

P-O Life

Life in the Pyrénées Orientales

Out for the Day
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Edito...

Aren't there some great words in the French language? I love 'époustouflé' (flabbergasted). Another of my favourites is 'ananas' (pineapple) which makes me want to shake my maracas every time I hear it. Or how about the verb 'blablater' (to blither and blather) coming from blablaba?

And youpi, here comes autumn, my favourite P-O season. Warm sunny days, cooler nights and mornings, unhurried and mellow after the hot summer frenzy.....
....days that you wish you could bottle and drink with friends over the winter months to come.

The P-O is still a long way from going into hibernation with festivals and events throughout the autumn. The vigneronns are busy in the vineyards, trimming pruning and pressing. It's a back breaking job so the very least we can do is help them out with the drinking! Cheers, hic!

As usual, a big THANK YOU to our advertisers without whom we would quite simply not exist. If you use their services, please tell them from us how much we appreciate them.

Wherever you are, and whatever you are doing, we hope your autumn is golden this year in the PO.

Kate

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Arrggghhhhh

Quel est le plat préféré des vampires?

Le croque-monsieur.



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Magazine gratuit. Tout Droits réservés, Reproduction interdite

Impression: Imprimerie du Mas Tirage: 9000 ex
Ne pas jeter sur la voie publique - Anglophonedirect accepts no responsibility for the competency of people and services advertising in PO Life.

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Walk the region...

with Leigh and Merry Foster

LAVALL, SORÈDE

MAP IGN 1:25000 BANYULS/COL DE PERTHUS/COTE VERMEILLE (GPS) 2549 OT

This is a short walk up and down the valley of Lavall (Lavail) near Sorède, tiny hamlet with delightful little church and traditional 'Festa Major' with sardane every November. The walk can be wonderfully peaceful, allowing you to lose yourself in the cork oak forests as you follow the little picturesque river up over the rocks, waterfalls, gorges and even secret swimming pools for the hardy!

Getting there: Hidden at the bottom of the Valley of Lavail, the river Massane winds its way down through dense vegetation. Many little rock pools await the curious walker, and in late summer a cool picnic in the shade of the Oaks can be a real treat. Depending on recent rains the river can be mild or a powerful torrent, but in early autumn, it is normally a quiet place of beautiful contemplation. Drive up from the D11 Sorede-

Argelès road to La Vall, and park in the car park just beyond the little hamlet. This is where you begin and end the walk at 500420 E 4706140 N. The trail is well marked with yellow paint strokes, although following the river is just as easy.

The walking is not difficult, and since it simply goes up the valley and back it can be as short as you like. If you go all the way to the head of the valley it is only about 2km each way and around 100 m climb overall. It can



Watch out beleau

One theory of the origins of the English word 'loo', is that it comes from the French 'regardez l'eau' (mispronounced 'gardyloo'). Meaning watch out for the water, it was used in medieval Edinburgh when chamber pots were emptied from a window onto the street.

be done in about an hour, but if you want to make the most of the scenery you should allow two.

The Walk: Leave the car park and head east, following the track about 300 meters to the only tricky point where you encounter a gated private property and have to go right to circle around it. As you continue up the valley you catch glimpses of the Tour De Massane on top of the hills to the left. In a couple of places there are signposts with footpaths heading up to the Tour but on this occasion you can, like us, take the easy option and stay in the picturesque valley. To the right the hills rise up steeply all the way to Neoulous. The rock pools and waterfalls are home to many frogs, tadpoles and dragonflies, and lizards skitter over the rocks at the sides. While we were walking up the valley in October we had the bizarre experience of meeting the cows coming down from the hills, (no cowherd anywhere to be seen) presumably for the winter, stopping for a quick drink from the river on the way. All the gently tinkling cowbells gave the walk a distinctly alpine flavour. In the earth on either side of the path we saw evidence of Sangliers rooting about for tasty nibbles, and in fact a hunting party were out and about on the day we were there. The walk ends in the hills with an impressive rock escarpment at the Collet del Tueler, surrounded by wooded hills on all sides (501150 E 4704700 N). For those that prefer a leisurely stroll, once you have reached the place where the path starts to become much steeper you can simply retrace your steps. On the left as you come back down the valley you may see the rather strange



rock formation in the picture (bottom left)!

If you are particularly energetic and keen to continue on a long, steep hike, you can fork right at the top of the valley where the Massane curls up to the left, and climb all the way to the Puig dels Quatre Termes, and from there either head back down to the Vallée Heureuse, or continue on the GR10 to Neoulous. Most people will be glad to know this is not obligatory, and a pleasant morning or afternoon in Lavall can be very enjoyable. There is even a Creperie in the little hamlet that is well recommended, (04 68 89 22 83) but check opening times before planning a meal there ☀



Did you know...?

CERRADO!

Put it in your diary - no shopping in Spain on 12th October. Why? Because everything is closed! Saturday 12th October is Día de la Hispanidad, national holiday in Spain, commemorating the exact date that Christopher Columbus set foot in the Americas! ...Hyper passionnant!



Short countries

Did you know that the only countries in the world with one syllable in their names are Chad, Greece, Spain....oh, and of course France?

HEALING TWINS

Every year, towards the end of September, (this year 21st - 29th) Argelès-sur-Mer pays homage to its patron saints, Saint Côme and Saint Damien, twins and early Christian martyrs, who healed the sick for free. According to legend, Argelès was struck by plague in the 17th century, an epidemic which magically disappeared on 27th September 1652 - the feast of these patron saints of barbers, doctors and pharmacists. Relieved and grateful, the population made a vow to carry out a solemn procession to honour them every year...



LA



The signing of the Treaty of the Pyrenees on 7th November 1659 ended the 30 years war between France and Spain. Unfortunately, it also divided Catalan territory and families between France and Spain, and put a ban on speaking Catalan on French or Spanish territory.

More than three and a half centuries later, Catalans continue to defend the Catalan language and culture. Described as the "caravan de promotion de la langue catalane" the 'correllengua' is the support of the Catalan language and culture, symbolised by the carrying of a flaming torch, the 'Flama de la Llengua', (Language Flame) through the Catalan territories.

Originally a relay race, it involves a series of celebrations, street dances, fanfares and cultural events of all kinds to spread the Catalan language.

SAFFRON

From Oms to Rodes, Sahorre or Maureillas, keep an eye out for the magnificent saffron fields of deep purple crocuses, in full bloom in autumn.

From the Arabic za'faran, meaning yellow, it can take 250,000 saffron stigmas, fine, richly coloured, orangey-red strands pulled from the flower, to produce half a kilo of saffron spice. Cultivated and harvested by hand, it is hardly surprising that it is considered one of the world's most expensive spices, sold between 20 and 30 euros per gramme in the P-O. And beware! If it's cheap, it's probably not the real thing!



The origins of Poppy Day - November 11th

On the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month in 1918, the First World War ended. The Flanders and Picardy regions of Northern France saw some of the bloodiest fighting. On the battlefields, the blood red poppy stood alone, fragile survivor in the aftermath of complete devastation.

Canadian army doctor John McCrae, deeply moved by what he saw, wrote 'In Flanders' Field'. Inspired by

the poem, American War Secretary, Moina Michael sold poppies to friends to raise money, and mark the sacrifice of those who had given their lives for peace and freedom, replying with her own poem 'We shall keep the Faith', in which she promised to wear a poppy 'in honour of our dead'.

So began the tradition of wearing a poppy in remembrance.

*In Flanders' Fields the Poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place: and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.
We are the dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders' Fields.*



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Things you might need to know...

CHEMIST CONSULTATIONS

A new initiative will soon mean that you will be able to make an appointment with your local chemist for advice and treatment on a variety of ailments such as asthma and diabetes. And it will be 'prise en charge' by the 'assurance maladie' who will pay the chemist directly.

People being treated with Vitamin K antagonist or VKA, (antivitamines K or AVK in French) are already receiving invitations from the Assurance Maladie to make an appointment for a chat with their pharmacist, and check ups for other pathologies are expected to follow through the pharmacy, both to release doctor time and use the skills of the pharmacist



IT'S ELECTRIFYING (NOT)

Expect a rise in your electricity bills - as much as 30% for some in between now and 2016, as France works at developing its renewable energy supplies. Ironically, EDF profits for 2012 were a mere €3.34billion!

PALM TREE PESTS

The Paysandisia archon, deceptively pretty moth, is responsible for munching through and destroying palm trees around the region. Until recently, detection and control were difficult, as larvae cannot be seen or reached easily, but a product called Biopalm is now available, and should be applied once a year in June. More info from christophe.vastel@novajardin.com



FRENCH LETTERS!

Visit www.conso.net -> Vos Droits->100 lettres-types for more than 100 specimen letters in French, to help you to complain, enquire, set up or cancel a contract, deal with insurance, banks, services, health, transport, neighbour and consumer disputes.....



in Rivesaltes?

It seems that there is a possibility that Ikea may open in Rivesaltes, situated between the caves Arnaud de Villeneuve and the A9. It is hoped that the visibility of its proposed position on the edge of the A9 motorway will tip the scales between Rivesaltes and Girona which the Swedish company are also considering.

TAKE NOTE

Look out over the next few years for the 'Europa' series, new and more security conscious Euro banknotes redesigned for the first time since the euro took over from the franc in 2002. Designs will be based around portraits of mythological figures, but the colours will remain the

same to avoid confusion. The first is the five euro note, already in circulation since the 2nd May 2013. Check them out at www.nouveaux-billets-euro.eu



DALIA

If you are travelling out of the country with more than 10 000 Euros in your pocket in cash, jewels, deeds or bonds, (I should be so lucky!) you must declare the amount to customs. Since Feb

2013, you can use the teleservice 'Dalia' to declare your pennies from 30 to 2 days before travel, and it will generate a number to quote to the customs if stopped. Before using the service, you must register at <https://pro.douane.gouv.fr> Available in English.

SCRAPPING A CAR

A VHU (véhicule hors d'usage) can pollute both ground and water, so it is important and legally required to dispose of a vehicle via an approved wrecker, (un démolisseur or broyeur agréé) who will give you a 'certificat de destruction'.

Your local prefecture will be able to provide you

with a list of approved wreckers.

You have 15 days after scrapping your vehicle to make the 'déclaration de cession pour destruction' at the prefecture of your choice, using a form which you can download at www.modernisation.gouv.fr/

The SIV (service d'immatriculation des véhicules) will acknowledge receipt and cancel the registration of your vehicle.



Total Peace of Mind

Don't wait until the last minute to think about renovations, repairs, and maintenance (sand changes etc) on your swimming pool. Organise it over the winter/spring and be ready to dive straight into the summer season.

- ▶ Annual or seasonal maintenance contracts
- ▶ Green pool treatment
- ▶ Pool opening and closing
- ▶ System upgrade

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What's on Around the Region



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

sideways, cancelled or changed.... or we just get it wrong! With this in mind, we bring you a detailed, up-to-date events calendar on www.anglophone-direct.com and in our free weekly newsletter..



Don't forget to check out your local tourist office (or visit www.anglophone-direct.com) for the date and location of the many fairs and festivals around the region in autumn, celebrating every imaginable 'produit de terroir' be it animal, vegetable and mineral. Coming from the French word 'terre' (soil), the word 'terroir' originally described the special characteristics of a region, or piece of land, which gave different varieties of wine, coffee and tea their individuality. (Soil, climate, position, regional traditions...) Over the centuries, French winemakers developed and took for their own the concept of terroir but the word is still often used to describe rural activities, harvest festivals etc. They might not all be a pulsing whirl of excitement - some are only small gatherings scantily attended - but it's a great way to support the local producers, many of whom are struggling in the present economic climate.



BANK HOLIDAYS

September 11th - Diada de Catalunya - national holiday throughout Catalonia
1st November - La Toussaint (All Saints Day) People visit cemeteries and place chrysanthemums on the graves of family members (most shops closed)
11th November - Armistice of WW1 (1918). Remembrance ceremonies and flowers placed on war memorials (most shops closed). Recently suggested that this day should represent all wars.
25th November - La Sainte Catherine - now rarely observed but unmarried ladies over 25, known as 'les Catherinettes' used to wear eccentric hats to help hook a husband! (not a public holiday)

School holidays for our region

Summer Holidays - Back to school
3th September

Toussaint (autumn half term)
19th October - 4th November



LA CASTANYADA, HALLOWEEN, TOUSSAINT 31st October/1st November

"C'est trop Americain" my French mother-in-law told me many years ago. "Ca ne va pas prendre". (catch on)

Eh bien. Wrong again M-L!

Not a traditional French festival by any means, and disapproved of by French purists, but pumpkins (citrouille or potiron), brooms, and fancy dress nevertheless flood the shops at the end of October. Halloween has been well and truly marketed to French children via American sit coms, and

Vide Greniers

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publicity campaigns by McDo style restaurants, Euro Disney.....

TRICK OR TREAT?

'Des bonbons ou une farce' is one way to beg for sweets on Halloween, 'friandises ou bêtises' is another, but as there is no literal translation of trick or treat, just about anything goes!

Ironically, the much more serious Toussaint (All Saint's Day), major French holiday was originally created by the Catholic Church to detract attention from the Celtic, Pagan celebration of Samhain, (pronounced sow-in), born in the British Isles, later to become Halloween. Also celebrated on Toussaint is la Castanyada, when whole villages would stay awake all night to honour saints and dead ancestors.

To prevent them from passing out from lack of sleep and the effort of ringing the heavy bells, they would eat high-energy foods such as 'castanyes' (roast chestnuts)



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Restaurant Reviews

with
Louise Sayers

La Garriane, Perpignan



If you don't know where to look for good food in Perpignan, you can find yourself wandering the city and settling for some decidedly average fare. There has been a lot in the press recently about some food establishments sullyng the reputation of French cuisine by serving frozen and microwaved dishes. The French Parliament is even discussing a proposed bill to force restaurants to declare such practices. Fortunately, these are several Perpignan eateries that don't need to worry about the bill and pride themselves on using fresh produce and making everything in-house. As it should be!

Hiding behind an unpromising exterior. La Garriane is possibly Perpignan's best kept culinary secret. Located near the station it looks so ordinary that we walked past it for years without giving it a second glance. Then someone in the know tipped us off and we gave it a go. OMG!!! It doesn't have a Michelin star but it really should.

Run by husband and wife team, Aussie chef, Garry, and French hostess extraordinaire, Ariane, the tiny and modestly decorated restaurant of perhaps 40 covers is always jam packed so booking is essential. The three course fixed lunchtime menu is phenomenal value at 16 euros and the food is inventive and, frankly, divine but if your budget can stretch to it, treat yourself to an evening at La Garriane. It will be a culinary experience to remember.

You won't have a choice in what you eat but your taste buds will be spoiled with a dégustation menu of 9 dishes for 35 euros (or skip the fish course and pay 29 euros). While this is not a cheap dinner, it is still excellent value for money considering the quality of the food.

Ariane presents the dishes with little explanation so part of the fun is deciphering what delights have gone into them. It's a great way of eating which really makes you concentrate on the food, the flavours and how they are put together.

The menu is ever-changing – I've never eaten the same thing twice at La Garriane – but here's what

we ate on our latest visit:

-  *Petit pot de Foie Gras*
-  *Calamari on a sesame paste with buckwheat and a spring onion tempura*
-  *Cheese biscuit topped with broad bean purée, asparagus, spring onion, radish, parmesan, pesto and thyme*
-  *Hake in pea broth with ginger, lemongrass and ground fennel seeds*
-  *Lamb on chick pea purée with cumin, carrot and coriander and carrot juice sauce*
-  *Brebis d'Aveyron and gorgonzola with tomato, orange and star anis confit*
-  *Coconut, white chocolate and passionfruit cream*
-  *Rhubarb mousse with strawberry sorbet, fresh strawberry, cooked rhubarb and yoghurt mousse.*
-  *Chestnut ice cream with smashed chocolate coated cocoa beans*

I can guarantee that you won't regret pushing the boat out for a meal of this calibre.

**La Garriane - 15 rue Vallette 66000
Perpignan Tel: 04 68 67 07 44**

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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PLEASANTLY PLUMP?

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NATURAL WINE IN THE P-O

With Ted Krasny

Historically, P-O is a bit of a backwater in the French wine world. Banyuls and Maury aside, its best known for its plonk and (allegedly) supplying grapes for certain prestige appellations. Things are changing, though, as the department becomes a leading producer of vin nature.

The term itself—'natural wine'—creates certain confusion. 'Nature' implies 'bio'—no pesticides, herbicides, chemical fertilizers—but it's when the fruit is ripe that the line is drawn. Organic wines may contain machine-picked grapes (machines still can't tell a good grape from a bad one), and be artificially yeasted, filtered, fined and sulphated as they proceed bottleward. All of this is taboo in natural wines, standards that pretty much exclude anything but hands-on micro-vignerons.

Somehow our little patch of the Hexagon has become a big player in a small but growing sector. In terms of numbers of natural wine-makers only the Loire can compete with P-O. So why here?

In part, precisely because it is a backwater with relatively affordable vineyards, and no need to conform stylistically to a name

appellation. Couple that with quality, exceptional diverse terroir.... and where else would an experimental winemaker go?

Some say natural wine is the true essence of the terroir and the maker; others say it's nonsense; humankind has been intervening in natural oenological processes since time began. The only thing to do is taste and decide for yourself.

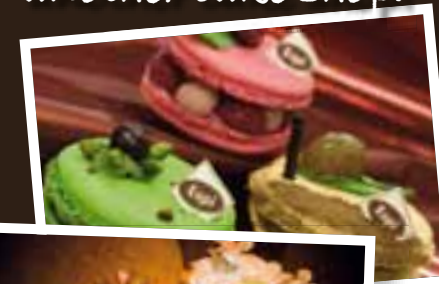
A good place to start is **Les Caves Maillol at 9, cours Palmarole in Perpignan** (04 34 10 36 21) where you will be offered expert advice, in French or in English, on an extensive list of these natural wines.

You won't find vin nature on the shelves at Auchan—not yet at least. And expect to pay a minimum of 10 euro for a bottle. But console yourself

with how much work, mental and physical, went into it.



Not just another cake shop!



If you thought that the recently opened ESPI, behind the Intermarché in **Le Boulou** was just another cake shop, boy, are you in for a treat!

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For health and diet conscious, ESPI also sells a range of 'lait vegetal', milk derived from different plant sources. But don't take my word for it, go and see for yourself!

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Wine and Vine

Côtes de Roussillon villages

There are a variety of 'routes de vins' throughout the Pyrenees-Orientales, on mountain, coast and plain, wonderful, panoramic drives through rolling vineyards, pretty little villages, wine cellars and caves co-operatives where tasting opportunities abound. For this edition, we will start off at Estagel, birthplace of renowned physicist and astronomer Francois Arago (1786 – 1853), on the D117, a scenic starting place to wander the Côtes de Roussillon villages with their rich, red, robust and spicy wines. And what better time of year to explore one of the P-O's main harvests than the autumn, season of mists and mellow fruitfulness?

From Estagel head up the D612 and take a side trip to Montner from where it is possible to drive a tiny winding road from the top of the village with fantastic views over the vineyards and Chateau de Queribus on the skyline.

This will bring you back onto the D612 just below the Col de Bataille at the foot of Força Réal. (see page 30-31) Turn here for a taster of the excellent wines of Chateau de Caladroy, more a village clustered around its ancient castle than a

wine cellar. Dating from the XII century and once a fortress on the old frontier with the Kingdom of Mallorca, the Chateau with its 130 hectares of vines and seven hectares of olives dominates the valleys of both the Têt and the Agly.

More tastings await as you move on to Belesta de la Frontière with its interesting museum of pre-history, and follow the signs to Caramany, a pretty village with splendid views over the lake formed by the barrage of the Agly, and a welcoming Cave

Cooperative.

Cross the Agly and continue to Ansignan where the Roman Aquaduct is the perfect spot for a picnic. Set in the vines, it is 100 metres long with numerous arches and a vaulted passage over the Agly, still usable after all these centuries. Back tracking a little, continue to Rasiguères, good wine, interesting pottery, Planèzes with the cute little chapel St Pierre, Latour de France with its fortified centre rising up from a bend in the Agly and so

back to Estagel. Each village is worth visiting in its own right if only to taste the wines, explore the walks through the vines, the little shepherd shelters, old chapels, and ruined towers.

Of course, this is just the prettiest part of one 'route de vin' which could be made much longer by starting at Rivesaltes and tasting your way through Peyrestortes, Baixas, Espira-de-l'Agly, Cases-de-Pène and Calce before arriving in Estagel.

Don't forget to take a non tasting driver!



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Pretty Perfect P-O Picnics

With Katja Willemsen



PICNIC AT THE TOP OF LA CALCINE, OMS.

Be prepared for company when you hike up the loaf-shaped hill overlooking Oms for a sunset apero or picnic, because friendly goats with Vogue hair will gladly share their paradise with you. The path up La Calcine is steep in parts but the spectacular 360° views are more than worth the effort.

Oms is off the tourist grid and nestles in a cradle of pastures and forests twenty minutes out of Céret. Wide sand tracks and sanglier paths wind between the cork and green oak trees that cover the hills and vales around the village, and low dry stone walls still crisscross some of the steeper slopes. Man may have abandoned the terraces where vines and vegetables once grew, but Mother Nature thrives in this hidden corner of the Aspres.

From Le Boulou, take the D115 towards Céret, turn right just before the Pont de Diable in Céret then follow signs to Oms. (See inset for detailed directions to the path.)

La Calcine rises a mere 100 metres above Oms and is sprinkled with fragrant potpourri (it is autumn after all!): lavender and thyme, wild roses and cistus. The path takes you past a sheer cliff, where limestone was once mined, and is strewn with chalky rock that crumbles in your hand.

As you sip your aperitif at the top, the setting sun drenches the sky in Matisse reds and oranges, from the Corbières in the north to the Albères in the south. On a clear evening, the Cathar fort of Queribus can be seen jutting out of the Corbières skyline.

The Mediterranean glistens on the horizon, and with half-closed eyes, you might see shadows of prehistoric mouflon and tahrs, wild horses, bison, deer and reindeer flitting across the sprawling Roussillon plains.

Mount Canigou quietly surveys this kingdom wearing a vermilion cloak worthy of a monarch, then as dusk falls, clothed in softer veils of grey and

blue, more suited to a monk.

Aim to start the hike a good 1-1½ hours before the sun goes down, and head back to the car thirty minutes or so after sunset so the fading light can guide you - but pack a torch just in case the view and wine entice you to stay longer than is sensible!

How To Get There

- **Time needed:** about 20 minutes from Céret to Oms by car, and a further 30-40 minutes to hike up La Calcine.
- From Le Boulou, take D115 to Céret.
- Before Pont de Diable (at the start of Céret) – turn right into D615 following Oms/ Llauro sign.
- After about 7.5 kms, turn left into D13, at Oms sign.
- After another 3.7 kms, turn sharp right into a road that hairpins back, marked with three colourful signs. The middle yellow one is where you're going: La Calcine. If you see the Oms village sign, you've gone too far.
- Take third road to left, immediately after the cemetery road.
- 600 metres later, park your car on the left hand side of the road in a small slipway leading to a track with a "gate" – if strands of wire can be called a gate! It might be electrified if cattle are out to pasture so take care. Hop over, or go through it, making sure to close it after you.
- Follow the path as it climbs through cork oaks, past a (delete colourful) children's drawing on a board about flowers, and continue through thickening scrub and trees. A good 25 minutes after the electrified gate, the path forks, but both upper and lower options end at the top. Cow patties are a good sign you're on the right track!
- Once you reach the flat crest of La Calcine, build a pile of rocks to mark the path as in the darkening light, you may not find it easily!

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

Available on Amazon





Força Réal A WALK, A DRIVE, A VIEW...

Starting off at Millas, on the N116 between Perpignan and Ille sur Têt, follow the signs towards our destination, Força Réal.

Situated between Millas, Corneilla-la-Rivière and Montner, at an altitude of 507 metres, the panorama from this stunning view point extends along the coastline from Port-Vendres to Leucate, across the Agly and Têt valleys, over the Albères, Canigo, Carlit... Truly fabulous.

Over the years, Força Réal (Royal Fortress) has been many things to many people! Signal tower and fortress for the defence of the Roussillon, welcoming beacon landmark for returning fishermen, hermitage, and today a 'tour de guet' for fire spotting. On a clear day, the view will take your breath away.

Built in 1258 by the kings of Aragon to reinforce Roussillon defences, the original signal tower and small fort, constructed on two adjacent hills, were destroyed in the 17th century. The fort was transformed into an hermitage and 'Conjurador', its function to appease the elements and chase away storms and summer drought.

For the more energetic, a labyrinth of well signed

walks for all levels, with 'sentier botanique' identifying trees and shrubs, will take you up to a large viewing platform, looking out over the wine villages of Montner, La Tour de France to your far left, Estagel in the distance. Further afield the Corbières and Queribus.

If you simply prefer a pleasant drive all the way up to this panoramic viewpoint and picnic spot, take the RD 38, from the Col de la Bataille so named after the treaty of Bayonne when the King of Aragon, Jean II, handed over the Roussillon and the Cerdagne to Louis XI of France. Years later, for various reasons, Louis's successor, Charles VIII, decided to get rid of the rebellious Roussillonnais, and handed them back! In 1496 the fickle king marched back into the Roussillon and waged war against the Catalans once again, a decisive battles taking place on the Col de la Bataille, as it was subsequently named. The col is also a poignant memorial to members of the resistance group Henri Barbusse, a reminder of courageous men and women who gave up their lives for the liberty which today we take so much for granted.

Follow the winding road up to the large free car

park and a short five minute climb will take you up to the pretty chapel with orientation table, passing the fascinating polished steel convex mirror which reflects back the enormous views around you. Unfortunately, the chapel is rarely open, but masses and processions do take place there on festival and Saints' days.

A path to your left takes you to the main viewpoint with a telecommunications mast (which somehow manages not to spoil the views) and a fire watching hut. In summer, volunteers with binoculars and walkie-talkies, linked directly to the emergency services, are on constant alert throughout the day.

A visit to Força Réal is not recommended on a windy day, unless you wish to lose your hat and anything else that's not well secured to your body!

Back in Millas, olive oil fans will not want to miss a visit to nearby Mas Saint Pierre, (www.moulin-saint-pierre.com) a small detour on the route to Thuir, where Monique and Joseph Planes, along with their son Victor, offer



Out for the day...

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We are nearly all photographers now, thanks to cheap digital imaging via compact cameras, tablets and Smart phones.

Photojournalism, however, is more than just taking a photo - it is about telling a story, recording an event, getting a message across.

Visa pour l'Image features exhibitions by some of the world's leading documentary photographers, as well as up-and-coming professionals and skilled amateurs (through the "OFF" programme of fringe events in local cafés, shops and other spaces).



Between 31 August and 15 September there will be 25 free exhibitions around Perpignan, as well as 6 evening shows, events projected on a giant screen amidst the graceful arcades of the Campo Santo, the largest and oldest funeral cloister in France. A second huge screen in the Place de la République, will repeat the Campo Santo screenings to an even larger audience sitting in the many cafes and bars.

Varied and fascinating, the exhibitions give us

an insight into the year's news from all around the world. Each individual photographer has an emotionally touching story to tell, images of our troubled times, but amongst the horrors of war and natural disaster are tales of hope and a glimpse of the quirky side of life.

And what a great way to explore and enjoy Perpignan, as you wander from venue to venue in this historic centre.

Hotel Pams in the Rue Emile Zola is the meeting place for all the press photographers. It was Pierre Bardou of JOB cigarette paper fame who bought it and several surrounding houses in the 1850s. The Tourist Office in Perpignan offers tours of these beautiful old "hotels particuliers" or, during VISA you could pop your head around the door, for a glimpse of the wealth of Perpignan a century ago.

During the Middle Ages Perpignan was blessed with any number of monasteries. Almost all religious orders were well represented. Many are

QUARTIER SAINT JACQUES

With Henry Shaftoe

Walk east from Place de la République and Place Rigaud in Perpignan and you will arrive at the inner-city neighbourhood of St Jacques, one of the most vibrant quarters in the city, a lively, colourful mix of native French, North Africans and Gitanes.

Some may be inclined to give St Jacques a wide berth, but despite its crumbling, impoverished appearance, it has a fascinating ambience, and contains several places well worth a visit.

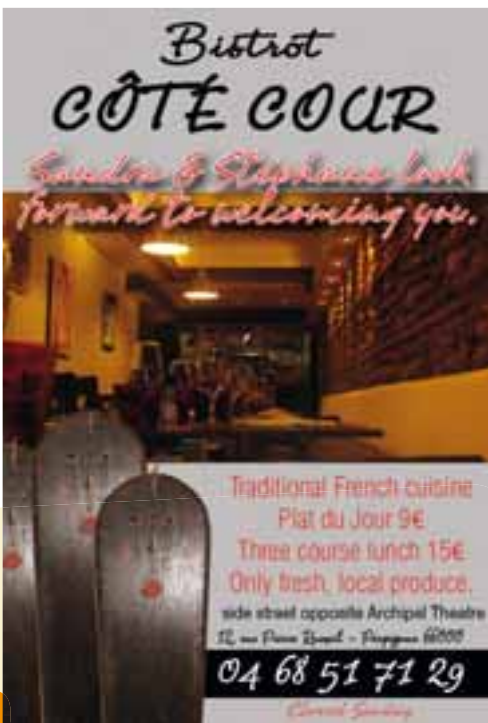
The relatively unknown church of St Jacques dates back to the 14th Century, and the interior is as impressive as Perpignan's cathedral. The area also boasts the Museum of Natural History, the Mediathèque, both in rue Emile Zola, and the Couvent des Minimes, built close to the ramparts in 1573 in what was then Perpignan's Jewish quarter, and regular host to a range of exhibitions and concerts. It is also here that you will find the largest number of Visa exhibitions, hung upstairs in one of the collection of buildings grouped around a vast courtyard.

However, for many, the jewel in St Jacques' crown has to be the market at Place Cassanyes, the colour, sounds and smells of North Africa on your very own doorstep. Set up daily in the Place Cassanyes, bread, meat and vegetables are cheap, fresh, herbs and spices abound and you will find there every possible item you could imagine – and many that you couldn't!

So go on. Try visiting one of the parts of Perpignan that makes the city unique..... and pick up a bargain in the process.



© Pascal Maitre / Cosmos / National Geographic Magazine - performing artist and photographer Julie Djikey (Kisalu Nkia Mbote collective) in the street in Kinshasa, protesting against cosmetics, pollution and climate change.





© Joao Silva / The New York Times - Afghanistan: Karizak, September 10, 1999.



Homeless Irishman, East End, London, Great Britain, 1969 Don McCullin

now used for exhibitions and concerts.

In the 15th century Couvent des Minimes, photographic excellence is on show on the walls of the old monk's dormitories, the grand corridors, the kitchens, the cloisters and courtyard with parasols.... and photographers taking a welcome break from the troubled world represented within.

Move on to the nearby Chapelle des Dominicains, where the photographs are hung on long wires, almost dwarfed by the height and beauty of their surroundings. Part of the Cloisters was sold to the army in the XVIII century and was, until recently, the base of the French Foreign Legion. Now, throughout the year, it is used as a venue for art and antique fairs, festivals and events. It is here that you will find the work of Somerset's own Don McCullin, internationally known British photojournalist, particularly recognized for his war photography and images of urban strife.

A small courtyard joins the Chapelle Ste



IS IT A BIRD? IS IT A PLANE? NO – IT'S A THEATRE!

With Henry Shaftoe

The Théâtre de l'Archipel has landed in Perpignan and its autumn/winter season is a real treat.

Looking somewhat like the leftovers from an abandoned space station, or the giant contents of a child's toy box tipped on to a site by the river Têt, the Théâtre de l'Archipel is in fact a recent project by celebrity French architect Jean Nouvel.

Love or hate the exterior look of the place, the auditoria it contains are excellent and the shows put on there are of the highest international standard. The biggest auditorium in the complex is called "Le Grenat" (the maroon blob in the picture) and I admit it took me a while to realise that this is a blatant visual reference to Perpignan's reputation as the centre of garnet jewellery-making.

This autumn the theatre is offering a range of circus, plays, music and dance performances, including 2 nights of pouting pop diva Vanessa Paradis and Mozart's opera Don Giovanni. They also put on a range of lunchtime "concerts sandwiches" for a very reasonable 5 Euros, which are so popular they tend to sell out, so best to book in advance.

This is one of the finest performing arts complexes in France, with a performance programme to match, so if you have not already checked it out, I urge you to do so. More information at

www.theatredelarchipel.org

or call in (between 12.00 and 18.30) for their free 100 page brochure.





© Jérôme Sessini / Magnum Photos - Aleppo, February 18, 2013. Frontline in the Old City. FSA Fighters use mirrors to observe Syrian Army.

Dominique to another VISA venue, the Chapelle du Tiers-ordre, full of dramatic 19th century art. The notorious "Trabucayres", Catalan highwaymen who terrorised the roads of the Albères in the mid 19th century, were tried and condemned to death or hard labour here.

Take some time out in the dappled shade of tall plane trees, by the lizard fountain in the Place de la Revolution Française before continuing your tour.

The city walls built by Vauban are no more, but the XIV century Castillet remains. Originally built as a fortress, it now houses a museum of Roussillon Folk Art and is another VISA venue. After enjoying the photographs, pop up to the crenulated terrace, added to support cannons, and survey the plain of Roussillon, with the spectacular views it affords over the city, the plain and Canigo.

Pick up a programme with handy exhibition map at the Tourist Office. For more details visit www.visapourlimage.com



CAN ZEBRAS SING THE BLUES?

With Henry Shaftoe

Oh yes! They most certainly can!

The annual "Jazzèbre" festival will take place in Perpignan from 27 September to 20 October. For those of you who think that jazz involves a bunch of grumpy old musicians playing a few notes too many, there is plenty within the festival programme to change your mind. Gregory Porter (18 October) is a fine soulful singer who has been getting great reviews in the UK over the last couple of years, and Erik Truffaz (16 October) will be airing his spacious trumpet playing (shades of late-period Miles Davis) in the Théâtre de l'Archipel's wonderful acoustics.

The Jazzèbre organisation promotes events throughout the year, in and around Perpignan, including an annual jazz picnic (see photo) and "jazz et vins". More details at www.jazzebre.com



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Cap Espardenya

by Louise Sayers **PUMP IT UP!**

Ok, hands up if you would like a custom-made pair of shoes with your own choice of style, colour and fabric? But that would be ridiculously expensive wouldn't it? Well, not at Cap Espardenya where they will custom make a pair of espadrilles for you for the not-so-princely sum of just 83 Euros. Yes really. And if you think an espadrille is not your thing, think again because these are not just your bog standard espadrille, these are espadrilles for the 21st century!

I visited Cap Espardenya in June and was bowled over by what this fledgling company, established in December 2011, produces from their workshop in Canet. With just three partners. Henri-Philippe Baptiste is the charming front man who showed me round the workshop where I saw his associates, Marguerite Lompech and designer Françoise Chaumat, in full production mode. Françoise has impressive design credentials, having worked for major fashion houses in Paris including Lanvin,



Thierry Mugler and Jean-Paul Gaultier. She has had the pleasure of shoeing many an illustrious celebrity foot, including those of Johnny Depp and Leonardo di Caprio!

The espadrille has a long history, dating back to the 14th century and both Catalonia and the Basque country lay claim to being the home of the shoe. The Catalans call an espadrille an espardenya, which in turn comes from another Catalan word, esparto. This is the name of a kind of grass traditionally used to make the rope sole which is the defining feature of an.

The company's adoption of the Catalan word reflects Marguerite's desire to take an iconic product from her native region, maintain all its best features – hand stitching, natural products and suppleness – and modernise it, transforming the

espadrille from a casual shoe into something more chic and elegant.

Cap Espardenya buy in their rope soles (semelles) from the Spanish Basque country but the rest of the shoe is made on site in Canet, much of it by hand, making this a labour intensive process. The rope sole is vulcanised with rubber – rubber balls are heated to 400°C turning them to liquid which is then pressed on to the rope and resolidifies.

The most labour-intensive part of the process is the hand-stitching of the upper to the sole. Cap Espardenya is unique in using a cross stitch to do this which makes for a sturdier shoe. I watched Marguerite sewing a pair, tough sewing which requires great precision. A basic pair of shoes takes around an hour to make but the more intricate styles can take up to 4 hours. An oft-seen hazard of espadrille wearing is the slipping off of the backs which results in the wearer treading it down. This unseemly look doesn't happen with Cap Espardenya espadrilles which feature a border sewn round the top to avoid slippage.

Cap Espardenya produce a traditional fabric espadrille which can be bought off the shelf in a range of colours priced at 30 euros - I came away with a beautiful bright orange pair perfect for a casual summery look. However what sets this operation apart is the range of different styles available. For women, they produce a ballet pump style in the softest Spanish leather, suede or patent leather in fabulous colours. These cost 55 euros off the shelf. They differ from the traditional espadrille shape with the front of the shoe slightly rounded and more comfortable on the foot. Having been given a beautiful pale yellow pair (very this year!) which I have worn a lot, I can confirm that they are classy, smart and comfortable and I've received many a compliment when sporting them. Other styles for women include a gladiator style and a wedge heel for a more formal look.

Men can choose from the traditional fabric style, leather or suede moccasins (to be worn without socks guys, please don't subject us to the fashion





faux pas of espadrilles and socks!), the bestselling unisex two-tone golf shoe or the Pablo lace-up version, named after possibly the world's most famous espadrille wearer, Pablo Picasso.

To get your hands on a bespoke pair of shoes, or indeed the off-the-shelf styles, you need to hotfoot it down to the Cap Espardenya workshop. Once you have chosen your style, colour and fabric, the team will get to work and produce your shoes within three days. They are really accommodating and can produce whatever you want I think a pair of Cap Espardenya espadrilles make a lovely gift, particularly if you want to give a regional product which is not

wine or food!

Just a final word on prices - the prices quoted in this article are only valid if you buy directly from the workshop. The shoes can be bought online but prices are higher.

ATELIER CAP ESPARDENYA

53 Boulevard Las Bigues
66140 Canet en Roussillon
www.cap-espardenya.com
contact@cap-espardenya.com
Tel: 04 34 12 44 15

Opening hours : From 15th April to 15th September : Monday to Saturday from 9am to 7pm.
From 16th September to 14th April : Monday to Saturday from 9am to 12 and 2pm to 7pm

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
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C'EST LA RENTRÉE!

Hands up if the vocabulary and acronyms associated with the French Education System leaves you standing outside the classroom door! Your neighbour's grandson 'va redoubler'. What a clever girl his sister must be, going to college at just 11 years old. And what on earth is BAC + 3?

Please don't mark us on the content. It would fill a very thick exercise book to explain the full system in detail, so we have put together a very basic guide to French schooling vocab and its approximate British equivalent.

Qualifications in brief !

Brevet Blanc - Equivalent of Mock GCSE's, (or O Levels if you're a certain age!) sat by all students in 'troisième' just after Christmas.

Brevet (Diplôme National du Brevet (DNB))

- Equivalent to GCSE's sat at the end of the 'troisième'. It equates roughly to 4 Grade C GCSE's, but is taken at the age of 14 instead of 16 in the UK. To pass the Brevet a child needs to have a basic knowledge in a range of core subjects as opposed to the passing or failing of individual subjects, as is the case in the UK.

Baccalauréat or BAC (Introduced by Napoleon in 1808) - Equivalent to A Levels in the UK, there are three main types depending on academic capabilities. A student must gain an average (la moyenne) of at least 10 out of 20 across a range of core disciplines as opposed to passing individual subjects.

BAC Générale - The most academic, usually leading to higher education / university

BAC Professionnel - Vocational based, usually leading directly to apprenticeship or jobs for the lucky ones.

BAC Technologique - Similar idea to the Bac Pro but more geared to direct students into further education.

Age	French Education System	English Education System
3	Maternelle Pre-school	Petite Section Nursery Class
4	(non-compulsory) Usually from 3 to	Moyenne Section Reception class
5	6 Years	Grande Section Year 1
6		CP - Cours Préparatoires Year 2
7	Ecole Primaire Primary school (also known as "écoles élémentaires")	CE1 - Cours Elémentaires Year 3
8		CE2 - Cours Elémentaires 2nd Year Year 4
9	cover the ages 6 to 11 Years	CM1 - Cours Moyens 1st Year Year 5
10		CM2 - Cours Moyens 2nd Year Year 6
11		Sixième (6e) Year 7
12	Collège Secondary School / High School	Cinquième (5e) Year 8
13		Quatrième (4e) Year 9
14		Troisième (3e) Year 10
15	Lycée	Seconde (2nde) Year 11
16	A sort of mix between Secondary school and Sixth form	Première (1ère) Year 12 (lower 6th)
17		Terminale Year 12 (upper 6th)

Diplôme Français	English	Levels
BAC	A Level	
BTS, DUT	HND	= BAC+2
Licence	BA	= BAC+3
Master 1	Master	= BAC+4
Master 2	No real equivalent	
Doctorat	PHD	= BAC+7

French / English Equivalents:

La Rentrée - new school term

Redoubler - to repeat a year if required standard hasn't been reached.

Bulletin - school report

Note - mark or grade

Directeur/directrice - headmaster/mistress

la dissertation - essay

dou(e) - gifted, talented

réussir/ échouer - to pass/fail (an exam)

Test your French

1 - 5 POUR SECRET!

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

- | | |
|------------|-------------------------------------|
| séance 1 | a remuer dans tous les sens |
| sec 2 | b partie du corps de la femme |
| secouer 3 | c le dessous d'une chaussure |
| secourir 4 | d durée d'un spectacle |
| seigle 5 | e facilement blessé |
| sein 6 | f chemin étroit |
| selle 7 | g aider |
| semelle 8 | h céréale qui ressemble au blé |
| sensible 9 | i siège sur un vélo, ou un cheval.. |
| sentier 10 | j ne contient pas d'eau |

Tongue twister
(Virelangue)
(Répétez trois fois)

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



Edith Piaf
Salad Dressing?

Je ne vinaigrette rien

Language tip

Il y a - there is
there are...

Il y avait
there was...

Il y aura
there will be...

Il va y avoir
there is going to be

Voici
here (it) is

Voilà
there (it) is

3 - FAUX AMIS

A few more of those irritating 'faux amis', false language friends, specially invented to confuse you. Can you remember which is which?

- Actuellement
a) In fact b) At present
- Coin
a) Corner b) Small change
- Avertissement
a) Poster b) Warning
- Devis
a) quote b) tool

- Sensible
a) Shrewd b) Sensitive
- Slip
a) Slide b) Underpants
- Marmite
a) Cooking pot b) Sandwich spread
- Piles
a) batteries b) haemorrhoids
- Sale
a) special offer b) dirty
- Rester
a) take a nap b) stay

VARY YOUR LANGUAGE

Don't just say something is 'très bien'. Say it is...

Sensationnel	Extra
chouette	Remarquable
Génial	Exceptionnel
Cool	Extraordinaire
Super	Formidable
Nickel (slang)	Nickel Chrome (slang)



Blague Bête

Quel est le fruit préféré de Beethoven?
POMME POMME
POMME POMME

4 - MATCH UP THE WINE VOCAB

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| pétillant 1 | a allow to reach room temperature |
| frais 2 | b corked |
| un tire-bouchon 3 | c tasting (session) |
| cépage 4 | d wine dealer |
| brut 5 | e chilled |
| chambrier 6 | f slightly sparkling |
| dégustation 7 | g sediment |
| bouchonnée 8 | h cork screw |
| dépot 9 | i dry sparkling |
| caviste 10 | j grape variety |

Can you find the English equivalent to these idiomatic words and phrases?

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Il y a quelque chose qui cloche 1 | a Until the end |
| Fais voir 2 | b Gradually |
| Au fur et à mesure 3 | c Informal |
| Au pif 4 | d He's missing the point |
| Jusqu'au bout 5 | e It's worth it |
| À la bonne franquette 6 | f Let's see |
| Si ce n'est pas indiscret 7 | g If you don't mind me asking.. |
| En robe des champs 8 | h Rough guess |
| Il est à côté de la plaque 9 | i There's something up. |
| Ça vaut le coup 10 | j Unpeeled (jacket) potato |

Améliorez votre Anglais

1 - Vous êtes fier de dire que vous vous débrouillez très bien en anglais? HmMMM.
On verra! Trouvez les définitions de ces mots anglais, un peu extraordinaires!

Cantankerous	1	a	Confondre quelqu'un
Gobbledygook	2	b	Idiot
Kerfuffle	3	c	Comportement bizarre
To mollycoddle	4	d	Se faire des câlins
To discombobulate	5	e	Charabia
Shenanigans	6	f	Maquignonnage
Skulduggery	7	g	N'importe quoi
To canoodle	8	h	Coléreux, grincheux
Codswallop	9	i	Couver
Nincompoop	10	j	Chahut

Une langue vivante, l'Anglais évolue constamment. Voici quelques mots avec leurs définitions, qui sont rentrés récemment dans le dictionnaire

Nonversation – une conversation ridicule

E-Quaintance – quelqu'un qu'on connaît uniquement en ligne.

Cyberchondriac – quelqu'un qui s'imagine malade après avoir parcouru les maladies de l'Internet

Buzzword – nouveau mot ou phrase à la mode

Daycation – un séjour ou visite d'une journée

Flexitarian – Un végétarien qui mange la viande de temps en temps

Glamping – camping luxueux (mélange de camping et glamour)

Guesstimate – un devis qui n'est pas exact

2 - REMPLISSEZ LES BLANCS DANS CES DEUX LETTRES AMUSANTES ENVOYÉES ENTRE GEORGE BERNARD SHAW ET WINSTON CHURCHILL

Dear Winston

I am 1 _____ two tickets to the first night of my new 2 _____ Bring a 3 _____ if you have one.

Dear George

Cannot possibly 4 _____ first night, will attend second ... if there is 5 _____.

a play b attend c one d enclosing e friend



Utile à savoir
Recevez-vous des lettres de vos amis anglais avec **XXX** à la fin?

Vous n'avez rien fait de méchant, ce sont des English kisses !!

3 - Trouvez le bons sens des ces phrases poilues!

By a hair's breadth	1	a	Couper un cheveu en quatre
Hair-raising	2	b	Journée où tout va mal
Let your hair down	3	c	Remède contre un gueule de bois
To split hairs	4	d	Effrayant
Hair pin bend	5	e	D'un poil
Hair of the dog	6	f	Un tournant en épingle
A bad hair day	7	g	Éclatez-vous!

Good advice

The secret of a good speech is to have a good beginning and a good ending.... with the two as close together as possible (speech – discours)

Just silly...

One hat says to another...
'You stay here, I'll go on a head.'
(ahead – en avant)



Ouch! That English humour
Seen on a wall in a ladies loo.
"MY HUSBAND FOLLOWS ME EVERYWHERE"

Written just below it. "I DO NOT!"
(loo – WC below – au dessous)

4 - U - is for Understand

Trouvez les définitions des mots suivants, qui commencent tous avec les lettres U, V, W ou Y

ugly	1	a	twist from side to side
vanish	2	b	moustache
waist	3	c	a round toy
wink	4	d	the yellow part of an egg
yolk	5	e	unpleasant to look at
underwear	6	f	shout loudly
yo-yo	7	g	disappear
whiskers	8	h	part of the body
yell	9	i	open and close eye quickly
wriggle	10	j	clothes worn next to body

Virelangue

(Répétez trois fois)

Freddy saw three fleas flying through!

RUGBY IN THE P-O With Mike Thomas

Rugby is a massive part of P O culture, but where did the game originate, how did it evolve and why is it so popular here?

The most widely held view is that rugby started in Rugby School in 1823 when a senior pupil "with a fine disregard for the rules of football, first took the ball in his arms and ran with it". The game spread rapidly throughout Public Schools and English Rugby Union was formed in 1871.

Baron Pierre de Coubertin, founder of the modern Olympic Games was a great admirer of the "never say die" ethos of English Public Schools and was a major influence in the setting up of the first two rugby clubs in France in the 1880s. Liberally sprinkled with aristocratic family names, it was clearly a game for the 'upper crust'.

In the 1890's, rugby spread like wild fire into the provinces, in particular throughout the south West, from Bordeaux and Biarritz up through the Basque lands and then to Pau, Lourdes, Carcassonne and into North Catalonia, mainly through the involvement of ex pats.

Our much loved local team USAP – United Sportive Arlequins



with the prestigious Harlequins from London. At this time "rugby de villages" took root and during the early 20th century many local clubs were set up. Ceret, Argeles, Thuir, Prades, Port Vendres, Collioure, Millas, have all produced teams that have achieved success at National Level. Intense local rivalries developed and continue to this day and it is well worth the small entrance fee to go to the picturesque stadium in Céret (opposite the Lycée) to watch a local match with Argelès, both for the game and a bit of interesting people watching!

Rugby League is also an English invention. In the late 1890's, when clubs in the North of England wanted to pay players who took time off from work to play, Rugby Union was horrified. The Northern Rugby Football League was formed at the George Hotel, Huddersfield in August 1895, in an attempt to make the game more attractive to the spectator. It was imported into France in the 1930's.

The Catalan Dragons play in the Super League along with 13 English clubs, 12 from the North and one from London. They play in Perpignan at the Stade Gilbert Brutus, a stone's throw from USAP's home, the Aimé Giral. A strong Catalan identity

Perpignanais - was set up in 1902 - Note the Arlequins, clearly a link

is evident in both stadiums. The passion and commitment of both sets of fans is clear, but one is also aware of a family atmosphere and for all of the noise and excitement there is never any trouble. A foreign influence in the French game continues to be a major factor. At the Dragons, the Scot, Ian Henderson, and former Leicester Tiger Leon Pryce are popular amongst the fans. Australians abound and Scott Dureau and Steve Menzies are ever present on the team sheet. The Union game in France is becoming extremely attractive to British, Kiwi, and South African players partly because salaries are higher here and because they love the lifestyle and climate. Johnnie Wilkinson was European player of the year last year with Toulon, and star players with USAP include Englishman Luke Narraway, Scotsman Alistair Strokosch and the two Welshmen James Hook and Luke Charteris. Many British and Irish frequent the matches and, dare I say it, many of us are as passionate about the 'Drags' and USAP as are the Catalans.

Rugby is a great game. Get down to the Gilbert

Brutus or Aimé Giral stadium or your local rugby club and you will see what I mean.



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Hunting in France

THE BOAR WAR

Attention
Aller à la chasse - to go hunting
Avoir la chasse (slang) - to have the runs, toilet-wise!

Love it or loathe it, (and I freely admit to being one of the latter) hunting has been going on in the Pyrénées Orientales since prehistory when Tautavel man caught lions on the plains of Roussillon with his bare hands.

Around the middle of August, men with dogs and guns in fluorescent orange gilets hang notices from trees warning the public that La Chasse has begun. Cute and hairy bassets, griffons and beagles, bells around their necks, leap from the back of battered vans and set off through the undergrowth to flush out the game. The lucky and much loved few may wear Kevlar vests to protect them against the dangerous tusks of the wild boar.

By mid September deer and moufflon, pheasant and partridge are also considered "fair game". Luckily migrating birds are no longer on the list of permitted targets. The hunts are strictly controlled, each commune having its own hunt association.

Permits are required and



can only be used in the commune in which the hunter resides. It is possible to get day cards from neighbouring communes and outsiders possessing international hunting permits can also apply for a day's shooting.

Hunters must take a training course and pass a theoretical and practical exam organised by the National Hunting and Wildlife Agency before they may legally obtain a licence. They must also carry proof of possession of legally required hunting insurance. (Assurance obligatoire de responsabilité civile)

The Boar War

The wild boar (sanglier) hunts that have turned many a peaceful Sunday walk into a nightmare for innocent ramblers are called 'battues', so named to describe the beating of woods and bushes

to force the game to flee in the direction of waiting hunters who encircle the area. The battue is potentially dangerous! A male boar can

weigh in at 150 kilos and have fearsome tusks. According to the French National Office of Hunting and Wildlife, the wild boar population in France is well over a million. Many believe that hunters play an important ecological role in the maintenance and balance of the countryside by keeping down a wild boar population which is responsible for increasing damage to crops and our environment. More efficient fencing and intensive harvesting have been tried, but, so far, only hunting seems to provide effective damage control.

The hunting season is often extended by a month or more, to generate money from the hunting permits, to be given to the farmers to improve their fencing and limit the rampaging boar activity.

The word sanglier comes from the latin 'singularis', meaning singular, in the sense of unique and solitary. Whilst these large and powerful beasts are capable of causing a great deal of harm with their tusks, kept sharp for fighting off other males

during the breeding season, the males are usually shy and solitary animals, and attacks on humans are rare unless cornered, frightened and defending themselves or their young. On the other hand, they are increasingly known to head for populated areas, rummage through rubbish bins, dig up lawns and even drink from swimming pools!

But don't panic. Boar are actually omnivorous, living mainly on berries, fruit, fungi, roots.... with acorns being a favourite treat, and whilst they will also root about in the soil for worms and insects, they have no yearning for the bitter flesh of angry little hunters!

Of course, if you're not keen on the killing, but like the idea of fun with a gun, why not have a go at the rather painful sounding 'ball trap', (clay pigeon shooting) a sport which involves no blood, guts, pain and misery for anyone.

- sanglier - boar**
- laie - female**
- marcassins - babies**

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Blackbirds Baked in a Pie

by Eugene Barter

Take two dollops of Peter Mayle, add a generous measure of Julia Child, drizzle with red wine then simmer slowly under sunny skies for seven years. The utterly charming result will be Eugene Barter and her tales of running a guesthouse in the Pyrenees-Orientales.

Throwing caution to the wind, Eugene Barter, or Gene, as she is known to her friends, leaves the comfort – and boredom – of retirement in Wales, buys a rambling house with uninterrupted views of Mount Canigou, and turns it into an auberge called Rozinante, after Don Quixote's mule. "The exploits of Don Quixote, the elderly Spanish knight who set off late in life for new adventures, sparked a reciprocal feeling, so that to me it did not seem at all strange at the age of sixty to find a house to use as an auberge and prepare to tilt at whatever obstacles came our way," muses Gene.

And there were obstacles a-plenty: an eccentric water pump, a drainpipe-climbing guest, forest fires



licking up the slopes towards Rozinante, and language challenges such as the time she asked a neighbour, "Comment vont vos boules?" and was kindly advised, "Madame, never ask a Frenchman how his balls are, you might find it... inconvenient."

Blackbirds Baked in a Pie is Eugene Barter's thoroughly entertaining account of rural life in the P.O. Bursting with cheeky humour and wry observations, it's a series of spirited tales that will leave you longing to share un verre with this charming raconteuse.

Blackbirds Baked in a Pie is available on Amazon.

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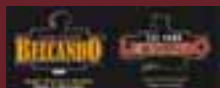
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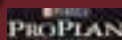
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AIRPORT NEWS

With JOHN FAIRCLOUGH



AUTUMN 2013

With the days drawing in, it's time to turn our thoughts to the availability of flights operating from the P-O and around, to the UK/Ireland during the Autumn/Winter months.

As always they represent a tiny fraction of what's been available during the summer, though, on a positive note, some of the cuts do not seem to be as savage as in previous years.

With the price of aviation fuel at an all time high, European governments trying to balance the books by levying ever more punishing airport taxes, and the recession stubbornly refusing to go away, it's rather difficult to envisage any time soon a return to the frequencies of a few years ago, particularly in the off-peak months. However, a number of the airlines are doing their bit to encourage us to book early by offering some attractive fares.

Sadly, yet again, **PERPIGNAN** is a no fly zone this winter, if it's flights to the British Isles you are after.

Over in **CARCASSONNE**, it's much the same service as last winter:

LIVERPOOL	2x pw
DUBLIN	2x pw
STANSTED	2x pw All Ryanair

The main news at **GIRONA** is the reinstatement of a winter Stansted connection.

MANCHESTER	4x pw
LUTON	3x pw
STANSTED	3x pw All Ryanair

Just when it looked like it was all systems go at **BEZIERS** for a period of growth, Ryanair have decided to shelve some routes, leaving:

LUTON	2x pw	Ryanair
-------	-------	---------

At **MONTPELLIER**, it's just one route:

GATWICK.....	5x pw	EasyJet
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So, not for the first time, it's down to **BARCELONA** if you want a wide range of routes and frequencies:

HEATHROW	48x pw	British Airways
GATWICK	14x pw	British Airways
	5x pw	Monarch
	14 x pw	Vueling
	38 x pw	EasyJet
	3x pw	Norwegian

LUTON	10 x pw	EasyJet
SOUTHEND	5 x pw	EasyJet
STANSTED	14x pw	Ryanair
LIVERPOOL	7x pw	EasyJet
	3x pw	Ryanair

MANCHESTER	2x pw	Monarch
	3 x pw	Jet 2

LEEDS BRAD	4x pw	Jet 2
BIRMINGHAM	4x pw	Ryanair
BRISTOL	5x pw	EasyJet
EDINBURGH	3x pw	Ryanair
PRESTWICK	2x pw	Ryanair
GLASGOW	2 x pw	Jet 2
DUBLIN	5x pw	Ryanair
	7 x pw	Aer Lingus

Getting to/from Barcelona Airport all depends on many factors; time of day, starting point, budget etc, but below is a list of the most popular options.

CAR..... El Prat Airport is on the south side of Barcelona on the C31 road signposted Sitges and Casteldefels. Example journey time from Perpignan via the A9/AP7 motorways is about 2h30 mins. At the time of writing the best on site parking deal I could find was a prebooked flat fee of up to 20 days for 79€. Another elegant solution, particularly if you've got an early flight, is to book a room (from app 60€ upwards) at one of the many airport hotels, leave your car for nothing there, and transfer to the airport on their free shuttle bus.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT.... Use one of the public transport options (bus, train, taxi...) to get to Girona Bus+Train Station, hop onto the frequent Barcelona suburban trains, and, by a same platform change at Passeig de Gràcia, take the R2 line direct to Barcelona Airport station (every 30 mins). From Perpignan, I'd leave a good 4 hours to get to the airport using this combination.

Secondly, if you have a possibility of getting under your own steam to Figueres Vilafant station, there is a fast AVE train every 2 hours to Barcelona Sants, where you can change onto the Airport train mentioned in the last paragraph. From Vilafant, I'd leave a good 2 hrs to the airport.

Finally the Spanish bus company Alsa runs a twice daily service direct from Figueres to BCN airport T1, but the morning service departs at 4 am!

All the above information re flights etc applies to the period up to the end of 2013.

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Test your French - answers p46-47

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

Améliorez votre Anglais - answers p48-49

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



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