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Paul Palau

The abuse of alcohol is a health hazard. Drink in moderation.

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EDITORIAL

Herault, heart of Languedoc, is one of the most popular tourist destinations in France. Indeed, the French people have indicated that it is their third favorite location. With good reason, the department boasts fantastic potential, including a "Great Site of France®" (Saint-Guilhem-le-Desert - Gorges of Herault) – officially recognized as exceptional along with another dozen or so French destinations outside of Herault. With over 15 amazing spots, as well as the Circus of Navacelles and the Salagou Valley-Circus of Moureze, both of which are also on the verge of becoming Great Sites of France®, this is a remarked and a remarkable destination. Situated on the shores of the Mediterranean, it is without a doubt an extraordinary territory, with its vast array of ponds, lakes and rivers. Herault is the second largest wine-growing department in France. It sets an example to follow in Languedoc. As a result, wine tourism is developing here, with sites of reference, linked to the area's rich vine-growing past. At present, gastronomy is also part and parcel of the decor. It explores the local specialties offered by numerous towns and villages, all the while adding value to the terroir, right up to the consumer's plate. More than elsewhere, visitors explore this sundrenched land, often while practicing different types of sport. Indeed, Languedoc offers a wide range of activities and attractions in an accessible natural environment, providing both pleasure and relaxation alike.

The Vent Sud editorial team

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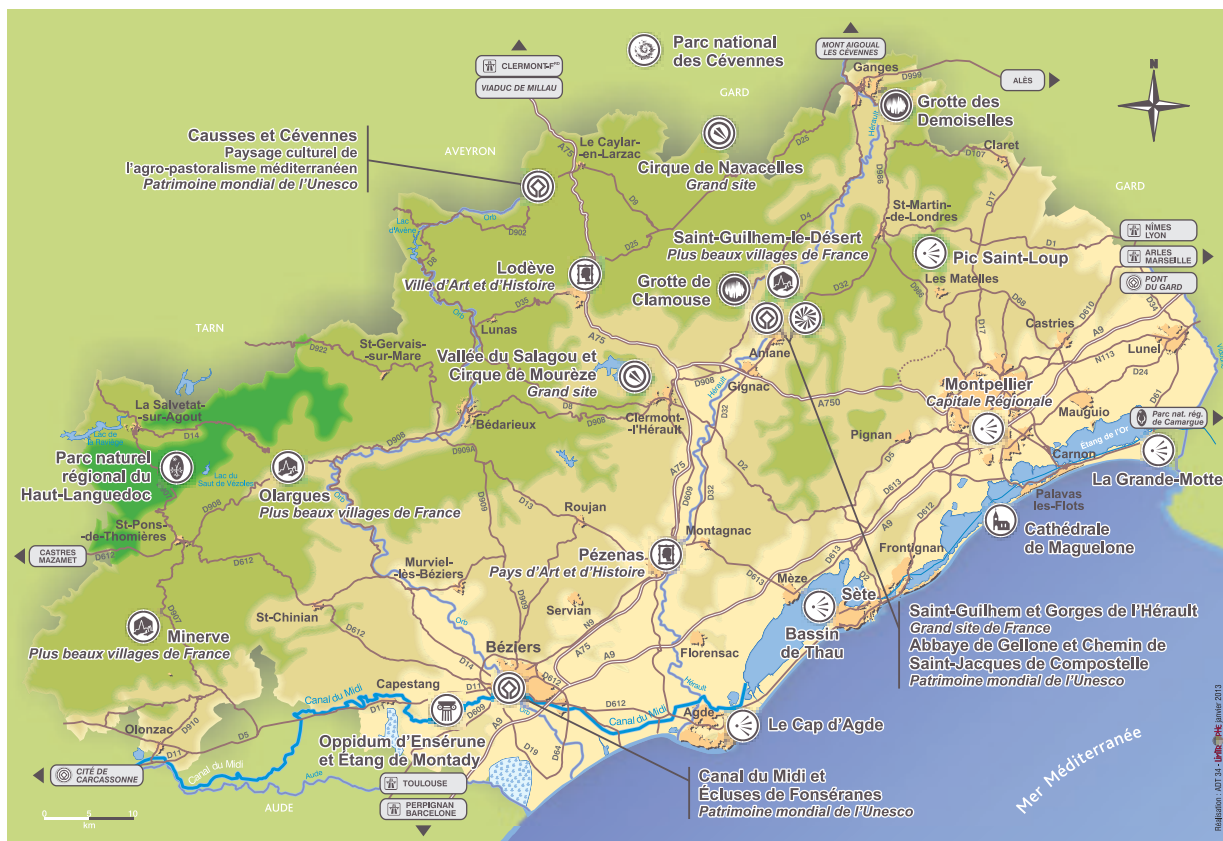
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{ A LAND OF EXPLORATION }



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6) VENT SUD / LANGUEDOC



© Christine Caville

The circus of Navacelles within the meanders of the Vis canyon

Currently vying for the status of Great Site of France®, the Circus of Navacelles entertains some 300,000 tourists each year – an impressive number for a natural amphitheatre. It was recently recognized by Unesco as a World Heritage Landmark within the Causses and the Cevennes area and is also listed as a Natura 2000 site. The view from the top of the Blandas plateau is breathtaking: it directly overlooks the Vis canyon,

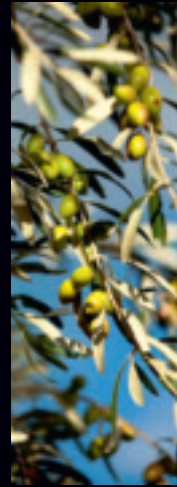
where the gorges cut the Gard and Herault limestone plateaus. In this location, a meander dried up 6,000 years ago reveals a green oasis. At the bottom of the canyon, the village of Navacelles seems to watch the cascades of its river where swimmers enjoy cooling off during the summertime. Navacelles is a beauty mark set within a crazy landscape – a 27-kilometer long and 800-meter wide canyon extending from one side of the plateau to the

other. This configuration was shaped over 3 million years ago by the Vis River. And if the waterways have moved to other facades, thereby roaming the slopes of the Massif Central and the Causses Mountains, the natural surroundings here are more astonishing than elsewhere. In some areas, the water of the river rushes out with force, like for example at the source of the Foux, within a couple of kilometers walking distance from Navacelles. ■

The Roman side to Saint-Guilhem-le-Desert

Situated at the entrance to the gorges of Verdus and the circus of Infernet, Saint-Guilhem-le-Desert lies between rocky outcrops and hills. It was classified as a Unesco World Heritage Site in 1999 for its two jewels of Roman art - the Gellone abbey and the Devil's Bridge - as well as for being on the pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela. Since 2010, the village is also recognized as a Great Site of France®, along with the circus of Infernet, the gorges of Herault,

the natural cave of Clamouse and the surrounding villages of Saint-Jean-de-Fos, Aniane, Puechabon and Montpeyroux. Each year, over 650,000 visitors come to see the Gellone abbey containing a piece of Jesus Christ's cross and the relics of Guilhem. It was founded in 804 by the latter, who was a monk and former soldier, and equally a first cousin of Charlemagne. In the year one thousand, the pilgrims who flocked from the east and from Italy, already used to stop here on their



way to Spain. The cave of Clamouse boasts an astonishing diversity of aragonite and calcite crystals. It is one of the most beautiful underground formations in France and is used as an example, in terms of management, in countries as far away as China. One must cross the indestructible Devil's Bridge to reach this site, under which the plunging gorges of the Herault River via the incisions in the limestone rock on a backdrop of scrubland and olive groves. ■



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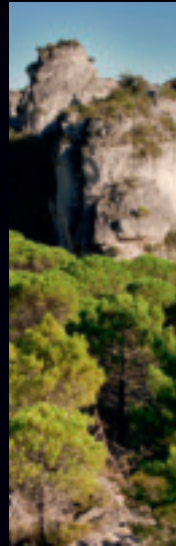


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The circus of Moureze near Salagou

Situated between Clermont l'Herault, Bedarieux and Lodeve, the medieval village of Moureze is surrounded by 300 hectares of chaotic rock formations shaped by the erosion identified as the most important dolomite-based site in France. In addition to its Saint Marie church dating back to the 12th century, Moureze offers a tangle of alleys where you can find the start to pathways leading to a large array of giant stones, standing upright as if in revolt. Mount Liausson is the highest point, whereas the orientation table of the park of Courtinals dominates this

collection of dolomite rocks. The ridge of Mount Liausson faces north towards the mountains of Lodeve and the banks of Lake Salagou. Situated a couple of kilometers away, this artificial body of water was created at the end of the 60s. It offers a reflection of the surrounding red ochre and green colored hills and allows fishing lovers to catch pike, perch and carp. The dam built out of basalt rock on the Salagou River did not however, inundate the nearby village of Celles, which, as a result, became a ghost town beside the lake. On the opposite



side, Octon seems to defy it to overcome its abandoned state. The Salagou valley recognized as a Natura 2000 area and on the way to becoming a Great Site of France®, boasts a dark red relief, produced by the rich in iron oxide ruffe rock. This inland sea is appreciated by the inhabitants of Montpellier and is a popular summertime tourist attraction. The villages of Liausson, Le Puech and Salasc invite visitors to discover the upper hinterland of Languedoc, while at dusk the limestone peaks of the circus of Moureze emerge in the distance as if unreal. ■



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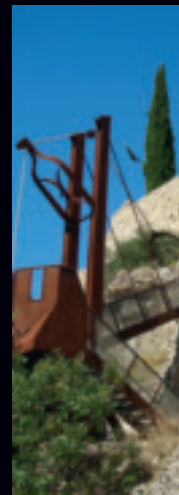


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Minerve, one of Herault's hidden treasures

Surrounded by steep ravines, Minerve proudly emerges from the landscape. Founded in the middle of the Cesse River and its tributary, the Brian River, this village was strategically of interest as it was considered impregnable, at least up until the Cathar episode in 1210. The paved streets weave from the Saint-Rustic well to the Saint-Etienne church and the ruins of the castle, its war machines or catapult... This decor, as grandiose as

it is arid in the summertime, is part and parcel of the scrubland, kermes oak and olive grove scenery offered by the Cesse and the Brian valley. Minerve is also one of the most beautiful villages in France. Situated a few steps away is the Canal du Midi, and Roquebrun, in the Orb valley, nestled at the foot of the Caroux mountains. In this area, the northern vineyard of Saint-Chinian, bordered by the Minervois and the Corbières appellations, competes for the



© C. Zamora

best limestone slopes covered with green oak and arbutus trees. These villages count among the hidden treasures of Herault. They offer a refreshing detour in the gneiss and granite gorges carved out by the Heric torrent on the plateau of Caroux, which can be accessed from Mons-la-Trivalle. The scenery of this location is striking with its rocky pinnacles, softened by a vegetation of beech and heather, covering numerous chasms and cascades. ■

{ A LAND OF EXPLORATION }



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From Caroux to the plateau of Lakes **At once beautiful and untamed**

Dubbed "Mountain of Light", the Caroux Massif is surrounded by La Montagne Noire (to its west), by the Lauragais hinterland and the Minervois mountains (to its south), as well as the Orb mountains (to its east). The Caroux-Espinouse massif, situated within the extreme north-west part of Hérault, covers 20,000 hectares and is recognized as a remarkable natural site. It is home to a reserve of mouflons as well as six bird species including the loggerhead shrike, the eagle owl and the great black woodpecker. As a result it has been recognized as a Natura 2000 site. At a crossroads between Mediterranean and Atlantic influences, Caroux is part of the perimeter of the Natural Regional

Park of Upper Languedoc, described as a meeting point between the various southern areas of France. Its diversity is written in the steep and woody relief, boasting a highly original flora. The village of Olargues is the secret gateway leading to the Lake plateau in the Somail massif - another strong element within this land of chestnut groves. The lake of Vesoles is exceptional as it is situated at the meeting point between the cascades of Saut de Vesoles on the Mediterranean side and the peat lands of Gatimort, evoking a much more Nordic atmosphere. These lakes are also very different in size, ranging from a couple of hectares for Airette to 400 hectares for Raviege. ■



{ A LAND OF EXPLORATION }



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The Canal du Midi **nothing short of a masterpiece**

Recognized as a World Heritage Site since 1996, the Canal du Midi remains the longest artificial navigable waterway in France, representing 241 kilometers from Toulouse through to the Thau Lagoon. As a result, 63 kilometers are situated in Hérault. Without a doubt, Pierre-Paul Riquet was the person who most explored the Montagne Noire as he wanted to link the Atlantic Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea. And he was successful in doing so, by constructing the Royal Canal of

The Two Seas from 1666 to 1681, re-baptized Canal du Midi during the French Revolution. Dubbed “The Wonder of Europe” by Vauban, this masterpiece which allowed the Languedoc wine industry to thrive over three centuries, remains renowned in Europe and throughout the world. Nowadays it is a holiday route open from April to October, punctuated by works of art: the round lock at Agde, the 9 locks of Fonseranes in Beziers or the Languedoc section, which from Carcassonne, joins

the Thau Lagoon via the ports of Homps or Colombiers. From this port, the direction of the archeological museum of Nissan-lez-Enserune, leads to Oppidum d’Enserune, an ancient Gallic village recognized as a National Monument. From the hillside, the oppidum overlooks the plane, the vineyards around Beziers and the dried up lagoon of Montady, cultivated since the 13th century. Under the hillside, the Canal du Midi flows through the tunnel of Malpas (1679), in direction of Beziers. ■

{ A LAND OF EXPLORATION }



© Olivier Maynard CMN/Paris Oppidum d'Ensérune



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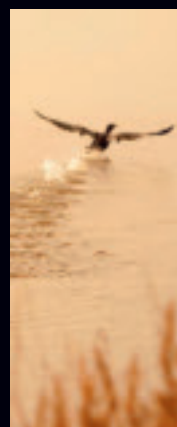


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Lagoons: from Orpellières to Thau

Between Valras and Serignan, the Orpellières estate situated at the mouth of the Orb River represents 150 hectares, including a 3-kilometer ribbon of dunes. It is one of the most majestic sites in Hérault and the region. In recent years, the restoration of its dunes by the reintroduction of vegetation and the use of wind-break fences - chestnut wood pickets to retain the sand - has made this site an example to follow. The National

Natural Reserve in Bagnas extends across 600 hectares in an ecosystem, home to a vast array of birds that can be observed at the site. West of the Thau Lagoon, this internationally renowned migration route extends across the former delta of the Hérault River, at the foot of the mount Saint-Loup with its volcanic earth. Contrary to Bagnas, the Thau Lagoon has generated tourist activities around the basin. Stretching



across 20 kilometers from Marseillan to Sète, this inland sea, identifiable thanks to its shellfish-related activities, is recognized as a Site of European Interest for its 2,500-hectare herbarium and its sea horses. Already immortalized by the photographer Frederic Maxant in "Thau, Oasis of Life", published by Biotopie, the largest lagoon in Languedoc nestled at the foot of the Gardiole Massif, plays both an ecological and an economic role. ■

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Sete and La Grande Motte: a singular island and a seaside town

When the weather is fine, the silhouette of Mount Saint-Clair, around which the town of Sete is constructed, and the pyramids of La Grande Motte seem to answer each other from the different sides of the coast. With its ballet of trawlers, its fish auction and its market filled with seafood stalls, Sete has preserved its image as a fishing and cargo harbor. Dating back to the 1960s, La Grande Motte is a construction designed by architect Jean Balladur. Initially criticized for its original appearance, it is at present recognized as a 20th century Heritage Site for its urban constructions. Sete's name is derived from the word cetacea meaning whale in Latin. Just as renowned, La Pointe-Courte is

its most picturesque suburb. If the curves of La Grande Motte match those of the Cevennes Mountain Range, its port is visited by leisure boats and nautical services are being put into place here at the same time as tourist attractions. Indeed, the town offers accommodation and top-class leisure activities. When it comes to the beach, the creation of the Lido sand barrier has united Sete and La Grande Motte in terms of sustainable development. Alfred Peter - in charge of the protection of the Mount-Saint-Michel - is developing the coast from Sete to Marseillan in order to fight erosion. The project also concerns the Lido sand barrier from Canon to La Grande Motte - an area boasting a rare quality of flora and fauna. ■



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Villeneuve-les-Maguelone: **another singular island**

Just next to Lattes, Villeneuve-les-Maguelone is a singular island with its ponds and its former islet. But this place attracts the inquisitive with its Saint-Pierre-&-Saint-Paul cathedral recognized as a historic monument with its stain-glassed windows by Robert Morris. On the estate managed by the Companions

of Maguelone, the Saint-Blaise chapel - surrounded by vines and a breathtaking view of the Lido sand barrier - is currently open to business tourism. From the road a passenger bridge gives onto a track circumventing the island on its west side, thereby allowing visitors to stroll to the beach in either summer or winter-time! ■



© Luc Jennepin

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©DR



Causses and Cevennes

A heritage of humanity

Above the towns of Ganges and Lodeve, the upper hinterland of the Causses and the Cevennes mountain range reunites majestic sites and a culture dating back to several thousand years: agro-pastoralism, a consequence of a direct relationship between man and nature, currently acknowledged by Unesco. On over 300,000 hectares south of the Massif Central, the Causses and the Cevennes mountains form a landscape braded by deep valleys within 4 depart-

ments including three - Lozere, Gard and Herault - situated in Languedoc-Roussillon. Five gateway towns offer an entrance to this territory: Ales in Gard, Mende in Lozere, Millau in Aveyron as well as Ganges and Lodeve in Herault. The site brings together 4 types of Mediterranean farming - agro-pastoralism, sylvo-pastoralism, transhumance and sedentary pastoralism. These activities create a link between the Cevennes' schist-laden valleys, the Causses' limestone



plateaus and the Mount-Aigoual's granite structure. International recognition has added value to a sometimes relic landscape, marked by the tranquility of isolated farms, hamlets, vaulted mangers, sheep tracks and watering holes. This world classification concerns 231 districts, including 28 in Herault, and recognizes the Cevennes Natural Park, the Grands Causses Regional Natural Park, as well as exceptional sites such as the Circus of Navacelles. ■



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From Bueges to Pic Saint-Loup

From gorges to vines

C lose to Ganges and the Cevennes National Park, a gothic-style bridge crosses the Herault River. After Brissac the limestone plateaus of Bueges and the gorges of the Herault River encourage visitors to wander off the beaten track. In the north of the department, Bueges - a tributary of the Herault - flows down a valley dug out at the foot of the Seranne Massif, a limestone backbone cutting the horizon. From here, the view alternates

rural landscapes and glimpses of the gorges of the Herault hinterland. The epicenter of this area - Saint-Jean-de-Bueges - lies under the rock of Tras Castel. In Saint-Bauzille-de-Putois, the upper valley of Herault hides the natural cave of Demoiselles boasting magical concretions. Olive trees and vines are an important part of this scrubland, along with mulberry trees - a mythical part of the Cevennes area where silk-growing used to be an important activity.

Nowadays, the vineyards and wines of Pic Saint-Loup are meeting with great success abroad. The Bonelli eagle flies over Pic Saint-Loup and the cliff of Hortus while Mount Canigou and Mount Ventoux put in an appearance on fine days. Popular with hikers, this peak has inspired artists such as Eugene Castelnau (1827-1894) and Vincent Bioules (1938). ■

For further information:
www.languedoc.com



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INTERVIEW OF ANDRE VEZINHET PRESIDENT OF THE HERAULT DEPARTMENT

Herauld offers great potential

WITH ITS GREAT SITES, WINEGROWING CULTURE, TERROIR, FANTASTIC LIFESTYLE AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES, HERAULT HAS IT ALL!

When it comes to tourism, how does Hérault compare to the rest of France?

Hérault is France's 3rd favorite destination. If you take into account all types of tourists, we are the 4th most visited department after Var, Alpes-Maritimes and Bouches-du Rhône. In addition, Hérault counts among the destinations that have remained popular since the onset of the crisis.

In your opinion, what is the definition of "a network of major sites"?

Hérault has a huge potential in terms of heritage sites (historic or natural), which could be used in the near future to boost its tourist industry. It already boasts one Great Site of France® - Saint-Guilhem-le-Desert - the Gorges of Hérault - out of the dozen or so officially recognized locations situated in other French areas. Two other spots - the Salagou Valley and the Circus of Navacelles - should soon also be added to this classification. The department includes around 15 other remarkable sites. Some equally plan to become Great Sites of France®; others just want to add value to their location and to implement a sustainable tourism strategy. I am working in collaboration with Louis Villaret, the President of the Hérault Tourism Office, who was also recently elected President of the national network of Great Sites of France®, in view of ensuring that all of these sites become recognized as exceptional destinations.

What are the stakes with regards to wine tourism in Hérault?

We benefit from an unrivalled potential at the heart of one of the largest

French vineyards, just next to the Mediterranean Sea. But some areas haven't as yet developed a tourism strategy. And yet in 2012, Trip Advisor rated Languedoc as the 6th best European destination for wine tourism, ahead of Burgundy and even Champagne. The current objective is that of structuring a somewhat limited and scattered offer, of associating the image of the destination to that of Languedoc wines, of assisting projects such as Viavino in Saint Christol, and of increasing the business of wine-growers and of tourism professionals.

Why are nature activities so important for tourism?

Over 50% of the requests made in our Tourist Offices concern nature activities. They have become a substantive social phenomenon. As a result, these activities should be a priority as they can help prolong the tourist season and can generate new markets. Some are even capable of creating genuine employment opportunities. For example, our water sports are already managed according to a guide elaborated in collaboration with the districts and agglomerations along the Hérault coastline. In view of better promoting these nature activities, the department has also adopted a tool, only used by twenty or so other areas. The Sites and Circuits Departmental Commission is a consultative body recognized by all actors for its efficiency when negotiations are called for. As result, Hérault will, without a doubt, become a major player in this domain.



It would appear that this tourist destination is going to be called "destination Languedoc, welcome to Hérault"?

This "brand" isn't really new. It's the term that visitors and the media use when they refer to our destination. But we have reinforced the values attached to this image and consolidated our positioning. This strategy is visually translated by our tourism logo and by the contents of our advertising. At present, it is the brand of a great destination, recognized by two-thirds of the people in France, as well as by many foreigners. ■

HERAULT France's oldest **winegrowing area**

ALMOST ALL OF THE DISTRICTS IN THE DEPARTMENT ARE INVOLVED IN WINEMAKING, THEREBY PLACING THIS VINEYARD IN A POLE POSITION WITHIN THE LANGUEDOC REGION. AT PRESENT HERAULT STILL BOASTS THE HIGHEST DIVERSITY OF WINES IN FRANCE BEARING A GEOGRAPHIC INDICATION.

The Hérault vineyard covers 86,100 hectares, making it the second most important winegrowing department in France. Along with Gard and Aude, it is one of the Languedoc's coastal departments extending from the flanks of the Massif Central to the seaside zones made up of beaches and lagoons. The development of local tourism in the 1960s did not really lead to the disappearance of the region's vineyards. Winegrowing vines were already found here 200 years BC. They were first introduced by the Greeks, followed by the Romans, before being saved by local monasteries. The most obvious incarnation of the latter era was the abbey of Valmagne. The Canal du Midi (built between 1666 and 1681) and the arrival of the railway boosted the development of the Languedoc wine industry, which from one century to the next, progressively became a mass producer of basic wine. More and more vines were planted up until the phylloxera crisis, ravaging the vineyard in 1863, followed by the revolt of 1907, which strongly marked the region's collective memory. At the end of the 70s, winegrowing unionist Jean Clavel defended the idea of producing less but better wines, at a time when cooperative wineries, mass production and high yielding vineyards dominated the scene. However, the nature of the terroirs, as well as the courage and the willingness of local and newly arrived vintners, progressively transformed this vineyard, thereby allowing it to produce premium quality wines, recognized today worldwide.

WINE PIONEERS

As it turns out, the local winegrowers were so innovative they ended up launching the trend for varietal wines – an adventure shared with wine merchant Robert Skalli in Sète and the Vin de Pays d'Oc denomination. As a result, Languedoc, France's pioneer winegrowing area, was the only vineyard capable of successfully producing a vast array of appellation wines at the same time as quality «vin de pays» wines. Over a 30-year period, Languedoc explored these complementary and parallel avenues, led by the Hérault wine industry. Protected Geographic Indication (PGI) wines account for 80% the area's total production. Some «vin de pays» are renowned worldwide, like for example, the white wine that has built the reputation of Mas Daumas Gassac in Aniane. Around the same time, Gérard Bru gained international recognition in 1994 for the wines of Puech-Haut in Saint-Drezery. Another treasure from Hérault, Picpoul-de-Pinet, is a dry white produced from the districts of Castelnau-de-Guers, Florensac, Meze, Montagnac, Pinet and Pomerols. It has become a reference for lovers of shell-fish. When it comes to red wine, Hérault asserts its character with the Faugères appellation north of Béziers on the southern side of Caroux, with the 30-year old Saint-Chinian Roquebrun appellation or with the Minervois appellation next to the Canal du Midi. At present, the Languedoc appellation brings together the following denominations: Gres de Montpellier, Terrasses du Larzac, Pic-Saint-Loup, Pezenas and Picpoul-de-Pinet. The terroirs of Cabrières, Saint-Saturnin,



© Olivier Maynard

Montpeyroux, Saint-Georges-d'Orques, Saint-Drezery, la Mejanelle, Verargues and Saint-Christol are located in these vine-growing zones. When it comes to fortified sweet wines, four appellations are elaborated in this area, as well as Clairette-du-Languedoc, made from a single grape variety, the wines of which are either marketed as young, dry or sweet.

THE KINGDOM OF NATURAL SWEET WINES

As early as Antiquity, the sweet wines of Languedoc were already well-known. Later on during the 13th century, Arnaud de Villeneuve discovered how to fortify them – a technique still used in the production of muscat today. The muscat wines of Frontignan, Lunel, Mireval and Saint-Jean-de-Minervois are shaped from the vineyards of Hérault. From Nîmes through to Montpellier, the muscat of Lunel extends over 321 hectares (5,329hl). Between Sète and Mireval, the zone producing the muscat of Frontignan is planted between the lagoons of Vic-la-Gardiole and of Thau. The terroir of Mireval, situated along the eastern side of the district of Frontignan, represents 260 hectares (4,776hl) and is surrounded by the Gardiole massif to its north, as well as by the sea and lagoons to its south. In Saint-Jean-de-Minervois, 195 hectares (4,250hl) are planted at an altitude of 200 meters, thereby producing the department's latest harvest. *“Recognized in 1936 by Inao (the French National Institute of Appellations of Origin) and created in 1935, the muscat of Frontignan is one of the oldest French appellations,”* points out Christophe Miron, President of the Hérault Muscat Wines Association. *“The Frontignan co-operative winery produces 17, 000hl from a surface area of 397 hectares – that is to say half of the volume of muscat wine made within the department. All of the wines are elaborated from a single grape variety - muscat à petits grains – previously called golden muscat of Frontignan. Their typical style results from the terroir and the climate, as well as winegrowing expertise.”* The appellation's annual production, evaluated at 35,000 hectoliters (4 million bottles), represents a small niche market, but the district and restaurants of Frontignan promote a range currently including dry, sparkling and sweet offerings. In addition to the co-operative wineries of Lunel and Frontignan, some well-known muscat wines are made by private producers such as Clos Bellevue in Lunel, Mas de Madame in Frontignan, Domaine de La Belle Dame in Mireval and Barroubio in Saint-Jean-de-Minervois. ■



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DOMAINE COUPE-ROSES IN LA CAUNETTE

An invitation to taste wines

AT THE HEART OF THE MINERVOIS APPELLATION, THE ESTATE OF FRANCOISE FRISSANT LE CALVEZ IS NESTLED AGAINST THE CESSÉ CANYON NEXT TO MINERVE WHERE THE WINES SPEAK OCCITAN, THE LANGUAGE OF THE LANDSCAPE AND OF THE TERROIR.

When she was 20, Françoise Le Calvez wanted to travel and had never even considered remaining in her native village of La Caunette. However she ended up returning home after completing an engineering degree in agricultural science. This woman of character, who felt that the profession of vintner was too difficult, attended the wine growing school of humility, when she took over the family estate. *"I started with 20 hectares in 1987 and increased the surface to today's 40 hectares. Trips are finally part of my life as I sell 85% of my wine in Asia and in the United States and the left over 15% in Europe"* Situated at an altitude, Domaine Coupe-Roses is called after the pink clay characterizing the parcels of viognier and roussane vines used to elaborate the estate's small quantities of white wine. Among its red Minervois appellation wines, such as Bastide de Coupe-Roses, Les Plots and Orience, Granaxa is especially surprising as it is the oldest product and made from grenache in an area largely dominated by syrah. Françoise and Pascal Frissant Le Calvez's latest pride and joy is their new cellar inaugurated in July 2012, which acts at

once as a tasting room and a gourmet food shop, as well as an exhibition area. This new addition has arrived at exactly the right time, as Françoise is currently at the head of Grands Chemins du Minervois – an association dedicated to promoting local artists. *"The 500 m² space that we have just opened at La Caunette represents an investment of 750,000€. I dreamt about it over the past 20 years, but we had to first invest in our winemaking facilities."* The estate is ideally situated on the touristic route of Minervois, north-east of Carcassonne and south of La Montagne Noire. It can therefore play the wine tourism card, so dear to Françoise. This woman of character is also one of those *"Languedoc Lady Winegrowers"* who have joined forces in view of sharing advice and marketing initiatives. Françoise Le Calvez's upcoming projects include the use of old local grape varieties (the estate is currently experimenting with 40 different types), the conversion of Coupe-Roses' vineyard to organic growing and the completion of its olive grove boasting 300 trees. This property has always been the antithesis of productivity. ■

LE RELAIS CHANTOVENT IN MINERVE

A restaurant **reflecting the terroir**

NICOLAS BRU'S CUISINE BOASTS THE FRAGRANCES OF THE CESSÉ VALLEY.

Nicolas Bru, the head chef at Relais Chantover, worked for the family-owned establishment La Caunette for 7 years after graduating from the hotel school in Montpellier. *"Nobody in my family was in the restaurant business, my grand-father was at the agricultural school of Montpellier and my uncle owned a wine estate,"* he comments. This 30-year old and nephew of Gerard Bru – the former industrialist and the proprietor of Domaine Puech-Haut in Saint-Drezery – established his restaurant 4 years ago: *"Our credo is to do everything from A to Z. We propose refined cuisine reflecting the region's terroir. I only serve local produce such as the goat's cheese from Combeville in Bize-Minervois. Our usual dishes include caramelized veal with hazelnuts, duck breast tourmedos with figs or lamb infused in thyme."* The clientele of this establishment enjoys coming here at once for the astonishing menu, but also for the extraordinary decor offering a view of the gorges of Brian. ■

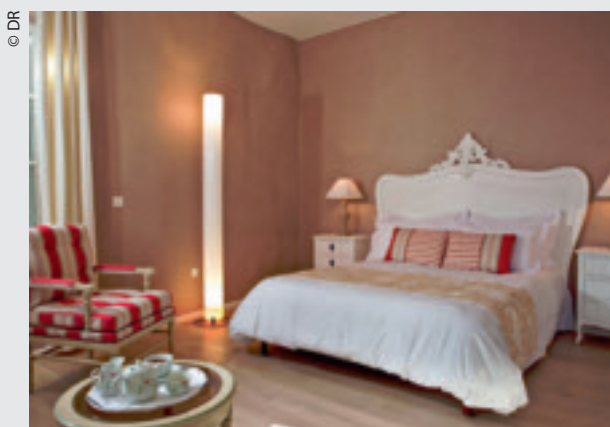


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CHATEAU DE SIRAN

A suave and velvety **hotel**

BROUGHT INTO THE SPOTLIGHT BY NADEGE AND GERARD BLET, CHATEAU DE SIRAN IS A HAVEN OF PEACE.



© DR

At teatime in this magnificent 16th century mansion, Nadege Blet evaluates the progress made since her arrival here in 2011. Indeed, she and her husband left Paris to settle down in Siran. *"This project is sheer madness; imagine a hotel with over 50 windows!"* she laughs. *"But most importantly, this castle has a soul. It is built upon the foundations of the rampart of the ancient village of Siran."* When there is a ray of sunlight one can consider having lunch under the castle's lime tree. To the edifice's west, a heated pool is discreetly located in a courtyard where the former stables used to be. At the entrance, the impressive Renaissance staircase made out of Aigne sandstone leads to the rooms which overlook the vineyard. This location promises peace and tranquility year in year out. ■

{ A LAND OF VINTNERS }

© Olivier Maynard



Situated in the old railway station of Quarante-Cruzy that used to link Colombiers to Cruzy, this local line dedicated to travellers but most especially to the transportation of wine, was acquired 4 years ago by a young couple. Sebastien and Gaelle Caille are the happy owners of this location. After working for a dozen years in Beziers for the caterer Pauvre Jacques, Sebastien thought about opening a restaurant – this dream has finally come true:

LE TERMINUS IN CRUZY

A railway-style bistrot

THE FORMER CRUZY TRAIN STATION AWAIT'S GOURMET TRAVELERS IN SUMMER AND WINTER ALIKE.

"I love well-made cuisine from local and seasonal produce." At Le Terminus, one can enjoy Catalan-style shoulder of lamb simmered in lemon juice and/or an excellent rum baba. The wine menu is limited to offerings from Languedoc and Roussillon and is largely dedicated to the Saint-Chinian appellation. During the summertime a pleasant terrace acts as a wine and tapas bar. This establishment has already obtained a distinction from the Michelin Guide ■

CHATEAU DES CARRASSES IN QUARANTE

Elegance on the banks of the canal

THIS 19TH-CENTURY ESTABLISHMENT BLENDS THE SAVORS OF ITS CUISINE WITH THE REFINEMENT OF ITS DECOR.

This is a dream location to stay in as its rooms, suites and units boast a rare elegance. The castle has decided to play the wine tourism card and is therefore highlighting the area's local heritage and gastronomy. Transformed into a southern French style resort, the complex offers a maze of terraces with panoramic views, pools and private gardens in the middle of olive groves, vines and a Mediterranean flora. One can enjoy tapas or a New York-style brunch served with regional wines. Within this summertime decor, an infinity-edge pool, tennis courts and a bowls pitch incite patrons to relax. Over the past two years, Anne de Ravel has been in charge of the cuisine at the request of the current co-owner Karl O'Hanlon, an Irish banker now involved in the tourist industry. ■



© DR

DOMAINE BORIE LA VITARELE IN CAUSSES-ET-VEYRAN

A dynamic style of wine

SITUATED EAST OF THE SAINT-CHINIAN ROQUEBRUN APPELLATION, DOMAINE BORIE LA VITARELE IS THE PRIDE OF ITS OWNERS.

When they acquired the estate, Cathy and Jean-François Izarn, were highly motivated about the prospect of settling down here. Jean-François originally lived a couple of kilometers from Cathy's home town of Causses-et-Veyran. This situation led to their encounter and their union, even before they started to think about taking over the vines abandoned by Cathy's father. *"To start with we relied upon inter-cropping with a parcel of plum trees, the harvest of which was sold in Agen. This situation lasted 7 or 8 years. We only had 1 hectare of merlot, 1.5 hectares of grenache, 2 hectares of syrah and 4 hectares of carignan. Back then, we used to sell the harvest in bulk and we both needed to be trained before even considering the idea of managing a wine estate,"* comments the couple. Indeed, they were really keen on taking care of these vines, bought one parcel after the other. *"We started off from scratch with only a couple of thousand euros on our bank account. At the beginning of the 1990s, we picked our first harvest and within 5 years, we had already paid off the entire estate!"* they explain with still the same astonishment. Little by little, the property grew to 18.5 hectares, its current surface area. The parcel of plum trees has since been replaced by white grape varieties that

are currently being harvested to elaborate wine. Last but not least, the estate cultivates the vine according to the lunar cycles and the use of herbal treatments. As a result, this is the only biodynamic wine estate within the Saint-Chinian Roquebrun appellation production area. From the very beginning, the cultivation of this vineyard has been punctuated by wild harvesting, visits to herbal shops and the preparation of infusions. *"I have to prepare herbal teas – mixtures that I leave to infuse overnight at 40°.* Biodynamic growing is not just a form of homeopathy. The end result isn't spectacular; it amounts to respecting the balances of nature and to creating a virtuous cycle. And it tends to bring mineral characteristics to the fore. The wines are fresher and more expressive thanks to the state of the soil," adds Jean-François. Indeed, Borie la Vitarele is one of the few local estates bearing the Demeter label, specific to biodynamic growing, even if a dozen or so neighboring vintners have switched over to organic farming. *"With an annual production of 70,000 bottles, our wines are currently well implanted in wine stores and are equally present in certain restaurants. Connoisseurs come all the way to the estate to buy directly from our cellar,"* points out Jean-François. ■



© Christine Caville

LE MAS DES CHIMERES IN OCTON

An organic conscience

AGAINST ALL ODDS, OVER THE PAST TWENTY YEARS, GUILHEM DARDE HAS GIVEN MEANING TO HIS WINES ORIGINATING FROM OCTON.



© Olivier Maynard

ren. In 1974, he took over his family's farm at the age of 18, at a time when mixed activities - vegetable and animal farming - allowed him to be entirely self-sufficient. However, at first, he just wanted to fit in: *"When I was young, I thought about stringing up the vines and machine harvesting like everyone else, and then I decided to stop everything!"* Contrary to the trend back then, he renewed with hand-picking and pulled out of the local co-operative winery in the 1990s. *"At the time I kept a low profile as my father was against this decision and I was sad about leaving this structure as I believe in solidarity."* In homage to the song by Brassens - *"The Birds of Passage"* - he decided to baptize his estate Le Mas des Chimeres. And then a miracle took place thanks to some wine made from a vat of cinsault. It drew plenty of attention and taught him that it was possible to produce another sort of quality wine in Languedoc.

REBEL WINES WITH A CAUSE

At the beginning of the 90s, when he had 17 hectares, Guilhem knew that *"traditional grape varieties were going to be replaced by the so-called noble ones that were popular worldwide such as chardonnay, merlot, cabernet or syrah."* His strong character incited him to revive the production of cinsault and carignan, resulting in two single varietal vin de pays Coteaux du Salagou. The second millennium witnessed the release of his red Terrasses-du-Larzac baptized Carminare, L'heretique and Nuit Grave in reference to the history books' negative depiction of the Languedoc's bygone proletarian winegrowers. *"We are creators of wealth and our wines are sold worldwide,"* insists this artisan, whose entire production is exported throughout Europe but also to the United States, Canada and Mexico. *"Organic wine-growing is my path to consciousness,"* he adds. When it comes to the area surrounding Octon, Guilhem is familiar with the agronomic qualities of each parcel situated on the red plains or on the basaltic plateaus. In 2013, he celebrated the 20th anniversary of his private cellar. His production of 60,000 bottles of wine is sold at an affordable price - between 6.80€ and 13€. Connoisseurs can also enjoy the Mas des Chimeres selection at La Coquerie, the Michelin star restaurant in Sete. ■

This objective is highly important to Guilhem: *"Appellation wines are terroir wines that have to be respected in order for them to fully express themselves! If over-nourished, the vine becomes obese. To obtain good fruit, it is necessary to respect the plant's balance and the growing cycles,"* he solemnly explains. Indeed Guilhem has taken part in struggles, notably as a former activist of the region's underground winegrowers protest movement. He is also in love with Octon, his native village, where he still lives today with his wife and his 4 child-

LA SOURCE IN VILLENEUVETTE

Set in a historic treasure chest

OLIVIER AND INGE BERNADOU SERVE THEIR GUESTS WITHIN THE HEART OF THE MANUFACTURE ROYALE OF VILLENEUVETTE FOUNDED UNDER THE REIGN OF LOUIS THE 14TH.

Created 25 years ago, the restaurant La Source is currently managed by the Bernadou duo – Inge who acts as hostess and her husband Olivier in charge of the cooking. This semi-gastronomic establishment displays its lunchtime chalk board or menu in an ideal decor, including a swimming pool and terrace during the tourist season. The Mediterranean-style cuisine is combined with south-western French delicacies, in view of offering dishes such as foie gras with glazed chestnuts, fresh sea scallops, or veal filet with a tarragon crust. Ever since he put on his chef's costume 2 years ago, Olivier cooks fresh produce that he only suggests with regional wines. This establishment is the obvious choice for a classy lunch in an enchanting site. ■



© Olivier Maynard

HOTEL LA PALOMBE IN THE HAMLET OF BASSE

Slumber in Salagou

AFTER OCTON, THE HAMLET OF BASSE BOASTS UNTAMED NATURAL SURROUNDINGS WITHIN A PEACEFUL SETTING



© Christelle Zamora

The small vegetable garden and the outdoors game of chess next to the restaurant are an unexpected site. The story of La Palombe, a hotel-restaurant situated in the district of

Octon, is quite unique. La Palombe was created in 1994, when five Swiss families decided to entirely renovate the hamlet of Basse, which, at the time, was entirely in ruins. A large white facade with old shutters situated in the middle of the establishment, indicates the presence of hotel rooms overlooking the chestnut and oak trees of the shimmering Salagou valley. *"This place is paradise for the Swiss, and after a first visit, you either come back on a regular basis or never return,"* explains Margrit Roth-Ott, the owner of La Palombe. *"When we bought this ruin in the 1990s, the hamlet was completely abandoned. With some Swiss friends we decided to contact the district and each of us bought a part of the ruins, which we agreed to restore within two years. As a result, the hamlet is only inhabited for part of the year."* ■

{ A LAND OF VINTNERS }

LA TERRASSE DU MIMOSA IN MONTPEYROUX

A winning formula

THIS CONVIVIAL SPOT IS AT ONCE A
CELLAR, RESTAURANT AND WINE BAR.

Thirty something Clotaire Gaillard took over *La Terrasse de Mimosa* with his childhood friend Bertrand Nicolas, who wields his culinary skills in the kitchen. *"This place has always been a business. It was previously a grocery store and a coffee shop before being acquired by the Pugh couple for whom I've been working as a sommelier for 4 years,"* describes Clotaire. During the summer period, people come here for the terrace and the wine waiter's expertise. In the wintertime, the restaurant conserves its charm with its cement floor tiles, its bar made from Lodeve granite, decorated with ceramic tiles from Saint-Jean-de-Fos. This store proposes the wines from the Terrasses du Larzac appellation and its thirty or so districts. Clotaire knows everything about the 200 products on display. At the same time, the cuisine promotes local specialties such as the charcuterie from Domaine des Agriolles situated in La Boissiere or the cheeses of Domaine de La Font du Griffon. *La Terrasse du Mimosa* knows how to cultivate a romantic ambiance for a candlelit dinner or tapas whatever the season. ■



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LE CHATEAU DE JONQUIERES

An Elegant Demeure

TOURISM ON THE HERAULT'S RIGHT BANK.

"Five families have successively owned this property, which is without a doubt at the origin of Jonquieres, Hérault's smallest district," observe today's owners Francois and Isabelle de Cabissole. *"Transmitting such an estate, dating back to the 12th and 17th centuries and officially recognized as an official monument, is quite an accomplishment. The Lansade family owned this chateau between 1787 and 1963, before leaving it to a Cabissole. Wine is produced here since 1890, but it was necessary to replant the entire vineyard between 1992 and 2000 in view of setting up an independent cellar."* After this period, Isabelle adapted four rooms for a bed and breakfast service in one of the two angle towers on the western side of the castle. As a result, pink, blue and yellow bedrooms and a games room are currently found in the upper part of the apartment. The walls are decorated with the arms and the crests of the Lansade family along with floral tapestries, except for the tower's red room. Everywhere, the view of the park and its impressive gate, incite the chateau's guests to discover the natural surroundings. Charlotte and Clement, the daughter and son-in-law of the Cabissoles, organize lunch-time meals paired with wine and served, of course, in the family's crockery. ■



DOMAINE ALEXANDRIN IN SAINT-JEAN-DE-FOS

A small vine-loving train

JUST A STONE'S THROW FROM THE GORGES OF HERAULT AND SAINT-GUILHEM-LE-DESERT, DOMAINE ALEXANDRIN OFFERS A VISIT OF THE VINEYARD, DEPARTING FROM SAINT-JEAN-DE-FOS.

"Our first small train called Great Vibrations was my very own prototype. I had previously decided in 2009, to attach two trailers to a tractor, in view of taking the public to the vineyard. The idea was a success, as result my wife Alexandra and I decided to buy a small train...", cheerily explains Jerome Hermet. Thoughtful, he evaluates the distance covered so far, after taking over his wife's family estate. Neither of them imagined that Jerome would become a winegrower/small train driver following his civil engineering studies. Jerome Hermet proposes two red appellation wines - *"Alex"* (Coteaux du Languedoc) and *"Les Hermes"* (Terrasses du Larzac), the 2010 vintage of which was awarded a Gold Medal and a Grand Prix by the Hérault Valley Wine Competition in 2012. Two other wines - Alexandrin white and rose - complete his selection. In addition, the couple found the original idea of promoting their products with a label in the form of a question mark! The following stage involved the acquisition of a tasting room across from the Argileum house of pottery in Saint-Jean-de-Fos. Jerome Hermet has magic fingers: he recycles used material such as old cooper sulfate machines or floating wood to make tables, lamps, and even Andrin, the estate's mascot. Domaine Alexandrin can be proud of its question mark wines and its very unique winemaking-artist



© DR

train driver. *"The inhabitants of the village are used to the bell, which indicates the train's departure. Two visits each day – in the morning and at the end of the afternoon – punctuate the tastings at the cellar during the summertime,"* he stresses. These tours undoubtedly create a great ambiance in the fabulous village of Saint-Jean-de-Fos, as well as at the estate! ■



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LE CLOS DES AUGUSTINS IN SAINT-MATHIEU-DE-TREVIER

An estate in good hands

IN LESS THAN DECADE CLOS DES AUGUSTINS HAS BUILT ITSELF A FINE REPUTATION. THIS RECENT SUCCESS STORY TAKES INTO ACCOUNT THE ENVIRONMENT WITH GRAPES PERFECTLY RIPENED THANKS TO THE PIC SAINT-LOUP'S SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS.

"We settled here in 2008, following my studies at the faculty of science when my wife was a sommelier at the Tringue Fougasse wine cellar in Montpellier," comments Frederic Mezy, whose father Roger is the owner of the estate. Indeed, this property has belonged to the same family since its beginnings in 1920. It has developed thanks to the watchful eye of Odile (the grandmother), thanks to the careful management offered by Roger (the father) and now thanks to the talent of Frederic (the son). This year it is celebrating its 10th anniversary as a quality wine producer. From a mere 4 hectares belonging to the great grandfather, the history of the estate was revived in 2003 when an additional 25 hectares were replanted and an extra 10 hectares of scrubland were converted into a vineyard. *"The area comprises five types of terroirs with soils that are more or less limestone as well as loamy soils. The terrain is difficult; cultivating the estate has been no mean feat. We decided to always work according to environmentally friendly practices,"* further explains Frederic. Even if they are not as yet certified, the vines are grown according to biodynamic techniques and some parcels will soon be officially recognized as organic.

STRAIGHT FORWARD WINES

These are well-mastered wines, which benefit from the teachings of the famous winemaking professor Pascal

Chatonnet in Bordeaux and the wisdom of Olivier Pousier, who was elected World's Best Sommelier in 2000. *"We are after finesse so we always harvest at maturity, limit the yields and age the wine in barrels used several times before,"* adds Frederic. When it comes to packaging, elegance is also of importance, so the estate's bottles sport a logo evoking *"The lady with the hat"*, painted by Roger Bonafe.

AVAILABLE IN WINE STORES

Clos des Augustins only exports 10% of its production (130,000 bottles) as it has first and foremost concentrated on the domestic wine store and restaurant trades. These efforts have paid off as Clos des Augustins features on the wine menus of reputed establishments such as *Le Grand Vefour* in Paris, *Le Jardin des Sens* or *La Brasserie du Theatre* in Montpellier. The selection of five red and white wines as well as two roses is entirely named after a member of the family: *Le Bambin*, *Le Gamin*, *Le sourire d'Odile* (the grandmother), *Les deux Rogers*, *Joseph* (the great grandfather), *La Lueur du Jour* or *Les Secrets de Monique*. Historically, *Le sourire d'Odile*, launched in 2003, is the oldest one, with *L'Aine* and *Les Deux Rogers*. When it comes to price, the wines range from 6.50€ to 30€ per bottle including a tasting at the cellar. ■



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LE MAS DE LUZIERE IN SAINT-ANDRE-DE-BUEGES

A home away from home

AN EDEN FOR HIKERS, NESTLED IN
MOUNT SERANNE.

Just after the entrance of the estate, one remarks the imposing silhouette of an old wine press – a reminder of the building's vine-growing origins. Far from the usual hotel decorations, Mas de Luziere combines the nobility of the materials used with a respect for their origins. Spacious areas and natural colors are an important part of the decor. Each room bears a name recalling the surrounding environment - Navacelles, Capitelle or Bueges. A dozen years ago, nothing suggested that Arnaud Delrue would one day come to live in the Bueges valley. But this former engineering student

was apparently undaunted by the idea and even went on to create an establishment offering accommodation, including last but not least an inn! The estate extends over an area of 1,200m² around four buildings: a barn (4 rooms), a dovecote (2 rooms and a spa), a manger (4 rooms) and a farm house (7 rooms). Stones, small clay arches, whitewashed or iron laden walls, all play a part in the authentic decor. Guests can take a refreshing dip in the two swimming pools overlooking the wild valley. Regulars even come from Quebec to stay here in view of organizing wine tours. ■

LE PIC SAINT-LOUP IN MATELLES

Spotlight on Fafa's fusion cuisine

AN ESTABLISHMENT WITH QUITE A FOLLOWING.

This restaurant is highly convivial whether you dine in its downstairs bistro, on its mezzanine decorated by an assortment of Asian products or on its shady terrace. When it comes to the menu, discover combinations such as a Mediterranean-style rabbit confit mixed with a galangal and citronella flavored Thai prawn soup! Indeed, this place blends local savors with Asian traditions resulting in a fusion cuisine invented by the chef Fafa, following her overseas trips. As a result, she uses ideas from Thailand or Tuscany, in viewing of adding a new special touch to the region's traditional dishes. *"I visit supermarkets, kitchens, and learn about the local specialties everywhere I go. But I make discoveries just as well in certain parts of Paris as I do in New York,"* points out the voluble Fafa. Indeed, she fully masters the food mixing and matching game. ■

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LE BISTROT D'ALEX IN FLORENSAC

The gourmet side to Vinipolis

VINIPOLIS REVEALS ITS FOOD AND WINE PAIRINGS IN BISTROT D'ALEX.



© Olivier Maynard

Launched by Jean-Claude Fabre – the former Michelin star chef from the famous restaurant Chez Leonce in Floren-sac - and Alexandre Fabre his right-hand man, Le Bistrot d'Alex decided as of 2007 to be included within Vinipolis. At present, these chefs are two happy guys, who are pleased to share their joy about working in a great atmosphere with a team that has grown from a permanent staff of 5 to 12 within 5 years. Although the establishment is not aiming at Michelin stars or other types of recommendations, it does qualify itself as a gastronomic bistro. The kitchen offers hearty servings. The menu changes according to the seasons and the chefs' inspirations. Among the dishes not to missed try the cepe omelet, the lobster lasagna, the rum baba or the “*Sublime de Leonce*” - a cake with a crunchy hazelnut base, dark chocolate mousse and verbena-vanilla ice-cream. According to Alexandre, the kitchen's strategy is clear: “*Simple and tasty meals made from quality products.*” This is a highly successful formula with wines sold at their cellar door price, thereby guaranteeing an excellent quality to prix ratio! ■

LES CHAMBRES D'ANDREA IN MARSEILLAN

Stay in a historic cellar

THIS ESTABLISHMENT OFFERS COZY ACCOMMODATION AND MEALS

In a very attractive farmhouse and its old cellar, for little over a year now, Stephanie Diaz and Philippe Grosso have been offering accommodation to the visitors of Marseillan. This establishment includes three rooms and two suites. “What most surprises our clientele is the 700 m² peaceful garden, as well as the swimming pool,” points out Stephanie Diaz. The couple baptized the place after their grand-daughter as if to wish it good luck. Luminous and pleasant, the house was entirely renovated so as to offer comfortable accommodation for couples or families with children. The shady garden is adapted to book reading or just relaxing by the heated swimming pool. ■



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VINIPOLIS IN FLORENSAC

Trendy co-op vintners

VINIPOLIS, A PILOT PROJECT LAUNCHED IN 2007, IS A WINE TOURISM SUCCESS STORY FOR THE WINEGROWERS OF FLORENSAC.

The wine tourism pole of Florensac can be proud of setting an example in Hérault. Indeed, this complex was originally a departmental pilot project and has inspired other up and coming sites such as Viavino, the venture launched by the districts of Lunel and Saint-Christol or the restaurant opened in Montagnac by the private producer Domaine Paul Mas. But most of all, Vinipolis was created by co-operative growers. With 2 million euros, Vinipolis was launched within the well-known territory of the Languedoc Picpoul-de-Pinet appellation: *“Our asset is that with 200 members, most of the growers of Florensac work with the co-operative. Our winery offers 14 products available at our tasting room at a direct cellar door price ranging from 4 euros to 9.50 euros per bottle,”* stresses Hicham Roubal, who is in charge of the project. With its 1,100 hectares of vines, the cellar sells 70,000 hl. The progress made by this cooperative structure is currently confirmed by the quality of its production. Indeed, the co-operative has already received over 20 medals for all of its wines, including a recent gold

medal from the Brussels International Wine Competition. *“The wines express a very good typical style in Florensac because the vines benefit from the influence of the Thau lagoon which offers cool evening temperatures. This is a corridor adapted to the production of white grapes, notably Piquepoul and Viognier,”* adds Hicham. The winery elaborates two roses, including a blend of cinsault and grenache, whereas another one, much fruitier, is a concentration of syrah. When it comes to the reds, the Cotes de Thau denomination is highly successful; whereas the winery’s blended offering called *“Vela”* represents the top of its range. Five interactive and fun terminals allow visitors to discover the world of vines and wines, including a tasting workshop. This convivial location is surprising in terms of hospitality and easy access. As a result, it removes all the complexes associated with the world of wine. After visiting the cellar and the interactive terminals, the site’s tourists (around 50,000 per year) stop by its restaurant - Bistrot d’Alex – for a bite to eat. ■

CHATEAU GRES SAINT-PAUL IN LUNEL

You have to listen to **the terroir**

SITUATED AT THE EDGE OF THE LITTLE CAMARGUE, THE VINEYARD OF CHATEAU GRES SAINT-PAUL BENEFITS FROM A RHONE-STYLE TERROIR AND MARITIME BREEZES, RESULTING IN THE MUSCAT OF LUNEL'S HIGH STANDARD OF QUALITY.

"I see storms over Nîmes and the Vidourle valley from here," declares with satisfaction Jean-Philippe Serviere, the owner who took over his family's estate in 1976. Indeed, no less than twenty years were required to meet with his objectives and to reduce the surface from 64 to 24 hectares to improve upon the quality. But as soon as the vineyard was awarded two gold medals at the General Agricultural Competition in Paris in 1993 and was listed in Parker's wine guide it had proven its worth. "It is important to maintain a constant level of quality," points out this vintner, whose wine figures on the menu of La Petite Cour, a reputed Parisian restaurant. Indeed, Chateau Gres Saint-Paul has become a sure fire value Languedoc wine thanks to its muscats and now its Languedoc reds. This situation has been patiently achieved, without having to rely on the supermarket trade. "I know all of my customers, who have remained loyal for a number of years now. The restaurant trade isn't the easiest one, but I didn't want to invest in large retailers. My wines are available in wine stores, as well as directly at the property." Following the golden age of Muscat during the 1980s, the estate decided to diversify its production. As a result, its Muscat de Lunel wines (Rosana and Seville) were joined by three other products - a sweet



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© Olivier Maynard

(Bohemienne), a dry (Libertine) and a semi-dry sparkling wine (Lolita). Jean-Philippe Serviere is attached to the best methods of culture and wine-growing. *"Without being 100% organic, I do my utmost to preserve the vines natural balance. Organic growing requires preparation."* When it comes to the secret of making a good muscat, Jean-Philippe is persuaded that *"it is best to let the terroir do the talking and not to go against what it says in the vineyard or in the cellar."* If nowadays, the estate lives mainly from its production of red Languedoc appellation wines, Gres Saint-Paul still boasts a high quality selection of affordable muscats, representing close to 30,000 bottles out of its total production of 70,000 bottles. Chiefly available in wine stores, Gres Saint-Paul is exported to the United States, Canada, Northern Europe, Japan and Korea. ■

© Olivier Maynard



THE VIAVINO WINE TOURISM CENTER IN SAINT-CHRISTOL

A showcase of the terroir

VIAVINO'S SCENOGRAPHY IS DEDICATED TO FAMILY VISITS AND WINE TASTINGS IN AN ECO-RESPONSIBLE ENVIRONMENT ASSOCIATED WITH THE TERROIR.

Unique, natural and outstanding are adjectives describing the surprising concept dreamt up by the site's architect Philippe Madec. He is a forerunner in France and in Europe in terms of sustainable development and received a medal from the Legion of Honour in 2010 and from the Trophy of Ecology in 2011. A play area, a green theatre and a museum, surround the site's educational vines, cellar and semi-gastronomic restaurant. The decor of this complex recalls the little Camargue, with its red colors, round shaped arenas, pallets of locally produced apples and fishing cabins. Situated in the district of Saint-Christol (1,500 inhabitants), this wine tourism centre, representing an investment of 7 million euros, plans on making a name for itself outside of the region. Two hundred wines are listed in the traditional vine-grower's stone shelter that serves as a cellar, whereas the restaurant pairs local produce with local wines. ■

CHATEAU DE POUGET IN VERARGUES

Wedding suites

ENJOY LIVING IN A CASTLE BETWEEN THE LITTLE CAMARGUE AND THE CEVENNES MOUNTAINS.

Located within two green hectares, this castle offers a romantic stroll under century old trees. Its iron gate, opening onto spacious grounds surrounded by old farm buildings and a stable, is a surprising discovery. A swimming pool, courtyard and orange grove, encompass carefully decorated rooms. Discover an intoxicating whirlwind of rooms, lounges, and dining areas where a luxurious decor mixes with the color of whitewashed walls and gilding. Antique furniture can be found in the different nooks and crannies. Chambre des Ducs de Pouget, Suite Victoria, Chambre de la Tour or Chambre des Songes, all offer a magical experience. In addition to weddings and receptions, guests simply come here for the place itself or for a pleasant break. ■



© Olivier Maynard



7 VIEWS

offered by talented chefs

WITH SIX MICHELIN-STARRED ESTABLISHMENTS THROUGHOUT THE DEPARTMENT, HERAULT CULTIVATES CULINARY EXCELLENCE. INDEED, LOCAL TRUFFLES ARE POPULAR WITH JACQUES AND LAURENT POURCEL IN MONTPELLIER, WHILE CHARLES FONTES INCORPORATES CHESTNUTS FROM OLARGUES INTO SOME OF HIS RECIPES. THAU EEL AND PARDAILHAN TURNIPS ARE PUT TO GOOD USE BY FABIEN LEFEBVRE AT L'OCTOPUS IN BEZIERS. IN THE MEANTIME, HEREPAIN BLACK PUDDING IS PART OF PATRICK OLRYS CUISINE AT L'AMBASSADE. LAST BUT NOT LEAST, MATTHIEU DE LAUZUN IN GIGNAC USES SWEET ONIONS FROM LEZIGNAN-LA-CEBE WHEREAS ANNE MAJOUREL IN SETE PREPARES THAU OYSTERS.

Photos **Olivier Maynard**

“ Truffles can be found in Saint-Genies-des-Mourgues, Claret, Saint-Jean-de-Bueges but also near Saint-Guilhem-le-Desert. We cook with the melanosporum variety from Herault as soon as it is available. Truffles are a special product expressing a unique earthly flavor. ”



Jacques and Laurent Pourcel

Ambassadors of French cuisine

Harmony of the 5 senses



Crispy truffle pie with an acidulous sauce

Just as Gilbert Furlan and Jean-Marc Forest promoted nouvelle cuisine as of the late 70s at Le Chandelier Michelin-starred restaurant (1978-1995), Jacques and Laurent Pourcel inaugurated a new gastronomic chapter in Montpellier at the end of the 80s. *“From 1988 to 1998, we had to become trendy in Montpellier, and then in Herault, followed by the entire region,”* explains Jacques Pourcel. This was a prosperous period, during which Montpellier grew in size and Le Jardin des Sens made a name for itself. *“Our first star was awarded two years after the restaurant was opened. At the age of 34, we had achieved three stars (1998-2006) and had become part of the world of great chefs.”* The opening in 2001 of La Maison Blanche in Paris was the start to the twin’s international career. Then in 2010, they were selected to represent gastronomy at the French pavilion at the Universal Exposition of Shanghai. *“The Mediterranean basin is the main theme of our cuisine. Without losing our roots, we also incorporate Asian cooking styles that is to say raw, simmered and natural ingredients.”* The year 2013 will include the extension from 15 to 25 of the number of rooms at Le Jardin des Sens hotel and the closure of La Compagnie des Comptoirs in Montpellier. The twins are thinking about opening an establishment in the town’s center in addition to L’Insense, a snack bar next to the Fabre Museum. Moreover, a hotel resort, representing an investment of 20 M€, will be inaugurated in the Odysseum quarter in 2014. Regaining their second star is equally another one of their ambitions.

{ A LAND OF STARS }



Fabien Lefebvre

Creative and contemporary
Fusion cuisine

This extremely empathic character from Beziers fulfilled his dream of opening a restaurant in his native town in January 2005 in collaboration with Olivier Bontemps. And he was right in doing so because three years later, the Michelin Guide gave them a star. At the age of 33, Fabien Lefebvre has plenty of experience, as he selected cooking as a vocation early on. He gained expertise with talented chefs such as Christian Morisset in Juan-les-Pins, before working at Le Bristol in Paris with Michel Del Burgo, and then seconding Eric Frechon. During this period, he was attributed the Pierre Taittinger culinary prize in 2000 and then the MOF award four years later. The evolving cuisine of L'Octopus mixes root vegetables with cress and fresh water iodized products. This chef offers a discreet Asian touch to contemporary and healthy cuisine, cooked in vegetable water. For example, the sweet onions here are flavored with a hint of soya. When it comes to the establishment's sugary offerings, its chocolate desserts and its licorice-based candy box are well worth trying, as Fabien used to be the pastry chef at Le Metropole restaurant in Beaulieu-sur-Mer. For him, the three qualities of a great cook are agility, precision and hospitality.



Lacquered eel, Pardailhan turnips and Sichuan pepper

“ We cook Thau eel in spring and autumn. Its firm flesh is well suited to Lezignan sweet onion lacquer. We flavor it with Sichuan pepper and mashed Pardailhan turnips. When I get my customers to blind taste this recipe, they are surprised to find out that it is eel. ”

“ The special-style oysters of Tarbouriech are very tasty. Outside of the water, they take in oxygen and develop a pink color produced by their exposition to the sunlight. Boasting a hazelnut taste, these rich oysters go well with winter vegetables such as diced butternut squash, browned in olive oil with shallots, finely chopped lovage and Pata Negra ham.... ”

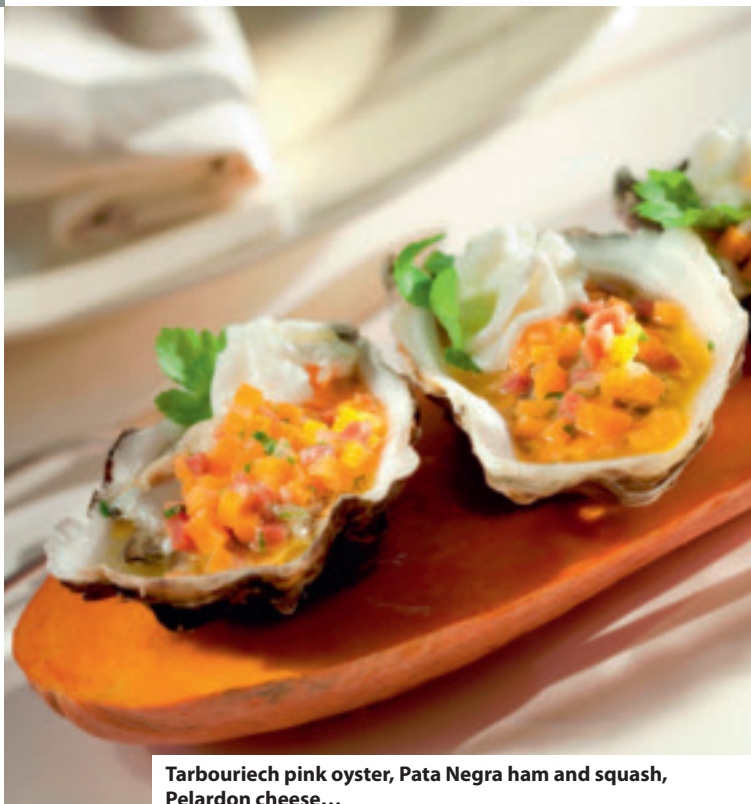


Anne Majourel

A woman at the helm

Iodine and aromatics

Sporting a smile and a chef's hat, Anne Majourel is the only Michelin-starred female cook in Hérault. To top it off, this is a distinction that she has never chased after! Following the sale of Demeures du Ranquet in Anduze, where she worked for 28 years, she did not want to have anything else to do with cuisine. With her husband, Jean-Luc, she decided to go back to her roots in Sète. *"People regretted my initial departure. Sète deserved something original with its wonderful products. But in order to start again, I needed to be close to the sea, to run a small cozy establishment and to enjoy myself. I wanted to settle down,"* she explains. As a result, Jean-Luc and Anne first came up with the idea of setting up a counter, followed by cooking lessons. They then added small tables to the establishment which has gradually transformed into what you can find today on the angle of rue Jean Vilar - La Coquerie with its amazing view of the sea. Jean-Luc, who is a native of Sète, cultivates an aromatic garden, dedicated to lovage, thyme, sage, potato weed and litchi tomato. Anne completes the harvest of this plot with organic produce from La Corniche market on Thursday mornings, in addition to the products available at Les Halles and fresh seafood from the Thau Lagoon.



Tarbouriech pink oyster, Pata Negra ham and squash, Pelardon cheese...

{ A LAND OF STARS }



Roast Lezignan-la-Cebe onion stuffed with goat's cheese and served with olive oil dressing



Matthieu de Lauzun

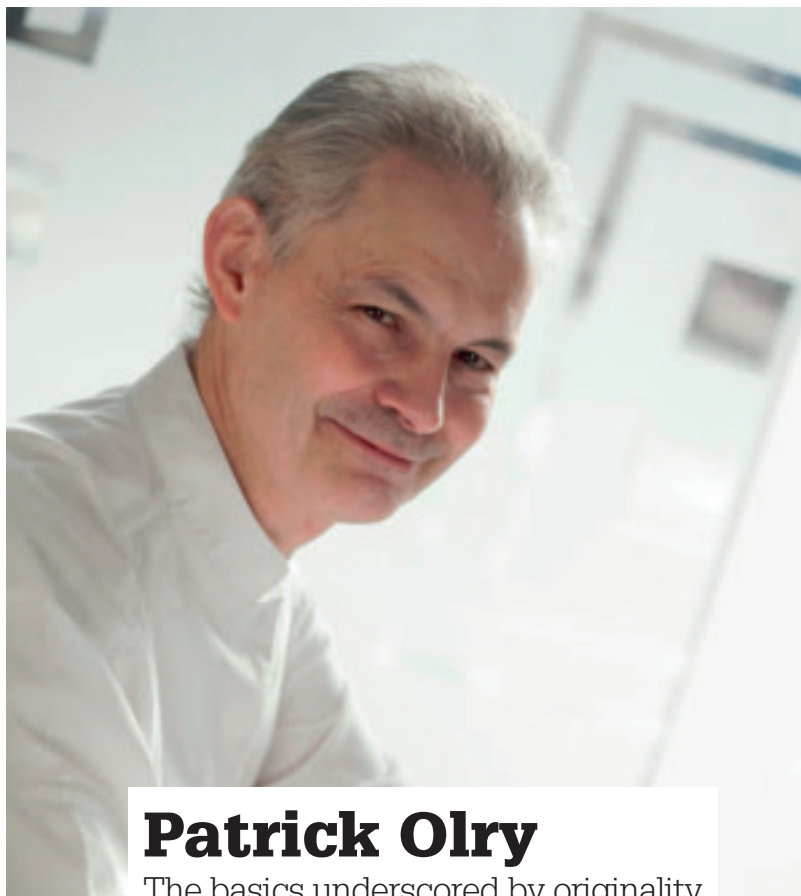
Thirty candles and a lucky star

Cooking with clarity

“What makes sweet onion exceptional is it remains suave whether served cooked or raw. It goes well with both a truffle or cheese flavored dish. Sold in bundles at the end of summer, it is stored in the cellar during the wintertime and can be used all year round.”

Among the youngest Michelin-starred chefs in France after obtaining the distinction at the age of 26, Matthieu de Lauzun from Lodeve offers a resolutely modern perspective to cooking. The boy who always wanted to be a chef started his career in some top establishments. After La Poularde in Montrond-les-Bains, he worked for Mathieu Viannay in Lyon, then at La Maison de la Lozère in Montpellier, before meeting the 3-star chef Michel Bras in Laguiole. *“This is where I learnt about purity and lightness. I discovered all about healthy, natural and easy to understand ingredients,”* he asserts. Matthieu de Lauzun admits without hesitation that another important influence is his grandmother Ghislaine who he visits on a regular basis in Morocco. It is thanks to her French Algerian origins that he loves to use plants in his cooking. Matthieu is sticking to his philosophy in Gignac where he created Le De Lauzun - that is to say, keeping things simple, by using barely transformed ingredients and easy to understand recipes.

{ A LAND OF STARS }



Patrick Olry

The basics underscored by originality
Lasting is what counts

Just a stone's throw from the train station of Beziers, the immaculate white facade of L'Ambassade, owned by Patrick Olry, does not go unnoticed. This native from Amiens in Somme, admits without concession that he arrived in the town by chance. He started off by travelling extensively around France and then tried out a number of stoves such as the ones at La Mer restaurant in Boulogne during the 1970s and Le Troubadour in Porto-Vecchio 10 years later. He for whom "*lasting is what counts*" took over L'Ambassade in 1989 when it was a hotel. He restructured the entire building in 1999, and was then awarded his first Michelin star in 2007. Since May 2012, Patrick has been investing in L'Autrement in Beziers, which was previously La Compagnie des Comptoirs, owned by the Pourcel brothers. He is currently the president of the Tables Gourmandes, an association reuniting a number of restaurant owners from Beziers and its immediate area. Cheap for a Michelin-star restaurant, it proposes game bird recipes, depending upon the season, with recurring themes about the terroir, topped off by lobster at Christmas time. Patrick is very attentive to the origin of the products used. When it comes to the cellar, boasting 600 offerings, it tends to promote Languedoc wines.

“Black pudding is a regional specialty from the House of Aninat in Herepian, a village situated at the foot of the Orb Mountains. It is a home-style pudding, the ingredients of which include thyme and rind. I've ordered it twice a week over the past 14 years.”



Sautéed duck foie gras, quince puff pastry tart and snack-style Herepian black pudding with apples



Vacherin with Olargues chestnuts and Williams pears



Charles Fontes

The Mediterranean touch

Sunny cuisine

“ My fond childhood memories include my grandfather's chestnut grove in Aveyron. I like the texture of chestnuts that can be served mashed as well as with fish, game meat or desserts.”

This native from Montpellier set up his establishment in 2006 in view of grabbing life and cuisine by the horns. A year later, following major renovations, he opened La Reserve Rimbaud on the banks of the Lez River. This address was already reputed in the 19th century during the era of Titus Rimbaud, and then under the direction of the Gousserand brothers who transformed it into a prestigious gastronomic place in 1902. Michelin decided to leave a star in Charles Fontes' Christmas stocking in 2010: “*The guide mentioned us in 2008, and then designated us as an up and coming talent in 2009, before deciding to fully recognize our restaurant the following year.*” After graduating from the hotel school in Lyon and studying law, his career was marked by Pascal Kirsch with whom he worked at Hotel des Neiges in Courchevel. Alain Dutournier from Carre des Feuillants, a 2-star restaurant in Paris was another important influence. La Reserve Rimbaud, which has also received a top ranking from the Gault & Millau guide, is tightly bound to Mediterranean cuisine, discreetly underscored by Andalusian, Italian or North African techniques. Charles Fontes works with his brother Francois in an immense white building, located on the enchanting shady banks of the Lez River. They are thinking about setting up a hosts' table in the cellar of the establishment in 2013 or a summer dining room on its magnificent terrace.

{ A LAND OF ADVENTURE }



Herault **HIGHLY** **COLORFUL LEISURE** activities

© Alexandra Klein

HERAULT IS ONE OF THE MOST TOURISTIC AND SUNNIEST DEPARTMENTS IN FRANCE. INDEED, THE AREA BOASTS AN 80-KILOMETER LONG COASTLINE, AS WELL AS A SERIES OF LAGOONS, GORGES AND LAKES. IT IS CROSSED BY FOUR RIVERS – THE ORB, THE HERAULT, THE VIDOURLE, AND THE LEZ. AS A RESULT, THE DEPARTMENT BENEFITS FROM A GEOLOGICAL SITUATION AND A CLIMATE SUITED TO A WIDE RANGE OF OUTDOOR PASTIMES. IT DRAWS VISITORS INTERESTED IN AQUATIC ACTIVITIES, HIKING, HORSE OR BIKE RIDING, AS WELL AS FANS OF AIRBORNE SPORTS.



© Régis Mortier / OT La Grande Motte

A WATER WORLD for sea legs

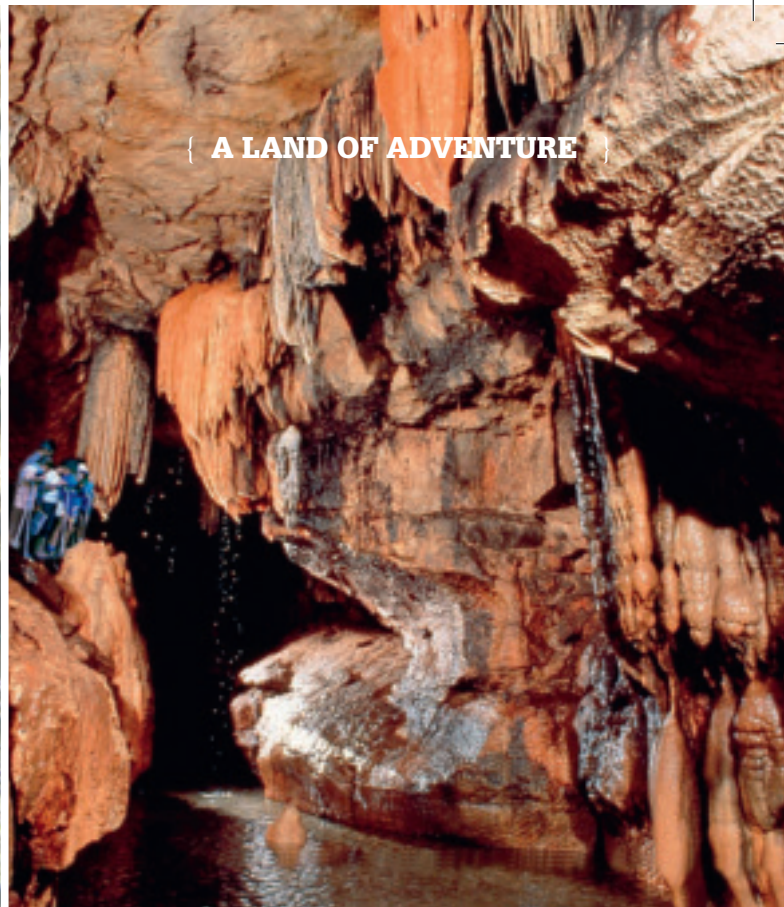
WHETHER YOU FEEL LIKE ENJOYING THE SUMMER'S FIRST STRAW HUTS OR TOURIST-FREE SAND BANKS, A STROLL ALONG THE DUNES OF LA GRANDE MOTTE OR SETE REVEALS THE COASTLINE'S VARIOUS ATTRIBUTES.

This encounter is a combination of beaches, dunes and woody areas, such as Vic-la-Gardiole, forming a coastal cordon and a hilly massif. The protected natural site of Mejean in Lattes extends over 700 hectares with pathways, including a lane adapted to handicapped visitors and a bike track. Reed beds and swamps produce a scenic patchwork boasting Camargue bulls and horses, as well as storks during the nesting period. Canoeing is extremely popular in the department especially on the Orb, the Vidourle, or within the gorges of the Herault River. On the outskirts of the seaside, families have fun canoeing on the Thau Lagoon, along the Sete canals or on the Lez River in Montpellier. The Herault coastline counts nineteen marinas. Situated at the heart of certain towns, they propose attractions such as sea excursions, boating lessons and regattas. However, other locations, notably Palavas-les-Flots and Sete, have maintained traditional nautical activi-

ties like lateen sailing. In addition, rowing is a popular pastime in Sete, Carnon and La Grande Motte. Fans of Stand up Paddle, a sport practiced all year round, are equally a familiar site in the area. An underwater 400-meter observatory in Cap d'Agde, reveals rocky volcanic depths, fish-laden grass beds, faults and scree slopes. Snorkeling lovers can also enjoy a guided tour to discover seahorses in the Thau Lagoon. In addition to the coastline, the hinterland is adapted to sailing, windsurfing or kite surfing in places such as Salagou or Salvétat-sur-Agout. Moreover spots like La Tamarrissiere in Agde, Villeneuve-les-Maguelone, or the beaches between Carnon and La Grande Motte, are perfect for the latter sport that is becoming increasingly popular along the department's sandy seaside. And on wind-free days, waterskiing and wakeboarding replace wind-driven pastimes. Last but not least, Herault caters for fresh water fishing in both rivers and lakes alike. ■



© DR



© DR

AN EXPRESSIVE LAND for thrill seekers

ROCK CLIMBING LOVERS CAN TRY OUT 17 OFFICIAL SITES IN HERAULT, INCLUDING SOME HIGHLY APPRECIATED LOCATIONS. CLIFFS, CLIMBING SCHOOLS AND IMPRESSIVE ROUTES COUNT AMONG THE ATTRACTIONS ON OFFER.

Climbing is a sport practiced in the department, including facilities for beginners such as the site in Ville-neuve-les-Maguelone or more challenging locations like the complex at Saint-Series or the one on the Thaurac plateau, close to Montpellier, where a via ferrata is also been set up. Several rock climbing schools have been established around Beziers, Montpellier and Bedarieux in addition to Hortus' impressive routes near Pic Saint-Loup or the ones next to Saint-Guilhem-le-Desert. More experienced climbers opt for the gorges of Heric, a site well-known for its various cliffs offering different levels of difficulty. Canyon lovers head for the upper part of Languedoc, whereas speleologists can choose from one of the 3,000 caves situated in department's mountainous areas or within the scrubland north of Montpellier. Located in the Regional Natural Park of Upper Languedoc, the cave of Deveze is reputed for its unique exposi-

tion, whereas the cave of Labeil proposes an adventurous terrain with its galleries and its underground safari. With 1,300 kilometers of paths throughout the department, hikers can explore the surroundings of Saint-Guilhem-le-Desert or take part in a botanical stroll with lamas. Fine days are the best time for arborists to discover the tracks of the Circus of Moureze or of Navacelles. Otherwise trails are accessible all year round in the Massif of Caroux, the gorges of Heric or the Cevennes Mountains. With its multitude of reliefs, the department comprises many excellent marked out trails. They offer access to a multitude of landscapes, punctuated by vineyards, forests, scrubland and valleys. ■

A WORLD OF EVASION

offering a free ride

THIS TERRITORY IS GENEROUS IN BIKE PATHS, THE NUMBER OF WHICH HAS TRIPLED OVER THE PAST DECADE. ALL TERRAIN OFFICIALLY APPROVED QUALITY TRAILS EXTEND OVER 2,000 KILOMETERS.

When it comes to this discipline, Hérault is the second French department after Savoie in terms of number of sites and long distance bikeways. Hérault counts six mountain bike tracks, formally recognized by the French Cycling Federation, situated in Beziers-Salagou, in Upper Languedoc, in Bessilles around Pezenas, in the Hérault Valley and in Lunel and its surroundings. Two long pathways allow cyclists to cross the department from east to west, from Montpellier through to La Salvetat-sur-Agout or to Minervois; then from north to south, from Caylar on the Larzac plateau to Agde by the Mediterranean Sea. In a more peaceful register, the bikeway between Meze and Balaruc, with its view of the lagoon and local fauna and flora, offers a different ambiance among the birds. On the old railway line, linking Mazamet to Bedarieux, the green track represented by a 60-kilometer itinerary, dubbed Passa Pais, allows you to pedal all year round among olive and chestnut groves. At the heart of the Regional Natural Park of Upper Languedoc, the Salvetat-sur-Agout mountain bike tracks, situated close to lakes and in the middle of pine and hardwood forests, encourage visitors to explore the higher parts of the department. The hinterland also has its very own pathways around Salagou and throughout the Hérault valley. Next to Pezenas, the site of Bessilles is the starting point of several bikeways. The possibility of visiting the area on a scooter is becoming more and more popular in Roquebrun, thanks to a couple of different tracks at the heart of the Regional Natural Park of Upper Languedoc. It is also possible to pedal near the seaside between Montpellier and Carnon. The plain of Lunel equally boasts cycling paths situated throughout the scrubland, pine tree forests, vineyards and the Little Camargue. ■



© Olivier Maynard

AN AERIAL VIEW LULLED

by the four winds

THE RELIEFS OF HERAULT CAN BE CONTEMPLATED FROM ABOVE THANKS TO PERFECT WEATHER CONDITIONS PRACTICALLY ALL YEAR ROUND, PLENTY OF SUNSHINE, HOT AIR AND ASCENDING AIR CURRENTS.



© Olivier Maynard

There are four main sports associated with the art of free flying in the area – hand gliding, paragliding, kite-flying and kite surfing. Indeed these disciplines are well-adapted to certain spots along the Hérault coastline. Moreover Villeneuve-les-Maguelone holds Festikite, a kitesurf festival, where amateur and professional competitors will meet for the 6th time in 2013. But for those who want to gradually gain in altitude, the heart of the Regional Natural Park of Upper Languedoc, boasting 300 kilometers of trails among pine and hardwood forests, is a perfect place to start with family and friends. You can plan your first paragliding experience from the top of the Vissou, near the Circus of Moureze close to Clermont l'Hérault, or undergo an air baptism. For further exhi-

laration, the more adventurous can fly over the Seranne Mountain - the area's highest point, representing 942 meters and situated 30 minutes north-west of Montpellier. It is a mythical site that has already hosted international competitions. The fleet of gliders at the Regional Flying Center of Saint-Martin-de-Londres makes it way over Pic Saint-Loup and Hortus on a regular basis. This is an activity that everybody can take part in. Baptisms and initiations, which include facilities for the handicapped, are organized there. Gliders can also be seen taking off from the aerodrome in Bedarieux. ■

For further information:
www.languedoc.com



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THE ARGILEUM HOUSE OF POTTERY

A space dedicated to delicate long lasting works of art

THE ARGILEUM HOUSE OF POTTERY IN SAINT-JEAN-DE-FOS IS A REMINDER THAT EARTHEN WARE POTS ARE AT ONCE FRAGILE AND USEFUL. THIS CENTER IS CONSTRUCTED ON THE SITE OF ALBE-SABADEL'S FORMER WORKSHOP.

The local district acquired the workshop of Albe-Sabadel (1890-1920) in 2005 with its towers, its varnish mill, its clay setting ponds, as well as its huge vertical furnace. Officially recognized as a historic monument, this preserved location presents its bygone activities before becoming the House of Pottery. The museum's at once fun, educational and historic narrative offers an overview of the ceramic industry in Languedoc. *"If the workshops in Saint-Jean-de-Fos were unable to compete with 20th century porcelain and ceramic factories, the production here was prolific as of the 14th century,"* points out Sabine Leteinturier, a guide-lecturer at Saint-Guilhem-Le-Desert in the Herault Valley. At a crossroads between the 19th and the 20th centuries, the museum presents the expertise required to make pottery and the history of the ceramics industry. The scenography explains the traditional methods of production, including

the elaboration of glazed earthenware, the preparation of the clay used and the firing of finished objects. Visitors can still see Saint-Jean-de-Fos-style pitches on display. For children, the museum features characters, videos, educational panels, and sensory games. *"As demonstrated by the oldest objects presented in Argileum, pottery making has remained traditional and rural without becoming a decorative art. This activity resulted in the golden age of Saint-Jean-de-Fos, notably thanks to the local clay quarries which provided work for dynasties of pottery makers. The village was the most important center of production in the Herault Valley,"* she adds. However artisan pottery makers only came back here in the 1980s, following the decline of this activity at the beginning of the 20th century. Argileum is an immersion in the world of yesterday's and today's craftsmen. ■



© Olivier Maynard



MONTPELLIER

The music-loving city

WITH ITS FESTIVALS, ITS OPERA HOUSE AND ITS NATIONAL ORCHESTRA, MONTPELLIER IS A MUSICAL TREND-SETTER.

In recent years, the Opera House of Montpellier, dubbed the little brother of Paris' Palais Garnier, has undergone a facelift. Some 15 million euros were spent on renovating the building. *"Its stage is extraordinary, as it has been modernized in the spirit of the 18th century,*

A POPULAR GUITAR-MAKING EXHIBITION

Over the past 18 years, the International Guitar-making Trade Fair of Montpellier is an important meeting place for guitar fans and professionals in the south of France. Organized in October by Les Internationales de la Guitare, the event has become a not to be missed occasion.
www.les-ig.com

making it one of the most successful theaters in Europe," stresses Managing Director Jean-Paul Scarpitta. Indeed the National Opera-Orchestra of Montpellier boasts a rich annual program in addition to the Radio France Regional Festival held each July, representing over 100 classical, symphonic, jazz or electronic concerts. The latter is followed by Les internationales de la Guitare at the end of September. *"The guitar is the most popular instrument in our region due to a well-implemented Spanish Diaspora and a big Gypsy community. This is the land of Manitas de Plata and of Georges Brassens, both of whom were born in Sete, and of Juliette Greco, who was originally from Montpellier,"* recalls the festival's director Talaat El Singaby. In more of a world music and North African vein, the Arabesque Festival is held every May. As a result, all forms of music are celebrated in this city, not just a single genre. ■

THE WORKSHOP OF FREDERIC CHAUDIERE

“A violin is at once
a painting and a sculpture”

LOCATED IN MONTPELLIER SINCE THE MIDDLE OF THE 1980S, FREDERIC CHAUDIERE IS CAPABLE OF TRANSFORMING TWO KILOS OF MAPLE AND SPRUCE INTO A PURE SOUNDING 600-GRAM VIOLIN.

When he was a teenager, Frederic Chaudiere loved music, but not really the classical kind. This turbulent pupil arrived on the music scene as part of Rutabaga, a rock group with which he roamed the Cevennes Mountains. *“I started to make guitars for the band and for friends; and then I found that violins were mysterious. As a result, I attended instrument-making schools such as Mirecourt in Vosges to learn about this craft. Then I passed the entrance exam of the Newark School of Musical Instrument Making.”* Following his training at this prestigious school, our young apprentice quickly found out that there were few violin workshops in France, and most of these only focused on repairs. Frederic Chaudiere decided to settle down in Montpellier in 1986, a time when the city had only two instrument makers compared to eleven at present. A couple of months later, he won the Maurice Vieux sound competition in Lille and immediately sold his alto. Since then, the guy who feels *“a good instrument has to be easy to play, strong and resonant”*, has sold over 600 violins worldwide. *“The price difference between a violin and a guitar is justified by the varnish which is less complex for a guitar. You can’t compare the techniques used for violins invented in 1535 and those developed for guitars during the 19th century. Violin-makers are interested in music, architecture, chemistry, and literature. A violin is at once a painting and a sculpture.”* Frederic Chaudiere is a writer, a sculptor and an instrument-maker, as well as a commentator on Radio France. Actes Sud has published his book *“Troppo Rosso”* about the Stradivarius. Frederic Chaudiere was the scientific commissioner of the temporary Stradivarius exposition at the Fabre museum in 2008, which included a display of 15 instruments by the Cremona violin-maker Antonio Stradivari (1644-1737) aka “Stradivarius”. He has trained



© Olivier Maynard

a number of instrument-makers, some of which have set up shop in Montpellier and is at the origin of a genuine creative movement, involving the sale of violins, violas and cellos worldwide. Montpellier can be proud about being the location in France with the most instrument-making workshops along the lines of Cremona in Italy, recognized as the cradle of this craft. *“This was where the violin was created 400 years ago. But now its workshops make instruments for retailers. In comparison, the artisans in Montpellier sell directly to their customers, thereby establishing a close relationship with musicians,”* he concludes. ■

AT ONCE CARPENTER AND CABINET-MAKER, SERGE IVORRA IS BASED IN PEZENAS, THE AREA OF WHICH HAS BEEN ATTRIBUTED AN ART AND HISTORY LABEL. ALREADY AT THE INITIATIVE OF THE DOOR AND METALWORK MUSEUM, HE HAS ALSO TAKEN PART IN THE RENOVATION OF THE TOWN OF MOLIERE'S HISTORIC THEATRE.

PORTRAIT OF SERGE IVORRA IN PEZENAS

An art-loving carpenter

This carpenter originally from Adissan – the cradle of the Clairette appellation – left Pezenas at the age of 17 to tour France to learn more about his craft, in view of returning with increased expertise. Over the past 35 years, he has been living and working in Pezenas. He also gives lectures at the Montpellier School of Architecture and his works of art are recognized at home and abroad. Serge Ivorra is the only Hérault-based carpenter specializing in the renovation of works of heritage. As a result, his delicate tasks sometimes include the restoration of classified monuments. For example, he participated in

the renovation of L'Hotel Dieu in Marseille, a building dating back to the 15th and the 18th centuries. In this case, he had to research and to draw its plans, in order to reconstitute an exact replica of its doors, decorated by religious motifs. Other orders include the theatre of Pezenas, created in 1803, and then closed from 1947 to 2012, as well as the great hall of the Prefect's Office in Montpellier, both of which are officially recognized as historic monuments. It does not therefore come as a surprise that his small business has been awarded a Living Heritage Company label. *"This means that we work according to specific historic procedures. Only a handful of companies in Languedoc-Roussillon have obtained this certification. These companies have been singled out for their specific expertise and sometimes for their historic background and heritage,"* recounts Serge Ivorra. It is pretty rare in this line of work to come across an artisan in overalls, with only a basic school certificate, who also teaches at university. He believes that *"one has to learn this craft early on. Experience counts more than obtaining a diploma."* This 60-year old, who has always wanted to transmit his knowledge, is surprised that music and the history of art are not taught to carpenter apprentices. When it comes to training, he knows what it means to permanently employ at his workshop, four apprentices, as well as several interns and students from other parts of France. Serge Ivorra also takes part in activities organized in primary schools where he has learnt that children are capable of expressing enormous creativity. ■





© Christelle Zamora



THE NATIONAL FABRIC MANUFACTORY IN LODEVE

A workshop weaving the thread of time

UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE STATE FURNISHING OFFICE SINCE THE 1960S, THE WORKSHOP OF LODEVE IS THE SOLE ANNEX OF THE NATIONAL CARPET MANUFACTORY OF PARIS. IT IS PERPETUATING A 400-HUNDRED YEAR OLD TRADITION...

The workshop of Lodeve, which weaves both designer carpets and the reproductions of contemporary artists, is a coherent part of a history marked by the textile industry. It was created in 1964, in view of employing the wives of Algerian immigrants, working in the area's forests, to provide their families with additional income. Two years later, the manufactory was placed under the direction of the State Furnishing Office, which is still part of the French Ministry of Culture. Ever since the 12th century, the town has been traditionally associated with cloth making. It became especially well-known after the introduction of a dying procedure transforming fabric into a scarlet color thanks to the use of a small berry. Situated along the banks of the Lergue River and close to the pastures of the Larzac plateaus, Lodeve was well suited for the development of the textile industry. In addition, this activity was promoted by Colbert, at a time when its production was sold at the markets of Pezenas, Beziers, Montagnac and Beaucaire.

A TEXTILE TOWN

Over time, Lodeve became highly reputed as a cloth manufacturing town, and even ended up supplying the French infantry. But this industry declined during the 20th century, to an extent that in 1966, the State Furnishing Office took over the workshop, but it did not realize just how complex the production of heavy wool textile was. It took the patience and the rigor of a man like Emile Philippon, the director of the National Carpet Manufactory of Paris, to set up a training course to acquaint the staff with the techniques involved. *"The weavers of Lodeve are civil servants, officially recogni-*

zed along the lines of the technicians of the Manufactory. They make identical copies of historic carpets, in view of replacing them. They also weave the sketches of contemporary artists such as the famous industrial designer Matali Crasset," indicates the workshop's director Christophe Pellissier. The production of this manufactory is listed by the National Furnishing Office and is primarily reserved to the highest levels of State, to presidential residencies, to the Senate and to Matignon in Paris, as well as French Embassies worldwide. ■



© Sophie Quencez

CULTURE

THIS IS THE VENT SUD SELECTION OF HERAULT FESTIVALS OR EIGHT GOOD REASONS TO GET OUT AND ABOUT ALL YEAR ROUND. THERE IS SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE, WHETHER YOU FEEL LIKE GOING TO A FESTIVAL OR MUSEUM.

THE PRINTEMPS DES COMEDIENS

JUNE - MONTPELLIER > Over the past 27 years, Le Printemps des Comédiens theater festival is a nationally-recognized event, preceding the one held annually in Avignon. During the entire month of June, the festival offers spectators the possibility of enjoying plays and readings in the green setting of Domaine d'O. This inventive event has always been open to the noises of the world. At present it combines all forms of expression – music, dance, theater and plastic arts. This festival, eagerly awaited by people belonging to the theater, includes musicals and cabarets. In addition, world famous circuses are part of the program, entertaining families and fans of the big top.

*For booking information: Domaine d'O - Montpellier.
Phone: 0 800 200 165*



© OT Cap d'Agde



A FESTIVAL FOR MOLIERE

JUNE - PEZENAS > To mark its fifth anniversary, the "Moliere dans tous ses eclats" theater festival in Pezenas will this time take place in both concert halls and in the street. This event, entirely dedicated to Moliere, includes a masked parade, a mid-summer Saint John bonfire, and plays acted out in the town's historic theater dating back to 1803. Local youngsters even also take part with their own creations rehearsed during the school year. If you want to discover or share the life of this illustrious author with others, come on down to Pezenas.

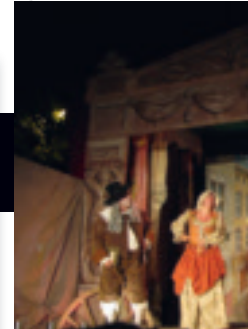
For further information: Pezenas Val d'Herault Tourist Office.

Phone: +33 (0)4 67 98 36 40



© Luc Jennepin

© DR



VINOCAP

MAY - CAP D'AGDE > In collaboration with the Cap d'Agde Tourist Office and the town of Agde, the Hérault Mediterranean Urban Community is organizing for the fourth time, three festive days dedicated to southern wines on the Cap d'Agde's renovated wharfs. This open-air wine fair presents the wares of around 80 vintners from 19 surrounding districts. The event kicks off in a lively atmosphere in the presence of numerous brotherhoods, tastings and handicrafts.

*For further information: Cap d'Agde Tourist Office.
Phone: +33 (0)4 67 01 04 04*

SAPERLIPOPETTE !

APRIL-MAY - MONTPELLIER > Over the past 16 years, this festival entirely dedicated to a young audience has grown in importance. It is one of the first spring event program at Domaine d'O. It includes a seductive combination of regional, national and international talents, explaining why each performance is always sold out. In recent years, Saperlipopette has become a travelling show throughout Hérault, which has contributed to its excellent reputation.

*For booking information: Domaine d'O - Montpellier.
Phone: 0 800 200 165*

{ A LAND OF ENCOUNTERS }

THE AQUARIUM MARE NOSTRUM

MONTPELLIER > Situated in Odysseum, a new suburb of Montpellier, the Mare Nostrum aquarium features 300 species. This recently created attraction offers an intelligent and original vision of marine life. Some of its sections are entirely designed for children. The scenography refers to "Twenty thousand leagues under the sea" by Jules Verne, thereby taking the public to underwater caverns on the Romeo cargo vessel, which ends up issuing a storm warning. You will wish that the trip could have lasted longer!

Mare Nostrum - Odysseum - Montpellier.
Phone: +33 (0)4 67 13 05 50



© Olivier Maynard



© Montpellier Agglomération

DUBOUT MUSEUM

PALAVAS-LES-FLOTS > Albert Dubout (1905-1976) was a talented drawer who found his calling as a newspaper cartoonist in the 1930s. The small train and the Dubout museums display a permanent exhibition of over one hundred drawings by this illustrator. Each year, the month of April unveils a new theme to the public. Visitors discover drawings of crowds, Dubout's cats, his big fat lady and his skinny little guy.

Musee Dubout and Musee du petit train
Redoute de Ballestras in Palavas-les-Flots
Phone: +33 (0)4 67 68 56 41

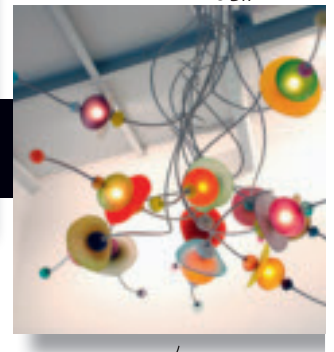
THE MIAM

SETE > As soon as it was created in 2000, Musee International des Arts Modestes, brought together collections illustrating different facets of its theme. Among its well displayed treasures are the caravans initially imagined by Herve Di Rosa, representing a sort of imaginary journey in a mobile home with holiday pay. Modest works of art offer an encounter between pop, contemporary and singular styles from various territories. At MIAM, visitors return to see the changing showroom windows of artist-collector Bernard Belluc. The museum's latest addition is its series of practical artistic workshops entirely dedicated to children.

MIAM - Musee International des Arts Modestes
23 quai Marechal de Lattre de Tassigny in Sete.
Phone: +33 (0) 04 99 04 76 44



© DR



© DR

THE HALLE DU VERRE

CLARET > Created with the assistance of research scientists and archeologists, this museum traces the history of glass and its development in the Mediterranean basin during antiquity (from the 5th century BC to the 5th century AC). It also presents the more local history of the gentlemen glassmakers of Causse de l'Hortus. Using themes and chronologies, the exhibition areas focus on the latest knowledge about the history of glass. The visit also includes information on ancient and modern glassmaking techniques.

Halle du Verre - 50, avenue du Nouveau Monde
in Claret - Phone: +33 (0)4 67 59 06 39

{ CONTACT DETAILS }

A LAND OF D'EXPLORATION

For further information:
www.languedoc.com

A LAND OF VINE TOURISM

28 |

• **Château Coupe-Roses**
4, rue de la poterie in La Caunette.
Tel. : + 33 (0)4 68 91 21 95.

29 |

• **Relais Chantavent**
17, Grand Rue in Minerve.
Tel. : + 33 (0)4 68 91 14 18.

• **Château de Siran**
1, avenue du château in Siran.
Tel. : + 33 (0)4 68 91 55 98.

30 |

• **Château les Carrasses**
Route de Capeatang in Quarante.
Tel. : + 33 (0)4 67 00 00 67.

• **Le Terminus**, avenue de la Gare in Cruzy. Tel. : + 33 (0)4 67 89 71 26.

31 |

Domaine Borie La Vitarèle
in Causses & Veyran.
Tel. : + 33 (0)4 67 89 50 43.

32 |

• **Le mas des Chimères**
in Octon.
Tel. : + 33 (0)4 67 96 22 70.

33 |

• **La Source**
rue de la Calade in Villeneuve.
Tel. : + 33 (0)4 67 96 36 95.

• **La Palombe**
Hameau de Basse in Octon.
Tel. : + 33 (04) 67 95 40 07.

34 |

• **La Terrasse du Mimosa**
23, place de l'horloge in Montpeyroux.
Tel. : + 33 (0)4 67 44 49 80.

• **Le Château de Jonquières**
in Jonquières. Tel. : + 33 (0)4 67 96 62 58.

35 |

• **Domaine Alexandrin**
7, av. du Monument in Saint-Jean-de-Fos.
Tel. : + 33 (0)4 67 57 72 09.

36 |

• **Le clos des Augustins**
111 chemin de la Vieille
in Saint-Mathieu-de-Trévières.
Tel. : + 33 (0)4 67 54 73 45.

37 |

• **Le pic Saint-Loup**
176, route de Montpellier in Matelles.
Tel. : +33 (0)4 67 84 35 18

• **Le Mas de Luzière**
in Saint-André-de-Buèges.
Tel. : +33 (0)4 67 73 34 97.

38 |

• **Le Bistrot d'Alex**
5, avenue des vendanges in Florensac.
Tel. : +33 (0)4 67 77 00 20.

• **Les chambres d'Andréa**
36, bd Pasteur in Marseillan.
Tel. : +33 (0)4 67 11 26 37.

39 |

• **Vinipolis**
5, avenue des vendanges in Florensac.
Tel. : +33 (0)4 67 77 00 20.

40 |

• **Domaine Les Grès Saint-Paul**
Route de Restinclières in Lunel.
Tel. : +33 (0)4 67 71 27 90.

41 |

• **Viavino (pôle œnotouristique)**
80, chemin de Vérargues in St-Christol.

• **Château de Pouget**
Chemin des brus in Vérargues.
Tel. : +33 (0)4 67 86 08 82.

A LAND OF STARS

43 |

• **Le Jardin des Sens**
11, Avenue Saint-Lazare in Montpellier.
Tel. : +33 (0)4 99 58 38 38.

44 |

• **L'Octopus**
12, Rue Boieldieu in Béziers.
Tel. : +33 (0)4 67 49 90 00.

45 |

• **La Coquerie**
1, Chemin du Cimetière Marin in Sète.
Tel. : +33 (0)6 47 06 71 38.

46-47 |

• **Le De Lauzun**
3, Boulevard de l'Esplanade in Gignac.
Tel. : +33 (0)4 67 57 50 83.

48 |

• **L'Ambassade**
22, Boulevard de Verdun in Béziers.
Tel. : +33 (0)4 67 76 06 24.

49 |

• **La Réserve Rimbaud**
Quartier les Aubes
820 avenue St-Maur in Montpellier
Tel. : +33 (0)4 67 72 52 53.

A LAND OF ART AND KNOW HOW

57 |

• **Argileum 6**
Rue du Monument
in Saint-Jean-de-Fos.
Tel. : +33 (0)4 67 56 41 96.

58-59 |

• **Office de Tourisme de Montpellier**
30, Allée Jean de Lattre de Tassigny
Montpellier. Tel. : + 33 (0)4 67 60 60 60.

• **Frédéric Chaudière**
10, rue du Bayle in Montpellier.
Tel. : + 33 (0)4 67 60 55 55.

• **Association des luthiers de Montpellier**
AIMM - Tel. : + 33 (0)4 67 60 87 11.
contact@aimm.tv

60-61 |

• **Arts décoratifs, le musée de la porte**
5/7 rue de Montmorency in Pézenas.
Tel. : +33 (0)4 67 98 35 05.

• **Théâtre historique**
7bis, rue Henri Reboul in Pézenas.

• **Métiers d'Art d'Agde et Pézenas**
www.metiersdart.cahm.net

62-63 |

• **Manufacture Nationale de la Savonnerie de Lodève**
Impasse des liciers in Lodève.
Tel. : + 33 (0)4 67 88 86 44.



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