

In the digital age, Paris revamps newsstands

March 13 2017



Most of the dark green 19th-century newspaper kiosks will be replaced by June 2019, while 40 will simply be renovated so as to help vendors compete with their online alternatives. The overall cost of the replacements is estimated at 52.4 million euros (\$56 million). More than 58,000 people signed a petition to save the historic kiosks dating back to Baron Haussmann's radical overhaul of the city. The newsstands came to be emblematic of the Paris of old, matching the city's dark green benches and water fountains.

A new-look newspaper kiosk appeared on a Paris street Monday, the

first of hundreds that will replace the iconic domed structures that have dotted the city since the 1860s.

The [new model](#), developed after extensive consultation, retains the forest-green colour and footprint of the original while modernising and revamping the space.

Plans for the overhaul sparked an uproar in June last year, with heritage groups and architectural experts heaping scorn on what they called its "sardine can" design.

But the aim was to help news vendors compete with online alternatives to their wares, as well as improve their working conditions, said Olivia Polski, the mayor's small business expert.

The revamped kiosk, created by French industrial designer Matali Crasset using recycled glass and aluminium, provides more head room and improved lighting, and allows customers to come inside and browse.

"Before, 90 percent of the merchandise was not accessible to the customer," said Jean-Paul Abonnenc of Mediakiosk, which specialises in the installation and management of France's newsstands.

Vendors will also benefit from more space and a heated "comfort bubble" to warm them in the winter.

The Parisian newsstand of the future will also offer a new set of services fit for the digital age: online ticketing sales, charging ports for smartphones, and digital screens.

The new kiosks can even be equipped with toilets, at the request of the operator.

They will replace some 360 original 19th-century kiosks by June 2019, while 40 will be renovated.

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