

P-O Life

Life in the Pyrénées Orientales



Festivals and Traditions
**FERIAS, FANFARES
AND BANDAS**



Restaurant Reviews
**A SUMMER
SELECTION**



SUMMER 2013
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Edito...

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Summer is a funny old time for P-O Life. There are so many restaurants to introduce, festivals and days out to delight, activities and adventure to excite, that we don't have any space left for the practicalities of life. Oh! (Big sigh) What a shame. We shall just have to force ourselves to put up with the obligatory 'apéro' on a balmy evening, wine tastings, beer and music festivals, street entertainment, sardanes, castellers, correfocs, gégants... and save all the serious stuff for autumn! In fact, there is so much going on in the summer that we have abandoned our usual 'What's On' guide and put a detailed events listing on the website at www.anglophone-direct.com instead, so don't forget to pop in for a daily peek at the myriad of entertainment around the region

In this edition, Louise lusts after lettuce, Katja cracks for canals, Victoria vociferates for Sainte Marie, Henry hoorays for the bandas, John jets.....I know, I'm getting silly.....but what I am really trying to say is a big, big thank you to all who have contributed to P-O Life this summer, with articles, suggestions and support, copy reading, distribution.... It is your input that makes P-O Life so special!

Have a wonderful summer

Kate

PS Do take care this summer around any form of fire. One stray spark from a cigarette or BBQ not properly supervised can cause catastrophe. In case of fire, ring 18 or 112



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Walk the region...

with Mike Rhodes



COL MITJA

Col Mitja between Gallinas on the left and Redoun on the right

COL MITJA 2367M, PIC DE GALLINAS 2624M OR PIC REDOUN 2677M FROM PRATS BALAGUER 1309M.

Each day I look from our house in Les Angles at Col Mitja and the perfectly symmetrical peaks of Gallinas and Redoun on either side and wonder if you could paint a better picture.

Fortunately this walk starts from the pretty village of Prats Balaguer (GPS 31N 432043E 4705497N) with its picturesque 11th century church and provides a superb day out with a variety of choices for mixed ability groups, with several starting points and summit options. It is also possible to descend into the Caranca Gorge or stay a night at the Refuge de Caranca.

Getting there: Prats Balaguer is just off the road between Prades and Mont Louis. Follow the N116 to Fontpedrouse. Just after the village, signs take you left on the D28, ignoring the turn to St Thomas le Bain, and climb up to Prats Balaguer.

The Walk: From Prats involves a climb of 1000m to the col and a further 300m to



one of the summits so some parties may wish to park beyond Prats at "Le Bassin" at 1645m (GPS 31N 432716E 4703181N). (13kms from Prats to Col Mitja and return, 6 hours walking.) Allow additional time if you wish to climb one of the peaks. If parking at the Bassin, allow 6 hours return including one of the peaks.

From Prats, follow the track east for 250m and then to the right for a further 420m to where a track branches off to the left, S and then E, climbing steadily, taking the R fork in the track after 20 mins.

Arriving at the crest of the ridge of Pic Coucouroucouil, 1585m, veer S and climb the SE flank of the ridge to 1970m where the track descends slightly before climbing again to rejoin the ridge at 1995m. A

APLECS

An 'aplec', Catalan for a gathering or mass meeting, traditionally used to involve a religious pilgrimage to a chapel or a hermitage, usually on a Saint's day or religious festival when the heavens were likely to be at their most receptive! Today the term is also used for more popular get-togethers such as the meeting of dancers to perform the sardane.

further 5 mins sees us at the Collet d'Avall 1996m where we join the cross Pyrenees route GR10. After 2 – 2 ½ hours of walking this col makes a great mid-morning stop with views over the Capcir and Tet valley.

From the collet it is possible to follow a wide track all the way to Col Mitja but our route now follows the well way marked GR10 route for another hour to the col, crossing the jeep track at various points. (3 – 3 ½ hours walking.)

From the col we are confronted with several options. Pic de Gallinas (GPS 31N 435492E 4703167N) to the L and Redoun (GPS 31N 434664E 4701733N) to the R are both just less than an hours walk but both offer the most fantastic views from the top. For those wanting to do a circuit via the Caranca Gorge, descend the other side of the pass on good tracks. Towards the bottom the path turns right to the refuge de Caranca 1831m where you may be able to get lunch or stay overnight. There is no phone at the refuge so making a reservation here involves a lot of pre-planning. Just before the refuge you will find the path on the L to Thues Entre Valls via the Caranca gorge taking 3 ½ hours.

Whichever route you chose, from the Col Mitja we are faced with more choices on the descent. It is possible to retrace our steps back to Prats or from Collet d'Avall, either continue descending the jeep track to the parking spot at Bassin or, just below the collet take the footpath



The view south from the descent route. Pics are Pic Monellet 2727m (L) & Pic de Raco Petit 2785m (R).

to the L through the forest following the GR10 to Bassin. Both routes take about 90 mins to Bassin. From the LH side of the Bassin pick up a good track that descends towards Prats. In 2 ½ km we join a jeep track by a ruined building "Le Castell" 1388m and Prats is now in view another 10 mins further on.

Whichever route you have chosen you will have had a fantastic day out and will have seen opportunities for further walks in the valleys and peaks to the south towards the Spanish border.

On your drive down from Prats why not stop off at St Thomas le Bain for a dip in the hot pool or for a free dip, park at the first hairpin bend below Prats and take a track to the R where you will find a "source" which you may need to share with like minded people. ☀

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

Did you know...?

For more than 60 years, the Pablo Casals Festival has presented inspiring annual concerts by great musicians in the beautiful abbey of Saint-Michel de Cuxà and other churches in the Prades area. The great cellist himself participated up to the age of 90. A staunch supporter of peace and freedom, he fled Franco's Spain to settle in Prades. Over his long career, he played for Queen Victoria in England and President Roosevelt and President Kennedy at the White House in America, amongst many others.

26th July - 13th August 2013 www.prades-festival-casals.com



HEAD FOR THE SHELTERS!

No, really...don't! When you hear the emergency sirens which blast out regularly in small towns and villages around the region, no need to move a muscle unless it's to raise that cold beer to your lips! This national network of 4,500 sirens is called the 'réseau national d'alerte' (RNA), a warning system which is tested on the first Wednesday of each month at midday, for one minute. Short sequences are also used in some communes to alert volunteer firemen to man their posts for fire or accident.

On the other hand, **DO panic** if you hear the siren sound in three sequences of 1 minute each, separated by a silence of five-seconds. This warns of 'imminent and major catastrophe'!



Twelve pound bill for WW2 escapee!

RAF Sergeant Leslie John Faircloth parachuted to safety when he was shot down on a bombing raid on the outskirts of Paris in 1944. Hidden by a local, and provided with false papers, he was eventually put on a train at the Gare de Lyon, destination Perpignan. The journey took five days.

Unable to find willing locals to help him to cross the Pyrenees, he walked from Thuir to Le Boulou, where he was betrayed and handed to the Germans. He escaped - and continued his trip via Céret, and on to La Jonquera where he was picked up by a Spanish militia patrol, who took him to Figueras, interrogated him, and handed him over to the British Vice-Consul from Gerona.

The British Vice Consul gave Leslie around £12 for essentials while waiting to get home. Some months later Leslie received a letter from HM Government asking for the 'loan' to be re-paid. Not quite the returning hero's welcome he had expected! Nevertheless, he and his wife celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary in May 2012.

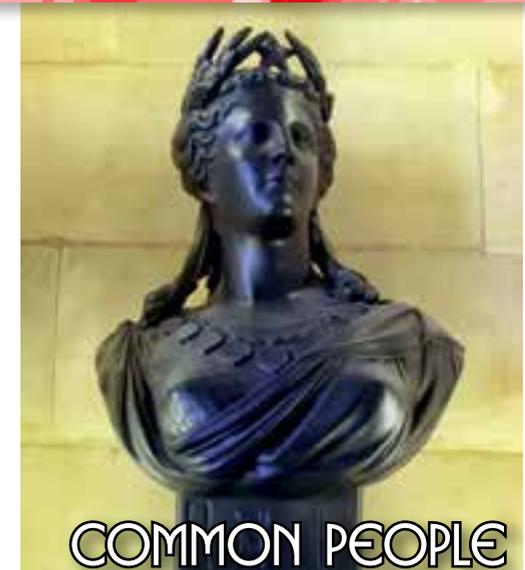
What a difference a D Day makes!

Have you ever wondered what the D in D Day stands for? Simple! (click click) It stands for 'day' exactly the same as the french equivalent 'Jour J' and the Spanish 'Día D'.



Released in 2009, the film 'Vertige' was filmed in the Font Romeu region and around the Lac des Bouillouses.

A group of friends on a climbing holiday in Croatia decide to try a trail high up in the mountains that has been closed for repairs. The climb proves more perilous than planned, especially as they soon realize that they are not alone.



COMMON PEOPLE

Look out for her in town halls, on bank notes, medals...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.



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The Céret Feria

a cock and bull story BY SIMON NEWMAN

Yes, it's that time again. As the Feria draws to a close it's time again to reflect on the traditional running in the streets of Céret. There was a two-legged creature that roared around charged up on cheap wine and testosterone, and oh yes, some young bulls scampered about too. Now I have to confess that for most of my time in this region I've gone along with the whole thing, enthusiastically even. This is not the Corrida after all, with its carefully choreographed, ritualised slaughter. No, this is just a bit of harmless fun, tradition, spectacle, excitement, drama. Isn't it?

Well, I recently reminded myself what it was all about by reviewing a video clip I took a couple of years back. About a half a dozen beefy lads had wrestled a young bull to the ground and kept it pinned down for a good minute or so whilst triumphantly grinning at each other through an

alcoholic haze. It wasn't a pretty sight. And not much of a contest either. The out-numbered and over-powered beast couldn't move an inch. All of this in the name of entertainment.

When I freeze-framed the video I could see a look of what I can only describe as blind terror in the animal's eyes. It was high on adrenaline, in fight-or-flight mode though prevented from doing either. It couldn't possibly know that within a few more seconds it was going to be released, as indeed it was, unharmed - if that's the right word to use in such circumstances. For all the poor creature knew its end was nigh.

Or was I completely misinterpreting events? Superimposing my human preconceptions about dread and fear on to this bonny bovine who might have actually been enjoying the whole experience

for all I knew. And let's not forget the lads. Any one of them could have been seriously injured. Deep gashes to the forehead welling with blood are regular sights, proudly paraded as evidence of a rite of passage. So does this risk-taking by these modern day gladiators balance the account? Is it okay because they've knowingly put their necks on the line?

I know what I think but I don't want to be a party-pooper. It is a huge tourist attraction and there's no doubting that the atmosphere is pretty amazing. So while I think it's time for change, what I'm proposing for next year would actually be a big improvement. Something that would be much more enjoyable and yes, more sporting too, with the same if not a greater potential for thrills, spills and, oh yes, blood-letting too.

Here's what I have in mind. Most spectators agree that the magnificent Camargue horses and their supremely skilled riders are the real stars of Céret's July spectacular. So, let's have pairs of well-up-for-it lads (there'll be alcohol checks of course, to ensure they've drunk enough) occupying the front and rear of jauntily-spotted pantomime-bull outfits being chased around the streets by the Camargue horses, encouraged by judicious prods from the



riders' long wooden poles duly sharpened for the occasion. Last man standing wins an exquisite 6cm high plastic/chromium-effect trophy and priority boarding on the sapeurs/pompiers meat wagon.

It would be much more evenly balanced than the current format - and so much more fun!

Inscrivez-vous ici, mes braves. ☀





There's just too much going on this summer to even begin to put it all down on paper without leaving someone or something out.... so we haven't!



Instead, we offer detailed events listings on www.anglophone-direct.com and www.bibimob.com. Between the two, you'll be spoilt for choice for where to go and what to do this season. Enjoy!

ps. Zap the bar code with your smart phone to take you directly to our events page

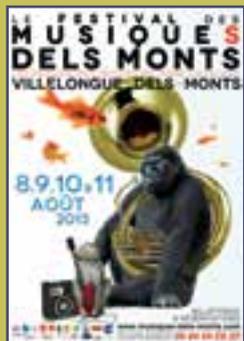


Musiques Dels Monts

Thurs 8th - Sun 11th Aug
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www.musiques-dels-monts.com



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Highlights

- Wednesday 7th:** 7.30pm Apéro Musical followed at 8.30pm by a "Grande Soirée Exotique" and dinner dance.
- Thursday 8th:** 16h30 'Amélie en fête' with all group
- Friday 9th:** "La Magie des Cultures" - folklorique music from around the world
- Saturday 10th:** "Le Carrefour du Monde"
- Sunday 11th:** Closing Galla with all the groups performing an extravaganza of music and dance from all continents

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FANFARES AND BANDAS DOING IT IN THE STREET

With Henry Shaftoe

If you have been to many public outdoor events in the region, you will probably have come across one or more acoustic bands in matching or themed outfits, consisting of wind instruments and percussion. Unlike their military counterparts, these are likely to be enthusiastic groups of local amateurs. So any roughness round the musical edges is made up for by their "joie de vivre"

In the P.O. region these bands will be either "fanfares" or "bandas". "Fanfares" are a very French phenomenon, often having their origins in the Beaux Arts faculties of Universities – once graduated, the ex-students continue to play together and dress up in wacky outfits!

Fanfares to watch out for around Perpignan are "Boutifanfare" and "Fanfarefelue" amongst others.

"Bandas" tend to be rather more straightforward in their dress sense and, as the name suggests, come from the Iberian tradition of village or town bands. So, as is often the case round these parts, we get the best of two cultures: French and Catalan.

Whether "Banda" or "Fanfare", you will hear a wide ranging repertoire; everything from traditional folk and dance melodies to rough and ready versions of pop classics!

For a chance to see and hear fanfares in convivial



surroundings, head down to Collioure on the weekend of 1st and 2nd June, when the streets and squares will be filled with the sounds and colourful sights of a number of these bright and bubbly bands.

Perpignan has an annual "Jazzebre" festival – mostly jazz sessions, as the name suggests, but with various spin-offs, one of which is the formation of a "Grande Fanfare du Festival Jazzebre". This year, this specially formed supersize Fanfare will be performing in the centre of Perpignan on Sunday 16 June and during the main festival on Saturday 28 September.

These events enliven the streets and it's all free! Just follow the sounds for colour and musical fun. ☀





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Restaurant Reviews

with
John Fairclough

A Summer Selection...

FIVE RESTAURANTS IN FRANCE AND SPAIN,



For many, an integral part of Summer in the PO is a tasty meal in the company of friends and family. Fortunately, it's not too difficult to find restaurants that serve up consistently good or excellent cuisine in picturesque surroundings with friendly attentive service, without the silly prices too often found in many popular tourist spots. In this summer issue I've visited five restaurants in France and Spain, which, although fundamentally different in location and atmosphere, have a consistent track record of providing good, tasty food at moderate prices.



Photo Laurent LACOMBE

perfectly cooked magret of duck as mains. As the sweets are made to order, you are asked to pick one from the outset to avoid delays. The top 39€ menu is also just two choices on each course, but with more expensive ingredients. Short, but well-chosen wine list, and fabulous, well-priced pichet wine from the popular Piquemal winery. All in all, at long last, a fine restaurant fitting for a town of Céret's calibre.

12 rue St Ferreol, 66400 Céret. 0468

95 47 41 [www.atelier-restaurant-](http://www.atelier-restaurant-ceret.com)

ceret.com Open every day except Sun eve and all day Mon. >>

First up, we head for the ever-popular town of Céret and a brand new establishment, **L'ATELIER DE FRED**, run by Fred, the ex-chef from the much lamented Michelin star Feuillants restaurant. Right in the heart of the town, it is a small, intimate place with a modern, comfortable ambience. Imaginative cuisine, using market fresh ingredients is very much the order of the day, with the daily changing lunchtime formule (19€ for two courses, 23€ for three) an excellent value introduction. Evenings see a choice of two Menus, both of which change monthly. The lead in at 28€ featured either citrus marinated salmon or home made foie gras terrine for starters, with either superbly fresh loin of cod or

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2



Next, we pop over the border to **LA GAVIOTA** in the small, but lively Costa Brava resort of L'Estartit. A stone's throw from the wide sandy beach, this is an ideal place for a good meal while on a seaside jaunt. There is a very comfortable and spotlessly clean main dining area done out in pale wood panelling. Also a small outside patio overlooking the beach. All the staff seem to speak excellent

English and service is prompt even during busy sessions. The menus range from a daily lunch menu at 15€ which includes a starter, choice of meat or fish, dessert and a glass of wine. Better value, to my mind, is the 20€ offering which also changes daily. On our visit, there was a choice of 5 different starters including a plate of small fried fish and an artichoke and king prawn warm salad. Examples of mains were suckling pig tenderloin, roast veal, hake basque style and a paella type rice dish. Sweets were imaginative by Spanish standards. The price for two includes a bottle of the highly regarded Espelt wine. For those looking for something more extravagant there is the 5 course 49€ deal which features a fresh fish course followed by lobster.

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Food & drink Restaurant Reviews



3
Back in France, in the Albères village of Palau del Vidre is the **ANCIENNE ECOLE**. As the name implies it is housed in the old stone built village school-house, and many of the original features remain. There is a lunch plat du jour menu for 16€. Evening food is served in a "formule" fashion, with a carte of starters, fish courses, meat courses and sweets. All permutations are possible, but, for

example, starter + main is 27€ and adding a sweet bumps it up to 33€. The food varies from week to week, but when we went examples of starters were goats cheese profiteroles and a beef tartare with avocado mousse. Mains included red mullet with summer veg and filet mignon of pork with cardamon butter. Much time appears to be spent making the tasty and imaginatively presented food look pretty on a slate board... maybe a little too much in fact, as our main courses

were delicious but just luke warm by the time they arrived at the table. Service is brisk, perhaps a little quick for some tastes. A good selection of wines is offered at reasonable prices with pichet wine available for those who prefer.

20 av Joliot Curie, 66690 Palau del Vidre
0468 22 34 09 www.ancienne-ecole.fr Open every day except Sun Eve and All day Mon. >>



4
A few km away, in the pleasant town of Thuir, just off the main square can be found **LA CASA DALIE**, owned by talented toque blanche chef David Carcaiso. A cosy stone clad dining room edging on to the open kitchen features an adventurous carte, many of whose dishes find their way onto the array of menus on offer. There is a lunchtime formule at

15€, and in the evening, in addition to a menu catalane at 29€ and an "eat what you like off the carte" arrangement at 43€, there is an ever changing 21€ entry level one, which we plumped for. Starters included an imaginative terrine featuring local ham and goats cheese, with mains a calamari and parmesan risotto and a chicken cordon bleu accompanied by a Byrrh sauce. Cheese and sweets were excellent by local standards, and special mention must be made of the deliciously light chestnut and

mascarpone mille feuille. Very reasonably priced wine list and superb pichet wine from the local Terrasous cave.

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5

Finally, back across the border to Spain, between Capmany and St Climent, not far from La Jonquera, is old favourite, **MAS ULLASTRE**. A large old farm in the middle of vineyards, this is popular with holidaymakers, day trippers and locals alike. The parents who ran it till recently have seemingly gone into a well-earned retirement, and now it's controlled by their offspring, who have updated the menu. There is a stunningly good value lunchtime

menu del dia at 10€ that changes daily, but does not offer any choice. Also on offer is the "Menu Especial" now featuring a wide variety of imaginative starters, followed, on our recent visit, by a huge Girona entrecote, salmon in honey, or pork solomillo in a port wine sauce. There was little in the way of vegetables however to accompany the ubiquitous chips, and as we often see in Spain, the sweets are rather predictable. Nevertheless, the deal does include unlimited wine and water, all in all very

good value at 20€. Plenty of superb fresh fish and a huge choice of tasty charcoal grilled meats are on the Carta.

Ctra Capmany a Villajuiga , 17751 St Climent Sescebes 0034 972 54 50 01 www.restaurantmasullastre.com Closed Sun eve and all Mon

Please bear in mind that reviews are based on the subjective opinion of the reviewer. Times, dates and prices are correct at the time of writing but you are advised to ring ahead and check Bon apétit



to see more resto reviews visit www.anglophone-direct.com



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You say 'tomatoes, we say.... La Font of Castelnou!

Castelnou, near Thuir, is rightly classed amongst the 'Plus Beaux Villages de France' with its medieval castle, quaint winding cobbled streets, signal look out tower, roman church..... But did you know about its unique, quirky little restaurant, born out of an equally unique and quirky passion for..... tomatoes?

Chef/gardener Jean-Paul, and wife Maryvonne, have a passion, a mission to re-introduce as many ancient or 'heritage'

tomatoes as possible – varieties that have not been found in shops and market gardens for decades and have become a little like the dinosaur - extinct.

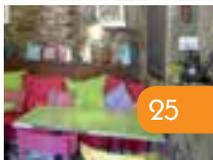
Grown from seeds sourced from around the globe, they now have over 40 weird and wonderful varieties. Try them! A 'degustation' plays tricks on your taste buds – the Cherokee Chocolate, as its name would imply, has a distinct chocolaty taste, the Raisin Vert are like 'bon bons' and the Limony does indeed have a citrus flavour.

La Font restaurant offers this experience with dishes inspired by their wonderful homegrown produce. The simple sounding menu of homemade tarts, quiches and salads is deceptively exciting. Deserts include deliciously refreshing 'Peach Gazpacho', pancakes with rich cherry sauce and 'Cuajada', a delightfully thick homemade yogurt. ☀

La Font : www.la-font-castelnou.fr

06 87 12 73 72 Open from 2pm to 7pm, 7 days a week for Pancakes and Ice Creams. From mid June until the end of September they are open for lunch and « gouter » from 10am to 7.30pm (the exact date to be determined by the ripening of the tomatoes ! So please check out the Anglophone website for more information)

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PALAU DEL VIDRE *Palace of Glass.*

At the foot of the Albères Mountain range, just off the two main roads from Argelès to Perpignan (D914) and Le Boulou (D618), sits Palau de Vidre; small village, big aspirations.

Strategically situated alongside the Via Dolmitia, first of the vast network of roads built around 118 BC by the Romans in France, Palau was for many years under the authority of the influential Knights Templar, during which time the village was fortified. This connection with the 'templiers' brought the 'Palauencs' special privileges such as tax reduction and a central oven in which each villager could bake his own bread, on condition that he give one loaf in twenty to the knights. However, it also meant that the village was passed around somewhat! When the Templiers were disbanded at the beginning of the 14th century, Palau was handed over to the 'ordre hospitalier de Saint-Jean de Jérusalem' (Knights of Malta) whose mission was to provide care for poor, sick or injured pilgrims to the Holy Land, and became a village 'hospitalier'.

A very small section of the ancient fortifications remains today, a reminder of a colourful past.

Originally Palatium Rodegarium, the name was changed to Palau de Vidre, 'palace of glass', in 1442, when glass makers from around France settled in the area. Attracted by plentiful resources such as sand from the River Tech, wood to sustain the high temperatures required for glass blowing, and the proximity of Elne Market, the industry flourished, only dying out with the start of the French Revolution.

Twenty years ago, it became clear that sons no longer wished to farm the land of their fathers. The original 200 farms were reduced to only 10, and the livelihood of Palau hung in the balance. The village put on its collective thinking hat, and started working the tourism angle.

True to its name, the first big event was the Festival International des Arts du Verre. Glass makers from around the world gathered together and the festival was an immediate success. A yearly event in August, don't miss the five days of music, castellers, Batacuda and street entertainment, with glass making and blowing on every corner. ([2nd - 6th August](#)). Look out in particular for the evening

session when the glass blowers toast their trade, and, once a little tipsy, allow the public to have a bit of a blow!

Today, there are five different glass making workshops around the small village, different styles, from intricate handmade glass jewellery to glass blowing, to stained glass and engraving. Most of them put on demonstrations so that you can watch the glass being crafted.

But this village is not just made of glass. The 11th century *église Sainte-Marie*, whose interior was financed by the wealthy glass makers of yore, holds a fascinating, perfectly preserved set of ancient artwork and 'retables'. These framed altarpieces, dating from the 16th century, painted in oils on wood, are decorated with paintings, and statues which tell a story according to the wishes of the person who commissioned it. Look out for the 'vierge ouvrante', one of the only 48 statues in the world of a pregnant Virgin Mary, which opens to reveal the Holy Father inside, much criticised, and pronounced heretical by the church. Take a look too at the ancient looking church doors, built and fitted only five years ago!

Or how about a spot of fishing, no permis required, for only 10 euros, payable on site? The Sant Marti lake is stocked with trout and carp, has a 'parcours de sante', (fitness trail) to encourage you to hop, skip, and jump around the lake, and makes a delightful

continued...



Out for the day...



...continued

day out with a picnic, the dog, and the kids.

The nearby 'Ancienne Ecole' (see page 18) provides a delicious alternative to a lakeside sarnie, and is a great community restaurant, using only local staff and local produce.

Small, yes... but Palau is no one horse town and equestrian fans have a bit of a treat in store.

Rando & Chariot was created by René over 20 years ago. With Scottish born Kim and their 2 sons Jordi and Jamie, they share their passion for horses (and camels!) with like minded lovers of 'la nature' by offering a breathtaking variety of exciting horsey activities along beach and river bank. For most of them, no experience is necessary so if you're a little

horsily challenged and having a go for the first time, or have been thinking about getting back into the saddle, this is the perfect opportunity.... with a little romance and a few thrills thrown in for good measure.

How about a horse and carriage ride through the countryside with peach tasting en route? A great family activity. Or maybe a ride along the River Tech, both in and out of the water, with qualified guides? And that's just for starters - or should I say beginners because for intermediate riders, a full day beach trek in and out of the waves includes swimming with your horse, picnic, siesta..... sounds soooooo good - as long as your bottom is up to 5 or 6 hours in the saddle that is! ☀



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Out for the day...

Lakeside at Saint Jean Pla de Corts

Treetop fun with friends and family

- Four Tyrolleans (zip wires) of more than 150m, including one splash across the lake of 170m
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Look out for signs for Plan d'Eau off the main road from Le Boulou to Saint Jean Pla de Corts, and you quickly arrive at the perfect spot for picnics, summer swims, and lakeside walks, shimmering reflection of Mount Canigo rippling gently in the smooth waters of the immaculately landscaped terrain.

With a lifeguard during the summer months for swimmers, it's already well worth the small entrance fee of 2 Euros per car, to park in the spacious car park, but around the large lake, Les Aventuriers de Saint Jean offers exactly that - adventure! You don't have to don a loin cloth and beat your chest, but you'll probably have more fun than Tarzan ever did, with a series of increasingly difficult runs high up in the trees.....nets, ropes, zip wires, Tyrollean splash across the lake, archery.... Warm and friendly extreme sport fanatic Pascal, described by his friends as 'casse-cou', (daredevil) was the first to develop an activity around the lake ten years ago. He has put his heart and soul into the venture ever since. And it's suitable for 4 to 104 years olds! Go on Gramps. Dare you!

And after a morning or an afternoon of thrills and spills, (we wish you more of the first and less of the second bien sûr!) the Guinguette on the

lake awaits for a true 'pieds dans l'eau' experience.

Guinguettes grew up around Paris in the 18th century, small outdoor bars selling cheap white wine known as 'ginguette', and originally found mainly along the banks of the Rivers Seine and Marne. They quickly became popular, particularly on Sundays and holidays - open air taverns, where tired workers could get away from the town, let their hair down after a hard working week, eat, drink, flirt, dance, and relax - a river side outing, simple, local cuisine, live music and a great atmosphere.

Think Renoir, 'Luncheon of the Boating Party' and you've got it!

With the opening of La Guinguette, charming Catalan couple Fabien and Anicée are fulfilling a dream they have created together - their own little piece of old France nostalgia. Their welcome is warm, their good humour infinite, and their proud smiles a reminder that we should always follow our dreams.

Supervise the kids lakeside, while sipping your pre-lunch apero, or watch the sun go down over the lake, as dinner is served to the sounds of accordion, jazz, swing, gypsy manouche, dance, vocals☀

Also around the lake in July and August.....

Join Helena and Alicia on Monday and Wednesday evenings for Nordic Walking and yoga Pilates. Find out more on 04.68.87.38.34



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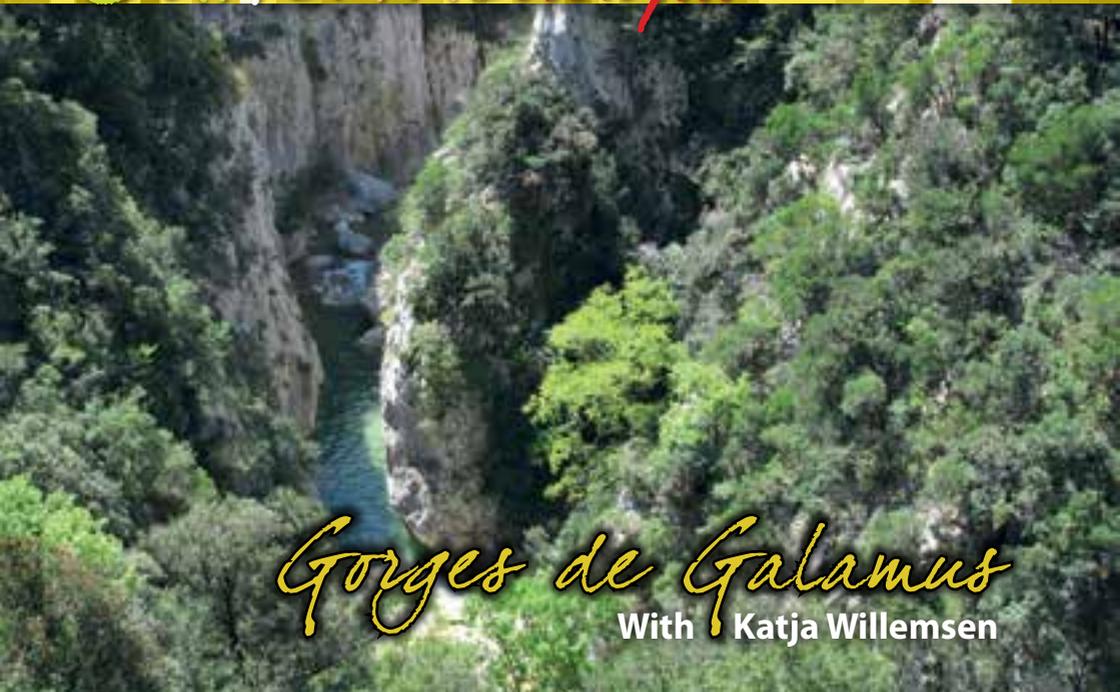
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Gorges de Galamus With Katja Willemsen

Picture the gods cleaving the earth with a monstrous axe and you have the spectacular Gorges de Galamus. However the glory for its creation doesn't go to metal but to Earth's most patient sculptress, water.

The River Agly moulded this gnarled and sinuous passage through the mountains and since the 7th century, the pious have been drawn there. First living in caves but later in the 'comfort' of a hermitage, after Franciscan monks squeezed their new home into a tall crevice the colour of old bones. The gorge remained impassable until 1880, when ingenious artisans canyoned down the rockface on ropes and carved a road using wrought iron rods called *barres à mines*.

How the original 7th century hermits must have turned in their graves! For them, roads were a luxury as unthinkable as warm beds.

From St Paul de Fenouillet, follow signs to the Gorges de Galamus. (See inset for more details). Behind you, Mount Canigou watches from its lofty

throne as the road rises steadily until swallowed by the gorge.

Very soon you'll arrive at a spacious parking on the left. Leave your car and take the path to the hermitage. The trail is steep, with gravel as slippery as marbles, so wear good shoes and take a hiking stick if you're unstable on your feet.

Mystique surrounds the Ermitage de St Antoine. Intriguing symbols thought to be Mayan and Templar can be seen on various surfaces. No-one knows the origin of the magic square of words chiselled onto a marble block in the main cave. People whisper of a secret portal to a feared "other world" near Ste Madeleine's font. A man who ventured through in 1597, reappeared three days later, insane and on death's door. His female companion disappeared.

After the miraculous ending of an epidemic in 1782, the shadow-filled cave behind the hermitage was turned into a chapel. Water drips from stalactites, gleams over walls, and fills the font

behind the cross. In the silence, you can almost hear the beating of the mountain's heart. Worn benches and scraps of handwritten pleas to St Antoine are a poignant reminder that many still pray here.

Stand in the shade of the courtyard's 230-year-old plane tree and breathe in the view then climb the steps to the cave of the early hermits, now dedicated to Ste Madeleine, with its basin of crystal clear water and startlingly modern wooden sculpture.

After visiting the hermitage, resist the temptation to drive and rather walk along the road to capture the full magnificence of this last stretch of the Gorges de Galamus. You'll feel like a tiny ant, dwarfed by imperious cliffs that slice down to the turquoise waters of the Agly River. ☀

About the Gorges de Galamus

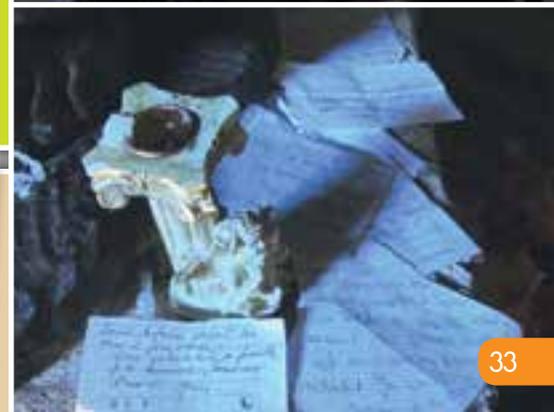
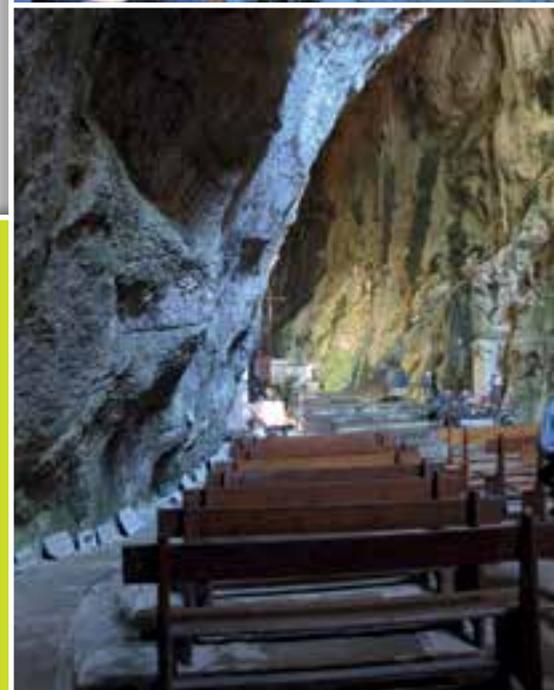
- 40 kms from Perpignan.
- Magnificent gorge linking the Pyrenees Orientales and Aude departments.
- Hermitage opening hours: 11 am to 6 pm. Visits are free.
- In summer, traffic is regulated to one direction. Camper vans aren't allowed.
- Electric shuttle busses will ferry you through the gorge from the main car park.

How To Get There

- Time needed: about an hour from Perpignan by car; a 30 minutes stroll from the parking to the hermitage.
- Take the D117 from Perpignan towards St Paul de Fenouillet.
- Turn right to St Paul de Fenouillet and follow "Gorges de Galamus" signs until the road becomes the narrow D10 through the gorge.

Read *Shepherd's Prayer*, Katja's fast-paced adventure set in Collioure.

Available on Amazon



Pretty Perfect P-O Picnics

With Katja Willemsen



Whether whispered murmurs or thundering torrents, our local waterways have stories to tell. The crumbling remains of one of the earliest canals snake along the cliffs of the magnificent Gorges de la Guillera.

With mountain water in the canal and a canopy of leaves to protect you, this picnic is perfect for a sweltering summer's day. Some of the walk isn't fenced and water hurtles past, so keep water-mad dogs and young kids on leashes!

Drive through Rodès and park on the cliff side of the Têt River. Stroll back across the bridge and up the steps beside the graffiti-covered structure. (See inset for more details.)

It was 11 am, a cloudless sky, and already a fierce 28 degrees when we started our walk. But no matter how hot, the symphony of water cools you down. The Têt River drums down in the valley and the Corbère Canal hums in stereo next to you.

Peer over the scarily simple fence and experience the stomach-clenching drama of the gorge below. Notice the pearly sheen of the river rock, polished silver by the pounding water.

Spindly pillars of the original canal clutch the

cliff like fingers, but the highlight of the walk is the aqueduct, Pont d'en Labau. It's not surprising how fragile it is after withstanding a thousand years of severe floods and the Tramontane! Its classification as a historic monument hasn't come a moment too soon, and there are urgent plans to stabilise this aging dame.

The canal brought water to wheat fields, vineyards and olive groves in the 11th century, and decades later, it powered wheat and textile mills then filled the moats of the Palace of the Kings of Majorca.

After forty minutes, a fence blocks the path. Cross the little cement bridge and let the sand track take you on a beautiful detour along peach orchards. Please remember you're on a farmer's private land so don't steal his fruit!

Keep the Têt River on your left and the orchard on your right, and follow the double sand track until you reach a "casot" or small cabin. An ivy-choked tree marks where you cross another bridge over the canal. Keep the next orchard on your right until you reach a steep cement road on your left. Head down to the jade green water of the Têt River.

Time to kick off shoes, release dogs and kids, and swim! Bon appétit!

Footnote: for those feeling energetic after lunch, the canal walk can be continued along the path running parallel to the river. Be warned that it involves scrambling and precarious ledges! path that runs parallel to the river. ☀

About Rodès and the Gorges de la Guillera

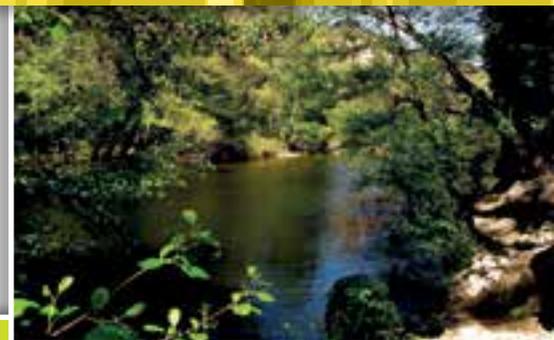
- This section of the Têt River flows from Vinça Dam into several irrigation canals. Vestiges of the original canal, "Sequia Real de Thoyr" – Royal Canal of Thuir, can be seen on the left bank. Our walk is next to the more "recent" Corbère Canal.
- Feeling energetic? Hike up to the 11th century Chateau de Rodès perched on a rocky crest above the village.
- Time spare? The Ermitage de Domanova with its extensive ex-voto collection is well worth a visit. (Cross N116 from Rodès then follow signs).

How To Get There

- Time needed for walk: allow an hour and a half of easy strolling but longer if you wish to walk further than the picnic spot.
- Head south from Perpignan towards Prades on the N116. Less than ten minutes after Ile sur Têt, turn right to the village of Rodès. Follow "Gorges de GUILLERA" signs through the village.
- The only time the signage isn't clear is at a small square with a tree: keep to the right, heading towards the mountain until you exit the village on the other side.
- Drive over the bridge and park next to the water purification plant then stroll back across the bridge and up the steps next to the small graffiti-covered building.

Read Shepherd's Prayer, Katja's fast-paced adventure set in Collioure.

Available on Amazon





Sainte Marie la Mer

With Victoria Barbé
(Photos by Simon Moss)

The seaside resorts of Le Barcarès, Torreilles, Sainte-Marie, Canet plage, Saint-Cyprien and Argelès-sur-Mer/Le Racou lie along the 'Côte Sableuse' or Sandy Coast', also called the 'Marenda'.

Over the years, P-O Life has visited all the larger resorts, so we thought it was time to explore one of the little chaps!

Sainte Marie la Mer may not be the most glamorous seaside destination on the 'Côte Sableuse' but it does have its own unique charm.

With beautiful views, a sandy beach and an interesting array of activities and entertainments, it is correctly self-promoted as 'your family destination'.

Due to the close lay-out and structure of the coastline-protecting rocky sea walls, the fine-

sanded beach offers a little more privacy for bathing than other beaches, and makes it easier to keep your eye on the kids...or even hide from them! It also provides convenient spots for fishing. Some areas of the beach offer rocky protection, some are more open, and at one end you will discover a slightly more rugged vision, with wild flowers, bushes and bamboo. Here, bathers can take advantage of the shade and screen offered by these creations of nature.

The views of the deep blue sea and mountains are just as magnificent as from the more popular beaches nearby, and the atmosphere is somewhat less hectic. There are also plenty of friendly restaurants, shops and bars to choose from day or night.

If nature calls, there are public toilets near the

beachfront, and plenty of parking a hop skip and a jump away from the sand.

The resort offers regular entertainments throughout the summer season, outdoor dancing, evening concerts, firework displays and traditional festivals with markets every Wednesday and Saturday in the village, beachside markets every Tuesday and Thursday, and night markets on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

For nights in, there are pizza takeaways to be had, and you can fill your empty water bottles with wine from the caves from as little as 1 euro 20 a litre!

Those of you searching for something more will find horse riding, scuba diving, mountain and town bike hire, a tennis club and private gym. There is also a fascinating giant corn maze (that I'm desperate to try) in seven hectares of nature, with

children's karting track, wooden games and puzzles and picnic areas at Le Jardin d'Ariane. www.jardin-ariane.com

Sainte Marie la Mer is a fairly new beach resort, created in response to the growing tourist industry of the 1950's, and made possible by the drainage of the once dangerous and impassable marshlands. In contrast to the beach, take a wander around the old village, situated just 1 km from the coastal resort. With its rich history, ancient church and interesting bell tower, the village dates back as early as 982 when it was named Santa Maria de Pabirans. Decimated by plague several times in the 14th and 15th century, due to its proximity to the unforgiving marshland, it is now disease free, with small shops and shady café trottoirs to enjoy a cool drink on a warm day. ☀





Salad Days With Louise Sayers

Les Paniers du Maraîcher 66

Nicolas Sauvaget is a third generation market gardener who lives and works on his farm, tucked away down a shady little lane in Elne. It's a tranquil spot, surrounded by fields of crops where Nicolas works 12 hours a day on the same land that was worked by his father and his grandfather before him.

Nicolas is a relatively small-scale farmer, owning eight hectares and growing a variety of crops. Eight hectares is enough to keep him and his two labourers more than busy. Work on the farm is relentless – there is always something to do. When I visited, the men were erecting some new polytunnels, working in a methodical fashion much as my husband does when he puts together flat-pack furniture, although on a much bigger scale!

Traditionally Nicolas has sold his produce at wholesale markets but last October an idea which had been germinating for some time came to fruition: veg boxes. Although veg boxes have really taken off in the UK, they are a relatively new idea in the P-O. The original idea was to sell to individuals in their workplace so that Nicolas could sell to

several people with just one delivery point, saving miles and minimising damage to the environment. He targeted schools and businesses and the boxes quickly became popular. A growing number of clients now visit the farm weekly to pick up their box.

Veg boxes are a win:win for both Nicolas and his customers. Direct selling gives Nicolas a guaranteed market and a fair price for his produce. His customers can be happy in the knowledge that they are getting produce which is 100% fresh and seasonal, usually harvested just 24 hours before it is put in the box, ensuring maximum nutrients are retained. All the fruit and vegetables in the boxes are grown locally in the fields of the Pyrénées-Orientales.

But isn't buying like this more expensive? Well, actually, no. Nicolas sells two types of box – the duo, designed for a couple – and the famille, good for a family of four. The boxes are priced at 10 and 20 euros respectively (although sometimes there is a supplement for extra special produce such as this week's gariguettes strawberries). The prices come out extremely favourably when compared to

continued...

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Living off the land...

...continued

the supermarkets, the duo for example offered savings of around 6 euros this week.

Half the produce in the boxes comes from Nicolas' own farm, the rest from other small-scale market gardeners in the area, friends of his from the local farming community. Free-range eggs from Trouillas are also added to the boxes.

The farm is not organic but nor is it intensively farmed like the big boys. In French it is classified as 'raisonnée', which means that nothing is treated unless it becomes necessary to do so. Systematic use of pesticides is avoided. Some of the crops are grown in open fields while others are in long polytunnels and the latter rarely need any kind of treatment.

The contents of the boxes vary from week to week depending on the season. When I visited it was all of those gorgeous spring fruit and veg including strawberries, broad beans and spinach. Carrots, radishes and turnips are year round staples.

Ordering is simple and can even be done in English. The box contents are emailed to existing customers and posted on the Les Paniers du Maraîcher Facebook page every Saturday. Customers place their orders by Wednesday lunchtime for collection at the farm the following Thursday or Friday evening.

Local, fresh, ecologically friendly and cheaper than the supermarkets. What's not to like?

Why not give Les Paniers du Maraîcher a go and support a local farmer? ☀

www.facebook.com/lespaniersdumaraicher
lespaniersdumaraicher@yahoo.fr 06 60 14 66 21



About Louise

Louise Sayers provides administrative support and relocation services to homeowners in France and also writes a blog about all things food-related in the region.

www.france-sos.com
www.frenchculinarycapers.com



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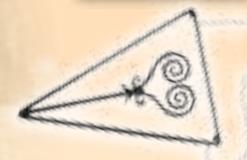
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Test your French

1 - 5 POUR SALADE!

Match up the words, all beginning with SA, with their definitions.
(Why not try to work them out first just from the definitions?)

- | | | | |
|-----------|----|---|-------------------------------|
| sable | 1 | a | grains très fins sur la plage |
| sabot | 2 | b | pas propre |
| sage | 3 | c | pleurer très fort |
| saigner | 4 | d | grande pièce |
| sale | 5 | e | obéissant, intelligent |
| sanglier | 6 | f | geste pour dire bonjour |
| saluer | 7 | g | à part |
| sauf | 8 | h | sorte de chaussure |
| salle | 9 | i | porc sauvage |
| sangloter | 10 | j | quand le sang coule |

Tongue twisté
(Virelangue)
(Répétez trois fois)

**Brian boit bien vingt
bonnes bouteilles
de vin**

Blague bête

Comment appelle-t-on une
gousse d'ail qui rebondit après
avoir été jetée contre un mur?

Le retour du jet d'ail

(gousse d'ail - garlic clove
rebondit - bounces back
après avoir été - after having been...)



3 - Language tip 'SAVOIR' OR 'CONNAÎTRE'?

Savoir and **Connaître** both mean 'to know'.

Use '**Savoir**' + verb to express the idea of
knowing **HOW TO DO SOMETHING**

Eg *Je sais parler français*
Tu sais danser la sardane?

Use '**Connaître**' + noun to express the idea of
knowing **SOMEONE OR SOMETHING**:

Eg *Il connaît le docteur Bachelard*
Connaissez-vous la route pour Perpignan?

1 *Voici mon mari Olivier. Ah, tu le --- déjà*
a) connais b) sais

2 *Lucien --- que c'est mauvais pour la santé*
a) connaît b) sait

3 *Je ne --- pas cet auteur*
a) connais b) sais

4 *Je ne --- pas faire du ski*
a) sais b) connais

5 *Vous --- le Roussillon?*
a) savez b) connaissez

Language tip 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 Perpignan*) 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

Blague bête

Lucien demande
10 euros à son père.

C'est pour quoi faire?

Pour donner à une vieille dame!

C'est très bien de vouloir
l'aider! Et où est cette vieille
dame?

Là-bas, elle vend des glaces!



Citation amusante

Mon père était fonctionnaire et
ma mère ne faisait rien non plus.

Colluche

(fonctionnaire - civil servant non plus - either)

2 - TEST YOUR IDIOMATIC FRENCH

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| 1. L'expression 'poser un lapin'
veut dire...
a) aller à la chasse
b) ne pas aller à un rendez-vous
c) manger un ragout | 4. Si elle pédale dans la
sémoule, elle...
a) devient sénile
b) fait du VTT
c) est coincée | 7. Si vous avez 'un poil dans la
main, vous êtes...
a) paresseux
b) poilu
c) loup garou |
| 2. Si je 'fais la tête' je...
a) boude
b) suis malade
c) joue au foot | 5. Que signifie l'expression 'perdre
la boule'
a) être gros
b) devenir fou
c) perdre un jeu | 8. Si je deviens 'chèvre', je ...
a) me fâche
b) mange de l'herbe
c) sens mauvais |
| 3. Si vous mangez 'sur le pouce'
vous mangez...
a) avec les doigts
b) rapidement
c) peu | 6. Si vous 'filez à l'anglaise', vous...
a) partez en vacances
b) courez après les filles
c) partez sans permission | 9. 'Ça passe comme une lettre à
la poste' veut dire que c'est...
a) en retard
b) facile
c) perdu |

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Test your French

4. PAS? OU PAS PAS?

Another of those little words which can be confusing, 'pas' joins 'ne' to form the negative BUT the noun 'un pas' means 'a step' and is used in many idiomatic phrases. Can you find the English for the following, using either the negative or the noun?

Il habite à deux pas d'ici	1	a	You have to drive slowly
Il ne fallait pas	2	b	He's pacing about
Qui a fait le premier pas	3	c	You shouldn't have!
Il fait les cent pas	4	d	He lives a stone's throw away
Ca ne va pas	5	e	He doesn't live close
Il marche à pas de loup	6	f	It's not OK
Il n'habite pas à côté	7	g	Who made the first move?
Pas une seule personne ne le sait.	8	h	No noise please
Pas de bruit, s'il vous plaît	9	i	Nobody knows
Il faut rouler au pas	10	j	He walks stealthily

Language Tip - How to use n'est-ce pas

N'est-ce pas (ness pah) literally means 'is it not (so)?' and is known as a 'question tag', used to tag on to the end of any statement, positive or negative, and turn it into a question. Its exact translation will change depending on the statement (isn't it? doesn't it? don't you? and loads of other variations)

but its general meaning is always 'is(n't) that right?'

Il pleut n'est-ce pas? – It's raining isn't it?

Vous parlez anglais n'est-ce pas? – you speak English don't you?



5

A FEW MORE OF THOSE FAMILIAR WORDS AND EXPRESSIONS, WHICH ARE NOT QUITE RUDE, BUT PROBABLY BEST TO AVOID IN POLITE COMPANY TO BE ON THE SAFE SIDE!!

Quel bourrin	1	a	He's talking bullsh-t!
Il pète plus haut que son cul	2	b	I'm worried
A poil encore?	3	c	He's two faced
J'ai les boules	4	d	Be careful!
Il est faux cul	5	e	What an oaf!
Il raconte des conneries	6	f	You're getting on my nerves
C'est de l'arnaque	7	g	He thinks a lot of himself!
Il faut faire gaffe!	8	h	It's getting dangerous/exciting
Tu me gonfls	9	i	It's a con
Ca va chauffer	10	j	Naked again?

6

CAN YOU FIND THE ENGLISH EQUIVALENT TO A FEW MORE COMMON FRENCH WORDS AND EXPRESSIONS?

par contre	1	a	quick look
blague à part	2	b	by the way
un coup d'œil	3	c	on the other hand
d'ailleurs	4	d	let's see
en fait	5	e	in fact
au fur et à mesure	6	f	guess what..
et j'en passe	7	g	seriously
dis donc	8	h	and that's not all
fais voir	9	i	what's more
figure-toi	10	j	gradually



How to say...

I'm full (I've had enough food)

J'ai trop mangé
je suis rassasié (ra-saz-ee-ay)
je n'en peux plus

It's full (an event, cinema etc)

C'est complet

IT EATS ITSELF!

If you're interested in French grammar, you will know that reflexive verbs are actions one does to oneself. (If you're not a grammar fan, don't worry about it; just learn some of the following phrases off by heart!) However, did you know that you can take most ordinary verbs and add pronoun 'se' to give the idea of something that is done (or not done), and form some very useful little phrases?

Ca vin se boit frais

This wine should be drunk cold

Cela ne se fait pas – That's not done.

Ca se mange – It's edible

Ca se mange avec les doigts

You eat it (it's eaten) with fingers

Ca se boit – it's drinkable/it goes down

Ca se boit avec un bout de citron

You drink it (it is drunk) with a slice of lemon.

Ca se voit – it shows

Blague bête

Le médecin arrive dans une chambre et voit l'infirmier en train de secouer le malade

"Qu'est ce que vous faites?" crie-t-il

"J'avais oublié de secouer le flacon avant de lui administrer son médicament."

(secouer – shake)



Test your French - answers

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

Améliorez votre Anglais

1 - Say the word! - Les expressions suivantes emploient toutes le verbe 'to say'. Pouvez-vous trouver leur équivalent en Français?

Needless to say	1	a	En fin de compte
You don't say	2	b	Souriez!
When all is said and done	3	c	Dis-moi stop
Wouldn't say boo to a goose	4	d	Avant d'avoir pu dire Out
Whatever he says, goes	5	e	Il va sans dire
Say cheese!	6	f	Ne vous laissez pas abattre!
Never say die	7	g	C'est lui qui décide
Say when	8	h	Ca alors!
You can say that again	9	i	Etre très timide
Before you could say Jack Robinson	10	j	C'est clair



Language tips

- Eng : My hair **IS** blonde (sing)
- French : Mes cheveux **SONT** blonds (plural)
- English : I bought my trousers at M+S (plural)
- French : J'ai acheté **MON** pantalon à M+S (sing)

Great quotes

Sometimes, when I look at my children, I say to myself, 'Lillian, you should have remained a virgin..'

Lillian Carter, mother of US Pres Jimmy Carter
(remain - rester virgin - vierge)

Good Advice

Don't wear polka dot underwear beneath white shorts.

polka dot
à petits pois

A silly insult for your friends

Earth is full, go home
Notre planète est complète - rentre chez toi!



3 - Trouvez les contraires
(Attention! C'est un peu plus difficile que d'hab :-)

about	1	a	voluntary
abundance	2	b	rear
admit	3	c	sharp
compulsory	4	d	host
foreign	5	e	exactly
front	6	f	supporter
already	7	g	deny
blunt	8	h	not yet
guest	9	i	domestic
opponent	10	j	lack

C'est l'été! Encore quelques phrases cucul-la-praline pour draguer à la plage!

(Attention! Si vous prenez une baffe, je n'accepte aucune responsabilité)

Do you believe in love at first sight?
Est-ce que tu crois au coup de foudre?

Do you kiss strangers? No? Then I'd better introduce myself.
Est-ce que tu embrasses les inconnus? Non? Donc, je me présente.

Did it hurt when you fell from Heaven?
Ca t'a fait mal quand tu es tombée du ciel?

Stop thief! Who stole the stars from the sky and put them in your eyes?
Au voleur! Qui a pris toutes les étoiles du ciel pour les mettre dans tes yeux?

You must be tired, you've been running through my head all day!
Tu dois être fatigué(e) parce que tu as trotté dans ma tête toute la journée.

4 - T - is for Tea

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

tale	1	a	jelly, custard and cream
tame	2	b	similar to a frog
trainers	3	c	story
turnip	4	d	small child
trifle	5	e	running shoes
trip	6	f	neatly arranged
tune	7	g	root vegetable
tidy	8	h	journey
toad	9	i	series of musical notes
toddler	10	j	not fierce or wild

Silly Joke...

Where do bees go to the toilet?
At the BP station!
(bee - abeille)

Sillier joke

What do you call an alligator wearing a vest?
An Investigator!

Silliest Joke!!

Why do golfers wear two pairs of underpants?
In case they get a hole in one!
(underpants - slip)

Virelangue

(Répétez trois fois)

**A big black bug bit
a bad black bear.**

Letsgetphysical...

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Letsgetphysical...

On yer bike!

Surely even the most dedicated couch potato has to resist the urge to dust down that saddle, pump up those sagging tyres, squeeze into those lycra shorts and head out on the old bicycle during the Tour de France.

Cycling in all it's forms has long been a national pastime in France, and recent years have seen a huge increase in the number of people taking up VTT – Vélo Tout Terrain or Off Road Cycling. In fact, many of the Alpine pistes are as busy in the summer as the winter.

Until recently the Canigou Fenouillèdes corner of the region has been somewhat of a hidden jewel in the P-O crown where cycling is concerned, and some excellent VTT tracks and circuits have remained largely unknown due to minimum publicity. Today, thanks to the combined efforts of the Canigou Fenouillèdes tourist office, and the local Mairies, a campaign is underway to attract mountain bikers to the region. Fifteen circuits are being promoted from the foothills of Canigou to the forests of the Fenouillèdes.

The circuits are classified into four circuit categories, 'familles', 'randonneurs', 'sportifs', and 'expert', offering different levels to suit all abilities

Family Circuits: these are mainly wide tracks and easily passable on either bike or foot. Distance: 4 and 15 km.

Hiking circuits: mainly on tracks and sometimes include portions of trails without major technical difficulties. Whilst there may be gentle slopes they contain no major difficulties. **Distance:** 15km to 20km **Vertical Climb:** 600 metres in altitude.

Sports circuits: they include some tracks, but are mainly "off road" trails involving steeper climbs and descents. **Distance:** 18km to 50km **Vertical Climb:** 900 and 1700 metres in altitude – not for the faint hearted!

Expert circuits: Require a great deal of technical and physical ability with many challenging climbs and descents. **Distance:**



Over 50km **Vertical Climb:** 2500 metres – the clue is in the circuit name!

To find details of all the circuits visit the website: www.ot-cf.com - click on Activités-Loisirs & select VTT Randonnées (or scan the QR code below)

Here you can download the .gpx file and the topo sheet full of each circuit.

Alternatively you can buy a dedicated Circuit Map for 3€ at the Canigou Fenouillèdes Tourist Offices:

Vinca 9 Place Bernard Alart, 66320 04 68 97 04 38

Sournia Le Château, 66730 04 68 97 70 38

Further information (in French) can also be obtained from www.transbiking.fr



Canigou-Fenouillèdes Office de Tourisme Intercommunal

LLO AND BEHOLD

les bains de LLO

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PHOTOS: SALES



Hyacinthe Rigaud

Art in the Heart of **PERPINYÀ**

This summer the Hyacinthe Rigaud Fine Art Museum triples in size and becomes a centre of art and culture in the centre of Perpignan, displaying emblematic works of art from the Golden Age of the 13th century Kingdom of Mallorca to the second Golden Age of the early 12th century when both local Roussillon painters and famous visitors were forging a new chapter in the history of Modern Art.

Hôtel de Lazerme, 16 Rue de l'Ange, is a large grey house in the heart of Perpignan. Grey walls, grey shutters, a grey cobbled courtyard in which a bust of Hyacinthe Rigaud, in his flamboyant 17th century wig, looks slightly out of place. For a long while now the only inhabitant has been Paule de Lazerme, an old lady of some hundred plus years. In 1979, her

house had been bought by the town of Perpignan and Perpignan's Art Collection moved from the Ancienne Université into a wing of the Hotel de Lazerme, becoming the Musée des Beaux Arts Hyacinthe Rigaud.

When Paule de Lazerme was young the house was full of social and artistic activity. The de Lazermes were a cultured family; they enjoyed the company of artists and were good friends of Raoul Dufy, Marc Chagall and Jean Cocteau as well as many local Roussillon painters, writers and musicians.

Picasso was often their guest. It was from the Hotel de Lazerme that, in 1953, he sallied forth to present Pierre Brune, first curator of Céret's Museum of Modern Art, with the series of decorated bowls that take pride of place in Céret's Museum. Always a great corrida

aficionado, Picasso was taken to the bullfight that precedes the magnificent firework display in Collioure each August 16th. He left immediately afterwards but was back in September, staying that time with the Pous family in their Café des Sports (now the Templiers Hotel).

This summer, the Museum is to expand into the adjacent Hôtel Mailly, allowing the works representing Perpignan's artistic life from the thirteenth century to the present day, to be shown in its entirety.

The portraits Picasso painted of the youthful Paule de Lazerme in Catalan costume will be rehung as will the collection of many photographs of his visits to the de Lazerme family in the mid fifties. Visits reciprocated several times when Jacques de Lazerme drove Pierre Brune, to stay with Picasso on the Côte d'Azur.

The new museum is divided into three parts: the thirteenth century Golden Age of the Kingdom of Mallorca, followed by the seventeenth century period when Catalogna Nord became the Roussillon and the Catalan artist, Hyacinthe Rigaud was court painter to Louis XIV and, finally, the era of the rich industrial families at the turn of the nineteenth century up to the works of twentieth century artists who lived and worked here.

The opening exhibition "Paris – Perpignan – Barcelone L'art modern en Catalogne 1889 – 1937" will run from 20th June to 13th October.

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Jane Mann's latest book "Art Revolution in the Roussillon"

A romp through Roussillon's recent art history in which tales of artists born and bred in this remote and, at the time, little known corner of France, are intertwined with the stories of the visiting artists who were challenging and changing the face of modern art. Now available from Amazon.fr livres en anglais, Chapitre.com and in many local Maisons de la Presses.

Things you might need to know...



British pensions

The French social security system is financed through social security contributions, not taxes as in many other countries. Nevertheless, retirees on a British government pension are normally not liable to pay these contributions, recently confirmed by the finance ministry, despite the fact that many British ex pats were actually billed last year. Much confusion from region to region has meant that some have been refunded and others upheld. Until the situation is clarified, you are advised to declare your pension as income, but to add a note in section E explaining that this is your pension, and you believe it to be exempt from social contribution due to the Franco British double tax treaty.

Going Green

Not sure what to do with old fridges, washing machines, hair dryers, electrical or electronic devices? Visit www.eco-systemes.fr, answer a few question about the item and its condition, and they will present you with a variety of solutions for repair, exchange, or recycling.



VAT

Watch out for a rise in VAT in 2014 from 19.6% to 20%.

EARLY RETIREES ...

...should once again have access to the French health service, with the only condition being residence in France.

A national centre for all applicants is also on the cards to avoid the confusion of 2007 when different criteria were applied throughout the country.

Write up your Rue!

Côte Vermeille Stories

by Ellen Turner Hall

Ellen Turner Hall's carefully crafted prose invites us into her half-imagined world inhabited by characters who, like her, fall under the spell of one or other of the four villages of the Côte Vermeille. Like her, their previous experiences are far flung. Like her, their knowledge and love of music influences their actions. They embrace their surroundings, sometimes seduced, sometimes seducers, sometimes deceived, often beguiled, never indifferent. Their stories, twist and turn, basking in and buffeted by the eccentric charms of Catalonia's rocky coast.

In these four stories, at least one of which is shortly to become a film, Ellen guides the reader on



a voyage of discovery along the Côte Vermeille.

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AIRPORT NEWS

With JOHN FAIRCLOUGH



SUMMER 2013

At the end of my spring airline report, I said that I was hoping to announce some new services from our airports local to P.O. Sadly, the continued economic turmoil has made this a forlorn hope. It really does seem that, for the time being at least, the various airlines have decided to stick with what they've got, and are unwilling to risk introducing new routes at a time when so many people are tightening their belts and, quite understandably restricting their travel plans.

So, I'm afraid all I can report are a handful of frequency increases in the high summer (July /Aug) period.

Ryanair's hub at Stansted seems to be the main beneficiary of this, with the Irish carrier's flights from **PERPIGNAN** to the Essex airport up to 8 per week (from 5), featuring two flights on a Monday.

A number of people have asked me about the new Hop! brand that has appeared on hoardings and in the press recently. This is not a new

company per se; merely an offshoot from Air France attempting to forge a no-frills operation principally on its French domestic network. It's true that there are some new low cost routes from the larger French regional hubs such as Lyon, Bordeaux and Nice, but nothing new from Perpignan. All that's happened is that the existing AF flights to Orly are now marketed under the Hop! brand, and prices are a little more competitive.

As in previous years the frequency from **CARCASSONNE** is also up in the peak period to 10 flights per week, with an increase also to East Midlands (to 5 pw).

Ambitious Scandinavian low cost operator Norwegian Air Shuttle have joined the very crowded **BARCELONA** to Gatwick route with a 3x per week frequency with some tempting fares on offer.

On the positive side, there do not appear to be any routes cut, so the list in the Airline section of the Spring issue remains in force.

This rather paltry offering does at least give me space to make a few suggestions to those of us

who are based in the area and looking for unusual direct travel ideas away from the tried and tested UK Ireland routes.

From **PERPIGNAN**, you could, by using Volotea's thrice-weekly flight, pay a short visit to France's sixth largest city, Nantes, a fascinating town and home to the Dukes of Brittany.

CARCASSONNE offers a twice weekly Ryanair service to Portugal's second city, Porto, renowned for its majestic bridges over the R Douro, quaint old town, and of course Port Wine Lodges.

In the words of Monty Python, have you ever "pined for the fjords"? Well, using the 3x per week Ryanair service from **BEZIERS** to Oslo Rygge, you could be there in about 3 hours.

For those looking for a trip a little further, don't forget that these days **BARCELONA** has a variety of long haul destinations direct to places in the Far East, S America, the USA and Canada.

And for something really out of the ordinary, what about a trip from **GIRONA** to Lappeenranta? Where's that I hear you ask? Well it's an ancient town deep in the heart of Finland's picturesque Karelia lakes, and only 30km from the Russian border! Ryanair flies there twice a week during the summer.

As always, if you hear of new routes, we're keen to hear about them. I'll be back in the Autumn edition with early news of what we can expect for winter 13/14.

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With Ann Villiers

We all love our dogs and enjoy their company,
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the weather is hot, is to leave them at home in a
cool place with plenty of fresh water.

Dogs cannot sweat like humans, they loose heat
by panting, and a little through their pads, but this is
not enough when the weather is hot and humid.

A refreshing cool down with a hose or sprinkler
is appreciated by most dogs or water poured down
chest and undercarriage can reduce the dogs
temperature.

DO NOT leave your dog in a car, even with
windows open. The temperature inside can rise
dangerously in a matter of minutes even on a
mildly warm day. If you see a dog in distress in
a supermarket car-park, please inform the store
manager who hopefully can locate the owner. Time
is of the essence to avoid heat stroke. (Je voudrais
vous signaler qu'il y a un chien enfermé dans une
voiture, et qu'il fait trop chaud. Pouvez vous joindre le
propriétaire par micro?)

- Walk your dog early morning or late evening and
avoid strenuous exercise, you can dress for the
heat but your poor pooch has to carry his fur coat!
- When outside, find a shady area and provide
plenty of cool water.
- Watch out for hot pavements/sand, which can
scorch the dog's pads.

Enjoy the summer but keep your pets safe.



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Fire service emergency	18
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