

Autumn 2016

P-O Life

Life in the Pyrénées-Orientales

N° 53
FREE / GRATUIT



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EDITO:-)



In this diverse and exciting region, there is never a shortage of new and delightful things to do, places to go, people to meet.and it is our greatest pleasure to share them with you. In this edition, we take a drive over the border to Port de la Selva, visit the Tours de Cabrenç in the high Vallespir, and take a wander round the dynamic little town of Thuir.

Tim and Chris Parker don their walking boots again around Taurinya, Henry Shaftoe tells us about the 'quartier de la gare' with its great architecture and restaurants, and Katja lays her blanket on the ground at the spectacular Gorges de Galamus. Peter Goonery takes P-O Life out of its comfort zone with a look at the wild boar hunt, and the Warblers look at Frexit in a different light.

Finally, after a photo tour round Peter Spencer's autumn P-O, and a sneaky peek with Simon Bridges at a golf course with a London bus, we cross our fingers and join John Fairclough as he scratches around to try and bring hope to the frequent flyers between P-O and UK - muchly in vain I fear!

Do hope your autumn is golden

Kate

*Hola
amics meus*

**P-O Life Mag is
getting on a bit in
dog years - 12 years
old in 2017 - and so
is its editor! Mais ne
vous inquiétez pas!**

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WALK ^{The} REGION

with Tim
and Chris Parker

LES BALCONS DE

TAURINYA

A 4h circular walk with approx 520 metres of ascent. Well signed with yellow/white waymarks and yellow signs indicating Les Balcons de Taurinya. Wonderful views of Le Massif du Canigou and its summit and very interesting industrial remains at Les Mines de Salver, near Taurinya. Visit to Abbaye de St Michel de Cuxa recommended.

ACCESS

map IGN 1:25,000

Massif du Canigou 2349 ET

Take the N116 from Perpignan to Prades. Turn right at roundabout to follow ring road round Prades. At next roundabout follow signs to St Michel de Cuxa. Pass through Codalet on outskirts of Prades and park at the Abbey car park.

START OF WALK: From car park walk uphill behind Abbey. Take path across field, on bend (waymarked yellow and white).

On entering woodland turn right. Pass remains of Chapelle St Pierre d'Orseleo and continue to a house beside D27. (10-15 mins from start)

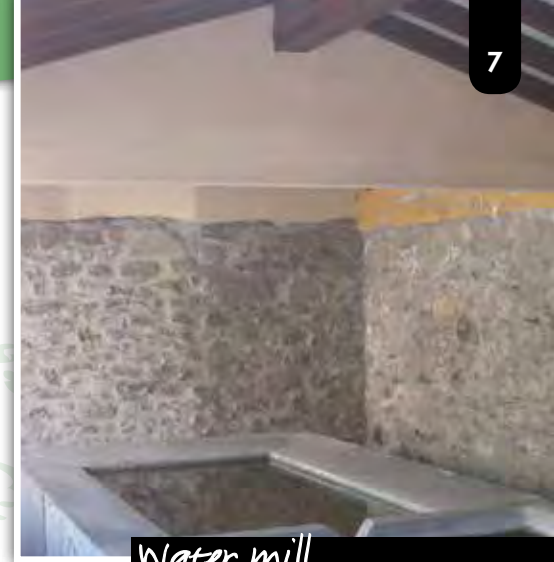
➡ Pass to left of house "La Remise" and turn left onto path through woodland which rises gradually to meet a wide piste. Turn left and admire the views on continuing to Col de Clara. (50 mins from start)

➡ Turn right just before piste to right and take steeply descending path to Taurinya. In valley (River La Llitera), reach a paved area and the ruins of an old water mill. Cross bridge, turn right and up into village. Turn right to find old Lavoir then left to D27 through Taurinya.

➡ Turn left up road in direction of Fillols, round bend, to reach Le Cami de las Tarteres on left. Take this road and after passing a few houses turn right on path which goes gently uphill alongside a stream. Emerge at Gîte d'Etape "El Passatje".

➡ Turn right up broad track, through a barrier (which may be up) to enter site of Les Mines de Salver. *These old iron mines were worked from 1879 until 1928 then closed when cheap imports came from Mauritania. They were reopened in 1958 but finally closed again in 1962. A series of boards explains the history and ways of working. Many vestiges remain.*

➡ First pass the site of huge hoppers used to load minerals, then rise steeply to turn right onto level track bed of old railway. Contour hillside to entrance of mine 703, so called after its altitude. The track goes in 50 metres and leads to 700-800 metres of galleries. *An old locomotive still stands behind the entrance grill.*



Water mill



Mines de salver



locomotive

WALK The REGION

with Tim
and Chris Parker



A very steep incline, formerly site of a mechanised lift, leads up to the first grill oven, which heated the rock containing iron ore.

➡ Continue up to the remains of miner cottages and a larger oven. *This is a lovely picnic place.*

➡ From left of the site, a path rises steeply past an old truck until the path forks. Turn right.

Contour then climb upwards over ground showing evidence of mining over centuries. Rise to crest of hill, emerging from woodland to descend to meadow where the scene becomes alpine.

➡ On this Col take right turn down grassy track beside fields with goats. *Look back at superb views*

The excellent El Taller restaurant in Taurinya is a 'Bistrot de Pays'. Created in 1993 to help rejuvenate small communities, a Bistrot de Pays can only be set up in a village of less than 2000 inhabitants, must promote local produce and tourism, organise events, and stay open all year round.



views of Canigou



Canal de Bohère

of Canigou and its Massif. Arrive at D27, turn right and descend for 400metres. Just before entrance to farm (unless you want to call in for some goat's cheese!) take broad path on left to reach T junction. Turn right and very soon left to arrive at la Tour de Corts. La tour/donjon and one other building are all that remain of an old mining village.

➡ Take broad path left off the site. Descend into valley for approx 1 kilometre. Just after site of "tented" accommodation a footpath on left leads to le canal de Bohère.

➡ Le canal de Bohère is the longest irrigation canal in the department – 41 kilometres from Serdinya to Marquixanes. However, it was only used from 1879 -1933 and became redundant because of improved methods of taking water using pumps.

➡ Follow the old canal to crossroad of paths. Turn right, signed "La tour de St Michel". Drop to river Llitera and follow it to cross a wooden bridge and find the car park. Abbaye St Michel de Cuxa was started in 956 and consecrated in 974. It is the biggest intact pre-roman church in France and has been substantially renovated •



La tour/donjon



St Michel de Cuxa



FEMMES FORMIDABLES

*post-summer blues?
keep calm and quilt!*

by Laura McLellan

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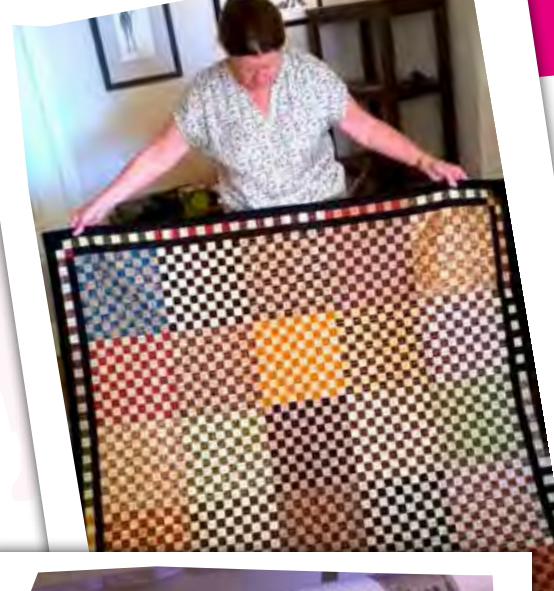
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Some like it hot – which is exactly how we've had it this summer. But with autumn settling in and winter just around the corner, the thought of snuggling up with a hot chocolate (or vin chaud!) is certainly something to look forward to. And nothing says 'cosy' quite like a quilt, so make yourself comfortable and read on to discover the bodywarming story of quilting in the PO.

Like any good story, this one starts in a far-off, exotic land: Doha, Qatar, to be precise. But unlike other fairy tales, this one begins just 5 years ago when **Pixi Bowen**, British expat living in this male-dominated society, sought out a local quilting club in search of new challenges, new experiences and new friends. Inspired by the beautiful, rich, vibrant fabrics available from the local soukhs, she quickly mastered this intricate art form and soon found herself leading the group and elected as President of the Quilt Guild.

Having swapped the deserts of Doha for the peaks of the Pyrenees, she is now crafting the most incredible quilts from her beautiful home in Oms. Her talent is evident in the various pieces on display and her impressive workshop is testament to her passion.



Pixi herself however, remains understated and humble: "I don't think of myself as creative, I just know how to follow instructions". With patterns and fabrics of all descriptions, her sewing room is an Aladdin's cave of quilting, presided over by a long-arm sewing machine, capable of constructing quilts well over king-size.

These beautiful, intricate, unique works of art are mostly crafted as very special gifts for very special people, although Pixi may be commissioned for certain projects if they fit with her ethos. This is certainly not a production line, churning out formulaic designs at the drop of a hat: on average, **Pixi dedicates 4 days of meticulous craftsmanship to each of her creations**. Rather than selling her wares, what she is aiming to do is run hands-on workshops and retreats, establish a local sewing guild and inspire the people of the PO to get crafty.

Watch this space
or contact Pixi on
pixibowenquitting@gmail.com



FESTIVAL & TRADITIONS

Automne Musical en Vallespir 2016

Glorious concerts by professional musicians, from September 24th to October 23rd in the 10 towns and villages that make up the Communauté de Commune du Vallespir.



Sunday 2nd October, 17h30 Eglise St. Pierre CERET

A very special evening uniting the choir Accent Lyrique with the Brass Ensemble of Roussillon from the Conservatoire de Perpignan, the ensemble Cat'Brass Quintet and Maï Saïto on organ, under the direction of Christian Papis. This promises to be a spectacular event never before experienced in the region.

Saturday 8th October, 17h30 Eglise St. Valentin TAILLET

Ensemble Marimba and Percussions Cyril Baudet-Coizet and Jean-Baptiste Solano-Parerl 2 musicians passionate about their instruments (marimba and vibraphone) playing both traditional and contemporary music.

Sunday 9th October, 17h30 Eglise St Jean L'ALBERE

The soprano Ariane Wohlhuter and guitarist Philippe Mouratoglou with a programme of music from England, Germany and Spain.

Sunday 16th October, 17h30 Communale VIVES

Ensemble Unitsax featuring soprano, alto, tenor and baritone saxophones, keyboard, drums and double bass. Once again, an evening of jazz sure to lift the spirits.

Friday 21st October, 20h Eglise Ste Marie LE BOULOU

Concert Stabat Mater by Rossini. Featuring the choir Accent Lyrique, with soloists Aurélie Loillier (soprano), Helene Delalande or Caroline Champy-Tursun (mezzo-soprano), Zhi Wei Shao (tenor) and Jiaming Zhang (baritone), accompanied by Emilie Benterfa, under the direction of Christian Papis.

Saturday 22nd October, 17h30 Eglise St Nazaire LES CLUSES

The duo "Encuentro" Marielle Nordmann (harp) and Eduardo Garcia (Bandoneon). Two instruments combine to bring us harmonies from Spain and South America

Sunday 23rd October, 17h30 Salle des Fêtes ST JEAN PLA DE CORTS

Romain LELEU (trumpet), winner at Victoires de la Musique Classique and his Ensemble Convergences. Cécile Agator, Cécile Petrol Leleu, Sophie Grovel, Renaud Guieu and Yann Dubost 6 Musicians famous throughout France bring to the Vallespir a superb programme from their repertoire to be heard this autumn also in Paris.

Places: 15 Euros or 12 Euros for members, and free for those under 15.

Pay on the door or see www.amuvall.org

Organised by Musiques et Voix en Pays Catalans

BANK HOLIDAYS

SEPTEMBER 11TH>> "LA DIADA"



National holiday throughout Catalonia, anniversary of the day in 1714 when the Franco-Spanish army captured Barcelona, bringing an end to the region's independence. From political demonstrations to concerts, fireworks, parades through the streets, the day is punctuated in unique Catalan style by sardanes, gegants and castells amongst other events. People wave 'senyeres' or 'estelades' (Catalan flags) and hang them on their balconies, and red and gold are the colours of the day. **Most shops closed.**

1ST NOVEMBER>> LA TOUSSAINT (All Saints Day)

Created by the Catholic Church to honour saints and martyrs who had no holy day of their own, it was also believed to be an attempt by the church to detract attention from the Celtic, Pagan celebration of Samhain, (pronounced sow-in), born in the British Isles, later to become Halloween. Cemeteries are busy this weekend of remembrance and chrysanthemums are on sale on every street corner. Don't offer them to your hostess when invited out for dinner! They are for the dead!

11TH NOVEMBER>>

ARMISTICE of WW1 (1918).

The armistice of 11 November 1918 marked Germany's surrender and the end of the First World War. The date has become a day of remembrance to pay tribute to all soldiers. Flowers are placed on the tomb of the "soldat inconnu" (Unknown Soldier) beneath the Arc de Triomphe in Paris and other war memorials. **Most shops closed.**



25th November>> La Sainte Catherine

Rarely observed today, but in the past, unmarried ladies over 25, (and over the hill!) were known as 'les Catherinettes' and wore eccentric hats to help hook a husband on this Feast of Saint Catherine, patron saint of young unmarried women. 'Capping Saint Catherine' (coiffer Sainte Catherine) represented the shame of still being single after this ripe old age. As women's status changed in society, so the tradition more or less died out, but parades of ladies wearing striking and outlandish hats can still be seen in some places on 25th November.

Not a public holiday, just a bit of fun!

Castanyada /// 31st October

Historically, La Castanyada, celebrated on All Saints Day, was to honour saints and dead ancestors. Whole villages would stay awake in vigil, and help with the church bells, which would ring out throughout the night. They would eat 'castanyes' (roast chestnuts) along with 'moniatos' (roast sweet potatoes) and 'panellets' (small almond balls covered in pine nuts)

and share Muscat in 'porrons', traditional glass wine pitchers with stem to pour wine into your mouth without touching lips, and avoid passing on bugs! The traditional, high energy foods were served up to prevent them from passing out from lack of sleep and the effort of ringing the heavy bells.



And don't forget....

to turn your clocks
back Sunday
30th October 2016



Fête des Vendanges



BANYULS / MER
05-09 OCTOBRE 2016

The very first Fête des Vendanges took place in Banyuls in 1996. The beach was chosen as the main venue, rather than the vineyards, to open the celebrations up to the public.

Now in its 21st year, with an estimated 7,000 visitors (so arriving early to find a parking space is recommended) the Fête des Vendanges turns the beach into a colourful, animated mass of eating and drinking, bands and musicians, jugglers, glee and



laughter. Towards the end of the afternoon, Catalan Barques zigzag a ballet in the bay before bringing the "harvest" in to the shore.

Buy your tasting glass for 5 €, hang it round your neck, and taste away to your heart's content.

Book a free table on the beach (info from Banyuls town hall) and invite your friends to make a day of it with you. Take your own food and drink, BBQ, or buy food and wine from the many beach bars and restaurants set up on the sands. A lively day of fun and (if you're lucky) sunshine.



What a great idea!

'La Vigne des Enfants' is a hands on initiative set up to teach local children about Banyuls's heritage - wine. The Mairie gifted 20 acres of vines to the local primary school, and with the help of 3 "papis vigneron", children and retired wine makers work together to cultivate the land from the vine to the bottle.

The local cave coopérative sells the wine and the proceeds go to funding the school. Unfortunately there is no special 'Vigne des Enfants de Banyuls' label, but maybe one day...



OUT for THE DAY

THUIR

Byrrh Violets and Vines



Thuir, dynamic little town in the Aspres, is well worth a wander. With plenty of good restaurants, cafés and shops to while away a pleasant few hours, there is also a colourful and lively market on Saturday morning, and an exciting and diverse autumn program of arts, music and dance at the Théâtre des Aspres
www.thuir.fr/le-theatre-des-aspres
 on Boulevard Violet.

Visit the **18th century church of Notre-Dame de la Victoire**, with its curious statue of the Virgin, created in the thirteenth century from black lead. According to legend, *when Charlemagne went into battle against the Saracens on the heights of Passa, he placed this statue of the Virgin in the midst of his parched and exhausted army, just as they were about to desert the battlefield. A fountain of water gushed from the dry land, the soldiers drank to their fill, and, replenished, drove away the enemy.* Charlemagne had a monastery, Monestir del Camp, built at the scene of this miracle. If monastery living appeals, it is now on sale for a cool 2,200,000 €, a fascinating ancient monument steeped in history and legend....but that's another story for another day.



After visiting the church, wander round the remains of **the ancient watch towers and the 'cellera'**, heart of the original small fortified settlement, dating back to 950. Farmers often built cellars or fortified areas around the church, sometimes surrounded by pits, to store and protect their crops from abusive local lords seeking inflated and unjust taxes.

Or how about a visit to the rather mysterious **'Cave Rouge'** on Route de Saint Féliu for a live escape game? Fort Boyard/Crystal Maze style, you, your family and friends will be locked up in an old wine cave with 60 minutes to solve the puzzles, follow the clues, find the Elixir of Life and break out - if you ever want to see the light of day again! Challenging, stimulating, fun....but maybe not for the claustrophobic (www.lacaverouge.com)



But Thuir is probably most famous for the **Caves Byrrh**.

Created by the Violet brothers of Corsavy in 1873, this well known aperitif, *'tonique et hygiénique'*, is created from good quality Roussillon wines and quinine water - *and said to be medicinal!*

Today, not only Byrrh but Cinzano, Dubonnet, Ambassadeur and Suze are made and matured in 600 huge oak barrels that line the storehouse leading to the biggest oak barrel in the world. At 10 metres high, it contains 420,500 litres. In the late 1800s the storehouse was extended and a railway came into the factory. A fascinating



© Graham Harris

guided tour of the station concourse (built by Gustave Eiffel), shows how wines are flavoured and fortified to make the aperitifs, passes by evocative old advertising posters, and ends with a tasting.

Gustave Violet, son of one of the Byrrh creators, chose not to follow in his father's footsteps. Instead, he became an artist, sculptor and architect. At the outbreak of WW1, he was conscripted. On his return in 1918 this gentle artist, totally traumatised both physically and mentally by the horrors of war, was commissioned by several of the towns of the P-O to sculpt their War Memorials. In fact, with no wish to glorify war, the monuments he created were very much ANTI-war. In Thuir, at the gateway to the cemetery, his bas relief sculptures depict not glory but sorrow and despair. Other Violet memorials in Perpignan, Prades, Estagel, Tautavel and Clairà, follow similar themes: women waiting for sons and lovers who would never return, the tragedy of war.....



Caves Byrrh, Eiffel

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OUT for THE DAY

THUIR

Byrrh Violets and Vines



Ste Colombe

Thuir is also an important wine centre, surrounded by neighbouring villages of Terrats, Trouillas and the beautiful hamlet of **Ste Colombe de la Commanderie**.

Heading from Thuir towards Trouillas, look out for the '**Tour Bouteillé**' of Terrats, the only three storied wine tower in France. Well worth popping into the 'Vignobles de Constance et du Terrassous' (its wines are the co-operative results of 70 winegrowers farming 800 hectares of vineyards), for a taster of these reliably good and well priced wines.

Legend tells that the vines of Terrats grew on land that was, once upon a time, a secret and magical village called Mirmande. This realm of fairies and enchantresses would 'fill men's souls with joy and pleasure'.

On now to Ste Colombe de la Commanderie, where wine domaine **Mas Deu** was once used by the Knights Templar as their administrative and religious headquarters. At the height of their power they controlled over 800 hectares and the largest vineyards in Europe.

At the start of the 14th Century, Arnaud de Villeneuve, Physician to the Kings of Aragon, created the first ever Vin Doux (dessert wine) in the cellars of Mas Deu. During WW2, it was the headquarters of the Occupying German Army. Before retreating in 1944, they blew up most of the beautiful old buildings – but Claude Oliver will be happy to welcome you for a tasting in the 18th century out-buildings which remain.



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Domain Treloar

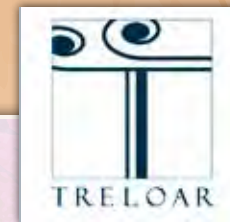
In nearby Trouillas, Yorkshireman Jonathan Hesford and his Kiwi wife Rachel bought an old cave in the village and built their home around it. If you're looking to improve your wine knowledge, **they offer a visit to the Domaine Treloar vineyards**, followed by a tour of the winery with its 100-year old large oak 'foudres' and a tutored tasting of their wines, along with explanations of terroir, organic viticulture, fermentation techniques.....



Rachel & Jonathan



Tours cost 15€ per person throughout the year and can be booked on 04 68 95 02 29 (www.domainetreloar.com).



The 2016 Vintage

By Jonathan Hesford

A 'good year' in wine-speak is all about the quality and quantity of the grape harvest, dependent on the weather in a particular year.

2016 was marked by a cool and damp late spring and early summer. This coincides with the flowering period of the vines. Cold, wet weather means that the grapes don't all form properly. It leads to 'couleure', where bunches contain very few grapes, and 'millerandage', where some berries are formed without seeds and remain small. Both mean a lower crop level.

The summer has been hot and dry, which means the grapes are ripening well and are free of fungal disease. However, drought conditions in some vineyards cause the vine to shut down or slow its ripening, meaning that the harvest will most probably be later than normal.

It's dangerous predict the quality of the harvest in advance, because hail and heavy storms in September can ruin things but this year is likely to produce a good quality harvest, with smaller volumes, particularly from the more organic growers.

OUT for THE DAY

THUIR

Byrrh Violets and Vines



Hotel Restaurant
Cortie Thuir

with Claire Gallaway



Hotel Cortie is a not-so-hidden gem - strolling down the Rue J.J. Rousseau, a narrow street near the Caves Byrrh, it's difficult to miss its sunny colours.

In 2014 the paper 'Echo de Roussillon' sketched out its story. *For more than a century, it was central to life in Thuir. Who couldn't remember celebrating communions or engagements at the Hotel Cortie? It had been a hotel-restaurant for more than a hundred years. The building had begun life in the 19th century as a wine storage cave, belonging to the brothers Violet. Mme Thérèse Cortie, their erstwhile cook, took it over as a hotel but unsurprisingly she found the building unsuited for its new purpose. The correspondance between Mme Cortie and the brothers on this topic still exists. Eventually, 1930 saw the refurbished hotel-restaurant open.*

Moving on to 2006, the hotel no longer met modern requirements and the funds needed were beyond the pocket of Pierre, the last member of the Cortie

family. So Hotel Cortie closed for 4 years - until a notice 'hotel for sale' caught the eye of M. François Mayeux, out on a Sunday bike ride. So the hotel was brought back to life, after a grant of 250,000 euros and months of work. Gossip was rife as to the likely success of this venture but the gossipers reckoned without the tenacity of M. Mayeux and his companion. In May 2011, Hotel Cortie was reborn - with 40 places in the restaurant and 20 places on the terrace, additionally 13 rooms, each with a distinctive style.

Faithful to the hotel's origins, the refurbished Cortie deserves its classing as a hotel of charm and character. You can still eat the signature dish 'Coq au Byrrh' devised by Mme Cortie - and furthermore, if an earthquake is forecast, you could take refuge there.

Anecdotally it is said that the building is so strongly built, it would withstand one while the rest of Thuir would crumble!

Hôtel Restaurant
Cortie

Small, family hotel
in the historic centre,
near Cave Byrrh

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www.restaurant-spaghetterialdo-perpignan.fr



FOOD & DRINK

Restaurant REVIEWS

1

CÔTÉ PATIO

COLLIOURE



Not far from the Quai but tucked away in a quiet corner, this restaurant has changed hands, and names. Previously a tapas bar 'la Zouave' with quirky decor, it was then given a new look as Côté Patio. My visit in 2015 was disappointing. The meal was fine, but the service poor (how a single woman diner is dealt with says a lot about a restaurant), and I was charged an eye-watering 13 Euros for 2 small glasses of rosé.

The following reviews are not adverts, they are just restaurants that I have enjoyed, or that friends have recommended. They are based on that person's opinion, on that day, usually taking into account the whole package. You might not always necessarily agree!

Bon appétit!

with Clare

However, do try the 2016 version - it has changed hands again and lived up to the good things I had already heard. Menu du jour on the lunch menu was a tasty millefeuilles of aubergines, tomato and mozzarella, followed by merlu filet, in a creamy sauce. Then pannacotta with apricot. Plenty of choice, with menus at a range of prices, all reasonable, and the service was prompt and friendly.

No hesitation in recommending.



CÔTÉ PATIO - Collioure
14 Rue du Dr Coste, 66190
Tel: 04 68 82 00 71



2

ORCHIDEE THAI

PERPIGNAN

with Danielle



One of the things I used to miss a lot here in France is real Thai food, and I had a lot of disappointments with really bland, supposedly Thai dishes. But no more! The Orchidee Thai in Perpignan offers some genuine and spicy Thai food, as well as a range of Vietnamese and Japanese dishes.

It is a busy Asian food shop/cafe encompassing a food counter and an eating area – you choose the dishes you want at the counter, which are then heated in the microwave, and they will then bring over your meal. Remember to ask for napkins at the till when you pay. There is seating for about 20 inside, also a few tables outside, and it is usually pretty busy. If you want a quiet, smart place with tablecloths and laid tables, this is definitely not for you! To enjoy a long and relaxed meal, why not take away several dishes to eat leisurely at home later, which is what a lot of customers seem to do – the food is seriously good.

I ate inside and had delicious prawns (lots!) in a spicy red curry sauce (piquante) with plain rice, for just 6,10 euros (it costs even less to take away). You can see everything laid out at the counter. There is a very large selection with

spring rolls and dumplings, beef in ginger, duck with 5 spices, pork in caramel sauce, Thai green curry, sushi (you choose 9) with a beer for 8,70, or a huge bowl of Vietnamese Pho soup, to name just a few. The "Assiette Complète" comprises 2 nems, any pork or chicken dish with rice or noodles, a non-alcoholic drink and a dessert or a coffee – all for 7,80! Vegetarians are catered for as well. A "small" portion is actually pretty big, and medium or large are for sharing. Wine is available – a ¼ litre carafe is a mere 1,30.

Before you leave, have a little browse around the shop at the back where you can find all sorts of exciting things – I came away loaded with tubs of curry paste, a bag of sticky rice (you help yourself from a sack in the front), fresh lemongrass and tiny chillies, a green papaya (for a Thai salad), a mango and some Asian greens.

ORCHIDEE THAI

64 rue Marechal Foch, Perpignan
Open 9am to 9pm every day
except Wednesdays.

Tel: 04 68 54 53 78
www.orchidee-thai.fr



3

GRAND CAFE DE PARIS

AMÉLIE

with Damon

If you're looking for somewhere posh, this isn't for you. If you're looking for friendly staff in a clean but relaxed atmosphere then you won't go far wrong. This seems to be a gathering place for the older locals in the evening where they meet for a drink and some food over a chat, or relaxing in front of the large TV on the back wall at the end of the day. However visitors are made equally welcome. You could liken it to a local country pub back in Blighty. The food is reasonably well priced for the quality - particularly the tuna steak which my partner said was absolutely delicious! Sadly some of the desserts were out of stock but the chocolate mousse with whipped cream and wafer on top was another nice and sizeable treat. This isn't a top quality place, but then it doesn't pretend to be. It is however a surprisingly good eatery with a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. Aimed at locals, but welcoming of visitors.



LE CAFE DE PARIS - Collioure

14 Avenue du Vallespir
Amelie-les-Bains-Palalda
Tel: 04 68 54 41 45



DO YOU HAVE A PANETIÈRE IN YOUR KITCHEN?



These ornate French-provincial bread boxes originated in Provence in the 18th century, and were usually hung on the wall to keep the bread safe from children and pets. In the 19th century, they became a bit of an art form, as talented sculptors crafted on motifs portraying country life: ears of corn, pecking birds, fruit clusters.....

Today, antique panetières in good nick can be quite valuable. Check out the kitchen of your old French renovation before you take everything to the tip!

DID YOU KNOW



Missing the point!

Did you know that knives had sharpened points until the seventeenth century, when the renowned Cardinal Richelieu of France changed all that? Legend has it that Richelieu, a fussy and finicky eater, objected to his house guests using the point of their knives as toothpicks. He ordered his steward to round the ends of all his knives, a fashion which spread throughout France and most of the Western world

ATTENTION!

Gourmand
greedy

Gourmet
associated with fine food

4

L'AUBERGE DES ALBÈRES

SAINT-GÉNIS-DES-FONTAINES

with Sue C

The plat principal also consisted of 3 choices. We went for Magret de Canard (pieces of succulent duck breast fillet wrapped in bacon, with Banyuls sauce; served with green beans and potato) and Entrecôte, (grilled exactly to requirements and very lean, with a choice of sauce au poivre or sauce Roquefort. Like the Magret, it was served with green vegetables and potato).

Duo of Sea-Bass and Gambas in a Langoustine Sauce was another firm favourite in our group.

A good selection of the usual desserts, including various flavours of ice cream, crème catalane, moelleux au chocolat, fresh fruit salad.

With a good bit of catching-up to do, conversation flowed along with a pleasant house rosé. Tables were sufficiently far apart for us to feel free to natter, without invading others' space.

All-in-all we enjoyed a most convivial evening, and will certainly return to L'Auberge des Albères

In the centre of the village, conveniently adjacent to the large public car park, we were cordially welcomed by the English speaking owner.

A pleasant, light restaurant with good space between the tables, and option of outdoor, semi-outdoor (in veranda) or indoor seating.

We selected from the medium-priced menu at €26.90. Other evening menus were available at €19.90 and around €35

From the choice of 3 entrées, 2 of us chose the Carpaccio de Saumon served with green salad - delicious thin slices of home cooked raw salmon which had been salted for 2 hours, then drizzled with freshly squeezed lemon juice.

Our friends chose Salade du Sud, which consisted of pieces of melon with serrano ham and goats cheese in a green salad

L'AUBERGE DES ALBÈRES

78 Avenue Maréchal Joffre,
Saint-Génis-des-Fontaines.
Tel: 04 68 89 88 38

Restaurant REVIEWS

5

TOM AND THE BAGEL

PERPIGNAN

with Fiona



A young entrepreneur, Thomas Artigues has followed his dream – first with his famous Foodtruck and now with his fast food outlet which he opened just 2 years ago – serving delicious food in a fun atmosphere.

Forget fast food outlet-style junk food. In his cosy, New York-style snack bar just off the place Arago, Tom sources only local produce and, forgive the wait, for Tom cooks everything the same day and to order.

I went for the 12,50€ lunchtime formula including a cold drink, a Bagel (Light my Salmon, Chicken for Nothing, Where is my Cheddar?, Pastrami be good, Serano Rhapsody and Highway to Nachos) and a dessert. The unmistakable Pecan Pie or American Cheesecake were on the menu that day.

And the verdict? I couldn't resist Light my Salmon. The sesame seed bagel came wrapped in a parcel served warm with a generous filling of Philadelphia cheese, cucumber, smoked salmon, red onions, mâche and a twist of lemon. The home-made coleslaw to go with it was very tasty and had a pleasant honey sweetness about it (alternatively you can go for mâche topped with parmesan shavings). My Pecan Pie was very nutty and sticky as it should be, and a scoop of ice-cream would have been the ideal accompaniment.

Overall, an ideal lunch-time or supper snack at a price that is right.

But this is just one formula – the menu is extensive with hotdogs and bagels – savoury and sweet – ice-creams and sundaes galore – to both eat in or take away – so there really is something for everyone.

Try it next time you're in Perpignan with friends and family!

TOM AND THE BAGEL
2 rue de l'Ange, Perpignan
Phone: 06 78 16 85 61

For starters...

Literally meaning "outside the works," *hors d'oeuvres* was originally an architectural term for an outbuilding which was not part of the architect's main plan. The phrase was 'borrowed' by French chefs to describe appetisers served outside the main design of the meal.

6

THE CITRUS

CABESTANY

with Stéphane



A gem of a restaurant hidden away at the entrance to Cabestany and easily missed. A no-frills exterior leads into a cosy interior decked out in traditional Irish colours – and a hearty welcome from Joanne, from Dublin and Christophe, her French partner.

Specialising in all things Irish and open only at lunchtimes (Sunday to Friday), their buffet-style menu from 11,00€ per person is a hit with many regulars and you really must book to be sure of a table.

Ditto for the Sunday Brunch (every other month) which begins at noon and can last until 3 o'clock! Mini pastries, pancakes, different breads (including Irish Soda Bread, of course), continental cold buffet, egg & bacon with all the trimmings... and the desserts. Wow. Miniature versions of practically everything that is naughty, but nice.

THE CITRUS

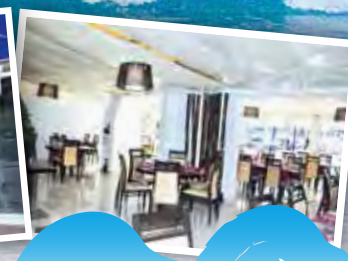
4 Avenue de Perpignan, Cabestany
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Escudella de Pagès (Catalan Peasant Soup)

(ESCUDELLA - BOWL PAGÈS - PEASANT, RURAL, OR RUSTIC)

If you love a good hearty broth, with plenty of meat and vegetables, this is one for you. Traditionally made around Christmas, it's easy and cheap to make, and warms the cockles on a cold day!

There are many variations on this soup, using chicken, ham and veal, and an assortment of vegetables. Here is a very simple recipe for absolute beginners. The stock is made from chicken cubes, but if you want to do the whole thing as in days of yore, you should make the stock yourself by boiling veal and ham bones in water.



INGREDIENTS

- Chicken stock (cubes)
- 4oz salt pork (la palette demi-sel – available in all supermarkets once weather gets cool)
- 1 smoked sausage (saucisse fumée)
- 4oz peeled chopped onions
- 1/2lb potatoes
- 1 medium Leek
- 5oz carrots
- 4oz cabbage
- 4oz rice
- 3oz pasta

METHOD

1. Soak the salt pork 1hr in water beforehand to reduce excess salt, then dice.
2. Heat the oil in a large frying pan, add chopped onions.
3. When the onions begin to brown, add the pieces of salt pork and allow to cook slowly.
4. Peel the potatoes, leek and carrots, chop them fairly finely, then add to the pan with the smoked sausage, chopped into bite sized pieces.
5. Chop the cabbage finely and add.
6. Stir, then add the chicken stock.
7. Gauge your own quantity of liquid depending upon whether you prefer a soup- or stew-like consistency.
8. Add rice and pasta. Cook for about 10 – 15 minutes, until the rice and pasta are done, and serve very hot with crusty bread.



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Cayenne potatoes with chorizo



BY MARTIN BAILEY
OF CURRYPAX

Well the summer has to end at some point I suppose. As the nights draw in and the evening temperatures drop, why not warm yourself with this comforting and warming dish.

Dried Cayenne pepper pods are available over the border at La Jonquera in Spain if you're having problems finding them in France, or you could substitute with either a fresh chilli or even chilli powder.

You can use a milder chorizo if you like a little less heat, or a stronger one with a bit more bite.

When accompanied with a fresh and good quality baguette it's a winter warmer you won't want to miss!

INGREDIENTS

- 4-5 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 medium sized onions, chopped finely
- 5 tomatoes, chopped into decent sized chunks
- 400g cured chorizo, roughly chopped
- 1 jar of roasted red peppers in oil
- 1-2 cayenne pods, or 1 chilli, finely chopped
- 1kg potatoes, chopped into chunks
- 2 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 100ml olive oil
- 1.5lt water
- 1-2 sprigs of thyme (optional)

METHOD

1. Heat the olive oil in a large pan, add the onion, garlic and roasted peppers. Fry gently for 15 minutes until golden.
2. Add the tomatoes, chorizo, cayenne, potato chunks cook for 5 minutes.
3. Finally add the vinegar, thyme (if using) and 1.5 litres of water. Bring to the boil, turn the heat down and allow to simmer for 25 minutes.
4. EAT.



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MARTIN BAILEY
MÉLANGEUR DE SAVEURS



Get Your Priorités Right!

Strange but true, France is yet another European country that drives on the wrong side of the road!

Seriously though, If you're 'a certain age' and have been driving around France for quite a few years, you will no doubt remember when the traditional 'priorité à droite' driving rule made your road trips a constant obstacle course. Give way to traffic coming out of tiny side streets when you're breezing down the main road, stop in the middle of a roundabout and give priority to those coming in on your right....In fact it is believed that Napoleon initiated the system originally for the ox and cart, and French fonctionnaires are still putting together the paperwork to repeal it!

So... although no longer applicable everywhere, this ancient road rule is far from obsolete. It is usually clearly signposted, and a small state fortune has been spent putting up signs to tell you when there is NO priority to the right! If you do get it wrong, (refus de priorité) you can be fined, or lose points on your Licence - and in the event of an accident, the car on the left will usually be considered at fault by both

insurance and police.

Bear in mind that older French drivers will still often assume priority where there is none – old habits die hard!

WHEN IN DOUBT, SLOW DOWN
AND BE PREPARED TO GIVE
PRIORITY, NO MATTER WHAT
THE SIGN SAYS.

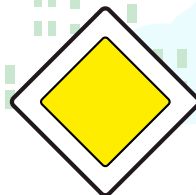
**VAUT MIEUX PREVENIR QUE
GUERIR!**

(Better safe than sorry)

THE THREE MOST USEFUL SIGNS FOR RECOGNISING PRIORITÉ À DROITE



This sign means that you should give way to the right at the next junction, or any road on the right, including those where traffic lights are out of order or flashing amber. However, always check that there are no conflicting markings on the actual road.



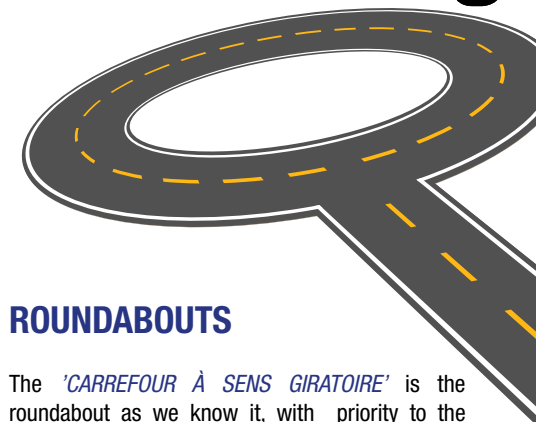
This sign indicates 'route à caractère prioritaire' meaning that you have priority at all junctions. It is usually to be found at regular intervals on main roads. Once you see the same sign with a thick diagonal black line through it, this instruction is cancelled, and you must obey individual junction signs.



This sign indicates 'Priorité ponctuelle' – you have the priority at the next junction, slightly different from the yellow diamond which tells you that you have priority at ALL junctions until the diamond is crossed out.



There is of course
no priority to the right
on motorways.
phew!



ROUNDBABOUTS

The 'CARREFOUR À SENS GIRATOIRE' is the roundabout as we know it, with priority to the vehicle already on the roundabout. You will usually see 'Cédez le passage' or 'Vous n'avez pas la priorité' to remind you to give way.

THE ROND POINT, on the other hand, gives priority to the right. Give way to drivers coming onto the roundabout. Yes, really. The good news is these are quite rare now. The most famous and craziest one is around the Arc de Triomphe in the centre of Paris...and another less famous and somewhat quieter one can be found at the entrance to Céret before the Banque Populaire!

Think right et bonne route!



In 1300 AD, Pope Boniface VIII decreed that pilgrims to Rome should travel on the left. It wasn't until the late 1700s, when goods wagons pulled by teams of horses, had no driver's seat, that this was to change. The driver would sit on the left rear horse, (so he could whip the horses on with his right arm), and drive on the right in order to see and avoid the wheels of oncoming vehicles. Later Napoleon enforced the keep-right rule in all countries occupied by his armies.

P-OLife

some useful vocab

Inside the Car



Registration document

- *La carte grise*

Glove box - *Le boîte à gants*

Windscreen - *Le pare-brise*

Gear stick - *Le levier de vitesse*

Clutch - *L'embrayage*

Brake - *Le frein*

Accelerator - *L'accélérateur*

Gear box - *La boîte à vitesse*

Rear view mirror/wing mirror - *Le rétroviseur*

Steering wheel - *Le volant*

Hand brake - *Le frein à main*

Driver seat - *Le siège conducteur*

Seat belt - *La ceinture de sécurité*

Horn - *Le klaxon*

Dash board - *Le tableau de bord*

Door - *La portière*

Outside the Car



Number plate

La plaque d'immatriculation

Windscreen wiper -

L'essuie glace

Tyre - *Le pneu*

Wheel - *La roue*

Spare wheel -

La roue de secours

Wheel hub - *L'enjoliveur*

Petrol tank- *Le réservoir*

Engine- *Le moteur*

Bonnet - *Le capot*

Boot - *Le coffre*

Exhaust pipe

Le pot d'échappement

Lights



Indicator - *Le clignotant*

Head light - *Le phare*

Full/dipped - *Les pleins phares/*

Les feux de croisement

Warning/Distress lights -

Le feu de détresse/les warnings

Mechanical Bits



Dip stick - *La jauge à huile*

Spark plug- *La bougie*

Sump - *Le carter*

Radiator - *Le radiateur*

Fan belt -

La courroie de ventilation

Battery - *La batterie*

Jack - *Le cric*

Shock absorber - *L'amortisseur*

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Useful phrases

Démarrer une voiture - *start the car*

Tomber en panne - *break down*

Gonfler les pneus - *blow up the tyres*

Contrôler le niveau d'huile - *check oil level*

Rouler vite/doucement - *drive fast/slowly*

Regarder (jamais!) dans le rétroviseur. - *(never) look in the rear view mirror*

Le pot d'échappement fait beaucoup de bruit - *The exhaust pipe makes much noise*

Je n'aime pas conduire la nuit - *I don't like driving at night*

Le plein de sans plomb/gazole s'il vous plaît - *Fill up with lead free/diesel please*



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Guide
MICHELIN
2016

LES TOURS DE CABRENÇ

When there's a light sprinkling of snow on Canigou and the vineyards are turning red and gold, it's a perfect time to pack up a picnic and head up the Vallespir.

Take the D44 after Arles sur Tech and follow signs for Serralongue, from where the three towers of Cabrenç are easily visible, perched on a nearby mountaintop. The first is the remains of the 10th century castle, the second the keep of the castle added in the 12th century and the third the signal tower built in the 14th century. Serralongue village itself was built in the 10th century to provide lodgings for the serfs of the Castle of Cabrenç.

Take the road to Lamanère, but turn off up a track signed to the towers, before the village. A steep path leads through the straight trunks of sweet chestnut woods, sunlight glittering on the remaining leaves, golden light allowing glimpses of craggy peaks and occasional farms. A beautiful but long

commute for the 10th century peasants getting to work in the castle from Serralongue on a daily basis. Gradually the chestnuts give way to beech woods, huge granite boulders appear and, as you approach the towers, the only sounds are of distant cowbells and the rustle of fallen leaves around your boots.

The views are stunning, the castle keep the perfect spot for an autumn picnic. A strenuous climb follows to the third tower but when you get there, a beautiful enamelled Orientation Table shows that you are 112km from Barcelona; the Bay of Roses is way over the border in that direction; it is only 40km from Collioure, and Canigou of course is all around you! The descent by the same path is easy.

Cabrenç third tower

view from "el Coll de la Cella"

Serralongue



The word 'cab' (as in taxicab) actually comes from the Spanish for goat (cabra) as the first carriages for hire were so bumpy that they reminded people of goats bouncing around in the hills!

Cabrenç means goat in ancient Catalan and seems an apt title for a path that could well have been designed by these tough little animals!

OUT for THE DAY

Over the Border

Llançà, El Port de la selva...

If you're looking for an exciting autumn drive, why not take the stunning coast road across the border to El Port de la Selva, and return to France via Figueres?

From Banyuls sur Mer, wind your way through Cerbère, Port Bou, and Colera, maybe stopping at the chic beach restaurant on the sands of Garbet beach, depending on the time of year.



Port de Llançà



Port de la Selva



Port de la selva



Wander around the small port of Llançà (packed in summer but peaceful in autumn), maybe stopping for drinks or lunch before heading into nearby El Port de la Selva: a pretty fishing and leisure port, with plenty of shops, cafes and restaurants to suit all pockets. It also has a pleasant beach if the sun is still shining and the siesta calls! The driver might

want to drop the more energetic off in Llançà, to walk the specially constructed coastal path to El Port de la Selva. A safe and well signed 90 minute clifftop walk, past pretty coves and small beaches will work up an appetite for a meal in Selva – or try it the other way round to work off that delicious Spanish lunch.

so >>>

DID YOU KNOW



After the Flood

It is over seventy-five years since the infamous 'Aiguat' (Catalan for flood or deluge) of October 1940 when north Catalonia was devastated by the worse floods of the century. The four days of excessive rains that mainly hit the Vallespir and the Conflent caused unbelievable damage, which left around fifty dead.

Catalan Director **André SOUCARRAT** devoted his film '1940, le 3ème déluge' to this terrible catastrophe. Other regional documentaries from M. Soucarrat are 'les Reginas d'Ille sur Têt', 'le Maquis de Valmanya', 'le 6ème Bouclier', 'les Poupées Bella' and 'La Saga de l'Ours en Vallespir', several of which can be found on the Internet.



OUT for THE DAY

...Sant Pere de Rodes

...

food sorted, exercise sorted.
Now how about adding a bit of culture?

Above Port de la Selva, a magnificent Benedictine monastery overlooks the bay, dominating the coastline of Cap Creus. Constructed by the Benedictines between 979 and 1022, the monastery was ransacked and abandoned in the eighteenth century. Its most important treasure, an illustrated bible, is now in the Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris. The impressive bell tower, lookout tower and church, all dating from the XII century, remain and can be visited. There is a café and bookshop as well as a study centre.



A scale model of St Pere which can be seen at "Catalonia in miniature" in Torrelles de Llobregat near Barcelona, one of the largest miniature scale model parks in the world.

A pot pourri of legend surrounds the building of the monastery. Some believe that in 600 AD, Christians returning from Rome were stranded in the bay for many months, a clear sign from God that they should build a monastery in that spot. Others say that when Rome was threatened by Barbarians, Pope Boniface IV ordered the Church's most powerful relics - including the head and right arm of St. Peter - to be hidden. Brought to this remote Cape for safe-keeping, they were hidden in a cave, but once the danger had passed the relics were nowhere to be found. A monastery was duly built on the site and dedicated to St. Peter (Pere in Catalan).

Whatever you choose to believe, there is no doubt that the views are breathtaking. *Walkers can reach the monastery from the campsite at El Port de la Selva (approx 2 hours there and back) but there is access by car to within 10 mins of Sant Pere de Rodes.*

Above the monastery, a further twenty minutes climb brings you to a ruined castle, from which the views of the Bay of Roses and the whole of the Cap Creus are breathtaking.

DID YOU KNOW



LEST WE FORGET

Look out for the '**Bleuet de France**' French equivalent of that powerful and iconic symbol of remembrance in England, the poppy.

Symbolising delicacy and innocence, the cornflower used to grow abundantly in France, and, like the poppy, was often the only sign of life, and colour amidst the mud and desolation of WW1. It was also used to describe fresh, young soldiers of WW1, whose bright blue uniforms initially stood out in sharp contrast to the grey and muddy misery of the trenches.



DID YOU KNOW

SPOT THE PIGEON

Did you know that the **French army is the only army in Europe to breed working carrier pigeons?**

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NATURALLY

Should They Stay or Should They Go Now?

By "The Warblers"



To leave or remain in the PO? Many birds will be doing one or the other now that the breeding season is over and winter approaches. But each species is hardwired to make the right decision (birdbrains don't need a referendum). And all the other creatures that stay are winding down – in some cases to a complete stop. Or are they?

Tortoises are certainly on a Go-Slower. Yes, we have wild ones here! The Albères Mountains are home for the last natural population of the **Mediterranean Tortoise** (*Tortue d'Hermann*). Rarely bigger than 18cm, they have bright yellow and black markings on their shells.

Credit: Orchi



This one was photographed in Mallorca. "Ours" in the Albères may be much more black than yellow.

With that camouflage they are hard to spot, so one of the best ways to see them is to visit the *Santuari de la Mare de Déu del Campa* over the border in Gariguella. It's dedicated to boosting and conserving the local population, and its information centre, small museum and tortoise enclosure (they have exotic species too) is open from March to end October. For more information, check out their website: www.tortugues.cat

If, however, you are lucky enough to come across a Hermann when roaming the hills, try not to disturb him or her. They're a protected species and absolutely must not be removed from their habitat and taken as pets.

Babies (*tortuettes?*) will only have hatched in September, but by end November they'll be bedding down in a scrape under a bush, and won't be active again until March next year.

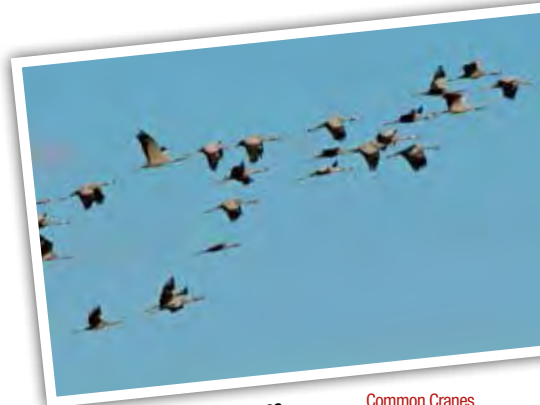
DID YOU KNOW



Hatchling tortoises have to fend for themselves from the off – and may stay very close to their birthplace for several years.

Birds don't hibernate, so if conditions aren't going to be right for them, they have to move. Migration began as early as July for some and is still ongoing. Frexiteers do so primarily because food is getting scarce, but the exact timing varies from

species to species. Insect eaters, like **swifts** and **swallows** (*martinets et hirondelles*), left weeks ago. Many **Short-toed Eagles** (*Circaètes Jean-le-Blanc*) are also well on their way to Africa by now, for more plentiful supplies of lizards and snakes. **Honey Buzzards** (*Bondrées apivores*) too, but there will be all sorts of stragglers – especially some smaller species – in October. Even as late as November, if you hear a strange sound, like a cross between a turkey and a goose, it's worth looking up (providing it's daytime!), because high above you there may be a big V of **Common Cranes** (*Grues cendrées*), escaping the much colder climes of Russia. It'll be February before any migrants start trickling back into the PO.



Credit: Arturo de Frias Marques

Common Cranes passing through

The Remainers continue to go about their business of course – but more quietly (noisy flocks of starlings excepted). There's not much to sing about now the days are short and there's no need to attract mates or claim territories.

Mammals stick around too, but some hibernate, including that Hammer Horror favourite: **the bat**. It's the only mammal that has wings, and there are about 28 different types in the PO – all of which are protected. The largest of these, we understand,



is the **European free-tailed bat** (*Molossus de Cestoni*), whose head and body alone measure 89mm – not counting 51mm of “fleshy and robust” tail!



Credit: Emanuel Yellin

Also called the **Bulldog bat** because his nose is wrinkled (small wonder, he pongs!), he is not the cutest. But, if not trapped in your bedroom, the Bulldog usually flies at a great height. So depending how you how you feel about bats, you may be glad that you're unlikely to see these guys. Or smell them. And, come the first frosts, you shouldn't hear them – or the rest of their kin – either. But they'll be back next year when it warms up, helping to control those mozzies. We have much to thank them for.

Some bats do migrate, from north eastern- to southern Europe. And all migrate shorter distances from summer roosts to winter hibernation sites.

So it's Halloween. You're wandering through the woods, hoping not to step on Hermann Jnr in the leaf litter, when something much smaller and faster than a tortoise skitters across the path in front of you. A mouse? It stops. You creep closer; bend down; see a lot of thick legs, big head, big eyes. It's a spider! But its body – darker than the rest – is domed, ridged and pitted like a truffle. Is it deformed? Some kind of Hitchcock mutation? Before you can scream “OMG!” it scuttles out of sight – spookily fast.

After scouring books and Internet you finally find...



Credit: Valerius Geng

... it's a **Wolf Spider** (*Lycosa radiata*). A female to be precise, who only looks like this in October because her brood has hatched and, given that she's a Supermum, she gives them all a piggyback! We've read (but can't confirm) that if one falls off she'll stop to wait for it to clamber up again. What is proven is that should she be attacked, the spiderlings shoot off in all directions to save themselves.

At 30mm in size, Wolf spiders belong to the tarantula family and, although they aren't aggressive towards humans, their bite is apparently like a wasp sting. They live in tunnels dug in the earth, and catch prey not by spinning webs but by hunting it down. Perhaps this partly explains why Mum always has to take the kids with her when it's dinnertime. No rest for her.

DID YOU KNOW



Female Wolf Spiders also carry their egg sac, attached to spinnerets at their rear end. But they have to keep the sac from scraping along the ground. So it's Bottoms Up, girls!

Things are stirring higher up too. Some trees are teeming with hundreds of lives. Since moths laid eggs on pine needles in August, **Pine Processionary caterpillars** (*Chenilles processionnaires*) have been busy hatching, feeding, growing, shedding their skins and growing some more, gathering into friendly sibling masses and spinning themselves increasingly cosy nests.

In autumn, this is as much as you'll see:



Once on the ground it's a one-way journey. This lot won't be back - at least not in this form.

Unusually for caterpillars, they are at their most active in the coldest temperatures, feeding on pine needles. And they only emerge from that candy floss at night – probably to reduce the risk of predation. It seems that during this period they go no further than the host tree – no walkabouts on the ground. So the time when we and our pets are most at risk (from those urticating hairs) will be around March, or late February if it's especially warm, when they finally come down, head-to-tail, with a sole aim: to find soil in which to pupate.

What this shows is that while many creatures enter a period of R&R each autumn, for some – especially those on the long, dangerous flight south – there's no Go-Slow.



“The Warblers” are a group of natural history enthusiasts based in the P-O.

For more blogs and photos, or if you'd like to contact them, visit www.mediterraneanpyrenees.com You can follow them on Twitter @66warblers

The Theatre by the Lake

Have you been to the Théâtre De L'Etang in Saint Estève?

If you haven't, you're missing out on some great entertainment at prices that make regular theatre-going easy.

Named after the lake on which it stands, this purpose-built theatre has plenty of parking space, access for the disabled and offers high quality music, dance, theatre, comedy and culture - from just 5€ per person!

highlights

Here are just some of the highlights for autumn and winter to come - but don't forget to visit their website at www.theatre-de-letang.fr for a full and varied programme.

LA TRAVIATA OPERA HOUSE

Saturday 5th November at 20h30

La Traviata (The Fallen Woman) is Verdi's tragic opera about a Parisian courtesan who sacrifices all for love. Based on La dame aux Camélias (1852), a play adapted from the novel by Alexandre Dumas, the opera was originally entitled Violetta, after the main character and was first performed in 1853 at the La Fenice Opera House in Venice.

DAVY KILEMBÉ

Saturday 26th November at 20h30

Perpignan born **Davy Kilembé** is well known for his mellow **folk-pop style**, and clever acoustic guitar. This 'apéro concert' includes a 'dégustation' and chat with a local wine maker.

MAGIC!

Saturday 17th December at 20h30

Do you believe in magic? This Christmas show by the 'équipe de France de Magie', the only recognised body of magicians in France, is a fascinating and technically unique experience, as a group of 'prestidigitateurs' put on a performance you will never forget.



FESTIVAL RADIO CROCHET

Saturday 7th January at 19h (free)

Opening evening of this '**X Factor**' style talent **competition** when amateur singers get the chance to compete for a place in the final at the Palais des Rois de Majorque.

NEW YEAR CONCERT 'MUSIQUE'

Sunday 15th January at 19h (free)

The 'Orchestre d'Harmonie' transports us from Franz Lehar's Vienna to Broadway and the story of jazz.... Kurt Weill (Mack The Knife), Cole Porter, George Gershwin, Duke Ellington, Glenn Miller, Benny Goodman....



Children

UNE SOURIS VERTE

Wednesday 26th October at 15h30

Recommended for children from 4 upwards, this show with accordion, violin and percussion is specially adapted to give the little ones a taste for concert going in the future! Classic childrens' songs reinterpreted via salsa, rap....



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HOW TO FIND US: Direction St Cyprien Sud / Les Capellans. Take turning off roundabout opposite boatyard (main road is LIDL road).

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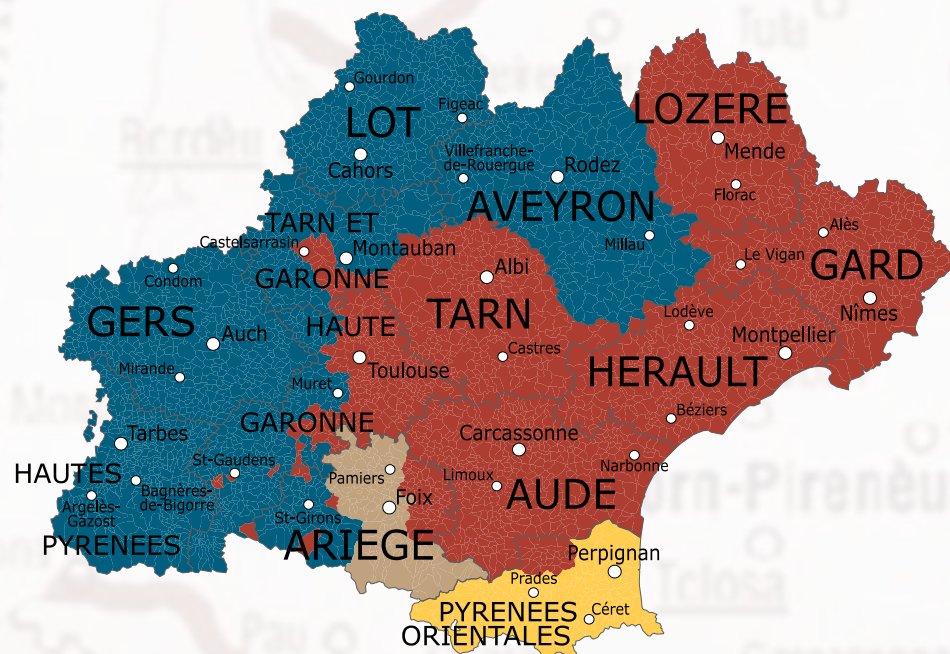
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Welcome to l'Occitanie

PIRÉNÉES-MEDITERRANÉE



Catalans are rarely backwards in coming forwards where the honour of Catalonia is at stake, and the new name of the administrative region has ruffled more than a few feathers!

In 2005, Georges Frêche became President of the Regional Council, and immediately recommended that the region revert to its ancient name - Septimanie. *Sounds a little like an infectious disease n'est-ce pas?*

Protests throughout the region and a **petition of 45,000 signatures made it clear that the change would be somewhat unpopular** - so Languedoc Roussillon it remained.

Ten years later, in an attempt to reduce bureaucracy, the 22 administrative regions of France have been cut down by nearly half, into 'super-regions', and Languedoc Roussillon has merged with the Midi-Pyrénées and is no more. *Welcome to L'Occitanie - with a 'subtitle' of 'Pyrénées-Méditerranée' below.*

This new region of Occitanie now consists of 13 'départements' - *Ariège, Aude, Aveyron, Gard, Gers, Haute-Garonne, Hautes-Pyrénées, Hérault, Lot, Lozère, Pyrénées-Orientales, Tarn, and Tarn-et-Garonne* - and it's whipped up another storm.

The name Occitania itself is a historical reference to a large part of southern France where several different versions of Occitanian French ('les langues d'oc') were spoken, right up to the nineteenth century.

But despite the fact that 'oc' means 'YES' in the langue d'oc, many true Languedocians are joining the Catalans in saying NO, disappointed at the spreading around and watering down of their own particular Occitanian identity.



Given the strong regional identity of the Roussillon, French Catalonia, it was never going to slip easily into a new name, particularly one with no reference to 'Catalan'. In the words of the song... there may be trouble ahead.

I swear...

In the 12th century, Catalans already had a well developed sense of identity and pride. This ancient Catalan oath of allegiance was sworn by the leaders of the council to the monarch of Catalonia and Aragon..

We....

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

*"Nós, que valem tant
com vós per separat, i
junts més que vós,
us investim sobirà i
us jurem lleialtat per
tal que ens protegiu,
defenseu i treballeu
pel nostre progrés,
i si no, no".*



SOME CHEEKY WINE *Suggestions*

Here at P-O Life,
we don't claim to be
wine connoisseurs
*we leave that
to the experts!*
However, here are a
few wines that have
tickled our fancy
for various reasons,
either for the taste, or
the story behind them.

FROM TERRATS, THUIR

(see page 18)

La Petite Bête Rouge – 2015

A bit of a one for the ladies, this wine won a médaille d'or, and was elected 'Coup de cœur' in a blind-tasting by 30 female journalists!

Described as 'séduisant'

Le Rosé Qui Ose – 2015

We just like the name!

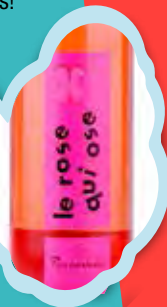
Rivesaltes Le '1981'

Médaille d'Or Bruxelles 2016

Very old!

Rivesaltes Le '1974'

Even older!



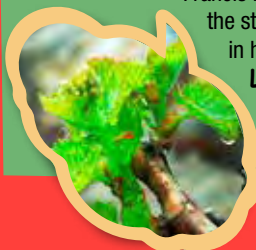
FROM BANYULS

Fête des Vendanges and other wine outlets maybe.

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Look out for him on your next walk in the vineyards!



FROM MAS CRISTINE

Saint André

Côtes du Roussillon Rouge

One of our favourites,
the culprit of a few giddy evenings
with friends.



DID YOU KNOW



Did you know that the first sales of Muscat de Rivesaltes in December date back to the XIV century when the Royal Court of Barcelona used to stock up with Muscat wine for the Christmas period. **In 1997, producers of Rivesaltes wine decided to renew this tradition.** They called the wine 'Muscat de Noël', young and fresh, made for Christmas of the same year. A good Muscat de Noël should be pale golden in colour with a delicate aroma of citrus, white peaches, mango, rose, and even hints of lychee and mint.

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!

*Comment appelle-t-on un sorcier
qui fait de la magie noire avec un
yaourt?*

Un faux mage blanc.
(mage – wizard)

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IDEAS ABOVE YOUR STATION

with Henry Shaftoe

**An architectural tour
around the railway
station neighbourhood
in Perpignan**

Doesn't sound very promising, does it? Yet "Le Quartier de la Gare" (the neighbourhood between Perpignan Station and Place Catalogne - location of the FNAC superstore), contains some superb early twentieth century buildings.

Before 1900 this whole area was occupied by the military and was thus out of bounds to the general public. When the army moved out, the site was developed residentially and became a desirable area, given its prime location between the station and the town centre.

Often neighbourhoods around railway stations can be seedy and drab, yet in Perpignan this area contains



Av Charles de Gaulle



Rue de Llena



many architectural gems from the first three decades of the twentieth century. Tree-lined Place de Belgique is a haven of tranquillity in the centre of this neighbourhood and has a restaurant – **Lou Grilladou** – whose tables spill out onto the square. Semi-gastronomic, Mediterranean-style cuisine, accent firmly on home cooking and fresh produce, and specialities including breast of duck in a honey sauce or for the savoury tooth, an attractive Cheese Platter.



Down the Ave De Gaulle, the main street from the station to the city centre, you will find the usual rash of kebab joints and pizzerias as well as a hugely popular Indian restaurant (**The New Delhi**), and even a fully vegetarian restaurant (**Saveurs Nature** in rue Paul Massot – you have to book in advance), a rare find in provincial France.



Rue de Llena



Watch out for a number of rust-coloured visitor information boards which explain the history of the area and point out particular buildings such as the one by the Danish architect who also designed Château Valmy near Argelès.

So next time you come to Perpignan, whether by train, car or the 'One Euro' bus, take some time out to wander around this delightful neighbourhood en route to the city centre.



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GOLF ⁱⁿ CATALUNYA with Simon Bridges

CASTELLO Pitch & putt

In the latest of his reports on local golf courses, Simon Bridges visited Castello Pitch & Putt near Figueras.



The building itself is a restored Mas from Spanish farmhouse
Inside there is a TV corner.

Castello Pitch and Putt golf course is tucked away in a corner of Figueras. It is a sort of green oasis amidst the urban sprawl and looks beautiful. The course itself is very well tended and the greens are particularly good. There is some longer grass around them but the moral of the story is keep to the fairways and hit the greens with your tee shot. It is quite possible to do this on every hole but for most golfers it is often easier said than done. Although it is small, this course provides a challenge for all abilities. It is perfect for sharpening up your short game if you are a serious golfer but equally challenging for novices to the sport. There are water hazards and bunkers to test your skill as well as trees to avoid – it is exactly like a big course, but in miniature. The longest hole is a modest 111 metres and the shortest is just 62 metres long; however there is a lake to cross over before reaching the green. Nothing is easy!! A full round of gold will take you less than two hours.

Finding the course is not difficult. Take the motorway from Le Boulou down to junction 3 and simply follow the signs for Roses. You will pass a large Carrefour on your left hand side to confirm you are on the correct road. Five roundabouts further on (the Spanish do like their roundabouts!!), you will see the sign Castello Nou golf to the right. You have arrived. It takes only 20 minutes from the Le Boulou interchange. The sign on the wall leaves you in no doubt.



The manager is Alicia and she is very friendly and helpful. She speaks several languages including English should your Spanish Catalan not be quite up to the mark.

At the desk one can buy small golfing accessories. The cost for 18 holes is €20 but seniors get to play for €10 on Tuesdays and Ladies pay only €10 on Mondays. Booking a tee time is advised.

The course is fairly flat so it is very suitable for those with slightly limited mobility.

One of the great assets of the course is The Red London Bus Café, which is exactly what it says it is.

The owner is English and he offers a wonderful menu del dia for around €13 which includes wine. He does fish and chips on Fridays and caters for children. His draught Guinness is legendary. An à la carte menu is also available.

One of the wonderful things about living in this part of the world is the ability to eat outside for much of the year without having to resort to thermal underwear for much of it. At Castello, there are tables, chairs and parasols under which you can sip a cold beer whilst wondering how on earth you managed to take that many strokes on such a small course. The covered seating area is perfect for keeping out of the direct sun if you've run out of the factor 20.

I do commend Castello to you for a fun half day out. The course is close enough to the centre of Figueras for dedicated shoppers to leave the golfers and indulge in a spot of retail therapy. The Dali museum is also well worth visiting...Golf in the morning and Dali in the afternoon – a perfect day.

The course has its own website www.castellopitchandputt.com I am sure you will have a great deal of fun if you do decide to give Castello a go.



THE HUNT



Whether you're for or against the hunt, its presence is inescapable in the P-O. Armed men (and women) in fluorescent orange gilets can pop up anywhere on our Sunday strolls; baying and belled bassets, beagles and griffons leap through the undergrowth to flush out the game.

Many of us are not happy about the killing of animals for sport, but it's clear that the ever-increasing wild boar population must be controlled. Unchecked, they wouldn't just upset the natural balance, but would continue to spread into urban and agricultural areas, resulting in more damage to land, safety issues for children and pets, and more collisions on roads.

Attention!

ALLER à la chasse
to go hunting

AVOIR la chiasse (sl)
to have the runs (toilet-wise)



Peter Goonery chatted with Pascal Mas,
senior member of the Equipe de Chasseurs
de Sanglier de Céret...



P.G. How long has the hunt existed in Céret?

P.M. For as long as anyone can remember, hundreds of years.

P.G. How old were you when you started?

P.M. I was 10 years old when I first went along to watch my father and grandfather hunt. Of course I didn't have a gun then. I first hunted with a gun when I was 16.

P.G. Do you have to have a permit to hunt?

P.M. Yes you need a Permis de Chasse granted by the Marie. To get this you are tested on your knowledge of the country and how to look after it, and on the local animals. There is no test for competence with a gun.

P.G. What do you enjoy about hunting?

P.M. The main thing is being in the forest close to nature, I love the countryside.

Tracking the boar is a huge challenge as they are very intelligent animals, excellent at evading the pursuer, but I also enjoy the camaraderie of working in a team to achieve a successful hunt.

I sometimes hunt with a bow and arrow, more challenging as you have to be very skillful and quiet to get that close to the boar.

I work in the forest in the summer months when we don't hunt, keeping the paths clear and generally managing the land.

P.G. How many hunters are there on a hunt?

P.M. About 25-30 on average. Women are welcome to join the hunt but few do. Also incomers to the region often come on the hunt to watch what happens and they are welcome to join once they have passed the exam and have the Permis de Chasse. We currently have an Englishman who hunts with us regularly. People from all walks of life hunt, rich and poor, old and young.

P.G. How do you decide where to hunt?

P.M. We meet up in one of our hunt areas and do an initial reconnaissance on foot, looking for tracks and signs of activity. We then reconvene for

breakfast and agree on the best area to hunt based on what we have seen.

P.G. How many boar do you kill each year and do you kill anything else?

On average we kill about 130 boar, 20 chevreuils (deer) and 20 mouflons.

If we did not hunt, the population (especially near the towns) would increase dramatically, resulting in widespread damage to crops and domestic gardens. The roads would also become much more dangerous at night when the boar are active. The hunting season is basically the winter months but we are often asked by the Maries to conduct a hunt to remove a nuisance boar in the summer months.

P.G. Do the dogs attack the boar?

P.M. No never. Our dogs are bred for their ability to follow a scent, They are chiens de pied. They would lose a fight with a boar every time.

It takes 3 years to train dog and they keep on learning. Most of them are mixed breeds but we also have Griffon de Gascogne, Ariégeois, Vendeens, Brunos de Jura.

On each hunt there are between 2 and 8 dogs.

P.G. What happens to the meat from the boar?

P.M. We butcher the boar at our facility outside Céret and share the meat amongst ourselves. This meat is then given to friends and family. It cannot be sold.

P.G. Is hunting dangerous to people?

P.M. Hunting can never be zero risk but we do all we can to minimize the danger.

Before every hunt our security rules are read out to remind everyone on the hunt of best practice.

We put up signs all round the area where we are hunting, to warn the public that we are there.

Airport news...

with John Fairclough



This is my first Airport Review since the momentous Brexit vote in June. Of course, the airports and airlines had already fixed their Winter 2016-17 flight schedules long before this, and so far, they have remained unscathed. In fact, several carriers had already announced their Summer 2017 arrangements before June 23, with some quite ambitious growth planned in a few cases. I'm sure they will all be carefully monitoring sales in the light of the Pound's slump against the Euro before they come to a final conclusion in the new year.

Availability of flights for the Winter (Nov to Mar) period seems to be on a par with last year, including the lack of any Ryanair flight from **PERPIGNAN** to **STANSTED**. The powers that be there made strong representations to Ryanair, citing that previous winter 'crack o dawn' departures from the **Essex airport** are hardly conducive to attracting full flights, but, sadly, to no avail. As far as the UK/Ireland is concerned, PO's local airport will yet again be a no fly zone this winter.

So, again, **CARCASSONNE** offers us the nearest connections this winter.

STANSTED	3x	pw	Ryanair
MANCHESTER	2x	pw	Ryanair
DUBLIN	2x	pw	Ryanair

Or **BEZIERS** is an option for London bound travellers

LUTON	2x	pw	Ryanair
MONTPELLIER	is another possibility		
GATWICK	4x	pw	EasyJet

November sees the much-heralded startup of Ryanair services from **TOULOUSE**

STANSTED	7x	pw	Ryanair
GATWICK	16x	pw	EasyJet
HEATHROW	21x	pw	British Airways
BIRMINGHAM	7x	pw	FlyBe

Sadly, **GIRONA** is another airport with no UK/Ire connections this winter, so, not for the first time, those wanting to begin their journey from Spain, and have the best choice of flights/routes will need to get down to **BARCELONA**.

HEATHROW	48x	pw	BA
GATWICK	7x	pw	BA
	28x	pw	EasyJet
	2x	pw	Monarch
	5x	pw	Norwegian
	14x	pw	Vueling
STANSTED	26x	pw	Ryanair
LUTON	4x	pw	Vueling
	12x	pw	EasyJet
BIRMINGHAM	2x	pw	Vueling
	7x	pw	Ryanair
BRISTOL	7x	pw	EasyJet
MANCHESTER	2x	pw	Jet2
	5x	pw	Vueling
	7x	pw	Ryanair
LIVERPOOL	4x	pw	Ryanair
	6x	pw	EasyJet
EAST MIDS.	3x	pw	Ryanair
LEEDS BRAD	2x	pw	Jet 2
	2x	pw	Vueling
NEWCASTLE	7x	pw	Vueling
	3x	pw	EasyJet
GLASGOW INT	2x	pw	Jet2
GLASGOW PIK.	3x	pw	Ryanair
EDINBURGH	4x	pw	Vueling
	5x	pw	Ryanair
DUBLIN	7x	pw	Aer Lingus
	7x	pw	Ryanair
	3x	pw	Vueling

n

DID YOU KNOW

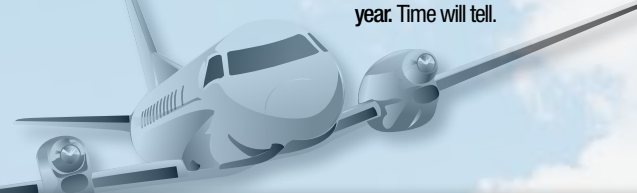
Spain Closes for Chris

No, I didn't miss the 'mas' off the end. October 12th, (Wednesday this year) is **Día de la Hispanidad**, national holiday in Spain, commemorating the exact date that Christopher Columbus set foot in the Americas - so naturally everyone gets the day off in his honour!

Good ol Christopher

All in all, then, bearing in mind the tremendous uncertainties following Brexit, not too bad an outcome for the winter flight possibilities. Quoted frequencies are for the main winter period. Please check with the individual airline re frequencies over the festive period.

An optimistic last word. There are some real growth offerings in the pipeline for next summer, particularly from **GIRONA**, and Dimitri and staff at **PERPIGNAN** are working hard to secure new UK routes to their smart new facility, following the successful Aer Lingus growth this year. Time will tell.



2017 Season ticket campaign to start in November
www.catalansdragons.com

Péage without Pain from France to Spain - and back!

At last – a “télépéage” automatic toll tag that can be used on both sides of the border!



In fact, it has been available since mid June, one automatic toll tag for both France and Spain. The payment is taken automatically out of your bank account as you sail blithely through the toll booth without stopping (more or less!).

Organised by two companies, **Bip&Drive**, and **Bip&Go**, it has taken several years to actually get this show on the road, bringing together the **Spanish VIA-T** and the **French Liber-T des Français**.

How does it work?

When you register, you will receive an automatic toll tag ‘beeper’ to place on a bracket (also supplied) in your windscreen. As you approach the reserved lanes (orange T), reduce your speed and stop briefly. Your details will automatically be recorded, you will hear a beep, and the barrier will rise in response to a signal from your beeper. Many péages now have lanes for “Liber-T” badge holders where you do not actually have to stop, but simply slow down to 20 or 30km. It takes a bit of courage, as the barrier opens at the very last minute!

Charges are invoiced and taken from your bank or credit card account once a month, according to the rules in each country (VAT etc) and you will receive a monthly detailed invoice.

Residents of France can register on line at Bip&Go or go directly to the télépéage boutique on the motorway. If you already have the Liber-T beeper, it will cost you 12 euros TTC to change it to the new, all singing, all dancing doofer.



Check out the website **www.bipandgo.com** for more info and the different payment possibilities, annual or monthly

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT.....

- > Use the beeper on all motorways in France and Spain.
- > Check the battery occasionally to avoid embarrassment if it doesn't work and you have to back out (you can also use it through the manned ‘péage’ booths if the worst comes to the worst!)
- > Put it out of sight when you are away from the car as it is a target for thieves

HOW TO REGISTER

- > Register with ASF at the toll booth of Perpignan sud (just before Rivesaltes) taking with you a RIB (bank details), ID and proof of home address.
- > Apply and register on line at

Some Useful Vocab:

Un badge télépéage
An automatic toll tag

La barrière de péage
the toll barrier

Un signal sonore
a ‘beep’

Je voudrais m'abonner au télépéage

I would like to register for the télépéage

Pouvez vous m'envoyer mon badge en Angleterre (Irlande, Norvège...?) *Could you send the automatic toll tag to England (Ireland, Norway...?)*

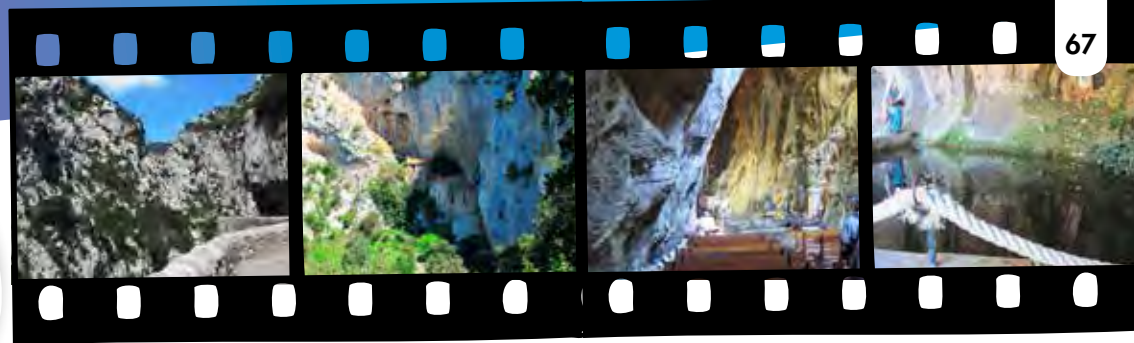
Pretty Perfect P-O Picnics



Picture the gods cleaving the earth with a monstrous axe and you have the spectacular Gorges de Galamus. No wonder the pious have always been drawn there.

The early monks lived in caves hewn into soaring flanks the colour of old bones. In later years, Franciscan monks squeezed a monastery into a tall crevice where they lived in complete isolation. Donkeys carried provisions to a certain point then humans lugged them the remaining stretch.

In 1880, an ingenious group of artisans canyoned down the rockface and carved a road using wrought iron rods called *barres à mines*. **To find this road, follow signs to the Gorges de Galamus from St Paul de Fenouillet.** (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 slippery gravel so wear good shoes and take a hiking stick if you're unstable on your feet.

Mystique surrounds the Ermitage de St Antoine and if you're observant, you'll see intriguing symbols thought to be Mayan and Templar. No-one knows the origin of the magic square of words chiselled onto a marble block in the main cave and locals whisper of a secret portal to a feared "other world" near the font.

It is said that a man and woman ventured through the portal in 1597 and when he reappeared three days later, he was insane and on death's door. His female companion was never seen again.

After the miraculous end to an epidemic in 1782, a chapel was created in the shadow-filled cave behind the hermitage.

Today, water drips from stalactites, gleams over walls, and fills the font behind the cross. In the silence, you can almost hear the mountain's heartbeat. Worn benches and scraps of handwritten pleas to Saint Antoine are a poignant reminder that many still pray here.

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.

Stand in the shade of the courtyard's 230-year-old plane tree and breathe in the view, then climb up to the cave where the early hermits lived, with its pool 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 dwarfed by imperious cliffs that slice down to the turquoise waters of the Agly River.



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.

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- Orme - *Elm*
- Hêtre - *Beech*

AND SOME WOODY VOCAB....

- bois de chauffage - *firewood*
- bois de construction - *timber*
- bois de pin - *pine*
- bois mort - *dead wood*
- charbon de bois - *charcoal*
- chaudière à bois/granulés de bois -
wood/wood-pellet fuelled boiler
- chèque en bois - *rubber cheque*
- feu de bois - *wood fire*
- toucher du bois! - *to touch wood!*



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DID YOU KNOW



Not a good weekend to pop across the border!

The official opening of the majority of ski resorts in the PO is usually around the first weekend of December, depending of course on the snow forecast. The 6th December is "Constitution Day" and the 8th is "Immaculate Conception", both of which are festival days and bank holidays in Spain, so not a good weekend for a spot of shopping of course as the shops will be closed!

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AUTUMN IN THE P-O...

with Peter Spencer



Festa de les Bruixes, Tresserre



Céret Square



Autumn Leaves



Collioure



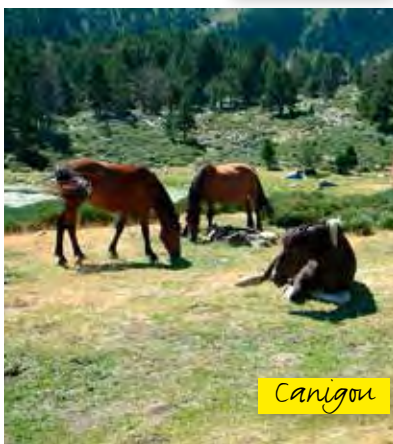
saillagouse



Domanine Falgos



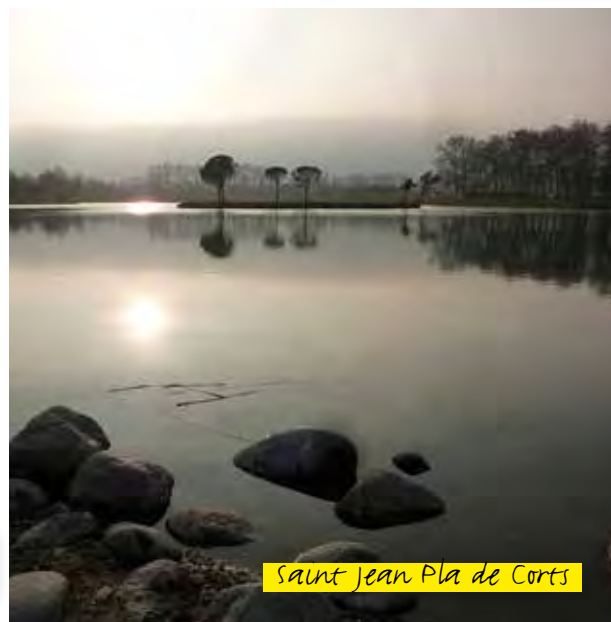
Port Vendres



Canigou



Terre Vinea,
Aude



Saint Jean Pla de Corts



Armistice Day, Le Boulou



Villefranche
de Conflent

Mayday

Computer services
pc-mac-network

Most computer performance issues are caused by an overload on system memory over a period of time. More and more programs are started when the system is booted (switched on). Computer users, either by design or inadvertently, add programs to the Start-up group. Eventually the amount of available memory is less than the program's requirement and the hard disk appears to be working harder (you can hear it whirring and clicking) and pages take longer to load. And system booting takes an eternity! If this describes you, it's probably time for a system check-up. A small outlay can revitalise your investment and inject a couple more years of useful life.

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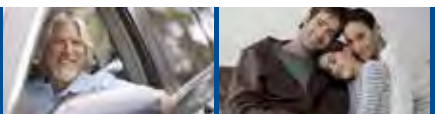


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TEST your FRENCH....

...AND HAVE A BIT OF A GIGGLE AT THE SAME TIME!

Un canard entre dans une épicerie et demande au patron:

"Vous avez de la nourriture pour canards ?"

Le patron répond

" Nous n'en avons pas. Ici nous vendons de la nourriture pour les gens. »

Le canard s'en va et revient le lendemain à la même heure.

"Vous avez de la nourriture pour canards ?"

Le patron, un peu énervé, réplique:

"Je t'ai déjà dit qu'il n'y en a pas ici ! Va-t'en ! »

Le lendemain à la même heure, le canard revient.

"Vous avez de la nourriture pour canards ?"

Le patron, maintenant très en colère réplique:

"Je t'ai déjà dit qu'il n'y en a pas ici ! Va-t'en ! Si tu reviens demain, je te cloue le bec sur le comptoir..."

Le lendemain, le canard se représente.

"Vous avez des clous ?"

Le patron répond que non.

Et le canard demande

"Et vous avez de la nourriture pour canards ?"

Un canard - *duck*
La nourriture - *food*
Nous n'en avons pas -
we don't have any
Il revient - *he comes back*
Le lendemain - *the next day*
En colère - *angry*
Va-t'en - *go away*
Je te cloue - *I will nail you*
Un bec - *beak*
Le comptoir - *counter*
Un clou - *a nail*

It's not too soon to start thinking about Christmas

by David Ingram

For the last 10 years there has been a largely British choir singing traditional Christmas carols in the Christmas Markets in the Ceret area.

We include carols in French and Catalan and have French and Belgian singers in the choir. The choir has some 20 members but there is room for more. Please come and join us if you want to sing and enjoy Christmas to the full. We hold rehearsals, in

Montesquieu, from the beginning of November.

We will be singing in Céret (with France Bleu Roussillon) Maureillas, St Jean Pla de Corts and Montesquieu. Our focus is on the camaraderie and enjoyment of choral singing. There are no voice tests and this year we are interested in having instrumentalists as well. We'd love you to join us!

Contact David the Choirmaster on david-ingram@orange.fr



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TEST your FRENCH

Tongue twister (virelangue)

Repeat quickly three times

**Voici de bien beaux
gros gras bras
blancs**

Useful Expression

Sauver la mise

*To get someone out of a
tight spot/save the day.*

**Il est arrivé juste à
temps pour sauver
la mise**

Useful word

empêchement

*last minute problem/
unexpected obstacle/
something cropped up*

**Je ne peux pas venir,
j'ai eu un empêchement**

Silly Definition

SANTÉ

*Une personne privée d'infusion.
(privé – deprived of
infusion – herbal tea)*

Feeling fruity?

*Lots of ways in French to say you're
feeling great – and many of them involve
fruit and veg!!*

**J'ai....
...la frite, ...la pêche,
...la banane, ...la patate**



1

F pour Fou!

Match up the words, all beginning with F, with their definitions.

(Why not try to work them out first just from the definitions?)

fourmi	1	a	peur
friandises	2	b	la moitié d'un derrière
frousse	3	c	paresseux
funambule	4	d	acrobate sur une corde
foule	5	e	insecte noir ou rouge
fesse	6	f	orchestre de cuivres, tambours...
fanfare	7	g	histoires en plusieurs épisodes
fainéant	8	h	bonbons, chocolat. ...
fossé	9	i	creux le long d'une route
feuilleton	10	j	grand nombre de personnes

2

Can you name the seven dwarves without reading any further?

Well done (but I bet you cheated just a little bit).

Here they are... but can you find their French equivalents?

Doc	1	a	Dormeur
Grumpy	2	b	Joyeux
Sneezy	3	c	Prof
Dopey	4	d	Atchoum
Sleepy	5	e	Simplet
Happy	6	f	Grincheux
Bashful	7	g	Timide

Aie aie aie! Blague Nulle!

*Comment s'appellent les parents
de l'homme invisible?*

Les Transparents!



Et une blague encore plus nulle!

Pourquoi Napoléon n'a-t-il jamais déménagé?

Parce qu'il a un bon appart!

See Page 82 for answers

3

Match up these idiomatic sayings

J'ai la flemme	1	a	He stood me up
J'en ai ras le bol	2	b	She got in her two cents worth
Elle a mis son grain de sel	3	c	He did it easily
Il m'a posé un lapin	4	d	She's out of it!
Ca marche!	5	e	Stop messing about
Il saute du coq à l'âne	6	f	I'm fed up
Elle est complètement à l'ouest	7	g	He jumps from one subject to the next
Arrête de faire l'andouille	8	h	I can't be bothered
Il l'a fait les doigts dans le nez	9	i	We're not out of the woods yet!
On n'est pas sorti de l'auberge	10	j	It works!

4

See you this afto? Yeah, deffo!

**Little short cuts to save breath and prove your 'frenchness'.
Can you find their English equivalent?**

Bon app	1	a	As usual
Clim	2	b	Have a good afternoon
Comme d'hab	3	c	Agreed
Dégeu	4	d	Enjoy your meal
Petit déj	5	e	Event, show
Assos	6	f	Breakfast
Bon aprèm	7	g	Lie in
Grasse-mat	8	h	Air conditioning
D'acc	9	i	Disgusting
Manif	10	j	Club group

Bodily functions!

(You never know when you might need them!)

Avoir les hoquets (ockays) – to have hiccoughs “ Ah non! J'ai les hoquets! ”

Éternuer – (ay-ten-you-ay) to sneeze “ Ah...ah... ah... je vais éternuer! ”

Baver – (bah-vay) – to dribble – “Arrête de baver!!”

Péter – (pett-ay) to break wind. “ Ooops Désolé, j'ai pété ! ”

Language tip

C'est terrible – That's brilliant !!

Ce n'est pas terrible – It's not great !



Language Tip

**Etre en train de +
infinitive...**

*to be in the middle of
doing something*

**Je suis en train
de lire**

**Etre sur le point
de+ infinitive...**

*to be about to do
something*

**Ils sont sur le
point de partir**

Blague Bête

*Comment appelle-t-on un
chat tombé dans un pot de
peinture le 25 décembre?*

**Un chat-peint
de Noël**

...et encore une!

*Quel est le snack préféré des
vampires?*

Un croque-monsieur

Useful Expression

Un peu cul cul
A bit corny, silly

AMÉLIOREZ votre ANGLAIS

Tongue twister (virelangue)

Répétez trois fois
**Surely Susie shines
smart shoes**



**Ouch, that
British Humour!**
Why are pirates called
pirates?

**Because
they arrrrrrrrrr.**

**...and more...
British Humour!**
Bought myself a piece of
German Xmas cake, but it
disappeared.
Turns out it was stolen.



1 L IS FOR LEMON

Trouvez les définitions des mots suivants, qui commencent tous avec la lettre L.

- | | | | |
|-----------|----|---|-------------------------|
| lung | 1 | a | a young sheep |
| laundry | 2 | b | small, round beetle |
| ladybird | 3 | c | a body part |
| lamb | 4 | d | waste paper and rubbish |
| lavatory | 5 | e | sea animal with claws |
| lightning | 6 | f | polite word for toilet |
| limb | 7 | g | organ for breathing |
| lukewarm | 8 | h | not hot |
| lobster | 9 | i | clothes for washing |
| litter | 10 | j | flash in the sky |



2 Make, Do or Get?

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1.....an effort | 6.....a mess |
| 2.....the shopping | 7.....the message |
| 3.....the sack | 8.....one's best |
| 4.....someone a favour | 9.....someone's help |
| 5.....permission | 10.....an appointment |

Vary Your Language

Ne dites pas que quelque chose est "good" Dites... It's...

...exceptional, ...brilliant, ...great,
...marvellous, ...fantastic, ...superb,
...wonderful, ...perfect, ...sound

Interesting idiom

**Things that go
bump in the night**
Phénomènes étranges

Ouch, that British Humour!

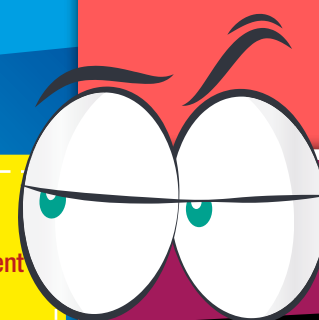
I said to the doctor, 'Can you
give me something for my liver?'
He gave me a pound of onions.
(liver – foie)

See Page 82 for answers

3 TROUVEZ LES SYNONYMES

Aie aie aie, ces faux amis. Ils sont partout. Ces mots anglais ressemblent à des mots français, mais ont un sens totalement différent. Pouvez vous trouver leur équivalent en français?

ENGLISH		FRENCH
to admit	1	a funny
awful	2	b to manage
odd	3	c to confess
bum	4	d astonishing
French dressing	5	e terrible
to cope	6	f weird
witty	7	g pleased
tipsy	8	h drunk
amazing	9	i bottom
glad	10	j vinaigrette



Famous Quote

« Often in politics
people look you in the
eye and tell you what's
not on their mind. »
George W. Bush

Funny expression

**A bit of how's your
father!**
*Une partie de jambes
en l'air!*

**I'm reading a book
about gravity.**
I can't put it down.

Language Tip

To agree and disagree

TO AGREE

... WITH A POSITIVE STATEMENT
SO + verb + pronoun
"I love chocolate." - "So do I."

...WITH A NEGATIVE STATEMENT
NOR/NEITHER + verb + pronoun:
"I don't want to go to work
this morning" - "Nor do I"

TO DISAGREE

... WITH A POSITIVE STATEMENT
Pronoun + verb + not (-n't)
"I love the Beatles" - "I don't"
...WITH A NEGATIVE STATEMENT
Pronoun + verb
"I don't like spiders" - "I do!"

4 C'est du Gâteau !

Pouvez vous trouver le français
pour ces phrases 'gâteaux et tartes' ?



- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 1 To eat humble pie | a vouloir le beurre et l'argent du beurre |
| 2 To have your cake and eat it | b mon chou |
| 3 To have a finger in every pie | c c'est du gâteau ! |
| 4 It's a piece of cake | d Tais-toi ! |
| 5 To sell like hot cakes | e rénover, se pomponner |
| 6 The icing on the cake | f reconnaître son erreur, |
| 7 That takes the biscuit! | g se vendre comme des petits pains, |
| 8 Shut your cake hole (vulg) | h la cerise sur le gâteau |
| 9 My sweetie pie | i toucher à tout |
| 10 To tart something/someone up | j C'est le comble (du ridicule!) |



**There are two types of people in this
world ; those who you want to drink
with, and those who make you want
to drink !**

P-O Life

TEST *your*
FRENCH

answers

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

AMÉLIOREZ
votre ANGLAIS

answers

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



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DID YOU KNOW

SWIMMING A ROUND

Have you seen the 'piscine tournesol' in Saint-Estève? Built by architect **Bernard Schoeller** in the 60s, this transformable design was one of 183 pools financed by the government to encourage more professional swimmers after poor results in the 1968 Olympics. Innovative for its time the pool enclosed in a dome, has large sliding entries, natural light, and can open up like the petals of a sunflower (tournesol) in good weather.

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Problem with your Waterworks?

If you find yourself inundated with an abnormally large water bill, you could have a leak. In theory, **it is down to the water company to contact you if your water consumption seems unusually large compared with past years.** If a leak is proved, and as long as you have the leak repaired, you will not have to pay the excess cost.

PUMA

The Protection Maladie Universelle (PUMA) has been in place since 1st January 2016. It allows anyone who is legally resident in the country, to claim health care rights as a resident. To be considered as a legal resident you should live in France for a minimum of three months, then at least 6 months out of each year. For retirees, this law is now applied consistently. For non active, early retirees, it is a little more complicated. The husband, wife or child of an employed person or retiree also has access to healthcare rights. **For more information, or to register, check out the CPAM website www.ameli.fr**



Things You Might Need to Know

Changes in driving laws operational from 1st July 2016 include.....

• the banning of all headphones and earpieces for listening to music (already banned – hands free devices which might prevent the driver being aware of his surrounding, leaving only the wireless bluetooth system without headset as an in-car chatting option.)	(135 € / 3 Points)
• No smoking in cars with minors present	(68 € fine)
• No eating at the steering wheel	(75 € fine)
• No rummaging in the glove box while driving (even if you want to put a CD)	(75 € fine)
• No listening to music that is loud enough to prevent you from hearing traffic	(75 € fine)
• No putting on or touching up make up, even when stationary in traffic	(75 € fine)



PINE PROCESSIONARY CATERPILLAR LADIES BEWARE.....BY AN ANONYMOUS LADY!

We were taking a walk along the canal at the base of Canigou and saw many of the caterpillar nests in the trees - we didn't know what they were until we saw your article in PO Life. Actually the reason it was helpful to me is a tad embarrassing, but has helped with diagnosis of a rash that I developed later that same day. Please don't mention my name...if you decide to give walkers a warning - but I snuck behind a tree for a sneaky w** - and my nether regions must have come into contact with some of the caterpillar hairs which blow around. I was in agony for a couple of weeks until I saw your posting - and it helped the doctors by giving them a diagnosis.

So - please let ladies know that they should cross their legs!

Dogs and Grapes

Here in the P-O, we live amongst the vines but some grapes and raisins are believed to have a high toxicity for dogs, and can cause kidney failure. The most common early symptom of grape or raisin toxicity is vomiting, usually within a couple of hours after ingestion. Other symptoms to watch out for are loss of appetite, lethargy, and dehydration (test by gently pulling up on the skin of the dog's neck. It should spring back immediately.) Research isn't clear but it is possible that a **mycotoxin (a toxic substance produced by a fungus or mold) may be the cause.**



Hello...Is it me you're looking for?

No!

The phone rings just once, then stops. Curious. **You're tempted to call back. DON'T DO IT!** It could be a #pingcall, in which you are connected to an international hotline which charges just for connecting, along with high per-minute fees for as long as they can keep you talking. Caller ID will look as if the call is coming from 01, 02, 04 etc instead of the expensive 0 899. These charges will show up on your bill as premium services. (surtaxée.) If this happens to you, send a text to 33 700 with the title 'spam vocal' and the suspect phone

number, and you will receive an acknowledgement of receipt

For any phone fraud, ring 0811 02 02 17

Watch out too for a scam involving La Poste telling you they are holding a 'colis' or 'lettre recommandée' for you, and asking you to ring to organize collection.

La Poste say they NEVER call you, and your postman should always leave a note when something is being held at the post office.



Useful vocab

une technique d'escroquerie/frauduleuse
a scam
la tonalité - dialling tone
composer un numéro - to dial a number
être coupé - to be cut off
laisser sonner - let it ring
le destinataire - recipient

le correspondant - caller
décrocher/raccrocher - pick up/put down
s'afficher - to display
un numéro surtaxé - premium number
un accusé de réception - acknowledgement of receipt



**OH NOOOOOOOOOO
IT'S NEARLY
CHRISTMAS....AGAIN!
Where does the time
go?
The good thing about
Christmas is that it
happens every year
so we can dig out the
same old Christmas
Catalan Traditions
and here they are!**



1st January Argelès

DON'T FORGET

THAT FIRST SWIM OF THE YEAR!
Premier bain de l'année (first dip of the year!) - meet up at 10h30 at the rond-point d'arrivée by the beach - et bonne chance!

>Pessebre vivent

The 'pessebre', or nativity scene is nothing new, but here in Catalonia these nativity scenes come alive! The 'pessebre vivent' places leading characters in period clothes, on decorated stage-sets portraying historical and biblical scenes. Sometimes they will sing and talk, other times they will just stand or sit without moving!! Often, there will be a commentary with spectacular special effects and lighting. Check out Perpignan Tourist Office and also over the border at Bascara near Figueres (www.elpessebre.cat)



> Le Caganer

Hidden away in the 'pessebre' is "El caganer", (the pooper) small statue of a Catalan peasant with trousers half down, sitting in a "toilet" position. His mission is actually to fertilize the land to ensure a bumper crop the following year. He adds a comical aspect to this traditional scene, and provides fun for the children as they try to spot him.



> Caga Tió

And staying on the subject of poo, look out for the caga tió (literally "poo log"!), a hollow log standing up on four little stick legs with a smiley face painted on one end and red "barretina" hat. From December 8th, he is "fed" every night and on Christmas Day, beaten with sticks to make him drop the sweets and torrons (turrón in Spanish) placed inside him.



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Anti-poison centre	04 91 75 25 25	International Mastercard	08 00 90 13 87
Perpignan Hospital	04 68 61 66 33	Local weather forecast	08 36 68 02 66
CPAM (English spk serv)	0811 36 36 46	GDF (gas problems)	08 10 43 30 66
Cancer Support France	04 68 69 01 37	EDF (electricity problems)	05 56 17 40 70

You can use the **European emergency number 112 in any EU country** from any telephone. **You do not need a card or money to ring this number** from a pay phone. 112 may also be used from a mobile to connect you with all emergency services.



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