

French Firm to Advise Its Clients in California

By Susan McRae
Daily Journal Staff Reporter

The first French firm to advise clients in California on French law is expected to start doing business in Los Angeles shortly, making it at least the third firm from outside the United States to perform that particular service here.

Pierre Hourcade, associate attorney with Paris-based Menant & Associates, has temporarily opened a branch in the Beverly Hills law offices of Cooper Epstein & Hurewitz, pending approval of the firm's license by the State Bar.

"We believe with the coming of 1993 [the year the European Economic Community has set to eliminate trade barriers between the 12 member countries], we can provide French legal assistance and European legal assistance to American lawyers," Hourcade said.

Like the Japanese and English firms that preceded Menant & Associates in coming to the West Coast, Hourcade said his firm will provide advice on French law, not compete with the existing market. Most of its work will come through American lawyers, whose clients have private investments in France or Europe.

The one-lawyer branch office of eight-attorney Menant & Associates also will serve as a referral agency for French clients in Los Angeles and Europe who are in need of American lawyers.

Hourcade said Menant & Associates decided to come to Los Angeles because the city provides a convenient link between Paris and the Far East, where the firm already has established business connections in Korea and Taiwan.

Moreover, he said, several French law firms exist in New York, but none has opened on the West Coast.

Hourcade said the firm expects busi-



OPENS BRANCH — *Pierre Hourcade of Paris-based Menant & Associates has opened an office in Beverly Hills.*

ness to pick up sharply as soon as the European trade barriers are lifted, stimulating investments in Europe as well as domestically. To that end, the French Department of Foreign Trade is organizing a seminar in Paris on June 29 on investing in California. A delegation from Los Angeles, including the French trade commissioner, is expected to attend.

Hourcade, 26, received his law degree from the Sorbonne University in Paris in 1986. He joined Menant & Associates last year. The firm specializes in international, business, tax and trademark law.