

Winter 2016-17

# P-O Life

*Life in the Pyrénées-Orientales*

N° 54  
FREE / GRATUIT



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**FESTIVALS**  
**and** **TRADITIONS**  
Theatre Guide

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EDITO:~)

Hola  
amics  
meus



**It might be a little late by the time you read this but Bon Any Nou - Happy New Year in Catalan of course - with warmest wishes for a Happy, Healthy and Lucky New Year!**

**A**utumn and early winter have surpassed themselves once again, warm and dry with daily generous doses of that magnificent light to boost our spirits and chase away the blues. You might even manage an early apero outside - with an occasional run round the garden to keep the blood circulating!

As usual, at the beginning of a new year, I take a few lines to say a big THANK YOU to our advertisers without whom we would quite simply not exist. If you use their services, please tell them from us how much we appreciate them. And an even bigger thank you to the many amazing people who contribute to P-O Life and make it what it is – informative, enjoyable, useful and a whole lot of fun to produce!

In this edition, Chris and Tim take us walking to Marcevol, Jan West explores the origins of flamenco, Lesley McLaren takes us on a P-O ramble - naturally and John takes a look at airport access.

Whether you're heading for the ski slopes, or curling up in front of a log fire with a good book, we wish you a sunny winter.

*Fins aviat*

*Kate*

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## Prieuré de Marcevol circular

### **RETENU DE VINÇA:** **Prieuré de Marcevol via the valleys**

A circular walk of approx 2½ hours using some parts of the GR/St Emilie route to the Priory, and taking in some of the delights of the surrounding valleys! Walking boots essential

#### ACCESS

map IGN 1:25000  
Prades St Paul de Fenouillet 2348 ET

#### START:

**F**rom Perpignan follow the river Têt on the N116 in the direction of Prades. Reach the Retenu (lake) de Vinça. Opposite the second turning for the village of Vinça is a right turn, over the reservoir, signed Tarerach D13. Take this road and park immediately after the bridge on the right.

#### THE WALK:

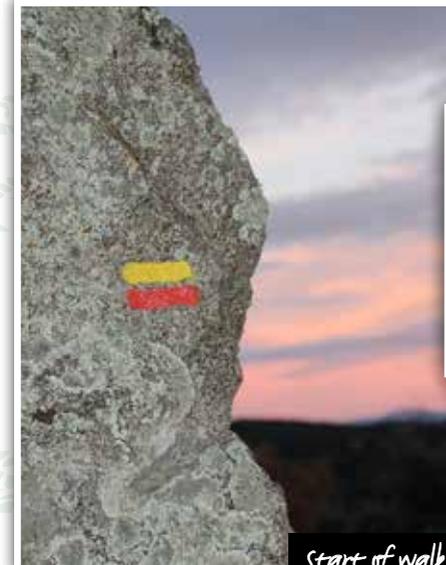
You will see the main path to Marcevol on the corner, at the exit of the bridge – signed Sentier d'Emilie and marked with red and white sign for a GR path (Grande Randonnée). This is your point of return.

#### START OF WALK:

➡ Cross the road from the parking area, heading right, and after a few yards take a path which rises from the roadside to wind up the right hand side of the valley. The narrow path climbs steadily, with zig zags and in parts is paved with stones.



*Grassy area*



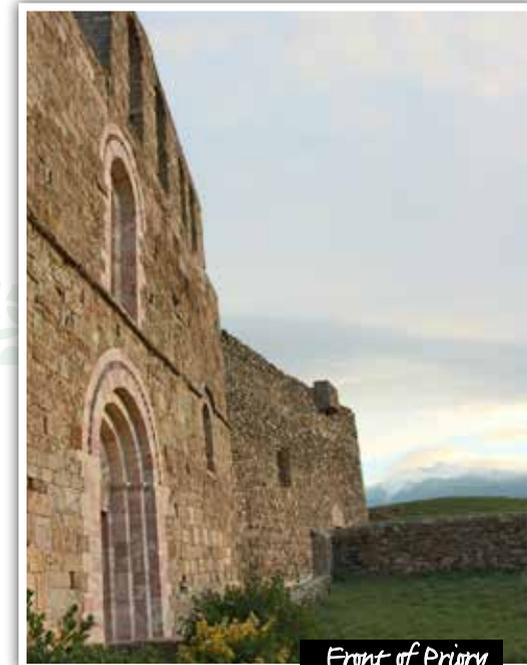
*start of walk*



*approach to Priory from back*

➡ The path crosses a rocky riverbed, then very quickly crosses a tributary riverbed to continue up the left hand side of this next valley. Follow the path under trees to emerge in more open landscape with gritty sandy rock, before it levels out to meet the GR path. (approx 40-50 mins).

➡ Turn right and continue up the GR to the Priory. Cross a grassy area to get to a wide track. A further 30 metres along this, take the footpath on the right, leading up to the Priory (1hr 15mins)



*Front of Priory*

# WALK *The* REGION

with Tim  
and Chris Parker

The Romanesque Priory, restored by a group of volunteers, dates from the 12th century, and is open to visitors from beginning of April to September. (3.50€ adult). It is a peaceful and natural spot, with an interesting pink marble door and window, from the nearby marble quarries of Villefranche-de-Conflent, and magnificent panoramic views across the Têt valley, to Arbussols, and Canigou. Inside the priory, an ancient fresco has been preserved.

👉 The tiny hamlet of Marcevol itself is also worth a visit. Pick up a path on the left near the bend in the road at the entrance to the car park (direction Tarerach). A pretty little street leads to the 16th century church, built on solid rock.



👉 Your return route starts through the rocks which line the back of the car park and is waymarked yellow. It drops then contours round the hills above the valley between Marcevol and Arbussols. The path offers dramatic views of the mountains, the rugged valley and the fertile Têt valley below.



Vinça, views of Canigou

👉 After approx 50 minutes, soon after passing an Orri (small stone shelter), rejoin the GR to continue down the steep rock-paved path. The path is very obvious but some walkers also have an artistic side and have created a wonderfully balanced cairn on the way down!

👉 Emerge by the bridge and car park. (1 hr 10 mins descent time from the Priory)•



Orri



Marcevol. Views of Vinça Lake



Exit route



As the Knights Templar were known to be prominent in the region, the priory is believed by many locals to have been one of their head quarters.

When they were disbanded in the early 14th century, it is said that a load-bearing lintel cracked above the main door, a sign of the Templars' importance, and a mark of displeasure from above at their fall from grace.

Be My Valentine

All's fair in love and war



**The romantics amongst you may already have visited the little village of Saint Valentin, Patron Saint of Lovers, situated in Indre, in the Val de Loire.**

This otherwise unremarkable village markets itself as 'le village des amoureux', and between the Jardin des Amoureux, le Saule aux Coeurs, and the Maison des Amoureux, love struck couples are spoilt for choice. Visit the annual festival of love around St. Valentine's Day, renew your vows in the church, attach your names to the tree of eternal hearts or sip champagne in the lovers' gazebo. Love is indeed a many splendored thing.

The Roman Emperor Claudius II wasn't against a bit of love either, but actual marriage was forbidden in his army, as he believed that married men did not make good soldiers.

Along came Saint Valentine, patron saint of lovers, but also of bee keepers, plague victims and epilepsy sufferers! (It's a hard job but somebody has to do it!)

Anyway, according to legend, our Val, worried that soldiers would nevertheless abuse their Christianity by indulging in the sin of extra marital nooky (as if!), performed secret wedding ceremonies for soldiers, to encourage them to remain faithful Christians. Caught out by Claudius, he was imprisoned and later beheaded for his sins on February 14, 270 AD.

Some say that the first Valentine's day card was sent by Saint Valentine himself from his prison cell, a letter of love to his jailor's daughter, signed 'From your Valentine'.

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The oldest existing Valentine card recorded was written in 1415 to his wife, by Charles, Duke of Orléans, also from a prison cell. Just 21 years old, the French nobleman was captured at the Battle of Agincourt, during the Hundred Years War, and imprisoned in the Tower of London.

Here it is, its 'olde worlde' spelling adapted for the modern reader:

*Je suis déjà d'amour tanné,  
Ma très douce Valentinée,  
Car pour moi fûtes trop tard née,  
Et moi pour vous fus trop tôt né.  
Dieu lui pardonne qui estrené  
M'a de vous, pour toute l'année  
Je suis déjà, etc.  
Ma très douce, etc.  
Bien m'étais suspeçonné,  
Qu'aurais telle destinée,  
Ainsi que passât ceste journée,  
Combien qu'Amours l'eût ordonné.  
Je suis déjà, etc.*

*(I am already sick with love,  
My very gentle Valentine,  
Since for me you were born too soon,  
And I for you was born too late.  
God forgives him who has estranged  
Me from you for the whole year.  
I am already sick with love,  
My very gentle Valentine.  
Well might I have suspected  
That such a destiny,  
Thus would have happened this day,  
How much that Love would have commanded.  
I am already sick with love,  
My very gentle Valentine.)*



**A Message for Your Valentine:**

Je voudrais être une larme  
Pour naître dans tes yeux  
Vivre sur tes joues  
Et mourir sur tes lèvres

Charles 1er d'Orléans

Of course, sceptics may say that the Valentine's card was invented by the greetings card industry! NB Several early Christian martyrs were named Valentine but we are going for the one who works best for us!

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## OLÉ Flamenco!

**A brief (and incomplete) look  
at the origins of Flamenco.**

*with Jan West*

Easy to appreciate the stamping feet, girls in colourful frilly dresses, and haunting guitar. Harder perhaps to understand the singing that sounds discordant to our ears!

**What's it about and where does it come from?**

**T**he name has several possible origins - one is from the Hispano-arab - "Fellah Mengu" meaning "expelled peasant" but this has a potential issue with dates and chronology.

Another is that it derives from Flanders as flamenco means Flemish in Spanish. Spain used to control an area corresponding to present day Luxembourg and Belgium, and Spaniards believed that gypsies originated there - hmmm.

Yet another is that it derives from 'flame', describing the fiery behaviour of Gitano players and performers.

The final one is the connection with Flamings, and the resemblance to the dancers. I don't see that one myself - but each to their own!

It started in Andalusia - the gypsies (Gitanos) were persecuted along with Moors and Jews back in the 1400s and the music still refers to pain and suffering.

Gitanos maintained the music tradition and

as they were pushed into ghettos the music stayed with them in pure state. It wasn't until the late 1700s when the Andalusian Gitanos were granted some freedom to travel that it spread from its historical homeland of the Andalusian triangle - Cadiz, Seville, Jerez.



Now we think of Flamenco as a dance accompanied by guitar and perhaps a singer but in its purest form it is song (cante). Later came percussion - often just using knuckles on a table, or clapping or finger snapping - and then guitar. The cante, which to us sounds out of tune, is played in something called Phrygian mode. I don't pretend to understand it, but for any musicos out there.....A scale played in E Phrygian can have G and D as a sharp.

*(Personally, I'm none the wiser!)*

Dance was a relatively late arrival and whilst it might appear random, it is in fact following strict rules of engagement and signals that allow the dancer and accompanist to "speak" to each other without words. Taken to extreme, this can mean that a dancer and a guitarist who have never met before can work together seamlessly.



Flamenco was a private art form till the late 18th century, happening spontaneously at small intimate gatherings. The flamenco we see today is a far cry from that, and appeared during the Golden Age between the late 1860s to early 1900s when it started to be performed in public at the Cafe Cantantes, becoming something to see in Spain when on the 'Grand Tour'.

The Retirada fetched Flamenco to France with the influx of refugees, many of whom settled here. The arrival of gypsies from Catalunya and those from eastern Europe added their music to the mix. The arrival of the Rumba Catalana from Barcelona in the 1950s popularised the music form mixing afro-caribbean rhythm with flamenco, not purist, but great fun!

I've been bitten by the bug and whilst it took many years to get to grips with the basics, and I'll never be brilliant, I don't know of any other art form that grips me so intensely and gives me goosebumps as soon as I hear the first plaintive notes.

**Olé Flamenco. Que Arte!!**



# FESTIVAL & TRADITIONS



**There's always something to do or somewhere to go in the P-O, no matter what the weather.**

FESTIVALS, PARADES, BANDAS, SARDANES, CASTELLERS, GIANTS and DANCING IN THE STREET for those days of winter sunshine.....and check out our THEATRE GUIDE with some excellent theatres offering OPERA, COMEDY, CIRCUS, BALLET, DRAMA, DANCE, CLASSICAL AND CONTEMPORARY MUSIC - high quality and diverse treats to delight the eyes and ears and brighten up those cold, dark evenings.

## Pancake Day - 2nd February



You don't need to wait for Shrove Tuesday to toss your first pancake of the year. The 'Fête de la Chandeleur' (Candlemas), also known as the 'jour des crêpes', dates back to Roman times and is celebrated 40 days after Christmas, on the 2nd February. Originally a religious festival, the name chandeleur actually comes from the word chandelle (candle), probably because this Christian occasion involved much lighting and blessing of candles.



## Carnival

Pull out your masks, costumes and confetti - it's carnival time! Street parades, fireworks, singing and dancing ... along with the symbolic burning of evil spirits. Carnival actually dates back to an ancient festival in honour of Dionysus, the god of wine. It was a massive binge – a celebration of excess. The church first tried to suppress it, and later wisely adapted it. It became a last fling, a **chance to eat, drink and be excessively merry** before Lent, the 40 day period of fasting, abstinence, and purging of sins.

The word 'carnival' is often interpreted as coming from the Latin 'carne vale', meaning 'farewell to meat' but it is also believed to stem from 'carrus navels' the 'naval car' or ship, which carried the Gods to the winter feasts. The medieval Church reinterpreted this as the Ship of Fools, sailing sinners to their deaths ... and so was born the carnival float. **Other aspects of Carnival** are believed to derive from the ancient Roman festival Saturnalia, when social rules of behaviour and class were reversed, masters waited on their slaves, men dressed like women, people wore fancy dress, paraded in the streets and, thus disguised, could be as wicked as they wanted.

## Bear necessities

Don't miss the Fêtes de l'Ours, bear festivals in Arles sur Tech (5th Feb), Prats de Mollo (12th Feb) and St Laurent de Cerdans (12th Feb).

Men and women run through the streets dressed as bears and hunters. Bears wear sheepskins, their faces and hands blackened with a mixture of suie (soot) and huile (oil). Les 'hommes en blanc' are covered in flour and dressed in white lace bonnets. They catch and shave the bear... The whole day ends with a Bal de Corré in which bears, hunters and barbers dance around in a frenzied circle until a gunshot rings out and the bears fall to the ground, dead. Intrigued? Visit our website or the local tourist office to find out more.



Sunday March  
26th 2017 - French  
summertime  
Don't forget to turn  
your clocks forward



PERPIGNAN  
SAISON  
16-17



Designed by renowned French architect Jean Nouvel in June 2012, the Théâtre de l'Archipel brought a touch of prestige to the previously rundown edge of the city, an exciting new addition to the Perpignan skyline.

Audiences of all ages can watch, listen and discover the very best in performance arts with dance, circus, theatre and music

of all varieties. Look out too for interactive workshops, lectures, conferences, exhibitions, lunch-break performances and an independent programme hosted at El Médiateur. Visit the website for full details.

For ticket and performance information, or a virtual tour, visit the theatre website: [www.theatredelarchipel.org](http://www.theatredelarchipel.org)

## Olivia Ruiz

Thursday 26th January 20h30

A former semi-finalist of the French Star Academy series, the unique voice of folk-punk chanteuse Olivia Ruiz pays homage to the ladies, her lyrics a 'hymne à la féminité et au plaisir charnel'.



POP MUSIC

## Halka

Wednesday 22nd February 19h

The Acrobatic Group from Tangiers returns to the Archipel with 12 of its finest performers. Building on the traditional Moroccan art form, passed down from generation to generation, Halka adds a modern, contemporary energy, exploring the idea of circles. The circle of the audience, the circle of friends within the group, a movement of a limb, or the body: powerful, energetic, seductive, all-encompassing.



CIRCUS

## Δ\_ο<sup>b</sup>[Inuk]

Sunday 12 March 15h & 18h

Snow, sledges, aurora borealis, seals, igloos, and a blizzard take over the stage when we visit Nunavik, land of the Quebec eskimo. Swaddled in padded anoraks, seal or bear masks, three actors take us into an imaginary world where penguins go fishing with rods, a radio and a cool box, and seals sleep in sleeping bags.



FOR KIDS

## En Ruta

Wednesday 22nd February 19h

Burning rubber of some of the great Road Movie classics, musicians and actors, students from the local music college, mix original sound tracks with their own creations. Easy Rider, Thelma and Louise, the Blues Brothers, Little Miss Sunshine, Pierrot le fou, Les Valseuses...



MUSIC AND IMAGE

## Quatuor Modigliani

Sunday 26th March 16h30

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# FESTIVAL & TRADITIONS



THEATRE  
GUIDE

## The Theatre by the Lake

Have you been to the Théâtre De L'Étang 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 winter and spring to come - but don't forget to visit their website at [www.theatre-de-letang.fr](http://www.theatre-de-letang.fr) for a full and varied programme.

#### FESTIVAL RADIO CROCHET

Saturday 7th January 21h (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 17h (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.....

#### LES MOUSQUETAIRES AU COUVENT

Saturday 28th January



Operetta in 3 acts directed by Daniel Tosi.  
Musketeer Gontran is in love with Marie, niece of the governor of Touraine. Marie lives in a convent. Gontran and his friend Brissac sneak into the convent disguised as nuns.....

#### 'CABARET' WITH LEENKA COMPAGNIE

Friday 31st March

A cabaret of music and dance as the Leenka company take you through an exciting repertoire from Piaf to Emille Simon, Shirley Bassey, l'Oncle Soul, Bruno Mars, Lady Gaga...

Both French and international 'greats' performed from a different angle.



#### LA PÉRICHOLE

Saturday 25th March

This 'Opéra-bouffe' is set in Lima in the 18th century. Life is miserable for impoverished Peruvian street-singers, la Périchole, and her lover Piquillo. The villain of the piece is lecherous viceroys, Don Andrés de Ribeira, who wishes to make La Périchole his mistress. Engaging romantic intrigues, colourful costumes and delightful music.

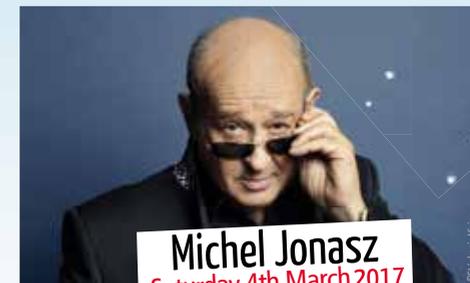


## THÉÂTRE DE L'ÉTANG

s a i n t - e s t è v e



Jean-Marie Bigard  
Saturday 21st January 2017  
Zany stand-up comedian



Michel Jonasz  
Saturday 4th March 2017  
Cool vocals and piano



Conseil de Famille  
Saturday 22nd April 2017  
Comedy



Pietragalla - Derouault  
Saturday 20th May 2017  
Contemporary dance

Reservations : Théâtre de l'Étang - 6 Allée des Arts et des Lettres - Saint-Estève  
Tel. 04 68 38 34 95 - Monday - Friday from 14h to 18h - Magazines FNAC or [www.fnac.com](http://www.fnac.com)

#### RADIO CROCHET

Saturday 7th January at 21h  
Talent Competition

#### DUO CORD'EOLE

Thursday 19th January  
Strauss, Tchaikovsky, Faure, Halvorsen, Granados, Bizet...

#### LA PÉRICHOLE

Saturday 25th March  
Opéra-Bouffe (French Operetta)



#### CONCERT DU NOUVEL AN

Sunday 15th January at 17h (free)  
New Year Concert

#### LES MOUSQUETAIRES AU COUVENT

Saturday 28th January  
Comic Opera

#### COLOUR JAZZ QUARTET

Thursday 27th April  
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and much more to discover at [www.theatredeletang.com](http://www.theatredeletang.com)



# FESTIVAL & TRADITIONS



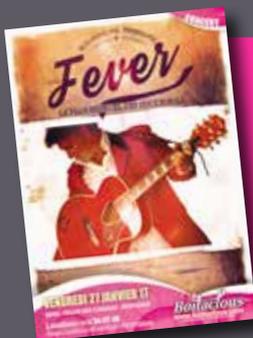
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## FEVER

FRIDAY 27 JANUARY 20H29  
PALAIS DES CONGRÈS - PERPIGNAN

From Memphis to Nashville, rock and roll of the good old days with the charismatic Eric Carbonne and the group Sun Sessions. Elvis Presley, Bobby Darin, Kenny Rogers... with dancers, acrobats.

## LES ÉTOILES DE LA DANSE

WEDNESDAY 1 FEBRUARY 15H29 & 20H29  
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## BARBARA HENDRICKS - BLUES EVERYWHERE I GO

TUESDAY 2 MAY 20H29  
PALAIS DES CONGRÈS - PERPIGNAN

A jazz and blues icon, this pastor's daughter started out singing gospel at her father's church in Arkansas. Music is part of her roots, as heard in this highly original programme that explores every aspect of irresistible swing.

## LES FRANGLAISES

TUESDAY 9 MAY 20H29  
PALAIS DES CONGRÈS - PERPIGNAN

Burlesque cabaret as the Tistics translate literally some of the greatest 'Anglo-Saxon' hits from the past. From Michel Fils-de-Jacques (Michael Jackson), Les Gens du Village, les Petits Pois aux Yeux Noirs, les Filles épicées... 'Tu dis oui, je dis non, tu dis stop et je dis va, va, va...' Sounds like fun.



## UNISEX HAIRDRESSING

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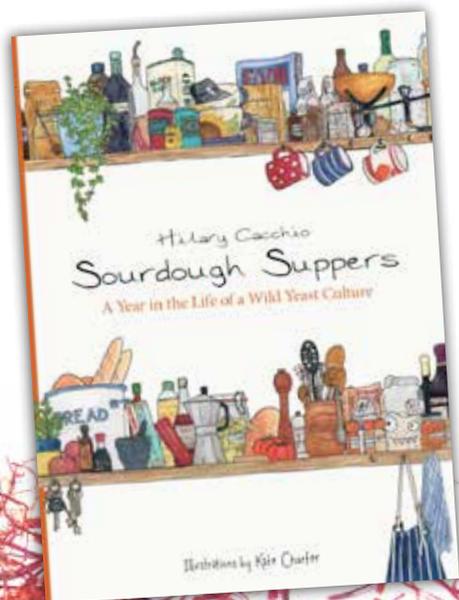
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ENGLISH SPOKEN

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t: philippemoralesscoiffure

## Give us this Day Our Daily Bread



**Hilary Cacchio arrived in the Vallespir 11 years ago after much exotic travel. An itinerant, freelance chef, she quickly learnt about the rhythm and sheer joy of being a seasonal chef - and all about sourdough!**

**F**rom her new home in Arles-sur-Tech, Hilary was inspired by its farmers markets its hard working and talented producers, its olive oils (some of the best in the world coming from the nearby Emporda Region), the cheeses, honeys, almonds, saffron, olives.... a cook's utopia.

Most of the recipes for the book were written and tested in her P-O kitchen. Bags of breads hung from front door handles, bizarre, experimental brunches took place with piles of sticky, maple pecan buns, sourdough pancakes, chocolate doughnuts with tomato paella and minted pea salsa thrown in!

Starting with advice on how to look after a sourdough culture, and how to make bread with it, the book is split into 12 monthly chapters guiding the reader through the seasons. The first few recipes in each chapter are the breads for the month, followed by recipes that either use bread or go well with the bread(s) featured. Recipes are informal, driven by what is available at the market that particular month.

Try her Moroccan Flatbreads stuffed with spicy onion and feta, her fennel crackers or her carrot, sesame and Kalonji naan breads. With dips, patés, soups and saucy dishes, you will soon find out on which side your bread is buttered!

A book written by a local lady, which will appeal to non-bakers as well as 'bread heads'.....and those who just enjoy eating.

**“Beautifully illustrated by animator Kate Charter, it is both a precise teach-yourself how to make bread book, but also a recipe book that will inspire you throughout the year.”**

Louise Tucker

**“Writing a book, I think, is quite a feat. Writing one and getting it published is even more impressive. And, considering both of those things, writing one and publishing it yourself seems practically superhuman.”**

Louise Tucker



Visit Hilary's blog [hilarycacchio.com](http://hilarycacchio.com), for a slightly more modern take on Catalan recipes.

Available from [Amazon.fr](http://Amazon.fr), [ebay.fr](http://ebay.fr) or by email at [hilaryjj@btinternet.com](mailto:hilaryjj@btinternet.com)

If you're interested in purchasing a working sourdough culture, this can be picked up from Hilary at Arles sur Tech.

## Pyrenean Leek and Potato Broth

Serves 4 as a main meal or 2 very hungry people!



- 125g everyday Spanish extra virgin olive oil.
- 2 large leeks washed, cut from top to bottom in half then into thin slices (including lots of the green parts).
- 700g potatoes (Marfona, Maris Piper or King Edwards), preferably organic, scrubbed and cut into small cubes (about 2cm).
- 200ml dry cava or white wine
- 700ml homemade vegetable or chicken stock.
- large bunch parsley, roughly chopped.
- salt and freshly ground white pepper.

**Our weekly local markets often have piles of small, tender young leeks speckled with moist soil. If you can find these, use about 6–8 to replace the larger versions. The parsley is very much an integral part of the soup adding a grassy fresh flavour, not just a garnish, so don't stint.**

Sweat the potatoes and the leeks with the oil, a generous pinch of salt and freshly ground white pepper in a large lidded frying pan over a medium low heat until the potatoes are soft and the leeks translucent. This will take about 25 minutes. Stir occasionally to prevent the vegetables sticking.

When the potatoes and leeks are cooked, add the cava and the stock and bring to a simmer. Using a potato masher, roughly crush some of the potato (this is a mountain soup so it requires a chunky, not smooth texture). Check the seasoning, stir in the parsley and serve immediately, topped with a dollop of aioli.

**Note:** this soup improves if kept for a day in the fridge, and freezes well, but don't add the parsley if you plan to store it. Instead, add the parsley once the soup is reheated and just before serving.

**For variation** add some shredded cooked chicken, prawns (add them raw as the soup comes to a boil and they will add a sweetness to the stock) or some big fat, creamy, cooked Spanish judion beans (a giant butter bean). If using beans, crush them with the potatoes.



## Aioli with Eggs

- Generous pinch salt
- 8 cloves garlic, peeled
- 1 organic egg yolk
- squeeze lemon juice

100–150ml Spanish extra virgin olive oil, or your own favourite extra virgin olive oil



**In country restaurants, high up on the Spanish side of the Pyrenees, you will find this punchy sauce served on the side of virtually every robust savoury Catalan dish. It is made with a LOT of garlic, extra virgin olive oil but no eggs; if lucky the emulsion will hold, but it is not for the faint-hearted! This recipe is a more stable, cheat's way of producing a more common but less authentic version. If you are a purist and feel brave you can miss out the egg yolk and add at least 6 more garlic cloves, but don't make it until just before serving; this method can be a little unstable, frightening the best of chefs!**

Using a pestle and mortar, pound the salt and garlic into a paste then thoroughly mix in the egg yolk and a squeeze of lemon. Initially, drop by drop, add the olive oil, whisking each drop in thoroughly before adding the next. When the mixture begins to thicken and the emulsion has formed, you can add the oil in a slow, steady drizzle until you have a lovely, glistening thick aioli.

**All the ingredients need to be at room temperature. You will also need a pestle and mortar and balloon whisk.**



## A Review of past Reviews!

We love publishing your reviews. They're honest (mostly!), objective (always!), unrelated to advertising (really!) and cover a wide range of tastes, prices and places. You might not always agree, the chef might have changed, your standards might be higher...or lower – but they give you an idea of what's available.

We've gone back in time, picked out a few choice phrases from past reviews, and checked they are still open. Prices quoted or small details might have changed though! Over to you now to see if the review still fits the restaurant.



### LE FANAL

BANYULS-SUR-MER

An experience in fine dining, for that special occasion. Impeccable service, minute attention to detail and dishes that are simply exquisite. Not cheap for the *Menu Grande Table* at 60€ and the *Menu Signature* at 80€ but they will leave you in no doubt why chef **Pascal Borrell** was awarded a Michelin Star. A '*Menu du Marché*' at lunch and evening is also available at **€19 for 2 courses or £29 for three**. Eat in the smart interior, or outside in their new and rather upmarket glass terrace with panoramic views of Banyuls' harbour.



Avenue du Fontaulé,  
Banyuls-sur-Mer  
Tel: 04 68 98 65 88  
www.pascal-borrell.com  
www.pascal-borrell.secretbox.fr



### LE PORTOFINO

SAINT CYPRIEN... with **Rosie**

With a bird's eye view over the port, service is attentive, and the *Piquemal Muscat*, one of the best I've tasted so far, was delicious with oysters from Leucate. Ranging from **22,50€ to 32,50€**, there is something for everyone with fish, meat, pasta, salads, seafood and shellfish.



Quai Arthur Rimbaud, St Cyprien Port  
Tel: 09 51 58 89 55 (Open all year)  
www.leportofino-restaurant.fr

### LA MARINE

SAINT CYPRIEN... with **Fiona**

First-hand views over the port, our mains of cuttle fish and a seafood platter (white fish, mussels, squid, sautéed potatoes) **were big enough to feed an army**. Home-made thickly-coated chocolate profiteroles proved irresistible. (Look out for the small, white pastille on a plate which, when you add water, springs into life and turns into a hot hand cloth!).



6 boulevard Desnoyer,  
Saint-Cyprien Port  
Tel: 04 68 39 06 21

### LES ENFANTS TERRIBLES

LAROQUE-LES-ALBÈRES with **Lucien and Kate**

Our fave restaurant of the moment, exciting and inventive cuisine, often with an interesting 'Masterchef' twist; fresh, homemade and unpretentious. Anthony is the talented chef with lovely wife Valérie front of house. Roomy interior with log fire, delightful shady courtyard for the warmer weather. 29 euro for 3 excellent courses. Fine dining at moderate price for the high quality.



33 Rue Louis Et Michel Soler  
Laroque-Des-Alberes  
Tel: 04 68 89 40 51

### LE RELAIS D'OULRICH

CÉRET.. with **Danièle**

For traditional French home-cooked food it would be hard to find better. Menu changes daily. Excellent cold buffet, and homemade tart /quiche for hors d'oeuvres. Three course 14€50 menu includes wine, or 2 courses for 11€. Lunchtime only. Recommended for quality and value for money.



Z.I. Oulrich,  
Ceret  
Tel: 04 68 39 17 28

## A Review of past Reviews!

Restaurant  
REVIEWS

### MOANA NUI

THUIR... with Sheila and Keith

This restaurant presents a menu from a different country around the world, changing on a weekly basis. **Fabien** is the excellent chef with his wife **Patricia**. The 3 course evening menu including a glass of wine and coffee is very good value.



2 bis Déodat de Séverac, Thuir  
Tel: 04 68 64 19 72

### SPAGHETTERI'ALDO

PERPIGNAN... with Kate and Fiona

Caters for vegetarians, carnivores and 'pâtivores' just a stone's throw away from the Castillet. The dilemma? How to choose from an amazing range of pasta dishes? Ravioli au foie gras, spaghetti vongole with clams, mussels and king prawns, tortellini au crabe, rigatoni, tagliatelle, fettuccine.... along with speciality mushroom or seafood risottos, traditional Italian meat dishes, good choice of salads.....and antipasti to melt even the hardest critic's heart. Described by many as 'les meilleures pâtes de Perpignan' (no pizzas!).



1 rue des Variétés, Perpignan  
Tel: 04 68 61 11 47  
www.spaghetteri-aldo-perpignan.fr

### LE PETIT CHOU CAFÉ

ST PAUL DE FENOUILLET... with Peter

Fresh, Friendly and Absolutely Fabulous – an accurate description of the whole caboodle, the food, the drinks, the location and most of all the staff! Open throughout the day, the menu is in four parts, Brunch, Le Midi, Afternoon Tea and Le Soir, with little gems in each menu. Kids and vegetarians are also well catered for - and if you love wonderful scenery and fabulous walks, it's a great place to make a day of it.



43 rue Arago, St Paul de Fenouillet  
Tel: 04 68 61 50 52  
www.lepetitchoucafe.com

And a few new kids on the block review-wise that are well worth a mention.....

### BELLA COSA

THUIR... with Sheila and Keith

A new (tiny!) restaurant recently opened in Thuir, opposite Byrrh, **Bella Cosa** is run by Italian father and son **Rocco** and **Matthieu** in Place du General de Gaulle. Very good food and low prices. Mains from 10€. Typical Italian fare.



Place du Général de Gaulle (opposite Caves Byrrh), Thuir  
Tel: 04 30 82 53 50

### LOU GRILLADOU

PERPIGNAN... with Kate

Just a couple of minutes walk from the train station, this restaurant is always busy and recommended by the locals. An excellent 3 course lunchtime **menu for just €14**, and plenty of reasonably priced à la carte alternatives for vegetarians, fish and meat eaters. Semi-gastronomic, Mediterranean-style cuisine, with accent firmly on home cooking and fresh produce. Friendly service with a smile, and clean loos. In fine weather tables spill out into a tree-lined square, and there is free street parking nearby, if you're lucky enough to find a place.



7 Place Albert de Belgique, Perpignan  
Tel: 04 68 34 86 81  
www.restaurant-lou-grilladou.fr

### HOTEL CORTIE

THUIR... with Fiona and Stéphane

We were very pleasantly surprised by the Easter **3-course Menu at 39€**, since we had our eye on the Coq au Byrrh – their speciality since 1902 – and the Boles de Picoulat, but in this case there was no à la carte option. The atmosphere was cosy, with a busy restaurant full of locals and tourists alike. Being Catalan, my boyfriend couldn't resist the traditional leg of lamb slow-cooked in its juices for 7 hours Catalan-style, and together with a foie gras starter and exceedingly chocolately profiteroles to finish, gave his menu top marks. My braised beef accompanied by a tasty gravy and chips reminded me of a wholesome, home-cooked meal and everything (where possible) is home-made here. The anchovy & vegetable vol-au-vent was as light as a feather and the Saint Honoré not overly rich. Despite the number of people, the service was swift and with a smile. We will return.



3 rue J. J. Rousseau, THUIR  
Tel: 04 68 34 58 66  
www.hotel-cortie.com



**WE'RE  
OPEN**

*Cosy  
Convivial and  
open all winter*

Not all P-O restaurants are equipped to remain open during the winter. Terraces and trottoirs can get a little chilly without the sunshine, and a cosy interior is not always so easy to find. Here are some restaurants that tick both 'open' and 'cosy' boxes - with a sizzling welcome to combat that winter cool. Don't forget to book in advance. Bon app!



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 facebook.com/cotecatalane  
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 Email: [info@hotelcarasol.com](mailto:info@hotelcarasol.com)



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[www.restaurant-lou-grilladou.fr](http://www.restaurant-lou-grilladou.fr)

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**04 68 36 42 03** 

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**Le Petit Chou Cafe**

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[www.cafedesartistes66.com](http://www.cafedesartistes66.com)

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**Restaurant**

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Lunch-time  
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**04 68 89 40 51**  
 33 rue Louis et Michel Soler,  
 66740 Laroque-des-Albères  
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5 place Gabriel Péri - 66300 THUIR [www.cave-lavoielactee.com](http://www.cave-lavoielactee.com)  
 09 81 47 20 53 • 06 74 00 50 73  CrèmerieLaVoieLactee

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[www.remparts.fr](http://www.remparts.fr)

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6 place du Coq d'Or, 66210 Les Angles

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WHERE ARE WE GOING TO EAT TONIGHT?

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09 51 58 89 55  
[WWW.LEPORTOFINO-RESTAURANT.FR](http://WWW.LEPORTOFINO-RESTAURANT.FR)

ENGLISH  
SPOKEN

**DID YOU KNOW**



Look out for 'calçots' (pronounced cal-show), a variety of long, thick green onion (rather like skinny leeks) that have their peak season in January, February, and March. Or even better, watch the events news for a 'calçotada' in a village near you. These delicious onions are normally cooked on a barbecue, turned until entirely blackened outside and soft and sweet inside, dipped into sauce, and held above the head before being lowered into the mouth. A delightful mess-fest.

SECTION



10

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# FOOD & DRINK

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# LE FANAL

BANYULS-SUR-MER



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## DID YOU KNOW



**Eat, Drink and be Merry –  
for Tomorrow You'll be Thin!**



It's not the first time we've talked about the magic 'resveratrol', found in red wine. This polyphenol transforms 'white fat' into a different kind of fat that burns off more easily and moderates your appetite.

In a study at Harvard School of Public Health, monitoring 20,000 women drinking two glasses of red wine per day over 13 years, 70 percent showed less tendency to be overweight.

## limoncello liqueur



### INGREDIENTS

- 200g caster sugar.
- 150ml water.
- zest and juice of 6 unwaxed lemons.
- 700ml eau-de-vie (clear, colourless fruit brandy 40-80% proof) or vodka.



### METHOD

1. Mix sugar and water in saucepan over medium heat. Stir to dissolve the sugar. Bring to the boil, then simmer briskly for 3-4 minutes until bubbles look syrupy. Leave to cool.
2. Add lemon zest and juice to syrup while still slightly warm. Add eau-de-vie or vodka.
3. Pour into sterile bottles or jars and seal.
4. This is where the patience comes in. Leave in a cool, dark place for 1 month, shaking every day for the first week. After a month, strain into clean bottles.
5. Put in the freezer for several hours before serving in frozen shot glasses.

So what's this Italian liqueur got to do with the P-O? Well, nothing at all really! :-)

Wondering what to do with the lemons from your (or your neighbour's) tree? How about making some homemade Limoncello? All you need to make this Italian lemon liqueur and popular after dinner drink, are some good lemons, a bottle of vodka or eau-de-vie, and a little patience.

## DID YOU KNOW Bra là là!

The English word 'brassière' originates from the French word 'bras' for arm, and used to describe a soldier's arm guard, shield or later a military breast plate, then a woman's corset. Funnily enough, this word in French means a baby's vest or a lifebelt, while the French for bra is soutien-gorge, literally "throat-support".



## DID YOU KNOW

Asparagus. Lucky for some!

Did you know that the distinctive smell in urine after eating asparagus is believed to be due to sulphur-containing amino acids that break down during digestion? However, not all of us have a gene that enables us to smell the resulting effects on our pipi!! Lucky for some 'cos it's time for collecting wild asparagus (les asperges sauvages) in the woods of the Pyrénées-Orientales. Fern-like, spindly, and packed with flavour, they are rather good at concealing themselves amongst the briars and grasses of the undergrowth, but hunting them down can become a great day of fun-filled adventure, leading you to strange and unexplored places. Take them home, blanch them for a few seconds, add a little olive oil, salt, and pepper, et Robert est ton oncle! C'est délicieux! However, eat immediately as they deteriorate and become 'stringy' within 24 hours unless refrigerated.

Low in calories and sodium, a source of folic acid, potassium, vitamins K and A, and dietary fibre, a natural diuretic, reducing swelling and water retention and recommended for its detox, anti-aging and aphrodisiac qualities - wow! What a superhero!



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MARTIN BAILEY  
MÉLANGEUR DE SAVEURS

## Pop the Bubbles

**Sabler le champagne**  
to taste the champagne

**Sabrer le champagne**  
to open a bottle of champagne.

**NE confondez pas ces deux termes!**

«**Sabler le champagne**»  
veut dire déguster.  
L'expression vient de l'époque où on mettait la bouteille de champagne dans du sable mouillé pour le garder au frais.

«**Sabrer le champagne**»  
veut dire ouvrir la bouteille d'un coup sec à l'aide d'un sabre. L'expression vient d'une tradition russe où les officiers du tsar ouvraient les bouteilles de champagne en grandes pompes.

**Voici quelques règles de base à respecter pour ouvrir une bouteille de champagne si vous n'avez pas de sabre!**

1. Evitez de secouer la bouteille avant l'ouverture.
2. Inclinez la bouteille à 45°, dégagez la boucle de la capsule.
3. Tournez le bouchon légèrement en le tenant fermement par sa partie supérieure et débouchez tout doucement en tournant le bas de la bouteille.

**ET FAITES ATTENTION :**  
un bouchon de champagne incontrôlé peut atteindre une vitesse de près de 50km/h !!!

Ne confondez pas / **don't confuse**  
veut dire / **means**  
déguster / **taste/enjoy**  
l'époque / **period (of time)**  
mouillé / **wet**  
garder au frais / **keep it cool**  
coup sec / **in one go**  
en grandes pompes / **with much ceremony**  
Evitez / **avoid**  
secouer / **shake**  
dégagez / **remove**  
bouchon / **cork**  
en le tenant / **holding it**  
partie supérieure / **top end**  
débouchez - **uncork**  
tout doucement / **gently**  
Plus.....plus.... / **the more...the more....**  
on renonce / **you give up on..**  
saveur / **flavour**  
atteindre / **reach**

**BON À SAVOIR :**

Plus il y a du bruit à l'ouverture de la bouteille, plus on renonce à la saveur du champagne!

**BOON!**



This light-hearted account of a recent spate of burglaries in the Albères is nevertheless a true story; these signs could be left around your gateway by organised crime gangs. And burglaries are not just restricted to night-time.

**PLEASE BE VIGILANT.**

# Burglary in the Albères

## The Blue Cross Code

By Lesley McLaren

*It was a winter's night, those wee small hours when all is still and there's nowt about but owls, rats, cats and ... cat burglars.*

*I was in bed, dead to the world until my dog heard something move in the garden, sending him hurtling from basket to patio doors, baying for blood.*

*Beast or human? Closed shutters precluded surreptitious tweaking of curtains. I gave it a few moments before venturing out – dog first. If attacked, I would throw open my dressing gown. Better than a taser.*

*It was still dark, but thanks to the streetlight I could see the front gate – wide open – and a small white van driving away. Uh-oh.*

*A tour of the garden revealed the door to the tool shed was open as well. Dammit, they'd only gone and nicked the lawnmower!*

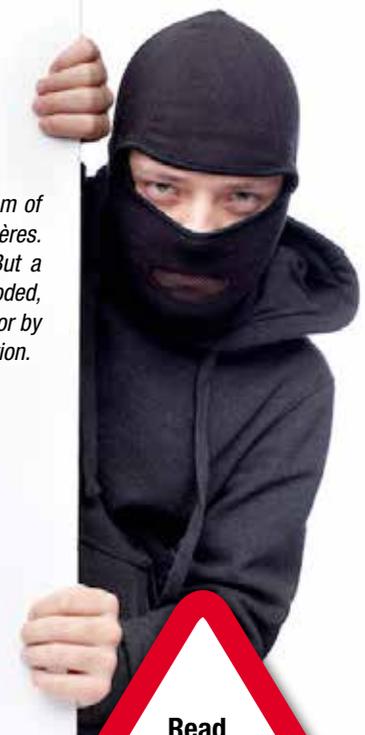
*Once it was light, I did a kind of Spot the Difference exercise around the house, and discovered a blue cross, chalked on the street side of our letterbox.*

*X marks the spot? Spooky. Even spookier to tour the estate and find the same mark on someone else's letterbox.*

*Their shed had been broken into, but nothing stolen. And my lawnmower was later found in a neighbour's garden, where the thieves had dumped it and run, in fear of my hysterical dog.*

*Not everyone was so lucky. The police confirmed that a team of burglars had been on an overnight spree throughout the Albères. They couldn't tell me what the blue cross might mean. But a neighbour could; she gave me a whole list of signs, decoded, which could be left outside your front gate in chalk, pebbles or by other means, to inform potential burglars of your home situation.*

	PROJET DE CAMBRICLAGE worth breaking in	VOIE LIBRE easy	
	4 OU 5 PIÈCES À VISITER several rooms	MAISON INOCCUPÉE occupied	
	IL Y A DE L'ARGENT cash	FEMMES SEULES woman alone	
	DANGER, À ÉVITER avoid	3 ENFANTS 2 FEMMES 1 HOMME	
	ATTENTION AU CHIEN dog	MAISON D'UN REPRÉSENTANT DE L'AUTORITÉ lawman!	
	POLICE VIGILENTE police surveillance	RIEN À PRENDRE, RIEN INTÉRESSANT not worth it	
	ATTENTION AUX VOISINS neighbours	INUTILE D'ENTRER	
	OU ALARME	RISQUE DE SE FAIRE PRENDRE, DANGER risky	
	RISQUE DE SE FAIRE PRENDRE, DANGER risky	MAISON DÉJÀ CAMBRIOLÉE already visited	



Read Lesley's detailed account of the burglary and police followup by visiting our web site on [www.anglophone-direct.com](http://www.anglophone-direct.com) and searching for Burglary in the Albères

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## at the Forteresse de Salses

Where French Catalonia melts into the Aude, the Forteresse de Salses, imposing and beautiful château, squats on the strip of land between the Corbières hills and the Leucate lagoon.

Standing on the Roman-built Via Domitia, sunk deep into the red clay earth, its defensive moat guarding the border, the château was of vital strategic importance to both French and Spanish in the XV century. It was the original northern frontier post of the Spanish Kingdom of Aragon, and had been under attack by the Arabs and French for centuries.



Taken by the French in 1639, recaptured by the Spaniards in 1640, retaken by the French, returned once more to Spain in 1642, it was finally handed back to France in 1659, with the signing of the Treaty of the Pyrenees.

Partially restored by Vauban, it became a state prison, housing the unfortunate lady poisoners of Louis XIV's court, before they began their life sentences in Fort Liberia, Villefranche de Conflent (another of Vauban's masterpieces).

Too sturdy and costly to destroy, it survived the centuries and was classified a Monument Historique in 1886.

**Massive walls, up to 10 metres thick, drawbridges and a huge central courtyard capable of sheltering 1200 men and 300 horses, remain.**

Considered a prime example of the transition from medieval castle to modern fortress, the Forteresse de Salses provides a fascinating glimpse into military history and architecture, with an interesting guided tour in several languages available – or just a stroll round the outer walls.



# OUT for THE DAY...

## at the Forteresse de Salses

...

Concerts, workshops, historical reenactments and events take place regularly at this imposing venue; there is a gift and bookshop...and there are even some very un-medieval vending machines for the peckish!

And to finish off a rather special day out, how about wine tasting at the Caveau du Château, Arnaud de Villeneuve, near the entrance, followed by a short drive to the oyster beds of Leucate?



Some of freshest and plumpest oysters around, ideally accompanied by a chilled glass of crisp local white wine, will make your day!

### GETTING THERE

Plenty of free parking out of season, including disabled, or take a bus (nbr 135 Perpignan-Salses line) or a train from Perpignan to Salses-le-château station, and enjoy the 15-minute walk to the fort.

Admission 7.50 (free for U25s)

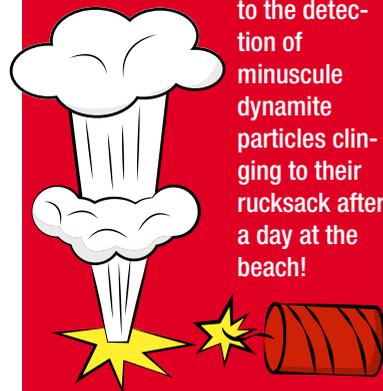
[www.forteresse-salses.fr](http://www.forteresse-salses.fr)



*Keep an eye out for National Heritage days when entrance is free.*

### Anything to declare?

Visitors to Paulilles bay, next to the former Nobel dynamite factory, have on occasion been stopped at airport security on their way out of the country, due



to the detection of minuscule dynamite particles clinging to their rucksack after a day at the beach!

### DID YOU KNOW



### All for one...

Rumour has it that the famous d'Artagnan was amongst the King's musketeers protecting Louis XIII in 1642 when he lay siege to Collioure and the Château Royal, and occupied the hills overlooking the town. It seems the dashing hero was also a bit of a wine connoisseur because, in 'The Three Musketeers', Alexandre Dumas tells how the musketeers 'were engaged in enjoying an enormous demi-john of Collioure wine'.

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# READERS PHOTOS

thank you readers!!

Some great winter photos from around the P-O. We love seeing them so please do keep 'em coming!



Robin salley



Noam Eshkol



Peter spencer



Nick Hunt



steve Bumphrey



Rhona Hazell



Marie Jenkins

# OUT for THE DAY...



## in Eus

Short name, small village, but it is instantly clear why medieval Eus is included in the national list of *Les Plus Beaux Villages de France*.



**T**his once-fortified village, built into terraces on a granite hill, played its part in defending the Franco-Spanish borders – on both sides! Ironically, after pushing back the French in the 16th Century when the village was under Spanish rule, it went on to repel the Spanish in the 18th Century when it became French territory once again! Bilingual language skills a necessity over those troubled years I would think! There is still a subtle Spanish flavour to the narrow, be-flowered, cobble streets joined by ancient vaulted passageways, many with Catalan names.

You might start your exploring at the top of this pyramid shaped, pedestrian only village, where narrow alleys between old village houses lead to the imposing 18th Century church of St Vincent, perched on a rocky peak. Built into the ruins of the original defensive Château



In the lower village, you can visit the 13th century Romanesque chapel, its porch crafted in pink marble from Villefranche de Conflent, or take a number of easy walks through olive groves and cork oak forests.

de la Volta by the villagers, the few wealthy citizens contributed money to the construction, whilst others provided the work. It is said that women worked as builders' labourers, moving the huge granite blocks from which it was constructed, and suffering 21 miscarriages and 7 deaths as a result. It has a Baroque Altar by Sunyer and several altarpieces dating from the 17th - 19th century.

Take a walk around the old ramparts for panoramic views of the Conflent Valley – and maybe your hit of winter sunshine. After all, Eus is said to be the sunniest village in France!

Wind your way down through the pretty cobbled streets, passing artisans and artists, gift shop, herbalist, small museum, bar/restaurant... reminding us that today the village is a charming tourist attraction.



However, in the past, it was very much a working village – but only the men were paid to work. The women and children received payment in kind: food from the land, which they would use to feed their families or sell in Prades market – a 4km walk away.



P-O

# NATURALLY



## Look Close for Signs of Life in Winter

By Lesley McLaren

You're out for a bracing country walk with friends, catching up on gossip and raging at a world gone mad. Apart from you, all is quiet and still; there are no signs of life. Or are there? Sometimes it can be interesting and fun to try a form of "conscious walking": to play detective, hunting for insights into the plants and animals that share our beautiful landscape.



To do it well, it's vital to cut the chat and actively deploy your senses – especially sight and hearing. Stop frequently, sniff the air, listen and really see. Ignore the view for a change. Instead, zoom in on that rock over there, on this branch or leaf. Take a closer look at a cobweb, a crevice, a dewdrop or patch of frost.

Check out the fifty shades of green on moss- and lichen-covered stony banks above the path. Zoom

in even more to their intricate patterns. What do they feel like? Do they smell of anything? Notice how other plants – shrivelled to a crisp in summer – are flourishing now in nooks and crannies that never see the sun in winter.

And as for those holes you've walked past but failed to notice before – what might live in them? Rodents? Hibernating snakes?



Weather conditions can vary dramatically between January and the end of March, making plants and animals respond accordingly. But with each warmer, sunny spell, birds will get chirpier. And in wooded areas it's worth standing still and listening, not just for song, but for birds at work: the faint tap-tap-tap of a nuthatch (*sittelle torchepot*) or drumming of a woodpecker (*pic*).

What about the trees themselves? Notice – and why not touch? – the shapes and textures of different species. Look for signs of what might visit and live on or in them.

Cork oaks (*chênes lièges*) especially, have many stories to tell. It's not just humans that find uses for them.



Even this dead tree has become home to fungi.

### DID YOU KNOW

Lichens are part fungi, part bacteria and/or algae. In return for nutrients they shade their smaller partners from strong, drying sunlight.



They make an ideal clamp. So much easier to dig out an acorn's soft centre when it's wedged in tight. What creature does this? The nuthatch.



And someone likes to hack away cork bark. Who and why? Kids, messing about? Too high up. Woodpeckers? Maybe, but my money is on nuthatches again, looking for insects.

Cork trunks make good scratching posts – for what? Something big: Wild boar (*sangliers*)



P-O

# NATURALLY



Boar also enjoy a bath of course. Off the beaten track, you might find a wallow.

Over the years, the bank at the back of this popular spa has been rubbed smooth.



And where there's mud, there may be footprints.



Heavy male boar can leave a deep imprint, including dewclaw marks at the back, as here.

Below, the print of a badger (*blaireau*) is fairly square, with 4 long claw marks. Whereas that of a fox (*renard*) (see faint print on the left) is more like a dog, except for the 2 very close, longer middle toes and corresponding claws.



And, if you're near a river, check out any damp ground along the banks: birds, coypu (*ragondins*) or even otters (*loutres*) may have passed by.

Otter prints are broad and curved; it's easy to imagine those webbed toes.



Otters also leave smelly droppings (spraint) on rocks. You may not even have to probe with a stick, to spot fragments of shell or fishbone!

In dry spells there might be few signs of mammals above ground. But if it's not too frosty there may be tunnellers abroad.



It looks as though a mole (*taupe d'Europe*) has created an underpass to cross this track.

Moles can dig up to 5.5m an hour, and eat 22kg of worms a year (as well as ants, spiders and grubs)!

Focusing above your feet again, all is not just green and brown at this time of year. As well as the highly scented yellow mimosa (*mimosa d'hiver*) and white almond blossom (*amandier*), look for splashes of colour from the likes of gorse (*ajoncs*), broom (*genêt à balais*), lavender (*lavande*), sloe (*épine noire*), and hollow-stemmed asphodel (*asphodèle fistuleux*).



A conscious walk in winter can find many signs of life around us, and make us wonder... It can also be a kind of meditation – an uplifting distraction from our own lives.



Lesley McLaren is one of "The Warblers" - a group of natural history enthusiasts based in the P-O. Photos by "The Warblers" unless otherwise stated.

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

Twitter @66warblers

# POET Life

## Conflent

by Norman Longworth

Land of high mountains,  
land blessed by sun  
Land of deep valleys  
where wild creatures run  
Land of antiquity, smooth  
age-worn stone  
Land of wild beauty,  
nature's royal throne

Land where the eagles  
heavenwards soar  
Land of the hiker, the  
hunter, the boar  
Land of migration the  
avian fleet  
Seeking escape to the sun's  
radiant heat

Land of great moment  
where time's tranquil  
crawl  
Reveals its rich past on  
each weathered wall  
Land of fine churches  
with rare baroque treasure  
Soaking man's senses in  
cerebral pleasure

Land of great music in  
abbey and hall  
Where once Pau Casals  
played his cello to all  
Land of grand festivals  
every saint's day  
Where villagers party  
the sweet night away

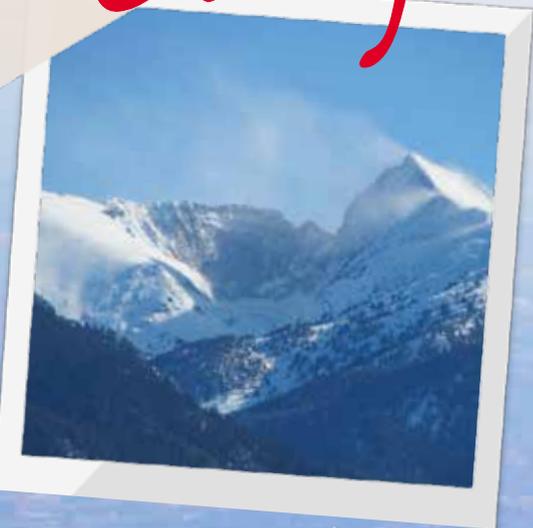
Land of brave Eus, a  
village of art  
An exquisite vision that  
quickens the heart  
Land of the Canigou,  
mountain sublime  
Sacred in Catalan folklore  
through time

Land of bold Vernet where  
Kipling once strode  
There where the hot  
healing waters still flowed  
Land of old Villefranche,  
Vauban's true delight  
Now a UNESCO World  
Heritage site

This is the Conflent  
a true paradise  
A land with a value  
beyond any price  
Land of great beauty  
where magic doth roam  
This is the Conflent -  
that now is our home



For more information about this wonderful land download 'The Conflent Tales' Vols 1 and 2 (same author) onto your kindle or kindle app.



FROM PECKHAM  
to  
P-O



French à la

'ONLY FOOLS  
and HORSES'



Del Boy Trotter, wheeler, dealer, charmer...and linguist!!! ???  
We take a look back at his own special brand of the French language!

Au revoir – **hello**

Au contraire – **hang on a minute**

Bain marie - **no problem**

Boeuf à la mode - **you win some, you lose some**

Bonjour - **goodbye**

Bonnet de douche – **impressive!**

Chateaufort du Pape! - **OMG!**

Crème de la menthe - **the very best**

Fromage frais! - **Eureka!**

Mange tout - **my pleasure**

Menage à trois - **to express surprise.**

Oeuf sur la plat - **it's obvious**

Pas de Calais – **to express approval**

Pot Pourri! - **I don't believe it!**

Plume de ma tante – **to express exasperation**

Tête de veau - **every one's a winner.**

...and a bit more fun from the Trotter brothers

**Del:** One of my most favourite meals is Duck à l'Orange, but I don't know how to say that in French.

**Rodney:** It's canard.

**Del:** You can say that again bruv!

DID YOU KNOW



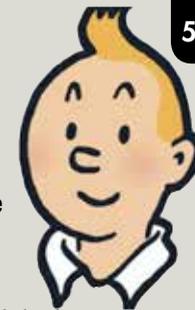
GREAT SNAKES - IT'S TINTIN!

Did you ever read Tintin? Maybe you still do...or have children or grandchildren who follow the adventures of the intrepid reporter-turned-explorer and his faithful dog Snowy, (or Milou in the French edition).

Les Aventures de Tintin, a series of 24 comic books first created by Belgian cartoonist Hergé in the 1920s, was actually one of the most popular European comics of the 20th century.

**And Tintin-mania is back again!**

Hergé died in 1983, after selling around 230m Tintin books. Original Tintin comic book drawings have been fetching millions at auctions in recent years, and at the end of 2016, an original 50cm x 35cm drawing in Chinese ink from Explorers on the Moon has sold for a record €1.55m in a Paris auction. It shows Tintin, Snowy, and Captain Haddock walking on the moon wearing spacesuits and looking at Earth.



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## British Bank Accounts for French residents



French residents can now open a UK bank account without a British address, according to new legislation. Whilst a British bank may still refuse, they must now give an explanation – which cannot be because of residency abroad. Not all the English banks have confirmed that they will go along with this new ruling.

## Your Right to Vote

Until recently, you had to have registered to vote in the UK in the last 15 years to be eligible to vote in UK Parliamentary general elections and European Parliamentary elections. However, in the name of democracy, the UK government plans to lift this ban on expats who have been out of the country for more than 15 years, and allow them their vote.

**Long-standing expats living abroad will now be able to register and vote in the 2020 British General Election.**



Things You Might Need to Know



## Under 26?

Did you know that most galleries and national heritage sites are **free for under 26s**, including some of the most famous, such as the Louvre in Paris!

## You can Bank on it!



As if French bank charges don't already make our eyes water, 2017 will see some quite substantial rises, with the charge for the privilege of using a debit card rising by about 3 percent, and drawing out money from a cash machine other than your own bank rising by 4.5 percent. Ouch!

## Our P-O Paradise

There are approximately 5 break-ins or attempted break-ins per 1,000 homes per day in the P-O! Shocking n'est-ce pas? If you go away, make sure you close your shutters. Some insurance companies may not pay out if shutters have not been secured, or if specific types of locks and alarms have not been fitted. **Check the small print!**

## OUI AU PAYS CATALAN? Contact your Mairie

The group 'Oui au pays catalan' ask you to help to keep the region's Catalan identity by writing to your local mairie and asking for them to put up a 'Pays Catalan' sign next to the entrance of your town or village – if it doesn't have one already.

Available on their website is a model letter. <http://ouiaupayscatalan.com/> They ask that you adapt it to your commune, date, sign and take to the mairie.

## Just a little prick...



I know... same old title, same old content every year...but it's worth repeating. Flu can be serious and it is easily prevented.

Buy your vaccine at the chemist for around 7 euros (note that the usual percentage is still reimbursed by the state), and make an appointment with a local doctor, nurse or vet (joking) to administer it. Anybody can do this.

Particularly recommended for over-65s and those with health problems that could make them more vulnerable. They should receive a letter, along with a 'prise en charge' voucher, for free vaccination. If this is the first time, see your doctor beforehand, to ensure sure that the vaccine is suitable for you.

## Calculating your Notaire Fees

Here's a useful website to help you to calculate the 'frais de notaire' or solicitor's fees.

Visit [www.immobilier.notaires.fr](http://www.immobilier.notaires.fr) and type in the following information:

- property type (old, new, plot of land...)
- department where property is located
- purchase price
- loan with or without mortgage

The calculations fit most situations and also help you to better understand (and therefore feel less hostile towards) the distribution of costs, clarifying sums that are collected on behalf of the state, and the actual payment to the solicitor.

## Supermarket Loyalty Card - use it or lose it!

Next time you shop at your local supermarket, check whether there is a deadline for using your points. (*Y a-t-il une date limite pour encaisser les points de ma carte de fidélité?*)

If you have a loyalty card, don't forget to cash it in before the end of December (Carrefour – too late now if you haven't already done it) or end of February (Intermarché) or else you will lose all.

**A friendly cashier may remind you that it is time to 'use it or lose it' but don't count on it!**





# LA RETIRADA

a period in the history of the P-O that should  
**NEVER BE FORGOTTEN.**



Dictionary definition  
*Retirada* (catalan) - withdrawal of troops to a more favourable position to escape the enemy's superior forces, or after a defeat.

**On the 5th February 1939, as Franco's troops advanced towards Figueras, nearly half a million Spanish Republican civilians and soldiers fled the newly declared fascist government, crossing into France via the frontier towns of Cerbère, Le Perthus, Coustouges, Puigcerda, Prats-de-Mollo.....**



“We had been fighting for freedom from Fascism for three years. We expected to be given a hero's welcome”



Seeking asylum and shelter, around 60,000 men were herded into internment camps on the beach at Argelès-sur-Mer, behind barbed wire fences, supervised by 'Gardes Mobiles' (a special branch of the gendarmerie) and brutal Senegalese troops. There was no protection from freezing temperatures and biting winds. There was no water, no sanitation and little food. Most men slept in holes dug in the ground. The weaker died of

exposure and were buried where they lay. Similar internment camps soon followed at St Cyprien and Le Barcarès. Unspeakable squalour, food and water shortage, dysentery, rat-infested conditions.....

Women and children were initially sent to accommodation centres, many more men were refused entry and gathered in miserable huddles in the Spanish border towns.





Others returned, willingly or by force, to Franco's 'new Spain', to be met by harsh reprisals against Franco's former enemies; persecution, prison, torture and death.

Many were later moved to designated "concentration camps" spread over the South of France. Bram (west of Carcassonne), Agde, Vernet in the Ariège, and Rivesaltes. Following the German occupation, they were joined by other 'undesirables' including East European Jews and gypsies. Thousands were exterminated in the Nazi gas chambers.

Still others, despite their treatment in France, joined the French Resistance and, as "Guerilleros Espagnols", contributed substantially to the Liberation in 1944.

A third of the Languedoc-Roussillon's present-day population are descendants of these Spanish refugees.



MUM/E

Museu Memorial  
de l'Exili



**Retirada Museum -  
another side to La Jonquera**  
In the centre of the old village,  
near the church, the Exile  
Memorial Museum (MUME),  
is a poignant reminder of the  
Retirada, a place for 'memory,  
history and critical reflection'.  
Distressing photos and  
original footage of crowded  
beaches, the wreckage of  
emaciated bodies piled up  
in concentration camps,  
eye witness drawings and  
paintings of desperation and  
despair, lists of names of the  
dead and disappeared, .... you  
will not come away unmoved.



**Why not visit the small expo Memorial of the Argeles-sur-Mer camp, at Chateau Valmy, on the first floor of the espace Jules Pams?**

Large panels explain the Civil war in French, Spanish, and Catalan with maps, interactive timeline, and an interesting look at the way in which the media covered this highly publicized conflict. Lights create atmosphere and explanatory panels hang from the beams, historical frescos, television documentaries and works of art (sculptures, paintings) showing the pitiful living conditions in the camp.



# Airport news...

with John Fairclough



As the details of winter season flights available have not changed significantly from those in the Autumn edition of P-O Life, I thought instead I would examine the rather sparse transport possibilities to and from our local airports. Please bear in mind that details, particularly public transport prices, vary wildly, depending on the day of the week, how far in advance you book and the route chosen, so please contact the various websites for up-to-date detailed information.



## PERPIGNAN [www.aeroport-perpignan.com](http://www.aeroport-perpignan.com)

**BUS/TRAIN:** The airport bus from Perpignan railway station takes about 20 mins and runs regularly from app 06.30 to 19.30 Mon to Sat, with a much reduced service on Sundays and Holidays.

**TAXI:** 3 taxi firms have the right to use the forecourt at Perpignan airport. Prices average about £2,50 per km, so fares for single trips to coastal resorts and the Albères/Vallespir can be eye-watering!

**CAR:** PGF is north of the city near Rivesaltes. Since the recent modernisation, parking supply is ample and costs 40€ per week.



## CARCASSONNE [www.aeroport-carcassonne.com](http://www.aeroport-carcassonne.com)

**BUS/TRAIN:** you can travel to Carcassonne railway station from almost any station in P-O, but must usually change at Narbonne. From Carcassonne, there is a shuttle bus that individually connects with each flight departure and arrival. Single fare 5€.

**CAR:** The airport is right by jcn 23 of the A61 autoroute. There are 3 car parks: short, medium and long stay, and a week in the latter costs 40€.



## BEZIERS [www.beziers-aeroport.fr](http://www.beziers-aeroport.fr)

**BUS/TRAIN:** All trains from P-O stations to Montpellier and beyond stop at Beziers. From there, there is a shuttle bus that individually connects with each departing and arriving flight. Single fare 1€60.

**CAR:** the airport is close to jcn 35 of the A9 autoroute. There is ample parking right next to the terminal and costs 40€ per week.



## GIRONA

[www.aena.es/en/girona-costa-brava-airport](http://www.aena.es/en/girona-costa-brava-airport)

**BUS/TRAIN:** local company, Perpicat offers a twice-daily minibus service to Girona airport from the PO coastal resorts, Perpignan and Le Boulou direct. Advance booking essential on [www.perpicat.com](http://www.perpicat.com).

**Fares 25€ single.** Spanish coach firm Sagales run an hourly airport shuttle service to/from Girona railway station.

**CAR:** The airport is right by jcn 8 of the AP7 autopista. Several car parking companies exist both on and off the airport, and the official on-airport car park do regular promotions. For example, at the time of writing, a prebooked stay of 7 to 20 days costs a flat 42€.



## BARCELONA

**TRAIN:** The new Barcelona Metro line L9 now serves both Terminal 1 and 2 but only from stations south of the city so is of limited use if coming from PO. The suburban train R2 Nord runs from Sants station in the city every half hour, but serves only T2. As regards accessing Barcelona by rail from PO, there are 4 trains to/from Perpignan daily direct to Sants station, but unfortunately the earliest of these arrives Sants at 12.38 and the latest departs Sants at 16.45. A better bet is Figueras Vilafant (AVE) station which offers a virtually hourly service to Sants from 06.30 to 21.00 daily.

**BUS:** The Aerobus runs from the Plaza de Catalunya in Barcelona city centre all day every 5 minutes to Terminal 1 and every 10 mins to Terminal 2. Perpicat (see Girona listings) run one morning service direct to Barcelona airport at a single fare of 50€. There is a free green shuttle bus between terminals.

**CAR:** Barcelona airport is on the south of the city just off the C31 autovia. I find that, generally, easiest access is via the AP7 toll road, continuing round the city onto the A2 autovia as far as the C31. Reckon on 2h15 mins from Le Boulou. Once there, parking options are vast. As a rule of thumb, the nearer the airport terminal, the more you'll pay, but even at popular times you should need to pay no more than 8€ per day. I recommend looking at the official airport site, as there are often deals and promotions. For example at the time of writing prebooked up to 20 day stays in the main T1 multi storey just 3 minutes walk from the terminal were only 75€! Another option, particularly if you are catching an early flight is using one of the 4 local hotels that offer free shuttle buses direct to the terminals. You can leave your car free by the hotel, and usually rooms are available booking in advance for about 70€. Try [www.booking.com](http://www.booking.com) for details.

## PERPICAT

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As I've stressed in this article, pre-booking tends to save you money, so a little pre-planning and flexibility usually pays dividends. But console yourself with the thought that, generally, transport and parking costs are a lot cheaper here than in the UK, where I've regularly paid more for my journey from East Anglia to Stansted than for the air ticket from Stansted to Perpignan!

And an update of flights from/to CARCASSONNE & PERPIGNAN for 2017 from *Dimitri Sindres*, dynamic development manager for both airports.

## PERPIGNAN

2 routes in Winter 2016/2017 :

### AIR FRANCE / HOP!

> Paris-Orly 3 to 4 flights/day

### RYANAIR

> Brussels-Charleroi 2 flights/week Tue/Sat.

10 routes in Summer 2017 :

### AIR FRANCE / HOP!

> Paris-Orly 4 flights/day

### RYANAIR

- > London-Stansted 4 flights/week Tue/Thu/Sat/Sun - up to 8 weekly in August
- > Birmingham 2 flights/week Tue/Sat. NEW flights to Birmingham will operate throughout the Summer from March, 28th to October, 28th 2017
- > Brussels-Charleroi 3 flights/week Tue/Thu/Sat

### AER LINGUS

> Dublin 4 flights/week Tue/Thu/Sat/Sun from April, 25th 2017

### FLYBE

> Southampton 1 flight/week Sat from May, 28th to September, 3th 2017

### VOLOTEA

> Nantes 2 flights/week Mon/Fri from April, 7th 2017

### CHALAIR AVIATION

> Ajaccio 1 flight/week Sat from May, 13th 2017

### CHALAIR AVIATION

- > Limoges NEW 1 flight/week Sun from May, 14th 2017
- > Metz/Nancy 1 flight/week Sun from May, 14th 2017



## STOP PRESS

**New route -**  
Perpignan to London Southend in 2017 with Flybe (Thursday & Sunday from 25th May to 24th September)

## CARCASSONNE

5 routes in Winter 2016/2017:

### RYANAIR

- > London-Stansted 3 flights/week Tue/Thu/Sat,
- > Dublin 2 flights/week Fri/Sun
- > Manchester 2 flights/week Mon/Fri,
- > Brussels-Charleroi 6 flights/week everyday except Wed

### ATLAS ATLANTIQUE AIRLINES

> Oran 1 flight/week Sun.

8 routes in Summer 2017:

### RYANAIR

- > London-Stansted 7 flights/week up to 10 weekly in August,
- > Dublin 3 flights/week Tue/Thu/Sat up to 5 weekly in June/July Tue/Wed/Thu/Sat/Sun,
- > East-Midlands 3 flights/week Mon/Wed/Fri.
- > Manchester 2 flights/week Mon/Fri up to 3 weekly from May to September Mon/Wed/Fri,
- > Glasgow 2 flights/week Wed/Sat,
- > Cork 2 flights/week Wed/Sun in June/July/August
- > Brussels-Charleroi 7 flights/week up to 8 weekly in July/August
- > Porto 2 flights/week Wed/Sun.



## THE AIRPORT

Airline - une compagnie aérienne  
Terminal - une aéroport  
Departures - les départs  
Arrivals - les arrivées  
Check-in - l'enregistrement  
Boarding - l'embarquement  
Duty-free - la boutique hors taxes  
Security check - contrôle de sécurité  
Gate - une porte (d'embarquement)  
Runway - la piste

## Some verbs

To take-off/a take-off - décoller/un décollage  
To land/a landing - atterrir/ un atterrissage  
To board - embarquer  
To disembark - débarquer  
To check in luggage - enregistrer (les bagages)

## You might be asked about...

Plane ticket - le billet d'avion  
Boarding pass - la carte d'embarquement  
Hand luggage - bagage à main

## USEFUL PHRASES

How long is the flight? - Combien de temps dure le vol?  
I just have one piece of hand luggage. - J'ai seulement un bagage à main  
How much is the flight delayed? - Le vol a combien de retard?  
Why is the flight cancelled/delayed? - Pourquoi le vol est-il annulé/retardé?

Many of us have had to spread our wings a little further over the past few years to find suitable flights back to the UK.

If you're lucky, once you get to the airport, there isn't really that much to say: hand over your boarding pass, glide through security (if you're not wearing an underwired bra), and settle down with a large G&T to await take-off. However, sometimes it doesn't all run quite so smoothly, particularly in winter, and it's useful to have a bit of local lingo to find out what's going on.

## People

Air-traffic controller - contrôleurs aériens  
Baggage handler - un bagagiste  
Crew - L'équipage  
Pilot - pilote  
Flight attendants - hôtesse/stewards

## Your flight might be....

on time - A l'heure  
delayed - Retardé  
cancelled - Annulé  
arrived - Arrivé  
landed - Atterri

## You might also need...

An aisle seat - un siège (du côté) couloir  
A window seat - Un siège (du côté) hublot  
A shuttle - une navette  
A stopover - une escale  
A table tray - la tablette

Keep an eye on **P-O Life website** for updates once other routes are on sale.

*Bon Voyage! Dimitri*



## CATALAN DRAGONS

# a great afternoon's entertainment



Rémi Casty

British fans travel to Perpignan regularly from Castleford, Huddersfield, Hull, Leeds, Leigh, Salford, St Helens, Wakefield, Widnes and Wigan for the highly competitive Super League. The Catalan Dragons are the only French team amongst the 12 clubs, and bring a flash of French flair and sunshine into the toughest Rugby League competition in the Northern Hemisphere.

A great afternoon's entertainment, brilliant atmosphere, friendly, expectant buzz, fans aged from 2 to 82..... old hands and rugby virgins alike will all be welcomed.

**Go along and watch a game. You won't be disappointed!**



Fouad Yaha



Vincent Dupont



Jason Baitieri



Louis Anderson



Yaha and Albert celebrate a try



Bousquet offload to Justin Horo



Tony Gigot



## The Boars are Back in Town

It may sound a little like a song you once knew but it's true. Wild boar have been spotted in Perpignan, Céret, and more recently paddling and cavorting on the beach at Banyuls-sur-Mer amidst other, less hairy bathers, as well as snuffling around the Emergency department in the centre of Barcelona!

There is also daily evidence of their presence in gardens, school playgrounds and sports complexes around the region as more and more land is made 'constructible' and their terrain is slowly whittled down by man.

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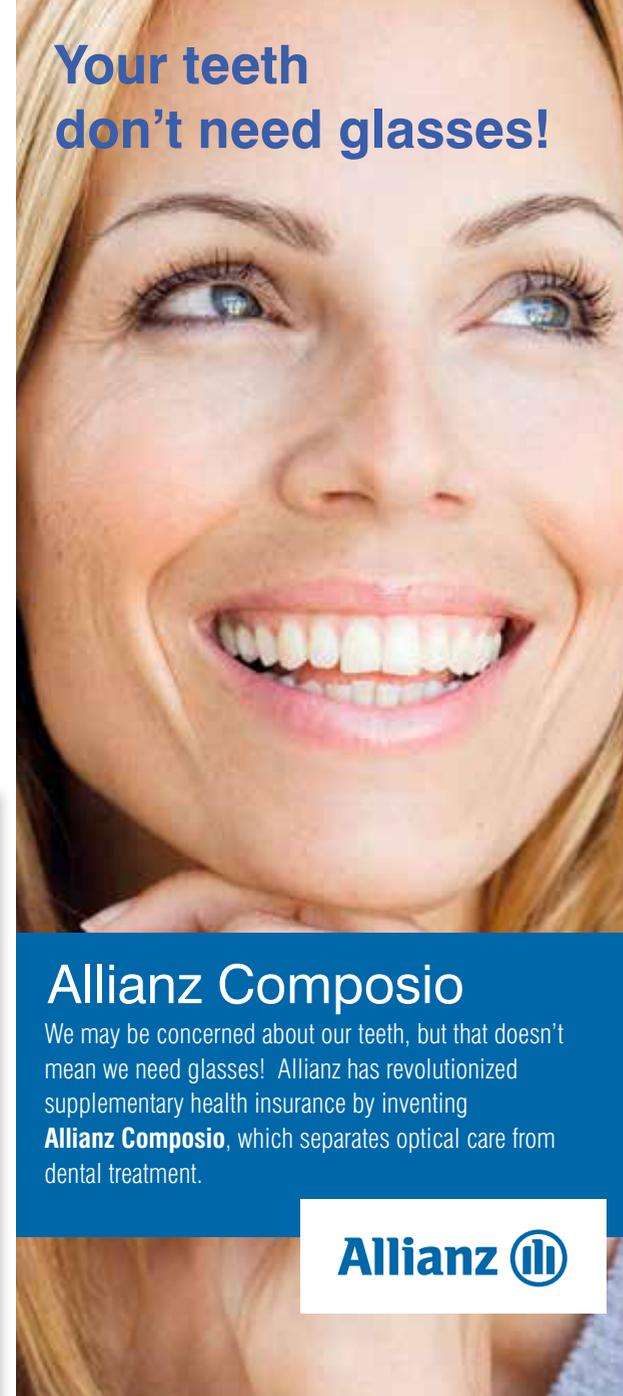
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For the full Super League list of fixtures, go to [www.catalansdragons.com](http://www.catalansdragons.com)

Your teeth  
don't need glasses!



## Allianz Composio

We may be concerned about our teeth, but that doesn't mean we need glasses! Allianz has revolutionized supplementary health insurance by inventing **Allianz Composio**, which separates optical care from dental treatment.

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## COME ON GAÏETÉ, LIGHT MY FIRE

This family business of mother, father and son has installed fires in the P-O since 1989. Son, Nicolas is the youngest person to have the 'Qualibois' qualification in France – so between them, what they don't know about choosing and installing stoves just isn't worth knowing!

### THEY MIGHT ASK...

Quel est le volume à chauffer ?  
**What is the size of the area you need to heat?**  
 Quelle est l'utilité ?  
**What is the purpose?**

### VOU LEZ-VOUS... Do you want ...

...un foyer en fonte ou en briques ?  
**... a cast iron finish or brick-effect around the fire?**  
 ...un chauffage de fond ou un chauffage principal ?  
**... background heat or main heating?**

### VOUS VOU LEZ... You want ...

... quel type de poêle ?  
**(Bois, granulé de bois, gaz ou bioéthanol)**  
**...what type of wood burner?**  
**(Wood, wood pellets, gas or ethanol)**  
 ...quel style de poêle ? (Acier noir/gris, finition en verre ou en céramique)  
**...what style?**  
**(Black/grey steel, glass or ceramic)**  
 ...quel type de cheminée ? (Moderne, rustique)  
**...what type of fireplace? (Contemporary, rustic)**

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## P-O SMALL ADS

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### TO LET

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Three bedroom villa with large heated pool, and breath taking scenery. High quality furnishings, contemporary and uncluttered style. Exclusive use of the pool, terraces and gardens.

<http://ceretholidays.co.uk/>



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A one-off opportunity to acquire this prestige, privately owned villa, occupying one of the best positions on the "La Pinede" luxury development. Built in 2007 and used solely as a holiday home by one family, this villa has never been rented and is in tip-top condition throughout. Peaceful, open aspect, approx 40m<sup>2</sup> managed garden fenced on all sides. Facing communal swimming pool (approx 20m x 6m) and within walking distance of the sea, sandy beaches, Barcarès town, schools and all amenities. Accommodation comprises 3 good sized bedrooms, lounge, kitchen, bathroom, 2 w/c. Approx 90m<sup>2</sup> living space, plus approx 17m<sup>2</sup> garage and dedicated parking.

**249,000€**

**E-mail: [terrydav2005@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:terrydav2005@yahoo.co.uk)**



### FOR SALE

#### COLLIOURE

2-bedroom apartment – approx 70 m<sup>2</sup> living space. Living area, bathroom, separate WC, fitted kitchen. Large terrace and private garden both approx 19 m<sup>2</sup> each. Cellar. Private parking. In excellent condition. Small development on the Route Imperiale, just 10 minutes on foot to town centre and beaches. *Photos available on request.*

**250,000€ negotiable**

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We require a reliable and fastidious housekeeper / cleaner for our properties in Villelongue dels Monts to commence in February / March 2017. This is a permanent role - 52 weeks a year, with regular changeovers of approx 6 hours per day, mainly on Saturdays, involving interior cleaning and preparation of beds, etc. In addition, other work is available, if suitable, i.e. errands and shopping, etc.

**Please enquire with your CV or personal profile to: [roussillon@btinternet.com](mailto:roussillon@btinternet.com) or phone: + 44 1995 640 002 / + 44 7496 377 717 for further information.**

### DID YOU KNOW

## The Lion in the Square

Have you visited the pretty 'Placé des Neuf Jets' in old Céret? This historic square, in the very centre of the cobbled town, has a beautiful fountain topped by a sculpture of a lion. From the body of the lion come the water jets that give the square its name, the ninth being from the lion's mouth.

It's said that when Céret and Roussillon belonged to the Kings of Aragon and Majorca in medieval days, the lion's head faced Spain. When it became French in the 17th century, the head was turned towards France. At a later date a fight broke out between some visitors from Barcelona and some locals, which resulted in the lion being decapitated, later to be reconstructed.



**Find out more!**

**Go to Property For Sale / To Let on our website**  
[www.anglophone-direct.com](http://www.anglophone-direct.com)

# OUT for THE DAY...

...at the **Bains de Saint Thomas**

## Don't Worry, be Happy!

**S**tress relief doesn't have to come in the form of a pill. Today we're taking the N116 up into the mountains, direction Andorra, turning left on the CD28 just after Fontpédrouse, and heading for a proper treat! St Thomas les Bains, oasis of peace, awaits with its natural hot springs, (the warmest in the Pyrenees) - **the ultimate spa of natural health and beauty.**

We don't usually do much sitting around on our days out, but every now and then we all need to recharge our batteries - and this mythical and tranquil valley at the very heart of the Pyrenees is the perfect location to refresh body and mind and soothe the soul.

If you don't fancy the long drive, why not take the little yellow train to the SNCF station at Fontpédrouse, just 3km from the spa, and pick up the shuttle bus (Reservations 48h in advance).

Set within a vast stone amphitheatre, you will find steam and sauna, jacuzzis with tonifying horizontal and vertical jets, three outdoor pools with massaging jets cooled to a steady 37°C (great fun in the snow and rain), paddling pool for toddlers, a series of reasonably priced beauty and massage treatments...and a tea room (scones, crumpets and toasted teacakes not included).

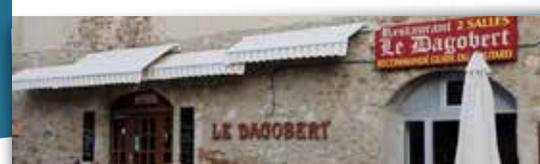
The healing powers of hot springs have been used for thousands of years as natural treatment options for various common ailments. These mineral-rich baths have been scientifically proven to detoxify; maintain soft, smooth skin; naturally relieve certain skin conditions such as eczema and psoriasis, and ease rheumatism.

In fact, soaking in highly concentrated mineral water also heats up your body temperature, killing harmful germs and viruses. As well as helping to eliminate toxins, it can increase blood flow, circulation and metabolism, as well as absorption of essential minerals. It can reduce stress, improve chronic muscle pain, arthritis or even fibromyalgia, and promote sleep. Phew! Now there's a hit list to take your breath away!

So...good for the body, good for the soul...and from only 7€ for the outdoor thermal baths, this luxurious treat will not break the bank!

Just 15 mins' drive – approx 9km from Fontpédrouse.

Did you know that the word Spa is an acronym for the Latin phrase, 'salus per aquae' meaning 'health through water'?



**A**fter a hard session of pure relaxation, why not lunch or dine at **LE DAGOBERT** down the road in the ancient fortified town of Mont Louis where you'll receive a warm welcome from Anne-Marie and team, no matter how cold it is outside. The cosy restaurant offers traditional fare in a rustic setting. Try their hearty, cheesy mountain dishes such as the famous Raclette, Tartiflette and Camembert Rôti or their all-year-round speciality 'le canard dans tous ses états!'

(8 bd Vauban, Mont-Louis, 04 68 04 14 32)

**O**r if you're heading further up the mountain to the ski slopes, you won't go wrong with lunch or dinner at **LA GRANGE** in Les Angles behind the tourist office. Hearty home-made soups, sweet and savoury pancakes, exciting regional specialities and traditional mountain cheese dishes, excellent couscous, friendly service...P-O Life 'Pick of the Mountain Restaurants' without a doubt.

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# Test your french



## Bio - organic

### FILL IN THE MISSING WORDS

- Bio est le diminutif du mot '...1...' (qui signifie "science de la vie")
- Les produits 'BIO' sont respectueux de l'...2..., du bien-être animal et de la biodiversité.
- Les aliments bio sont ...3... à partir d'ingrédients cultivés ...4... produits chimiques et sans OGM (organismes ...5... modifiés).

a produits b génétiquement c biologique d sans e environnement

Answers:  
1 c 2 e 3 a 4 b 5 d

## Résolument bio

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## Tongue twister (virelangue)

Repeat quickly three times

**Gros rat blanc, rat blanc gras, gros rat blanc gras**

## Useful Expression

**Ah, la vache**  
*Flippin' 'eck!*

## Useful word

**abonnement**  
*Subscription, season ticket...*

## Bit of a softie?

**Doux**  
*soft (gentle, pleasant, not rough) sweet (wine)*

**Mou**  
*soft (limp, weak, floppy...)*

## Don't confuse....

**je suis crevé**  
*I'm tired (knackered)!*  
**J'ai crevé**  
*I've a puncture*

## JUST TESTING TO SEE IF YOU'RE FOLLOWING!

*Ooops! We mixed up our answers in the last edition and the solutions to the idiomatic sayings in Test your French exercise 3, p82, were all over the place!! Here are the right answers!!!*

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

## 1 G pour Grand!

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

- |             |                                     |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 grenier   | a maladie contagieuse               |
| 2 gencive   | b très impoli                       |
| 3 gag       | c lumière sur une ambulance         |
| 4 galipette | d partie d'un fusil                 |
| 5 guêpe     | e espace sous le toit               |
| 6 grippe    | f roulade avant                     |
| 7 grossier  | g petite scène drôle                |
| 8 gyrophare | h insecte volant avec dard venimeux |
| 9 gamelle   | i chair rose à la base des dents    |
| 10 gâchette | j bol pour nourrir le chien         |

## 2 What's afoot?

Can you find the English equivalents of these French expressions which all use the word 'pied'?

- |                                   |                           |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 Je n'ai pas pied                | a Very badly              |
| 2 Comme un pied                   | b It's great fun          |
| 3 Prends ton pied                 | c Literally               |
| 4 Il s'est levé du pied gauche    | d I put my foot in it!    |
| 5 J'ai mis les pieds dans le plat | e Off balance             |
| 6 Il n'a pas le pied marin        | f He's not a good sailor  |
| 7 C'est le pied                   | g I'm out of my depth     |
| 8 Au pied de la lettre            | h Play footsie!           |
| 9 A contre-pied.                  | i Enjoy yourself          |
| 10 Faire le pied                  | j He got up in a bad mood |

## 3 Remplissez les blancs avec les mots ci-dessous

"Je ne ...1... plus aller à l'école...2... ne m'aime. Les élèves me détestent et les profs aussi. Je veux ...3... à la maison". "Absolument ...4... question. Dans la vie, il ...5... faire des efforts." "Mais ce n'est pas ...6...! Donne ...7... deux raisons ...8... y aller." "La première, tu ...9... 52 ans. La deuxième, c'est ...10... le directeur!"

a pas b juste c veux d pour e faut f rester g personne h moi i toi j as

See Page 86 for answers

## 4 Match up the proverbs

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1 Un de perdu dix de retrouvés                 | A No pain, no gain                          |
| 2 Qui dit fortune, ne dit pas félicité.        | B Talk of the devil!                        |
| 3 Quand on parle du loup, on en voit la queue. | C Money doesn't necessarily bring happiness |
| 4 La curiosité est un vilain défaut.           | D Curiosity killed the cat!                 |
| 5 Nul plaisir sans peine.                      | F Plenty more fish in the sea               |

## 5 Match up the French animal sounds with the animal that makes it

- |                |           |
|----------------|-----------|
| 1 Hi han       | a frog    |
| 2 Coin coin    | b birds   |
| 3 Glou glou    | c chicken |
| 4 Cui cui      | d sheep   |
| 5 Hiiii        | e duck    |
| 6 Meuh         | f horse   |
| 7 Bêêê         | g cow     |
| 8 Croac croac  | h turkey  |
| 9 Ronron       | i cat     |
| 10 Cotcotcodet | j donkey  |

## Blague Bête

Comment s'appelle un chien que vend des médicaments?

Un pharmacien! 🤔🤔🤔

## Silly definition for linguists to consider

Héberger *appeler un gardien de troupeaux*

## Very Bad Joke

Que dit une tasse dans une ascenseur?

Je veux mon thé!  
(monter – to go up)

## Cold as Ice

As Winter sets in, be sure not to confuse your ice with your glass!

**glace** - general term for ice (and ice cream)

**glaçon** - put it in your gin

**verglas** - black ice (on roads)

**glacé** - cold or frozen

**verre** - glass

**fenêtre** - window (frame and glass)

**carreau** - window pane, usually one of several smaller ones

**vitre** - window pane (whole sheet of glass)

**vitrine** - shop window

## Interesting Expression

Passer à tabac - to beat up

Il m'a passé à tabac pour me faire parler!

## Word origins

Savez-vous comment on appelle un collectionneur de nounours?

Un 'arctophile'! (Venant du mot grec 'arktos' qui signifie ours et d'ou vient aussi le mot "arctique"! (nounours – teddy bear ours – bear venant de – coming from)

# AMÉLIOREZ votre ANGLAIS

See Page 86 for answers

## Tongue twister

(virelangue)

Répétez trois fois

Red lorry,  
yellow lorry

## Ouch, that British Humour!

A girl told me we had  
already met at the  
vegetarian club -  
but I never saw  
herbivore.



## A silly question

Does the name Pavlov  
ring a bell?  
(ring a bell – vouloir dire  
quelque chose)

Quelquefois, il faut trouver  
une phrase polie pour  
quitter quelqu'un qui  
parle un peu trop!  
En voilà quelques unes  
pour vous aider

Must go...

- ... the kettle's boiling.
- ... there's somebody at the door.
- ... my other phone is ringing.
- ... I'm desperate for a pee.
- ... my hamster needs a walk.

## 1 M IS FOR MUM!

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

- |            |                                 |
|------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 malt     | a unkind or miserly             |
| 2 mankind  | b tropical fruit                |
| 3 mean     | c offspring of horse and donkey |
| 4 moist    | d small burrowing animal        |
| 5 mortgage | e used for brewing beer         |
| 6 mule     | f the human race                |
| 7 mole     | g gloves without fingers        |
| 8 moth     | h loan for house purchase       |
| 9 mittens  | i butterfly-like insect         |
| 10 mango   | j slightly wet                  |

## 2 On, In or At ?

- What's.....the telly tonight ?  
a. on b. in c. at
- I have left my keys.....the door.  
a. on b. in c. at
- Take the second street.....your right.  
a. on b. in c. at

### Language Tip

'Put' a plusieurs sens et est largement  
utilisé en anglais. En voici quelques  
exemples

- Put something away - ranger
- Put somebody away - mettre quelqu'un en prison
- Put somebody up - héberger quelqu'un
- Put somebody down - rabaisser quelqu'un
- Put something back - remettre (ou reporter)

## 3 Trouvez l'équivalent en français pour ces expressions idiomatiques

- |                                   |                               |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 Let's talk shop                 | a Fais comme chez toi         |
| 2 By hook or by crook             | b Ce n'est pas mon truc       |
| 3 She's wearing her birthday suit | c Je me débrouillerai!        |
| 4 It's not my cup of tea          | d Fais comme tu veux          |
| 5 Make yourself at home           | e Parlons affaires            |
| 6 I can't stand her               | f Que diable se passe-t-il?   |
| 7 Please yourself                 | g Elle est à poil             |
| 8 Serves him right !              | h C'est bien fait pour lui    |
| 9 What the dickens!               | i Coûte que coûte             |
| 10 I'll make do                   | j Je ne peux pas la supporter |

## 4 To be or not to be....

Les idiomes suivantes, rentrées dans le langage de tous  
les jours, sortent directement de la plume de M. William  
Shakespeare.

Trouvez leurs équivalents en français.

- |   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1 In a pickle ( <i>The Tempest</i> )                                | a c'est incompréhensible          |
| 2 Green-eyed monster ( <i>Othello</i> )                             | b objet de risée                  |
| 3 Love is blind<br>( <i>The Merchant Of Venice</i> )                | c très gentil                     |
| 4 A heart of gold ( <i>Henry V</i> )                                | d il y a de l'ordre dans sa folie |
| 5 Wear your heart on your sleeve<br>( <i>Othello</i> )              | e jalousie                        |
| 6 Laughing stock<br>( <i>The Merry Wives Of Windsor</i> )           | f une fausse piste                |
| 7 The world is your oyster<br>( <i>The Merry Wives Of Windsor</i> ) | g l'amour est aveugle             |
| 8 There's method to his madness<br>( <i>Hamlet</i> )                | h dans de beaux draps             |
| 9 Wild goose chase<br>( <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> )                   | i montrer ses émotions            |
| 10 It's all Greek to me<br>( <i>Julius Caesar</i> )                 | j le monde t'appartient           |

## Phrase utile pour adoucir un critique

With respect...

Eg, *With respect*, I dont think you  
know what you are talking about!



Ouch, that English Humour again!

Did you hear about the two  
Spanish firemen?  
Hose A, and Hose B



## Interesting Word

**blurb**

A short written description  
Have you read the blurb ?

## Useful expression

**Let's talk Turkey**

Revenons à nos moutons

**Nouveau  
mot dans le  
dictionnaire.**

Bestie – meilleur ami

Eg, Rosy is my bestie

**What sound do  
porcupines make  
when they kiss?**

**Ouch!**

## Good advice

As you get older,  
you'll still do silly,  
immature things -  
but much slower!

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

AMÉLIOREZ votre ANGLAIS

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

DID YOU KNOW



## John Wayne at Sea

Did you know that, according to the Midi Libre, the yellow boat 'Marguerita' that can be seen slowly falling to bits in Port Bou belonged to John Wayne!

The 19m boat was built in 1933 in Massachusetts for the coast guard. In the 40s, it was bought by John Wayne and renamed Marguerita after his lover.

Sold on again to an American fan of the Med coast, it ended up shipwrecked on the beach at Banyuls. Towed to Portbou, where it has remained ever since. Estimated by the owner at 450,000 €, this collector's piece doesn't seem to be selling!



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**POLICE emergency 17 European emergency line 112**

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<b>Emergency vet</b>	<b>04 68 83 35 85</b>	<b>International directory enquiries</b>	<b>118 700</b>
<b>Anti-poison centre</b>	<b>04 91 75 25 25</b>	<b>International Mastercard</b>	<b>08 00 90 13 87</b>
<b>Perpignan Hospital</b>	<b>04 68 61 66 33</b>	<b>Local weather forecast</b>	<b>08 36 68 02 66</b>
<b>CPAM (English spk serv)</b>	<b>0811 36 36 46</b>	<b>GDF (gas problems)</b>	<b>08 10 43 30 66</b>
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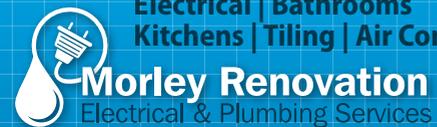
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