

# P-O Life

Le magazine anglais des Pyrénées Orientales

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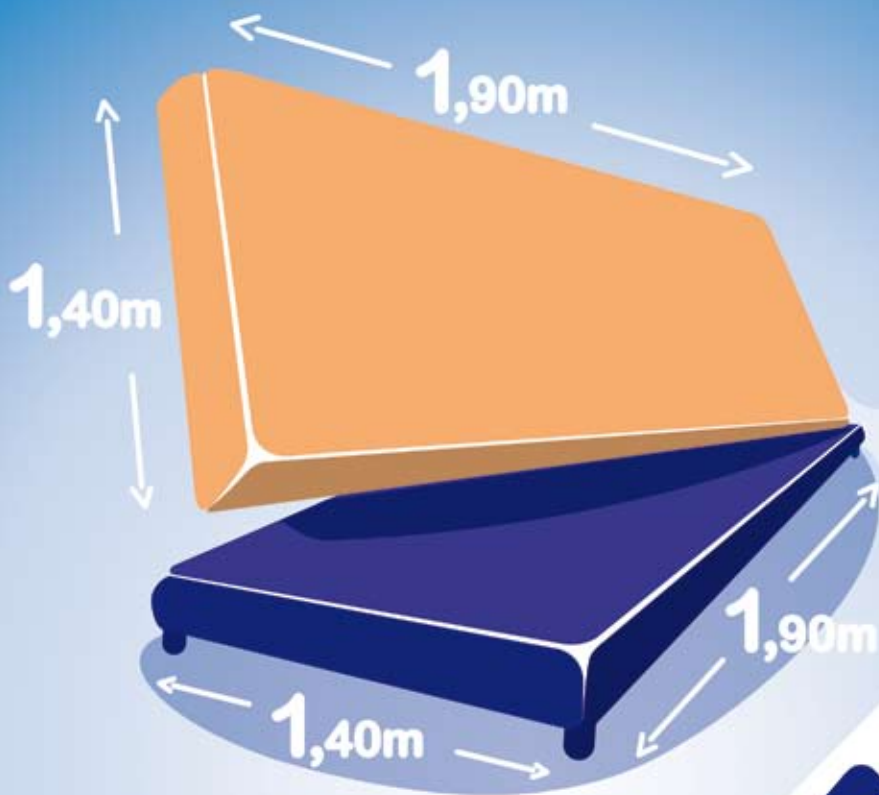
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Bonjour !



I was recently asked why I have the same photo in my editorial every month ? Well, SHE doesn't put on any weight, and can still get into those red trousers ! I can't ! There is so much going on in the Pyrénées-Orientales once the summer season starts : the obligatory "apéro" on a balmy evening accompanied by "amuses gueules" (nibbles), wine tastings, beer festivals, absolute "must" outdoor meals with street dancing and live music, sardanes and castellers, correfocs, gégants...

Dieting is really quite out of the question, so my thinner, "other self" stays on the first page watching the calories whilst I check out the food and drink and find out a little bit more about these long standing Catalan traditions ! (See page 7 to 11)

Like me, P-O Life has expanded for summer but unlike me, will be restored to its former glory in September. In the meantime, have a great summer – go easy on the sun and heavy on the sun cream.

A la prochaine - Kate

## SOMETHING TO SAY ...

Contact us on [info@anglophone-direct.com](mailto:info@anglophone-direct.com)

*Château Valmy - On a recent trip to the PO, we decided to visit Château Valmy and combine it with a walk up to the chapelle St Laurent which is above Valmy - a great walk and fantastic views down onto Argelès and the surrounding area. Unfortunately the chapelle was closed (opens on certain days). Walk time just over 3 hours.*

*After lunch we followed the trail around the grounds. To say we were disappointed would be putting it mildly There seemed*

*to be empty pens, a large pool of brown water, run down gardens, the follies looked like they had not been attended to in years and a man made waterfall would have looked better if they had concealed the many pipes lying around everywhere.*

*I do feel it lets the area down very badly; all it needs is a little care and attention and the place would look lovely. The Château lit up at night promises so much, but delivers so little. - Sav*

# Edito ...

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## Welcome to the Pyrénées-Orientales!

Move around, go out...  
Consult the events calendar on:

[www.cdt-66.com](http://www.cdt-66.com)

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## CAMI to MONTBOLO de la RODELLA

Vallespir offers a wide choice of historical trails. This one, according to legend, is related to the Saints Abdon & Sennen whose relics were brought from Rome on the back of a donkey. It is the final part of this legendary trip that makes up this month's walk. To celebrate the two Patron Saints of Arles sur Tech, every 30<sup>th</sup> of July, a procession carries a rounded shaped candle, "la Rodella", between Montbolo and

Arles. In addition to its mystic atmosphere, this trail also provides a combination of refreshing exercise and great sightseeing.

**Acces :** Drive to Amélie les Bains and cross the residential area "la Petite Provence" on the left bank of the river Tech. Park near the gymnasium and the tennis courts.

### Walk :

- ✓ Take the direction "Ribamala". After the hotel "Castel Emeraude", the track turns into a path close to the river. An oratory dedicated to the Saints Abdon & Sennen is on your way.
- ✓ After 15 mn, when reaching the first houses of a *lotissement* (housing estate), walk up the concrete steps on your right. Notice the yellow signpost "Montbolo", starting point for a steep footpath. Take your breath and go up ! You will follow painted yellow signs all the way. Your effort is rewarded by extensive views over Vallespir, from west to east : Pic de Tres Vents and the village of Corsavy, Arles sur Tech at your feet, towers of Cabrens in the far distance, the massive silhouette of Pilo de Belmatx in front, Roussillon and the coastline on the left.
- ✓ After more or less 1 hour, you reach a crossroads. Don't take the one on the right (except if you suddenly remember an important meeting !!), it goes down to Amélie. A wooden signpost invites you to continue along a gentle shady path to Montbolo (1h45).

Pour faire bon ménage, il faut que  
l'homme soit sourd et la femme aveugle.  
In a perfect couple, the man must  
be deaf and the woman blind

The village offers a place for a picnic close to the church, curiously flanked with two towers (la Rodella is kept inside). An alternative choice is the terrace of the bar-restaurant "Point d'Art" (that's if you don't mind plain traditional dishes).

- ✓ Return to Amélie : Go down the path starting at the back of the restaurant. It crosses the tarred road several times. 10 mn later, a short detour to the big Holy Cross offers breathtaking views over the town. Back to the road, follow it for a few minutes and turn down the path (formerly used as "Chemin de Croix" by penitents). The signposts lead you back to "la Petite Provence", close to the parking place (total time : 2h45).

In the next issue, don't miss our special trail for aficionados of strenuous walking.

Programmes of Christian's scheduled walks in the "What's on" section of Anglophile website.

Christian Piquemal invites you to join "Le Club" and benefit from special discounts on the guided walks scheduled monthly.

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Those lazy, hazy, hot days of summer are here. Do remember that a carelessly discarded cigarette or a stray ember from a barbeque can so easily set off a fire that can destroy lives and livelihoods.

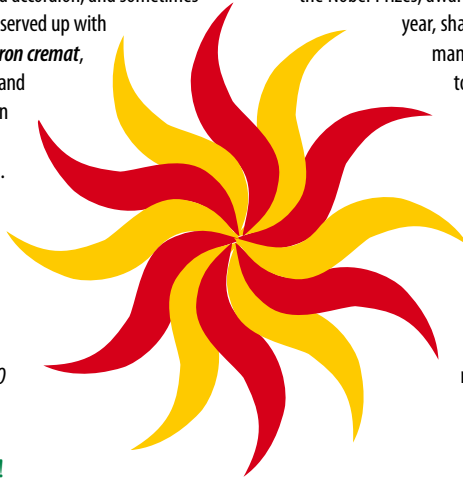


## WITCH BEACH?

According to a Catalan tradition, a person who wants to become a **witch** (bruixa) should go to the beach, take off all her clothes, roll over in the sand seven times, stand up, draw three circles, and roll around again, whilst muttering witch-like prayers and incantations. She will turn into a witch, as long as **no one has seen her** completing this ritual. However, if she is spotted, she will remain a mere mortal (if she has not by then been carted off by the men in their white coats !)

## HELLO SAILOR!

Watch out for **Havaneres concerts**, sea shanties brought back from Cuba by sailors in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, telling of lost loves and faraway places, and named after the capital town of Cuba, La Habana (Havana). Accompanied by guitar and accordion, and sometimes bass, these fun songs will usually be served up with the traditional accompanying drink, **ron cremat**, a mixture of rum, sugar, lemon peel and coffee beans, with optional cinnamon stick, served in an earthenware bowl and flambéed to burn off the alcohol. *(On the same subject, it is rumoured that the motto of the French navy is "To the water ; it is time" – in French "A l'eau, c'est l'heure". Say this quickly with "Allo Allo" accent - with special thanks to Merry for this extremely serious and sensible contribution to PO Life !)*



## GET THAT BOTTLE OPEN!!

Did you know that the word **apéritif** comes from the Latin **aperio** meaning to open or uncover ?

## SEX, DRUGS & ROCK'N'ROLL

(OK, no sex or rock'n roll involved really, but it got your attention didn't it !!)

If you are going across the border into Spain (or from any country to another), and have prescription drugs and medicines with you, you should **always carry the actual prescription** with you in case you are searched, in order to prove that your drugs are legally acquired.

## PET ALERT!

If you find your dog **shaking its head** violently from side to side, and pawing its ear, this could mean that it has a **grass seed** in its ear which, if not removed, can cause infection and even perforate the eardrum. During the months of May and June, foxtail barley and similar species of grass growing in the PO can be very harmful to your dog (and to your wallet if you have to visit the vet) as the seeds can become embedded in the ear or the paw.

## EXPLOSIVE RUINS

**Alfred Bernhard Nobel** (1833 - 1896) invented dynamite amongst other things, and left a large sum of money in his will to fund the Nobel Prizes, awarded "to those who, during the preceding year, shall have conferred the greatest benefit on mankind". Alfred set up **numerous factories** to manufacture and sell dynamite all over Europe, one of which he opened in 1871 at **Paulilles**, next to Port Vendres . The ruins of the dynamite factory can still be seen today on the left hand side of the road between port Vendres and Banyuls. The site has now been taken over by the Conseil Général who have begun work to conserve the flora and fauna and turn the building into a museum, workshop and exhibition centre, to be finished in 2008 .

## LE P'TIT BUS

Do you know about the **P'tit bus** in Perpignan ? It is a **free bus service** which started up on the 30<sup>th</sup> March and runs approximately **every 7 minutes** from 7h45 to 12h20 and 13h15 to 19h40, every day apart from Sunday and Bank holidays. Pop into the tourist office for a plan of the route.

## OVERWEIGHT?

If you decide to go to Le Perthus or Spain to stock up on cheap booze, bear in mind that if your car is **overloaded** (and there are regular **controles** by police and customs on the road out of Le Perthus into Le Boulou), on the **spot fines of around 100€** can be levied or in extreme circumstances the car could even be seized. Check your car's manual to find the maximum recommended weight that your vehicle can take. Extra weight can affect the handling and damage your suspension, making your car unsafe.

Don't forget ...  
Father's Day - June 10th  
Bastille Day - July 14th

## Swimming Pool Security

There has been much confusion in the past surrounding the laws for swimming pool security in France.

We spoke to EURO PISCINE SERVICE at Pollestres near Perpignan, who explained that all pools, whether they be private or on premises which are rented out, should now have a safety system fitted. This covers all in-ground and partially in ground pools.



**Failure to respect the security rules and regulations could result in a 45,000€ fine and criminal charges of death by negligence, should a fatal accident occur.**

**EURO PISCINE outlined the different kinds of security available.**

Pool owners have a choice of five safety systems

✓ **Alarms** (alarmes)

There are 2 main types of alarm.

-> **Les Alarmes d'immersions** (Submerged pool alarms)

Simple, cheap and easy to fit, these alarms work by **sensor tubes**. If a body falls into the pool, it causes an acoustic wave which in turn triggers sensors situated in the tube, and sets off the alarm sirens. However, these alarms can easily be triggered by a strong gust of Tramontane if the pool is exposed!

-> **Les Alarmes périphériques** (Perimeter alarms)

Very swish with infrared beam which forms a **perimeter "fence"**. However, these alarms are not recommended for pools where the owner is not in permanent residence as the alarm will sound off if the beam is interrupted by animals.

-> **Sonar alarms**

Ideal for secondary residences, as they are not set off by the wind, these alarms work with a sensor based poolside detector of 15m and can be adapted to pools up to 20x10m. A little more expensive but the best alarm option for peace of mind.

Alarms do not compensate for parental supervision

✓ **Fencing** (barrière)

This must be at **least 1.20m** high with a child-proof opening and closing system and be installed between 1m and 3m from the edge of the pool. EURO PISCINE offer two types of fencing, the first which is removable and comes in white, green or black (particularly economical and efficient for those with young children) and the second which is more solid and permanent, more attractive too, but at a higher price.

✓ **Reinforced PVC pool cover** (bàche)

This should have supporting bars along the sides and across the width and be **strong enough to hold the weight of a child**. Recommended for pools up to 10 x 5 metres – any bigger than that and you will need a big strong man (or woman!) to open and close it! Helps to keep the water clean and conserve the heat.

✓ **Electric or solar energy shutters**

**Very easy to use** but not suitable for all pool shapes and not cheap! Check with EURO PISCINE to see if these are suitable for your pool.

✓ **Sliding glass cover** (abris) – low, medium and high.

Be careful! There are many types of "abris" on the market which can vary enormously in price. The best and easiest to use is probably the "abris télescopique"

*All the above should conform to the required standards and be accompanied by a "certificat de conformité".*

*All the team at EURO PISCINE would be very happy to answer your questions, advise, or supply any further information. EURO PISCINE is part of a network of 300 qualified and experienced staff with more than 45 agencies throughout France.*

*EURO PISCINE SERVICE is open from Monday to Saturday inclusive and is located at Pollestres in the "zone artisanale", rue Lo Pou del Gel, opposite (and a little further along from) the Intermarché.*



EURO PISCINE also offers you...

- ✓ a wide range of pool accessories and products in our showroom, pool cleaners, heating, games
- ✓ your choice of pool built to your individual requirements
- ✓ a range of different pool systems, pumps
- ✓ a selection of SPAs including the new "Sanus per Aquam" (health through water) for the ultimate in well being.



**Travel tip** - It is worth ringing your credit card company before leaving for your holiday destination. Increased fraud means that credit card companies are turning down cards where the pattern of spending is different from the norm.

## POLLUTION NIGHTMARE!

Ecologically speaking, the yearly *férias* of Céret, Collioure and Millas are a pollution nightmare. Over a million plastic cups are thrown in bins, and to the ground, making between three and five tons of plastic waste polluting the environment of the towns concerned, and in the case of Collioure, the sea.

## ORGANIC PRODUCTS

If you wish to eat and drink "organic", pop into your local tourist office and ask for the *Carnet d'adresses bio* a free booklet listing regional farms, shops and markets selling organic products from fruit and veg, to cheese, meats, oils, honey, eggs...

## Too Good to be Vrai?

The intended *tracé* or line of the Perpignan to Barcelona TGV is causing concern for residents living in the many high-rise apartment blocks along its proposed route. It seems that **cracks** have started appearing in walls and pavements around El Prat, on the outskirts of Barcelona, under which a tunnel is being dug. The minister of *formento* (public works) has demanded that an expert's report be completed to look into this damage in relation to the TGV. If it turns out that the tunnel is responsible, it could mean a serious delay to the completion of the TGV line. There are also **worries for the foundations of the Sagrada Familia**, Gaudi masterpiece, which is to be reinforced by a wall of concrete pillars!

## PIRANHAS IN ST ESTÈVE LAKE!

Yes, honest! It's not April 1<sup>st</sup>. Three dead piranhas were found in March in Saint Estève Lake when it was being emptied and cleaned. It is believed that an **aquarium owner** may have thrown them in to the lake to get rid of them or just to cause a bit of underwater chaos, but piranhas could not have survived in the **untropical** temperatures of the St Estève lake! Carnivorous Florida tortoises have also been found there in the past so probably best not to dip your hand in the lake the next time you're in St Estève!!

## DIAL 15 FOR MEDICAL HELP

Dial 15 if you need medical treatment and the doctors' surgeries are closed. This will put you through to the **Samu and medical emergency number** but did you know that you can also talk to a doctor who will assess your medical problem and tell you if he or she thinks that you require emergency help? **Régul66** has 23 doctors, GPs themselves, who have volunteered (for a fee) to work a round the clock rota. They will call out the doctor on call for your section (the department is divided into 23 sections, each having a doctor on call at all times) if they feel that a visit is necessary. Incidentally, a visit will cost you 67€ (8pm – midnight and 6am – 8am and 76€ from midnight to 6am.

## HGV MOTOR RAIL

The 29<sup>th</sup> March 2007 was the inauguration of the first *autoroute ferroviaire* linking Le Boulou and Luxembourg. From the 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2007, **heavy goods vehicles** will be able to drive directly onto the train in the north and descend at the distribriport in Le Boulou and vice versa, eventually making a difference to the amount of congestion on our motorways, when it is fully up and running, with 15 trains per day (600 vehicles).

### REAL ESTATE PROJECT IN MIND...

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# Local traditions

## LLEVANT DE TAULA

The expression *Llevant de taula* literally means "desert" - that which is placed on the table last, then taken away. During a *Festa Major*, the Llevant de taula is the means by which a village raises funds for the fêtes and entertainments. Strolling musicians with wind instruments (or these days floats with people in fancy dress or Catalan colours piping traditional Catalan music through speakers) travel from house to house, receiving small amounts of money to be put towards the village festivities.

## CORREFOCS

A *correfoc* is a Catalan tradition which ensures that any festival goes with a bang! Its meaning of "fire run" really says it all! It consists of a **parade through the streets**, accompanied by loud music, bangers... a fiesta of sparklers, firecrackers, and roman candles with *colles de diables*, - groups of devils - who dance amongst the crowds as they play with fire and set off their fireworks, amidst a shower of sparks.

Great atmosphere, great fun but can be very frightening for small children and animals. Wear a hat and clothes that will protect you from the sparks. (Although there is usually a fireman or two there to put you out if the worst comes to the worst!!)

## LA SARDANE

La *Sardane*, or sardana, is a **traditional Catalanian circle dance**, believed to be of Greek origin, designed to bring whole villages out onto the village green and get them in party mood - a little like a more complicated version of the "hokey cokey" in fact! Music for the sardane is played by a *cobla*, a wind band with double bass including **typical Catalan instruments** tenora, tible, flabiol and tambori, alongside trumpet, trombone, fiscorns and double bass. During his 30 year rule of Spain from the late 1940's to 1975, Franco considered the Catalan national pride and wish for independence to be arrogant and an insult to his authority. He passed a series of laws attempting to squash their traditions, language and culture. Among these laws was the banning of the Sardana. As often happens in the face of adversity, the dance soon became a powerful symbol of national unity, as folk from all walks of life, young and old, met up and proclaimed through their dancing, their pride in being Catalan, passing on this important part of Catalan culture from generation to generation.

## GÉGANTS

Enormous **painted papier-maché figures**, sometimes 14 or 15 ft tall, with traditional clothing and a person inside. They usually appear in **couples** during the patron saint holidays (*Festa Major*), carnivals and parades, often as king and queen, or some important person in the history of the town. They dance in the streets with little "big-heads" or *cap-grossos*.



© <http://gigants-villefranchedeconflent.chez-alice.fr/index2.htm>

## CASTELLS

(CATALAN FOR CASTLES)

A tradition which originated at the end of the 18th century in Valls, Tarragona, when rival groups of people called *colles*, began to compete in **constructing human towers**. Those who take part in these tours are called *castellers* (castle-makers), fearless men and women who wear traditional catalan costume and climb on to each others' shoulders to create a human pyramid, sometimes **up to eight or nine storeys high** and often topped off with a brave child, a bit like a cherry on a cake!

## Vide-greniers (car boot sales)

Great atmosphere, hotdogs, snails and beer (only joking about the hotdogs!) and a chance to get rid of those unwanted bits and pieces. Remember: one man/woman's trash is another man's treasure. If you're a car boot sale fan, or have items you wish to get rid of, it's well worth checking out the vide-greniers around the region, which take place mainly on Sundays. Get there early if you want to get the bargains and avoid the rush!

*If you wish to display/sell at a vide-grenier, you will normally need to register in advance to book your "emplacement" and show some proof of identity and residency (electricity bill etc) when registering. More information on how to do this from the town hall or tourist office in the commune where the vide-grenier is taking place.*

### JUNE

**Sunday 10th**

Olette / Osséja

**Saturday 16th**

Montsquieu

**Sunday 17th**

Thuir / Mont Louis

**Sunday 24th**

Saillagouse

### JULY

**Sunday 1st**

Terrats / la Cabanasse /

Saint Paul de Fenouillet

**Sunday 15th**

Estavar

**Saturday 21st**

Saint-Pierre-del-Forcats

**Sunday 22nd**

Evol / Saint-Paul-de-

Fenouillet

**Saturday 28th**

Ria-Sirach

**Sunday 29th**

Angoustrine

### AUGUST

**Saturday 4th**

Sainte-Marie

**Sunday 5th**

Mont-Louis



# CÉRET FÉRIA

14<sup>th</sup> 15<sup>th</sup> July

This yearly bullfighting festival, with **Bull Run** through the streets, market, bands, street entertainment and party atmosphere, is a big event in Céret and indeed in the whole of the PO, (along with the Millas and Collioure ferias which take place later in the season) but be warned. It is not for everyone! Céret de Toros weekend attracts an **enormous amount of criticism** and generates heated controversy, as much for the staggering drunkenness which seems to be *de rigueur* on the Friday and Saturday night as the perceived animal cruelty of these bullfights to the death, which take place in the purpose built bullring just out of town. All restaurants close and food and drink, from a full meal to a burger, is on sale from the many *bodegas* (street bars), run by the different *associations* of Céret. If you don't want to stand out from the crowd, wear the traditional feria colours of red and white.



Companion  
(Compañero in Spanish or Copain in French)  
actually comes from the Latin "Companionem" meaning "one with whom you would eat bread" Con = with and Pan = bread

# INTERNATIONAL FLAMENCO FESTIVAL

17<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> July

Argelès-sur-Mer

The fifth Festival International Flamenco d'Argelès-sur-Mer will take place in the beautiful surroundings of the Parc de Valmy. This unique flamenco festival offers a programme of music and dance to delight all, along with stands and workshops during the day for those who would like to have a go! Passionate, angry, deep, joyful, expressive, plaintive - if you are not already a fan of flamenco, you will be after this!

# LES FEUX DE LA SAINT JEAN

21<sup>st</sup> 22<sup>th</sup> June

# AND LA TROBADA DU CANIGOU

Regional

THE SAINT JEAN FIRE

A lovely tradition to celebrate the **Summer Solstice of St Jean** around the 22<sup>nd</sup> June is the meeting of Catalans from both sides of the Pyrénées on the **summit of the Canigou**. Troops of walkers and representatives of villages and towns throughout Catalonia meet up on the Plateau des Cortalets, where they set up tents and prepare for a sleepless night! The ultimate goal of the Trobada is to get up to the peak at 2,784m high, with **bunches of wood** to contribute to the huge bonfire prepared on the summit. This gathering is known as the *Trobada* (a catalan word meaning "meeting" or "reunion"). At **midnight** a flaming torch, kept throughout the year at the Castillet in Perpignan, is carried to the top of the mountain and used to light a bonfire which **can be seen all over the Conflent**. The next day, relay runners carry the *flamme du Canigou* down onto the plain to all the villages they pass through on the way to Perpignan and in the evening, these flames light the *Focs de la Sant Joan* or *Feux de la Saint Jean*, fires that have been prepared in towns and villages all over the region. With the arrival of the torch, and the lighting of the fires, the festivities begin.

It is a night for celebration and an important symbol of the unity of the Catalan culture

(Excerpt from **My Life in the PO** – online diary)

*The festival season has arrived in the Pyrénées-Orientales. Yesterday, following hot on the heels of la Fête de la musique came les Feux de la Saint Jean, a feast of fire and music. We went to the Maureillas festival - great fun, with fireworks and candyfloss but we were surprised to see a local tradition in which the children, some as young as 7 or 8, jump over the bonfire!! Lulu had a go too, wearing his nylon T shirt and nylon trainers, and we narrowly missed having roasted sweetbreads for dinner! They all seemed to enjoy it and, apart from me, nobody was the slightest bit anxious, as the firemen were there to put the children out if need be!*

Mayonnaise  
The -aise of mayonnaise actually means "native to" or "originating in"; In French (eg Anglaise) Mahonnaise was apparently created to celebrate a French battle victory over the British on the Spanish isle of Port Mahon



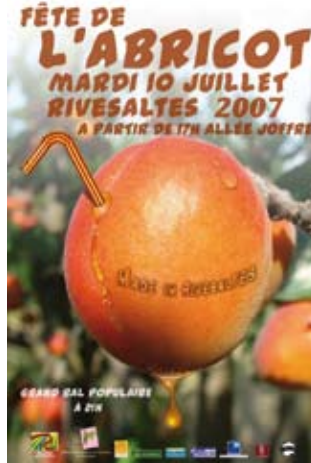
## Denim

The cloth used for jeans was originally made in Nîmes, (as well as Genoa, Italy). It was called Serge di Nîmes and later shortened to di Nîmes, which became denim.

## FÊTE DE L'ABRICOT

10<sup>th</sup> July Rivesaltes

Rivesaltes is not only famous for its sweet fortified wine, it is also well known for its **apricots**. Every July, the town celebrates the fruit with a **festival of apricot** tasting, apricot jam, apricot eating competitions, apricot drinking (look out for the local drink *abricotade*), in fact all things apricot! Add to this a general atmosphere of fun and good humour, a **local produce market** selling and proposing for tasting all manner of speciality, and an evening of music and dancing, and you have a superb family day out.



## QUERENCIAS

29<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> June

Céret

Two days of **Catalan music** and dancing, featuring well known artists and accentuating flamenco. *Querencias* is actually a **bull-fighting term**, signifying the spot in the bull arena where the bull makes his stand and prepares himself, ready to charge!

6<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> June

## FESTIVAL

Perpignan

## IDA Y VUELTA

4 days of concerts in various locations all over Perpignan, most of which are free. Festival Ida y Vuelta, literally round trip or "come and go", is a mixture of street parties, home-grown musical talent of all types and plenty of sunshine and atmosphere, spread over four days.

## LA FÊTE DE LA MUSIQUE

21<sup>st</sup> June

National

Every year around the summer solstice, the longest day of the year, musicians from all over the world perform **free concerts** in venues throughout France. The festival aims to celebrate music in all forms and is **open to anyone**.

It all began in October 1981, when Maurice Fleuret became Director of Music and Dance. He expressed the desire to be "the director of all kinds of music, from the accordion to the recording industry". He wanted to find a way to bring people and their music out on to the streets. Three weeks later the Fête de la Musique was born.

If you are in France on this day it will be hard to avoid the vibrant sounds of salsa bands parading the streets, string quartets and steel bands playing on street corners rock, pop, jazz and soul together with accordionists wandering among the crowds.

Carnival atmosphere, food, drink and laughter, and music of all sorts in the bars and cafés, streets, squares and courtyards, this national festival is not to be missed.



### Would you like to know who is behind PO Life's design ?

Well, it's the same person who is behind this camera !  
When she isn't taking care of me, my mistress is  
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or on the web.

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10

Oh...and  
by the way...  
she speaks english

Vernet  
Les Bains

5<sup>th</sup> August

## THE CANIGOU RACE

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

In 1905, a race was proposed by the local branch of the Alpine Club of France to honour the intrepid ice carriers. This race was to be from Vernet to the summit of the Canigou and back and competitors would have to carry a load on their back.

In 1980, this mountain race was revived, and each year since then the event has been held on the first Sunday of August. The event is open to both walkers and runners and follows a circular route over a distance of 30 km, with 2,100 metres (nearly 7,000 feet) of ascent. Competitors set off from Vernet-les-Bains, pass close to the Mariailles refuge, head for the summit of the mountain, then descend to Vernet down the north slope of Canigou, past the Cortalets chalet.

## LES JEUDIS DE PERPIGNAN

July - August Perpignan

Music, street theatre, jugglers, acrobats, flamenco, salsa, jazz... and late night shopping! This is Thursday evening in Perpignan when local, national and international artistes light up the streets and the places with a sparkling mixture of colour, sound and rhythm. A weekly event throughout July and August. Sit on the *café trottoir* with a glass of wine and be a part of it all!

Prades

26<sup>th</sup> July - 13<sup>th</sup> August

## Pablo CASALS FESTIVAL

Now in its 55th year, the Pablo Casals festival is one of the most respected chamber music festivals in France and, indeed, Europe, and takes place in the beautiful abbey of Saint-Michel de Cuxà and other churches in the Prades area. As you might expect from a festival named after a world famous cellist, many of the concerts focus on the cello, although there are also evenings devoted to Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and many other greats.

LES ESTIVALES

5<sup>th</sup> - 31<sup>st</sup> July Perpignan

In July 2007, the Estivales, Perpignan summer festival of dance, music and theatre, will celebrate its 20th anniversary. To mark this occasion, there will be more than fourteen shows of live music, theatre and dance at the Campo Santo, including Joan Baez, Blood Wedding danced by the Compagnie Antonio Gades and many more famous acts along with « Scènes ouvertes » at the Couvent des Minimes, cinema and various other forms of entertainment. Today, the festival retains its Mediterranean flavour and colour as it opens this year with an 'Ole' to « Vertiges, du flamenco à la transe », a dance musical produced by Tony Gatlif with 50 artistes, a show based around the artistic and cultural aspect of the wandering gypsy..

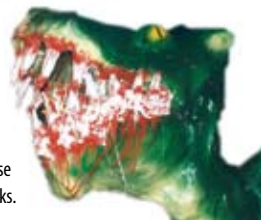
FÊTE DU BABAU  
(PRONOUNCED BA-BA-OH)

1<sup>st</sup> August

Rivesaltes

Rivesaltes will become a pedestrian-only zone all day long for this fun festival of the Babau, legendary monster reputed to have terrorised Rivesaltes during the middle ages.

Based upon the medieval legend, the «Babau», half-iguana, half-dragon, scaled the town walls and helped himself to a snack of several children. The festival relives the more dramatic moments of the tale as the Babau parades through the streets accompanied by stilt walkers, fire eaters, jugglers, brass bands and the Rivesaltes giants, Galdric Trencavent and his wife, the giantess Radeconda. At nightfall, the Babau is sacrificed - 'put to death' on the banks of the river Agly - in a dazzling cacophony of noise and fireworks.



## Selection of events from the Palais des Congrès, Perpignan

For the full programme of events for June and July, visit [www.anglophone-direct](http://www.anglophone-direct) or [www.congresperpignan.com](http://www.congresperpignan.com)

### Events at the PALAIS DES CONGRES Perpignan

Thursday 28th - Friday 29th June - 8.30 pm

Gala of Modern Jazz Création  
Box office opens at 7.30 pm.

### Exhibitions at the PARC DES EXPOSITIONS Perpignan

Information: 04 68 64 68 56 or [www.parc-expo-perpignan.com](http://www.parc-expo-perpignan.com)

Tuesday 12th June

Julio Iglésias - 8.30 pm - Grand Hall

Saturday 2nd and Sunday 3rd June / Saturday 9th and Sunday 3rd June / Saturday 16th and Sunday 17th June / Saturday 23rd and Sunday 24th June  
Magic Park : Bouncy castle theme park - Open: 10 am - 7 pm - Salle des Festivités.



John Fairclough

Spanish Catalonia has some excellent cafes and restaurants from which to choose and food in Spain is a lot cheaper than France. (Meals carry only 7% VAT (IVA) as opposed to the French 19.6%). Likewise, as long as one sticks to Spanish produce, wine prices are about one third cheaper, even in plush restaurants. The Spanish (especially in Summer) like to eat a little later than the rest of Europe. The lunch "rush" doesn't tend to start till after 1 pm, and most restaurants do not even open till 8 or even later, for evening diners. By law, Spanish restaurants have to offer a "menu del dia" (daily menu) which often includes wine and water.

Here is a selection of the places I've been to regularly and enjoyed over the last few years.

After crossing the border at LE PERTHUS, home to many cheap and cheerful tourist cafes, the first place one encounters is LA JONQUERA, a plethora of buffet, tourist and lorry driver places. **Artigas**, a seven day a week operation on the main road at the south of the old town, near Tramuntana garden centre is an atmospheric, low ceiling building, very Spanish, and professionally run with a great selection of meat and fish dishes. Try the **Pica Pica menu** at (rather like tapas) 10€, for a useful introduction to Catalan cooking.

Moving south, to FIGUERAS, with its vast Thursday market, I rather like **Casa Pepe**, on the N11 at the northern end of the bypass, opposite the large pottery place. Very friendly, family run, there is a good choice of home cooked dishes a la carte, but the menu del dia is especially good at 11€. Pepe closes on Tuesdays.

Turning towards the sea, there are a number of very pretty villages in the south Alberas, a wine growing area centred on Capmany and Perelada. In ST CLIMENT SESCEBES you'll find **Mas Ullastre**, a converted Catalan farmhouse of rustic charm, with 21st century mod-cons, open every day except Sunday. Monthly Catalan seasonal specialities are a highlight. Further along this road in GARIGUELLA is **La Vinya**, a roadside steakhouse opposite a large campsite. The décor is very comfortable and its claim to fame is the choice of superb meat kept in a cooler at the entrance, so you can choose your actual T bone steak or whatever takes your fancy, after which it will be expertly grilled on the charcoal "churrasco".

Now you are nearly in ROSES. The worldwide fame of the posh **El Bulli** has brought gourmets flocking to this large seaside resort, and there are a number of excellent and pricey eateries on the front. In the back streets of the old town are some less

expensive places ranging from Tapas to Chinese. I have always liked **Del Moll**, rather out of the centre down by the fishing port. It has an upstairs panoramic dining room, with superb vistas of the port and beyond to the Bay of Roses and the Pyrenees. As you'd expect, fish is king here.

Carrying on round the bay, via EMPURIABRAVA, you'll reach L'ESCALA. This pretty spot again has plenty of tourist restaurants and pizzerias, to suit every taste and pocket, but I head for the port and **La Llar dels Pescadors**. From the outside this modern building looks more at home on an industrial estate, but do not be put off. As the name implies it is the haunt of the fishing community, and I can say that the **Dover Sole** I had there recently was the best I'd ever tasted anywhere. The daily menu at 7€ including drinks is incredible value.

Retracing our steps up the coast towards France again, EL PORT DE LA SELVA is worth a visit, with its spectacular scenery, dark brooding St Pere Rodes monastery overlooking the town, and family friendly gently shelving beach. The choice of places to eat here is a little more restrained, but there are a couple of places on the right as you enter the centre of the town. I like the **Bellavista**. The 12€ set menu is particularly good, with mains being a choice of tender entrecote, an authentic paella, or a plateful of fried small local fish, which in the evenings you can see being landed and taken to the nearby auction.

I hope this short guide is of use to those of you who venture "over the border". If you come across any other gems during your travels, I'm always keen to hear, so post them on the forum on [www.anglophone-direct.com](http://www.anglophone-direct.com) or email us on [info@anglophone-direct.com](mailto:info@anglophone-direct.com).



"I feel sorry for people who don't drink. When they wake up in the morning, that's as good as they're going to feel all day." **Frank Sinatra**

## WHINING WOMEN

According to English wine journalist Jancis Robinson, more and more women are occupying traditionally male jobs in the wine industry such as wine makers and sommeliers, writers and industry experts. It seems that women have more sensitive palates than men and a more open minded approach to wine, making them more receptive to new or unknown varieties. I'll certainly drink to that!

## RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OUR POWINE FORUM

More wine recommendations and advice on [www.anglophone-direct.com](http://www.anglophone-direct.com)

### Domaine de Vezeian (Toulouges/Pezilla)

"Tried both rosé and red - both excellent, especially the red. Very smooth!" 2-3€

### Mas de Deu

"We've just discovered a great winery on the road to Trouillas. It's the Mas de Deu (great history, originally the first Knights Templars' commanderie in the region). The wine is organic (not obligatorily a badge of quality) and their dry white (cuvee Chloe) and sweet white wines (Rivesaltes Macabeu & Muscat de Rivesaltes) are superb. The red (vintage 2004) is good but will need ageing a bit. The owner speaks English."

Would you like to be a virtual vigneron? Find out how in the August edition of PO Life

## Pull the udder ONE

The following appeared on various wine websites on April 1st 2007

Japanese "Sake Cows" produce wine gene - 01-Apr-2007  
Scientists in Japan claim to have discovered a gene which simulates the effects of yeast fermentation inside the udders of "Sake Cows" enabling them to produce the base ingredients for wine. The wonders of genetic engineering allow scientists to replace the gene for making lactose with an artificial gene that produces pure alcohol. Although the process is in its infancy the implications for the wine industry are huge. Should Dr Sakegami's research come to fruition (or fermentation if you will) we could see the first commercially produced wine from a mobile vineyard within 15 to 20 years. The news is sure to promote backlash amongst animal rights activists and traditional alcohol producers in equal measure.

### Domaine du Mas Rous Cotes du Roussillon rouge 2001

"Lovely spicy aroma with berry fruit and herbs too. Great fruit on palate and noticeable black pepper. I loved this wine at first but after a couple of hours it developed an oxidised Port-like aroma. My advice - drink it quickly!" (7-8€ Auchan)

## Wine tip

If you want to linger over your white in the summer, invest in one of these gel-filled sleeves which you put in the freezer and then wrap round your bottle. They work well.

## Wine Quiz

The first person with 4 correct answers will win a bottle of Domaine Treloar wine (your choice) upon visiting their cave in Trouillas any Monday or Thursday afternoon - (Tel: 04 68 95 02 29 or visit [www.domainetreloar.com](http://www.domainetreloar.com))

WIN a BOTTLE of WINE

1. Which of the following is NOT a "named" Cotes du Roussillon-Villages ?

- a) Lesquerde
- b) Tautavel
- c) Maury
- d) Caramany

2. Which of the following Rock Stars does NOT own a vineyard ?

- a) Sting
- b) Bob Dylan
- c) Cliff Richard
- d) Mick Hucknall

3. Which of the following grape varieties is NOT allowed for Cotes du Roussillon rouge ?

- a) Syrah
- b) Grenache
- c) Cabernet Sauvignon
- d) Carignan

4. Which of the following books is about an English Winemaker in France

- a) The Grapes of Ralph
- b) The Ripening Sun
- c) Virgil's Vineyard
- d) Walking Over Lemons

answered by

PO oenologist & vigneron Jonathan Hesford [hesfordj@hotmail.com](mailto:hesfordj@hotmail.com)

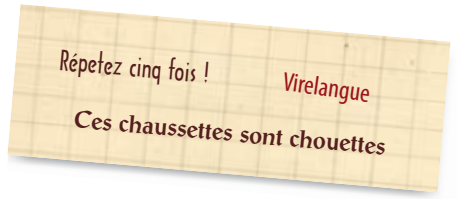
## Your questions

**CERTAIN WINES GIVE ME A HEADACHE, OTHERS DON'T ? (AND I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT OVERINDULGING !!) Why is this ?**

There are a number of chemicals and tannins present in red wines that aren't in white ones. This is why it is often cited that red wines cause more headaches/allergic reactions than white. The best advice I've ever received is get to know which ones affect you. Then avoid them ! Personally I think it has more to do with your condition at the time of drinking than the wine - too much sun, dehydrated, atmospheric pressure, blood-sugar level . . .

ANSWERS TO "WINE VOCAB" PO Life n°10

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



## Match up the définitions 1

accès ou passage payant 1	a. glace
établissement de jeu 2	b. casino
le temps à venir 3	c. loi
eau à l'état solide 4	d. avenir
dans un autre endroit 5	e. collation
règle imposée par une autorité 6	f. écho
répétition d'un son par réflexion 7	g. péage
un petit snack 8	h. ailleurs

## Put the following sentences into the negative : 2

- J'aime manger les escargots
- Il boit trop de vin!
- Nous avons acheté beaucoup de fromage
- Il fait beau aujourd'hui
- Je peux venir boire l'apéro chez vous ce soir

## Faux amis : choose the correct definition 4

- |                    |                         |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>1. Blessé</b>   | <b>4. Avertissement</b> |
| a) Pray            | a) Warning              |
| b) Injure          | b) publicity            |
| <b>2. String</b>   | <b>5. Acompte</b>       |
| a) Thong           | a) Deposit              |
| b) Washing line    | b) account              |
| <b>3. Attendre</b> |                         |
| a) To be present   |                         |
| b) To wait         |                         |

## An/année

Both mean «year,» but they indicate different ways of looking at the year. In general (but remember there are always exceptions to every rule) “an” applies to the division of time (eg J’ai passé un an à Paris) whereas “année” indicates length or amount of time spent (eg il travaille à Perpignan toute l’année).

Several other pairs work in the same way:

- jour - journée - day  
 matin - matinée - morning  
 soir - soirée - evening

- 5 **Fill in the blank with the correct word**
- Je suis fatigué ce soir/soirée
  - Nous avons passé une jour/journée intéressante
  - J’ai 21 ans/années

## LANGUAGE TIPS

✓ In French, we use a double negative to express NOT. Think of the two words NE...PAS as two slices of bread to make up a sandwich. The filling is the VERB of the sentence.

Je NE sais PAS

vous NE parlez PAS Anglais?

Le restaurant Nest PAS ouvert

✓ Where more than one verb is involved, the ‘bread’ goes around the first verb

Je NE suis PAS allé à Perpignan ce matin

Je NE veux PAS partir

## Match the idiomatic sayings 3

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| tomber dans les pommes 1          | a. to play truant                       |
| vouloir, c'est pouvoir! 2         | b. where there's a will, there's a way! |
| à tout à l'heure 3                | c. let's get back to business           |
| tabasser quelqu'un 4              | d. to faint                             |
| sauve qui peut! 5                 | e. like father, like son                |
| revenons à nos moutons 6          | f. to bear a grudge against someone     |
| sécher les cours 7                | g. every man for himself!               |
| avoir une dent contre quelqu'un 8 | h. to draw lots                         |
| tel père, tel fils 9              | i. see you later                        |
| tirer au sort 10                  | j. to beat someone up                   |

## ANSWERS TO 'TEST YOUR FRENCH' PO LIFE N°10

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



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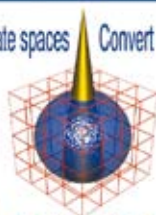
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# Améliorez votre Anglais

## Remplissez les blancs avec une couleur 1 pour compléter les expressions suivantes.

1. ----- herring - une diversion
2. to catch ----- handed - attraper en flagrant délit
3. once in a ---- moon - une fois toutes les 36 du mois
4. ----- area - ambigu
5. tickled ----- - heureux
6. ----- tape- la paperasse
7. ----- lie - un petit mensonge

### ✓ Le saviez-vous ?

PIN est un acronyme pour Personal Identification Number

Répetez cinq fois ! *Tongue twister*  
*Fat frogs flying past fast*

## Completez les phrases avec le bon adjectif pour compléter ces comparaisons connues 2

- As \_\_\_ as a bat.  
As \_\_\_ as a bee.  
As \_\_\_ as a mule.  
As \_\_\_ as an eel.  
As \_\_\_ as a feather  
As \_\_\_ as a fox.  
As \_\_\_ as the hills.  
As \_\_\_ as a mouse  
quiet - slippery - busy - stubborn - blind  
- old - cunning - light

## Trouvez la définition de ces abréviations d'usage courant 3

- |        |                           |
|--------|---------------------------|
| AKA 1  | a c'est à dire            |
| ASAP 2 | b absent sans prévenir    |
| i.e. 3 | c société anonyme         |
| Ltd 4  | d connu sous le nom de... |
| AWOL 5 | e dès que possible        |

### ... et les voilà

Also Known As  
As Soon As Possible  
id est. (that is)  
Limited  
Absent Without Official Leave

## Put these instructions for making a perfect cup of tea into the right order 4

1. Add milk and sugar if required
2. Enjoy your cuppa
3. Pour the tea into the cup
4. Bring the kettle to the boil
5. Fill the kettle with fresh water
6. Put the tea in the teapot.
7. Leave the tea to brew for five minutes
8. Warm teapot with hot water and pour away
9. Pour the boiling water into the teapot

### ✓ Do or make ?

**Do** - quand on parle d'une activité sans la préciser ou pour parler d'un travail

**Make** - exprime souvent une idée de création, ou de construction  
Attention : Beaucoup d'expressions utilisant **do** ou **make** ne se traduisent pas par faire en Français - ce sont des structures idiomatiques

Eg : *You make me sad - vous me rendez triste*

*It has nothing to do with you. - Cela ne vous regarde pas*

### ✓ To make ...

- a mess
- a noise
- an appointment
- a complaint
- make enquiries
- make fun of someone
- make a fuss
- make a mistake

### ✓ To do ...

- housework
- a favour
- do your duty
- do damage
- do harm

## RÉPONSES D'AMÉLIOREZ VOTRE ANGLAIS PO LIFE N° 10

- 1 mice, cherries, sheep, sons-in-law, teeth, scissors, crises, fish, wolves, people
- 2 1i 2j 3h 4d 5f 6e 7b 8c 9g 10a
- 3 1let 2make 3make 4let 5let 6make
- 4 1c 2d 3b 4a

### ✓ Do or make ? 5

1. He \_\_\_\_\_ an excellent job at the meeting last week. (did/made)
2. What are we going to \_\_\_\_\_ this evening? (do/make)
3. Please stop \_\_\_\_\_ so much noise! (doing/making)
4. I didn't win the race but I \_\_\_\_\_ my best (did/made)
5. I would like to \_\_\_\_\_ a complaint! (do/make)



G & T anyone?

The English word «gin» comes from the French word *genièvre*, (meaning «juniper») the berry which gives gin its distinctive, bitter flavour

ON...

## THE ROUNDABOUT NEAR AUCHAN...

"We have given the roundabout near Auchan a nickname - Suicide Roundabout. Very useful when you want to give people directions as everyone knows it."... "When showing a friend around Perps, when we came up to this roundabout, I can remember saying "don't use your indicators, they just regard it as a sign of weakness"..." "Never try to jump onto the roundabout in front of a huge truck, a broken down rusty local "artisan" camion, a more beaten up junky-looking "saloon" car than yours - or any car with a Russian number plate!"... "keep in the correct lane. And avoid going at mid-day if at all possible : hungry people are aggressive - especially men!"

ON...

## PUBLIC TRANSPORT FROM LOCAL AIRPORTS...

"A little *Navette* operated by *Les Courriers Catalans* - not much more than a mini-bus really, pulls up right outside the main entrance of Perpignan airport. There is a bus timetable in the main arrivals/departure. Basically they run every hour or so and are supposed to link in with incoming/outgoing flights. Journey time to Perpignan bus station and rail station approx 15 minutes."... "4.50 each way, arrives on time, very pleasant lady driver with amusing bilingual banter."... "I took a train from Girona to Elne. It was all very straight forward. Buses from the GRO airport to Girona centre appear to leave at 30 mins past the hour, every hour, from 5 a.m. until midnight."... (operated by *Sagales*) The bus journey takes approximately 20-25 minutes and costs €2.50 one way. The bus stop is located outside arrivals. Alternatively, there is a taxi rank outside arrivals. A taxi to Girona takes approximately 15-20 minutes and costs €20-25."... "The worst bit about the train journey is having to change trains either at Portbou or Cerbere - the French and Spanish timetables don't dovetail so, more often than not, the Spanish train gets in just after the French one has left. (Spent a very boring 90 minutes in Cerbere station)."... "We have used the airport bus to the bus station in gerona - no problems - then walk across the concourse to the train station. Cost is about 7 euros single. The only problem is the delay at the border though there is a reasonable cafe at Port Bou station. Interestingly this is one of the only border crossings where we have always had our documents checked."

ON...

## SHOPPING IN SPAIN

"If you smoke, drink whisky etc, drive a diesel car and like the odd meal out, things are significantly still a good deal cheaper in Spain, but the gap is certainly narrowing. If you need quality goods, clothes, cheese etc, stick to France."... "I made the best savings in Spain for trees and shrubs. There's a company called Monet. It's tough to find - between Figueras and Girona but towards the coast. They have two stores and you can find larger bushes at a reasonable price. Compared with France, this shop is about 1/3 to 1/2 off the similar product. When you plant a garden, this is the place to visit."... "The Wine Palace - Wow. What a good place to visit. I like Spanish wines, so this is worth driving down to Figueras. The big olives and the hams and sausages are great too. Needless to say their *piece de resistance* is the choice of Spanish wines from all over the country, but the thing I cannot explain is their small, yet well-chosen selection of French wines which are cheaper than here in France. I'm not a huge fan of liqueurs, but it is fascinating to look round their section with the incredible array of different coloured goeey liquids of all colours and hues. Is there any fruit/veg that they DON'T make liqueur out of!? I especially like the Chinese one with a dead lizard in the bottle."

And on ....

## DRIVING DOWN (OR UP) FROM CALAIS

"We regularly come by the *Autoroute Méridienne* (A71) via Clermont Ferrand and Millau.

We always find the route quiet and there are lovely views as you pass through the Auvergne. Definitely recommend it. And you can miss out the horrors of the *Péripherique* in Paris (not for the faint-hearted) by going from Calais to Rouen and then south via Evreux and Chartres to Orleans where you pick up the A71. Rouen, Chartres and Orleans are all worth a stop-off although we visited them one each trip otherwise it would have taken too much time."... "We have tried all the routes over the years, and I agree that the Clermont Fer/Millau option, with the Paris avoiding Abbeville-Rouen- Orleans bit at the start is a fair compromise of distance v less traffic v low péage charges v speed. The one we like least is the Troyes/Dijon/Lyon option. It is MILES further, very pricey, and Lyon is as bad as Paris (at least it has been every time we've done it!!)"... "As my family lives in Boulogne sur Mer, I go and visit them using the A20 i.e via Carcassonne, Toulouse, Limoges...i think it's cheaper than via A75 (Millau) and the traffic is fine, not like via Lyon, well known for its traffic jams."

# Before buying property in the Roussillon

## Some food for thought ...

by LEWIS GUNN

What makes a desirable "résidence secondaire" may not be any good as a permanent home. What are you buying and why? Are you intending to let the property? Potential clients may not be prepared to live with inconveniences that don't bother you.

### ✓ What sort of neighbourhood do you want to live in?

Maybe you want to be tucked away up a cart track! Take a look through the phonebook for the commune. Are there a lot of foreign names? You may or may not relish living in an area where the neighbours are predominantly non-French.

### ✓ What proportion of the houses in the neighbourhood are holiday homes?

In summer registration plates on cars give a good indication. A lively village in the summer may die come winter.

### ✓ Seen in warm summer sunshine all sorts of places look attractive.

The rest of the year may be a different story. Is the terrace/swimming pool sheltered from the Tramontane? If not, there could be periods of time when it is completely unusable. Do the trees have a definite lean, are windbreaks a local feature?

### ✓ What can you tell about your prospective neighbours?

Are they the kind of people you would choose to live among in your country of origin? Your dream house may appear to be an oasis of calm during the day. But it may be very different at night or the weekends, particularly if it is situated near a café, salle de fête, boules area, chiming church clock...

### ✓ What happens if you fall ill? Is there a doctor/dentist locally? How far to the nearest clinic/hospital? Where is the closest ambulance service?

### ✓ Are there buses, to where and how frequently. How far to the rail network?

### ✓ Will you be totally dependent on your car for transport? What would happen if you were without it for any reason? If you don't have your own off street parking where will you park? Where will

your visitors park? In popular locations this can be a real headache in the summer. Is there somewhere to keep your car securely?

✓ Are there permanent neighbours, how close? The risk of burglary is very real, especially of properties in preponderantly holiday home neighbourhoods. If you buy a property and have a phone installed, consider not having your number listed. France Telecom doesn't promote the service but do provide it and it's free. The best current option is the Liste Chamois. The "annuaire" (phone directory) is a thief's best friend as subscribers are listed by commune. If you feel you must be listed get France Telecom to give you a truncated entry. eg Name and commune only. Their willingness to provide this service seems to vary from one department to another.

✓ Will your new house be on the phone? If not, is there a phone box nearby (they are getting rarer). Do mobile phones work – coverage is often poor in rural areas. French mobiles are horrendously expensive! Is an internet connection needed? Can the local phone network meet your needs?

✓ Make sure you know who is selling the property and why. Remember the three D's. Death, Divorce and Debt tend to lead to complications and delays.

The Land Registry (Cadastré) records are available at the Mairie and are open to public inspection. To identify the property you want to buy all you need is the plot number(s). Copies of the records may be free or you might have to pay a nominal amount. If you re-sell the property in the short term you will be liable for capital gains tax.



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# Featured Properties from private sellers

*For more info, or to feature your property on this page, please contact [info@anglo-phone-direct.com](mailto:info@anglo-phone-direct.com)*

## Le Boulou

A tastefully & entirely renovated village house over 4 floors by an English registered artisan to French regulations. The house incorporates a separate garage, fully fitted kitchen, 4 Bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 1 cloakroom and a roof terrace.

This house has been finished to a high standard with fully restored varnished wooden shutters and doors. The property is located in the town centre ideal for local shops, car parking and other amenities.

Price : 210,000 €



## Arles-sur-Tech

A large, fully air-conditioned villa that sleeps 10 with its own private pool (9m x 5m) and large sun terrace. Fantastic location with spectacular views. 4 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, 3 terraces. Fully enclosed garden / grounds with Mediterranean plants, flowers and fruit trees, (orange, cherry, pear, olive). Private, off-road, gated parking for one car plus 4 Car Garage. Located on the outskirts of the village of Arles-sur-Tech in a quiet residential area backing onto open countryside,

it is a short walk to village with all amenities.

Spectacular scenery, lots to do, and close to Spanish border and Mediterranean beaches 45 mins.

Less than an hour to Perpignan airport.

Price : 650,000 €



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## *Reduced rate VAT* for your renovation projects

Did you know that most renovation and building works and materials for renovation are subject to VAT (TVA) at only 5.5% as opposed to 19.6% on all other building work? Of course, this can make an enormous difference to the total cost of work. The reduced rate applies to most renovation or improvement of an existing property (fitted kitchens and bathrooms, heating, air con, aerials, loft conversion, some garden works...)

The reduced VAT rate does NOT apply to :

- ✓ new builds (properties over two years old)
- ✓ Extension leading to a newbuild (where more than one third of the *gros œuvres* - foundations or supporting walls - are renovated)
- ✓ Building where the existing height changes. (ie if you were to add another level, tax would apply at 19.6%)
- ✓ "luxury" additions, such as a swimming pool

This reduced VAT only applies to registered tradesmen and builders. If you do the work yourself, you will of course pay 19.6% VAT on all materials. This means that if materials and supplies represent a large part of the total cost of your project, it can actually be cheaper to pay someone to do the work than to do it yourself! It is always worth checking out both options.

All emergency repairs (a plumber for burst pipes, a locksmith in case of theft...) benefit from the reduced rate, no matter what the age of the building.



The creation of a new TGV (train à grande vitesse) line between Perpignan and Barcelona via le Perthus will make the journey so much faster and easier between France and Spain for both tourists and freight. At the moment, the journey time between the two towns is 2h45 - the expected time once the TGV is completed is 50 minutes !

Although the official "début" for the opening of the line is **February 2009**, the trains are expected to start running well before that to test them out for the general public.

Two years away from that day in 2009 when the first train from Barcelona should enter Perpignan, the constant road works and land torn up has become so much a part of the scenery in the Pyrenees Orientales that one hardly even notices any more. The 45 km between Perpignan and Figüères have proved particularly challenging - 8.3km straight through the Albères - and not so cheap at a mere **billion euros** !

## THE ROUTE

### PERPIGNAN

Le Soler  
Toulouges  
Ponteilla  
Villemolaque  
Banyuls-des-Aspres  
Tresserre  
Montesquieu  
Le Perthus  
La Jonquera  
L'Estrada  
Bosquero  
Biure  
Llers  
Figüères  
BARCELONA

### THE FACTS

✓ In order for the TGV to achieve speeds of 350 km/hour, it must run on a special line, a **LGV (ligne à grande vitesse)** which must be straighter than a normal train track.

✓ The section of the TGV line going from Perpignan to Figüeres (or rather Le Soler - Llers) will be known as the **section internationale** on this LGV (ligne à grande vitesse) and is being constructed by a private company TP Ferro, branch of the Spanish group ACS, whilst the other part

of the track is being built by the French Eiffage group, owner of the company founded by Gustave Eiffel, builder of the Eiffel Tower, and builders of the Millau viaduct.

✓ Along the 25km of the track which will be known as **la plate-forme de France** (from Le Soler to the tunnel at Montesquieu), there will be 39 viaducts, tunnels, bridges... in other words,

some kind of construction every 400m approximately.

✓ Part of the contract states that all building work and subsequent construction should be **landscaped and planted**, so that the region does not continue to resemble a building site ! Particular care has been taken in some areas to preserve the environment, for example in Toulouges where two large oaks have been replanted elsewhere, as they are home to large long-horned beetles.

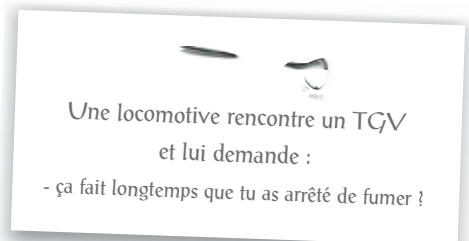
✓ Spanish trains drive on the right, French trains drive on the left ! This has been solved by a **saut de mouton** (a sheep leap ?), one around Tresserre and another between Le Soler and Toulouges, which allows the Spanish trains to leave the LGV and change to a French link line until the LGV is completed on to Montpellier.

✓ On the French side of the Alberes tunnel, 1.4 million square metres of earth were moved and more than **200 tons of explosives** used to break through 800,000 square metres of rock.

✓ The main road most affected by the TGV is the RD618 - Argeles to Le Boulou.

✓ The **light at the end of the tunnel** is expected by the end of this summer (2007) when the first of the **tunneliers** should break through the final rock layers of the Alberes into France. The two tunneliers, called Tramontana and Mistral, do not move quite as quickly as their namesakes !

✓ Work has proceeded more quickly on the Spanish side due to the fact that the Spanish are not terribly bothered to whom the land belongs - according to the DUP (Déclaration d'utilité publique), once it has been **appropriated** by the public services, Spanish land owners do not really have a say in the disposal of their land - whereas the French have to comply with permissions, land sale etc





# LE PETIT TRAIN JAUNE

DE CERDAGNE

The petit train jaune was built at the beginning of the century in order to link the towns and villages high up in the mountains with Perpignan and Prades, the principal administrative towns.

It links Villefranche-de-Conflent with la Tour de Carol and is 63 km long, made up of wooden compartments with bench seating. It is the highest railway track in France with the highest SNCF station and the views are stunning as you pass over the viaducts ; Séjourné (named after the chap who built it) and the Pont Gisclard, built 80m high overlooking a precipice

Its braking system is unique in the world, being the first train to have used electricity. These "aéro-statiques" brakes use electrical current and stop the train by electro-magnetism : the heat created by this friction is dissipated by enormous elements underneath the machine which are cooled by air. The brakes of course are rather important as the downward run is particularly steep between Olette et Saillagouse, so there are three separate braking systems. Despite the steepness of the return journey, there has never been an accident apart from the day of the train's first run in 1910 ! Ooops ! Not the smoothest train journey in the world - in fact, if you get talking to the friendly driver, he may tell you with a smile that you

are travelling on the TGV – Train a Grande Vibration! The line is a single track and the trains can only pass each other at certain stations (Olette, Fontpédrouse, Mont-Louis, Odeillo, Saillagouse, and Bourg-Madame) so the driver has to check by radio with the control centre in Villefranche and obtain permission to leave each station ! The line leaves Villefranche-de-Conflent, goes up through the Tet gorges to Mont Louis and crosses over



the col de la Perche into Cerdagne. It passes Font-Romeu, descends towards Saillagouse, Osséja, Bourg-Madame, Ur, and finishes in Latour-de-Carol where passengers can link up with the "Transpyréneen" (Paris-Toulouse-Barcelone). It goes through 19 tunnels and over 2 viaducts and is a fabulous day out ; particularly on a hot day when you are looking for a bit of cool mountain air.



## La Roussillonnaise

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● **Poser un lapin – to stand someone up**  
(il m'a posé un lapin, snif !)

This expression actually originates from the 19<sup>th</sup> century when it described refusal to pay a lady for her favours, the rabbit being the payment ! Another example is "voyager en lapin" – to travel without paying or to stow away.

# English speaking services

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Penny & Mike Statham - Villefranche de Conflent - www.fuilla66.com 04 68 05 63 08

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IGC - Camélas 06 20 84 00 24

Saper - painting and decorating - Amélie les Bains 04 68 39 15 84

P. H. Insulations - plaques de platre-Plasterboards - Ceret 04 68 22 56 65

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## Education and translation

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Eliane Morley - Le Boulou 06 08 01 80 15

Lucie Grimal - Vallespir 06 80 67 83 29

Idiomatic Language Service - Perpignan - marenostum@idiomatic

## Estate agency

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## Moving stories ... *Being Blunt with your Business*

Blunt Communications, a PR company set up by husband and wife team, CJ and Jim Brough, has recently moved from London to Port-Vendres. Since the company was working out of their home and clients rarely needed to meet face to face, they thought "why put up with the traffic, expense, pollution and crime of London when all of the benefits of the south of France were just a two hour flight away?"

that we speak to are all 100% behind our move. We're not sure if it is totally altruistic, since many of them then ask if they can write up our story for their various publications!" said CJ.

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Arriving on 1<sup>st</sup> January this year, CJ and Jim, a corporate lawyer, have kept all of their clients they came out with, and have even received some support from unexpected quarters. "The journalists

## WHO TO CONTACT IN CASE OF EMERGENCY ?



<b>SAMU (medical emergency)</b> . . . . .	<b>.15</b>
<b>Police emergency</b> . . . . .	<b>.17</b>
<b>Fire service emergency</b> . . . . .	<b>.18</b>
<b>European emergency line</b> . . . . .	<b>.112</b>
directory enquiries . . . . .	118 008
International directory enquiries . . . . .	32 12
International mastercard . . . . .	08 00 90 13 87
Local weather forecast . . . . .	08 36 68 02 66
GDF (gas problems) . . . . .	08 10 43 30 66
EDF (electricity problems) . . . . .	08 10 333 066
SOS Doctor 24/24 . . . . .	08 20 20 41 42
Emergency vet . . . . .	04 68 55 55 83
Anti-poison center . . . . .	04 91 75 25 25
Perpignan hospital . . . . .	04 68 61 66 33

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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