brand image in 2025; Japan is 1st

Sources: DGE, EPV label and SGS impact report (May 2026); Anholt Nation Brands Index 2025.

SEEN FROM KOREA

Origine France Garantie certifies around 1,600 product ranges from some 500 companies. Back from a week in Korea, its technical director Julien Vialar said he was struck by how many products display French symbols without being French: "Abroad, France sells." (Le Moci, 2023)

OUR TAKE

Made in France is a ticket to enter, not a selling point. What sells is the story told around the product.

02 · OUR ICONS

Three French brands that became benchmarks in Asia

None of them changed its product for Asia. All have a solid origin story, a product recognised at first glance, and a use their Asian customers have made their own.



Duralex Picardie. Photo: La Maison Française du Verre, Wikimedia Commons (CC BY-SA 4.0).



Échiré Maison du Beurre, Tokyo. Photos: Échiré.



Le Creuset. Photo: Vincent van Zeijst, Wikimedia Commons (CC BY-SA 4.0).

BRAND	ORIGIN	ICON	RITUAL IN ASIA
Duralex	1954, tempered glass, still made in La Chapelle-Saint-Mesmin, near Orléans	The faceted Picardie, recognisable without seeing the logo	In Japan, the water glass served in cafés; sold at the MoMA Design Store and Ron Herman
Échiré	1894, a dairy cooperative near Niort; grand prize at the 1900 World's Fair	A PDO Charentes-Poitou butter, served as far as the Élysée Palace	In Tokyo, pastries baked on site with butter shipped from France
Le Creuset	1925, a foundry in Fresnoy-le-Grand, northern France	The enamelled cast-iron pot and its colours	In Japan, a shallow pot for sukiyaki, a cherry-blossom edition, and a centenary celebrated in 2025

CASE · ÉCHIRÉ IN TOKYO

Imported into Japan by Kataoka & Co., Échiré did not open its first shop in Paris, but in Tokyo, in 2009. Fifteen years later, the brand has eight in Japan, across Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya, and the queues are still there. The product stayed the same; its story travelled.

Sources: Duralex; ronherman.jp; Japanese press (Kinarino, Macaroni); Ouest-France / Le Courrier de l'Ouest (12/2024); Monocle; Le Creuset; Fashion Magazine; WWD Japan (2025).

OUR TAKE

The product stays true to its story; its uses adapt to local habits. That balance is what turns a French brand into an Asian icon.

03 · ASIA GOT IT

They invented a France for themselves

Asian brands follow the same recipe, without going through France: a French name, sometimes a founding date, a flagship product presented as a traditional object, and a use adapted to local habits.



Photo: Paris Baguette, a Sangmidang Holdings brand (formerly SPC).

KOREA · PARIS BAGUETTE

The name says Paris. The money says Seoul. Production is local.

13
countries outside Korea

736
stores abroad, including 340 in China and 321 in the US

+30%
US sales growth in 2025 (₩585bn, ≈ $390M), its first profitable year

Everything is made locally: factories in China and Malaysia, a central kitchen in Paris for its five French stores.

FRENCH NAMES, BRANDS BORN IN ASIA



Tous les Jours
KOREA · CJ GROUP
bakery-cafés



Laneige
KOREA · AMOREPACIFIC, 1994
"the snow", for a cream



Étude House
KOREA · AMOREPACIFIC, 1995
make-up



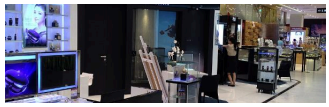
Mamonde
KOREA · AMOREPACIFIC, 1991
"ma monde", sic



Comme des Garçons
JAPAN · TOKYO, 1969
fashion



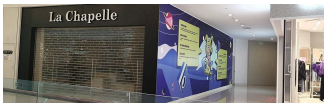
Francfranc
JAPAN · TOKYO, 1992
home decor



Clé de Peau Beauté
JAPAN · SHISEIDO
luxury skincare



Vie de France
JAPAN · YAMAZAKI
bakery-cafés



La Chapelle
CHINA · SHANGHAI, 1998
up to 9,000 stores



Les Enphants
TAIWAN · TAIPEI, 1971
"enfants" + "éléphants"



Saint Honoré
HONG KONG · 1972
cake shops



CÉ LA VI
SINGAPORE · 2010
"c'est la vie", shortened

None of them was ever French. All of them sell a little bit of France.

Photos: Wikimedia Commons (CC BY, CC BY-SA, CC0 or public domain). Brands cited for illustration only.

FRANCE AS THEIR CUSTOMERS PICTURE IT

China
effortless chic, "法式" ("French-style")

Japan
refinement and craftsmanship

Korea
the bakery-café

WHAT RESEARCH SHOWS

A French-sounding name makes a product more appealing to consumers, even in a taste test (Leclerc, Schmitt and Dubé, Journal of Marketing Research, 1994).

OUR TAKE

They don't sell France as it is, but as their customers picture it. A French brand needs to know that image to use it, rather than be shaped by it.

04 · OUR EDGE

They had to invent a story, a heritage. Ours is real.

Don't just say "made in France": tell what lies behind it, a craft.

1. **Make your origin known**
   A date, a place, a craft: the three things a buyer should be able to repeat.
2. **Put an iconic product forward**
   The one people recognise without its logo, and that carries the whole brand.
3. **Anchor the product in a ritual of use**
   Serving, giving, collecting: give customers a reason to use it every day.
4. **Adapt your story to each market**
   China, Japan, Korea: three visions of France, three ways to tell the same story.

The flag opens the door. The story makes the sale.

YOUR BRAND IN ASIA

What story does your brand tell?

A free 30-minute review of your pitch and visuals through the lens of your Asian markets' cultural codes.

Book 30 minutes ›

maxime.defougeroux@bymyfrench.com

Scan to book

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Know an export director looking at Asia? Forward this letter. All editions of The Asia Letter are on bymyfrench.com