

# P-O Life

*Life in the Pyrénées Orientales*

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*Edito...*

Shhhhhhhh. Stop whatever you're doing and listen. Can you hear it? Frogs are croaking, crickets are chirping, that summer buzz is in the air. The scent of wild lavender, rosemary and thyme drifts on the heat, mingling with suntan oil and barbecue... Here comes summer!

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Wine tastings, beer festivals, communal outdoor meals, street dancing, live music, sardanes and castellers, correfocs, gégants....In fact, there is so much going on that we just can't cram it all here. Don't forget to check out our website [www.anglophone-direct.com](http://www.anglophone-direct.com) for loads more on What's On, Where to Go, Where to Eat..... Oh, and if you haven't already done so, why not subscribe to our free weekly newsletter, and just wait for it to PING into your inbox every weekend with all the very latest from the Pyrenees-Orientales?

Regular readers may have noticed that Jane has deserted me (sniff) here on the editorial page. In fact, she has fallen in love with a bunch of great French artists, most of whom have long since departed to that great easel in the sky, and is researching their links with the P-O. Watch this space. In the meantime, never fear. She will still be regularly found leaping about in the centre pages.

Wishing you sunshine (and shade!) this summer

*Kate*

PS For the spanish students amongst you....What do you call a Spanish streaker? Señor Willy.



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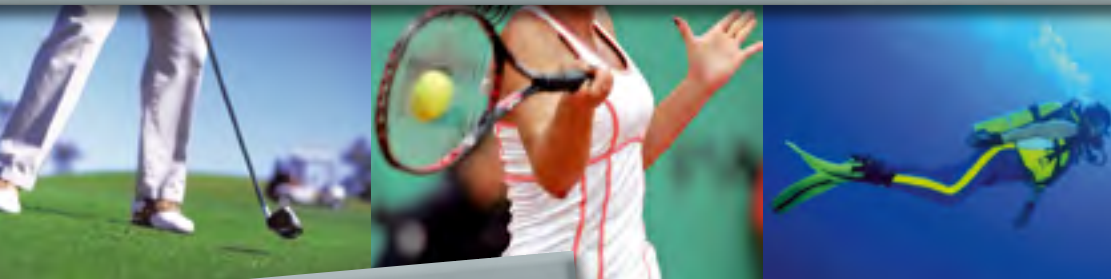
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## Index

<b>P-O Life distribution points</b> .....	5	Flowers of the Pyrenees .....	38-39
<b>Walk the region</b> Upper Vallespir .....	6-7	<b>Test your French</b> .....	40-43
<b>Did you know?</b> .....	8-9	<b>Améliorez votre Anglais</b> .....	44-45
<b>Pool Leak?</b> .....	10	<b>Over the Border</b>	
<b>Airport News</b> .....	11	Girona with Frog bus .....	46
<b>Traditions &amp; Events</b> .....	12-17	<b>An alternative to Kennels?</b> .....	49
<b>Food &amp; drink</b>		<b>Lets get physical</b>	
Restaurant review -La Pierranne .....	18-19	Up the creek WITH a paddle.....	50-51
La Maison de l'Amande.....	24-25	What's new on the activity front? .....	52
Apricots.....	26	Quads and wine??.....	53
<b>Out for the day</b>		<b>Things you might need to know</b> .....	56-57
Le Boulou to Argelès .....	32-35	<b>Emergency numbers</b> .....	59
Donkey Day out.....	36-37	<b>English Speaking Services</b> .....	60-63

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### All main tourist offices and Palais des Congrès

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**Cabestany:** Asia Center, Mas Guerido Zoo **Céret:** Intermarché, Carrefour Market, Bar Au Bon Coin, Real Estates - see p64, Allianz - Céret - see p53 **Collioure:** Château Royal **Elne:** Champion **Ille sur Têt:** Carrefour Market **Laroque:** Carrefour Market, Café des Artistes **Perpignan:** Leroy Merlin, Loft Café **Pollestres:** Intermarché **Prades:** Super U, Intermarché **Pyénées 2000:** Casino Supermarket **Thuir:** Champion

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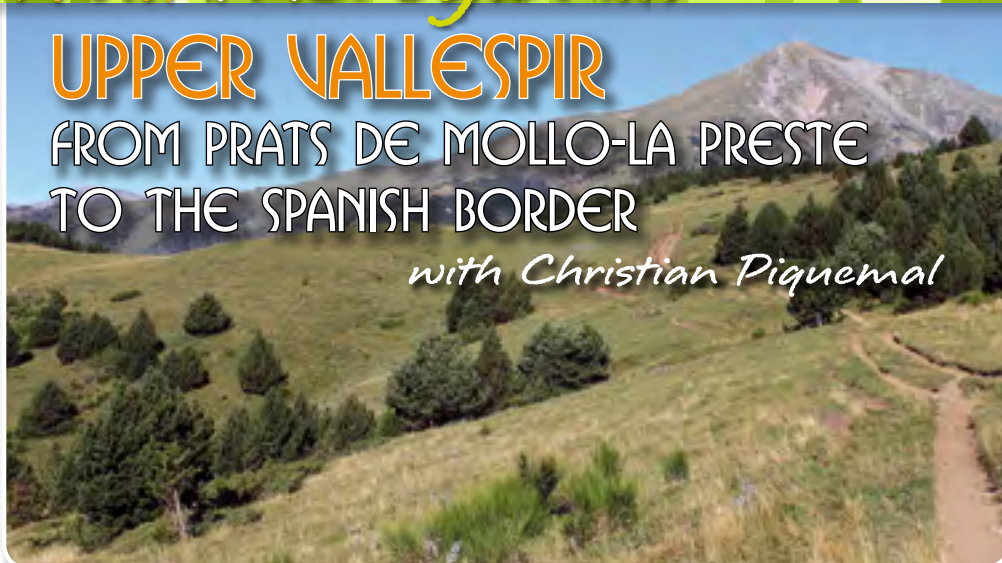
welcome to the Pyrénées-Orientales!

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## UPPER VALLESPİR FROM PRATS DE MOLLO-LA PRESTE TO THE SPANISH BORDER

*with Christian Piquemal*



**Total walking time: 4 - 5 hours. Distance: 10 km. Ascent: 600m**

**This trail takes you along the border crests overlooking the valley of Prats de Mollo. Footpaths in the area have been well walked in the past by generations of shepherds, smugglers, refugees and escapees. Panoramas over Canigou, Costabona, Spanish Catalonia and Vallespir are outstanding. On a clear day, views stretch to the Mediterranean coastline. The area also provides gentle strolling for those who prefer to take it a little easier.**

**Access:** Take the RD900 to Prats de Mollo. Cross the bridge over the river Tech and turn right at the roundabout direction La Preste. After the spa resort, stop at a large parking area at the end of the main road.

**The walk:** From the parking area, follow the road just below a large farmhouse. After 900m, turn left onto the footpath going abruptly up (signpost "Col de Siern"). Your itinerary is marked with yellow signs and n° 20 all the way.

Walk up through woods of oak and beech trees. If lucky, a deer or an isard might cross your path. Continue following the markings until you come out of the forest at Col de Siern (1h45 from the start; alt. 1629 m) not far from the boundary stone n° 514.

Turn left on the track along the crest, mostly on the Spanish side, and enjoy the panoramas over Costabona, Catalan Pyrenees and the pastures of Ripollès. Three km later

(an easy 1h), you reach Col Pregon, marked with signposts and the boundary stone n° 515. It was a popular border passage for smugglers and one of the routes for refugees fleeing Fascist Spain in 1939.

Cross the fence always following the yellow marks, direction north. Don't miss the steep path leading down to the hamlet of La Forge, close to the Tech river (1h10 down). Cross it on a "passerelle" and take a narrow path going up to the tarred road D115A. Turn left along it to reach the spa resort of La Preste and the parking place (15mn).



**Option for hikers: Tour de Mir** - (Needs a second car parked in Prats de Mollo.) From Col Pregon, continue alongside the fence to Pic de la Clape and col des Basses de Fabert. At the corner of a pine wood, a dirt track leads to the Tour de Mir, medieval watchtower. (1h from col Pregon). From the tower, a footpath goes down to Col d'en Cé, to the farmhouses of Mir and Xatard and finally to Prats de Mollo (1h30). Map: IGN TOP 25 2349 ET - Massif du CANIGOU

**Strolling options:** Not keen walkers? Too hot to do the full walk? You can still enjoy the spectacular scenery of the border area.

Drive from Prats de Mollo to Col d'Ares and park. From there you can:

1. Have a walk down along the "Cami de la Retirada" (signposts + yellow marks), an itinerary used by the Spanish refugees at the end of the Civil War.

2. Go over to the Spanish side leaving the bar-restaurant on your left. Close to a picnic place, cross the fence and follow the waymarked path going slightly down, with stunning views over the valleys of Ripollès and the village of Molló. For both options, you will have to get back to col d'Ares the same way.

**Gourmet option:** After having enjoyed the



**Baaaaaaaad Joke!**  
*Maurice mouton se perd pendant une journée entière. Quand il retrouve son troupeau, les brebis ont toutes été tondues. Maurice mouton, très poli, les prévient....*  
*"Excusez-moi mesdames, je ne suis pas encore rasé..."*  
*(se perd - gets lost troupeau - flock brebis - ewes prévient - warns)*

panoramas from col d'Ares, drive back direction Prats and park close to the 3rd U-turn of the road. At a short distance stands the chapel Santa Margarida, a popular stop-over on the pilgrims' path to Compostela (Way of Saint James) and an outstanding viewpoint over Massif of Canigou.

Driving down again for a few minutes, you reach a "transformateur électrique" where a dirt track on the right side will lead you to the "ferme-auberge Costa de Dalt" (reservations in advance; tel: 04 68 39 74 40). This welcoming place provides good meals exclusively using products of the farm.

**Bon appetit!!**

**Christian Piquemal**, professional guide, provides a large selection of entertaining walks throughout French and Spanish Catalonia. A 7-seater is also available for transfers and tourist excursions. General information and timetable of programmes on: [www.enchemin.com](http://www.enchemin.com)  
Contact: +33 (0)621 664 215 // [enchemin@mail.com](mailto:enchemin@mail.com)

# Did you know...?

## Yeuse in Eus

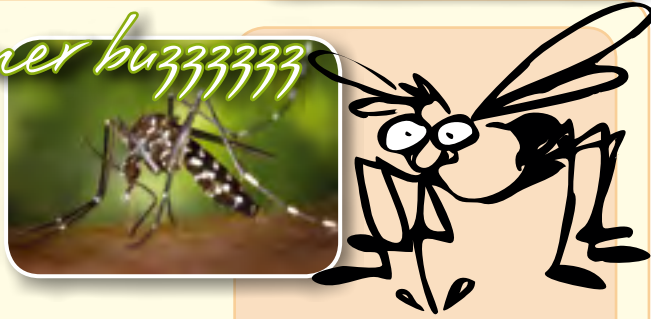
The pretty little town of Eus, (ay-ooss) near Prades, takes its name from a type of green oak tree called the Yeuse, which grows around the village.



## That summer buzzzzzzzz

Did you know that the Tiger mosquito, (moustique tigre) normally native to Southeast Asia, is heading for North Catalonia? These unpleasant little devils fly and attack during the day as well as night, their bites are more painful than the common or garden mozzie, and their stinger is able to pierce clothing!

If you want to keep them away from you this summer, surround yourself with flatworms, swimming beetles and spiders, which are their natural enemies! An easier option is to avoid leaving pots of stagnant water or old tyres lying around as these are fave reproduction sites.



A P-O mosquito called Bert  
Honed his sting til it stood up quite pert  
Then he dived for the kill  
and drunk blood to his fill  
After rolling with glee in the dirt!

## ON THE BIG ROCK CATALAN MOUNTAIN!

Mount Canigou, 'montagne sacrée des Catalans', has been officially recognised as a 'Grand Site de France', prestigious label awarded by the State. In future, it will return to its Catalan name 'Canigó' to differentiate between the not-so-sacred tinned dog food bearing the same name!

'Grands sites de France' are all world-renowned, regarded as cultural treasures and belong to a short list of Europe's most desirable tourist attractions. Only ten other sites have so far received this coveted title. Chapeau Canigó!



## And That Summer Bite!

Commonly known as millipedes, 'scolopendres' are unpleasant little beasties to all but the ardent entomologist, made up of several segments, with twenty-one pairs of feet, four pairs of eyes, and lots of other bits that you don't want to know about!

They move quickly, hide beneath stones, in woodpiles, in beams of houses, and at least one of their species, *Scolopendra cingulata*, is resident in the South of France!

And they bite!

However, their venom is mild compared to some of their larger cousins around the world, and, if bitten, you will live to take your revenge!



## COASTING

Coastal paths, known as 'sentiers des douaniers' or sentiers littoraux are strictly pedestrian. Dating back to an old Napoleonic decree, all French citizens had the right to access the national treasure that is the French coastline, so a minimum strip of three metres was to remain available to the public along the whole French coastline. This law was reinstated in 1976, by which time houses and hotels blocked much of the coastal access in touristic areas, and Napoleon's dream was becoming a nightmare! It is now up to local councils to enforce or suspend the law as they see fit, and although, in theory, you can walk the complete French Mediterranean coast from Menton near the Italian border to Collioure, I won't be taking bets on the outcome.

## Je t'aime, moi non plus

Many people of a certain age will remember all the fuss about the banning of Serge Gainsborough's 'Je t'aime (moi non plus)', which only served to make it so much more popular. In fact, the title was inspired by a Salvador Dalí comment: "Picasso is Spanish, me too. Picasso is a genius, me too. Picasso is a communist, me neither", hence the rather strange 'moi non plus' (me neither) in the title.

## Don't bother with a garden gnome....

Buy a cow for your garden and avoid the mozzies this year. Cows are warm and release certain plant chemicals from eating grass, along with carbon dioxide, the chemical signature that mosquitoes crave. They will go straight for the cow and leave you in peace.

## EVAPORATION OR A LEAKY POOL?

It can come as quite a surprise just how much water is lost from a swimming pool via evaporation, due to heat, humidity and wind. Even a gentle breeze can more than double the evaporation rate by removing the insulating layer of warm, moist air directly above the pool surface.

Add to these factors a gaggle of splashing swimmers, and it is understandable that large water bills sash onto pool owner's doormats every summer.

However, not all water loss is down to evaporation. Even small leaks can significantly raise the cost of your water bill, and be very difficult to locate. If you think you might have a leak, it is worth having it checked out, not only to lighten your water bill, but because those expensive products might be literally going down the plughole!

The first thing a pool specialist will check out is the location of the leak - pool or filtration system. Special test kits can detect leaks in liners and shells, although for concrete pools, the checks can only be carried out by visual inspection. If the suspected leak is in the filtration system, checks on the pipe pressure can confirm or rule this out.

Once confirmed, a flexible inspection camera can snake its way around the inside of the piping,

pinpointing layout, and determining breakage, blockage etc. The camera records the findings, and is checked on a screen afterwards, very similar to a colonoscopy!

Identifying and locating a leak can be a long and complicated process, but well worth it in the long run for economy and peace of mind.



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## AIRPORT NEWS

With JOHN FAIRCLOUGH

As promised in the Spring issue, I have examined the various airport and airline schedules for any additions to their summer 2012 operations. In truth there have not been many new routes on offer, but some increases in frequencies are worth noting.

- **PERPIGNAN**.....Despite all sorts of positive noises, the only new route from here is a weekly service to Nantes. Very disappointingly, no-one has stepped into the breach as regards BMIBaby's abandoned Manchester connection. However, the Ryanair flights to Stansted will increase to 8 x per week for the high summer period.
- **CARCASSONNE**.... New route to Cork with Ryanair; 2 x pw
- **GIRONA**.....Another summer option for UK travellers is to buy a ticket on one of Thomson's Costa Brava charter flights; Gatwick.....2 x pw  
Manchester ..2 x pw  
Birmingham ..1 x pw
- **BARCELONA**.... A few new routes:  
Birmingham... 4x pw BMI Baby  
Nott E Mids.... 5x pw BMI Baby  
Liverpool..... 7x pw Ryanair  
London City.... 7x pw BA CityFlyer

It's never nice to be looking at the winter, especially when the summer sun is shining, but, hopefully, by the time the P-O Life autumn edition hits the streets, we'll have some sort of idea as to what connections will be available from this area to UK/Ireland from November onwards.



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## Absolutely Almost All you need to know about the Pyrénées Orientales

**Absolutely Almost All You Need to Know about the Pyrenees-Orientales.** Lavishly illustrated with its lively blend of information and essential facts, Jane and Kate's guide book is a must have for lovers of the P-O. Pick one up at most Maisons de la Presse, or online at [www.lespresseslitteraires.com](http://www.lespresseslitteraires.com)





## BASTILLE DAY SATURDAY 14TH JULY

**The poor were starving to death on the streets of Paris. In the royal palace, the king's breakfast consisted of 4 chops, a full chicken, six poached eggs and a slice of ham, washed down with a bottle and a half of champagne. The French Aristocracy, the most spoilt and wealthy in Europe, played, whilst the poor, the starving, the sick, and the tired, became more and more resentful.**

The scene had long been set for the events to follow.

The storming of the Bastille prison marked the beginning of the French Revolution of 1789, and led to the end of the monarchy, and the start of the French Republic.

The Bastille (from old French bastide, meaning fortress and the Provençal 'bastida' meaning built) symbolised the absolute power of King Louis XVI and his queen, Marie Antoinette. Not only did it often hold political prisoners, including the great writer Voltaire, who spoke out against the government, but it was also a weapons and

ammunition store.

The day of the storming and fall of the Bastille was declared a French national holiday in 1880, a celebration of the birth of the Republic.

If you're looking for fireworks, you've come to the right place! Thousands of euros go up in flames every year to mark the event, with dancing, live music and a whole lot of celebrating.

Check with Tourist Offices for exact dates and details as events may take place on the night of the 13th.



*Que font deux broses à dents le 14 juillet? Un feu dentifrice!*

## THE SARDANE IN HISTORY

**Sardane Festival - Céret  
Friday 20th - Sunday  
22nd July 04 68 87 46 49**

**The Sardane (sardana) is a traditional Catalan circle dance, designed to bring whole villages out into the streets, and get them in party mood. - a little like a more complicated version of the 'hokey cokey' in fact!**

Some say that the word has links with Sardinia, others that, because it was originally often spelt 'cerdana', its origin must be in the Cerdanya region. Nobody is absolutely sure.

Music for the sardane is played by a 'cobla', on typical Catalan instruments, tenor, tible, flabiol and tambour, as well as more traditional trumpet, trombone, fiscorn and double bass. The makeup of a cobla never varies.

The evolution of the sardane has deep links with republicanism, and over the years, has become more than just a dance.

When the Spanish Republic was declared in 1931, Catalonia gained a degree of autonomy, but when the Second Spanish Republic collapsed in early 1939, General Franco declared a fascist government, over which he ruled until 1975. He resented the Catalan national pride and identity, and introduced bans against certain aspects of Catalan culture, language and heritage, to force the Catalans to conform with the rest of Spain.

Not for the first time, the speaking of Catalan was banned. So was the Sardane as Franco believed dancers were passing on coded messages with their feet. The banning served only to strengthen national unity. The Sardane brought together the sexes, all ages and classes, linked together, heads held high, as they declared their 'Catalanité' loud and proud.

Today the Sardane is danced in villages and towns



throughout Catalonia, by Catalan and non Catalan alike, a great way to make friends and take a little air and exercise at the same time. Join in the next time you see a Sardane starting up - the more the merrier - but don't be fooled by the apparent gentle pace. Hopping up and down on one spot is a great thigh and leg workout as well as putting your mental skills to the test!

### *A load of bull? Férias*

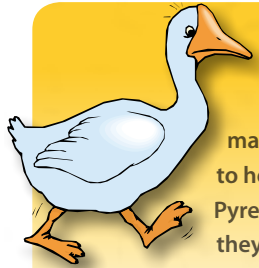
**These yearly bullfighting festivals, with Bull Run through the streets, market, bands, bodegas, and street entertainment are not to everyone's taste. If you are not into bloody bullfights to the death, keep away from the slaughter arenas and just enjoy the partying.**

**Céret - 14th - 15th July**

**Millas - 9th - 12th August**

**Collioure - 14th - 18th August**

## What's on Around the Region



**We hate sending people off on wild goose chases, even in the hunting season!** There are so many festivals, concerts, and events to herald in spring and summer in the Pyrenees Orientales, and sometimes they are sneakily brought forward, backwards, sideways, cancelled or

changed. With this in mind, we bring you only a small selection of main, confirmed events here. Detailed, up-to-date What's On information will continue to be published on [www.anglophone-direct.com](http://www.anglophone-direct.com) and in our free weekly newsletter.

### BANK HOLIDAYS

**14th July** - Bastille Day.

**15th August** - Assomption

**Don't forgot ...**

**Father's Day** - June 17th

### School holidays for our region

**Summer Holidays** - 5th July to 4th September

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**June:** Mon 2-7pm, closed Wed, Tues - Sat 9am - 6pm

**July:** Closed Mon, Wed 2-7pm, Tues - Sat 9am - 6pm

**Aug:** Closed 6th - 19th, Open Mon 20th & Mon 27th

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## JUNE

**1st - 3rd June**

**Collioure Les Musaiques de Collioure**

*Festival of wine, art and music*

**04 68 82 15 47**

**Saturday 2nd June**

**Céret Festival d'Havaneres del Vallespir**

*Lively sailor 'sing-songs' in the streets accompanied by guitar, accordion and a tot or two of rum!* **04 68 87 00 53**

**Sunday 3rd June**

**Port-Vendres (Paulilles)**

**Beach festival, Port Vendres**

*A family day at the beach at Paulilles to kickstart the summer season. Bring your own picnic. Batacuda (samba style Brazilian percussion), free sports activities (kayak, canoeing, scuba diving....), sardanes, tastings and sales of local produce, organised activities for the kids, complimentary apero....* **04 68 82 07 54**

**15th - 16th June**

**Maury Voix de Femmes**

*Vibrant female artists, some well known, others up-and-coming. Celebration of the female voice.* **04 68 50 08 54**

**Sunday 17th June**

**Canet Olive festival and parade of the giants**

*All things olive, music in the streets and dance of the giants* **04 68 86 72 00**

**Thursday 21st June**

**National Fête de la Musique**

*On this, the longest day of the year, amateur and professional musicians perform free concerts in venues throughout France, in a celebration of music in all its*

*...forms, open to anyone. Salsa, string and steel bands, rock, rap, hip hop, house and heavy metal pound out from bars and cafés, streets, squares and courtyards. Carnival atmosphere, food, drink, laughter* [www.fetedelamusique.culture.fr](http://www.fetedelamusique.culture.fr)

**Saturday 23rd June**

**Les Feux de la Saint-Jean French**

*Catalonia is set ablaze to celebrate the Summer Solstice of St Jean around the 23rd June when Catalans from both sides of the Pyrénées meet up on the summit of the Canigou and a relay of runners bring down flaming torches to light the "Focs de la Sant Joan" in towns and villages all over the region.*

**Fri 29th - Sat 30th**

**Céret Les Querencias - Catalan music festival** with the accent firmly on flamenco music and dancing **04 68 87 00 53**

**Saturday 30th June**

**Argelès beach Corso Nocturne d'été.** *Carnival parade with floats, brass bands....* **04 68 81 15 85**

## JULY

**Tuesday 3rd July**

**Château Royal, Collioure**

*Flamenco* **04 68 82 15 47**

**5th to 7th July**

**Torreilles Festival Jazz à Juhègues**

*"Hommage aux légendes du Jazz"* **04 68 28 41 10**

**Saturday 7th July**

**Céret Festival d'Havaneres Collioure**

*More lively sailor 'sing-songs' in the streets, and a complimentary 'ron cremat', traditional rum drink* **04 68 87 00 53**

**Tuesday 10th July**

**Rivesaltes Fête de l'Abricot** *Rivesaltes is not only famous for its sweet fortified wine, the town celebrates the fruit with a festival of tasting, jams, apricot eating competitions and apricot drinking.*

**Wednesday 11th July**

**Canet Foam evening.** *Slip, slide and slither to music* **04 68 86 72 00**

**13th to 21st July**

**Prades International Film Festival** *The second longest running film festival in France, after Cannes, this year's festival spotlights British director, Stephen Frears, (My Beautiful Laundrette (1985), The Queen (2006))....and a selection of previews of unreleased films* [www.cine-rencontres.org](http://www.cine-rencontres.org)

**19th July - 23rd Aug**

**Perpignan Les Jeudis de Perpignan** *Street theatre, jugglers, clowns, acrobats, flamenco, salsa, jazz, tango, reggae, hip-hop, sardanes, jazz, blues, late night shopping.... and it's free every Thursday evening in the streets of Perpignan.* **04 68 66 30 30**

**22nd July**

**Osséja Concours international de Chiens de Bergers** *(International Sheepdog Trials) Sheepdog trials, regional market, weaving workshop, various crafts, food and music....* **04 68 04 53 86**

**Fri 27th - Sat 28th**

**Campo Santo, Perpignan Les Estivales de Perpignan** *Southern culture - Mediterranean, Catalan, Spanish, gypsy - in this festival of dance and music held on the open air stage of the Campo Santo in Perpignan centre, the site of one of only two cloister cemeteries in France, whose graceful arcades contained the tombs owned by wealthy burghers in the Middle Ages.* [www.lesestivalesdelarchipel.org](http://www.lesestivalesdelarchipel.org)

**13th July - 19th Aug**

**Maury Toutes Toiles Dehors** *A great drive out past shops and house fronts draped in paintings on the theme of 'La Vigne...le Vin'* **04 68 50 08 54**

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## What's on Around the Region



for detailed information visit:-  
[www.anglophone-direct.com](http://www.anglophone-direct.com)

26th July - 13th Aug

### Around Prades Festival Pablo Casals

Renowned chamber music festival, with concerts in the beautiful abbey of Saint-Michel de Cuxà and other churches in the Prades area  
[www.prades-festival-casals.com](http://www.prades-festival-casals.com)

Wednesday 18th July

### Canet Théâtre de la mer, Tribute to the Black Eyed Peas

This excellent tribute band play all the Peas hits since 2003.  
 04 68 86 72 00

24th July - 5th Aug

### Mosset, near Prades. Opera: La Belle Hélène

Each year, the Mosset opera produces its own unique high standard version of a favourite Opera in the Castle Courtyard. The major roles are taken by international opera stars but the chorus, orchestra and all other parts are played by locals who also make the costumes and build the sets.  
 04 68 05 50 83

Wednesday 25th July

### Canet Théâtre de la Mer, Tribute to Abba with 'Abba Star'

This successful Abba revival band faithfully reproduce the famous foursome in both music and costume in this free concert.  
 04 68 86 72 00

Sat 28th - 29th July

### Thuir Diades Catalanes

Catalan gastronomy, traditions, street music and arts  
 04 68 53 45 86

Sat 28 - 29th July

### St Laurent de Cerdans Fête de l'Espadrille

Market, various activities, visit the workshop Toiles du Soleil. Visite de l'atelier  
 04 68 39 55 75

## AUGUST

6th - 12th August

### Amélie-les-Bains Festival Folklorique International

Amélie les Bains Palalda celebrates the 70th Festival Folklorique International, the oldest festival in the Pyrénées Orientales, with singers and dancers who will light up Amélie with a kaleidoscope of colour and rhythm.

#### Highlights

- **Wednesday 8th:** 17h Amélie sings with other choirs, followed by dinner dance
- **Thursday 9th:** 16h30 'Amélie en fête' with all groups
- **Friday 10th:** Catalan evening
- **Saturday 11th:** Tahiti evening. Anniversary party
- **Sunday 12th:** Last night with all groups... Argentina, Brittany, Nice, Landes, Bulgaria, Komi Republic, the Catalan dancers...

Information and reservations:  
 04 67 83 99 44 or 04 68 39 01 98



29th July - 4th Aug

**Vernet-les-Bains Le Canigou Poc à Poc** A week of walks and activities to help you to discover the Canigou, 'poc à poc' (bit by bit).  
 04 68 61 60 59

Wednesday 1st August

### Rivesaltes La fête du Babau

The legendary monster parades through the streets in search of tasty human flesh, and is finally put to death on the banks of the river Agly.  
 04.68.64.04.04

3rd - 7th August

**Palau del Vidre Festival des Arts du Verre** Glass blowing festival  
 04 68 22 13 02

Sunday 5th August

**Vernet-les-Bains The Canigou Race.** Not for the faint hearted, competitors set off from Vernet-les-Bains, to the summit of Canigo, and back to Vernet, some carrying a load of 8kg like the ice porters of old.  
[www.courseducanigou.com](http://www.courseducanigou.com)

Wednesday 8th August

**Port Vendres Music Festival** 'Hisse et Oh' Free concert for charity. Bodegas, bandas, paella, and some great bands with both local and national artistes. All money taken will go to o Cystic Fibrosis Research.  
 04 68 82 60 99

Wednesday 8th August

**Canet Théâtre de la Mer, 'Tribute to Queen' with 'Cover Queen'.** Vibrant and explosive, this queen revival band pays homage to the great Freddy Mercury, just over 20 years after his death, in this free concert. 04 68 86 72 00

Fri 10th - Sun 12th

**Villelongue dels Monts Music festival.** A variety of concerts ranging from classical, jazz, children's concerts, to contemporary and Brazilian music, will give you the chance to watch great entertainment played out in local scenery. A treat for all the senses including heritage, regional culture and Catalan gastronomy.  
[www.musiques-dels-monts.com](http://www.musiques-dels-monts.com)

Friday 10th August

**Sorède 'Sol Argentino'** Argentinian tango, malambo, base drums in this free, 40 artistes show of rhythm and colour.  
 Giant paella 04 68 89 31 17

Wednesday 15th August

### National L'Assomption Bank Holiday.

Many shops closed  
 The date when Catholics believe that the Virgin Mary ascended into heaven.....and a religious holiday is always a good excuse for a bit of a knees up - parades, fireworks, 'bals', music and entertainment throughout the region.  
 Check with your local tourist office for details.

#### Our personal favourite?

The 'setting alight' of Saint Cyprien port with firework extravaganza, preceded by 'sardinade'.  
 Parking is difficult and leaving after the display even more so - but the firework display is well worth the hassle!

Friday 17th August

### Théâtre de la mer Canet Concert/show Blues Brothers

This free concert takes us back to the 80s with Jake & Elwood Blues. Jokes, music and great choreography.  
 04 68 86 72 00

Sunday 19th August

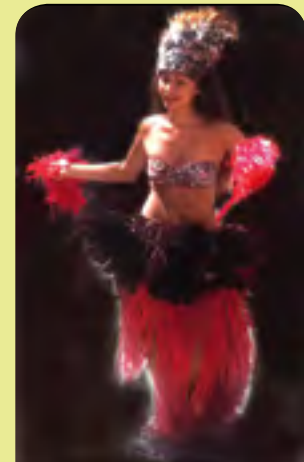
### Mont Louis Les Gegants d'Argelès

Procession of giant papier maché figures with cobla through the streets of the pretty walled town of Mont Louis  
 04 68 04 21 97

Friday 24th August

### Place Méditerranée, Canet

The final, free tribute concert pays homage to the Stones with '100% Stones'. 04 68 86 72 00



Amélie les Bains Palalda celebrates the 70th Festival Folklorique International.

## NIGHT MARKETS (JULY AND AUGUST)

These markets usually take place from around 19h - midnight, but can start earlier and finish later

### CANET

Every evening (sea front) and every Saturday (port)

### CÉRET

Every Tuesday

### ARGELÈS

Every Tuesday and Friday (Port)  
 Every night - craft (Parking des Platanes)

### PRADES

Every Friday

### TORREILLES

Tuesdays and Thursdays, Sunday

### LE BARCARÈS

every evening

## La Pierranne

VILLELONGUE DELS MONTS

**Restaurant Review**  
with  
John Fairclough



Despite being the brunt of many cheap jokes over the years, the good people of Belgium have had the last laugh where food and drink are concerned. For example, Brussels has relatively more Michelin starred restaurants than either Paris or London. Chips, or 'French Fries', are, in fact a Belgian invention, and Belgium's beers routinely win far more prizes than the output of UK or German breweries.

So when I discovered that the owners of the new 'Pierranne' restaurant in Villelongue dels Monts were Belgian, I was very optimistic. Having visited it several times now, my optimism was not misplaced. Well sited in a modern row of shops in the heart of the Albères village, it's easy to find and park. Peter and Anna who, like all Flemish Belgians, speak flawless English, are very friendly, welcoming hosts, and there is a warm atmosphere in the small dining room.

During the summer, food choices surround fresh market ingredients. A 3 course set lunchtime formule costs 13€90, varied every day, and excellent value.

There is a daily plat du jour at 9€50, available lunch and evening, when the menu options range

from 19, 26, and 32€. On our most recent visit, the 26€ menu offered, amongst its starters, salmon tartare with a very interesting curry infused oil dressing, mixed local charcuterie, and the ever-popular moules gratinées.

Mains featured a tender entrecote steak with choice of sauces, grilled fillets of red mullet with lemon reduction and fennel, and a delicious osso bucco, done to Anna's recipe, which she was rather cagey about divulging!

Every day, on all menus, in addition to healthy Mediterranean and classic French fare there is a Belgian speciality. This time it was chicken vol au vent, but other regular ones are Carbonnade Flamande (beef cooked in beer) or Waterzooi (a creamy chicken stew from Ghent).

Sweets were varied, with the popular Belgian chocolate Dame Blanche or Noire, and Apple Crumble with pain épice ice cream worthy of mention.

Cheese is also an option, and this varies from day to day, too. The 32€ menu runs very much along the same lines, but clearly features more expensive ingredients, such as foie gras and fillet of beef.

Wines are on a small, but well chosen list; the vast majority from producers in the local Albères region, and starting at a very reasonable 14€ a

bottle. An excellent pichet wine is also available at 7€50 per half litre, as well as some fine Spanish cava. Being Belgian, Peter and Anna, also regard beer as an integral part of the meal, with Jupiler draught, plus 13 other bottled examples from all over the country on offer, including some of the famous ones made by Trappist monks!

Of course, in addition to those wishing to eat a full meal, anyone who'd like to just pop in for a wine, beer, a nibble and a chat is equally welcome.

In summary, I'd say that Pierranne offers something distinctly different on the local dining scene, particularly for lovers of Belgian cuisine and beer. All in a very welcoming and convivial atmosphere. The restaurant is small (max 10 tables), so, particularly at busy times, I'd recommend booking or phoning in advance to check.

## La Pierranne

21 Carrer de la Marinada  
66740 Villelongue dels Monts  
Tel: 04 68 56 83 01.  
[www.lapierranne.com](http://www.lapierranne.com)

Opening times are lunch and dinner, Tues to Fri, plus Sat dinner and Sun lunch. Closed all day Mon



to see more resto reviews visit  
[www.anglophone-direct.com](http://www.anglophone-direct.com)



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[www.domaine-st-sebastien.com](http://www.domaine-st-sebastien.com)



## LA MAISON DE L'AMANDE... IN A NUTSHELL

*'C'est la nature qui décide'*

**Dusky, dark eyed Catalan, Christine Llense is carrying on the tradition of a family business which dates back generations.**

Surrounded by 500 'amandiers' her tiny shop and factory in Laroque-des-Albères has absolutely nothing to hide. Almonds are pressed into oil, or chopped, broken up, baked or stirred into nougatine, almond butter, flour, cream, powder... It is all completely natural, it is all produced on site, in front of you, by Christine herself, according to recipes that have been passed down from generation to generation. It is fascinating to watch and delicious to taste!

Visitors to this almond paradise can watch as 4 kilos of almonds spit just one liter of oil out of



the press, or as Christine melts brown sugar in a copper pot, stirs in hand broken almonds, and rolls the mix out on a marble top to produce mouth watering nougatine 'à l'ancienne' according to her grandmother's recipe.

The full process for many of these hand made products is long, such as almond butter where powdered almonds turn slowly in a mixer for 24 hours, but the end result is truly scrumptious.

Start off by tasting. Garlic almonds, chili almonds, wholemeal or skinned, almond butter, nougatine... Watch and listen as Christine

explains, in excellent english, the picking and production process - then grab a bucket, a stick and a plastic sheet... and go pick your own! From June to October, this can be a fun family afternoon out. Ring Christine on [04 68 89 11 53](tel:0468891153) or email her on [christine.llense@orange.fr](mailto:christine.llense@orange.fr) to check that the almonds are ready.

Depending upon the weather, almond trees blossom in late February, early March. In April/ May, they go through nature's own sorting process, and bad almonds drop off the trees, leaving only the healthy. Interestingly, 80% of the flowers never become almonds.

At the end of June green almonds are picked manually, with softer skins and a different taste to the almonds that most of us know well. In July and August, the 'vendange' proper begins.

Almonds do have fat in them, but it is mono saturated fat, which is great for your heart, and there is solid evidence that including a handful of almonds in your daily diet can have a significant impact on heart health. Eating two or three almonds before meals has been shown to decrease after-meal

**Herbs, Spices and Oils**  
*(Les herbes, les épices et les huiles)*  
HMMMM, it's barbecue time. Check out these herbs and spices to make sure that you have a spicy, sizzling summer!

- |                         |                          |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| aneth - dill            | genièvre - juniper berry |
| basilic - basil         | laurier - bay leaves     |
| cannelle - cinnamon     | menthe - mint            |
| ciboulette - chive      | noix de muscade - nutmeg |
| clou de girofle - clove | oseille - sorrel         |
| coriandre - coriander   | romarin - rosemary       |
| cresson - watercress    | persil - parsley         |
| curcuma - turmeric      | sauge - sage             |
| estragon - tarragon     | thym - thyme             |
| fenouil - fennel        |                          |

Huile.....

- ...végétale - vegetable oil
- ...d'arachide - peanut oil
- ...de tournesol - sunflower oil
- ...de noix - walnut oil
- ...de ricin - castor oil
- ...d'amande - almond oil
- ...d'olive - olive oil
- ...de colza - rapeseed oil

surges in blood sugar, lowering the risk of developing diabetes. **Healthy and delicious!**

### Simple Amandine tart

A daytime treat baked on rare rainy days by Kate's husband, Olivier!

- Shortcrust pastry for base (pâte sablée)
  - 150g almond powder (poudre d'amande)
  - 100g brown sugar
  - 1/2 tsp almond extract (amande amère)
  - 2 eggs | 50g butter
  - 1-2 teaspoons cognac, rhum etc (optional)
  - sliced almonds (amandes effilées)
- Preheat oven to 180°C (Thermostat 6).

Mix softened butter with sugar, stir in beaten eggs and almond powder. Add almond extract, and cognac if required. If mixture is too solid, add a little cream until good pouring texture, not too liquid. Grease a cake tin, line with pastry base, puncture with fork, and spread on a thin layer of raspberry jam.

Pour in mixture, sprinkle on sliced almonds and bake for around 30 - 40 mins.





TUESDAY 10TH JULY  
**RINESALTES**  
Apricot Festival with  
apricot eating competition

## APRICOTS (AND PEACHES)... JUST SING OUT SUMMER HERE IN THE P-O.

Members of the 'Prunus' family (along with plums, cherries, peaches and almonds) it is generally agreed that the apricot originated in China and was introduced into Southern Europe by Alexander the Great in the 4th century BC

High in vitamins A and C, with a good amount of potassium, the intense orange colour of these feisty little fruits reflects its high content of beta-carotene and lycopene, two antioxidant compounds which promote heart health and have anti carcinogenic qualities.


Two to three apricots per day provide you with as much as 50 per cent of your daily vitamin requirements.


Apricots ripen early (their Latin name 'praecoquum', means early matured) and need specific climatic conditions for successful cultivation. Our P-O weather, fairly cold winter followed by moderately high temperatures spring and early summer, is pretty perfect!


If you're not lucky enough to be able to reach out and grab an apricot from a tree in your garden, look out in the shops for a well-defined crease, a slight give to the flesh, avoid fruit with green around the stem or with shrivelled skin, and most importantly, the smell should give you a preview of the taste.

### Apricot chutney.

- 2 lbs fresh apricots, stoned and halved
- 10 oz brown sugar
- 1 onion
- 1 tblsp salt
- 1 cup cider vinegar
- 1 tsp coriander seeds
- 3 cloves garlic

 Slice onion and garlic thinly and place all ingredients into a heavy pan. Boil until apricots are very soft.

 Remove apricots from the pan with a slotted spoon and place in clean, dry jars.

 Boil the remaining liquid until a thick syrup, pour the syrup into the jars, seal and allow to cool before storing.



Visit this famous ancient Lintel in the nearby church in Saint Genis des Fontaines

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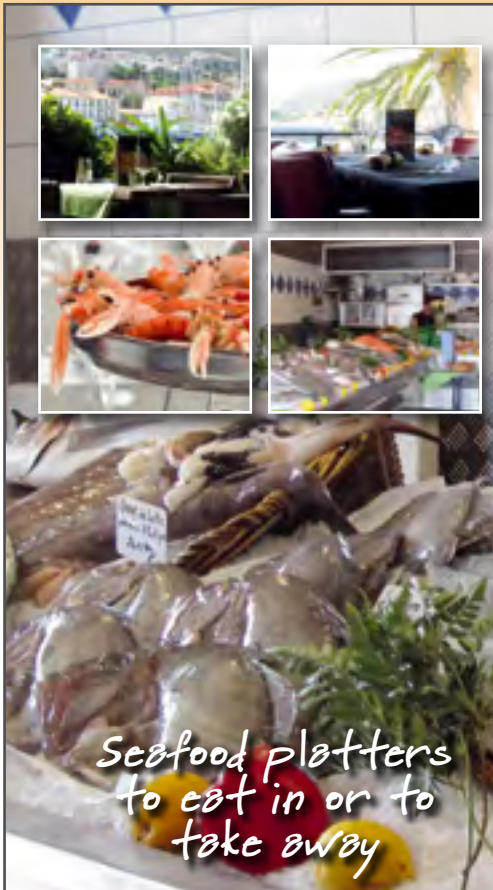
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For Reservations :

04 68 89 88 38

[www.auberge-des-alberes.com](http://www.auberge-des-alberes.com)






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**Gargling gargoyles**  
Sculptors used to create angels and demons to direct accumulating rainwater away from the walls of cathedrals. As water spewed from their mouths, they were named gargouille (old French for throat), and translated into English as gargoyle

## Le Boulou to Argelès..... in the slow lane

**If you're in a hurry to get to the beach, the 'voie rapide' from Le Boulou will whiz you onto golden sands in the blink of an eye. If you prefer life in the slow lane, the pretty villages along the foothills of the Albères just beg to be explored.**

Heading from Le Boulou towards Argelès, turn off first towards Montesquieu-des-Albères and look out for Mas Rous on the left. Michel Bizern produced fortified wine and olives and was known as Miquelo Ros (Michel the blonde) due to his mop of blonde hair. When he built his house on the land in 1850, the villagers called it 'El Mas del Ros' which evolved over time and language into 'Rous'. Today, his great grandson, José Pujol, carries on the tradition, with eleven different wines on offer in this cool wine cellar and tasting room.

This tiny village also boasts a 12th century Romanesque church with ornate oak and metalwork door and ancient bell tower, the ruins of an 11th century medieval castle, destroyed by King Louis XI in 1475, and a small museum of private collections and objects, recording the history of the village.

At the top of the village, passing well signed botanical and mountain walking trails leading off into the heart of the Albères, turn left towards Villelongue dels Monts, a short, delightful drive through shady forests of chestnut and cork oaks. In Villelongue, cool down in the 12th century church built in Catalan Roman style, visit the tiny museum of village history, or wind upwards into the mountains and visit the priory Santa Maria del Vilar built by Augustinian monks in 1083 at the centre

of the original village. When the monks left the priory in 1538, they left a key with a family in nearby Laroque des Albères, and over the years, the priory became a sheepfold. Four hundred and fifty years later, in 1994, the same family handed back the key, and the building was restored and opened to the public. Most Saturdays throughout July and August, the 'Festival International Lyrique et Médieval' takes place in these beautiful surroundings with magnificent acoustics, songs both religious and profane from the fifth to the twelfth century.

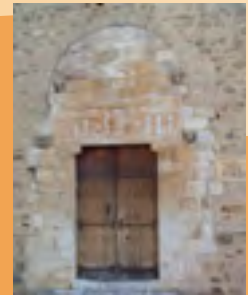
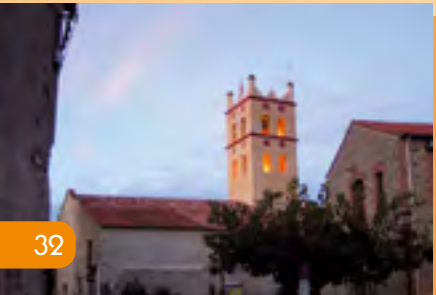
[www.prieureduvilar.free.fr](http://www.prieureduvilar.free.fr)  
Don't forget to check out our **'Festivals and Events'** section to find out about the Villelongue Music Festival in August.

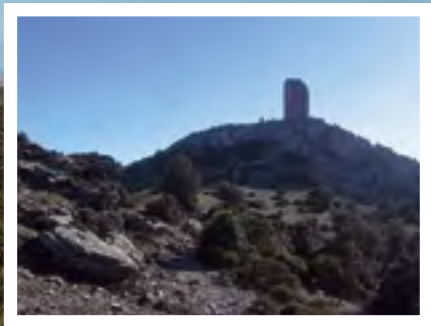
Back at the top of the village, head towards Laroque-des-Albères, small, vibrant, and the first

village in the department to introduce electric lighting in 1897! As well as medieval chapels, 14th century flour mill, and natural rock pools, the old part of the village is a maze of ancient narrow streets and pretty village houses built into the ancient ramparts of the original castle fortification. Refuge for kings, the chateau was an important stronghold in the defense of the territory, along with Perpignan, Salses, Elne and Collioure. From the remaining tower, at the top of the village, the views are stunning.

At least 12 well marked walks lead off from Laroque, taking in dolmens, ancient ruins, mineral fountains, ice wells, nature, history and heritage.

Visit the Maison d'Amande (see page 24-25) or the Moulin du Llevant, olive oil mill. Tucked away in a pleasant residential area, husband and wife,





**Se construire des châteaux en Espagne**  
*(il se construit des châteaux en Espagne)*  
**To make plans which are unlikely to come to fruition**  
*During the occupation of Spain by the Moors, it was not worth building a castle as it would have been attacked by the Moors*

Christine and Philippe, farm and press olives, and grow a variety of fruits, all organic, on 7.5 hectares of land. They invite you to visit them from 15th June to 30th August, no appointment necessary, and offer a free, guided tour of the process from tree to jar along with the chance to taste the oils and related products. Check out their new 'figue-olive à l'orange'. Sounds delicious n'est-ce pas?  
[www.moulindullevant.com](http://www.moulindullevant.com)

Pop into the tourist office for exact directions, or to pick up some of the excellent village trail sheets for children, created to teach and entertain. And don't leave the tourist office without a visit next door to café restaurant, Café des Artistes, where Fearghal and Melanie await you with a delicious lunch on their shady terrace, draught guinness, or dinner beneath the stars.

Follow the route now for Sorède, but just before

you enter the village, look out for signs on the right towards the Vallée des Tortues. Did you know that 200 million years ago, giant tortoises, weighing up to 300 kg, roamed the land that is now Perpignan? Children will love this tortoise park, one of the last European tortoise sanctuaries for giant, domestic and wild tortoises. [www.lavalleedestortues.com](http://www.lavalleedestortues.com)

Arriving in Sorède, why not start off with a visit to the 'ESAT les micocouliers' behind the tourist office? This fascinating 'whip' factory provides work for 88 youngsters and adults with learning difficulties, who hand make whips and crops for riding and hunting, as well as walking sticks, bracelets, and wood products... Made from the branches of the very flexible micocoulier (hackberry tree of the elm family) this production is unique in the world. They are proud to have presented one of their 'cravaches' (riding crop) to the queen of England

in 1987. Michel, english speaking worker, will take great pleasure in giving you a free guided tour of the whole process from wood to finished product, and a film in the roomy cinema will fill in any gaps. A great cause to support and some fabulous and original presents on sale in the factory shop.

[www.catlesmicocouliers.pagesperso-orange.fr](http://www.catlesmicocouliers.pagesperso-orange.fr)

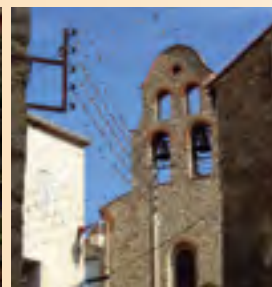
And did you know that over a hundred years ago, Sorède was a pioneer village where solar energy was concerned? The original site up in the hills, and remains of one of the first solar furnaces in the world can still be seen at the 'Coll del Buc'

Saint Génis des Fontaines beckons next, with a chance to combine lunch or dinner at the Auberge des Albères on the main street with a visit to the ancient 12th century cloister, built from different coloured marble, white from Céret, pink from Villefranche-de-Conflent and black from

the Corbières, with Romanesque sculptures and tombstones of monks and local notables.

Or just a little further towards the coast, in Saint André, the Ferme de Découverte awaits you, with 300 farm animals just waiting to be cuddled, and fed. An excellent lunch is to be had at the Table de Cuisine, small, quality restaurant near the Romanesque Abbey Church with its marble sculptures, and gallery of Roman art. The Festival Européen de Théâtre from 1st to 6th July is a great opportunity to watch drama beneath the stars.

Natural frontier between France and Spain, dominated by the Pic du Neoulous, the ancient signal towers of Massane and Madeloc keep a watchful eyes over the pretty little Albères villages, which have become home to a pot pourri of different nationalities.





## DONKEY DAY OUT WITH JANE MANN

At the far, far end of the Pyrenees Orientales is the tiny village of Rabouillet. There, surrounded by rich pastureland, beech and pine forests and the freshest cleanest air imaginable, Céline Noguer raises her donkeys. Ring [06 26 54 73 38](tel:0626547338) for an appointment to visit her Asinerie de Rabouillet and buy some asses milk soap or to join a day long walk with a donkey to carry your picnic or the ingredients for a grillade in the countryside.

From Ille sur Têt, take the D2 and follow the signs from Montalba le Chateau to Sournia. The countryside is dramatic, huge granite boulders rear up out of the garrigue, vineyards give way to farming country, forests appear on the skyline. After Trevillach, on the right, the D2 is joined by a road from Ansignan, and, spanning



the river Désix and just visible from the road, is an ancient, Roman, double-donkey-backed bridge.

Through Sournia, follow the signs to Rabouillet, and, as you exit the village, on the left, is a sign to Arsa. Well worth the detour for a drive through spectacular country, the little village of Rabouillet often visible on the right hand side. Arsa is just a farm and a ruined Roman castle. A small stream, the beginning of the Désix River, wanders through farmland meadows that, in spring, are full of orchids and cowslips. The road brings you to the far side of Rabouillet where Céline Noguer will meet you.

In her twenty hectares of donkey paradise Céline has been raising her donkeys since 2008. She is very particular about their well-being and who buys them and remains in contact with

the new owners, offering free advice on how to look after their donkey. Mostly, they are bought by organizers of donkey ballades or, as they have healthy appetites, for keeping land clear. They are the friendliest donkeys you could wish to meet, difficult to photograph, as they are so interested in the photographer and camera...

Milking requires patience and skill as the mares need to have constant visual contact with their foals or they become stressed and produce no milk. They are milked two or three times per day giving a maximum of 250 ml of milk per day per mare. Not much compared to a cow's 20 litres.

But asses's milk, as Cleopatra knew well, is rich in vitamins and minerals and brilliant for human skin. She is said to have bathed in it every day to embellish her beauty and preserve her youthfulness needing the milk from 300 donkeys to fill her daily bath.

We could not help noticing that the women of Rabouillet we encountered seemed to have benefitted from the Cleopatra effect. Céline herself and several others we passed had a youthfulness and beauty not found in every village in the P.O.

The Rabouillet Asinerie Asses's milk soap is made from natural ingredients to an old artisanal recipes using wheat germ, avocado, argan and almond oils, some unscented and some perfumed with natural scents of lily of the valley, honeysuckle, passion fruit, strawberry and blackberry.

You may also pass grazing flocks of distinctive "Rouge de Roussillon" sheep, white coated with rusty coloured faces and bellies. In summer they move to the high pastures above Formiguères, coming down to Rabouillet to lamb in the autumn. They are bred for their meat that is top quality and totally organic, reflecting the quality of their breeding and surroundings.

With or without a donkey the area is rich in walking trails. Perfect picnic spots abound and the views are vast, from the mountains to the far away sea.

Rabouillet is also well known for its hazel nuts. In



fact so prolific is the production that each autumn in an ambiance of carnival a Foire de la Noisette is held there. Yet another good reason to take the 45 minute drive from Ille sur Têt to the end of the Pyrenees Orientales.



## Flowers of the Pyrenees

with Mike Rhodes

**Up here in the Capcir and Cerdagne, we are at over 1500m and with temperatures generally 10 - 15 degrees less than in the 'low-lands' our plants have adapted to this more difficult climate.**

The end of May/start of June is a popular time for visitors, as the fields around Lac de Matemale turn white with Pheasants Eye Daffodils. The fields look as if they are covered in snow, and by the lake, the surface looks like an Impressionist painting with bright yellow Globe flowers, Bistort, Wood Cranesbill, Tufted and Wood Vetch, Wood Scabious, Marsh Marigolds in the wetter areas, Carthusian Pinks and their showy cousin Superb Pinks.

Closer to the ground you can find Tubular Gentians, Hairy Yellow Rattles, Bugle plants, Alpine Trefails, Wild Thyme, Cowslips and if you look really carefully Heath Spotted Orchids.

It is great fun, especially if you have children with you, to take a picnic down to the fields and have a competition to find and identify as many varieties

as you can. PLEASE record these with a camera and do NOT pick them. Not only are most of the flowers protected by law, but people coming after you should have the same joy in finding them.

As an International Mountain Leader, I love taking clients into the mountains and seeing their delight on discovering beautiful Alpine gardens.

As you climb higher, the vegetation and plant life changes dramatically. Walking through the Scots Pine forests the most stunning sight in late spring is the profusion of Hairy Alpenrose which covers the forest along with Juniper, Gorse and Broom. (Broom is the one that does not prickle and Juniper berries can be used to flavour your Gin!)

One of my popular, flower finding walks, traverses the belvedere above Lac de Balcere before following the path leading to Etang de Balmette. The valley leading to the lake has superb displays of Alpenrose and Broom, Bellflowers, Giant Yellow Gentians, prized for their roots which are made into a liquor, Willowherb, Asphodel and Heleborine.



Just past the lake you will find the rare Pyrenean Lily as well as the tall yellow Wolfsbane and the poisonous blue/violet Monks-hood who's root extract was used to tip arrows. It is still used to treat neuralgia. I find it quite fascinating that many flowers/herbs are now being re-discovered by the medical industry. If you see a plant ending with "wort" you will find that it always had a medical or practical use in days gone by such as Lungwort, which helps to restore elasticity to the lungs.

The delicate and rare St Bruno's Lily can be seen on the road up to Lac de Bouillouse and I have seen Martagon Lilies near to the Gorge de Caranca.

As you climb above the tree line the true alpine plant life predominates with flowers rarely more than 20cm above the ground. In these cold, thin air regions you will find Alpine Clover in abundance

and in the rocky areas the distinctive Alpine Toadflax, bluish with two orange tubes.

One of the best natural alpine gardens can be found on the standard walk up Madres from the Col de Sansa and I would recommend this walk to all flower lovers.

Visiting the mountains, together with a good flower guide book is like opening a window in to a new dimension. Have a wonderful day!

**Mike Rhodes is an International Mountain Leader / Accompanateur 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 mike.rhodes@free.fr - www.pyrenean-trails.com**

# Test your French

## 1 - P POUR PARACHUTE!

Match up these words, all beginning with P, with their definitions.  
(Why not try to work them out first without looking at their equivalents?)

Désordre	1	a	paillason
Petit tapis devant la porte	2	b	peau
Gros fruit jaune	3	c	pagaille
Petit pont pour piétons	4	d	pensionnaire
Long bateau à fond plat	5	e	pésanteur
Blessure qui déchire la peau	6	f	pissenlit
Partie extérieure du corps	7	g	plaie
Elève qui dort et dine à l'école	8	h	passerelle
La force qui entraîne vers le sol	9	I	péniche
Fleur jaune	10	J	pamplemousse

## Tongue twister (Virelangue)

(Répétez trois fois)

**Mon père est maire,  
mon frère est masseur.**



## Left holding the baby?

Useful expression

Figure-toi

Get this, imagine that

As with many languages, French has its fair share of 'baby talk' Test some of these out on your partner if you can't find a baby nearby!!

un doudou - favourite teddy

un toutou - doggy

les joujoux - toys

faire caca - to have a poo

faire pipi - to have a wee

le cucu - bottom

un bobo - a wound, a poorly bit

un dada - horsey

faire dodo - go to sleep

tonton/tata - uncle/auntie

le zizi - willy

miam miam - yummy

## 2 - TEST YOUR IDIOMATIC FRENCH

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| 1. Si 'j'appuie sur le champignon' je...<br>a) ... fais la cuisine<br>b) ... me promène dans les bois<br>c) ... roule très vite | 4. L'expression 'perdre la boule' signifie...<br>a) ... être gros<br>b) ... devenir fou<br>c) ... perdre un jeu                                   | 7. L'expression 'poser un lapin' veut dire...<br>a) ... aller à la chasse<br>b) ... ne pas aller à un rendez-vous<br>c) ... manger un ragout |
| 2. Si vous avez 'les dents longues', vous êtes...<br>a) ... malade<br>b) ... ambitieux<br>c) ... un vampire                     | 5. Si vous vous creusez la tête, vous...<br>a) ... allez à l'hôpital<br>b) ... réfléchissez<br>c) ... travaillez dans le jardin                   | 8. Si quelqu'un 'te prend la tête'...<br>a) ... il t'énerve<br>b) ... il te coiffe<br>c) ... il te frappe                                    |
| 3. Quand vous avez 'la chair de poule' vous avez...<br>a) ... froid<br>b) ... honte<br>c) ... faim                              | 6. L'expression 'filer à l'anglaise' veut dire...<br>a) ... partir en vacances<br>b) ... courir après les filles<br>c) ... partir sans permission | 9. Si ça coûte 'bonbon'...<br>a) ... c'est sucré<br>b) ... c'est cher<br>c) ... c'est gratuit  |

## 3 - Find the meanings for this pot pourri of useful words and expressions

À vos souhaits	1	a	pet hate
A la bonne franquette	2	b	a little bird told me
Remets-toi vite.	3	c	we're even
Canicule	4	d	It's simple
A poil	5	e	beat about the bush
Tourner autour du pot	6	f	bless you
Dégage!	7	g	broke (money)
Mon petit doigt me l'a dit.	8	h	heatwave
Cul sec!	9	I	to be in hot water
C'est du gâteau!	10	j	eat pot luck
fauché	11	k	fuss about nothing
nous sommes quittes!	12	l	get well soon
c'est du chichi	13	m	On your bike!
être dans de beaux draps	14	n	in the nude
bête noire	15	o	Down in one!

## Language tip

Penser à / penser de - both mean 'to think about'. ...but with slightly different senses!

**Penser à - to consider, have in mind**

*Je pense à ma mère.*

*I'm thinking about my mother.*

*Je pense à ce que je dois faire demain.*

*I'm thinking about what I must do tomorrow.*

**Penser de "to have an opinion about."**

**(Often used in a question)**

*Qu'est-ce tu penses de mes cheveux ?*

*What do they think about my hair?*

*Que penses-tu de ce beau temps?*

*What do you think about this beautiful weather?*

## Définition bête

**Facebook : Le seul endroit où tu parles à un mur sans être ridicule.**

## Blague Bête

**Un monsieur très radin dit à ses enfants :**

**"Si vous êtes gentils ce soir, je vous montrerai la photo de quelqu'un qui mange de la glace."  
(radin - mean)**



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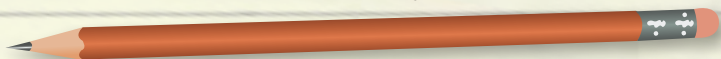
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# Test your French

4- The following French expressions all use the verb 'tomber' Can you work out their meanings in English? (Grammar: note that tomber uses 'être' to form the past tense eg Je suis tombé)

Laisse tomber!	1	a	It's heaven sent
Il est tombé dans le panier	2	b	I dropped it.
Je suis tombé dans les pommes	3	c	That's lucky
Il est tombé du ciel	4	d	I fainted
Il est tombé juste	5	e	Forget it, never mind
Je l'ai fait tomber	6	f	He fell for it!
Ca tombe bien	7	g	He hit the nail on the head
C'est tombé à l'eau	8	h	It fizzled out/fell through
Je suis tombé en panne	9	i	I knocked it over
Il nous est tombé dessus	10	j	I broke down



## Une blague bête

Deux vis regardent avec admiration un grand tournevis rouge et beau "Oh celui-là, il nous a bien fait tourner la tête!"  
(vis - screw tournevis - screwdriver)



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42 [www.alfmed.com](http://www.alfmed.com) [contact@alfmed.com](mailto:contact@alfmed.com)

## Bodily functions! (You never know when you might need them!)

Roter (rott-ay)- to burp

"Excusez-moi, j'ai roté!"

Baver (bav-ay) to dribble

"Attention! Vous bavez!"

Éternuer - (ay-ten-you-ay) to sneeze

« Ah... ah... ah... je vais éternuer! »

Cracher (crash-ay) - to spit

"Eloignez-vous! (keep away) Il crache quand il parle!"

Avoir les hoquets (ockays)

- to have hiccoughs

« Ah non! J'ai les hoquets! »

5

## AND TALKING OF BODILY FUNCTIONS, CAN YOU MATCH UP THESE USEFUL PHRASES WHICH ALL INVOLVE BODY PARTS?

Mettre le pied dans le plat	1	a	To have lots of influence
Rester bouche-bée	2	b	Get out on the wrong side of the bed
Avoir le bras long	3	c	To put your foot in it
Prendre ses jambes à son cou	4	d	Yeah, sure (disbelief)
Se lever du pied gauche	5	e	Up yours!
Motus et bouche cousue	6	f	To leave quickly
C'est le pied	7	g	Mum's the word
Donner sa langue au chat	8	h	To give up trying
Mon œil!	9	i	It's great
Faire un bras d'honneur	10	j	To be speechless



## Verlan

Coming from the word 'envers', (the reverse), Verlan is a well-known form of French slang which involves reversing the syllables. Many words of verlan are used quite regularly in everyday French, and not just by the kids!

Here are a few popular words used often in verlan

- chelou (louche) - shady, dodgy
- une meuf (une femme) - woman, wife
- ouf (fou) - crazy
- relou (lourd) - heavy
- une reum (mère) - mother
- un reup (père) - father
- une teuf (fête) - party
- zarbi (bizarre) - strange



## Useful expression

payer/régler en espèces -  
to pay in cash  
(Vous me faites une réduction si je paie en espèces?)



Quel est le fruit le plus végétarien?  
La 'pas steak'  
(pasteque - water melon)

## Language Tip

Nouveau and neuf both mean new  
Nouveau - new to you but may be second hand  
Eg J'ai acheté une nouvelle voiture  
BUT  
J'ai acheté une voiture neuve (brand new)

## Test your french - answers

- 1 - 1c 2a 3j 4h 5i 6g 7b 8d 9e 10f
- 2 - 1c 2b 3a 4b 5b 6c 7b 8a 9b
- 3 - 1f 2j 3l 4h 5n 6e 7m 8b 9o 10d 11g 12c 13k 14l 15a
- 4 - 1e 2f 3d 4a 5g 6i 7c 8h 9j 10b
- 5 - 1c 2j 3 4f 5b 6g 7i 8h 9d 10e

# Améliorez votre Anglais

1 -

## 'ING' VERSUS 'ED' FACILE À CONFONDRE

I am boring  
je suis ennuyeux  
I am bored  
je m'ennuie

- We hope you find P.O. Life **interesting/interested**.
- I am so **tired/tiring** of waiting for you.
- Winter can be quite **depressed/depressing** in the north.
- I was very **disappointing/disappointed** with the result.
- The joke was not very **amused/amusing**.

## Vary your language

Ne dites pas simplement... YES.

Soyez original et dites...

For sure  
Aye (Scottish)  
Aye aye captain  
Indeed  
You bet  
Certainly  
Absolutely  
Of course  
Yep!



## Thought for the Day

You don't stop laughing because you grow old, You grow old because you stop laughing.

## Silly Joke

I went to the doctor's last week with a sore throat. He told me to stand by the window and stick out my tongue. I asked if he thought I had tonsillitis. He said "No, I don't like the neighbours".  
**tonsillitis - angine**



2 -

Trouvez l'équivalent en américain pour ces mots anglais

BRITISH ENGLISH AMERICAN ENGLISH

- |                |    |   |           |
|----------------|----|---|-----------|
| lorry          | 1  | a | sick      |
| autumn         | 2  | b | yard      |
| caravan        | 3  | c | truck     |
| dustbin        | 4  | d | fall      |
| pavement       | 5  | e | sidewalk  |
| condom         | 6  | f | gas       |
| petrol         | 7  | g | eraser    |
| garden         | 8  | h | trash can |
| ill            | 9  | i | trailer   |
| rubber (gomme) | 10 | j | rubber    |



3 -

Trouvez le français pour ces mots et phrases utiles en anglais

- |                               |    |   |                             |
|-------------------------------|----|---|-----------------------------|
| I get the picture             | 1  | A | Tout, mais vraiment tout!   |
| He is all fingers and thumbs  | 2  | B | Un coup d'essai             |
| We'll see about that!         | 3  | C | Attends!                    |
| A lone wolf                   | 4  | D | Je comprends                |
| He talks rubbish              | 5  | E | Un solitaire                |
| A dry run                     | 6  | F | Il raconte n'importe quoi   |
| All but the kitchen sink      | 7  | G | Elle est préoccupée par qch |
| Hang on!                      | 8  | H | On verra bien!              |
| She's got a bee in her bonnet | 9  | I | Il a repris le dessus       |
| He's back on his feet         | 10 | J | Il est maladroit!           |

## Useful word

### Feisty

Adjective pour décrire une femme forte ou courageuse

### Mot mignon

**higgledy-piggledy** - en pagaïe, pêle-mêle

4 -

Ces 'faux amis' anglais ressemblent à des mots français, mais ont un sens totalement différent. Les connaissez-vous?

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| 1. A grave<br>a) tombe<br>b) accident                            | 3. A lecture<br>a) lire un livre<br>b) une conférence | 5. A bribe<br>a) une rumeur<br>b) un pot-de-vin           |
| 2. A Conductor<br>a) chef d'orchestre<br>b) chauffeur de voiture | 4. To cry<br>a) Pleurer<br>b) crier                   | 6. An affair<br>a) Bon business<br>b) Liaison (amoureuse) |

## 5 - P - is for Park

Trouvez les définitions des mots suivants, qui commencent tous avec la lettre P

- |         |    |   |                             |
|---------|----|---|-----------------------------|
| pain    | 1  | a | regular shapes or colours   |
| pip     | 2  | b | sweet, juicy fruit          |
| parrot  | 3  | c | film for any age            |
| pattern | 4  | d | press tightly               |
| pear    | 5  | e | shellfish                   |
| pebble  | 6  | f | feeling of hurt             |
| pinch   | 7  | g | thin, sharp piece of metal. |
| prawn   | 8  | h | small fruit seed            |
| PG      | 9  | I | bright tropical bird        |
| pin     | 10 | j | small stone                 |

Ouch!

That English humour!

What do you call a shortsighted dinosaur?

A Do-you-think-he-saw-us!

## Virelangue

(Répétez trois fois)

Six slimy snails sailed silently south

# 9 REASONS TO VISIT GIRONA WITH frogbus.com



Girona has all the charm and feel of a bigger city but without the bustling crowds. It's a perfect size for a day trip, an overnight or a weekend break. During the day, stroll the ancient streets of the old city and La Rambla, visit the Cathedral, browse the shops on the streets around the Carrer de Santa Clara, or have tapas in one of the many fine restaurants on the magnificent Plaça de la Independencia.

Southern French towns and cities are typically very quiet after 8pm but Girona comes alive in the evening to a cacophony of the sounds of people socialising and enjoying themselves. Steeped in Catalan culture and traditions, Girona has plenty to offer at night with a very active theatre, lots of festivals throughout the year and busy bars, restaurants and cafes.

With Frogbus' special return fare of **ONLY €9\*** and 6 return services daily, hop to Girona city from Le Boulou/ Perpignan in just over an hour and enjoy a relaxing day out or short break without the hassle and expense of driving, paying for parking or needing to appoint a designated driver! (\*Standard online return fare)

### Did you know?

- There are **6 museums** in Girona city
- Girona has **2** of the world's top **10 restaurants** and 6 in the top 100
- **Tuesday** and **Saturday** are market days in Girona with a fantastic mix of locally produced Catalan food and exotic fare
- Girona's famous **cathedral** took **7 centuries** to construct.

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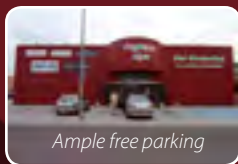
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c'est un yacht.  
Ah bon, et comment ça s'écrit papa ?  
Euh... ah oui, tu as raison, c'est un bateau.*

by Simon Newman

## Up the creek WITH a paddle

**Looking for something new to do this summer? Ever thought of kayaking? Me neither until last year when I decided to take the plunge, jumping in as I did at the deep end and going with the flow, if you get my drift. Any watery metaphors I've missed?**

Now, first of all let me make it clear I'm not talking about the white knuckle end of the spectrum. More a gentle walk in the park, only on water - though not actually walking on water, obviously, that's a completely different skill-set.

The whole thing started when I realised that although I like the whole beach vibe and swimming in the sea, I don't really enjoy the lying around bit. And I'd increasingly noticed people taking off on water-borne diversions in all sorts of contraptions that looked fun. Kite-surfing is the king of cool, no question, but kayaking looked the easiest to be honest, so I started out by hiring one at Argeles' north beach. I quickly got the bug.

From there I bought an inflatable type thinking the ease of transport (a large sports holdall) would outweigh any limitations. Wrong. Inflatable kayaks, as I soon found out, are simply not rigid or heavy enough to glide properly (too little momentum and too much drag) so they come to a halt almost as soon as you stop paddling, placing greater demand

on the engine - that's you.

As luck would have it mine sprang a leak and on taking it back the retailer pronounced it unrepairable (and discontinued) so I was duly given a credit voucher in refund. A result or what? And full marks Decathlon. This time I went for a solid kayak which at under three metres long and weighing around 18 kgs sits easily on the roof rack of a small car.

I chose a surf kayak - very stable and easy to remount in the (rare) event of a capsiz. Initially I confined myself to the lakes at St Jean Pla de Corts and Villeneuve de la Raho, both safe places to practice and get your sea legs (lake legs?) Then it was off to Le Racou beach where fortunately the prevailing wind is onshore so you work hardest



going out - but the return leg is a breeze and you get to take in the beauty of the Cote Vermeille framed by Les Albères. In the distance, the odd coastal train clatters gently by bound for the Spanish border at Cerbere/Port Bou. On a clear blue day, it really doesn't get much better than this.

A kayak has zero moving parts to fail, there are no mooring fees and fuel costs are limited to an extra Weetabix breakfast. Kayaks can winter in the garage, or in the garden, and in summer I leave mine on the beach at Le Racou secured (gratis) to a post alongside sundry canoes and dinghies, though space is at a premium during August so I really should be keeping this quiet.

Despite doubts as to whether I was up to it (age and assorted body parts not what they used to be - or ever were) kayaking turned out to be much easier and more enjoyable than I imagined. It's also good exercise without needing to be super fit to start with - and all this at minimal cost. In fact I'd go as far as to say the bang-for-your-buck factor is hard to beat.

### Do's and don'ts

- You don't need to be a great swimmer, but a confident one, yes
- Take some tuition - an hour's lesson gives the essentials, 25 Euros
- Always wear a life jacket and sun protection

Rigid kayaks start at 250 Euros new, much less used - try les petites annonces



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# Letsgetphysical...

## WHAT'S NEW ON THE ACTIVITY FRONT?



Tucked away below the picturesque village of Eus, just outside Prades is a company with a mission - to constantly bring new, exciting activities to the P-O. Kapoupaskap. This play on words, capable ou pas capable, able or not able, is really a french equivalent of "I dare you..."). This year they introduce Devil Mountain and Disc Golf – both unique to the PO.

### Devil Mountain – qu'est ce que c'est?

A fun new alternative to VTT (vélo tout terrain) or off road biking. These 'scooters' are specially designed to go off road, down mountain sides, over bumps and jumps. Much easier and comfier to handle than off road bikes but without losing any of the sense of fun or adrenaline. All excursions are accompanied by a fully qualified english speaking instructor.

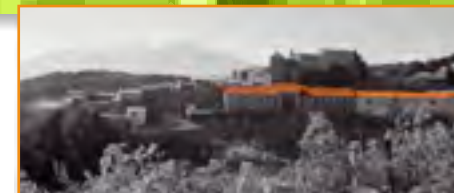
### Et Disc Golf – c'est quoi?

Looking for fun for the whole family, but prefer to give the adrenaline a miss? Then Disc Golf is for you. You play a 9'hole' round of 'golf' using a frisbee instead of a club and ball, the aim is to 'toss' the frisbee into the specially designed nets. Just like in real golf, every hole has a par. At just 4€ per person in these current economic climes this is a great value day out.

## Wine and quads do mix!

When quad biking was suggested, I was a little apprehensive to say the least. My kids did it and loved it, but they are young. I am not! However when the words 'leisurely' and 'wine tasting' were included in said suggestion my spirits lifted. I was assured this was to be 'quad biking with a difference'. No burning round a field at lose-your-lunch pace over unfeasibly large bumps (though AccroQuad do offer this). No, this was to be 'doux et agréable' - quad biking for grown ups And what a fantastic day it turned out to be.

After a safety briefing and initiation by Fred, a fully qualified, experienced, instructor, I gingerly mounted my quad.....and we were off! Nerves quickly faded and the leisurely pace allowed me to appreciate the breathtaking scenery. Up into the hills below Canigou we rode, above Ille Sur Têt and Rodes, en route to the luxury Riberach Hotel &



Cave (a stunningly converted old cave co-operative in the picturesque village of Bélesta) for a wine tasting to remember.

A more fun way to arrive at a 'cave' would be hard to imagine. After a thoroughly enjoyable degustation we left, happily clutching our 'cadeau maison' - a delicious bottle of Riberach wine.

Descending back to Rodes by quad, I couldn't help thinking what a truly unique, memorable way this had been to discover the ways, wines and wonders of our beautiful region.

For lovers of grain not grape, AccroQuad have similar 'tasting randos' to a local independent beer producer – 'Alzina', and renowned bakery 'Le Couvent' at Ille Sur Têt. Quad trips to a local olive oil mill and snail farm are also available.

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## ONE EURO TRAIN

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For 2013, Christian Bourquin hopes that this experimental initiative will be in operation throughout the 1 800 km of railway track of the Languedoc-Roussillon. This does not count the 'Train Jaune'



## BRA LÀ LÀ!

It's strappy dress and bikini weather ladies, but if you find yourself staring in horror at bra sizes in the 80s and 90s, don't panic! You won't make a boob if you use this easy conversion table! (Cup sizes the same as Britain)

32 = 85	42 = 110
34 = 90	44 = 115
36 = 95	46 = 120
38 = 100	48 = 125
40 = 105	50 = 130



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... call 902 102 112 to make a 'denuncia' (police report) or visit the Spanish Police's website at [www.policia.es/denuncia](http://www.policia.es/denuncia) (English version available) Most insurance policies require you to have some sort of crime number from the local police

## HANG ON TO THOSE TROLLIES!

Unscrupulous tricksters are making themselves quite a few quid in the large supermarkets by swapping your trolley (before it is too full of course) for one with a 'jeton' (token), thereby pinching your euro.

## Carte européenne d'assurance maladie

Don't forget your CEAM if you are resident in France but travelling abroad. It will ensure free or subsidized medical treatment (depending on the country visited) and is free and easy to obtain. Simply ring or visit your local CPAM at least two weeks before travelling. The card is valid for one year. If you are leaving in less than two weeks, your CPAM can provide you with a temporary document - un certificat provisoire - valid for three months.



## French Inheritance Law Changes

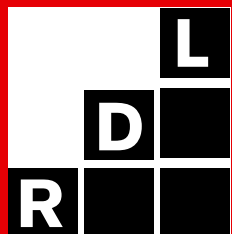
Proposed new laws by the European Parliament, expected to take effect from 2015, will give Brits living in France the right to apply the inheritance laws of their home country. This means that they can will their estate to whoever they wish, according to British law.

## Wibble wobble!

If you are stung by a 'méduse' (jelly fish) do not scrub or wash with fresh water but rinse immediately in (jellyfish free) seawater and remove any visible tentacles remaining with tweezers or similar. The pain can be eased by a vinegar rinse..... or urine, which neutralises the toxins, so make sure you take a friend with you to the beach!



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## 08 and see!

Many French companies use premium rate numbers. Watch out in particular for numbers beginning with '08'. Although some are free, (0800, 0805 0809 08088....) and others are local call rates, (0810, 0811...) some are unreasonably expensive (0820, 0821, 0825, 0826...). The worst baddies to avoid are 0892 - 0899, which tend mainly to be used for games, competitions etc

Calls from mobiles or broadband lines will cost more than calls from landlines, and even the 'free' numbers will charge a fee, depending on the provider.

Internet service providers and businesses are obliged to provide a non-premium rate number for calls but it may be well hidden, as they make money from premium rates. Check out Geonumbers at [www.geonumbers.com/fr](http://www.geonumbers.com/fr), where you can find alternative 'géographiques' numbers (local and national calls on 01, 02, 03 and 04) for the majority of large French businesses, and save yourself a 'joli centime'!

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<b>Police emergency</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Fire service emergency</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>European emergency line</b>	<b>112</b>
<b>SOS Doctor 24/24</b>	<b>08 20 20 41 42</b>
<b>Emergency vet</b>	<b>04 68 55 55 83</b>
<b>Anti-poison centre</b>	<b>04 91 75 25 25</b>
<b>Perpignan hospital</b>	<b>04 68 61 66 33</b>
<b>CPAM (English spk serv)</b>	<b>0811 36 36 46</b>
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<b>Directory enquiries</b>	<b>118 008</b>
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<b>Local weather forecast</b>	<b>08 36 68 02 66</b>
<b>GDF (gas problems)</b>	<b>08 10 43 30 66</b>
<b>EDF (electricity problems)</b>	<b>05 56 17 40 70</b>

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**Louise Sayers - Med & Mountain** .....04 68 56 54 22  
Translation & administrative service .....06 20 03 54 46

**PromoLangues** - Céret .....04 68 87 48 10

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