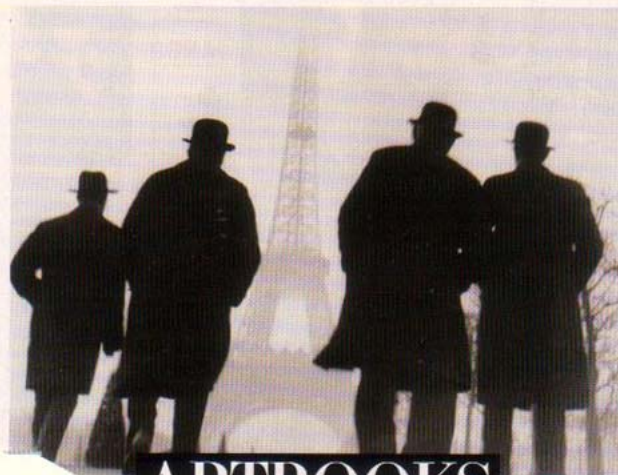


It is a well-known fact that the French short-story writer Guy de Maupassant used to have lunch in the Eiffel Tower everyday because it was the one place in Paris from which the tower could not be seen. It is also well

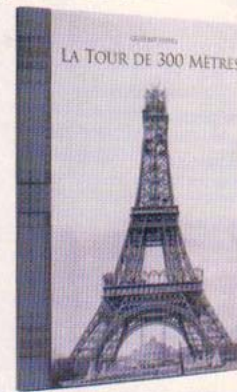
known that Maupassant suffered from advanced syphilis, which drove him insane and eventually killed him. But his hatred of the Eiffel Tower should not be understood as a quirk of his degenerating nervous system. Lots of people have hated the Eiffel Tower, almost from the moment of its conception in 1884, through

its opening for the Universal Exposition of 1889, and on into the twentieth century; there are doubtless still Parisians grumbling that the city would be better off without it. Long before the tower was complete, the leading artists of the day were already complaining that it was "useless and monstrous," and calling it "the dishonor of Paris," an epithet that speaks perhaps to its phallic proportions—an unpleasant surprise for a population that had, up until then, imagined its city as a lovely woman.

What may be less well known is that, when the tower was built, even Gustave Eiffel didn't know what it would be good for. **La Tour Magnifique: The Construction of the Eiffel Tower in Drawings and Photographs** was Eiffel's 1900 attempt to justify his work after the fact, both as a marvel of ingenuity and as a research station for scientific experiments. The case for the former, 53 drawings laid out on double-page spreads and a dozen photographs, is convincing. To turn the big pages of Eiffel's folio, finally reprinted by Taschen (\$125) and due out in November, is to return to an era when it seemed as though engineering would take care of



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everything—as indeed it did in the tower's construction, a process that took about two years and claimed only one life. Eiffel's assertions about the tower's scientific utility are less compelling. But, fortunately for him, the radio

was invented before the tower's twenty-year lease ran out, and a broadcasting station was established at the top of the tower, ensuring its existence indefinitely.

