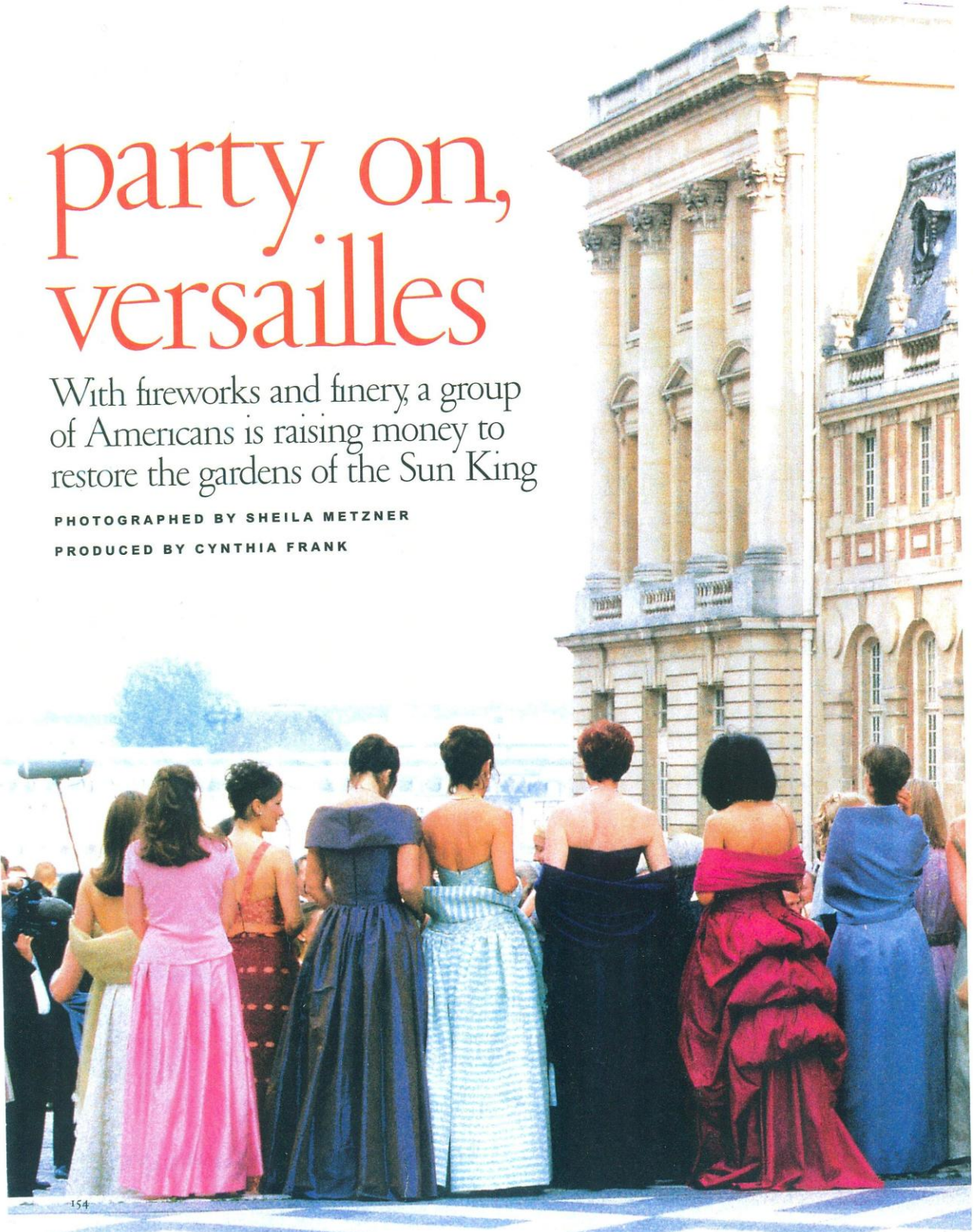
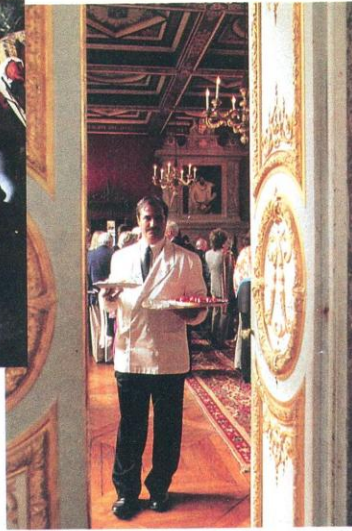
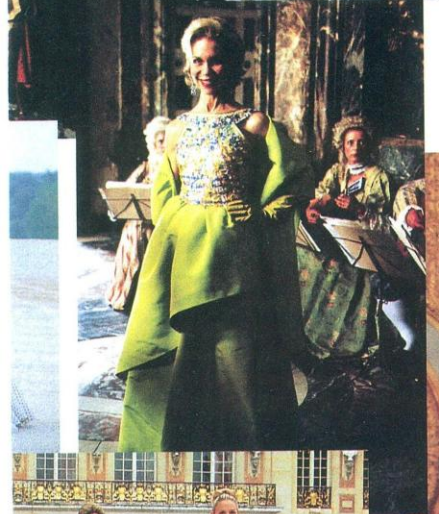


# party on, versailles

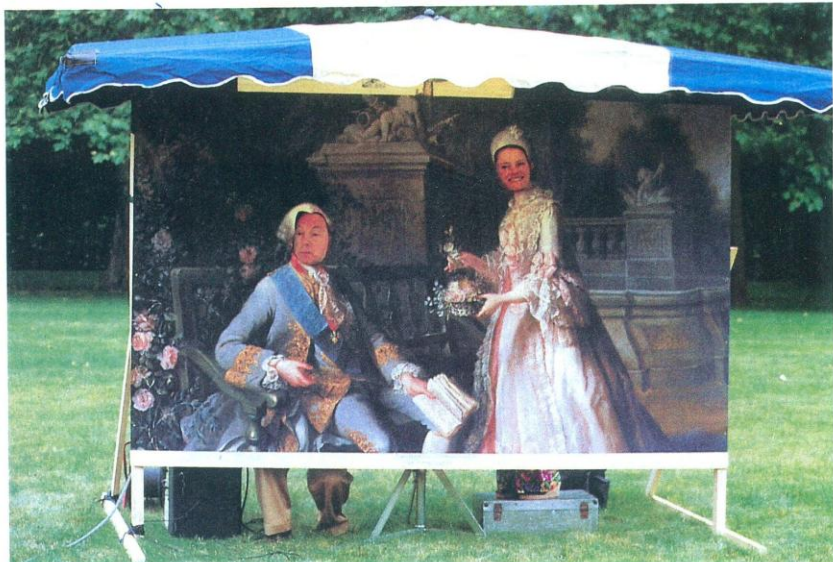
With fireworks and finery, a group of Americans is raising money to restore the gardens of the Sun King

PHOTOGRAPHED BY SHEILA METZNER  
PRODUCED BY CYNTHIA FRANK





**CHATEAU-HOPPING** The day after the ball, M. and Mme. Jean de Yturbe welcomed guests to the Château d'Anet, above, their 16th-century home, built for Henri II and Diane de Poitiers; at the Hamiltons' barbecue, below from left, Raymond Nasher, Joanne Bilby, Patricia de Bary, Marquette de Bary; bottom, Arnold Scassi, Catharine Hamilton; left, hors d'oeuvres at the Chateau d'Anet.

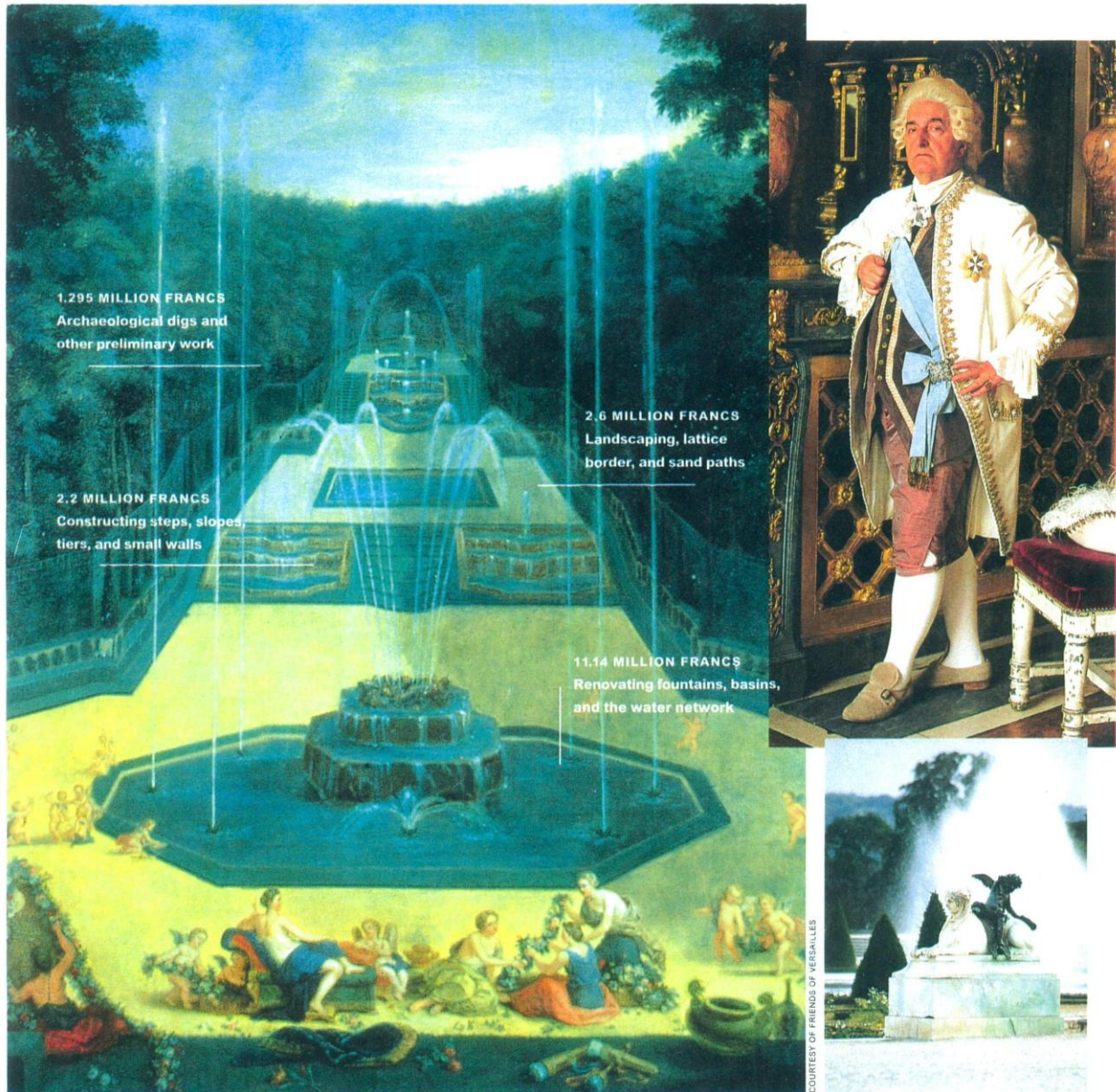




**GRAND FINALE** The skies flame with feux d'artifice. Such spectacles were also popular with the French kings. In *The Gardens of Versailles*, Pierre-André Lablaude writes that the fetes of Louis XIV "mark a definitive stage in the history of the gardens."



**GOWNS GALORE** Couture-clad ladies gathered on the Grande Terrasse for the champagne reception before the ball. For \$5,000, guests could attend four events, including Le Bal de Versailles and waltz away with commemorative



1.295 MILLION FRANCS  
Archaeological digs and other preliminary work

2.2 MILLION FRANCS  
Constructing steps, slopes, tiers, and small walls

2.6 MILLION FRANCS  
Landscaping, lattice border, and sand paths

11.14 MILLION FRANCS  
Renovating fountains, basins, and the water network

COURTESY OF FRIENDS OF VERSAILLES

**D**ESIGNED BY André Le Nôtre and Louis XIV, the gardens of Versailles were meant to symbolize the Sun King's power over man and nature. And, they were a great place for a party. Amid fireworks and fanfare, Molière's players performed at Louis XIV's fetes; Mozart entertained Louis XV's guests; and the arcadian revels of Marie Antoinette and Louis XVI were unrivaled. Until now. Last June, the American Friends of Versailles—a charitable organization devoted to Franco-American relations and spearheaded by Catharine Hamilton—planned a week of festivities culminating in Le Bal de Versailles, which recalled the extravagance of the Gallic kings, but for a

cause. The committee staged 16 gala events and raised two-thirds of the \$4.2 million needed to restore the Trois Fontaines Bosquet, one of 16 groves carved out of Versailles's landscape. This particular grove was laid out by Le Nôtre, according to Louis XIV's design, and was comprised of three terraces, originally linked by cascades and flights of stairs and later by ramps, so that the gouty king could get around his favorite spot. The three fountains (hence the name)—each a different shape—were the bosquet's only ornament. But that must have been enough to charm the democratic souls of two earlier American ambassadors, Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin, who also danced all night in the gardens of Versailles. —SABINE ROTHMAN





**ALL THAT GLITTERS** Clockwise far left: Jean Cotelle's *Les Trois Fontaines Bosquet*, commissioned in 1688; party planner Pierre Celeryon in Louis XIV's bedroom; the Marie Antoinette Theater, where guests enjoyed a piano and violin concert; Baron Elie de Rothschild's place setting for a state dinner in the gallery of the Grand Trianon; Pierre Celeryon prepares for the state dinner; an angel above the altar in the Royal Chapel; a centerpiece from Catharine and David Hamilton's barbecue at their 17th-century home, Chateau de St. Georges Motel, the day after the ball; Marie Antoinette's music room; Sphinx meets Pan.



**AT THE BALL** Clockwise from top left: Carolyne Roehm; Charlotte Moss and Chris Walling; Susan Gutfreund; Sandy de Yturbe; Lynn Wyatt; from left, Sandy de Yturbe, Cecile Zilkha, Francine LeFrak, Michèle Fiérschi-Fouan, Anne-Marie de Ganay, Comtesse Helene de Mortemart, Gretchen Jordan, Lynn Wyatt; the Horners of the Hunt take five; pre-dinner procession in the Orangerie; Courtney Cline, Victoria Kataoka, Anne Catharine Morton, Alexandra Gugelmann; Hubert Astier (president of the Chateau of Versailles), Catharine Hamilton (president of the American Friends of Versailles), David Hamilton, Catherine Trautmann (Minister of Culture), Robert Noel Castellani, Le Vicomte de Rohan, (president of Les Amis de Versailles), Pierre-André Lablaude (chief architect of Historic Monuments); Renaud de Viel Castel and Diana Odasso.

