

Monday, May 16, 2011 (7-8 pm)– the Bridge Café

## “French Kiss and Pheromones”

Pr. Jean-François PICIMBON

The romantic French Kiss from « Quai des Brumes » may be famous example of cultural traits. What is the biological reason behind a **French kiss**? We may explore the olfactory rituals from certain primitive tribes and compare them with the kissing behaviors from various animal species such as snakes, frogs, cats, dogs, deer, horses and squirrels. In reptiles, batracians and mammals, kissing behaviors are largely based on recognition of specific odors (**pheromones**). As a result, all of these “animals” have well developed vomeronasal organ (or Jacobson organ responsible for pheromone detection in vertebrates). What is the bird, fish and snail case? Birds kiss each other on the neck to detect specific odors, fishes kiss to exchange food (trophallaxy), but snails kiss to exchange sperm. In insects, many social species such as ants, bees, termites and wasps kiss for trophallaxy (or fight). The kiss of the cockroach is very complicated: male and female have antennal contacts then the male releases an odor, the female climbs on his back to eat an aphrodisiac gland, “...”. **Kiss, aphrodisiac gland, pheromone, “...”, what is known in human?** How important is the olfactory sense in human? Is French kiss associated to the recognition of specific pheromones? A terrible answer is that the boar pheromone is secreted by human sweat.

**The conference ends by odors and flavors in degustation:** 1) recognition of different perfumes and shampoos, 2) evaluation of differences between boys and girls, men and women, yé and lão, 3) Europe and China, “...”. The experiment shows that Chinese girls are high-performance olfactory radars in contrast to their boy classmates and professors.



## About the Speaker:

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Professor Jean-François Picimbon got his PhD in 1995 in Neurosciences-Neurobiology at the Université de Provence (Aix-Marseille I). He obtained several postdoctoral and research fellow positions in several countries (USA, Canada, Germany, Japan). From 2001 to 2005, he was professor in the “Pheromone Group” at the Ecology Department of Lund University (Sweden). In 2005, he took his habilitation in Environmental Biology-Biochemistry at the University of Pau-Pays de l’Adour (France). From 2006 to 2009, he got several positions in China as scientific expert in several Chinese universities (Nanyang Normal University, Henan; China Agriculture University, CAU Beijing). Since 2009, he is “Rencai” full-professor at High-Tech Research Center/Shandong Academy Agricultural Sciences (Jinan) and adjunct prof. (tutoring) in several universities (Shandong Univ., Shandong Normal Univ., CAU, NYNU, NJAU, QAU).

His scientific production comprises more than a hundred scientific publications, book chapters and international conferences. He is also member of dozen of international societies and governmental institutions. Logically, he is France’s permanent representative to Shandong.

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