

P-O Life

Life in the Pyrénées Orientales

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Next to the restaurant "Le Clos des Lys"

Holà

It is hard to believe that P-O Life is six years old in the New Year! After all this time, I still get giddy as a kipper each time a new edition rolls off the press, so this seems the perfect time and place to say a big 'Thank you' to readers, contributors and advertisers for the unwavering support over the years, which has helped to make P-O Life what it is today.

Some rather macho looking clouds are swaggering across the sky as I write this, but autumn in the P-O has been spendiferous, with a superb 'été indienne' at the beginning of November, making a few wet, windy and rainy days to come so much easier to swallow.

This winter, we explore some of the canals that criss cross the P-O, hunt out some perfect picnic and barbeque spots, and head up into the mountains in search of extreme fun in the snow.!

Bou Nadal i Felic auy Nou.

Wishing you a 2011 full of all that is good

Kate & Jane



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and stay up to date with
life in the Pyrénées-Orientales.
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Index

Walk the region Vallée de Planès.....	6-7
Did you know?	9
Events festivals & traditions	10-13
Food & drink	
Restaurant review.....	14-15
Wine and Beer.....	16
Truffles.....	17
Chinese Recipe - we will wok you!.....	18
From Prades with love.....	19
The legendary lovers	20
Ski Catalan	22-29
Out for the day	
Coastal Drives.....	30-31
Canal du Bohère.....	32
Rodès.....	33
Perfect Picnics.....	34-35
Test your French	38-41
Améliorez votre Anglais	42-43
Let's get physical	44-45
FrenchLife Choosing a GP.....	46-47
Things you might need to know	50
BookLife Easy French reads.....	52
Vous et Tu	54-55
Taxi!!	58
Emergency numbers	60
English Speaking Services	62-63

Vide Greniers

Visit our site at www.anglophone-direct.com for an up-to-date list of the vide greniers in your area.

Palais des Congrès, Perpignan

organises events, exhibitions, salons, concerts and conferences throughout the year. Check out their website on www.congres-perpignan.com




Welcome to the Pyrénées-Orientales!
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VALLÉE DE PLANÈS – HAUTE CERDAGNE

Cambre D'Ase from St Pierre del Forcats.

UTM Grid WGS84 – 31N 427572E 4704037N - 5.5 hours and 325m of ascent

This enjoyable walk follows mainly forestry tracks under the lofty summit of the Cambre D'Ase with wonderful views over the Cerdagne and Capcir plateaux. Although it is possible to walk from the ski station at St Pierre del Forcats, it is much more enjoyable to take the chairlift to Pla du Cambre d'Ase

Access

The large car park at the ski station at St Pierre del Forcats is our starting point at an altitude of 1655m. The walk is covered by map IGN2250ET, 1/25000 (Bourg-Madame Mont-Louis). There is a café just above the car park which makes a good meeting point. It is best to enjoy this walk outside school holidays as the ski lift does tend to get very busy.

In the car park there is an office where you can buy a "piéton" lift pass.

At the eastern end of the car park

you will find the Telesiège del Mouli which we take up to the Pla du Cambre d'Ase at 1939m. . Once out of the lift station, take a minute to look at the towering icy cliffs of the Cambre d'Ase 2750m, where you can often see climbers clinging to its icy slopes and even more scary, skiers descending its steep couloirs..

The walk

Look for the green ski piste sign "le plan école" which you follow to the left, staying to the RH edge of the piste. After approx 50m follow a forestry track to

the right with superb panoramic views over the Cerdagne, for 550m, passing the teleski du Riu to a junction marked vallée de Planès. We now leave the skiers behind and continue on the track towards Orri de Planès, passing the Rec del Moli. The track is simple to follow and in winter, after a fresh snowfall, it is difficult to believe that cars could pass through the trees. After 2 hours we reach the end of the forestry track at a clearing where horses and cows are herded in spring and autumn. The signs indicate

Carte-blanche

Meaning literally blank card, this expression means freedom or permission to do anything and originally referred to a signed blank cheque for which the recipient decided on the amount. Yes please!

that you go left but we take a track to the right, through a small gate and up out of the trees to a clear area at 1980m GPS 31N 430211E 4701989N, where you will also see a signpost indicating Planès to the left and the Orri to the right.

➡ To the right you have the steep cliffs of the Mallaza and the back of the Cambre d'Ase. *These slopes are very avalanche prone and care should be taken if you decide to walk more than a further 300m up the valley.* To do so would require stable snow conditions and an

experienced guide!

➡ Follow the valley to the south for a few hundred meters to find a good picnic spot in the sun, with great views and a very remote feeling.

➡ After lunch retrace your steps to the signpost at 1980m and instead of following our ascent tracks continue N following the summer

path and waymarks where visible, descending gradually to a junction at 1845m GPS 31N 429956E 4703205N, taking the path to the L descending to another forestry track. From here there are two options – 1. Turn left and follow the track S to a bend and summer parking area.

Continue on the track following signs for St Pierre until you arrive once again at the ski pistes which you follow back to the car park.

2. Turn R and follow the track a short distance until a sign takes you down L into the forest, crossing a stream and up the

other side to a path which we follow straight down through the forest for 850m until just above Planès at 1630m. Follow the level track to the left for 450m until a track, GR36, for the ski station climbs up to the L. Follow this track all the way back to St Pierre ski station.

➡ This is a great walk for observing animal tracks so invest in a good book and try and identify the tracks of deer, wild boar, pine martin, marmot, mice and other animals.

Bonne promenade!



Mike Rhodes is an International Mountain Leader / Accompagnateur de Montagne, lives all year in Les Angles and specialises in guided walks in the high mountains and Snowshoe trips in winter. He can be contacted on +33 (0)4 68 04 37 28 email: mike.rhodes@free.fr web site: www.pyrenean-trails.com

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Did you know...?



The first day of the winter sales (*soldes d'hiver*) in the Pyrenees-Orientales has been set for 12th January at 8h

continuing until 15th February 2011. During this period, the shops of Perpignan are allowed by the municipality, to open all day on a couple of Sundays.

Dates are set by the prefecture although recent changes now allow retailers to

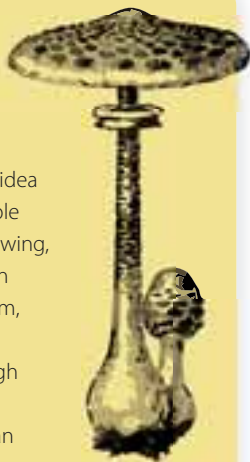
choose a further two weeks, on top of the set summer and winter sales dates. Special 'promotions' do not count as 'sales' and can take place whenever the shop wishes.

Not mush room for error!

Not sure about your mushrooms? Did you know that you can take them into a chemist, where they have been trained (in theory) to tell you whether your pickings are 'comestibles' (edible). It's a good idea to note down as much information as possible when you pick - where the mushroom is growing, (on wood, soil, moss) whether it is single or in clusters, the colours of the caps, gills and stem, and any other distinctive features.

Don't take just one for identification though unless you are sure they are all the same species as one bad mushroom in a basket can poison the lot!

(By the way, what do you call a mushroom that buys all your drinks? A fungi to be with. (fun guy! Get it?)



Famous Frenchmen

It is to writer Charles Perrault (1628 – 1703) that we owe the modern version of the fairy tale. Whilst he wrote many books, he is remembered for just one. Based upon old folk tales, his 1697 book, '*Histoires ou contes du temps passé, avec des moralités*' (Stories or Tales from Times Past, with Morals), contained eight simple stories, amongst them Le Petit Chaperon rouge (Little Red Riding Hood), La Belle au bois dormant (Sleeping Beauty), Cendrillon (Cinderella), and many other stories that coloured our childhood. In fact, he was almost 70 when he wrote his first fairy tales.

A little bird told me....

Did you know that a starling (*étourneau*) produces one gramme of poo per day, according to ornithologists? Times that by the hundreds of thousands of these cute little villains that choose Perpignan for their winter sun destination each year, and you might want to consider wearing a hat between mid-October and February, when the skies of Perpignan are darkened by startling starling clouds of chirps, warbles, trills and whistles... and poo-a-plenty!





for detailed information visit:-
www.anglophone-direct.com

DECEMBER

PESSEBRE VIVENT.....

REAL PEOPLE ACTING OUT LIVING NATIVITY SCENES.

The 'pessebre', or nativity scene, has always been popular in Catalonia. Originally introduced from Naples, sets are constructed in churches, private homes, public squares, halls and shopping centres, traditional representations of the Nativity Story... which is nothing new. A little less traditional however is the 'pessebre vivent' when these nativity scenes come alive!

The leading characters, dressed up in period clothes, take their places in decorated stage-sets portraying historical and biblical scenes. Sometimes they will sing and talk, other times they will just stand or sit without moving!! Often, there will be a commentary with spectacular special effects and lighting. A comical addition to the traditional 'pessebre' is "El caganer", the statue of a Catalonian peasant with trousers half down, sitting in a 'toilet' position and making his small contribution to the land, in order to fertilize and ensure a bumper crop the following year! And staying on the subject of poo, look out for the



caga tió (literally "poo log"!!), a hollow log standing up on four little stick legs with a smiley face painted on one end and red "barretina" hat. From December 8th, he is "fed" every night and on Christmas Day, beaten with sticks to make him drop the sweets and turrions placed inside him.

Christmas Markets
Visit our site at
www.anglophone-direct.com
for a list of Christmas markets

2nd December

Carol service - Vernet

at 19.00 - Vernet

Prayers, carols, mince pies and mulled wine at the Chapelle de Notre Dame du Paradis
More information, Lynn or John Shearman on [04 68 05 88 18](tel:0468058818)

3-5th December

The AFM Telethon

National

The AFM (Association Française contre les Myopathies et les maladies neuromusculaires) Telethon has become France's major fund-raising event. For those

who fight every day against devastating neuromuscular diseases, each Telethon is a new step on the road to victory. Your donation will help accelerate research progress and raise patients' hopes. Look out for events taking place throughout the région

School holidays for our region

Christmas - Saturday 19th December - Monday 3rd January 2011

February Half Term - Saturday 26th February 2011 - Monday 14th March 2011

3rd -31st December

Outdoor ice rink

Perpignan (place de la Victoire, at the foot of the Castillet)

4th December

BRITISH TEA ROOMS in aid of the Telethon

Foyer Municipal, Maureillas 2pm-5pm

Apart from that nice feeling of doing something for charity, there is a very selfish reason to come along to the British tea rooms in Maureillas. Well, quite a few reasons really! Scones, Victoria sandwiches, home-made shortbreads, biscuits, chocolate and fruit cakes, Christmas cakes, mince pies, sausage rolls, home made chutney.....along with a nice cuppa and a chance to meet up and chat with both French and British cuppa fans. SEE YOU THERE!!

14th December

Christmas Café Service

Centre Chrétien du Roussillon, Perpignan 4pm - Come and celebrate Christmas with us at our relaxed café service. Enjoy carols, mulled wine, festive nibbles and a gift for all the children. Please contact us to help us plan numbers on www.riverchurch.fr

December

Take a ride on the Santa special

Rivesaltes and Axa

Organised by the Train Touristique du Pays Cathares et du Fenouillèdes (TPCF), this Christmas train will leave from Rivesaltes on the 15th, 18th, 19th, 20th, 21st and 23rd December and Axat in the Aude on the 22nd December. Non stop entertainment for both old and young including a visit from Father Christmas. Hot drinks and nibbles, make-up workshop on board and a present for every child
Reservations: [04 68 59 99 02](tel:0468599902) or www.tpcf.fr

19th December

Casse-Noisette

« Made in China »

Théâtre de l'Etang, St-Estève

Based on the story "The Nutcracker and the King of Mice" with music by Tchaikovsky, Nutcracker "Made in China" by The Chinese National Circus has been reinvented for acrobats. Thirty eight artistes present this acrobatic extravaganza of dance, magic, and drama. More info: [04.68.38.34.95](tel:0468383495)

31st December

"CHAPEAU COLLIOURE"

New year fun

Give your hat that 'Collioure

touch' Bodegas, bandas

and bopping. Fireworks

at midnight in the bay.

Wear a hat and decorate

it in any style that makes

you think of Collioure!

Book a table on the beach

for 5€, ([04 68 82 05 66](tel:0468820566)), and

bring your own banquet,

or dine in bodega-style

Musical firework display

Canet - Hot chocolate, hot wine and music and dancing to welcome in the new year.

Useful phrases in Catalan for the festive season

Pau i salut! (paoo ee saloot)

Cheers (lit : peace and health)

Volis ballar amb mi ?

(bolz beuya um mee ?)

Would you like to dance with me ?

Què voldrien beure vostres?

(keh vuldree-en bayoor, boostess?)

What would you like to drink?

El compte si us plau.

(ell conte see ousse plow)

The bill please.

T'estimo. (tesstimoo)

I love you.

January

A PIECE OF CAKE

First Sunday in January

Pop into Perpignan for the 'Fête des Rois' and check out the 'Cavalcade des Rois Mages', a parade through the streets on horse and camel back, representing the kings, Gaspard, Melchior and Balthazar.



Of course, the French have a bit of a reputation for mistreating their royalty, but don't be fooled – these days, it is more about cutting up cakes than cutting up kings. The 'Galette des Rois' (differs according to region but usually a cake made from puff pastry with frangipan stuffing) was originally to 'draw the kings' to the Epiphany. Eaten in honour of the three kings, it goes rather well with a cup of tea or a glass or two of white wine. It is traditionally divided into enough portions for all the people present plus one more for the first poor person that passes by. A lucky charm (une fève - originally a bean but now more often a plastic trinket) is baked inside the galette, and whoever receives the fève is crowned king or queen for the day. It is the perfect opportunity to invite family and friends or maybe get together with those neighbours you haven't yet met! During the French Revolution, the name was replaced with 'Gâteau de l'Égalité' (equality cake), as the word 'king' was a little out of fashion!

1st January

DONT FORGET THAT FIRST SWIM OF THE YEAR - Argelès, Premier bain de l'année (first dip of the year!) - meet up at 10h30 at the rond-point d'arrivée by the beach - et bonne chance!

23rd January

Over the border, Southern Catalonia- Olive Festival (Espolla) + Bean Festival (Santa Pau) Two festivals for the price of one... Fuel up on beans in Santa Pau then blast along to nearby Espolla for all things olive.

for detailed information visit:-
www.anglophone-direct.com

Mayday, Mayday

The international radio distress call - used since about 1927 for sailors in danger, is an Anglicization of the French 'm'aidez', "help me" or more fully 'Venez m'aider' meaning 'Come help me'.

Just plain silly!!

Could a '**coup de grace**' translate as a **lawnmower**?

Does '**Tant pis, tant mieux**' mean **Auntie has a pee, Auntie feels better?**

Might '**Moi aussi**' translate as '**I'm Australian?**

February

FLIPPING EASY

Pancake Day - Fête de la Chandeleur - The nearest French equivalent to Pancake Day is the 'Fête de la Chandeleur' (Candlemas), originally a religious festival, which has many proverbs and superstitions surrounding it. One tradition was to light a candle in the church and carry it home without the flame going out, if you were hoping not to pop your clogs in

the coming year. *'Celui qui la rapporte chez lui allumée. Pour sûr ne mourra pas dans l'année'*
To ensure that the crop would be plentiful for the coming year, it was an absolute must to eat pancakes. But only after 8 pm. *'Si point ne veut de blé charbonneux Mange des crêpes à la Chandeleur'*
If the elected tosser could flip a crêpe with one hand whilst holding a gold coin in the other, the family was assured of prosperity throughout the coming year.
Finally.... time to talk about the weather. *'Quand il pleut pour la Chandeleur, il pleut pendant quarante jours.'*



Image: recettestriples.fr

1st February

LES RENDEZVOUS DU CAVEAU DE LA HUCHETTE

Palais des Congrès, Perpignan - Named after the famed Paris Jazz club, "Caveau de la Huchette" this regular jazz 'club' brings together talented jazz musicians every month. This month, we meet the Rolling Dominos, New Orleans style rock 'n' roll, rhythm and blues, and swinging jazz band!.

19th-20th February

SALON ANIMALIADES - Puppy and kitten fair Parc des Expositions, Perpignan

Puppies of every shape, size and breed for sale and exhibition, are just a part of this weekend of animal magic

FETE DE L'OURS BEAR FESTIVAL

Once upon a time, a young shepherdess was spirited away by a bear, actually the devil in disguise, and rescued by woodcutters. In this yearly enactment, men and women dressed as bears and hunters run through the streets as the crowd cheers and screams. Eventually the 'hommes en blanc' or 'barbiers' intervene, covered in flour, armed with heavy chains and dressed in white with lace bonnets! One of them has an axe, another carries a botifarra (locally made black pudding!!) and a cuvette (basin) with which they "shave" the bear.



In Prats de Mollo, watch out for the mascarade in which the children parade noisily through the streets, dressed in white with faces covered in flour, or the Encadenat, (link up) a conga like dance through the streets. Have a giggle too at the Ball de la Posta, where naughty "damsels" get smacked on the bottom with a plank or the Tio-tio where dancers dressed in white, covered in flour, and equipped with a lit candle try and set fire to the bottom of the person in front of them!

Restaurant

El Taller, Taurinya

Restaurant Review

*Jackie Edwards
reports on restaurant
El Taller, ambitious
new Bistrot de Pays in
Taurinya*



If you're visiting the Abbey of St Michel de Cuxa near Prades, why not continue just a kilometre or so up the valley to Taurinya, where an ambitious new Bistrot de Pays, El Taller, offers excellent food in a stunning setting. Opened in November 2008, El Taller is a brand new construction built entirely of steel (to reflect Taurinya's mining history) and glass. With some striking steel sculptures both inside and out, it provides an arresting new focal point in this otherwise traditional mountain village. Its enthusiastic young management team is welcoming and they speak excellent English. The atmosphere is informal, the cuisine inventive and everything is beautifully presented with meticulous attention to detail

The menu is (reassuringly) not extensive, though there is a good range of choices which change regularly. Everything is freshly prepared, and always features both local and seasonal produce. There is a set menu (€26.50 in the evening; at

lunchtime the set menu prices start at €14 for 2 courses, €17.50 for 3; there is also a €26.50 menu at lunchtime) as well as a small à la carte selection.

We live in the village so visit as often as we can, though there was little on last night's

menu that had featured in previous visits. On this chilly autumn evening, my starter of a pastilla (feuille de brique pastry) stuffed with lardons, pumpkin & mushrooms, served with brie toast and a side salad, was particularly delicious. My companions respectively chose a vegetable Charlotte topped with local goat's cheese, and a salad of potato, anchovies, pistou & tapenade, all homemade. In each of our choices, we commented on how well the ingredients complimented each other, whilst retaining distinctive individual flavours. The presentation, on slate platters, was elegant.

For our main courses, we all opted for hearty meat dishes.

The terrace in front of El Taller, edging the village Place, on a balmy summer's evening





www.bistrodepay.com

The Bistrot de Pays network was the brainwave of Bernard Reynal in 1993 and aims to rejuvenate small communities and counteract "la désertification". There are a few rules for those wishing to join. They can only be established in villages of less than 2000 inhabitants and must promote local produce and local tourism; organise events - theatre, art exhibitions, sport etc; substitute for the disappearance of other commerce in the village; and stay open all year round. Though not widely spread across the country, there is a significant number in the P.O.

Slow cooked *joue de boeuf* with carrots, ginger & coriander, flavoursome pork fillet stuffed with mushrooms in a rich wine & mushroom sauce and deliciously tender rabbit stuffed with herbs in a rosemary sauce. Each dish was accompanied by an imaginative selection of fresh seasonal vegetables, cooked to perfection. Two fish options were available [red mullet or monkfish] and we have enjoyed these equally in the past. Sylvain, the chef, is also happy to cater specially for those with specific dietary requirements or smaller appetites than we had on this chilly night!

You might think, after such a blowout, that only the truly

greedy would have ordered a pudding. That may be so, but the choices on offer were, I'm afraid, irresistible, and we succumbed to temptation. Again, all were home made and heavenly: a chocolate fondant pudding, a tarte tatin and a sumptuous chocolate *crème* enhanced with dried fruits and crunchy nuts.


The wine list is well chosen, local wines are predominant and, mostly, modestly priced [ranging from €15-€48]. The house wines are good, and we often stick to a *carafe* of their excellent Caramany at a reasonable €8. Tonight we tried the *vin primeur*, a Cotes d'Agly at €12 a bottle, which proved to be a good choice.

**Quel est le fromage
preferé de Carla Bruni?**

Le Président!

Finishing with their excellent coffee, the meal tonight for 3 people cost us €106, which we thought was good value for such an enjoyable experience where virtually everything is home made, seasonal and locally sourced. We will undoubtedly be back again soon!

EL TALLER, Place de Verdagner
Taurinya, 66500
Tel: 04 68 05 63 35



The building has been deliberately constructed out of steel, designed to weather and change it's appearance over time.



BEAUTY IS IN THE EYE OF THE BEER HOLDER!

with JOHN FAIRCLOUGH

Changing drinking trends mean that beer is slowly replacing wine as the drink of choice for young people in many Mediterranean countries.

The V&B chain of beer shops, (standing for Vins et Bières believe it or not!) primarily sited in the North of France, has not been slow to notice this trend, and as such, has recently opened a branch in Mas Guerido, Perpignan.

The idea behind V+B's operation is to be 50% shop and 50% bar. The bar part has wooden chairs and tables, with at least 4 draught beers on tap, plus dozens of bottled beers, primarily from Germany and Belgium, in large fridges. There is also a selection of wines, soft drinks and coffee.

The shop is a veritable paradise

for beer lovers, and fans of several other alcoholic beverages! There is a range of bottled beers, far too numerous to list, covering all the beer styles of Belgium, Germany, and France with contributions from Britain, Ireland, Czech Rep,



Cave & Bar



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Beer Cave – over 350 beers from around the world, including Green King IPA, Old Speckled Hen, Murphys and many more...

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04 68 86 36 68
www.VandB.fr

22 rue Michel Carré 66330 Mas Guerido, Cabestany

L'abus d'alcool est dangereux pour la santé, à consommer avec modération

Poland, Italy, Denmark, USA, Canada, Australia, plus several African and Asian countries. In total, there are at least 300 different sorts. Another highlight is the range of whiskies. All the different Scotch styles of single malt are present, plus examples from Ireland, N America, Japan, and, bizarrely, Corsica! There is a small, but interesting range of other spirits, such as rum, on offer too.

Returning to the beer theme, there is a wide selection of « mini futs » or small kegs, for use with the home draught beer taps now so popular, and for those without the equipment they will rent it to you for the weekend; ideal for those Christmas parties.

And speaking of the Festive Season, there are literally dozens of great gift ideas, from Belgian beer glasses, DIY wooden crates with a selection of beers, and a huge range of booze paraphernalia (openers, corkscrews, chillers etc) at competitive prices.

Look out for special evening events, such as coverage of Rugby and Football matches (they have a giant screen,) live band entertainment (they have a small stage,) and “ degustation” evenings. More information on www.vandb.fr

V+B can be found in the heart



of the Mas Guerido complex at 22 rue Michel Carré. There is plenty of parking available right outside. Tel: **04 68 86 36 68**
Opening hours are 10 to 12.30 and 14.30 to 20.00. Closed all day Sunday and Monday morning.

Les truffes (Truffles)

Black truffles (coming from the Latin ‘tuber’, meaning “lump”) sell for 800 to 1000 euros a kilo in local markets and over 3,000 euros per kilo in some sectors of the retail world!

Truffles are fungi that grow underground from small organisms which grow on the roots of certain trees, in particular green and white oaks.

In order for the truffle to develop, the right combination of soil, climate and host tree must be present and even then it is not guaranteed. The soil must be chalky, the climate Mediterranean and the tree of the right species.

Specially trained dogs sniff them out and indicate their

presence to the ‘trufficulteur’ who will carefully investigate the site with the help of a trowel or spoon.

The truffle is well protected by law with heavy fines and even prison sentences for poaching. At all reputable truffle fairs the goods on sale will be inspected by an expert to ensure that they are the genuine article.

An economical way to enjoy the flavour is in scrambled eggs. Store the eggs overnight in a plastic container together with a

whole truffle. After about twelve hours make your scrambled eggs in the usual way. The scent and flavour of the truffle will have permeated through the eggshells. You can add a few truffle shavings before serving but don’t be too heavy handed as it is a very delicate flavour.

Bon Appetit

Snuffle a truffle at the truffle festivals in ...

Villefranche de Conflent

– Sunday 19th December

Arles-sur-Tech – Sunday

6th February

Lesquerde – Sunday

13th February

Spicy Chicken with Cashew Nuts

We thought we'd leave the Pyrenees behind in this edition, and just concentrate on the 'Orientales' to celebrate the Chinese New Year of the Rabbit, starting on February 3rd.



All ingredients for this simple Chinese chicken recipe are available from the Asia Centre in Mas Guerido. Or if you're more into rock than wok, stick on some Elvis or Zeppelin & heat up one of their delicious home made, prepared dishes, washed down with a few bottles of Chinese beer or a glass of 'sake'.

Ingredients: 2 Tbsps oil
2 cloves garlic, minced
1/2 small onion, cut into halves
6-8 strips dried red chillies, cut into halves
1/2 cup roasted cashew nuts, rinsed & drained
8 oz chicken, cut into small cubes
1 spring onion, trimmed & cut into 1 1/2-in lengths

Sauce:

1 Tsp soy sauce
1 Tbsp sweet soy sauce
1 Tsp fish sauce
1/4 Tsp sugar or to taste
2 Tbsps water

*We will, we will,
wok you....*

Method: Heat up wok & add oil. Add garlic, onion, chillies & stir-fry until you smell the spicy aroma of the chillies. Add cashew nuts, then chicken. Stir-fry chicken until surface turns opaque. Add all ingredients for the Sauce & continue to stir-fry until chicken is cooked. Stir-in spring onion, & serve immediately with steamed rice.

*For a Great British Christmas,
Authentic Chinese New Year or
Romantic Valentines Dinner...*

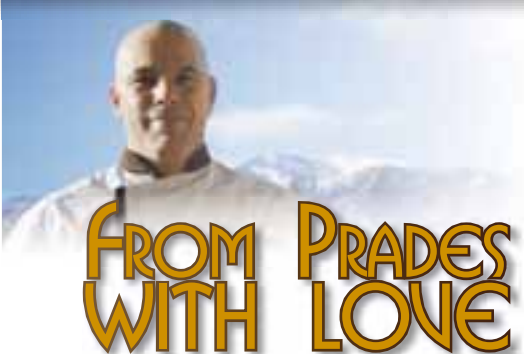
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Bringing you the festive tastes of home & abroad



Wander accidentally into the kitchens of the boulangerie chocolaterie Bruno Daudet, in the centre of Prades and you will be assailed by odours of freshly baked bread, cake and delightful homemade chocolate.....and soothed by Strauss!

The great composer in this bakery however, is Bruno himself. A worldwide wanderer in his youth, he has injected his cakes and pastries with an international flavour, and hot cross buns and traditional English Christmas cakes can be spotted

side by side with home made 'flan' and fresh French cream cakes.

A passionate chocolate maker, Bruno believes that the old methods are the best. High quality chocolates, lovingly produced by hand, adorn the shelves of this small 'grand cru' chocolate emporium.

Truffles with a hint of whisky, cinnamon, and orange, all shades and shapes of milk, plain or white chocolates with different 'ganache', silky chocolate mixture flavoured with mouth watering mint, honey, liqueur..... Sooooooooooooo nice.

Bruno's health and hygiene standards are high. Despite my begging and badgering, he refused to let me lick out the bowl!

From December, you will be able to select individual choccies according to your budget, either in person or by Internet, and have them sent to friends and family all over the world – a fabulous Christmas, birthday, Valentine or Mothers day present – **FROM PRADES WITH LOVE.**



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Forever bronze THE LEGENDARY LOVERS OF PORT VENDRES

With MM Brady

Who they really were has been lost forever in history, but by the time of the Third Republic, the legend of the love of Fenouil and Fenouille was so familiar along the coast that Minister Jules Pams proposed that a statue be put up in Port Vendres to immortalise the lovers. In March 1901, the proposal was approved and a bronze statue by sculptor Jean Ossaye Mombur was put on a pedestal at Place Castellane, above the new harbour. Entitled *Idyll*, it depicted a teenage couple in the attire of country folk, gazing out toward the sea. It immediately struck the hearts of the townspeople and became a focal point for festive events.



Photo of statue by Marianne Hadler.

Sadly, the statue was torn down in 1942 during the occupation, to salvage the bronze. Rescue came in 1999, when the municipality commissioned Pyrénées-Orientales resident sculptor Gérard Vié to make a replacement, working from old postal card photos of the original. It was unveiled in 2000 and shows the lovers as they originally were depicted.

That brought the legend back to life. Fenouil and Fenouille were the Romeo and Juliet of Catalonia. They were teenage Gypsies, madly in love. He was in training to be a fisherman, she to be a fishmonger.

Each year, when Fenouil is at sea for weeks in the big catch season, Fenouille is distraught, as she knows that there are other girls in other ports; what if one should make eyes at her beloved? Then he is lost at sea and does not come back to Port Vendres. Overcome with grief, she leaps into the sea to join him in death. The unforgiving sea is for once quite forgiving, and remorsefully draws the faces of the two lovers in the sand of a beach. A sculptor sees the drawing and is immediately moved to create a statue in bronze to immortalize the love of Fenouil and Fenouille.

la table de cuisine

Saveurs et Gourmandises toute l'année

Open every day throughout the holiday season including Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Years Eve & New Years Day

Please see our website for details of our festive menu



Martine et Laurent Brozzetti invite you to savour the flavours of our beautiful region

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If a picture paints a thousand words.....

Have you counted the hundreds of photos stored on your computer, never to be seen again? I have well over 2,000 – but my walls are bare! Fortunately, Thuir based Justin Harris has the solution. He can transform your family photos, treasured memories and precious moments into beautiful canvas masterpieces – and he can even delete the mother-in-law if it's easier on the eye!

All you need to do is choose the size and style required and email the image over, via the website. Using a specialist art printer to print onto a canvas, it is then 'stretched' over wooden frames. Inks and materials are durable, and will last for decades, making it into a fabulous and original gift to send to friends and family who want to keep you in their head as well as their heart.

Ski the P-O...

SKI CATALAN....



A day out in the mountains of the high Pyrenees-Orientales can be as extreme or relaxing as you chose, a delightful combination of whatever you want it to be. Accommodation, restaurants and facilities are cheaper than the Alps, skiers and snowboarders are assured plenty of snow, even if the winter is mild, thanks the an abundance of snow cannons, and if you fancy fondu on the ski slopes for lunch and lobster on the sea front for dinner, you couldn't chose a better location.





LES ANGLÉS

THE RESORT

Ringed by mountains, Lake Matmale glistening in front of the village, Les Angles offers 32 downhill pistes catering for all levels, and an impressive Snowpark. From the top of the télécabine, black, red, blue and green ski runs bring you through the pine forests to the village. There are two restaurants on the slopes, warm and welcoming, and a "Salle de Grillade" at the top of the télécabine where you can leave your own barbecue meat at the start of your skiing day and arrive to have it grilled and served for you at lunch-time!

THE HISTORY

The old village is centred round the church of St Michel, several fountains and the remains of the XIII century tower of the chateau. Attractive old houses have been turned into gites,

restaurants and hotels.

A fairly dynamic village in the early 20th century, the population declined through war and the 'exode rural' as people left agriculture and headed for work in the towns. The ski resort was created in 1964 to restore the economy and bring life back to a fading village – and it worked!

THE NAME

It seems that Les Angles was originally named Podium Angularum (Latin for 'angular summit') after its geographical position. At some point, somebody must have realised that it was a bit of a mouthful and shortened it to Les Angles!

THE PARC ANIMALIER

If skiing is not your thing, why not visit the 'parc animalier' des Angles, where you can see many

of the animals of the Pyrénées, in very large enclosures, in their natural surroundings. The one and a half to two hour walk through enclosures of boar, wolf, bison, bear, reindeer, marmotte and izards is a pleasure for all ages. Picnic spots and beautiful views through to the lake and mountains add to the pleasure.

SKI FACT FILE



In brief

Advanced skiers ★★★★★☆
Intermediate ★★★★★☆
Beginners ★★★★★☆
Snowboarding ★★★★★★

Tourist Office: 04 68 04 32 76

www.lesangles.com

Les Angles

STATION DE SKI CATALANE 1600/2400M

le village station



www.lesangles.com

Quoi? You've never built an igloo? Never gone snowshoe walking in the mountains late at night or dined and slept in a snow-covered tepee? Never snake sledged from the top of the mountain or popped into the ice bar for a hot wine? Julien Boher and Frédéric Maugery, fully qualified instructors and leaders of all things mountain based, are on a mission to introduce you to the mountains in winter. In a group, en famille, all ages, all abilities, fun in the snow with survival, tracking, avalanche victim search...



See page 44 - Aventure Pyreneenne for contact details

Les Neiges Catalanes

Les Neiges Catalanes offers a single ski pass which covers *8 resorts and 4 cross country areas giving access to 288 kms of Alpine skiing, 107 ski lifts, 1330, 360 kms of cross country, 13 ski schools and 10 snow parks.

*Cerdagne Puigmal 2900 ; Cambre d'Aze ; Font- Romeu/Pyrenées 2000 ; Formiguères ; La Quillane ; Les Angles ; Porté-Puymorens and Puyvalador.

Contact : www.neigescatalanes.com



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HOW TO LOOK STYLISH ON THE PISTE

The dilapidated old Hotel Carlina in the heart of Les Angles has been transformed into a state of the art outdoor activity emporium.

The sheer range of clothing and equipment easily rivals anything you will find in the large Alpine resorts. Official stockist for all the leading brands, I was delighted to find that they even stock Killy, loved by the Brits for its quality, warmth & comfort, widespread in the Alps but rare as rocking horse poo in the Pyrenees! (My 16 year old Killy jacket is still going strong despite the dubious 80's Wham inspired design). They also have an excellent range of value clothing and equipment so whatever your sport, whatever your budget, and whatever the weather, Chalet du Ski will be able to help.

And forget about wasting precious time queuing for ski hire. Chalet du Ski have introduced the very latest in equipment hire technology, before you can say "Oh la la" you're out of the door suited, booted and ready to hit the slopes.

Another first for the region – a dedicated, specialist sunglasses area, offering expert advice on the right type of glasses for your sporting activity – climbing, randonnée, skiing ... You may love your Ray Bans, but are they really right for Kite Skiing?

Christophe & Paul are passionate outdoor sports enthusiasts. They are looking forward to sharing with you their expert knowledge of a wide range of year round outdoor sports.



FORMIGUERES

THE RESORT

At 4kms from the small but delightful village, with a huge carpark and a free navette (shuttle) in French school holidays, the ski area of Formiguères is a safe and family-orientated ski resort. All the runs return to the base where a large cafeteria with vast sunny terrace, a crèche for under threes, sports and ski hire shops and the possibility to leave ski equipment over night make life easy and relaxing. There is a free button lift for those who are not yet sure if they are skiers. In spring, the sweet melody of flute hovers in the pure air over the pistes, where a Spanish shepherd tends his flock.

The swooping pistes run through tall pine trees of the second largest pine forest in France. In days gone by, the French Navy used these same trees to make the masts for its ships.

THE HISTORY

Historic Capital of the Capcir in the heart of the Parc Naturel, Formiguères was chosen by the Kings of Majorca to be their Summer Palace in the XIV century. Sanch I, son of Jacques I, King of Aragon and Count of Barcelona, was an asthma sufferer. The air in this friendly and robust village high in the Capcir was reckoned to be good for him. It is certainly good for us.

The rich heritage can be seen at the 12th century church of Ste Marie with its impressive bell tower and interesting façade, which is joined to the Mairie and Tourist Office. The door of the Mairie is all that remains of the door and walls of the fortified château.

THE NAME

Two origins for the name have been suggested. One comes

from the original name for the river Lladura, called 'Frumigar' by the Visigoths. The other from the Latin 'Formica', (meaning ant) used at the time to describe a form of 'écobuage', a clearing of the land by which a heap of branches was covered with earth and burnt, which was popular with the Romans at the time.

SKI FACT FILE

 **25km downhill**
 **20km cross country**
Pistes



In brief

Advanced skiers ★★☆☆☆
Intermediate ★★★★★
Beginners ★★★★★
Snowboarding ★★★★★

Tourist Office: 04 68 04 47 35

www.formigueres.com

Ski the P-O...



FONT-ROMEU/ PYRENEES 2000

GETTING THERE

From Perpignan, follow the RN116 via Prades, Villefranche de Conflent to Mont Louis, then the D618 Font Romeu.

THE RESORT

Developed as a ski resort as early as 1921, the linked ski area of Font-Romeu and Pyrenees 2000 is the largest artificially snow covered ski-area in Europe with ski runs to suit all levels (downhill and cross-country skiing), and the biggest snow making machine in the Pyrenees.

In 1968, it was chosen to train French athletes for the Mexico Olympics and remains the "Centre National d'Entraînement en Altitude" for athletes of all disciplines to this day.

A town of hotels, bars, restaurants, sports shops, Font Romeu also boasts casino,

cinema, disco, bowling... Not the prettiest of the Pyrenees ski resorts, but everything you need on site for a great ski holiday as it is centrally located.

THE HISTORY

Originally nothing but a small cluster of chalets, Font Romeu flourished as a result of the arrival of the Petit Train Jaune in 1908, followed in 1911 by the building of the fashionable and luxurious Grand Hôtel, frequented by royalty and the rich and famous from all over the world during the 1920s and 30s. The Grand Hotel still dominates the town but is now split into apartments.

THE NAME

The name Font Romeu means "Pilgrim's fountain". According to legend, a cowherd went to investigate when he saw his

bull pawing day after day at the water of a fountain, and bellowing. When he looked in the water, he saw an image of the Virgin, a miracle which naturally warranted the building of a chapel. The Fountain of the Pilgrim can be found in the chapel of the XVII Hermitage at the top of the town.

SKI FACT FILE

 54km downhill skiing

Pistes
 15  11  8  6

In brief

Advanced skiers ★★★★★
Intermediate ★★★★★
Beginners ★★★★★
Snowboarding ★★★★★

Tourist Office: 04 68 30 68 30
www.font-romeu.fr

CAMBRE-D'AZE

St Pierre dels Forcats (linked to Eyne) is the first resort on the way up the mountain from Perpignan, & nestles at the foot of the impressive glacial cirque of Cambre d'Aze. Good for beginners and families.

 **35km downhill**
5km Cross Country



In brief

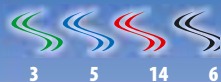
Advanced skiers ★★★★★
Intermediate ★★★★★
Beginners ★★★★★
Snowboarding ★★★★★

Tourist Office: 04 68 04 61 60
www.cambre-d-aze.com

CERDAGNE-PUIGMAL

The highest of the Pyrenees ski resorts, with challenging black runs and superb panoramic views. There's an 85 ha area for off-piste skiing, snow permitting. Relatively few snow cannons, so you do need to be sure of the weather!

 **305 hectares**
of skiable area



In brief

Advanced skiers ★★★★★
Intermediate ★★★★★
Beginners ★★★★★
Snowboarding ★★★★★

Tourist Office: 04 68 04 70 15
www.puigmal.fr

PORTÉ PUYMORENS

Just a fifteen minute drive from Pas de la Case, it is often overlooked by skiers rushing to buy cheap booze & cigarettes. However, it offers a variety of different levels for such a small resort, & its vast snow park attracts young snowboarders from all around.

 **45km downhill**
20km Cross Country



In brief

Advanced skiers ★★★★★
Intermediate ★★★★★
Beginners ★★★★★
Snowboarding ★★★★★

Tourist Office: 04.68.04.82.41
www.porte-puymorens.net

PUYVALADOR

With its lake of the same name, Puyvalador is the last village before the P-O drops into the Aude and boasts a chairlift which is open most of the year. Not the biggest skiable domain but in the right conditions provides some good "thru" the trees skiing

 **2 Snowparks**
4km Cross Country



In brief

Advanced skiers ★★★★★
Intermediate ★★★★★
Beginners ★★★★★
Snowboarding ★★★★★

Tourist Office: 04 68 04 44 83
www.puyvalador.com

LA QUILLANE

A family resort made up of just three small green and one blue runs, La Quillane is fabulous for first timers or nervous beginners!

 **Tiny!!**



In brief

Beginners ★★★★★
Snowboarding ★★★★★

Tourist Office: 04.68.04.22.25
www.laquillane.fr

Don't forget your snow chains or snow tyres.

They are a legal requirement and the 'gendarmes' will prevent you from continuing and very likely dole out an on-the-spot fine if you do not have suitable security for the snow. Put them on as soon as you see the signs.

For up to date weather call 3250, for road conditions call 04 68 38 12 05 or visit www.i-cerdanya.info www.dirso.fr/viabilitehivernale/



ALONG THE COASTAL LAGOONS OF THE P-O



On a clear winter's day, a drive along the coastal lagoons of Salses and Canet can offer vast skies, wide horizons, bird spotting, oyster eating and windsurfer watching. There are wine domains to be checked out, small towns to be stopped in and wandered around. Flamingos may be seen and Chateau de Salses can be visited.

Starting at the St Cyprien end of the Canet Lagoon on the D81, on one side you have the lagoon, on the other, the long sandy beach and the sea. Chateau l'Esparrou, designed by the same architect as Chateaux Valmy, overlooks the lagoon. Set in the midst of its vineyards, a visit may well involve a tasting...

The land around the lagoon is a nature reserve, Canigou gleams in the distance, its snow capped reflection dancing in the water. Traditional fishermen's reed huts line the shore and paths provide easy walking or cycling.

From Canet, the D81 continues just inland behind Toreilles, running through rich vegetable growing country. Artichokes

form geometric patterns in the fields and riding establishments abound.

The road joins the D83 just behind Le Barcares. In Catalan, Le Barcares means "a dry place to which boats can be dragged". Follow the signs to the Lydia, and, appropriately enough, you will find a 1930 ferryboat beached on the sands. The Lydia has a new lease of life as a casino, restaurant and nightclub.

Back on the D83, as you

cross the bridge overlooking Port Leucate, the road becomes the D627 and you are in the Aude. Look out for signs to the Centre Cochylicole, Rive Gauche. This is where the Salses/Leucate lagoon drains into the sea. The channel is lined with oyster catching huts.





Oyster “tasting” is the name of the game here. Tanks bubble with oysters, tables are full of tasters. Glasses of crisp local wine, plates of oysters and sliced bread are all that is available and it is possible

to buy oysters and cleaned mussels to take home.

If you continue along the road you arrive at Leucate village or Leucate sur Mer. Circling around the end of the lagoon you enter

the Fitou wine region. Good wine caves to visit, good wine to sample. You can then return to Perpignan on the A9, passing, or visiting, Chateau de Salses on your way..





...ALONG THE CANAL DU BOHÈRE TO ST MICHEL DE CUXA.

Many irrigation canals criss-cross the Pyrenees Orientales, some constructed over a thousand years ago in the time of the Visigoths. The Canal du Bohère, 1881, is one of the more recent ones. Running from Serdinya above Villefranche de Conflent and ending near the lake of Vinça, stretches of its 42 km length provide the perfect winter walk for lovers of peace, beauty and easy strolling.

A beautiful walk at any time of year but, in winter, the naked trees reveal the stunning views across the valley as the canal meanders high above the towns on the plain below.

An easily accessible stretch is to be found by taking the D35 Clara road out of Prades. After 2.5 km the road crosses the canal. Park on the right, climb the bank and turn right onto the footpath. The canal, about 2 m wide and

20 cm deep, winds under little bridges, past gardens, orchards and woods of chestnuts, cherries, walnuts, acacias and figs. As it twists and turns you catch glimpses of Prades, Eus, and finally the beautiful Abbey of St Michel de Cuxa before the walk ends at an impressive spurting siphon.- see restaurant review.

Abbey St Michel de Cuxa

It is easy to descend to the 940 Abbey dedicated to St Michel. One of the most peaceful and beautiful of the region's monastic buildings, the imposing interior is majestic in its simplicity. The setting, with Canigou towering in the background, is stunning; an inspirational place in which to refresh the spirit, and to buy the excellent cheese, honey and home made jam on sale in the shop before retracing your steps along the canal to your car.



... AND IN RODÈS

DISCOVERING A CANAL, AN ABANDONED QUARRY AND A MEDIEVAL CASTLE.

Rodès, on the right of the N116 between Ille sur Têt and Vinça, is a pretty, sun-drenched village dominated by a ruined 13th century castle. The river Têt fairly hurtles past, peach and nectarine orchards lining its banks before and after the gorge.

The canal clings to the edge of the Gorge of Guillerà high above the racing river. To reach it, on the left before the bridge over the Têt, a narrow footpath is signposted "the Gorge of Guillerà". On either side the sound of rushing water drowns out all other noise. Far below on the left, the river has carved out pools and smoothed the rocks, on the right the canal water hurries on its way to the next point of irrigation. After about ten minutes walking, the remains of the VIII century Aqueduct de Labau comes into view. It no longer spans the Têt but, from Roman times and

through the Middle Ages, it allowed the "royal canal" to cross the Têt and traffic from Ropidera to make its way to Rodès.

Soon after the aqueduct a path on the right leads to the castle. The views down the Têt valley to Ille sur Têt and the sea, or up to Canigou, Vinça, the barrage and lake, are stupendous and a footpath lined by wild lavender, prickly pears and olive trees leads back to Rodès.

The quarry, visible from the N116, used to produce high quality blue granite from which the quays of Port Vendres, Sète and Marseille were made. But transport was always a problem, with no railway station at Rodès and being on the far side of the Têt from the road. It closed before the war. Follow the "Rando Jazz" signs from the village and you will arrive at the perfect amphitheatre formed by the empty quarry.



Out for the day...



BBQ/PICNIC NEAR SOREDE

High above the village of Sorède, (D2 from Argelès or follow signs from the Le Boulou) and drivable until the last hundred or so metres is the Hermitage of Notre Dame d'Ultrera. At 530 metres, the ruins of the old castle of Ultrera dominate the Albères from their rocky piton, just as they did when first built in the time of the Visigoths

Before crossing the bridge that leads to Laroque-des-Albères, turn right along Rue Campet until the Place du Christ. The road on the right is signposted to Ultrera and, after 5 km, a carpark is reached, leaving just a five minute walk to the Hermitage.

Hermit honey?

The little chapel of the Hermitage has been restored and contains some dramatic art and a baroque altar. The large picture of Ste Marie Magdalene washed up on the shores of the French Mediterranean is particularly fanciful. Honey and a book telling of the first ever

solar oven can be bought from the resident hermit priest.

Padre des Himalayas

Near the ruined Chateau d'Ultrera, one of the world's first solar ovens took shape, the forerunner of those at Montlouis and Odeillo. It takes about ten minutes to walk to all that remains of Manuel Antonio Gomes's 1909 solar oven. A Portuguese physicist, he was known as the Padre des Himalayas because of his considerable height.

The disc measured 7 metres in diameter and, thanks to small mirrors attached to its surface,

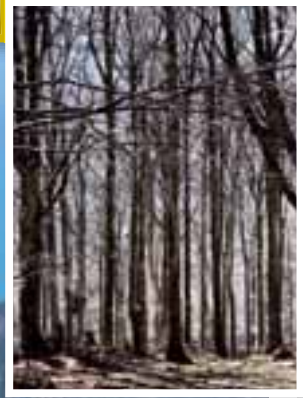
the concentrated heat of the sun could be directed towards an oven that achieved temperatures of 2500 degrees. The circular rail can still be seen...

Time for lunch

Back at the hermitage, a large terrace shaded by tall plane trees provides a perfect picnic spot and barbecue area. The views down the coast are spectacular. It is a beautiful spot, well worth the five km drive from Sorède.



PICNIC WITH A VIEW... ...NEAR PIC NEOLOUS



The backbone of the Alberes hills forms the border between France and Spain, and Pic Neolous, at 1256 metres, is the highest point. This is an easy drive with spectacular views, picnic and barbeque area and fabulous forest walks, so why not pack up your lunch and head for the hills?

Take the RN9 direction Le Perthus, turn off at the D71 just before Le Perthus, direction St Jean d'Albère.

Restaurant or picnic

An avenue of twisted cork oaks leads to the hamlet of St Jean d'Albere where a hearty Catalan restaurant, Can Joan, awaits those who wish to go no further. In a large room dominated by a boar's head bursting through the wall above the fireplace, you could be served a spectacularly carnivorous meal washed down by copious quantities of basic local wine. However, if you have your lunch or barbeque with you, continue, passing tempting

footpaths, till you reach St Martin d'Albère. Small chapel, big views.

On top of the world

On and up to the Col l'Ouillat where the last bit to the peak has to be walked. The trees as you near the summit are bent by the wind and great boulders and scrubby pastures line the route, but the panorama seen from its 1256 metres makes it well worth the effort. The sea, the Spanish plain of Ampurdan, the Bay of Roses, and down the French coast to Leucate. Superb...

And you have earned your lunch... Back on the road is a chalet/snack bar and, in the pine forest, the picnic/barbeque spot

par excellence.

The scenery is wonderful and it is tempting to continue. However, the piste soon becomes spotted with deep pot-holes, so pay attention to the route as well as to the view. It is possible to descend through a seemingly never-ending beech forest to Sorede but it is actually better to retrace your steps and return to Le Perthus, enjoying the splendid views of Canigou, the new TGV line, Fort Bellgarde and the A9.



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Home security tips for residents, second home owners and holiday homes

Holiday homes are our little oasis in the desert of life. We leave behind slog, smog, and stress and head off to our safe haven to recharge our batteries, unwind, chill... and easily forget that burglary and vandalism are not exclusive to that world we have left behind. Likewise for those of us who decide to head back across the Channel for the hols.

SCARY STATISTIC: *in the P-O there are approximately 5 break-ins per 1,000 homes per day*

On a brighter note, 95% of these unwanted visitors run after hearing the sound of an alarm.

We spoke to Lauren from Acti Protec who gave us a few tips to help you to keep your property safe.

- Consider double glazing. It's stronger. and much harder to break
- Use lights or radio on intermitent timers so the

house appears occupied

- Close your shutters. Some insurance companies may not pay out if shutters have not been secured, or if specific types of locks and alarms have not been fitted.,
- Consider fitting security grilles on doors & windows, these can be removable.
- Ask your neighbours to check on your property every now and then. Don't forget to leave them a contact number in case of emergency.
- Let the local gendarmerie know when your house is unoccupied. In the smaller villages, they will keep an eye on your property.

For total peace of mind, it is well worth investing in security lighting and a good burglar alarm.

ActiProtec will be happy to advise on which system best suits your lifestyle and budget.



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It's important to feel safe in your home and equally important to feel your property is protected while you're away.



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Test your French

1 - I POUR IMPOSSIBLE!

Match up these words, all beginning with I, with their definitions.

endroit où je suis	1	a	immeuble
pas blessé	2	b	instituteur
bâtiment de plusieurs étages	3	c	impôt
maladie si on reste trop longtemps au soleil	4	d	inverse
professeur pour les petits enfants	5	e	incendie
signe ou objet qui aide à prouver quelque chose.	6	f	ici
passage par où l'on peut sortir	7	g	insolation
grand feu	8	h	indemne
contraire	9	I	indice
somme d'argent qu'on paie à l'État	10	J	issue

Although in adult language learning, it's quite important not to get TOO hung up over genders (masculine and feminine), there are a few words whose meaning changes completely depending upon whether you use the correct one.

le chèvre - goat cheese

la chèvre - goat

le livre - book

la livre - pound (currency and weight)

le manche - handle

la manche - sleeve/ English Channel

le mode - method, way

la mode - fashion

le moral - morale

la morale - moral (of a story), morals

le mort - dead body

la mort - death

le poêle - stove

la poêle - frying pan

le poste - job, tv/radio set

la poste - post office

le radio - radio operator

la radio - radio, X ray

le somme - snooze, nap

la somme - sum, amount

le tour - tour, turn, trick

la tour - tower, rook (chess)

le vague - vagueness

la vague - wave (sea)

le vase - vase

la vase - silt, mud

le visa - visa (to enter a country)

la visa - Visa (credit card)

le voile - veil

la voile - sail

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2 - CAN YOU FIND THE FRENCH EQUIVALENT OF THESE POPULAR ENGLISH PROVERBS?

No sooner said than done	1	a. C'est l'hôpital qui se moque de la Charité
Every penny counts.	2	b. Il faut casser le noyau pour avoir l'amande
No pain no gain	3	c. Chacun pour soi
Nothing ventured, nothing gained.	4	d. Chat échaudé craint l'eau froide.
All's well that ends well.	5	e. Impossible n'est pas français.
Every man for himself	6	f. Après la pluie le beau temps
It's the pot calling the kettle black	7	g. Tout est bien qui finit bien
Every cloud has a silver lining.	8	h. Aussitôt dit, aussitôt fait
Once bitten, twice shy.	9	i. Qui ne risque rien n'a rien
There is no such word as "can't".	10	j. Un sou est un sou

What animal am I?

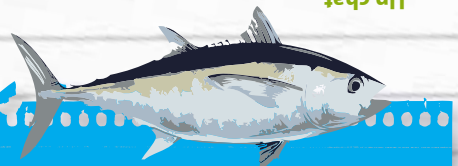
Je suis un mammifère carnivore qui aime bien dormir et faire sa toilette. On m'a dans la gorge lorsque la voix est rauque. Lorsqu'il pleut très fort, les Anglais disent que je tombe du ciel avec des chiens.

Un chat

**Tongue twister
(Virelangue)**

(Répétez trois fois)

**Ces cerises chaudes
sortent de Céret !**



Blague bête

Deux pêcheurs, assis sur un poisson, se disputent :
L'un dit à l'autre « Ne me parles pas sur ce thon! »

(**thon - tuna ton - tone**)"



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Test your French

3 - MATCH UP THE USEFUL EXPRESSIONS!

ca coûte les yeux de la tête	1	a	he talks rubbish
cul sec!	2	b	to have a lie-in
ne quittez pas	3	c	we'll see about that!
tant mieux	4	d	out of order
hors service	5	e	to French kiss
il raconte n'importe quoi	6	f	down in one (drink)
rouler une pelle (fam)	7	g	to go window shopping
on verra bien!	8	h	hold on ('phone)
faire du lèche-vitrines	9	i	it costs an arm and a leg
faire la grasse matinée	10	j	great (so much the better!)

4

FILL IN THE BLANKS, USING THE VOCABULARY BELOW. BE CAREFUL! A COUPLE OF RED HERRINGS HAVE SNUCK IN SNEAKILY AMONGST THE ANSWERS!

Deux hommes ¹..... dans la salle d'attente d'une maternité.

L'²..... arrive, souriante, et dit à l'un des ³..... hommes.

« ⁴....., Monsieur! Vous ⁵..... un heureux papa... »

L'⁶..... monsieur se lève, furieux:

« Ce n'est pas ⁷..... ! Je suis arrivé ⁸..... lui ! »

a: autre b: faire c: deux d: juste e: Félicitations f: avant

g: êtes h: médecin i: attendent j: infirmière

5

MATCH UP THE ACRONYMS

SPA	1	a	bank account details
AOC	2	b	French electricity company
EDF	3	c	French rail
SNCF	4	d	guarantee of origin
SMIC	5	e	RSPCA
RIB	6	f	Co. (company)
Cie	7	g	parking ticket (fine)
P.-V.	8	h	homeless
SAMU	9	i	minimum wage
SDF	10	j	emergency medical service

...and here they are in full

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Test your french - answers

1. 1 f 2 f 3 a 4 g 5 b 6 i 7 e 8 d 10 c
 2. 1 h 2 j 3 b 4 i 5 g 6 c 7 a 8 f 9 d 10 e
 3. 1 i 2 f 3 h 4 j 5 d 6 a 7 e 8 c 9 g 10 b
 4. 1 i 2 j 3 c 4 e 5 g 6 a 7 d 8 f
 5. 1 e 2 d 3 b 4 c 5 i 6 a 7 f 8 g 9 j 10 h

SAMPLE LETTER TO SANTA!

Cher Papa Noël,

J'espère que tu vas bien et qu'il ne fait pas trop froid chez toi!

Moi, j'ai fait quelques bêtises cette année comme d'habitude, mais tu connais les femmes de mon âge! En général, j'ai été assez sage, donc si tu me laisses des cadeaux au pied du sapin, je te laisserai un grand verre de vin avec une mince pie en échange!

Je t'embrasse très fort

Kate

PS L'année dernière, tu m'as donné des appareils ménagers! Grrrrrrrr. C'était très gentil, mais pas vraiment ce que j'avais en tête. Réfléchis un peu plus longtemps cette fois s'il te plaît. Merci.

Vocab

faire des bêtises – to get up to mischief

comme d'habitude – as usual

sage – well behaved

appareils ménagers – kitchen appliances

avoir en tête – to have in mind

Réfléchis – think



Une autre blague bête !

Comment fait-on entrer 2 Pères Noël dans un frigo ?

Impossible, il n'existe qu'un seul Père Noël

il n'existe qu'un – there is only one

Les boules!

Savez-vous pourquoi on accroche des "boules" aux branches du sapin de Noël ?

C'est parce que, jadis, on y accrochait des pommes ou des oranges, donc les boules représentent la forme ronde de ces fruits !

Accrocher – to hang
jadis – in the past



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1 - TROUVEZ LES CONTRAIRES

cold	1	a.	ugly
slow	2	b.	bad
soft	3	c.	cheap
heavy	4	d.	mean
good	5	e.	light
quiet	6	f.	thin
beautiful	7	g.	hard
expensive	8	h.	fast
generous	9	i.	hot
thick	10	j.	loud

Ouch, that English humour!

Did you know that five out of three people have trouble with fractions?!

and another one..

Why is 6 afraid of 7?

Because 789!!

(Seven ate nine)

Virelangue

Répétez trois fois

Think it through thoroughly!

(réfléchissez bien)

EXPRESSIONS WITH ON.....

add on - rajouter

get on - monter (dans)

go on - allez

hold on - attendez/ne quittez pas (téléphone.)

keep on - continuer

try on - essayer

turn on - allumer

.....AND OFF

come off - détacher

keep off (the grass) - défense de (marcher sur l'herbe)

lay off - licencier

lift off - décoller (fusée)

take off - décoller (avion), enlever (ôter)

pay off - rembourser (ses dettes)

put off - remettre à plus tard

turn off - éteindre, fermer (robinet)

2 - TROUVEZ LA BONNE RÉPONSE

1. Where shall we meet?

- a. Tomorrow.
- b. In front of the Castillet.
- c. Steak and chips.

2. Do you have any pets?

- a. Yes, one son of 18.
- b. Yes, I often get indigestion.
- c. Yes, one hamster and a budgie

3. What kind of work do you do?

- a. I work every day.
- b. I'm a teacher.
- c. I work in Perpignan

4. What do you usually drink?

- a. Tea of course! I'm British!
- b. With my friends.
- c. I'll have a pint please.

5. What time did you eat last night?

- a. At seven.
- b. boles de picolat!
- c. With my family.

3 - DOG AND CATS! **Trouvez la bonne definition**

scaredy-cat	1	a	la vie est facile
it's a dog's life	2	b	écorné
catnap	3	c	une sieste
raining cats and dogs	4	d	pleuvoir très fort
in the doghouse	5	e	en disgrâce
let sleeping dogs lie	6	f	vendre la mèche;
dog-eared	7	g	peureux
to let the cat out of the bag	8	h	ne réveille pas le chat qui dort

Useful Expressions...

It's about as much use as a chocolate tea pot
 (Pour décrire quelqu'un ou quelque chose qui ne sert à rien)

...and a riddle

There's one in every corner and two in every room.

The letter O

Bon Conseil

Sex on the television can only hurt you if you fall off.

Learning a new language!

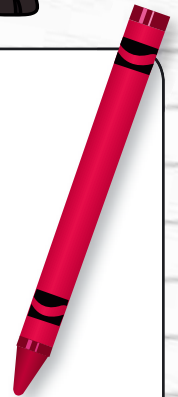
Cow 1: Mooooo
 Cow 2: Bahhhhh
 Cow 1: Eh?
 Cow 2: I'm learning a foreign language!



4 - I - is for Igloo

Trouvez les définitions de ces mots suivants, qui commencent tous avec I

ice	1	a	presses wrinkles out of clothes
inch	2	b	eskimos live here
ink	3	c	acid in stomach
iron	4	d	notice to pay bill
igloo	5	e	frozen water
ill	6	f	not connected to the subject
indigestion	7	g	set on fire or explode
irrelevant	8	h	unit of measurement
invoice	9	i	not well
ignite	10	j	coloured liquid used in pens



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Heliskiing

Have you ever considered heliskiing? Far from the madding crowd, this off-piste, downhill skiing is accessed by a helicopter, presenting skiing conditions to your specifications, hard to replicate in the ski resorts.



Paragliding (parapente)

Take off on foot or on skis, on a tandem flight with an experienced instructor, for an intoxicating bird's eye view of the snow capped peaks.



Snake Sledging (snake luge)

Personally, I'm a bit of a wuss when it comes to any kind of flying that doesn't involve a plane and a large G&T, so when I heard about Snake Sledging, I did a little jig to celebrate discovering something that was a little less extreme, but still totally exhilarating. Each person takes a segment of sledge which then all slot together to make one big collective snake, on this hysterical, fun 4km roller coaster ride down the pistes.



Ice climbing (cascades de glace)

Fancy climbing up ice faces and frozen waterfalls? Experienced instructors introduce you to a magical world of weird and wonderful snow and ice formations. Crampons, ice picks and all equipment provided



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How about cross-country skiing combined with laser rifle shooting? You don't have to be an Olympic champion to take up the challenge in this exciting session of agility and concentration.

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Warm Water Canyoning (canyon d'eau chaude)

Slip, slide and slither down hot water falls, surrounded by cold fresh snow. Unique in Europe, if you're already a fan of canyoning, then you have to give this a go. And if you're new to it all, what a great initiation! An unforgettable experience.



CHOOSING YOUR GP (MÉDECIN TRAITANT)



Whilst residents are not obliged to register with a general practitioner in France, your medical fees will be higher if you do not, and you will receive a lower rate of reimbursement from the social security. Lists of doctors (**les 'médecins traitants'**) in your region can be obtained from your local CPAM (**Caisse Primaire d'Assurance Maladie**). They will also give you a form which should be taken first to your chosen doctor, who will fill it in with you, and stamp it, then submitted by you to CPAM office.

Alternatively, you can download the form at www.ameli.fr (click on 'formulaires') where you can also refer to a list of medical professionals in your area, (click on 'choisir un professionnel de santé') apply for a Carte Vitale or report a lost card, follow

repayment of medical expenses (click on 'Mon compte').....

By referring to this site, you can also check that your doctor is 'conventionné' and charges standard rates as dictated by a 'tarif de convention'. (23€ for a GP from Jan 2011.) Beware. Being treated by some healthcare specialists who are 'conventionnés' does not always guarantee that you pay the standard rate as he or she can charge more, provided it is 'reasonable' to do so. For example, a surgeon who has specific qualifications or experience may charge extra for his services. This supplementary charge is called 'dépassements d'honoraires'. This will also affect your social security (sécu) reimbursement, which will only be 70% of the standard rate.

Health specialists who are "non conventionné" can charge what they like. They will usually inform you of this before treatment.

If you wish to change your médecin traitant, you may do so at any time by filling in another form and submitting it to the CPAM.

Members of the same family can register with different doctors.

You do not have to consult your designated médecin traitant every time if you do not wish, but you will be reimbursed at a lower rate for visiting another doctor.

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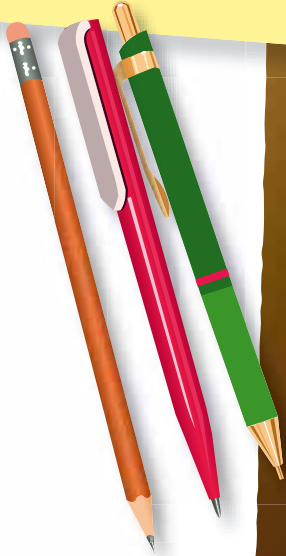
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Docteur, docteur. - Je travaille comme un cheval, je dors comme une marmotte, je mange comme un cochon, je parle comme une pie. Que me conseillez-vous ?

Je vous conseille de consulter un vétérinaire.



If you are on holiday elsewhere in France, and cannot attend your chosen médecin traitant, you may attend any doctor and will be reimbursed at the normal rate.

Once you have chosen your médecin traitant, he or she will be responsible for your records, results and referrals to specialists, the whole treatment course referred to as the 'parcours de soin'. You will pay more for a specialist, and be reimbursed less, if you are not sent by your médecin traitant.

However, you may make appointments directly with gynaecologists, ophthalmologists, psychiatrists, neuropsychiatrists, neurologists and dentists.

Residents should present their 'carte vitale' to the medical specialist. This health card with microchip and photo, similar in looks to a credit

USEFUL VOCAB

Useful phrases for visiting the doctors

May I have an appointment... ? -

Puis-je avoir un rendez-vous ... ?

(pweej av-wah an ron-day-voo...)

...as soon as possible/today/tomorrow

Dès que possible / aujourd'hui / demain

(day kuh posseeb/aw-jord-wee/duman)

Can you give me a prescription for ... ?

Pouvez-vous me donner une ordonnance pour... ?

(poovay voo muh donnay oon ord-an-onse poor...?)

Could the doctor come and visit me ?

Le médecin pourrait-il venir me voir ? (luh medsan

poorate eel veneer muh vwar ?)

It hurts. - Ca me fait mal. (sa muh fay mal)

Where can I find a doctor who speaks English ?

Où puis-je trouver un médecin qui parle anglais ?

(oo pweej troo-vay an medsan kee parl onglay ?)

This is my usual medicine.

Voici mon médicament habituel. (vwasse mon

medickamon abit-choo-ell)

There has been an accident.

Il y a eu un accident (eel ee-ah-oo an ax-idon).

card, contains your personal medical details and all the information necessary to prove your entitlement to the 'French health service' treatment. Although you will pay 'on the spot' you will normally be reimbursed 70% of the cost via the post or by direct debit.

Non residents should have a European Health Insurance Card, formerly known as an E111 which entitles you to state-provided medical treatment at reduced cost or sometimes free.

You can make an appointment to see any doctor, and should ask for a 'feuille de soins' which will give details and price of treatment, to help you to claim back the fee.

Moggy and Doggy delight!

I felt very much like a puppy in a squeaky toy shop when I visited the Guerido Zoo, (renamed Sud Croquettes) pet shop 'extraordinaire' in Mas Guerido near Perpignan.

Boasting bouncy balls, bowls and bedding, toys, tugs and chews, for every imaginable kind of pet, Geraud Mathy, owner of this family run business, is not just a confirmed animal lover; he is also a specialist in nutrition for dogs and cats. Passionate in his quest to answer your nutrition questions, he proudly described his new line in healthy, high quality dog and

cat food 'croquettes'. Produced by small companies, working only with local farmers, Belcando and Leonardo are totally natural, containing no artificial colouring, flavours or preservatives, no genetically modified products with all meat coming from products that have been declared fit for human consumption.

I declined a 'dégustation' but admit I was tempted!



And the beauty of this quality dog and cat food, which caters for your pet's every dietary need, is that it doesn't cost a paw and a leg, like much of the speciality nosh available at your local vets.

A shop run by animal lovers for animal lovers!

Bought Bisou, my delectable doggie with a delicate tum, a vegetarian chew in the shape of a crocodile. It went down a treat with no after effects!

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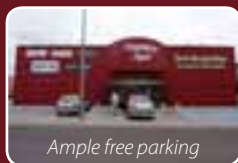
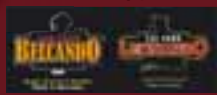
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Things you might need to

Just a little prick....

..... and you can be protected against the three common strains of flu, including swine flu, predicted by the WHO (World Health Organisation) as this year's winter flu viruses.

Buy your own vaccine at the chemist for around 7 euros and make an appointment with a local doctor or nurse to administer it. Anybody can do this.

The jab is recommended for over-65s and for those with health problems that could make them more vulnerable to the bug (heart or lung problems etc). If you are amongst the above, you will probably receive a letter recommending the vaccination.



Too Good to be Vrai?

The first TGV on the new Perpignan – Barcelona line, completed as far as Figueres, should leave Perpignan for Figueres on December 12th of this year, according to a spokesperson for the French company Eiffage.

Two trains are expected to run per day,

Perpignan-Figueres is 44,4 km long, 24,6 km of which is in France and 19,8 km in Spain.

Until the completion of the Barcelona-Perpignan line, now predicted for 2013, passengers for Barcelona will need to change trains at Figueres, and continue the journey on a conventional train.

The price of the tickets is still unknown at the time of writing this article!

STOP PRESS: Yet another setback in a catalogue of delays means that this date now looks unlikely. Watch this space.

New landlord/tenant helpline

The annual 'trêve hivernale' (winter truce), which prevents landlords evicting tenants during the cold winter months started on 1st November and ends on 15th March. If you are having problems with a landlord or with a tenant, you can ring the free telephone helpline, SOS Loyers Impayés, on **0805 160 075**

Sex, drugs & rock'n roll

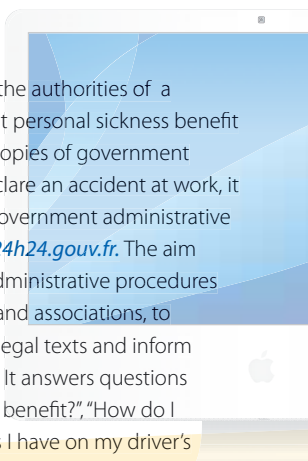
Well, no sex or rock'n roll involved but it got your attention didn't it?

When you take a prescription to the chemist, don't panic if the medicine that you receive does not have the same name as prescribed on your 'ordonnance'. Branded drugs are more expensive than generic or unbranded drugs, so you will often be given a cheaper alternative.... but it will still do the same job.



French admin online

If you're looking to notify the authorities of a change of address, consult personal sickness benefit reimbursement, request copies of government forms and certificates, declare an accident at work, it might be worth visiting government administrative site www.administration24h24.gouv.fr. The aim of the site is to "simplify administrative procedures for citizens, professionals and associations, to give them easy access to legal texts and inform them of their obligations". It answers questions such as "Am I entitled to a benefit?", "How do I find out how many points I have on my driver's licence?", etc. Although it does have an English section (click top right), much of it has not yet been translated. Maybe by the time you click.....



to know...

LOCAL BUS TIMETABLES

If you want to do a bit of sightseeing without actually having to get behind the wheel, it's cheap and easy with the Conseil Général public transport, which will take you anywhere in the region for just ONE EURO. Check out their timetable by visiting www.cg66.com, and selecting *Harmoniser le territoire* from the tabs at the top -> *Le bus à 1€* from the drop down menu -> *Consulter le plan et les horaires des lignes*, where you can also download a map of the bus routes.

Pay your 1 euro when you get on the bus, and the ticket is valid for 2 hours, so you can change buses within that time and not pay again.

All tickets can be purchased at the bus station in Perpignan and the weekly and monthly ones are available on the bus itself. The annual ticket requires a photo. In case of bad weather, ring [04 68 826 826](tel:0468826826) to check if your bus is still running



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EASY READS IN FRENCH

Looking for an easy book to kick start your 2011 resolution to improve your French? Two local authors Gildas Girodeau and Ellen Hall, both published by Cap Béar Editions, write in clear, simple prose. Girodeau's "Nucléar Parano à Port Vendres" and Hall's "Nouvelles Impressionnistes de la Côte Vermeille" are both slim volumes that won't weigh you down with obscure vocabulary. Both available at the FNAC or on Amazon.

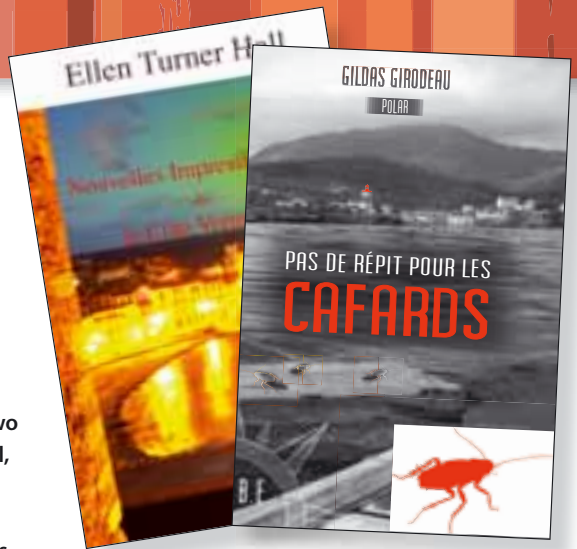
Ellen Hall

Since her childhood in New York, Ellen Hall has always been a storyteller. She has written and spun her imaginary world into tales to entertain herself, her friends, and now, a wider public.

For lovers of the Cote Vermeille her collection of short stories set in Collioure, Port Vendres, Banyuls sur Mer and Cerbère are a delight to read and the perfect way to practice your French. The seven stories reflect the character of the four very different coastal towns and the characters, real and imagined, that have lived in them. Machado in Collioure and Charles Rennie Mackintosh in Port Vendres are woven into tales that could only have come from Ellen's pen.

She and her British husband have made their home in Collioure for the last twenty-five years, and her knowledge and love of their chosen corner of France shines through her writing. The word pictures she paints in "Nouvelles Impressionnistes de la Cote Vermeille" allow us to share her passion as we follow her literary tour along the rocky coast she knows so well.

For the last year Ellen has organised literary evenings, sometimes in English, sometimes in



French, once a month at the Templiers Hotel in Collioure. Anyone with an interest in literature is welcome and on the January 28th 2011 meeting of "Cafélcát" she will be presenting her book. To meet Ellen and buy a signed copy she will also be at the *Marché de Noel* in the Chateau Royal in Collioure from 2nd – 6th December.

Gildas Girodeau

It is quite natural that Gildas Girodeau's detective novels are set in his native Catalonia. Born in Collioure, Girodeau started writing as a student at the Lycée Arago in Perpignan. Today he and his wife live and work in the midst of an olive grove nestled in the hills just above the coastal path between Argeles and Collioure.

What is less natural is that this big man with an open, innocent face projects such a dark vision of human nature in his stories.

Girodeau's detective fiction is a kind of double helix: set against the background of a social evil – drugs, nuclear contamination, human trafficking – the intrigue revolves around the lives of the characters. This year he has launched himself in a new direction which he calls heroic fantasy, titled "La saga de Xavi el valent" and published by US Black Coat Press. Set in "Katland" in the year 1213, the book portrays demons and dragons with a Catalan accent.

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~~VOUS~~ et TU

Wherefore art thou Romeo? **Tu and vous - which 'you' two you's?**

Did you know that English is now one of the only languages without an equivalent to the "tu-vous" distinction in French? In fact, the nearest English equivalent is 'thou' which we don't hear too often in everyday conversation!

It's easy to come across as rude if you don't know the basic 'formules de politesse' (courtesy phrases) such as 'merci', 's'il vous plaît'... However, getting your 'vous' and 'tu' in a twist can actually be even worse as far as some people are concerned.

If you're worried about putting your 'pied dans le plat', here are a few basic rules, bearing in mind that they depend very much on age, class, circumstances, and the individual.

First the easy bit

'Vous' is the plural of 'tu', and should be used when talking to more than one person, no matter what their age, rank or class.



Now the rest!

Tu demonstrates a certain closeness and informality.

Use tu ...

- to friends and colleagues
- to your own family & relatives (but not necessarily to your in-laws!)
- to children or people younger than you
- to your dog, cat hamster or rabbit (but maybe use VOUS to a lion or a crocodile just to be on the safe side! 😊)

Some people might also use 'tu' to be deliberately disrespectful, 'breaking' the social barrier where 'vous' would otherwise be expected.

Vous is used to show respect or maintain a certain distance or formality

Use vous

- to people you have never met before
- to people who are older than you
- to an authority figure (teacher, policeman...)
- to your boss, unless otherwise agreed.
- to anyone to whom you wish to show respect

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The moment when two people move from “vous” to ‘tu’ can actually be quite a milestone in their relationship – the moment when a professional relationship changes to friendship for example.

TIP If you don’t know somebody well enough to call them by their first name, always ‘vous’ them to be on the safe side.

Some exceptions to the ‘rules’

In some aristocratic circles, children are encouraged to ‘vous’ their parents, but this is becoming more and more old-fashioned.

Sons and daughters-in-law will often use ‘vous’ to their in laws, even if they like each other and get on well.

Neighbours who don’t socialise together may well ‘vous’ each other all their lives!

We asked a few French folk how they felt about the tu/vous division

Fred, Perpignan « C’est une forme de politesse. Ça permet de garder des barrières, de montrer du respect ou de la distance. J’ai du mal à tutoyer quelqu’un que



USEFUL VOCAB

<p>Tutoyer/vouvoyer <i>to address somebody with tu/vous</i></p> <p>Tu peux me tutoyer <i>you can address me as ‘tu’</i></p> <p>On peut se tutoyer? <i>Can we use ‘tu’ to each other.</i></p> <p>Je n’aime pas qu’on me tutoie <i>I don’t like being addressed as ‘tu’</i></p> <p>Ça permet de <i>it allows us to...</i></p>	<p>J’ai du mal à <i>I find it difficult to..</i></p> <p>J’ai plus de facilité à <i>I find it easier to...</i></p> <p>Au boulot <i>at work</i></p> <p>tous une bande de potes <i>all mates together</i></p> <p>sympathiser <i>to be friends (to get on with someone)</i></p> <p>Ça peut me déranger <i>it can bother me</i></p>
--	--

je ne connais pas bien. J’ai plus de facilité à tutoyer quelqu’un de plus jeune. »

Nadia, Paris « Au boulot, les gens se tutoient pour se montrer qu’on est ‘tous une bande de potes’ Si on se vouvoie, ça veut peut être dire qu’on ne veut pas sympathiser. Ça peut me déranger si quelqu’un me tutoie de façon inappropriée. Les gens se tutoient plus facilement aujourd’hui. »



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- stationner (stash-onnay)** - to park
- un feu rouge/vert (an fur rooj/vert)** - a red/green traffic light
- une file de voitures (oon feel duh vwatt-sure)** - a line /queue of cars
- Attestation d'assurance (attest-at-shon dass-urance)** - proof of insurance
- Constat amiable d'accident consta amee ab daccidon)** - accident report sheet
- J'ai essayé de... (chay essayay duh..)** I tried to
- J'ai failli.....(chay fai-ee....)** I nearly



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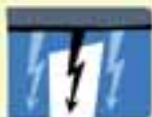
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