

P-O Life

Life in the Pyrénées Orientales

Out for the Day
**BATTLE OF
LE BOULOU**



Walk The Region
**PAULILLES TO
BANYULS-SUR-MER**



Autumn **2012**
FREE / GRATUIT N° 37



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Edito...

Don't batten down those hatches yet, summer is most definitely not over here in the P-O and we have many more long sunny days ahead. Lazy walks on deserted golden beaches, meanderings through endless hills, orchards and vines against a background of cloudless blue sky, that incredible melange of every shade of green, red, brown and gold to delight the heart of artist and photographer, lift the spirits and warm the soul.

Yes, autumn is absolutely my favourite time of the year with its dry warm days and cooler nights and a few drops of rain after such a dry summer will be very welcome!

We have dedicated a large part of this autumn P-O Life to remembrance, lest we ever forget the struggles and lost lives of the past which allow us to sit on shady terraces in the present, tasting and toasting the toils of a land which has seen its fair share of blood, sweat and tears.

Alongside interesting facts, entertainment listings, and language, exercises, Leigh and Merry take us on a fabulous coastal walk from Paulilles to Banyuls, John checks out the dwindling flight possibilities, and pops into the casino, Simon Newman relaxes amidst the Pyramids of Perpignan and Courtney O'Brien-Brown chats to Etienne, the 'witch' of Castelnaud.

Don't forget to visit our site at www.anglophone-direct.com to find out more about what's going on in the region, walks, restaurant reviews, and a whole load of other stuff.

And, most important of all, we do hope your autumn is golden.

Kate

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LA CÔTE VERMEILLE PAULILLES TO BANYULS-SUR-MER

with Leigh and Merry Foster

Length: approx. 6.5 km circular walk. Time, approx 2 hrs. Well marked and signposted. Map reference IGN 2549OT 31N 509910E 4705560N

This walk starts and ends at Paulilles, south of Port Vendres – the town has recently claimed the beach for its own, but that does not change the unspoiled beauty of its pebble-dashed sands and crystal clear blue water, nestling beneath immaculately terraced vines.

Start at the beach, or in high summer more likely at the car park by the roundabout exit to Cosprons. Instead of following everyone towards the sea, head to the southern end of the car park where there is a footpath leading through part of the ruined Nobel brothers' dynamite factory. While it may seem odd to recommend a walk between a railway and a main road, bear with us, the rewards are worth it! The footpath tracks the railway through the hills (don't go under the bridge or you'll be on the wrong side!) You are surrounded by vines, trees and cacti, but with beautiful views up to the Tour de Madeloc. Follow the footpath south up to the top of the hill, where you emerge next to the main road at a roundabout looking down towards Banyuls. This is the Coll de Pere Barnera.

Cross the road here and take the gravel track

eastwards, following the contours of the hillside in between vineyards and a conifer plantation. Everywhere there are ancient – looking dry stone terraces and carefully tended vines, and you are quickly lost in nature and surrounded by birdsong.

When you reach an open vineyard, at



510452E 4704380N, you can choose either to turn right and downwards to the sea or short-cut through the trees straight ahead, which avoids climbing back up to the path later. On exiting the trees and turning right, you emerge at the cliffs overlooking the sea, named Cap Castell de Velló. After admiring the impressive views of Banyuls to the south and the waves rolling onto the rocks below, retrace your steps inland about 80m and turn left and follow the footpath northwards and upwards. It is well marked with yellow paint.

There is a fork in the footpath at a semicircular car turning space at 510690E 4704690N, you should turn right here instead of heading inland. (We didn't and ended up having to climb over a drainage ditch, a familiar Foster tactic!)

Follow the footpath north down the low ridge



**Un cactus demande à un autre :
"Connais-tu le langage des hommes?"**

"Oui" répond l'autre cactus. "C'est facile. Ils disent tous AÏEEEEEE!"

parallel to the coast, to Cap d'Ullastrell. You can find a very good description of this part in Ted and Kate Hiscock's walk at www.anglophone-direct.com/Walk-Banyuls-sur-Mer-to-Port "views across to Cap Bear in one direction and to Banyuls-sur-Mer in the opposite direction whilst inland and behind are Cosprons, Tour de Madeloc and to the left, the three beaches, their ruined fortresses, concrete excrescences from World War II and the admirably adventurous development of the Conservation Site of the Dynamite Factory of Paulilles."

After crossing the Cap you reach a small

road leading to Platja del Forat, a seemingly forgotten pebbly beach fronted by a handful of low houses. As you continue north, you have to leave Forat and follow the road behind the ruined factory to the larger beach at Anse de Paulilles. At the north end you follow a small creek inland about 100m under a footbridge, and climb up to the right to pass through more ruins, being swallowed by vegetation. The path winds through the thick woodland over the promontory before you finally descend to your starting point at Plage Bernardi for a refreshing dip in the sea or, if you're lucky, a cold drink!

Did you know...?

Austrian croissant



Did you know that the croissant, firmly associated with France, actually originated in Austria? August Zang, Austrian artillery officer, opened a Viennese Bakery in Paris in 1839. He introduced Viennese specialties such as the 'kipfel', which quickly developed into the croissant as we know it, named for its crescent shape.

Can you dig it?

According to legend, in 1939, seven lorries carrying Republican gold bars left the Spanish village of La Vajol, in the Albères, heading for the nearest port. Only six arrived. Eyewitnesses stated that they had seen it around Las Illas near Maureillas, others at Argelès where they suggested that the drivers had buried it in the sand, awaiting better times. Taking a bucket and spade to the beach will never be the same!



In the cinemas now...

Filmed in and around Céret, with financial aid from the Région Languedoc-Roussillon, Paradis Perdu tells the story of a father and his teenage daughter who live, work and love in an isolated 'pépinière' in southern France.



Escarro - all mine

Known for its mining history, with a fascinating museum to the "Memoire de la Mine" the mine of Escaro was the first area in France to produce fluor spar, (also called fluorite) dubbed "the most colourful mineral in the world" and also mined at the Blue John Cavern in Derbyshire.

The mine closed in 1993 when the mineral was exhausted.

Hannibal and the elephants

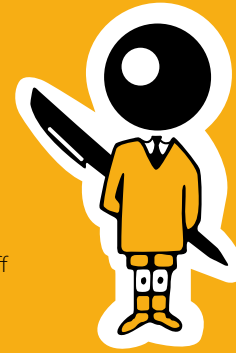
Carthaginian commander Hannibal stopped off at Elné (then names Illiberis) to discuss a treaty which would allow his army free passage when they marched from Iberia over the Pyrenees and the Alps into northern Italy.

The treaty allowed safe passage through the Panissars (Perthus) pass with 80,000 soldiers, 10,000 cavalrymen and 40 elephants. War elephants were trained to charge the enemy, trampling them and breaking their ranks.



SON OF A

One of the first French words we learn in school is 'bic', for ballpoint pen. (Qu'est ce qu'il y a dans ta trousse?). In fact, the pen was not invented by Monsieur Bic, as many believe, but by Monsieur Bich! Based upon an already existing ballpoint pen manufactured in Argentina by László Bírópen, Marcel Bich presented it to the American public - but took good advice and dropped the h off his name before marketing it!



I SWEAR....

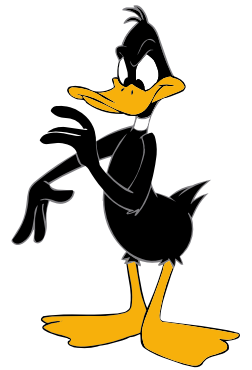
In the 12th century, Catalans already had a well developed sense of identity and pride, shown by this ancient Catalan oath of allegiance made to the king.

We.... who are as good as you swear to you, who are no better than we, to accept you as our king and sovereign lord, provided you observe all our liberties and laws; but if not, not.

Duck!

Wild ducks have been hanging around the campsites and restaurants of Argeles-plage for several decades and have become a bit of a tourist attraction.

But not everybody is happy. Fed regularly by kindly residents and tourists, the surplus of bread lying about is now attracting rats and other unwanted guests.



Shake your shoes..



Love 'em or hate 'em, everyone should know a little bit about scorpions shouldn't they? And the news is better than you would expect. Apparently, the black ones which look quite mean are not actually aggressive, and fairly harmless. If they were to sting you, it would be no more painful than a bee sting. (ouch, I hear you say!) The paler coloured scorpions (Scorpion languedocien or Buthus Occitanus) are actually the least venomous of all French scorpions - and they are nocturnal so you're unlikely to meet one during the day. Phew from me!

Crying in the Chapel

Did you know that the chapel on the hill near the village of Castelnou is reputed to have very special acoustics which allowed the curé to hear every word spoken in the village? No need for confessionals then!!

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AIRPORT NEWS

With JOHN FAIRCLOUGH

PREVIEW OF AIR SERVICES FROM PO AIRPORTS AND NEARBY....AUTUMN 2012

Luckily, the Airlines and Airports have announced their autumn/winter schedules good and early this year, no doubt in an attempt to entice us to book well in advance. Less happily, the range of services and frequencies from the Airports of the PO and nearby have once again been drastically cut from November onwards, with, if anything, even fewer to choose from than the 2011-12 winter season. The demise of BMI Baby has meant that there is one fewer airline offering services to this region. Booking well in advance may well be the order of the day! Below is a summary of what seems to be available in terms of direct flights to destinations in the UK and Ireland.

Once again **PERPIGNAN** sees no direct UK/Ire services, with only the Air France connection at Paris, and maybe an option of using Ryanair via Charleroi (Belgium) the sole possibilities.

Likewise **GIRONA** has seen savage cuts to its Ryanair operation, begging the question as to how genuine the alleged "dispute" over landing charges that led to cuts last winter really was! The only Ryanair flight available this winter will be

Manchester 4x per week

CARCASSONNE fares little better with reduced Ryanair options compared to last year

Stansted 2x pw

Dublin 2x pw

At **BEZIERS** only one of the summer Ryanair links survives the axe.

Bristol 2x pw

MONTPELLIER chips in with an easyJet flight;

Gatwick 3x pw

So, once again, it's down to **BARCELONA** to provide the lion's share of UK/Ire flights, though I estimate that, even here numbers are down about 10% compared to last winter. The promised improvements to rail connections there in theory should make access easier, but until such time, a flight from El Prat does represent something of a trek.

Birmingham 2x pw (Ryanair)

Edinburgh 3x pw (Ryanair)

Glas Prest 3x pw (Ryanair)

Liverpool 4x pw (Ryanair)

7x pw (EasyJet)

Manchester. 3x pw (Monarch)

Leeds Brad 2x pw (Jet 2)

Stansted 7x pw (Easyjet)

14x pw (Ryanair)

Southend 5x pw (EasyJet)

Luton 12x pw (EasyJet)

Gatwick 38x pw (Easyjet)

7x pw (Monarch)

Heathrow 56x pw (BA/Iberia)

Newcastle 4x pw (Easyjet)

Dublin 5x pw (Ryanair)

7x pw (Aer Lingus)

OTHER OPTIONS: It may well be that for some people the only realistic option will be to change planes, either in the UK at major airports such as Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted, Manchester etc, or in France at airports in nearby regions such as Lyon or Toulouse, continuing down to PO by either train or rental car.

Another possibility is the use of the train via TGV and Eurostar services. THE SNCF is promising fare deals to/from London St Pancras via Paris or Lille starting at around 60€ each way. It seems that they cannot be booked more than 3 months in advance, and the bargain basement fares will involve the same sort of restrictions to cancellation/amendments and luggage as demanded by the budget airlines.

So, all in all continued hard times for those wishing to travel to/from PO outside the popular summer months. I hope to report a few new routes added in the Winter edition as airlines crank up their winter sports flights in the New Year, but realistically, I suspect that it will only involve Toulouse.



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1st - 16th September

PERPIGNAN

Visa Pour L'image - International Photojournalism Festival

Major cultural event of the P-O. with workshops, lectures, wonderful nights of huge images projected onto giant screens in the Campo Santo and the Place la Republique and 27 completely free exhibitions scattered around central Perpignan. Many bars and restaurants will be full, not only with enthusiastic exhibition goers, but also with the alternative photo exhibitions of VISA OFF.

Wander around exhibitions documenting the year's news from all around the world... Guantanamo Bay, Nigeria, North Korea, shock wave in Greece, the graveyards of E-waste, mental

de

health in African countries, Afghanistan from the inside, coming of age for Swazi girls, the Rastafari Movement, North Korea hunger crisis, child brides.....

Each individual photographer represented has an emotionally touching story to tell, images of our troubled times, of man's inhumanity to man. But, amongst the horrors of wars and natural disaster are tales of hope, laugh out loud images showing up the quirky side of life. www.visapourlimage.com



LOCAL FAIRS AND FESTIVALS

Don't forget to check out your local tourist office for the date and location of the many fairs and festivals around the region in autumn, celebrating every imaginable animal, vegetable and mineral. Here are just a few... They might not all come up to expectations - some are only small gatherings - but it's a great way to support the local producers, many of whom are struggling in the present economic climate.

15th - 16th September

Canet Ferme à Canet

16th September

Baillestavy Fête de l'Âne
Catalan

30th September

Saint Michel de Llotès Fête du
miel et des Abeilles

14th October

Casteil Chestnut Festival

20th - 21st October

Ur Foire Internationale du
Cheval

18th - 21st October

Le Boulou Les Journées du Gout

21st October

Olette Foire d'Olette

27th October

Perpignan Bio génération

28th October

Sahorre Fête de la pomme

4th November

Castelnou Marché du Gout
fermier

Caudiès-de-Fenouillèdes
Fête du Chardonnay

13th November

Rivesaltes Journée des Saveurs
Authentiques

18th November

Prades Foire au gras

What's on Around the Region



We hate sending people off on wild goose chases, particularly in the hunting season! There are still so many festivals, and events to herald in autumn in the Pyrenees Orientales, and sometimes they are sneakily brought forward, backwards,

sideways, cancelled or changed....or we just get it wrong! 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 and in our free weekly newsletter.

BANK HOLIDAYS

September 11th - Diada de Catalunya - national holiday throughout Catalonia

1st November - La Toussaint (All Saints Day)

People visit cemeteries and place chrysanthemums on the graves of family members (most shops closed)

11th November - Armistice of WW1 (1918). Remembrance ceremonies and flowers placed on war memorials (most shops closed). Recently suggested that this day should represent all wars.

25th November - La Sainte Catherine - now rarely observed but unmarried ladies over 25, known as 'les Catherinettes' used to wear eccentric hats to help hook a husband! (not a public holiday)

School holidays for our region

Summer Holidays - Rentrée - 4th September

Toussaint (autumn half term)

27th October - 8th November

SEPTEMBER

1st September

Château Royal, Collioure La Grande Scène Catalane

"Els Ben Parits", Catalan equivalent to the 'Enfoirés', perform in this annual benefit concert of music, dance, drama, donating all proceeds to French charity, Les Restos du Cœur, which provides food packages and free meals to the poor and homeless.

04 68 85 04 53

1st - 2nd September

Canet village Fetes Médiévales

Medieval festival and market with medieval crafts, stalls, fire-eaters, sword fighting, re-enactments of medieval scenes, jugglers...

15th - 16th September

National Journées Européennes du Patrimoine

Museums, exhibitions, historical and cultural centres invite you to share the Catalan culture free of charge.

Beware! They are not all free and it is worth checking in advance.

www.journeesdupatrimoine.culture.fr

14th September

Bages Concert in aid of cancer research

Homage to a brave young lady, Margaux, who lost her courageous battle against a brain tumour in 2010. All proceeds will go to the 'Etoile de Martin' charity for cancer research. 04 68 21 89 50

15th - 16th September

Céret Ronde Cérétane

Challenging marathon through the vineyards and cherry orchards of Céret. Music and entertainment all weekend.

www.rondeceretane.com

22nd - 23rd September

Perpignan and Fort of Serrat d'en Vaquer nr Auchan Trobades Médiévales de Perpignan

Medieval fun in and around Perpignan as this medieval weekend takes us back in time to the days of the kings of Majorque.

28th Sept - 21st Oct

Perpignan Festival Jazzebre

Series of jazz and world music concerts in Perpignan, and towns around the Pyrénées-Orientales. Musical picnics, debates, musical apéros, films.....www.jazzebre.com

OCTOBER

3th - 14th October

Banyuls-sur-Mer Fête des Vendanges

BBQs, picnics, bands, dancing, juggling on the beach along with excessive tasting of vino and arrival by sea of the grape harvest as in days of old when the barques catalanes brought the grapes to the beach.....

5th - 28th October

Automne Musical en Vallespir. Series of 5 concerts and 2 musical spectacles, involving 100 musicians and dancers in villages around the Vallespir. www.amuvall.org

18th and 20th October

Nuit et Fête du vin primeur Perpignan

From 18h onwards (18th) caves, bars and restaurants will celebrate the 2012 wine vintage with music, and tastings On the 20th, throughout the day, the cobbles of the rue Maily and rue de l'Ange run red, white and rosé with 'cavistes' touting their new wines (les vins primeurs), fresh from the vines into your glass

26th - 27th October

Tressere Festa de las Bruixes

Fairies foul and foulies fair... witches and wizards from around the region arrive on their broomsticks this weekend when the village and its visitors dress up for a weekend of myth, legend and Catalan culture.

27th Oct - 25th Nov

Palais des Expositions, Perpignan Foire Saint Martin
All the fun of the fair

27th - 28th October

Perpignan, Palais des Expos International Dog Salon

Sunday Oct 28th

Don't forget to turn your clocks back
Clocks back

30th Oct - 4th Nov

Château Royal, Collioure, L'Automne des Antiquaires
Antique dealers galore.

NOVEMBER

11th November

Corsavy 'Castagnade'
Grilled chestnuts, vin nouveau, music, dancing and a cosy autumn atmosphere

11th November

Perpignan Foire aux étalagistes
Colourful market along the riverbanks of Perpignan centre

for detailed information visit:-
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Le Cédrat JoaCasino LE BOULOU

**Restaurant
Review**
with
John Fairclough



In one of his French themed books, the humorous travel writer, Stephen Clarke tells of fixing a first date with one of his many new girlfriends, on her suggestion, at "The Casino". Excited at the prospect of an evening of glamour by the roulette wheel, appropriately booted and suited, imagine his dismay when it turns out that their final destination is the café of the supermarket of the same name in some dismal suburb of Nantes.

No such problem here in Le Boulou. The Casino on the main D900 Le Boulou to Le Perthus road, in common with many of the region's gambling establishments, has been incorporated into the JoaCasino chain. Fortunately, this is a group that prides itself on the quality of its catering. Recent chefs have been members of the Toque Blanche decoration. The most recent is due to retire, and his replacement, keen young Wesley Durand, is a graduate of the celebrated Paul Bocuse School in Lyon and the winner of the 'Jeune Talents' award. He brings a modern flair and freshness to his creations.

As one would expect in a casino, the surroundings are comfortable and plush, recently renovated, with an interior inspired by Catalan architect, Gaudi. A little apart from the hubbub

of the slot machines and gaming tables, the food area is well appointed, with a choice of a sheltered outside terrace or a spacious, air-conditioned, dining room. The kitchen is open from Wed lunch to Sun eve inclusive. At lunchtimes Wed to Sat, a large buffet with both hot and cold dishes is offered at a very reasonable 14€ whilst Sunday Lunches are a gourmet 28€ 4 course affair.

The entry level is the 14€ menu du jour. Three courses, no choice and changed every day. On this occasion it consisted of a starter of tartine catalane, elegantly presented and decorated with anchovies, a main of strips of marinated chicken, grilled and served with a light barbecue sauce with small fresh local veg, followed by a home made creamy flaky pastry gateau.

You can upgrade, as we did, to the Decouverte menu at 18€, basically the menu du jour, but with extra choices added in. Currently, this consists of a delicious cold melon soup or a mixed Roussillon salad as starters, followed by an excellent fish tian gratineed with parmesan cheese, or traditional Catalan dish, boles de picoulat, home made and by some distance the best I've tasted. Dessert introduced more of the chef's fancy and tasty creations, or a plate of local cheeses for those with no sweet tooth.

There is also the Gourmet menu at 28€ for special occasions. Ever keen to impress, Wesley provided us with a few select nibbles from this menu, including a superb foie gras with apricot chutney, and pieces of his succulent home-smoked salmon. Mains include a trio of locally caught fish, and fillet of beef. Of course all the dishes, plus a few more are available as an à la Carte option, but I'd certainly recommend sticking to one of the menus for value for money.

Wines are plentiful. Though not publicised, there is a pichet wine from the Le Boulou co-op at 4€50 per 50cl. Also good value is the JoaCasino house wine. Red, white or rosé vin de Pays d'Oc at 13€ a bottle, all good quality. The fairly extensive list of wines from all over the French regions include some rare vintages, at prices that are commensurate with the surroundings. In general, outside that, drinks prices are average for the area.

Service is prompt, efficient and very friendly. Wesley takes the trouble to come out to chat with diners and oversee the service of his food, in which he clearly takes great pride and enthusiasm. Several of the waiting staff speak pretty good English. Interestingly, and to their immense credit, although this is first and foremost a gambling house, there is no Las Vegas style hard-sell to diners to partake

Le Cédrat

Route du Perthus 66 160
LE BOULOU
Tel: 04 68 83 01 20.
www.joa-casino.com

Open 7/7



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reviews visit
www.anglophone-direct.com

of visits to the bewildering array of slot machines or gaming tables. Of course it is there, and a brief round of Roulette (either English or French!), Blackjack, or Poker could be a fun way to round off your meal should you so wish. Or not.

One important point to remember is that to gain entry to the Casino and Restaurant you will need to show some form of ID. Either a French ID card or a passport will suffice, but they are very strict on this... no ID = no entry. Children under 18 can therefore not eat in the restaurant.

All in all, for an evening out with a difference, and a little glamour thrown in for good measure, coupled with an excellent meal produced by an up and coming young chef, the JoaCasino in Le Boulou is a welcome option for locals and tourists alike.

Further info telephone **04 68 83 01 20**.
Reservations, though not necessary, would be sensible at busy times.



Food & drink

Le France RESTAURANT

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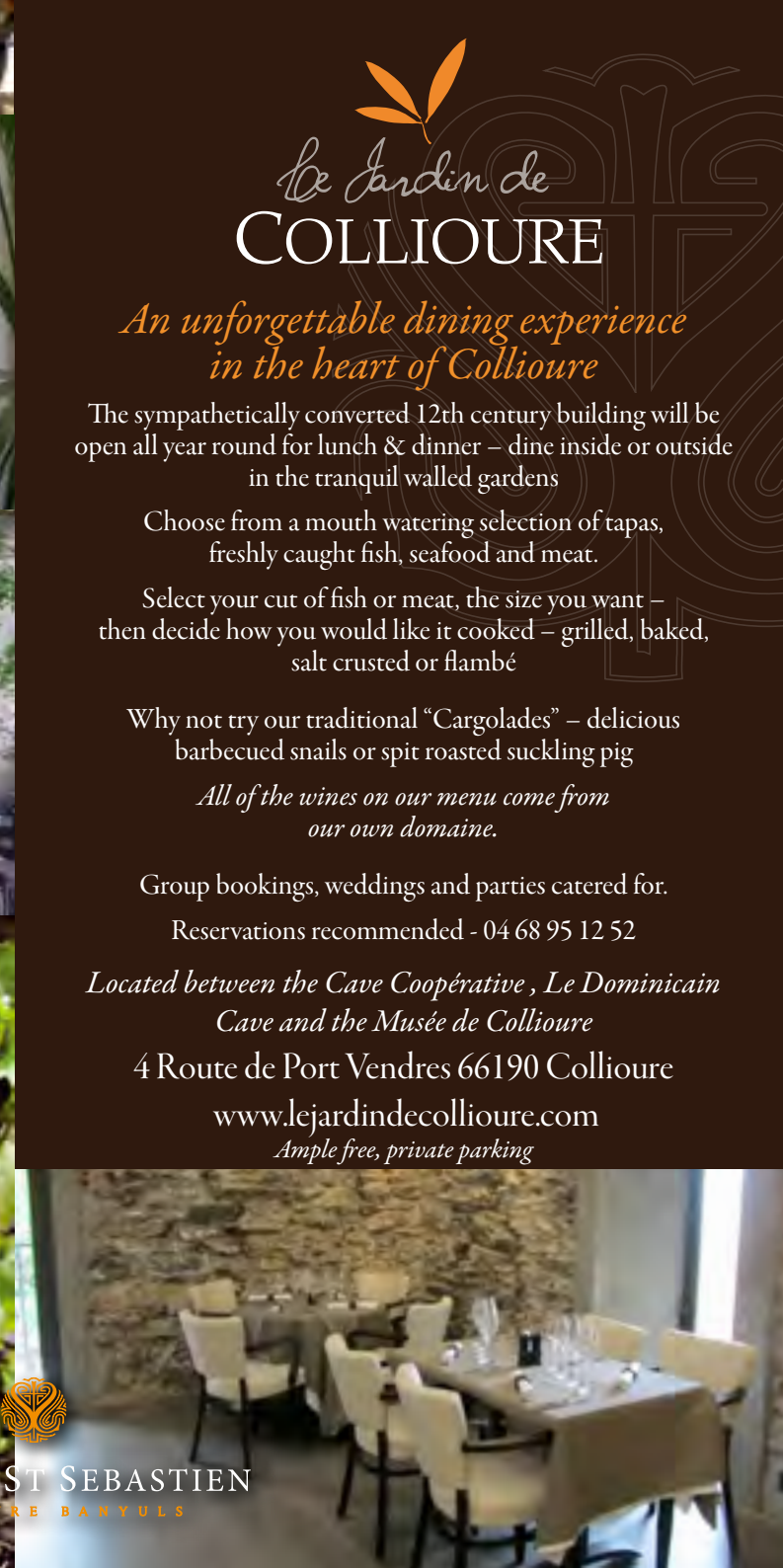
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Ingredients

750 g of pork mince
750 g of beef mince
2 eggs

100 g of flour
3 onions
2 cloves of garlic
1 bunch of fresh coriander

500 g of green olives
300 g of cepes (or dried cepes)
1 kg of carrots
tomato purée, olive oil, salt, pepper

Preparation

-  Peel carrots, onions and garlic. Clean 'cepes' or soak if dry.
-  Chop one onion finely together with one clove of garlic and the coriander. Add salt and pepper, and mix preparation with minced meat and the eggs.
-  Form into small meatballs, flour generously and brown in olive oil.
-  Brown sliced carrots in olive oil, add the 2 remaining onions and thinly sliced garlic, tomato purée and glass of water. Simmer for 15 minutes. Add meat balls, cepes and green olives. Cover with water, add salt and pepper and cook under cover for 45 minutes.
-  Adjust seasoning to taste and serve with warm white beans or chickpeas tossed with garlic and olive oil on the side.

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Etiennette the 'witch of Castelnou'

by Courtney O'Brien-Brown

"Each herb comes in its own season. The 'monnaie du pape' needs two years before you pick it. It grows the first year, the flowers come out in the second year and then it needs to have no rain because there are seeds inside. You peel them from one side and then the other. I tell my grandson, look maybe in August... try to catch them if you see them. Every plant has its own season. Thank god it's like that."

To visit Etiennette Mayneris' shop is an experience more akin to a stroll in the mountain



than to stepping inside an old stone house. The aromas of fennel, thyme and rosemary mingle with tilleul and laurier. Dried bunches of l'immortelles (popular for la Fête de la Saint-Jean) chardon bleu and monnaie du pape hang from the roof beams. The mélange of natural odours puts the modern boutiques of L'Occitane and Fragonard completely to shame.

At 89 years of age, the larger than life Etiennette has been selling fresh homegrown 'produits du terroir' since the late 1940's when she and her husband ran a small farm in the region. *"When we got the phone line here, there was only one phone in the village. People used to call us and we'd prepare a grocery bag for them with vegetables from our garden. We'd kill a rabbit if they asked for one. My husband is a good worker in the garden and in the vines...we had a bit of everything. Selling things here started like that."*

Later in life Etiennette decided to sell specifically herbs, stocking up on seasonal varieties for year round use. *"When people come here, they take 3 or 4 bundles. You can't find herbs sold in many places like that. These are all Mediterranean plants. There used to be less garrigue here and more herds. Now there are less animals eating them, so we have more herbs and plants."*

The best places to find cèpe, mûres and other

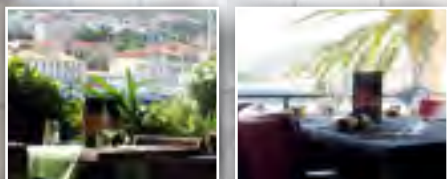
wild delicacies are closely guarded secrets in the region. But Etiennette has never needed to look too far. She has them all growing wild across her property. *"We have a farm with 80 hectares. 7 hectares of vines, then there's almond trees, olive trees and the rest is for the sheep."* Her knowledge of plants has also influenced her family. *"Both of my daughters married doctors, one of whom is a homeopath. My daughter makes a special therapeutic cataplasme (poultice) from clay and essential oils. 'Plants? I know all about them'"*

Etiennette is not just renowned for her knowledge of plants and local produce. She is also a poet. *"I've tried to write about flowers, about animals, but they don't like it. People like poems about parties, about the fêtes, even Castelnou. The birthday ones, the ones about love and friendship sell the most I do poems for 60th, 70th and 80th birthdays and wedding anniversaries too. I wrote one that is from the male's perspective. People buy that one because men don't dare to say these things sometimes."*

The name of Etiennette is often discussed in the region. She is known as the 'witch of Castelnou', a slightly misleading title. If she resembles one, it would be in the Druidic sense - a wise women of plant and herb lore. Or perhaps it is due to her lyrical ability to compose verse and inspire emotion. Most likely it is both these things combined with her captivating personality and creative sense of style. Visit her shop and she will happily tell the tales of Castelnou, the American spy who lived in the castle, the old farming traditions and the best time to pick wildflowers. But, Etiennette does not dispense herbs for medical use. Instead she recommends them for making a jolly good dinner!

Le Boutique de Mami Etiennette is located inside the stone walls of Castelnou, to the left of the entrance arch. All the herbs are picked wild, dried and sold in bundles. Decorated photocopies of her poems can be purchased for 2€ each.





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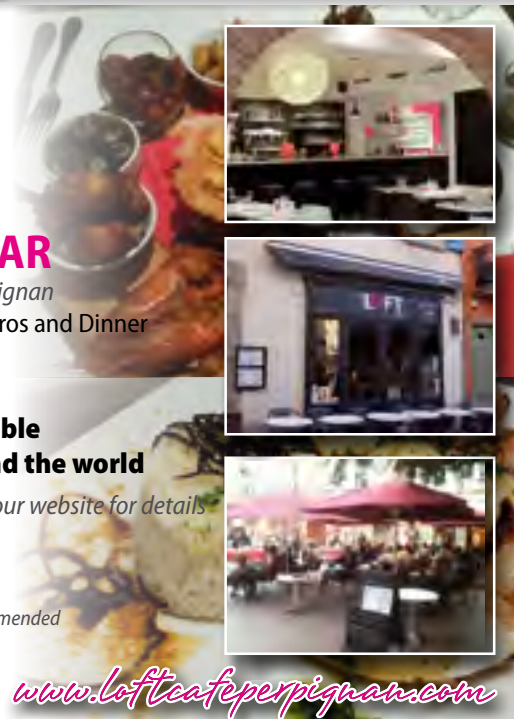


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DIVIDE AND CONKER THE SWEET CHESTNUT

Look out for a 'castanyada' near you, village festival celebrating the sweet chestnut, traditionally held on the 1st November at Toussaint, but a hot treat on any cold day of the year.

Not much beats an autumn walk, a big stick, and a sweet chestnut hunt. Delicious roasted, steamed, pureed, chestnuts are gluten free, low in calories compared to most other nuts, but rich in minerals and vitamins.

The following chestnut recipe is definitely NOT low in calories!!



Chocolate Chestnut Pie

Ingredients

- 200g/7oz Shortcrust Pastry
- 225g/8oz Cooked Chestnuts (steamed or boiled)
- 3 tbsp Cocoa Powder
- 1 Egg, beaten
- 4 Tbsp Caster Sugar
- Milk

- Preheat the oven to 180C, 350F, Gas Mark 4, roll out pastry thinly and line a flan tin.
- Mash chestnuts until smooth in a large mixing bowl.
- Stir in the sugar and cocoa and add enough milk to make a thick cream.
- Add beaten egg to the bowl, mix well and pour into pastry case. Bake for 35 - 40 minutes. Serve hot or cold.



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Le Boulou... BLOODY BATTLES AND BOLD BOY'S BOTTOMS



THE BATTLE

It is 1793. The Spanish Royalist Army holds the Tech valley, Collioure, and Port-Vendres on the coast. It isn't looking good for the French Republican Army, under the command of the 'Comité de salut public' temporary revolutionary government. Responsible for the 'Reign of Terror', (mass executions of 'enemies of the revolution'), they execute French generals for losing battles, and French soldiers for displaying royalist tendencies!

The Fort of Bellegarde on the important Perthus pass has already been surrendered to the Spanish, who are advancing on Perpignan. The tide turns and a French win at the Battle of Peyrestortes forces the Spanish back to the Tech River.

In 1794, on the plateau of Pla del Rey, the Battle of le Boulou takes place. Led by the seasoned Général Dugommier, it is a decisive victory over the Spanish, who, with the way back to Bellegarde blocked at Les Cluses, are forced to flee in disarray via Maureillas las Illas and the Col du Porteil. Spanish dead and wounded are estimated at over 2,000 whilst French losses are reported as 20 killed and 300 wounded.

The Battle of the Pyrenees stemmed mainly from the attempt by the monarchies of western Europe to control revolutionary France, lest the fever of revolution spread across its borders.

The king of Spain promised neutrality, if Louis XVI was spared. Red rag to a bull! Louis was executed in January 1793 and war was declared between



France and Spain, putting the Roussillon on the front line.

Pierre Bayle, 10 years old, soldier of the brand new French Republic, was the first child to officially die at the battle of Le Boulou in 1794. His weapon was his drum. He is remembered for his courage in drumming continuously throughout the night to mask the sounds of cannon movement and military preparation before the battle. Believing that the attack was coming from that direction, the Spanish turned their cannons on the drummers. It was noted that 'le petit Pierre prend contact avec les horreurs du champ de bataille mais est fier d'accompagner les soldats victorieux'. He was hit in the face and died on the spot.

Le Petit Tambour was immortalised by sculptor Gérard Vié. His statue stands proud in Le Boulou centre, homage to the brave little drummer boy.

THE SITE

Today, a fascinating panoramic viewpoint map looks out over the battle ground. It situates the French and Spanish troops below, giving numbers and positions. Close your eyes and you will hear the thunder of the cannons, the beat of the drums, the cries of the wounded and dying, smell the gunpowder. A bloody battle, landmark in the history of the Roussillon, engraved on the Arc de Triomphe in Paris.

Drive out of Le Boulou on the main road towards Perpignan. Look out for a small, rather awkward left turn after the pottery and level crossing, signed to Domaine Els Barbats which you will soon pass on the right. This small, totally organic vineyard and orchard produces some delicious organic wines and muscats, along with almonds, grape juice and local products. Paul and Muriel Poutingon pride themselves on being completely self sufficient, including a roof full of solar panels

Je vais AU Boulou - not 'à le Boulou'.

to provide all their power needs — the Good Life à la française! You will receive a warm welcome in this tiny tasting room. They do not believe in selling out to the large supermarkets, so the wines are only to be found there, or in small wine boutiques. Contact them on **04 68 83 28 51**, or just pop in. If the gates are open, so are they!

After a fortifying taster of organic wine, and a nibble of organic almond, continue along this pretty, winding road for a couple a miles, until a left turn indicates the site of the battle. Follow the signs, and the distant French flag, to arrive at this historic and relatively unsung panoramic site.

A historic circular walk with signs and explanations of the bloody battle, several of which are being renovated after weather damage, starts off from this point, or from Le Boulou itself. Ask for details at the tourist office or look out for the full and detailed walk in the spring edition of P-O Life.

THE TOWN

As well as its strategic importance, lowest natural crossing point over the Pyrenees at Le Perthus, crossroads into Spain or up to the Tech Valley, Le Boulou has long held the dubious title of the biggest bottleneck in the P-O.

Today, thanks to a recently opened by-pass, the mists of car exhaust and impatient, honking drivers



are a dim and distant memory, and Le Boulou town is on the up.

Wander around the great little shopping centre with its new pedestrian zone, a variety of small boutiques, and plenty of pavement cafés to allow some serious people watching, with pretty cobbled streets and ancient monuments tucked away off the main through route. Look out for Le Manège, cheerful and friendly café restaurant on the edge of the new pedestrian zone at 22 rue des Pyrénées. With traditional cuisine, 3 course menus from just 12€, and live music in the evenings, they also boast the best toilets in town and a fabulous, quirky, “Gaudi-esque” artist designed bar.

Visit the Église Sainte-Marie just after the tourist office. Cool shelter on a hot day. The only remaining part of the original 11th century church is the fascinating door surrounded by its frieze, depicting scenes from the childhood of Christ, sculpted by anonymous 12th century sculptor, the Master of Cabestany.

Now you are in the ‘cellera’ — heart of the original small walled settlement. Farmers would build cellars or fortified areas around the church, surrounded by pits, to store and protect their crops from abusive local lords seeking inflated and unjust taxes.

Head past the church, and look up at the cat and flowerpots sitting on a nearby window ledge. Is the cat real? Are the shutters real? This fabulous ‘tromepe l’oeil’ will certainly make you look twice. Is there even a window there?

A little further on, watched over by the statue of

the Little Drummer Boy, a small and shady public garden with pretty fountain makes a pleasant stop before entering the tiny 15th century Chapelle de Saint-Antoine. Named after the patron saint of Le Boulou, originally built on the site of the former cemetery and intended as a crypt for sheet salesman, Guillaume Nègre, it has since served as a schoolroom, flour storage, and army bread oven before being restored as a chapel. Stop a minute to admire the magnificent 15th century, 832kg bell, before entering the ‘Espace des Arts’ art gallery for local artists and sculptors, with a permanent expo of the Battle of Le Boulou. One of the largest local exhibition galleries in the region, a museum is to be added in the future, to better present the rich history of this small town.

Look out for the autumn exhibition inspired by the Maître de Cabestany and artists, photographers and sculptors from Catalonia.

Open Tues to Sat 9h - 12h and 14h - 18h. Free admission <http://espacedesarts.over-blog.fr>

ARSE BOATS

Le Boulou, or El Voló, takes its name from the Catalan for cliff, situated as it is between rivers Tech and Valmanya with sheer ravines overlooking the town.

In the early 18th century, 150 years before the present suspension bridge was built to allow passage into Spain, the Tech River regularly flooded the valley. The wooden bridges rarely won the watery war with the angry river and at times of high rainfall, it was



impossible to cross. A group of young men built up a nice little business by forming a human chain and transporting travellers across the river on their naked backs. Known as ‘Les Barques de Cul’ (arse boats) due to their bottoms sticking out of the water to form a bridge, they provided a sight for sore eyes for the ladies of Le Boulou on a rainy day!

For a delightful stroll, follow the path along the banks of the River Tech, or just sit on one of the wooden benches and enjoy the sound of the water bubbling over the rocks.

On the outskirts of Le Boulou, on the road to Le Perthus, the ‘Thermes’ water therapy centre is an oasis of calm, shady walks, and fizzy water! The medicinal and healing qualities of the waters are recognised far and wide, and did you know that if your doctor recommends a spa treatment which would be beneficial for your health, the cost is reimbursed by the state? Mini cures for weight loss, back problems, help with stopping smoking, are available as well as mornings of pampering for male and female from only 55 euros, including mud bath, water massage... hmmm, nice, although these are most definitely not reimbursed! (Tel: 04 68 87 52 00 or email leboulou@chainethermale.fr)

And once you’ve lost a few pounds sweating it out in the Thermes, why not change currency, pop next door and lose a few euros on the slot machines in the casino? A little naughty but all good fun as long as you don’t go mad. The casino restaurant ‘Le Cédrat’, under enthusiastic young chef, Wesley Durand, (see restaurant review on p16-17) puts on a very reasonably priced three course evening menu at 18€50 and a lunchtime ‘all-you-can-eat’ buffet at 14€ including wine. Of course, you don’t have to risk your hard earned pennies on the roll of a dice - the restaurant is open to all.

Le Boulou is working hard to shake off its past image of gridlocked traffic, a ‘pass through’ on the way to somewhere else, and the panoramic walk around the battle site, followed by a wander around this much improved little town is recommended.





A Remembrance Day Out

By Jane Mann

Gustave Violet was born in Thuir in 1876. His father and uncle had made their fortune by inventing the aperitif Byrrh, but, rather than following in his father's footsteps, young Gustave chose instead to train in Paris to become an artist, sculptor and architect.

By the start of the 20th century he was an active member of both the Paris and the Roussillon art scene. A gentle and cultured man, he was a good friend of both local and visiting artists, musicians,

writers and collectors, familiar with Picasso and the Ceret crowd and becoming sought after both as an architect and sculptor.

His artistic life was brought to an abrupt halt by the outbreak of war in 1914. Within the first couple of months, his greatest friend, the writer, Louis

Codet was killed. Violet's six year old son never forgot seeing his father's uncontrollable tears on being told of Codet's death.

Violet himself was mobilised in 1915 and returned in 1918, totally traumatised by the horrors of war and weighing a scant fifty eight kilos. He was profoundly scarred, both physically and mentally, and, when the towns of Perpignan, Thuir, Prades, Claira, Collioure, Ortaffa, Aléyna, Tautavel, Estagel and St Laurent de Cerdans commissioned him to sculpt their War Memorials, the monuments he created were, in reality, anti-war memorials.

Following the death of Rodin in 1917, Violet's friend, Aristide Maillol of Banyuls sur Mer, was becoming recognised as the greatest living French sculptor of his generation. He too was invited to sculpt War Memorials. In common with Violet he had no wish to glorify war. They both refused to put victorious warriors on the monuments, preferring instead to evoke the fate of the women left at home, waiting for news of husbands, brothers, friends at the front, women whose sons and lovers would never return. A "Lest we Forget" drive around the Pyrenees Orientales can take in many of the monuments they created, plus giving glimpses of a few of their sculptures on more joyful themes. It could also be the moment to visit or revisit some of the villages and enjoy the autumn colours of the wonderfully varied countryside of our Pyrénées Orientales.

We will start in Perpignan, at the Palais des Congrès.





Violet's statue of a tragic couple, grief stricken at the loss of their young soldier son who failed to return from the 14-18 war. The neighbouring graves bear out the extent of the tragedy.

On the opposite side of the expressway to the Cote Vermeille, at Aléyna, is the last War Memorial, Gustave Violet sculpted built in 1948, four years before his death. With the Memorial in Perpignan it is the one of the only two he signed. Thirty years after the war ended "La Douleur", (Grief) depicts a veiled woman still mourning her dead soldier.

His Collioure Monument is adorned by one sad girl, a flower in her hand, standing over the list of those who fell. In Port Vendres it is Maillol's reclining goddess who gazes out over the harbour. It is in his home town of Banyuls sur Mer that Maillol, describing his war memorial, said "...I have added the sad sentiment of war as I feel it. I would have preferred a song of joy but it is the sense of sadness I have had to leave on this Banyuls rock, that I have linked to the sun, this sea and the beautiful countryside surrounding this spot."

It takes the form of a triptych. The centre panel is one of his rare male figures. The striking and tragic naked soldier captures the essence of a man giving his life for his country. Almost like a Christ on the Cross, it exudes a universal sadness emphasised by the female figures on the two side panels. Mothers and wives, the older and younger women, mourning their lost menfolk.

More of his work can be seen in the Musée Maillol, well signposted 4 km outside the town, set in the beautiful valley that leads to Spain via the Col de Banyuls.

Céret is an essential stopping place. Maillol's War Memorial, "La Douleur", and Violet's Monument to the Canal d'Arrosage are both typical of the two sculptors' work. Maillol was unhappy with the plinth, saying it needed to be lowered by twenty centimetres to arrive at the angle he intended for the figure's chin. Unfortunately and to Maillol's fury, it was actually raised by twenty centimeters. It was not altered again.

Further up the Vallespir, Violet is responsible for the St Laurent de Cerdans monument designed to appear to be integrated into the wall of the Chapelle de la Sort. In Thuir a suitably dramatic and moving Violet memorial dominates the gateway to the cemetery of the town of his birth. The bas relief sculptures portray to a heartrending degree both the sorrow of the women and the stoicism blended with despair of the soldiers.

(While in Thuir you might like to visit the Byrrh factory at the same time and admire the Gustave Eiffel station roof and the largest oak barrel in the world...)

The construction of the monument to the Entente Cordiale of 1904 in Vernet les Bains was delayed for a good eight years. The idea was conceived in 1912, the sculptor was to be Gustave Violet and among the patrons were Lord Roberts and General Joffre. The model Violet proposed was approved in 1913 but it was well into August 1920 before the giant granite blocks were hauled up from the valley by oxen and the heroic stone mason could begin working fourteen hour days in blazing summer sun. Local children watched, fascinated as the final iron railings were sealed in place in holes filled with molten lead.

When the newly renovated Rigaud Beaux Arts Museum opens in Perpignan next year the first major exhibition will be of the works of Gustave Violet, work that has, until now, been under-recognised. This November is a good time to start putting this right...



Violet's magnificent War Memorial shows off the full panoply of his artistic skills as an architect, a ceramicist, a sculptor and an artist. For the sculpture he chose hard and rugged stones saying... *"Our race has never been aristocratic, it is the fruit of our soil, of the plain and the rocks biting into the sea. It shows the character of our vignerons, our shepherds and our fishermen..."* From the massive monument, a wander down the Allée Maillol passes a couple of Maillol statues. Not to be missed is his La Méditerranée in the courtyard of the Hotel de Ville or his Venus in the Place de la Loge. Violet is responsible for the fronton of the College Jean Moulin and was the architect for the Maison Escoffier on Place Arago.

Leaving Perpignan, head towards Elne where, high on the old town ramparts is a gentle Maillol war memorial and also a bust of his friend, the local artist, Etienne Terrus. Set into the ramparts of the Cami de la Réal, where the Wednesday market is held, is a large terracotta bas relief by Violet depicting many of the scenes of everyday agricultural Catalan life he so enjoyed sculpting.

A side trip to the cemetery of Ortaffa reveals



Time out at the Pyramids of Perpignan BY SIMON NEWMAN

If you are visiting Visa pour l'Image this year in Perpignan, you might just want to take time out from the bustle for ten minutes to recharge for the next foray.

Just a couple of hundred metres from the Palais de Justice lies Notre-Dame des Anges, the 13th century Franciscan convent built by those seemingly ever-busy bees, the Majorcan Kings. It spent some time as a military hospital too and of its type the site is interesting enough but what the tourist guide makes little mention of is something that I think gives it its greatest appeal – its serene courtyard.

You don't have to pay to enter this part, just walk through the gates and immediately to your right is the free exhibition area where you're confronted with, well, you could say it's just a load

of old masonry in transparent containers. But for me what makes it work is the sharp contrast in form and texture between the glass pyramids and the crumbling stonework housed within. In fact there's more than a touch of the Louvre museum concourse in Paris about this juxtaposition of the classic and the contemporary.

Soak up the atmosphere, read the storyboards and enjoy the frescos before moving across to the other side of the courtyard where you'll find a shaded rest area amongst lemon trees and what must surely be one of the oldest olive trees in France.

And so tactile you just want to run your hands over its deeply fissured bark knowing that this living, breathing entity could easily have given witness to Napoleon. There are some benches

overlooking this beautiful tree but before you take the weight off your feet there's a little treat on offer nearby that just might complete the moment.

Over the road from the convent (about 50 metres down) is what looks like a pretty ordinary, and if I'm honest not especially appealing, sandwich/pizza/café called Le Soleil de Tunis. Ignore the fast-food ambience and feast your eyes on the seductively scrummy baklava on display. The north African variant of this traditional Greek/Turkish delicacy variously combines pistachios, dates, orange and lemon zest, cinnamon, sesame seeds and almonds all wrapped in melt-in-your-mouth-wafer-thin filo pastry steeped in honey and rose-water. The surroundings are not Michelin three star that's for sure, but I can personally vouch for the fact that these delights are to die for, not to die from.

Yield to your deepest desires and buy at least a couple of slices (one date and one pistachio variety would be my serving suggestion) grabbing a bottle of water and a couple of paper napkins while you're about it - essential for dealing with the aftermath of the yummiest but stickiest things in creation.

Now go back to enjoy your forbidden fruit on one of the benches in the pyramid and olive-tree tranquillity that is the courtyard of Notre-Dame des Anges. And should you feel any twang of guilt at your small indulgence, consider that in less enlightened times those long-suffering, hair-shirted Franciscans had to exist on a diet of gruel and twigs so really all you're doing is realigning the karma of



the place. Having carried out this self-sacrificing task you can return to your city-centre agenda with a spring in your step and your head held high.

One thing to note. This being a French tourist attraction it is of course closed lunchtime but to be fair, only from 12.30 to 13.15 - which in France barely qualifies as a ciggie break.

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



Test your French

1 - R POUR RADAR!

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

Coup de vent fort	1	a	ranger
Exprimer son mécontentement	2	b	raie
Qui ne pardonne pas facilement	3	c	rayure
Oiseau au bec crochu	4	d	rarement
Contraire de souple	5	e	rafale
Trace laissée par un objet pointu	6	f	râteau
Outil à dents pour ramasser les feuilles	7	g	rapace
Mettre à sa place	8	h	râler
Presque jamais	9	I	rancunier
Poisson plat	10	J	raide

Blague Bébête

Deux icebergs discutent

Alors j'ai entendu dire que ta femme à accouché?

Oui, on a eu un beau petit glaçon!

(j'ai entendu dire - I hear..

accoucher - to give birth glaçon - ice cube)"

Tongue twister (Virelangue)

(Répétez trois fois)

Trois tortues trottaient
tristement sur trois
toits étroits!

2 - PROVERBS

Can you match up these French proverbs with their English equivalents?

1	Il faut casser le noyau pour avoir l'amande	a	Don't count your chickens before they hatch.
2	Qui dort dîne	b	Never say never.
3	Il ne faut pas vendre la peau de l'ours avant de l'avoir tué	c	Experience always wins the day.
4	On n'apprend pas à un vieux singe à faire des grimaces	d	No pain, no gain
5	L'habit ne fait pas le moine	e	You can't teach an old dog new tricks.
6	Il ne faut jamais dire "Fontaine, je ne boirai pas de ton eau"	f	Every cloud has a silver lining
7	Un bouillon de chou fait perdre au médecin cinq sous	g	An apple a day keeps the doctor away
8	Impossible n'est pas français.	h	There is no such word as 'can't.'
9		I	He who sleeps forgets his hunger.
10	Après la pluie, le beau temps	j	Don't judge a book by its cover.

3 - Call me naughty if you wish, but I think everyone should know a little bit of 'argot' (slang)

Match up these slang verbs with their English meanings

chopper	1	a	to break, damage
chialer	2	b	to understand
flipper	3	c	to sleep
piger	4	d	to stink
gonfler	5	e	to catch
papoter	6	f	to go mad
vadrouiller	7	g	to chat
se planter!	8	h	to cry
roupiller	9	I	to stare
mater	10	j	to make a mistake
bousiller	11	k	to roam about
schlinguer	12	l	to annoy

Some French phrases to recognise but NEVER to use to your neighbours granny!

Tu as grossi

You've put on weight

Tu pues de la gueule

Your breath stinks

Arrete de me cracher dessus quand tu parles!

Stop spitting on me while you're talking

Est-ce que tu as bu?

Have you been drinking?

Fais-le toi-même

Do it yourself.

Parle à mon cul, ma tête est malade
It's like talking to a wall

Tu devrais poursuivre ton tailleur en justice

You should sue your tailor

Définition bête

Porte-clefs...

Invention très pratique qui permet de perdre toutes ses clefs d'un seul coup au lieu de les perdre une par une.

(Porte-clefs - key ring qui permet - which allows un seul coup - in one go au lieu de - instead of)

Cheap at half the price?

One of the world's first real 'department stores' was Le Bon Marché in Paris, designed by Gustav Eiffel. Of course, as an adjective, bon marché means cheap - doesn't sound quite so chic when you think about it does it? Here are a few more useful phrases when looking for a bargain

un bon rapport qualité-prix - good value

un meilleur rapport qualité-prix - better value

une bonne affaire - good deal

une mauvaise affaire - bad deal

un prix avantageux - bargain price

pas cher - inexpensive

Blague nulle

Une lettre e parle avec une lettre é.
Tu peux répéter, je ne comprends rien avec ton accent!



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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

Que dit Dracula après avoir mordu une jolie femme?
Merci, beau cou



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5 EXPRESSIONS WITH 'COUP'

A confusing little word which literally means 'punch' or 'blow' but is used in many idiomatic expressions.

Can you match up the phrases below?

un coup de couteau	1	a	a dirty trick
un coup de pied	2	b	a helping hand
un coup de barre	3	c	sudden tiredness
un coup de fil	4	d	kick
un coup en vache	5	e	head butt
un coup de feu	6	f	gust (of wind)
un coup de pinceau	7	g	glance
un coup de tête	8	h	stab (wound)
un coup de vent	9	i	sun burn
un coup d'oeil	10	j	phone call
un coup de soleil	11	k	gun shot
un coup de main	12	l	brush stroke



Language Tip

Manquer - To miss, to lack

Tu vas manquer le train. You're going to miss the train.

Il manqué de patience. He lacks patience.

Mon café manque de lait. My coffee is lacking (needs) milk.

.....and a little more confusing

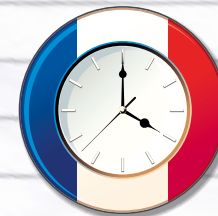
Mon père me manque - I miss my Dad (My Dad is lacking/missing for me)

Vous nous manquez - we miss you (you are lacking/missing for us).

Note how the person or thing being missed is the subject of the sentence, (so tends to come first) whereas in English, the person missed is the object.

Have a go at these (and don't worry - it IS a weird construction for English speakers to grasp) Don't forget to start off with the person or thing being missed

- 1 I miss my dog
- 2 We miss our friend
- 3 I miss you



Useful expression

Passer à l'heure d'hiver
Put your clocks back

Crying in the rain

Attention

Pleurer - to cry

Pleuvoir - to rain

Il pleut - it's raining

Il pleure - he's crying

Test your french - answers

- 1 - 1e 2h 3! 4g 5j 6c 7f 8a 9d 10b
- 2 - 1d 2! 3a 4e 5j 6b 7g 8h 9 10f
- 3 - 1e 2h 3f 4b 5l 6g 7k 8j 9c 10i 11a 12da
- 4 - 1e 2f 3d 4a 5g 6i 7c 8h 9j 10b
- 5 - 1h 2d 3c 4j 5a 6k 7l 8e 9f 10g 11! 12b
- 1 Mon chien me manque 2 Notre ami nous
- manque 3 Tu me manques
- 4 - 1e 2f 3d 4a 5g 6i 7c 8h 9j 10b

Améliorez votre Anglais

1 - Encore un peu d'argot... Trouvez la bonne traduction

Have a bash	1	a	C'est de qualité douteuse
He's a bit of an anorak	2	b	J'étais très impressionné
It's a bit iffy	3	c	Je vais vomir
He's skiving	4	d	Calme-toi
I was blown away	5	e	Essayez!
Chill out!	6	f	On va boire un coup vite fait?
You crack me up!	7	g	C'est un type ennuyeux, pas cool
That's wicked	8	h	C'est génial
I'm going to throw up	9	i	Tu me fais rire
Time for a swift one?	10	j	Il évite le travail

Useful expression
Hold your horses
Wait!



Ouch! That English humour!

I woke up last night to find the ghost of Gloria Gaynor standing at the foot of my bed. **At first I was afraid...then I was petrified**

Daft joke
What do snakes do after they have a fight?
Hiss and make up.

Another daft joke
What's red and flies and wobbles at the same time?
A jelly copter!
(wobbles - tremble)

2 - 'Time is money!' - Ces expressions anglaises concernent 'time and money'. Pouvez-vous trouver leur équivalent en Français?

Twenty-four seven	1	a	Avec peu de moyens
Penny-pinching	2	b	Radin
Keep the wolf from the door	3	c	Quand les poules auront des dents
Never in a month of Sundays	4	d	Barbe d'un jour
Chicken feed/ peanuts	5	e	Gagner beaucoup d'argent en peu de temps
Make a killing	6	f	Gagner assez pour manger et vivre.
For ages	7	g	Tout le temps
Loan shark	8	h	Usurier
Five o'clock shadow	9	i	Somme d'argent dérisoire
On a shoestring	10	j	Depuis très longtemps

Good Advice
Don't waste money on expensive iPods. Just think of your favourite song and hum it.
waste
gaspiller
hum
fredonner



Body Language
Vous ne savez jamais quand vous aurez besoin de ce vocabulaire!

To burp - roter
Pardon me, I burped
To dribble - baver
Careful, you're dribbling again!
To sneeze - éternuer
I'm going to sneeze...
Ah, ah ah, atchooo. Bless you!

To have hiccups - avoir les hoquets (okay)
Oh no, I've got hiccups again!

To spit - cracher
Keep your distance - he spits when he talks!

Useful word
And Bob's your uncle!
Et voilà! (le tour est joué)

3 - Et pendant qu'on parle 'body language', trouvez les équivalents de ces expressions avec les parties du corps

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| 1 Dominé - under the --- | 4 Malheureux - down in the --- |
| 2 Discuter - to have a --- was | 5 Se taire - bite your --- |
| 3 Changer d'avis - to have a change of --- | 6 Bonne chance - Break a ---! |
| a leg b chin c heart d mouth e tongue f thumb | |

4 - R - is for Rap

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

rainbow	1	a	decay or go bad
robin	2	b	stop working
rash	3	c	not cooked
raspberry	4	d	ready to eat
retire	5	e	arc of colours
ripe	6	f	pay to use a room, house etc
rubbish	7	g	red spots on skin.
rent	8	h	fat little bird
rot	9	i	soft, sweet, red berry
raw	10	j	waste material

Virelangue

(Répétez trois fois)

Long legged
ladies love long
legged lads!

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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.

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10:00	13:20
13:00	16:20
16:00	20:20
22:30	01:30

Journey time 80 mins

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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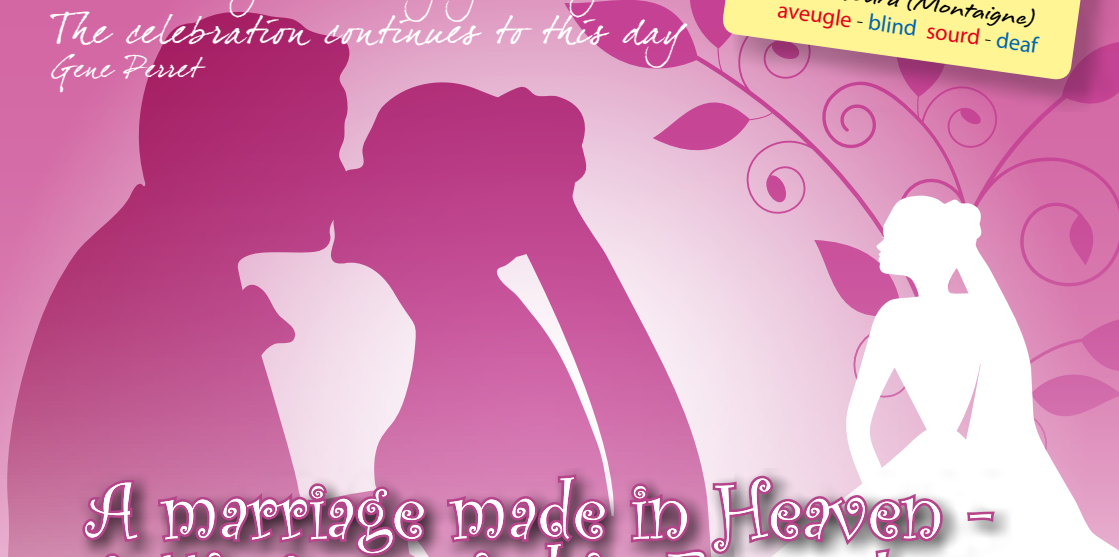
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Our wedding was many years ago.
The celebration continues to this day
Gene Perret

Un bon mariage serait celui
d'une femme aveugle et d'un
homme sourd (Montaigne)
aveugle - blind sourd - deaf



A marriage made in Heaven - getting married in France!

Every wedding celebrates a love story, but getting married in the south of France has to rate up there at the top of the list of dream wedding destinations, the icing on the gâteau - and it's not so difficult to do, once you know the options.

A marriage performed under French law is recognised in the UK so this gives you the choice of having the whole wedding, both legal ceremony and reception, in France. The civil ceremony is the only legally binding part of a marriage, although many follow it with a religious wedding.

Having your gâteau and eating it!

However, because of France's residency requirements, (see below), many non residents choose to have the legal ceremony in their own country, followed by a fantastic Mediterranean wedding reception with blessing, a celebration of a life full of sunshine ahead.

This also means that those unable to travel will not miss out on the wedding itself.

Value for money

And of course, as we know, man (and woman) does not live on love alone and much as we would love to splurge freely, price is a VERY important factor. There is less hype in the French wedding industry compared to Britain. Caterers, cake makers, car hire and photographers don't add on that extra percentage for weddings, in the knowledge that we will pay whatever it takes for that perfect day, so an average reception in France is far cheaper.

Paperwork

If you do choose the whole marriage in France, bear in mind that French paperwork should never be underestimated!

Documents needed for the civil ceremony (only originals or certified copies accepted)

- ✂ **Passport**
- ✂ **Full birth certificate** (issued within three months of your marriage date.)
- ✂ **Certificat de Celibat.** (downloadable at www.fco.gov.uk) The Certificate of Celibacy states that

you are not already married, and can be obtained from the consulate.

- ✂ **Certificat de Coutume.** (downloadable at www.fco.gov.uk) This is a statement from a solicitor to certify that you are both free to marry and your marriage will be recognised in your country of residence.
- ✂ **Medical certificate.** A medical examination including blood test must be carried out by a French or Embassy approved doctor.
- ✂ **Justificatifs de Domicile** Some kind of proof, such as a utility bill, that one of you has been resident in France for at least 40 days.
- ✂ **Certificat du Notaire** - This is only if you wish for a prenuptial agreement.

Banns must be published at the mairie where the marriage will take place. The wheels of French bureaucracy are not always speedy so it is essential that you contact the mairie well in advance to check out their documentary requirements (not all mairies will ask for ALL the above documents).

So...great value for money, fine cuisine, sunshine, good quality wine...and a great atmosphere. (After all, your guests are on holiday too!) No contest really. Organising a wedding abroad can be somewhat challenging of course, so hiring someone over here to take care of all the details and do all the hard work, will leave you free to enjoy the day. And it is actually much cheaper than you would expect.

USEFUL VOCAB

Stag night - enterrement de vie de jeune garçon
hen night - enterrement de vie de jeune fille
Toast - lever son verre/trinquer

fiançailles - engagement
guest - invité/e
honeymoon - lune de miel
several-tier cake - pièce montée
un mariage civil a civil wedding
bride - la mariée
groom - le marié
newly-wed - jeune marié/e
witness - le témoin
best man - le garçon d'honneur
bridesmaid - la demoiselle d'honneur

wedding.....
...day - jour des noces;
...dress - robe de mariée
...night - nuit de noces
...reception - repas de mariage
...ring - alliance
...vows - vœux

THE WEDDING PLANNER – COUP DE COEUR

Wedding planner Jennifer Lopez, in the film of the same name, said "Are you aware that Fran has chosen teal for her bridesmaids? Teal, the colour of gangrene. ... matrimonial suicide"

With heavy workloads and high stress levels, many couples have neither the time nor energy to mastermind that Perfect Day, a début celebration of the rest of their lives together. OK, it's true. When it comes to love, you can never really plan what's going to happen in the future, but a good wedding planner can certainly make sure that you get the best possible start.

A hopeless, yet amazingly calm level-headed

romantic, Laurence Segura was saddened to see so many friends stressing and panicking about the 'big day' so in 2005, 'Coup de Coeur', the region's first professional wedding planning company was born. From her 'wedding planning HQ' in Céret, Laurence has delivered hundreds of wildly differing Dream Weddings.



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Miss-used, or just miss-understood?

I have often been called a proper little Madame, and that was well before I became a real one!

In fact, until the French Revolution, Madame, (my Lady, equivalent to Monsieur, my Lord) was mainly used to address the bourgeoisie, whilst Mademoiselle, (my Damsel) was the form of address used for both younger and older 'common' ladies. Young, unmarried men were addressed as 'damoiseau', which translates roughly as squire, but this disappeared from common usage over a century ago.

In 1690, a dictionary defined Mademoiselle as a 'name given to all girls who are not married, provided they are not the dregs of the people, or daughters of Artisans'. Perish the thought that we might feel obliged to even converse with the dregs of the people - or worse, artisans!!

Anyway, as we know, the Revolution wasn't the best time to be boasting

about one's noble origins, and it was at this defining point in French history, that Madame came simply to refer to a married lady and Mademoiselle an unmarried lady.

At the beginning of the year, French Prime Minister François Fillon directed Prefectures to remove discriminatory and inflammatory vocabulary such as 'nom de jeune fille' (maiden name) or nom d'épouse (married name) from official documents and the title Mademoiselle now hangs in the balance. Men are never asked to state their marital status. Why should women?

Maiden name boxes are now deemed politically incorrect and an 'intrusion into women's private life'. For economy's sake of course, old forms will continue to be used until supplies run out.

And for linguists amongst you, and those struggling to make sense of the French language on a daily basis, you might be interested to know that, even as we speak, the militants of the linguistic and feminist struggle are busy sending out petitions proposing a total neutering of the

language by abolishing masculine and feminine agreements!

There can be no doubt that the french language is a little 'male' heavy. In fact, the masculine form of adjectives grammatically trumps all. If one fat man and 5,000 buxom wenches were stranded on a dessert island, they would still be described collectively as 'gros', the masculine adjective, and not 'grosses' in the feminine.

Not surprising really when you learn that grammaticians who helped set the gender rules for modern french in the 17th century, said, "The male is the most noble, he must prevail whenever masculine and feminine appear in the same sentence". Yeah, right!

Well, personally I like having doors opened for me, I enjoy being treated like a lady, and I'm proud of my hard earned 'Little Madame' status. But that's just me!

We asked some french friends how important it was to be addressed by the correct term

Chloé (Céret)

Hé bien, cela me fait très plaisir que les gens m'appellent mademoiselle, cela me rajeunit, c'est comme s'ils n'avaient pas vu mes rides...



Je ne trouve pas sexiste qu'une femme prenne le nom de son mari; c'est un signe d'Amour. Je trouve ridicule qu'une femme veuille absolument garder son nom de jeune fille. Quelle importance....?

Martina (Perpignan)

Par principe, je pense que l'on ne devrait pas faire de distinction de statut. Ce n'est pas fait pour les hommes, pourquoi le faire pour les femmes?



Pour moi, le titre de Mademoiselle ou Madame est associé à l'âge. Dans les mœurs, dire madame à une jeune femme de 18 ou 20 ans me semble déplacé.

Les "génies de la grammaire" feraient bien de se mettre à jour, les choses ont bien changé depuis le 17ème siècle!

Useful vocabulary

cela me fait plaisir que - I like it that....
 cela me rajeunit - makes me feel younger
 rides - wrinkles
 prenne (subjunctive of prendre) - takes
 veuille - (subjunctive of vouloir) - wants to
 statut - status
 mœurs - customs, way of life
 déplacé - inappropriate
 génie - genius
 mettre à jour - get up to date
 siècle - century

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THE PAT LINE

by PR

In a previous edition of **P-O Life**, we spotlighted the Comet line and Belgian heroine, Andr e de Jongh, who helped around 400 allied escapers and evaders to cross the northern Pyrenees into Spain. In fact, there was a busier and even more successful escape route here in the P-O, the Pat Line, named after the man who set up this reliable escape route for as many as 600 evaders. Amongst these was Airey Neave, former Conservative MP, and escapee from Colditz, who stayed in a safe house in Port Vendres.

Pat O'Leary, real name, Albert Guerisse, was a Belgian medical officer in the Cavalry regiment, who escaped to Britain via Dunkirk. Recruited as a Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, he worked dangerous missions escorting agents onto french soil in small vessels, dodging the Vichy defences and patrols..

In April 1941, en route to recruit agents for S.O.E. (Special Operations Executive) in Collioure, his boat sank and he was captured when he swam ashore. Claiming he was Canadian to his Vichy captors, in order to protect his family in Belgium, he took on the name of former military colleague, Pat O'Leary.

Interned in St Hippolyte Fort near Nimes, he met fellow S.O.E. man, Ian Garrow, who introduced him on his release to Nancy Wake, British agent and leading figure in the maquis. He joined them in helping escapers to safety.

When Garrow was captured in October 1941, O'Leary, as he was now known, took over the escape line and organized it into an effective route.



Reverend Donald Caskie fled his Scottish church in Paris when his loudly expressed anti nazi views put him on the enemy radar. He took over the Seaman's Mission at Number 46 Rue de Forbin, Marseilles, which soon became the biggest 'safe house' in France - and probably the worst kept secret.

Escapers were generally sent down a system of 'safe houses' in Narbonne, then Perpignan, staying close to the border in small villages such as Port Vendres, to await their guides, who were mainly Spanish. Some were taken across the border via small tracks like the Col de Banyuls, others were picked up by ships and submarines waiting off the beach at Canet. Most, however, crossed the Pyrenees and were taken to Figueres where Spanish rail workers would help them get to Barcelona and

the safety of the British Consulate

In January 1943, the line was infiltrated by French double agent, Roger Le Neveu, and O'Leary was arrested by Gestapo.

Even under torture, he gave nothing away.

He was sentenced to death in Dachau but fortunately the SS guards surrendered to the allies before the sentence was carried out.

The Pat line continued for a while, led by Marie Dissard, but the Germans were becoming more efficient at breaking and infiltrating the lines, with the help of alleged British traitors such as Harold "Paul" Cole. Believed to have betrayed up to 150 men including Garrow and Guerisse, he became wanted as the Worst Traitor of the War.

ALBERT GUERISSE was awarded the George Cross, rejoined the Belgian army and served in Korea before retiring as a Major General. He died in Belgium 26 March 1989 aged 77.

IAN GARROW died in Scotland in 1976 after a distinguished war career with S.O.E. and MI9.

DONALD CASKIE was sentenced to death by firing squad but after speaking with a German pastor, had his sentence commuted. He spent the rest of the war as a POW. He returned to Scotland in 1951 and was awarded the OBE as well as honours from the French government. He died in Greenock in 1983.

Traitor **HAROLD COLE** was hunted down, shot, and buried in an unmarked grave in Paris.



"Il suffit de chanter un chant de paix avec grimace et gesticulation pour qu'il devienne un chant de guerre"

Jean Giraudoux



Bugarach – not the end of the world.

According to an ancient Mayan calendar, the world will come to an end towards the end of 2012. Unless you live in Bugarach!

The village in the Aude lies at the foot of Pic de Bugarach, a 1,230 metres mountain peak and the highest summit in the Corbières mountains. The Pic, also known as the “upside down mountain” has top layers which are millions of years older than the lower strata, as if someone tossed the mountain in the air, flipped it around, and dropped it back.

On 21st December 2012 the date predicted for the Apocalypse, there is already no room at the inn. Gîtes, chambres d’hôtes, and campsites, have been swamped with advance bookings, and the mayor is turning down applications from hot dog and pizza vans hoping to make a few last quid out of the gullible.

Known by locals as ‘les zozotériques’, many of these people believe that the village will be a refuge from the End of the World, or a stage for some earth

shattering event programmed to take place on that date.

House prices have shot up of course. A house estimated at 260 000 € is at present for sale at 474 000 €.

One hopeful has applied to the mayor to set up a therapy centre for ‘lavement intérieur’ a chance to cleanse the soul before departing this mortal coil, very similar to a colonoscopy, but much more expensive!

This limestone region has many caves and underground caverns, an underground network largely unexplored, an underground river flowing as far west as Salses. Some believe that within these ‘grottes’, aliens are awaiting the 21 December 2012, to destroy the earth and whisk away a select few humans, the chosen few, who will be spared the Apocalypse.

Of course, myth and magic is a bit of a speciality in this Aude valley, linked as it is with Rennes-le-Château and Rennes-les-Bains, mystically renowned and rife



with legend of the knights Templar, Cathars, Jerusalem, the tomb of Jesus and Marie-Madeleine, the Holy Grail... What better region for a miracle?

In 2011, there were over 20,000 visitors to this tiny village of 200 inhabitants. With its sad past of cults committing mass suicide, France’s sect watchdog, Miviludes, is keeping an eye on the area.

But don’t despair! In December 2011, Leonzo Barreno, trained by Mayan elders

to read their ancient calendars, explained that the doom and gloom predictions and misinterpretations of the Mayan calendar are wrong. According to Leonzo, December 21st, 2012 simply marks the end of the 5,125-year-long Mayan Long Count calendar, at which point a new calendar cycle will begin.

He adds, “The beginning of the cycle is something to celebrate, not fear.”

Phew. What a relief.



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Things you might need to know...

PERPIGNAN - BARCELONA IN 50 MINUTES? TOO GOOD TO BE VRAI?



If you were hoping to pop into Barcelona for tapas, then home for Coronation Street this year, you might be disappointed.

Whilst the Spanish authorities still hope the first train on the new TGV Perpignan - Barcelona line will run at the end of 2012, they are now admitting that a 'légère variation de calendrier' might be on the cards!

One man's trash....

.... is another man's treasure. If you happen to notice old fridges, bike frames or bathtubs lying around on a certain day every month, it's "les monstres" time.

Check with your local town hall for this day when you can put outside items next to your bin for collection. It is not uncommon to see local kids (sometimes accompanied by a Mum or Dad) wandering round on 'monster' night, to check out the neighbours' rubbish.



Looking for a ride?

www.covoiturage.fr is a carpool site which allows you to search for drivers travelling all over France and hitch a ride, or offer one. Simply type in your departure date, town and destination, to see a list of people offering lifts, or register your own offer. You can stipulate how much contribution you expect for petrol, how many places you have available, whether dogs are allowed, and even whether you will be expected to chat or just sit in silence!

Drawing blood

If you have your blood pressure taken in France, and have difficulty interpreting it, just add a zero to each, and hey presto, you have the UK measures. For example, if le medecin says you are 14/8, that is 140/80 in UK money!

In case of motorway break down....

If you breakdown on the motorway, do not contact your insurance breakdown service as only motorway approved breakdown vehicles are allowed on the motorways. Contact the emergency services from an orange emergency phone, and they will contact an approved breakdown service, who will explain the procedure to follow with your insurance company.



DANGER: HUNTERS AT LARGE

For your security, do check with the local town hall or ACCA (hunting association) where the designated boar hunting areas are during the hunting season. Permitted from mid-August to the end of January, it can be dangerous and frightening to find yourself in the vicinity of an organised boar hunt (une battue). Warning signs should be put up at all entrances to woodland but this law is not always enforced as strictly as it should be.

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New 'radars-tronçons'

Watch out for a new breed of radar, which monitors your average speed between two specific points over several kilometres. These new 'radars-tronçons' will be indicated by a flashing speed reminder and a sign with 'contrôle radar fréquent' approximately 1 or 2 kilometres before the first radar tronçon.

For the time being, they will mainly be installed in accident hot spots where it is difficult to install fixed or mobile radars, but many more are expected in the future.

New European driving license

A European driving license, with an electronic chip, is on the cards for 2013, to enable European police forces to access data from all European drivers.

New licenses will have a photo, to be updated every 15 years, and will contain relevant personal details and info such as points. It will also provide a long discussed opportunity for France to bring in medical examinations to check out fitness to drive for elderly drivers. At present, there is no age limit.

If you have swapped your British driving license for a French one, you will be expected to change to the new digital style next year.

European sharing of driving licence registration information

From 2013, thanks (?) to EUCARIS (EUropean CAR and driving license Information System), all European countries will be able to share their car and driving licence registration information. Whether you are driving an English car in France or a French car in Spain, this multilingual programme will catch up with you for using phone while driving, speeding, going through red light, parking violations.....

Grand Frère is watching you

Perpignan street cameras, originally set up to fight crime and identify trouble makers, will now also be used to hand out parking fines for parking on zebra crossings, double parking, use of bus lanes etc identified on central screens.

Warning signs have been set up at the end of the road with 'verbalisation par vidéosurveillance'. Offenders will be fined 'at the discretion' of the police officer on the other side of the camera, who will decide whether to send the pictures to the processing centre in Rennes. Offenders will receive a ticket in the post within 4-5 days.



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Tuesday 23rd September
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ALBÈRES Book stall and small
display of paintings by local
artist, Colin Dunster

Thursday 26th September
12.30pm at LIZZIE'S KITCHEN,
ILLE SUR TÊT
Lizzie is offering us a light lunch
with glass of wine for just €12

For further details or to find out how you can help "Cancer Support France – Sud de France" or how we can support you and those close to you - contact:

Penny on 04 68 38 81 28 pennycsf66@gmail.com

www.cancersupportfrance.org

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Cancer support France	04 68 69 01 37
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You can use the The European emergency number 112 in any EU country from any telephone. You do not need a card or money to ring this number from a pay phone. 112 may also be used from a mobile to connect you with all emergency services.

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organises events, exhibitions, salons, concerts and conferences throughout the year.

Check out their website on

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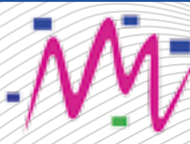
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