

CITY FOCUS III

## My Geneva

Geneva in December offers tons of seasonal charm, with its cute Christmas markets and fairs. But for a more alternative guide to this Swiss city, Celeste Neill Duvoisin talks to **Katharina Sand** – owner of Septieme Etage, the most influential fashion boutique in town

**I**t might be known as the world's smallest metropolis, but Geneva has a big reputation as a meeting place for world-influencing decision makers, and hosts numerous international organisations. The city also has a growing international influence, focused around its passionate appreciation of aesthetic philosophy. This pretty lakeside settlement has an inherent adoration of the arts and nature that is immediately apparent in its urban >>



culture and unique lifestyle. The vibrant district known as the Quartier des Bains ([quartierdesbains.ch](http://quartierdesbains.ch)) is perhaps the key player in the city's strong desire to nurture both international and local contemporary art.

### Day One

■ **9:00** Start your day with a fresh croissant and reviving coffee on the **Place du Bourg-de-Four** in the heart of Geneva's Old Town. It's a charming cobbled square that features a number of little cafés.

■ **10:00** Head across town to the **Palais des Nations** for a tour of The United Nations (8-14 Avenue de la Paix, [unog.ch](http://unog.ch)). The palace



Tintin fans should head to the Cornavin Hotel, which features in *The Calculus Affair*

stands in a park originally owned by the Revilliod de Rive family, whose last member bequeathed it to the city – but only on the condition that peacocks should roam freely in the grounds. You can sometimes hear the birds' strange mating calls interrupting major peace conferences.

■ **12:30** Back in the Old Town, stop for lunch at the cafeteria of the **Musée d'Art et d'Histoire** (2 Rue Charles-Galland, tel. +41 (0)22 418 2600) before exploring the collection and the incredible bookshop.

■ **14:00** **Septieme Etage** (10 Rue du Perron, [septieme.com](http://septieme.com)) has two stores, which are set right at the edge of the Old Town; it makes a nice contrast to have modern collections from international designers set against this historical backdrop. Just a few doors up is **Librairie L'Exemplaire** (12 Rue du Perron, [lexemplaire.ch](http://lexemplaire.ch)), where the owner can unearth collector's items such as the largest stockpile of the very fashionable 1920s illustration magazine *La Gazette du Bon Ton*. Also on the same street is the curious **Perret Antiques**



**Top:** Peruse on-trend creations amid serene surroundings at Septieme Etage

**Above and left:** All things old and unusual at quirky Perret Antiques

**Opposite page:** Beauty inside and out at the Fondation Bodmer

