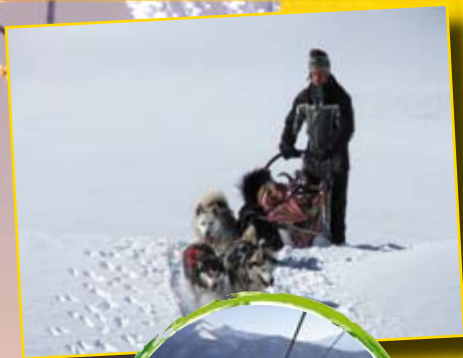


Life in the  
Pyrénées Orientales

# P.O Life



EXTREME  
SNOW  
SPORTS



DISCOVER THE  
REGION

DAY OUT FOR THE DAY OUT

20% off  
ski hire in  
Les Angles!

AMÉLIOREZ VOTRE ANGLAIS  
& TEST YOUR FRENCH

*FrenchLife*

CIC  
& CCI



What's On  
EVENTS AROUND  
THE REGION



A selection of events  
from the Palais des Congrès

FREE / GRATUIT  
n°20

December  
January

2008/9

# Les Angles

STATION DE SKI CATALANE

1600/2400M



## THE SKI PLANET

[www.lesangles.com](http://www.lesangles.com)



## Can't find a PO Life?

Print out your name and address clearly and send to PO Life (address below) with cheque for 30€, for one year's subscription made payable to Anglophone-direct or see p30

Oh I know that magazine editors should be serious and sober but it IS nearly Christmas and I've been saving up my favourite joke for a special occasion – so here it is!

What did the frog order from the Perpignan fast food restaurant?  
French flies and a croak!! Yo ho ho!

This month we take you up into the mountains of the P-O – you don't need to be an expert skier or an extreme sports buff to sip hot wine and taste sweet mountain air on a café trottoir in the winter sunshine. There are some great snow shoe walks, superb scenery, excellent family skiing (guaranteed by snow cannons just in case) and all the ingredients that you need for a fabulous alpine holiday.

Wishing you a Happy, Healthy and Lucky Christmas season here in our beautiful region

Bon Nadal i Felic any Nou  
(Merry Christmas and  
Happy New Year in Catalan)

Kate & Jane

Our  
English  
Speaking Services  
directory has now moved  
to the back pages.  
Find busines-  
ses, services,  
accommoda-  
tion.... at a  
glance!

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Welcome to the Pyrénées-Orientales!

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## LAC DE LA BALMETTE

Mont Llaret 2376m & Roc D'Aude 2325m

This classic tour of the Capcir plateau follows good footpaths, is waymarked in yellow and takes 6 hours, starting and ending in Les Angles centre. In early summer the wild flowers are magnificent and the views over the Pics Peric are stunning. This is a high mountain walk with 900m of height gain so make sure that you can navigate well and take suitable clothing. Poles may help your knees on the final 700m descent!!

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

A snowshoe walk in winter  
but at its best and most beautiful in late spring



**Access :** Map IGN 1:25000 Font Romeu 2249ET. Park by the télécabine Les Pelerins in Les Angles at 1650m 31N 423652E 4713989N

### Walk :

✓ From the télécabine follow the Mermet piste for 500m to a crossroad. Take the path just to the right or the Llaret ski piste leading to the chateau d'eau. Cross the road and follow a forestry track, signed La Balmeta which leads to a footpath climbing through the Scots Pine forest to estany de la Balmeta. ( Since 1983 IGN have been reprinting maps with local historical names, hence Balmette & Balmeta). Skirt the LH side of the lake through the azaleas and up a rocky valley with rare Pyrenean Lilies. Cabana la Balmeta is just 30 mins further. The cabana was a shepherd hut but now "le vacheurs" use an encampment about 500m away and look after 400 cows each summer. The cabana has a sleeping shelf, table



and open fire and is a popular, if informal, refuge for walkers.

✓ To your right (North) you will see the imposing south ridge and summit of Pic Peric 2810m, a route for another day. From the cabana head towards Lac de Bouillouse on the Tour de Capcir path for 700m until you see a path on your left (west) heading towards Mont Llaret. Take this path, which this year was marked by small, waymarked posts, taking care after 1km where the path to the Lac d'Aude goes off to the right.

✓ Our path continues up the hill to the summit plateau at Mont Llaret, 2376m and marked by a cross. To your right is the Lac d'Aude, the source of the river Aude, but beyond there are views to the slopes of Font Romeu, Puigmal 2910m, Sierra de Cadi and the limestone spikes of the Pedraforca. Across to the east lies Roc d'Aude 2325m and the outline of machinery that marks the ski station of Les Angles and the start of our descent. From the top of the ski lifts, follow the piste, Mermet, initially to the SE until you can see the télécabine station. In July & August descend by the cabine for free but if it's not working, follow Mermet piste down to the Jassettes café and junction with Llaret piste which is followed all the way back to the village. The LH branch of the piste above the village leads directly to the bar Eden Roc where that first beer will taste like nectar!!

In summer make sure that you set off in the cool of the morning and plan to get back to the village by mid afternoon as any storms on a hot day tend to arrive in the late afternoon.

Mike Rhodes is an International Mountain Leader / Accompagnateur de Montagne, lives all year in Les Angles and specialises in guided walks in the high mountains and Snowshoe trips in winter.. He can be contacted on 0033(0)468043728 - [mike.rhodes@free.fr](mailto:mike.rhodes@free.fr) - [www.pyrenean-trails.com](http://www.pyrenean-trails.com)



Qu'est-ce qui peut faire le tour  
du monde en restant toujours  
dans son coin? Un timbre!



WELCOME

## MR PRESIDENT

A family-owned business in Girona has been particularly quick off the mark and has already produced a *Caganer* (see page 9) of future American president Barack Obama.

## UN ÉLÉPHANT, ÇA TROMPE ...

Elne is the **oldest town in Roussillon** and it was from there that Hannibal negotiated a safe passage for his men and 40 elephants across the Panissars Pass at Le Perthus.

## EXCEEDINGLY GOOD STORIES

Did you know that **Rudyard Kipling** wrote a short story during one of his stays in *Vernet-les-Bains* called « Why does it snow in Vernet ? » The amusing and light-hearted piece pokes fun at the English habit of talking about the weather.

Visit our site [www.anglophone-direct.com](http://www.anglophone-direct.com) to read the full story.



## LEST WE FORGET ...

We have all heard of Oscar Schindler, hero and saviour of hundreds of Jews from the death camps of WW1 but how many of you know of the wonderful **Elisabeth Eidenbenz**, now in her nineties, living a quiet life in the Vienna woods?. Along with her team of nurses, Elizabeth set up a maternity ward in an abandoned castle in **Elne**, Château d'En Bardou, and it is estimated that she saved up to **600 babies** by rescuing women in the last few weeks of their pregnancy, fleeing the horrors of Nazism during WW2. Visit the Swiss Maternity at Elne, restored in 1997 – a memorial to a courageous lady.

# Did you know?

## THE SURREAL STORY

The shooting is already well underway in both Spain and New York for the film "**Dali and I: The Surreal story**" based on the book "Dali and I" by the Belgian author Stan Lauryssens, Dali's only neighbour in *Cadaqués*.

**Al Pacino** plays the main role of Dali. The script focuses on the **surrealist painter's latter years** - when the art was becoming less important than the money, fame and power, and his eccentricities and lifestyle were drawing as much attention to him as his work.

The film is expected to be released some time in 2009

## LE DELACROIX

still worth a quid or two!

Don't forget that you still have **until 31<sup>st</sup> January 2009** to take any 100 francs \*Delacroix bank notes to a *Banque de France* and exchange them for approximately 15 euros per note at present exchange rate. This still leaves the 1980 Debussy, (20F) the 1993 St Exupéry, (50F) the 1997 Cézanne (100F), the 1995 Eiffel (200F) and the 1993 Pierre et Marie Curie, (500F) whose *date limit* for exchanging against euros is 2012 so plenty of time to dig through old bags and sticky pockets!

(\*Delacroix was one of the most important of the French Romantic painters in the 19th century).

## COMMON PEOPLE

You may have seen her in Ille-sur-Têt, a magnificent statue flying naked through bomb spattered cloud, but did you know that **Marianne** is a national **symbol of France**, symbolising liberty, French values and republican ideals? Although she seems to have emerged out of the French revolution, the origins of the name Marianne are unclear though many believe that the name Marie-Anne, one of the most common names of the time, was chosen to represent the common people. Look out for her in town halls, on banknotes, medals...

## CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & CHAMBRE DES MÉTIERS

The Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie (CCI), and the Chambre des Métiers both help out in the creation or development of any business activity and can advise you on training programmes, business practices, financing small businesses... The CCI deals with **commercial or industrial enterprises** whilst the Chambre des Métiers specifically covers **trades** and will advise you on the requirements, rules and regulations covering each trade.

The CCI in Perpignan (Tel: + 33 4 68 35 66 33 Quai de-Lattre-de-Tassigny - BP 10941 66020 Perpignan cedex) offers a drop in service between 9h – 12h and 14h – 17h Monday to Friday. No appointment is necessary for an initial chat. An adviser will take you through the stages of the creation of your business, suggest suitable training available, answer your questions and put you in contact with any other agencies that may be of help. A further meeting where necessary can then be arranged with a specialist. The service is **free**.

They also have an *Espace Création*, an area equipped with documentation relevant to businesses, computers and free internet access. General meetings on business creation are held at the Chamber of Commerce every Tuesday 9 - 11h and every Friday at the Chambre des Métiers (7, Boulevard Conflent, Perpignan near the station Tel 04 68 35 87 95). They are open to all.

✓ Take a look also at the **APCE** (Agence pour la Création d'Entreprise) on [www.apce.com](http://www.apce.com). The site publishes a series of information packs (dossiers), and posts up to date information throughout the year.

**We take care of everything...  
except forwarding your mail.**

**CIC THUIR**

Ph. 04 68 29 36 00



Parce que le monde bouge.

[cic.fr](http://cic.fr)

Quel est l'animal le plus âgé?  
Le mouton (parce qu'il est laineux)

## You can bank on it!

CIC is the fourth largest banking group in France. General banking conditions are available in English along with an explanation of product ranges and English speaking advisors are available directly in your local branch.

Visit: [www.cic.fr/en](http://www.cic.fr/en) (in French and English) or ring their English speaker's helpline on 0800 082 082 (open Monday to Friday from 8h30-19h and Saturday from 8h30-17h).

CIC will be happy to answer your banking questions over the next few editions. For now, some general banking facts.

## Cheque it out!



✱ It is illegal in France to issue a cheque if you do not have sufficient funds

in your account to cover it and you could be banned from writing cheques in the future or even added to a central register called the "Fichier Central de Chèque" for the prevention and punishment of cheque-related offences. Most banks however will not enforce this except in extreme circumstances, and some banks will actually allow you to overdraw - but watch out for the charges!

✱ It is also technically illegal to post or pre-date a cheque, so whilst a company may ask you to pay for a large amount with several cheques, to be banked over several months, there is no guarantee that they will not be presented before those dates.

✱ Oh!, and watch out! It is also illegal to cancel a cheque unless you can prove that it's been lost, stolen or fraudulent.

## Livret A

Following a European ruling, a tax free savings account 'Livret A' will be available at all banks from 1st of January 2009, to all tax paying residents of France. More on this in the next edition.



## Things you might need to know...



### CHEAP P-O TRAVEL

From the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2008, fares on all buses run by the *Conseil Général* are just €1 for any destination within the department of the *Pyrénées-Orientales*. Visit [www.perpignanmediterranee.com](http://www.perpignanmediterranee.com) for timetables. You can also find info here for *Le P'tit bus* (so named because it is *petit*!) in Perpignan, a free bus service which 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.

### Toll free — with a catch!

Did you know that you can travel free on the A9 between *péages* Perpignan Sud and Perpignan Nord if you live in the Perpignan Méditerranée area? Project Zap allows residents of this zone to use the motorway for nothing in an attempt to 'unconstipate' the town centre. A slight catch is that you need to register for the *télépéage* which costs 2€ per month, but the actual stretch of the motorway between Perpignan north and south is not charged. Register with ASF at the toll booth of Perpignan sud with a RIB and proof of home address.

### It's electrifyin'

Visit [www.edf-bleuciel.fr](http://www.edf-bleuciel.fr) and click on 'foreigners' in the top right to find out all about your electricity bill and supply in English, pay your bill or submit your electricity meter readings online



### New Year

More a general Spanish tradition than a Catalan one, as the twelve strokes of midnight sound on the 31st December, the Spaniards pop a grape into their mouth for each bong to bring good luck for the 12 months ahead; Much hilarity, spitting and dribbling starts the new year off in style!

### Shop opening hours over the festive season

Main supermarkets (Carrefour, Auchan, Intermarché, Champion etc) will be closed on Christmas Day and New Year's Day but open as usual at all other times (early closing - 19h - on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve). Boxing Day is not a bank holiday in France. Smaller shops will be open at the discretion of the owner but closed on Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

### FOR ladies only

Just in case you have been choosing your bras by trial and error ladies, here is a useful conversion table so you don't have a droopy Christmas!!



|          |          |                    |
|----------|----------|--------------------|
| 32 = 85  | 46 = 120 | Cup sizes the same |
| 34 = 90  | 48 = 125 | apart from         |
| 36 = 95  | 50 = 130 | DD = E             |
| 38 = 100 | 52 = 135 | E = F              |
| 40 = 105 | 54 = 140 | F = G              |
| 42 = 110 | 56 = 145 | FF = H             |
| 44 = 115 |          |                    |

### MOVING MADE EASIER

If you move house in France you will need to inform various services of your change of address. Visit [www.administration24h24.gouv.fr](http://www.administration24h24.gouv.fr) and you can do this easily online.

From the home page, click on "Mon logement", then "Changement d'adresse en ligne".

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MASTERSERVICES BALBOA CE

## CATALONIA LUXURY PRISONS

The government of the Province of Catalonia has commenced plans to build **6 new prisons** over the next five years, one of which will open in Figueres, at the beginning of 2011. These new prisons will conform to certain standards, as expected and required, by the modern criminal of today, and architects have been briefed to incorporate a **pleasing visual interior** for the prisoners, along with **sports facilities, pool, and tree lined walkway** alongside the 64 cells, which will be in 8 independent units, with patio, each with sport facilities (gym etc) **hairstresser, canteen and library**.  
Slightly controversial non?

## OVER THE BORDER

It is hoped that the lengthy queues which awaited drivers heading for Le Perthus over the summer will greatly improve in **2010** with the anticipated opening of the **Le Boulou by pass** and the additional **lane to be added to the A9** in 2012, making the motorway into a three lane traffic system on both sides

## DON'T SHOOT! IT'S A RIFLE!

From October onwards you'll see Rifles advertised everywhere you go in the P-O! No need to duck unless you're talking "two little ones"! It's **bingo!** ( Well, yes, I always thought it was "Lotto" too but that's language evolution for you! ). In fact, all non profit making associations are allowed to organise 2 rifles a year in order to **raise funds** for their activities, so it's all for a good cause.

Quelle est la différence entre un homme intelligent et un extra-terrestre?  
Il n'y en a pas, on en a tous entendu parler, mais on n'en a jamais vu!

Papa : J'espère que tu prêtes ta luge à ta petite sœur!

Fils : Ne'inquiète pas Papa! Elle l'a pour monter et moi je l'ai pour descendre.



## READER'S SCAM WARNING

Over the last month I became a victim of a **clever scam** while out shopping. Simply going out to Intermarché has turned out to be quite traumatic. **Don't be naive enough to think it couldn't happen to you** or your friends.

Here's how the scam works: Two seriously good-looking 20-21 year-old girls come over to your car as you are packing your shopping into the boot and start cleaning your windscreen provocatively.

When you offer to pay them, they ask instead for a ride to another store and climb into the backseat. On the way, they start undressing. Then one of them climbs over into the front seat and starts crawling all over you, while the other one steals your wallet.

I had my wallet stolen July 4th, 9th, 10th, twice on the 15th, 17th, 20th, & 24th 29th. Also August 1st, 4th, twice on the 8th, 16th, 23rd, 26th, 30th, three times last Saturday and very likely again this upcoming weekend.

## GOLF COURSE

### SAINT JEAN PLA DE CORTS

The project for a 27 hole (three times nine) **golf course** plus a practise course, spread over 150 hectares bordering Maureillas, Saint Jean and Céret, has not been abandoned, but **postponed due to the present difficult financial climate**. The sale of most of the land has been agreed (if not finalised) and the building is expected to start in 2009 and take 3 – 4 years to complete.

There will be two large hotels and an estate of new villas and apartments on the course. Other facilities will include

spa,  
conference  
centre, gym,  
etc.





The pooey traditions below may shed some light on the popular Catalan saying "menja bé, caga fort i no tinguís por a la mort!" (Eat well, poo strong and don't be afraid of death!).

# Festival and tradition

## PESEBRES AND CAGANERS



Look out for the *caganer*, (the pooper!!), a small statue of a Catalan peasant, wearing traditional red stocking hat (a *barretina*), and, sitting with trousers half down, in a "toilet" position, making his small contribution to the land, often smoking a pipe or reading a newspaper!

The **exact origin** of the Caganer has been lost over the years but the tradition is known to have existed since the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Some say that he is "fertilizing" the land to ensure a bumper crop the following year, others that he represents equality of all people (we all do it!!) He will usually be found crouching in the *Pessebre*, the representation of the Nativity Story, adding a rather comical aspect to this traditional scene.

There was actually a well supported *Salvem el caganer* (Save the caganer) campaign in Barcelona when the council did not include a Caganer in the public nativity scene, stating that it does not set a good example (no pooing in public was the message) but the little chap was quickly reinstated with media support!

## LE CAGA TÍO

Still hovering around the subject of poo, (apologies to the sensitive souls amongst you!) another



Catalan Christmas tradition is the *Le caga tío* (literally 'poop log!!'), a **hollow log** standing up on four little stick legs with a smiley face painted on one end and red *barretina* hat. From December 8<sup>th</sup>, (the Feast of the Immaculate Conception – bank holiday in Spain so shops closed) he is **given something to "eat"** every night and covered with a blanket so that the poor little chap will not be cold at night. On Christmas Day, he is **beaten with sticks** to make him **drop the sweets**, gifts and torrons (torron recipe p12) placed inside him.

**SANTS INNOCENTS** (Day of the Innocents) - 28<sup>th</sup> December. Of pagan origin, this was the beginning of many days of festivity, culminating in a Carnival. "*Por San Antón Carnestolendas son*" and also known as the "Festival of the Crazy" Today, the festival is more for young children - **practical jokes and silly stories**, much like April Fool's Day in Britain. These pranks are usually innocent and funny, like sticking stickers on people's clothes without them knowing, and the press sometimes take advantage of this day to invent news, so don't believe all you read in the papers!

## LA FÊTE DES ROIS

*La Fête des Rois* is another festival celebrating the **3 kings** and takes place on, or around the 6<sup>th</sup> January, (**Epiphany**, the first Sunday of



each New Year) a tradition which actually dates back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century Although a normal school and working day, this is still very much a family tradition. A lucky charm (*une fève* - originally a bean but now more often a plastic trinket) is baked inside the *galette des rois*, a frangipane based cake, and shared around the table. Whoever receives the *fève* is then crowned **king or queen for the day** and has the much coveted opportunity of bossing the rest of the family about and choosing someone to be their king or queen.

(\*Tip: Watch out for your teeth if you are the lucky winner of the *fève*; Trust me - I talk from experience!)

## THE DAY OF THE THREE KINGS 5<sup>th</sup> January

This is a big celebration for children, telling of the arrival of the kings who lavish children with toys and sweets. Parents encourage **children to write to the Three Kings** with their gift requests. The children go to bed and leave shoes and a snack near the window or on the balcony. On the morning of the 6<sup>th</sup>, the children find the **gifts** left by the kings, sometimes accompanied by a piece of coal, if they have not been well behaved!

# What's on?

Our pick of events around the region. For a more detailed events calendar, visit us on [www.anglophone-direct.com](http://www.anglophone-direct.com)

Visit our site and register for our free **weekly newsletter** !

5<sup>th</sup> -21<sup>st</sup> December

## IL ÉTAIT UNE FOIS NOËL



**Thuir**

From the 5th December, Thuir will become another world of illumination, decoration, film settings, street parades and story telling...the streets, shops and cafés transformed into Pinocchio land, including a magical show "Les aventures de Pinocchio" on 20th and 21st December presented by the Théâtre du Gecko. More info: Office de la Culture: 04 68 84 67 87 [www.thuir.com](http://www.thuir.com)  
photo : sophie waerzeggers

4<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup> December **Elne**

## FÊTE PATRONALE DE LA STE EULALIE\*

Discos, concerts, *gégants* parade, sardane, havaneres and various entertainments throughout the week  
More details: OT: 04 68 22 05 07 \*One of the Patron saints of Elne, young Eulalie, (meaning 'she who speaks well') was martyred by torture in the 4th century during the great persecution of Roman Emperor Diocletian



## Le Papa Noel arrive...

2nd Dec **Barcares**  
7th Dec **Amélie**  
12th Dec **Elne**  
13th Dec **Prats-de-Mollo**  
20th Dec **Port Vendres**  
24th Dec **Banyuls, Bolquere, Eyne, Formigueres, Les Angles**

*Check out details with the tourist offices*

5<sup>th</sup> -6<sup>th</sup> December

**Le Boulou**

## THE AFM TELETHON\*

This year, the French Muscular Dystrophy Association ("AFM") presents the 22nd annual AFM Telethon, an event which has become France's



major yearly fund-raising event. Look out for charity events throughout the region.

\* l'Association Française contre les Myopathies et les maladies neuromusculaires

7<sup>th</sup> -21<sup>st</sup> December

**Fenouillèdes**

## Choo choo! SANTA SPECIAL

Organised by the Train Touristique du Pays Cathares et du Fenouillèdes (TPCF), this Christmas train will leave from Espira on the 7th, 13th, 14th and 21st, from Rivesaltes on the 17th December and Axat in the Aude on the 20th December, with non stop entertainment for young and old. Father Christmas, sweets, presents, hot drinks and nibbles, make-up workshop on board... Reservations: 0468599902

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20<sup>th</sup> -26<sup>th</sup> December

Les Angles

## LE TEMPS DE NOËL

Magical Christmas in the snow with candy floss, roast chestnuts, Papa Noel and firework display (24th)...



*A selection of New Year's Eve fireworks*

**Canet** music, dancing, hot wine and chocolate....  
**Collioure** music, dancing, bodegas and picnic on the beach  
**Les Angles** torchlit descent, hot wine and chocolate....

**Christmas markets:** a selection of christmas markets and Foire au gras (literally 'fat fair' : foie gras, duck, goose confit and related products) around the region

**Monday 1<sup>st</sup>**

Perpignan (place de Gambetta) - Pessebres, crafts, local products, hot chestnuts, crêperie, hot wine....

**Thu 4<sup>th</sup> - Sun 7<sup>th</sup>**  
Collioure, Château Royal

**Sat 6<sup>th</sup> - Sun 7<sup>th</sup>**

Alénia, parc Ecoffier

**Sunday 7<sup>th</sup>**

Amélie-les-Bains  
Thuir  
St Estève  
Saillagouse  
Millas  
Thuir

**Saturday 13<sup>th</sup>**

Prats-de-Mollo  
Vernet-les-Bains

**Sunday 14<sup>th</sup>**

Sahorre  
Maureillas  
Sorède

**Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup>**

Le Barcarès

**Sunday 21<sup>st</sup>**

Céret  
Vinça  
Port-Vendres

**Christmas shopping :** Perpignan shops will be open for Christmas shoppers on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> December. There will also be free parking in Wilson, Arago, Saint-Martin and Catalogne carparks in the city centre..

1st January

Argelès

DON'T FORGET THAT  
**FIRST SWIM  
OF THE YEAR !**

Premier bain de l'année (first dip of the year!) - meet up at 10h30 at the rond-point d'arrivée by the beach - et bon courage!

**WE THREE  
KINGS...**

3<sup>rd</sup> January

Perpignan

Cavalcade des Rois Mages (procession of the Three Wise Men Gaspard, Melchior and Balthazar, the three kings who brought Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh to the baby Jesus, will parade through the streets of Perpignan on horse and camel back, collecting letters from children containing their wishes for 2009. Similar processions will be held in several other towns around the region



11th January

Les Angles

**NEW YEAR SNOWSHOE  
WALK & BBQ**

25€ walk & bbq, 10€ bbq only, snowshoe hire 6€; To reserve a place contact: Mike 04.68.04.37.28 Details on [www.anglophone-direct.com/Snowshoe-Walk-and-BBQ](http://www.anglophone-direct.com/Snowshoe-Walk-and-BBQ)

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

For the full programme of events visit [www.congresperpignan.com](http://www.congresperpignan.com)

### PARC des EXPOSITIONS

**Chocolate festival - 6th-7th December**

**Moscow circus on ice - 20th December 3.00 am & 8.30 pm**

**Magic Park - Bouncy castle theme park - December 3, 6, 7, 10, 13, 14, 17, 20, 24, 26, 30 - Festive fun in this indoor theme park for children with jungle run, mini slides, ball park, soft mountain.**

**International cat show - 3th- 4th January**

### PALAIS des CONGRÈS

**Les Rendez-vous du Caveau de la Huchette - 2nd December - This regular jazz 'club' brings together talented jazz musicians. In this concert, we meet the «Drew Davies Quintet»**

**Swan lake (Le Lac des Cygnes) - 4th December: Ballet**

**Verdi's La Traviata - 15th January Company 'Française de l'Opéra à l'Opérette'**



## Catalan cuisine "TURRON de Jijona"

(SOFT NOUGAT)

The turrón is a type of nougat of Moorish origins, typically made of honey, sugar, and egg white, with toasted almonds or other nuts.

It comes in two main varieties : touron mou (soft, from Catalogne) and touron dur (hard, from Alicante) and it is eaten particularly at Christmas in Catalonia but of course there is nothing to stop you nibbling it at any time of the year if you have a sweet tooth – yummy yummy!

1 dessertspoon cinnamon - 250 gms sugar - 250 grams white honey - 250 grams toasted almonds - 250 grams toasted hazelnuts - 5 egg whites

✓ Chop nuts finely and crush into a smooth paste. Beat the egg whites stiffly and add them to the paste.

✓ Put the honey and sugar in a saucepan and bring to the boil. Add the paste to the honey mixture. Stir constantly with a wooden spoon for ten minutes. Remove from the heat, put into moulds lined with rice paper.  
✓ Leave to cool and sprinkle with cinnamon.



## WELCOME VELLA FRONTERA!

Although Maury is perhaps best known for its sweet aperitif wines, there is a growing number of independent winemakers who are hoping to change that.

One such is **Corin Fairchild and his wife Jayne**, who moved to the area from Sussex 3 years ago and created the Vella Frontera domaine. Wine has always been their passion and the vines that came along with the domaine enabled them to turn this interest into reality. The name Vella Frontera reflects the fact that the old border between Catalonia and the rest of France used to pass right through the spot where the current vineyards are. Their logo, a dragon holding a Fleur de Lys, combines the French Domaine with Corin's Welsh roots

Vella Frontera's wines are not as yet widely available, so enjoy a certain exclusivity.

Contact Corin at the domaine (91 Av Jean Jaures MAURY) on 04 30 15 41 60 to sample his wine; you can also find Vella Frontera wines at Aubergine, Auberge du Chene,

MAUREILLAS - Aux Vins 4 Canons,

24 Bd Clemenceau, PERPIGNAN -

Cave Gustuma,

11 Av de la

Mediterranee

CANET

If you drink,  
don't drive.  
Don't even putt.

Dean Martin



## Wine recommendations

### Cave Cooperative in Trouillas.

Seasonal bubbles and fizz with Cantarene white (at just over 5€) or Cantarene rosé (at just over 7€). It is excellent! Dry and festive, this local champagne-method wine is considerably better value/quality/price than many "real" champagnes.

Or why not try the 'sweet and low' Dizzy? As opposed to alco-pops this light (5°), fizzy Muscat contains no nasty ees or additives and can be drunk straight from the bottle like beer. It is refreshing, fun and very festive (3.90€)

### Côtes de Roussillon Villages

For just over 9€ Cuvée Huguot de Caraman, 2005 from Caramany is a gold medal winner of Macon 2008 and competes happily with many a Bordeaux or Chateaufort at twice the price. Matured in new oak barrels, its full, deep-bodied peppery tones reflect the hand picked Grenache Noir, Syrah and

Carignan grapes harvested on the sun burnt, wind beaten slopes of Caramany vineyards. The supple rich red flavours add pleasure to any seasonal feast. Available from ... Caveau du château, Châteaufort de Salses, and, if you are lucky, your local Champion.

### AUBERGE du CELLIER Montner

Pierre Louis Marin, owner of the Auberge du Cellier in Montner is an inspired chef. His wife greets you and takes you to one of the eight or so tables covered with crisp linen.

✓ The choice on both menu and wine list is impressive.

Starting at 24 euros for 3 course weekday lunches, the menus rise to 39, 59, and 70 euros for longer lunches or dinners. The food is locally produced and most of it organic. You know it will be delicious.

✓ The huge wine list of over 150 Roussillon wines, Champagnes, Bordeaux and Burgundies is reasonably priced, ranging from 15 - 40 euros although you can spend 340 euros on a single bottle should you wish.

✓ Our amuse geule of pureed pumpkin soup, a swirl of garlic cream topped with a tiny edible mauve flower, accompanied by various mini home made breads augured well and the starters were perfect, both in presentation and content. The finely sliced salmon on the 24 euro menu had red salmon eggs scattered over it and was flavoured faintly with fennel. My foie gras and ceps was mouth wateringly good, some ceps finely sliced and raw, the rest cooked and pureed. We shared a delicious trout course before moving on to duck breast and saddle of hare with roast autumn fruits and crisp vegetables. I could not



count the number of cheeses on the cheese board but know that chevre, brebis and vache were well represented and all local. We had watched tall soufflés, intricate little baskets of fruit, home made sorbets and chocolate confections heading off to other tables. When our turn came we were not disappointed.

Our fresh figs topped with home made cassis sorbet and sitting in crème patisserie on a shortbread base were faultless. Then coffee, with dark chocolate full of raisins and chopped almonds. Home made, of course. From time to time Pierre Louis Marin would emerge from the kitchen to see that all was well and that we were enjoying the feast he, and his minute team (one sous-chef and an apprentice), were creating for us. We were.

✓ A meal at the Auberge du Cellier is a real treat (although it costs little more than a tank full of petrol), the food and wine top quality, the service discreet and friendly, and, should you want to stay the night the rooms with views across the rolling vineyards are a very reasonable 60 odd euros.

Montner, in the heart, of the Côtes de Roussillon Villages, is just a 25mins drive from Perpignan airport. Perfect for a weekend of wine-tasting, walking touring and relaxing.

*Closed from 12 November-12 December, open Christmas Day, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. 04 68290978. English spoken.*



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| Formule<br><b>MEDIUM</b> | 3 html page, 8 to 15 pictures<br>unlimited text | 230 € |
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|---------------------------|---|-------|
| Formule<br><b>INTENSE</b> | 1 flash movie clip on 1st page<br>6 html page, unlimited text<br>& pictures | 400 € |
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## Winter Sports

### In the High Pyrénées!

A

December or January day

out in the mountains can be pretty invigorating. And the winter sporting possibilities in the P O are many:

**L**es Neiges Catalanes offers a fixed price ticket for 8 resorts and 4 cross country areas giving you access to 288 kms of Alpine skiing, 107 ski lifts, 360 kms of cross country, 13 ski schools and 10 snow parks. 1330 snow blowers make sure you will have plenty of snow even if the winter is a mild one. [www.neigescatalanes.com](http://www.neigescatalanes.com)

**T**he joy of the Pyrenean resorts is that they are super friendly, very family orientated and, of course, you can drive to them in an hour or two. The **skiing** may not be quite as challenging as the Alps but the slopes are well tended and, for the middle to beginner skier, perfect.

**F**or **boarders** the snow parks have half pipes, slide kick and box ramps galore and the region is famous for its competitions. The cross country ski runs through breathtaking scenery are long and varied.

**S**now shoeing (randonnées en raquettes) can be fun. Snow shoes used to be used by trappers and fur traders. Although forest rangers still wear them, their use has become predominantly recreational, the freedom they give enabling one to get around areas of deep snow-fall. Take a guide and discover the tracks of wild animals and birds, enjoy the calm rhythm of the countryside and closeness to nature. Mike and Jenny Rhodes of Pyrenean Trails [www.pyrenean-trails.com](http://www.pyrenean-trails.com) can not only accompany you but can arrange a lunchtime barbeque picnic halfway through the day or an overnight in a mountain refuge in the majestic scenery they know so well.

**S**now-shoeing is strenuous. A more leisurely way to swoosh through the snow is on a **husky drawn sled-**ge. *Husky Forever* at Matmale 0687760266 or *Drakkar*

*Traineau Adventure* in Font Romeu 0608628745 are the people to contact for that activity.

**O**r you could hire a **four wheeled mountain bike** and follow well bashed trails through the forests. Both ecologically sound and original, *le Quad VTT* can be hired by ringing 0688582716.

**O**r why not take to the skies??? **Kite skiing** is pretty exciting! You can see a demo on December 21<sup>st</sup> at La Llagone. The sun, the thermals and the Tramontane all combine to make C.KITE on 0614598087 another must ring number for an extraordinary winter sporting experience.

**S**ki'n co will **fly you tandem** for an unforgettable view of the mountains and teach you all you need to know about winter paragliding. . . They have also started *biathlon* which literally means a combination of any two sports but in this case the two sports are cross country skiing and rifle shooting. Ring 0468300779 or Fred on 0674824349 for details. Vol'aime (0468301010) also arrange paragliding courses for all levels.

**I**f the sky is not to your taste you could go **diving** beneath the ice of Lake Matmale with the Rederis dive club of Banyuls sur Mer. Contact Gilles on 06 11 58 52 28 for a bit of plongee sous glace!

**H**ot Baths! How relaxing! Both at St Thomas les Bains 0468970313, off the N116 at Fontpedrouse or at Llo 0468047455, off the N116, 2kms east of Saillagousse, well ordered, naturally hot sulphurous water fills the baths and invites long soaking and lazy swimming in the open air. Beauty treatments and massage are available by appointment. For a more rustic version try Dorres 0468046687, 10 kms north of Bourg-Madame. The ancient Roman baths there at 1450 metres have splendid views of Carlit and the mountain frontier.

**A**ll in all a day out in the mountains can be as extreme or relaxing as you chose, or a delightful combination of whatever you want to make it. Time to head up the N116 and see for yourselves!



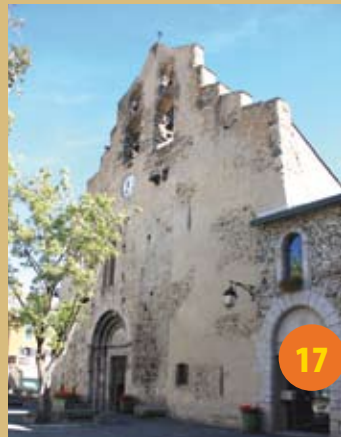
The old village is centred round the church of St Michel, several fountains and the remains of the XIII c tower of the chateau. Some attractive old houses are now mainly gites, restaurants and hotels although some are still lived in by local farmers, their cellars full of potatoes. The new village is full of sports shops, head for the **Le Chalet du Ski** almost opposite the ski school complex and benefit from the reduction on ski hire available for those armed with a copy of P O Life.



King Sanch would not have had the advantages of the Ski Station. 4kms from the village itself, with a huge carpark and a **free navette** in French school holiday weeks, it is a superb **family holiday ski resort**. All the runs return to the base where a large cafeteria with vast sunny terrace, a crèche for under threes, sports and ski hire shops and the possibility to leave ski equipment over night make life so easy and relaxing. There is a free button lift for those who are checking if skiing is their thing, there is a **ski school**. The swoon-



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bouse are the  
highest in France  
and a visit there is a  
fascinating and very  
beautiful experience:  
0468309555.





Built in the local impenetrable pink marble, Fort Liberia, with defensive interior walls of soft brick to absorb cannon balls and internal corridors in the massively thick outer walls from which to fire on

Actually, the fort has seen more use as a prison than a fort. Although both Liberia and the views from it are stupendous, two women "poisoners" banished from Louis XIV's court of

At the end of your visit it is possible to descend to the town by a 1000 step **subterranean staircase** bringing you out where the little **Yellow Train** passes the fortified walls of Villefranche on the start of its climb to Latour de Carol. The train line opened in 1908 and a ride on the Yellow Train is now one of the most popular tourist attractions in the Pyrénées Orientales!





Ille sur Têt was an important religious centre in Medieval times. Now the huge cathedral-like church of St Etienne seems way out of proportion to the narrow streets that surround it. Inside the grand pink

marble doorway the vast nave is dark. In the gloom the gold on the altars and side altars gleams. There is a Cross des Outrages, a huge organ, many paintings. Outside the atmosphere is lighter. There are several small but pretty squares. There is an impressive tower made from the same river stones as the equally impressive ramparts.

In the Hospici d'Ille, now the Centre of Sacred Art, passing pilgrims used to be cared for and resuscitated. In their small sleeping alcoves, statues, crosses and altars are displayed. All the information you need on the abundant Baroque Religious art in the Têt Valley

is available here. But, for me, the most interesting objects on view are the frescoes of the little chapel of Casenoves.

The fresco fiasco began in the ruined village of Casenoves. Across the bridge on the road to Belesta, a small road on the left runs along by the river. It is a popular picnic spot. Continue along the road till a sign informs you you have almost reached the XI century chapel of St Sauveur containing some of the oldest frescoes in Europe. (Falls of rock mean you have to walk the last few metres). The chapel is surrounded by ancient olive groves, the remains of the village of Casenoves and a tall square tower. The church is usually locked. Too late! The frescoes that used to decorate its walls have gone. In 1953 an unscrupulous art dealer, read of the frescoes and, with the

blessing of the then Mayor of Ille, bought them for a pittance. He sold them on. This did not go unnoticed. The Mayor and several Councillors left under a cloud. Recognising their loss, efforts were made to recover them, but the dealer was dead, all efforts were fruitless. Eventually most of them were found in Switzerland, and, since 1997 have been on show in the Hospici.

In Ille sur Têt is impossible to ignore the strange limestone cliffs dominating the landscape. Follow the road to Belesta and turn right by the builders merchants. You will arrive at Les Orgues d'Ille. The amazing "Cheminées des Fées" have been sculpted by nature over the last five million years. Similar in appearance to those found in Cappadocia in Turkey, they form a natural amphitheatre that is a paradise for photographers, a haven for birds and provides a fascinating walk for the many visitors who follow the well laid out trail. You will be given a hel-

pful leaflet as you enter but, really, the incredible scenery speaks for itself.

Back in Ille itself a visit to the Musée du Pompier is fun. The old fire engines, uniforms and equipment as well as the collection of over 2000 miniature vehicles plus a video takes at least an hour. 04 6884 0354

In nearby St Michel de Llores the Musée de l'Agriculture Catalane is a must. All the tools and machinery used when the difficult mountain terrain was cultivated are there. Easy to imagine the village, long before WW1 decimated the male population, when the hills were alive with the sound of threshing and charcoal burning, of vineyards worked by mule and cork forests harvested. The 400 or more items are well set out and the tale they tell is fascinating. 04 6884 7640. If you need a break for lunch, try Entre Mers, place de la République, 0468842595.



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Répetez cinq fois ! **Virelangue**

Trois tortues trottaient  
sur trois toits très étroits

## Trouvez la bonne définition

### 1. accoucher

- a) to go to bed
- b) to have a baby
- c) Bless you! (sneeze)

### 2. dégager

- a) to break an engagement
- b) to keep somebody quiet
- c) to clear the way

### 3. ortie

- a) nettle
- b) big toe
- c) should do (Scottish)

### 4. selle

- a) salt
- b) sole (of shoe)
- c) bicycle seat

### 5. écharde

- a) shallot
- b) sample
- c) splinter

Comment  
appelle-t-on  
un vieux  
bonhomme  
de neige ?  
Une flaque

### ✓ ALLER CHEZ ou ALLER À (au - aux) ?

|                  |                                |
|------------------|--------------------------------|
| chez + person    | <i>Je vais chez le docteur</i> |
|                  | <i>il va chez le boulanger</i> |
| à/au/aux + place | <i>je vais à l'hôpital</i>     |
|                  | <i>il va à la boulangerie</i>  |

## Remplissez les blancs

Pendant un **1**, un ventriloque dit à sa **2** « Alors, tu vas **3** raconter une petite **4** ? »  
La marionnette **5** « Oui! C'est l'histoire d'une blonde... »  
Soudain une blonde **6** lève dans la salle et crie « Ah non. Pas de blagues sur les blondes, j'en ai **7** de me faire ridiculiser! »  
Le ventriloque, mal à l'aise, répond « Excusez-moi, madame... On fait ça juste pour s'**8** ! »  
La blonde répond « Mais non, c'est pas à toi **9** je parle, c'est au petit vilain à **10** de toi !  
a Spectacle - b marre - c blague - d amuser - e marionnette  
- f côté - g se - h nous - i que - j répond

### ✓ To send your good wishes to someone....

Meilleurs souvenirs à ... / Passez le bonjour à ... / Bisous à ...

...and for your Christmas greetings....

Joyeux Noël – Merry Christmas

Bonne Année et Bonne Santé – Happy New Year and Good Health

Joyeuses Fêtes et Bonne Année – Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

Paix, joie et amitié – Peace, joy and friendship

Bonheur, santé et prospérité – Good luck, health and prosperity

## Work out the translation of these French text language shorties

|          |    |   |                           |
|----------|----|---|---------------------------|
| A+       | 1  | a | it is...                  |
| A12C4    | 2  | b | who, what                 |
| a2m1     | 3  | c | I bought some wine        |
| C        | 4  | d | I'm sad                   |
| GHT2V1   | 5  | e | See you later             |
| Ct       | 6  | f | Are you busy?             |
| SNIF     | 7  | g | See you one of these days |
| TOQP     | 8  | h | I have...                 |
| G        | 9  | i | it was...                 |
| ki, koi? | 10 | j | see you tomorrow          |

### Useful saying

Nous ne sommes pas  
sortis de l'auberge

We are not out of the  
woods yet



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VARY YOUR LANGUAGE!

Don't say ... non  
Say...  
absolument pas  
bien sûr que non  
certainement pas  
je crois que non  
non et non !  
pas du tout  
pas question

## ANSWERS TO 'TEST YOUR FRENCH' PO Life n°19

- 1 1b 2a 3c 4c
- 2 1c (take off) 2d (spa treatment) 3a trap 4b (go for walk) 5e (place)
- 3 1c 2g 3i 4e 5f 6d 7j 8h 9a 10b

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# Améliorez votre Anglais

Répétez cinq fois ! Tongue twister

Six slippery snails,  
slid slowly south

✓ Pour envoyer vos vœux de Noël...

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

Best wishes for a happy and prosperous New Year.

Season's greetings with all good wishes for the New Year

Vocabulaire

Ne dites pas... no  
Dites... absolutely not

nothing doing

no chance

of course not

certainly not

no way

no can do

## Trouvez le bon sens des ces phrases poilues!

- |                       |                                    |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 to split hairs      | a s'écarter                        |
| hair of the dog       | b effrayant                        |
| by a hair's breadth   | c remède contre un gueule de bois  |
| to let your hair down | d un tournant en épingle de cheveu |
| hair-raising          | e couper un cheveu en quatre       |
| a hair pin bend       | f d'un poil                        |

✓ To make up

1 He made up the whole story (inventer)

2 She made up her face (se maquiller)

3 Let's kiss and make up (se reconcilier)

4 They made up for lost time (se rattraper)

5 I will make it up to you (compenser)

## Trouvez les contraires

- |              |                |
|--------------|----------------|
| 2 absent     | a to spend     |
| accidentally | b attic        |
| to deny      | c awake        |
| natural      | d compulsory   |
| asleep       | e artificial   |
| cellar       | f to admit     |
| worst        | g entrance     |
| to save      | h to melt      |
| sharp        | i blunt        |
| to freeze    | j present      |
| voluntary    | k deliberately |
| exit         | l best         |

What goes  
"oh, oh, oh"?

Santa walking  
backwards

Which TWO  
of the following are  
NOT Santa's reindeer?  
(rennes)

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Two hunters are 1 in the woods when one of 2 collapses. He doesn't seem to be 3 and his eyes are 4. The other man pulls out his 5 and calls the 6 services.

"Operator. Help me. My friend is dead! What can I 7?" The operator replies in a soothing voice "Calm 8. Take it 9. First, let's make sure he's dead." There is a silence, then a shot is 10 Back on the phone, the hunter says, "OK, What next?"

a breathing b do c mobile d them e glazed f down g heard. h out i easy j emergency

## Réponses d'Améliorez votre Anglais PO Life n° 19

1 1 Can you tell me the way to the airport. 2 Do you need a hand? 3 I am hoping to visit Britain next year  
4 I speak a little English 5 Ryanair is one of the low cost airlines 1b 2a (walking) 3 c 4 b

2 1 Both wines are quite expensive 2 the invitation is for both of you 3 we both enjoy a nap in the  
afternoon 4 You are 3 1h (un sou c'est un sou) 2e (quand les poules auront les dents) 3b (c'est facile)

3 4j (il pleut des cordes) 5i (J'ai un chat dans la gorge) 6g (vous me faites marcher) 7c (il est fou) 8f  
(Impossible n'est pas français) 9a (vouloir c'est pouvoir) 10d (chat échaudé craint l'eau froide)

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



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## Olive industry REBORN IN THE PO



According to one of the many olive legends, Hercules, during the course of his labours, rested his mighty club on the ground. From it sprouted an olive tree. Once his labours were successfully completed, he took his tree to Olympia and planted an olive orchard for the gods. Reputedly the first in the Mediterranean.

Since then they have been an important cash crop all around the Med. Indeed, in 1870 there were 108 olive oil mills in the P O alone. Then the terrible winter of



1956 destroyed almost all the olive trees. Olive orchards were rooted up and vines planted. Spain survived and now accounts for more than 40% of world production. Since 1994, a programme of grants has encouraged the resurgence of the olive oil industry in France. It takes **five years from planting the trees to harvesting** the first crop of olives.

For eight years, crossing the plain between Trouillas and Mas Sabole, I have watched tiny olive saplings grow into fine olive trees. Last year a sign announcing *Vente d'Huile d'Olive* appeared. Similar signs are cropping up all over the département. Olive Oil is once again being produced commercially by men passionate about the oil they produce. Christian Pouil of la *Ferme avicole de la Canterrane* is one such man. His 9 hectares have just begun producing oil. His trees are planted 7 metres apart to allow natural development and to ensure maximum sunshine to the fruit. He explained how he waits for the exact moment in late October when his olives are **1/3 green, 1/3 violet and 1/3 black to start the harvest**. Black olives give more oil but the quality suffers. Too green, not enough flavour. There should be no worms, minimum leaves and twigs in the olives sent to the mill.

He knows all his trees personally. Chicken shit from his egg farm produces the only fertiliser he uses and very effective it is too. When they are ready, his olives are shaken into nets without touching the ground and taken **straight to the mill at Millas**. He picks up the oil the next day. He assured me

there was no risk of them being muddled with any olives less carefully grown or gathered. He would collect the precious oil as soon as it had been extracted and return to Les Oliviers de la Canterrane where it would stand for three months to allow any sediment to sink before bottling.

I went to the Millas. In the old building of *La Catalane* is a museum and shop, and, on a nearby industrial estate, in the modern mill were Christian Pouil's olives, about to enter the complex stainless steel machinery to have their oil extracted. Thanks to rising fuel prices it is no longer cost effective to send the stones and mush to Spain where they would extract the last dregs of oil to be added to inferior cooking oils. Instead, at Millas, a new machine makes fantastic fuel for central heating out of the stones and the mush is used as excellent compost. **Nothing is wasted.**



### The mills

*The number of mills in the Pyrénées Orientales is growing. In 1976 La Catalane at Millas was the only one. Now they are springing up all over the place. At nearby Mas Saint Pierre for example, Monique and Joseph Planes have the latest in oil extracting machinery and 30 hectares of olive trees. New "oliveraies" start with new trees, chosen carefully from the 600 varieties available. The olive, the terroir and the method of culture all contribute to the taste of the olive oil. At all the mills you are made welcome and will be given a tasting and guided tour.*



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## GARALART

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Artlife

A new, surprisingly diverse gallery has opened in Céret.

Its name is a contraction of Gare A L'Art, as it's in an old industrial building 150 metres west of the former railway station.

Garalart features works for sale by seven artists of the Vallespir, the valley of the Tech River that extends westward from its mouth at St. Jean. The works include **pottery, crystal, furnishings, jewellery, apparel, shoes, paintings and sculpture**. The genre varies, reflecting local roots: the vigatanes court shoes with ankle laces are made from rope soles and sailcloth uppers manufactured since 1860 in the PO, and a variety of garments are made from colourful sailcloth and from mohair from local goats. Flair pervades: the feet of chair and table legs are shaped like human feet, wearing shoes. Garalart occasionally **hosts exhibitions** by other artists and theme evenings of poetry and music. Open since last

September 6th, its **official opening** is at 6 pm on **Saturday, 6 December**.



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