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Pyrénées - Orientales - 66

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P.O. Life

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Le magazine anglais des Pyrénées-Orientales



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FORESTS of UPPER CONFLUENT

Walk with «le Petit Train Jaunes»



Build your own walking programme by combining it with the train timetable* and have a nice cool day in the forests of the upper Tet valley, between altitudes 1500m and 1100m. Shady paths will lead you from the enchanting village of Planès, on the borders of Cerdagne, to the hot springs of Saint Thomas and back (or further down to the village of Fontpédrouse).

Access : Drive the RN 116 to Villefranche or Fontpédrouse (depending on your programme; see options below) and park near the railway station. Take the train in due time* and get off at Planès station.

1/ The round walk :

Take the footpath going under the railway line. It goes down to the river Tet and alongside it then up under the suspended Gisclard bridge. Go straight on until reaching the end of the forest. From the point of view, the path goes abruptly down to Saint Thomas (40mn there and back). At a fork, take left to go to the village or right to reach the spas. On your way back, walk straight up into the forest (indication "Les arbres du Haut Confluent" on a signpost) in the direction of Planès, then across lush meadows to a TV pylon where the village appears. **Total walking time : 3 hours. Yellow signs all the way.**

A sample : Take the train at Villefranche 9:05 - Get off at Planès station 10:20 - Do the round walk (5 to 6 hours including walking, resting time, lunchtime) - Take the train back at Planès 17:05 - Arrival at Villefranche 18:09.



OPTIONS:

2/ Detour to Mont Louis :

An easy trail from Planès following the white-red signs of the GR10 to La Cabanasse (train station here). After crossing the later village, go up under the railway line and on to the fortress of Mont Louis. **Walking time Planès-Mont Louis: 1 h.**

3/ Down to Fontpédrouse :

After leaving the baths of Saint Thomas, reach the start of a path on the right (wooden steps - yellow signs). It goes up then meanders down to a road. Follow it on the right to reach Fontpédrouse and cross the village. Up from the RN 116, a little road leads to the train station. **Walking time Planès-Fontpédrouse: 2 h 30.**

* Trains leave Villefranche at 9:05 am and 10:05 am. Please check the complete timetable for departure time on your way back, possibly at intermediary stations. Tel : 04 68 94 63 6

Did you know....?

The Via Domitia was the first Roman road built in Gaul, and connected Italy to Spain. It was built for military purposes in 118 BC by the proconsul, Gnaeus **Domitius** Ahenobarbus and named after him. It goes all the way from the Rhone near Beaucaire, arriving in this region south of Salses le Chateau, and crosses the Tet near Chateau Roussillon to join today's N9 near Le Boulou before crossing the Albères mountains near Le Perthus. The remains of a roman fortress, Clausurae, (near Les Cluses) built to protect the border between France and Spain, are still intact and worth a visit for the views from the ruined ramparts.



This route was probably the one taken by Hannibal and his famous elephants in 218 BC on his way to the Alps (before the Via Domitia was built).

The route played, and still plays, an important part in the development of the coastal region of the south of France.

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AK ATOUT K.RO

Pa amb Tomaquet

Widely known as the embodiment of Catalan cuisine, it is often accompanied with any sorts of sausages (cured botifarres, xoriço, fuet, etc.), ham, cheese, anchovies or other marinated fish, or grilled vegetables like escalivada.

Ingredients:

Sliced bread (optionally toasted - the original base used to be made with toasted slices of pa de pagès or peasants' bread.)

Very ripe tomatoes or a can crushed tomatoes

Garlic cloves

Extra Virgin Olive Oil

Salt

Peel the garlic, crush slightly and rub against the bread. Halve the tomatoes and rub one side of the toast with a tomato half, allowing the juice, seeds and pulp to soak into the bread. Pour on olive oil and season with a little salt et voilà! Delicious also topped with

chopped olives, capers, anchovies or Serrano ham.



Restaurant review

YOUR DREAMS BECOME TRUE



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swimming-pool

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old house

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Visiting Barcelona.....

Leave your car at the station in Figueras. (20 min drive from Le Perthus) The station is easily accessible (unlike Girona), there is free parking nearby, and the trains are cheap, punctual and clean.

Make sure you get the CE (Catalunya expres) rather than the regional train which takes much longer.

Dont forget to 'composter' your ticket in the station before getting on the train (kneching it in the machine at the door) or you can be fined.

If you're making for Barcelona centre, get off at Barcelona-Passeig de Gracia (two stops before the end of the line) it takes 1hr 45 mins and 6 stopsand cost only 9.10 euros

".....I wouldn't eat on the Ramblasbut pausing for a drink or ice cream is good fun. There are many nice areas to eat just off the Ramblas (left hand side going down)."



"Gaudi is a must - Parc guell, Sagrada Familia is not of this world, a truly incredible experience!"

".....watch your bags and wallet as Barcelona is notorious for organised pick pocketing/bag snatching."

"(food)go to the gothic area, bang on architecture and low food price - quite a collection of international cuisine"

Drink driving

June, July and August are the big festival months in the PO.

Les feux de la Saint Jean, Fete de la musique, La Trobada du Canigou, Flamenco evenings, Festa major, Fetes Médiévales, fete de la bière, fete des vins, fete de l'olive..... all of these festivals involve alcohol and many involve driving - une mauvaise combinaison! The gendarmeries are cracking down on drink drivers this year, beginning with collaboration between the organisers of these festivals and alcohol advice and prevention groups. The aim is for the organisers to take some responsibility for the drink driving that often results from the festivals.



Last year (2005) in the PO, coming away from the férias at Céret, Collioure and Millas, 337 drivers tested positive for the breath test, 163 lost their licences and 10 were actually detained. Police presence is expected to be even tighter this year. Take particular care the next day. 'Controls' (checks) by police the morning or afternoon following a férias have proved to produce nearly as many drivers over the limit as on the actual night!!

Speed traps in to PO (radars)

- D83 Le Barcarès (PR 4+230), direction Perpignan - Leucate - limit : 100km/h
- D900 Perpignan (PR 17+70), direction Narbonne - Perpignan - Limit : 110km/h
- D900 Pia (PR 14+418), direction Narbonne - Perpignan - Limit : 110km/h
- D900 Villemaquie (PR 34+37), direction Le Boulou - Perpignan - Limit : 90km/h
- D914 Collioure (PR 24+200), direction Perpignan - Cerbère - Limit : 90km/h
- D914 Perpignan (PR 5+24), direction Perpignan - Argelès sur Mer - limit : 110km/h

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Did you know....?

The **biggest** solar furnace in the world

Built 36 years ago, the solar furnace in Odeillo, is the largest in the world. The location was chosen due to the air quality and the fact that the region boasts approximately 300 sunny days per year. The furnace consists of an enormous satellite which captures the sun's rays at its centre via 10,000 mirrors. It reaches temperatures of 3,000 degrees, unique in the world.



An exhibition along with demonstrations of the working of the solar furnace can be seen every day from 10h - 18h. Amongst other things, it explores the potential and actual uses of solar energy for domestic purposes, as well as solutions for the energy crisis. Interesting and educative, well worth exploring with the whole family from a science point of view.

The **first** solar furnace in the world.



The solar furnace in Mont Louis, built in 1949 by Professor Félix Trombe, was the first solar furnace in the world. This dual reflection solar furnace has been in steady evolution over the past 50 years and in

1993, was taken over by the limited liability company "Solar Furnace Development" who, along with continued scientific research, is the first company to use a solar furnace for industrial and manufactured products such as the firing of ceramics, and bronze and aluminium products.

Each year, more than 30,000 visitors are fascinated by the solar furnace in Mont-Louis, an enormous construction of 1420 mirrors.

Blague du mois.

"Que disent deux serpents qui se rencontrent ?"
"Quelle heure reptile ?"

Proverbe du mois.

"Ce qui est fait n'est plus à faire."
Don't put off until tomorrow what you can do today.

More top tips from our forum

Places to visit around the region.....

Castelnou - Steep to walk around, but well worth it! Fantastic views and very atmospheric. From Thuir, take the D48 up to Castelnou! (The drive all the way to St Michel de Lotes is very nice, especially on a clear day!)

Just over the border.....

Begur and Tamarit on the Costa Brava..... I'd always thought the Costa Brava was high rise hell - but this part is far from that. It's hilly, tree covered, with some stunning views.



Roses. Empuria Brava

Scenic drive via the coast. Lots of ups and downs and hairpins so not so good for anyone who is prone to car sickness

L'Escala... nice little town with a good selection of bars and restaurants and then a walk past several sandy beaches to the Greek/Roman ruins of Empuries and just beyond a little village of St Martin with 3 more restaurants in a pretty square. The beaches are safe and the sea is warm



Test your French

1 Trouvez la bonne définition

1. Un atelier

- a) le propriétaire d'un restaurant
- b) un endroit où l'on fabrique ou répare des objets
- c) un magasin qui vend du tabac

2. Une action

- a) portion d'une entreprise cotée en bourse
- b) l'art de chanter sur scène dans un théâtre
- c) un discours que l'on fait en public

3. Le muguet

- a) un oiseau commun
- b) une plante aux fleurs en clochette
- c) une soupe originaire de Provence

4. L'ombre

- a) l'obscurité produite par un corps qui intercepte la lumière
- b) un petit parasol
- c) une substance translucide et aromatique

5. Ronfler

- a) augmenter de volume
- b) faire un bruit en respirant pendant le sommeil
- c) manger à petits coups

2. Put the words below in the correct order to make five statements about the Pyrénées-Orientales. Start with the word in bold.

Level 1

Il Beaucoup à dans y les de a choses Pyrénées-Orientales voir.

Pablo Casals né du est Catalogne Sud en.

Le sacrée Canigou est des montagnes catalanes la.

Level 2

Le Jaune de Cerdagne a construit Train au été début du Petit siècle.

On des profiter, une journée, la activités de peut la en seule mer et de montagne.

3 Match up these idiomatic sayings

- 1 Aussitôt dit, aussitôt fait
- 2 C'est la poule qui chante qui a fait l'oeuf
- 3 Les bons comptes font les bons amis
- 4 Petit à petit, l'oiseau fait son nid
- 5 Quand les poules auront des dents !
- 6 Vous me faites marcher
- 7 Je ne peux pas m'empêcher
- 8 L'habit ne fait pas le moine
- 9 Occupez-vous de vos oignons !
- 10 Ça passe ou ça casse

- A It's sink or swim!
- B I can't help it
- C you can't judge a book by its cover
- D Don't let money spoil a friendship
- E No sooner said than done
- F Mind your own business!
- G Every little bit helps
- H You're pulling my leg!
- I When pigs fly!
- J The guilty dog barks the loudest

4. Olives et l'huile d'olive (olives and olive oil)

L'olivier est l'arbre symbole de la Méditerranée, indifférent à la nature du sol, mais susceptible à l'humidité et au froid. On le cultive essentiellement dans les pays de climat méditerranéen caractérisé par des hivers doux et des étés secs et chauds. L'olive est l'élément de base de la cuisine méditerranéenne. Le bon goût et les bienfaits pour la santé de l'huile d'olive sont largement connus.

Find the French for

- | | | |
|------------|--------------|-------------|
| olive tree | ground | cold |
| country | mild winters | dry summers |
| good taste | benefits | recognised |



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5. Match up the acronyms

- | | |
|---------|--|
| 1. SMIC | A/ Apayment method between banks or to pay bills |
| 2. TIP | B/ French electricity company |
| 3. EDF | C/ French rail |
| 4. SNCF | D/ Payment slip |
| 4. RER | E/ Parisian train system |
| 5. RIB | F/ Genetically modified food |
| 6. OGM | G/ High speed train |
| 7. TGV | H/ Homeless |
| 9. SAMU | I/ Minimum wage |
| 10. SDF | J/ Emergency medical service |

...and here they are in full

Salaires Minimum Interprofessionnel de Croissance.
Titre Interbanquaire de Paiement.
Electricité de France.
Société Nationale des Chemins de fer Français.
Réseau Express Régional.
Relevé d'Identité Bancaire.
Organisme Génétiquement Modifié
Train à Grande Vitesse.
Secours d'Aide Médicale d'Urgence.
Sans Domicile Fixe.

6. Choose the correct definition

Fauteuil:
armchair
error
wheelchair

Fumier:
ashtray
smoker
manure

Magnétoscope:
microscope
tape recorder
VCR

Point d'interrogation:
police interrogation office
question mark
information center

Limace:
lime
lemon
slug

Douleur:
dollar
twice
pain

Solutions

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and 28th September 2006

Try out our '66 Resident' course, first lesson free for Anglophone direct readers. (Specify "anglo" when inquiring)

Special session for families: adults and 7-15 year olds from the 9th to the 23rd of July 2006, special discount for families who already have accommodation.

ALFMED is recognised by the Ministry of Education as a "Centre de Formation Continue" (A centre for continuing education) and Etablissement d'Enseignement Supérieur Privé – Privately run post graduate Language Academy (for students). Official agreement with the Chamber of Commerce in Paris, as an examination centre for the TEF « Test Evaluation de Français ».

For more info contact Tracey and take our French test online.



FESTIVALS & TRADITIONS



Festival des Méditerranéennes – 2006



9th to the 11th August 2006

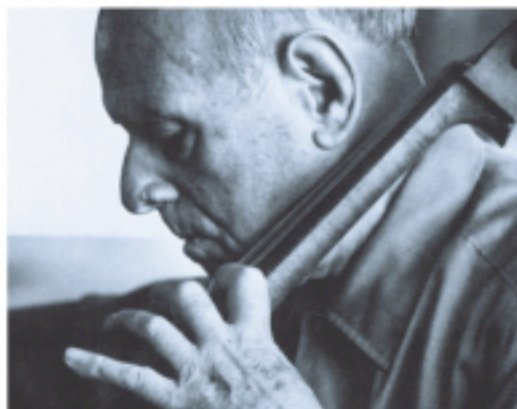
Originally held in Olmet, this Mediterranean festival now takes place at the parc de Valmy in Argelès. The festival is an opportunity for both established and new talent to take to the stage and looks set to be one of the big events of the summer.

Introducing a cocktail of young talent, along with established artistes, the three day festival should be a great representation of Mediterranean talent. A second stage, Nouvelle Vague, will be available during the intermissions for unknown talent to try out in front of an audience, acts which have been 'spotted' in the cafes and bars around the region.

Festival Pablo Casals 26th July - 13th August

Now in its 54th year, the Pablo Casals festival is one of the most respected chamber music festivals in France. The event organisers consistently attract soloists and larger groups of the highest quality to perform in the

beautiful abbey of Saint-Michel de Cuxà and other churches in the Prades area. The programme is mainly based around much known artistes such as Mozart, Beethoven and Brahms.



As you might expect from a festival named after a world famous cellist, many of the concerts focus on the cello, although there are also evenings devoted to organ music, Mozart's clarinet concertos, orchestral works for children and Czech music.

Travel tips.

Always keep some cash on you. Some restaurants, bars and small shops do not accept credit cards

FESTIVALS & TRADITIONS

Festival International du Photojournalisme

Saturday 2nd - Sunday 17th September

"Can anyone tell the story of the tsunami without showing bodies? Can we talk about Iraq without showing bomb attacks or mentioning the number of victims?" - Jean-François Leroy (Director General)



A two week exhibition of in-depth reports, photos and stories which have often not been published, Visa pour l'Image is a free event attracting thousands of visitors every year and offering the public the opportunity to discover newspaper photos they

may not have seen, either because they had never been published or because they might shock, invite disapproval or offend

Evening screenings and exhibitions are presented in a variety of historical and cultural spots around Perpignan, which also enables the visitor to discover the city.

The exhibitions are open every day from 10 a.m to 8 p.m, including week-ends

Diada de Catalunya

The 11th September

The Diada de Catalunya, is a national holiday throughout Catalonia and the Balearic Islands, politically and historically significant and an affirmation of Catalanian nationality and pride.



September 11th is in fact the anniversary of the day in 1714, when the Franco-Spanish army captured Barcelona, ending the region's autonomous status. Five thousand Catalans withstood the attack of forty thousand Castilian and french soldiers until the fall of the city on September 11th September

The event is marked by parades in towns and villages across Catalonia and the red and gold of the Catalanian flag are the colours of the day.

The Canigou race

Sunday 6th August



At the beginning of the twentieth century, well before the introduction of fridges and freezers into the region, "vernetois", inhabitants of Vernet les Bains, used to climb high into the Canigou, and cut blocks of ice from the hillside which they loaded onto their backs in order to run back down to the village and sell to the luxury hotels of Vernet. The fastest runners had the greatest chance of selling their ice.

Kiss my donkey !

What is the sticker on the back of the car in front ? A bull ? Or a donkey ? If it is a bull, you are following a Spanish Catalan - fierce, proud, and macho. If it is a donkey, you are seeing the new Catalanian symbol and are following a french Catalan - strong, hardworking, dependable but with a mind of his Mollo.

A region of Prats.

If you or have spent time in the region, you will have noticed that there are a lot of Prats around. In fact, Prat is a Catalan word for prairie. Prat de Mollo, for example, is so called after Mollo, a village over the border in Spain, whose land was where Prats de Mollo is now, hence the prairies of Mollo.

Like Winnie the Pooh, I am A Bear of Very Little Brain. I often read wine reviews and of course appreciate the recommendations

made on the Anglophone-direct forum. Problem is, I end up staring at the wine shelves in the shops trying to remember the name of even just one wine. No memory, you see. So I decided: be systematic and make a list.

You have the same difficulty? Well, here is a list of wines recommended so far in our forum.

Whites

Domaine Prieure de Ramejan, Vin de Pays d'Oc, Leader Price 2.20.

Domaine des Chenes Les Sorbieres

Vignerons de Terrats Cotes du Roussillon Blanc 2005 (4)

Cellier Trouillas Cotes du Roussillon Blanc (3.40)

Vin de Minuit Chardonnay, available from Intermarche, Le Boulou 4.50

Cotes du Roussillon Blanc 2004 (aged in old oak barrels) 470 Vignerons de Fourques (Villa forca)

Reds

Vaqueyras 2004 "Domaine de la Cuniere" . Auchan 5
Chateau Courac, Cotes du Rhone Villages, 2004 4.75 Auchan

Cotes du Roussillon Aspres 2003 Vignerons de Fourques (Villa forca)

Cotes du Roussillon Rouge en Vrac. 1.50 / litre. Vignerons de Fourques (Villa forca)

Cotes du Roussillon Tradition Rouge 2003 4.75 Chateau Masse at St Colombe de la Comanderie behind Thuir

Cotes du Roussillon Temparis 2003 and Vin de Pays Carignan 2003 also from Chateau Masse

La Nain Violet, Domaine de la Pertuisane, 12

Domaine des Chenes Le Mascarou

Enjoy !

A team of researchers in Barcelona have discovered that wine contains the same dietary fibre found in fruit and veg and believed to offer protection from some cancers. This is because this fibre is present in the grape and therefore in wine, a minimum of 1gr per litre in red wine and 0.2 gr in white wine. In fact, the study found that red wine contains 6 times as much fibre as white wine.

Dr Saura-Calixto, the leader of the study published in the American Journal of Enology and Viticulture, said: "The daily consumption of 300 millilitres of red wine would increase soluble dietary fibre intake by 6.9%, helping people to meet their recommended quotas." **300ml is 30cl or nearly half a bottle!**

Terroir

A group of vineyards (or even vines) from the same region, belonging to a specific appellation, and sharing the same type of soil, weather conditions, grapes and wine making savoir-faire, all of which contribute to the specific personality of the wine.

AOC

(Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée). certifies that a product comes from a specific region (e.g. the name 'Champagne' is an AOC, so sparkling wine can only bear the name Champagne if it comes from the champagne region). It also certifies that the product meets certain standards, which are mainly concerned with how the product is produced. AOC's are mainly for wine, cheese and other food products, focused on area of origin and method of production rather than evaluation of the end product.



Fort Lagarde - Prats de Mollo

Every Summer, Fort Lagarde puts on a daily show tracing back its military history. Fencing, canon ball fire, cavalry advances, and battles are all part of this reconstitution. Free shuttle buses leave from the Office de Tourisme to take you to the fort.

For more info: 04 68 39 70 83



In 1659, the Treaty of the Pyrenees brought about the annexation of Roussillon with the kingdom of France. Prats de Mollo therefore became a border town, and to overlook and protect the fortified town and border, Fort Lagarde was built.

The fort was constructed in several stages around an old mediaeval signal tower in the area of Lagardia. Traced back to 1307 during the reign of the Kings of Aragon, this circular tower forms the heart of the actual fort.

The major part of the construction was organised by Vauban, the officer in charge of fortifications for Louis xiv, from 1677 onwards. The dungeons, originally intended to keep the inhabitants of Prats in check, were extended and a link was built from the fort to the town, made up of an underground passage and covered road..

Many more modifications were added up until 1858, and there are now more than 40 rooms, armoury, ammunition store, kitchen, dungeon.....

The Cathars

The Cathars (believed to be derived from the Greek katharos, meaning perfect) were a **breakaway religious sect, who spread their doctrine throughout the region** in the eleventh century **at a time** when many Christians were questioning their beliefs. Languedoc Roussillon was known for its policy of tolerance but when the Languedoc nobility turned to Catharism, pope Innocent III proclaimed the religion heretic, and called for a crusade to crush the Cathars. Men, women and children were massacred, the nobility disgraced, humiliated and replaced and the ruins of the famous "Cathar castles" are all that remain today of Catharism. **It has been suggested in some modern fiction and non-fiction books that the Cathars could have been the protectors of the Holy Grail of Christian mythology.**

The history of the olive tree

The olive tree was first noted, growing wild, more than 14,000 years ago and fossilised leaves going back as

early as 8,000BC have been found in Roquevaire (Bouches-du-Rhone.) It's actual cultivation started around 4000BC in Greece and eventually spread to other Mediterranean countries, finally crossing the ocean after the discovery of the Americas and taking root in California, Mexico, Chili, South Africa and Australia..

According to Greek legend, the olive was the result of a quarrel between Athena, goddess of wisdom and science, and Poseidon, god of the sea. In order to resolve a dispute, Zeus suggested that each make a gift to humanity and the winner be granted the right to protect a newly created town.

Poseidon touched a rock and out leapt a magnificent horse capable of carrying many riders and arms. Athena touched a piece of land and brought out a tree which could feed, heal, light, heat, and would live forever. She was pronounced the winner and given the protection of the town which bears her name, Athens. She planted the original olive tree on a rocky hill which we know today as the Acropolis.† The olive tree which grows there today is said to have come from the roots of the original tree.

Useful phrase in Catalan.

Perdo - excuse me

What is this? - Què és això?

Bon profit - Bon appetite

Pau i salut! -paoo ee saloot! - Cheers!



Come and check out our range of English foods, regional products (boles de picolat, Catalan snails and sausages ...) and Roussillon wines.

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**Friday and Saturday
non stop 9h/19h30**

Driving in France

European legislation now means you are covered in Europe (the old green card), but bear in mind it is only for third party insurance and not comprehensive. If you have an accident, try to take some photographs and insist on filling in an accident report sheet - the constat amiable d'accident. You can pick up a blank form from your insurance office and keep it with you in the car 'just in case'!

Fire!

In these dry months, a major forest fire can start with a carelessly discarded cigarette or hot embers from a BBQ.

Fire safety advice for property owners



Get rid of dry branches, brush and any other easily inflammable material that might normally be lying around your garden.

Prune tree branches in such a way that the tips of the branches are not touching the next tree or any cables, electrical wires.

Avoid growing garden hedges or tree lines at less than ten metres from the house.

Leave at least 5 metres distance between individual tree plantations.

Leave a band of at least one metre around the house with no vegetation.

Avoid leaving combustible materials lying around in the garden (gas bottles, paint tins etc).

If you have a swimming pool, purchase a pump to

enable you to utilise the water in case of emergency. If you have a gas supply cylinder in your garden, dig it into the earth so that it is not exposed.

What to do in case of fire

Call the fire brigade on **18** or **112** (European emergency service).

Open and clear all access to the property.

For more information on this or any aspect of fire security in the Pyrenees-Orientales, contact your local town hall, or the 'Service Departemental Incendie et Secours' (DDAF - Service Forestier) on 04 68 51 95 29 (ave de Grande Bretagne, 66000, Perpignan).

Up the criquewith or without a paddle!

If you lose your credit card in France - Ring:

Interbank service	0836 69 08 80
(Paris) American Express	01 47 77 72 00
Diners' Club	01 49 06 17 50
Eurocard/ Mastercard	01 45 67 84 84
Visa International	01 42 77 11 90

More useful numbers

SOS Doctors 24/24	+33 (0)8 20 20 41 42
Emergency vet	+33 (0)4 68 55 55 83
Anti-Poison Centre	+33 (0)4 91 75 25 25
Perpignan Hospital	+33 (0)4 68 61 66 33
International mastercard	+33 (0)8 00 90 13 87
Local Weather Forecast	+33 (0)8 36 68 02 66
EDF (electricity problems)	+33 (0)8 10 333 066
GDF (gas problems)	+33 (0)8 10 43 30 66

Who to contact in case of emergency

SAMU (medical emergency)	15
Police emergency	17
Fire Service emergency	18
European emergency lingne	112
Directory enquiries	118 008
international Directory enquiries	32 12

Proverbe du mois

"C'est l'hôpital qui se moque de la charité".
It's the pot calling the kettle black.