



## Spotlight on Expats!: Carolyn Moncel

Author: [Priscilla Lalisce](#)

I met Carolyn Moncel back in 2003 when she was featured in another magazine. I found her story so interesting that I had to make her acquaintance, and almost three years later she's still inspiring me. She's an extraordinarily talented woman who juggles motherhood and family as well as running her own businesses, all at the same time of course. Meet her and see for yourself!



### STATS

*Name* : Carolyn Moncel

*Age* : 37

*Nationality* : American

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### How long have you been in France and what brought you here?

October 11, 2005 marked my family's third year in Paris. Love, I guess, plus a shaky US economy brought me to France in 2002. My husband is French and originally from Lyon. We met, married and lived in Chicago, but after being in the US for 10 years, my husband was getting homesick.

Admittedly I wasn't thrilled about moving to France, but only because for me the timing was all wrong. When my husband made the announcement, I was eight months' pregnant with my second daughter and had only been in business for a year. To start my business in the first place I had to begin from scratch. I had worked too hard to give up everything only to start over in another country where I knew no one and didn't speak the language.

However, by the same token, my husband had worked hard, too. Faced with a US economy that was sluggish at best, and brutal on people like him in the information technology field, we made the difficult decision to move. We packed up our house, kids (ages five and 2 weeks old), a dog, a cat. and my business and moved to France.

### **What keeps you here?**

The challenge of learning to speak the language respectfully keeps me here but also succeeding at building a successful company on two different continents.

### **What's different for you here, versus where you're originally from?**

Everything is different for me - new country, new language, new culture, and new food. Sometimes that's frustrating. but at other times I really embrace it because I like having an opportunity to try different things.

### **What do you not like about living here, if anything?**

I don't like crowds – especially when shopping. I like my personal space.

### **What are your favourite haunts?**

I don't have any yet. For me - even after all of this time, everything is still new so part of the fun is in the discovery.

### **What do you miss most from your own country?**

Don't laugh but Pop-Tarts! I also miss soul food sans substitutions and Mexican food. I miss the lakefront and watching my Chicago White Sox!

### **If you didn't live here, where would you live?**

I would return to Chicago or San Francisco. I wouldn't mind giving London a try as well.

### **And if you left France, what would you miss the most?**

I would miss just the sheer beauty and knowing that I could go any of the world's most renowned museums in 10 minutes by métro. I'd also miss the cobble-stoned streets.

### **Tell me about your work here. What do you do, etc.**

I actually run two companies. I launched MotionTemps, LLC ([www.motiontemps.com](http://www.motiontemps.com)) from my home in Chicago back in 2001 after leaving a job as a communications manager with a PR agency. MotionTemps provides back-office administrative support (PowerPoint presentations, copyediting, copywriting, desktop publishing, word processing, and web maintenance), but also marketing and public relations consulting services to small-business owners.

Because I wanted an opportunity to work on site, I launched MotionTechs ([www.motiontechs.com](http://www.motiontechs.com)) here in Paris in August 2005. MotionTechs provides affordable and flexible PC maintenance services in English for home-based business owners and families too. The company focuses on the preventative measures necessary to ensure that computers continue performing properly.

**Complete these two sentences: Paris is... magical.**

**French people are... often misunderstood.**

**What advice would you give someone who wants to move here?**

Plan your move if possible. We moved to Paris 14 days, and I would strongly caution against anyone doing this because it's tough! Red tape is terrible enough for French natives, so imagine what it's like if you are coming here from another country. Therefore, it's imperative to do as much research as possible prior to your move. Use the French and American embassy sites and your local French consulate offices back in the U.S. to find out all the information you'll need to make your stay as hassle-free as possible. Also network and try to meet people who are currently living in Paris or who have lived there for long periods of time. They can help you tremendously in preparing for your move.

Note to readers: Would you like to appear in my Spotlight on Expats column? If so, contact me at [priscilla@priscillalalisse.com](mailto:priscilla@priscillalalisse.com) and tell me why your picture and story should go here!

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*A true Southern Belle who grew up in Alabama, Priscilla Lalissee now lives with her French husband and son in Paris--well, almost--and provides the "Paris For Kids" section of our Events column.*

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