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Editorial

Tourism to France is recovering after two difficult years, which has inspired us for the theme of this latest edition of Destination France. The desire to visit France is growing again, and bearing signs of fruitful seasons ahead.

France is like a vast garden of new ideas in several fields, be it in art, fashion, architecture, or cinema. We invite you to take advantage of this flourishing yet deep-rooted artistic milieu and discover a new side of France each time you travel.

Gardens have been an inspiration for walkers and artists since antiquity, and are conducive to relaxation, poetic multi-sensorial experiences, and sharing. After admiring the work of the great Impressionist painters, many images of France stay with us: Renoir's Luncheon on the Grass, Monet's water lilies, Van Gogh's sunflowers, Gauguin's French Polynesian landscapes, and the passionate garden paintings by the indefatigable Caillebotte.

The biodiversity of the French regions is a veritable treasure. Botanical interest began budding in the 19th century, partly due to voyages to the West Indies, where the abundant vegetation inspired the public botanical gardens. Over time, several labels have been created to recognize and reward the work of cities and landscape architects in their integrated approach to preserving this biodiversity.

Landscape architecture also contributes to the embellishment of heritage sites, which are numerous in France. Who hasn't been enchanted by the gardens of the châteaux in the Loire Valley, or those in Île-de-France? These immense parks like the ones at Château de Chantilly and Château de Versailles were designed by André Le Nôtre, who helped build not only the reputation of the French-style garden, but also the splendour of the Sun King.

Vegetal design has been elevated to an art form, expressed with great creativity, and contributing to the French quality of life, not to mention the travellers' delight. Think of the greenways of Paris, of the integration of public art in the parks of Nantes and on the shores of the Loire, and of Patrick Blanc's spectacular vertical gardens in Paris, Avignon and Lyon.

Urban greening is an inevitable trend that is being integrated in all the renovation projects throughout France's big cities, like the industrial isles in Nantes (Green Capital in 2013), the port in Marseille (European Capital of Culture in 2013), and the vibrant project for Bordeaux 2030.

This is why Atout France published "*Valoriser la nature en ville*," the fourth publication in the "Rendez-vous en ville" collection, which focuses on urban tourism and valorizing nature in cities as a strategic element in destination tourism. You will find some excerpts from this publication throughout this press kit.

You'll also be charmed by the bouquet of offers presented by the destinations and partners of *Destination France in Bloom*, which include the parks and gardens of France, as well as outdoor events in memorable green settings. And so we invite you on a delightful stroll around this extraordinary garden, that of France and its overseas regions.

Happy reading!

The Role of Gardens in France

The history of gardens in France: from Roman times to now

There were two main types of gardens in Roman times: very large spaces in the countryside and much smaller indoor gardens in cities. These green areas were used mainly as vegetable gardens, but were also conducive to religious practice.

Gardens quickly became proof of civilization, and were located near dwellings. During the medieval period they became veritable symbols: nature was more spiritual than material.

More and more green spaces were created during the Renaissance era, with people reconnecting with their origins and placing Antiquity at the heart of their gardens.



© Pixabay

Several mostly-private botanical gardens were created for the transmission of knowledge, and were greatly appreciated by pharmacists. Box trees were their main element, though stone and water also played dominant roles in their landscape. The first green labyrinths also made their appearance during the Renaissance.

In the 17th century, gardens were becoming a real extension of architecture. André Le Nôtre's French gardens were an inspiration for a style that spread throughout France. Large parterres, or garden beds, were built around a central axis and the use of geometric shapes was becoming increasingly common.

The Enlightenment in the 18th century gave way to a more British style, inspired by paintings and theatre, and a contrast to what already existed in France. As a symbol of emancipation vis-à-vis the monarchy, art was the basis of this new impulse where gardeners let nature rule, creating gardens with more irregular shapes and a less delicate aesthetic. Nature's imperfections and the association of several plant species were at the forefront of this blooming style.

Public gardens emerged in the 19th century, in Paris, as Napoleon wanted to "air out" the capital. Numerous parks and squares were built to accompany the industrial revolution, including the Bois de Vincennes and the Buttes-Chaumont gardens. Provincial towns quickly followed suit, with the Thabor in Rennes and the Tête d'Or in Lyon being some of the era's greatest creations. Technical progress led to the development of large greenhouses, which in turn helped in the expansion of tropical plant species.

More recently, old-style gardens have been replaced by contemporary ones, which are now often referred to as green spaces. After the two world wars, reconstruction was focused on buildings without taking into consideration any particular garden design. It was only in the 1980s that landscape architects began to see nature as a priority once again.



Parc André Citroën ©Paris Info

Source :

http://www.lafermeorneedecarrouges.fr/fichiers/histoire_art_jardin.pdf

André Le Nôtre: The King of Gardeners and the Gardener of Kings



Jardins du Château de Versailles

Louis XIV's famous gardener, André Le Nôtre, is best known for his landscaping of the Château de Versailles parks and gardens. He also worked, however, on the Jardins des Tuileries, the gardens at Château de Vaux-le-Vicomte and Château de Chantilly.

Born in 1613, Le Nôtre grew up in a nature-loving family. He was first noticed as a gardener when he was 22 years old, and quickly thereafter acquired a series of prestigious contracts.

Founder of the "*jardin à la française*," this style became Le Nôtre's trademark. His gardens, characterized by geometric curves and a limitless perspective, were a successful marriage of art and technique. His mission was simple: to surprise visitors. By adorning his creations with fountains and statues of all kinds, the gardener created a world of enchantment.

His fame took him across borders, to England where he designed gardens, notably in Greenwich. In 1675, Louis XIV ennobled him. He pursued his work at Versailles until 1693, when he retired near his family and continued working on smaller projects until his death, in 1700.

To celebrate the 400 years of his birth in 2013, the "International André Le Nôtre Award" was developed in his honour. It rewards landscape architects from around the world for their contribution throughout their career, from their early ideas to final creations.



Valorizing Nature in Cities

Source: "Valoriser la nature en ville" written and published by Atout France in partnership with Val'Hor and Nantes Métropole.

4th publication in the "Rendez-vous en ville" collection, which focuses on city tourism and designates nature as a strategic element in destination tourism.

The attraction of nature in cities

There has been resurgence in the popularity of urban green spaces over the past few years. Parks in cities are multiplying, as are ephemeral gardens and green walls. Nature has always played an important role in the attractiveness of an urban destination, and although green spaces don't necessarily bring new clientele, they are essential when it comes to developing loyalty from returning visitors. Nature can affect travellers in several different ways. We all know the environmental benefits, but green spaces also seduce with their aesthetics, and can even become a destination's must-see. More and more old, unused buildings and abandoned sites are being reconverted into green spaces. The goal is simple: to revitalize little-used areas and invite local populations to revive these spaces.

The biodiversity of cities

The biodiversity of cities has long been anecdotal, though it has recently been the focus of more concrete attention. In fact, several vegetal spaces have integrated and adapted to their urban environments, making awareness and special efforts now necessary to help preserve these "made for city" varieties.

Capitalizing on nature to attract visitors

During an event, the scenography of a garden, park or any other green space presents a whole new facet of a familiar place. Take Nantes, for example, which transformed its botanical garden during the summer of 2013, or Boulogne-sur-Mer, which welcomed an ephemeral garden in its city centre.

More and more, cities are using nature to help bring forward their destinations.



→ <http://atout-france.fr/publications/valoriser-la-nature-en-ville>

Dedicated labels

It has become essential to create labels related to green spaces, and many exist today to help promote landscaping policies and encourage cities.

- **The EcoJardin Label**



Created in 2012, it certifies public and private sites open to the public. This label is based on eco-management criteria divided up into eight fields according to some 100 key points. The certification, once obtained, is valid for three years. In 2017, 128 new sites were awarded the label, bringing the total of France's EcoJardins up to 392.



- **BiodiverCity**

With 80% of the world population expected to live in cities by 2050, the integration of biodiversity into buildings is an important challenge for the future. The mission of the BiodiverCity label is to evaluate and display the ecological performance of buildings.



- **Remarkable Gardens**

Created in 2003 by the National Parks and Gardens Council, this label promotes green spaces that boast particularly unique landscaping. It is awarded for a period of five years, and is based on various criteria, including composition, botanical interest and the history of the parks and gardens.



- **Villes et village fleuris**

Launched in the 1960s, this label's main mission was to promote places through their aesthetics. It has since evolved and now encourages landscaping strategies that focus on environmentally responsible practices. To this day, more than 4,700 municipalities have been labelled with a status of one to four flowers.

Urban Greening: many projects' success

The Island of Nantes

The urban redevelopment project for the Island of Nantes was launched 20 years ago as part of the city's restructuring policy. The project aims to improve the urban landscape and build a city of tomorrow, showcasing large open spaces in a remarkable environmental setting.

By combining all aspects of city life (housing, economic development, culture, entertainment...), with a focus on sustainable development and innovation, the project hopes to create a strong urban metropolitan centre.



© F. Toms

Bordeaux 2030

The urban renewal project of Bordeaux's Grand Parc was started in June 2016. The project is being developed by Bordeaux Métropole in collaboration with the Bordeaux City Council.



The missions for Bordeaux 2030 are as follows:

- Lead the urban project and offer Bordeaux residents a sustainable territory and neighbourhoods;
- Contribute to the evolution of the Local Urban Planning documents according to the urban project, in collaboration with the Bordeaux Urban Community;
- Encourage the architectural quality of projects;
- Implement the management plan for the UNESCO World Heritage Site;
- Lead the project to renew the city's historical centre;
- Organize Agora, Bordeaux's architecture, planning and design biennial.

Marseille: the "New Old Port"

Marseille has a privileged location and lies in an exceptional setting: between the sea, the hills and the Calanques cliffs. Half of the city's territory is made up of natural spaces, with more than 400 hectares of parks and public gardens.

The second phase of the renovation of Marseille's Old Port has just been completed. The first part of Marseille's vast redevelopment project was delivered in time for the Marseille-Provence European Capital of Culture festivities, which began in January 2013.

This project, designed by landscape architect Michel Desvigne-Foster and Partners-Tangram-Ingerop-Yann Kersalé, aims to give a new life to this unique space, by prioritizing pedestrians and gentle modes of transport.



© Pixabay

DESTINATIONS

Brittany

Brittany Tourism



Brittany, a region committed to slow tourism with its serene, inspiring setting, is an authentic wellness destination. The region is Celtic at heart, and is constantly reinventing its traditions, placing it at the top of the list for its festivals, water sports, cycling and hiking possibilities.

Come partake in the true Breton experience! Meet locals and learn about their work, and explore the small characterful cities with their markets. Take advantage of the spectacular high tides, discover unique, wide-open landscapes via bike routes and greenways, learn the pleasures of golf and water sports. Or simply

indulge in one of our many spa hotels...

Feel like partying in Brittany? This area has one thousand and one assets to make you vibrate, including an archetypal festival fit for everyone. Visit and discover the festive Breton spirit!

TO SEE

Brittany's Parks and Gardens Association

In 1988, Brittany's Parks and Gardens Association (APJB) was founded after the September 1987 hurricane that left a path of destruction. Since then, the APJB has been dedicated to protecting, restoring and enhancing the region's parks and gardens, on both plant heritage and decorative levels.

The Ballue Gardens

Since their creation in the 17th century, the Ballue Gardens have undergone many changes. Traversing 13 parcels of land, the first garden is landscaped to showcase multiple scenes throughout a labyrinthine course.



The Brocéliande Forest

The Brocéliande Forest is renowned as the source of numerous myths and legends. Merlin the Enchanter, King Arthur and the fairy Viviane are inseparable from this place. Get to know their stories and other historical gems with one of many organized hikes around this beautiful site.

EVENTS

- June to August: The *Lieux Mouvants* Festival

Each summer, the festival program includes innovative performances and visits of ephemeral gardens. Embark on a discovery tour of magical and unknown villages, gardens and sites.

- August 3 to 12: Lorient Interceltic Festival

Get to know the lay of the land in Lorient and uncover Celtic culture. Become a part of its tradition with age-old music and dances, Breton gastronomy, and more.

- Departure on November 4: Route du Rhum

For its 40th edition, more than 100 sailors will start the race from Saint-Malo and sail towards Guadeloupe. This unique event only takes place every four years so don't miss it!

→ <http://www.brittanytourism.com/>



Normandy

CRT Normandy - D-Day Cluster



© Pixabay

Normandy boasts a wealth of monuments and emblematic cities, ranging from Mont Saint-Michel to Étretat and Rouen. Visit all the territory has to offer on bicycle or horseback, letting yourself be moved by emotion at the landing beaches and other significant historical sites.

The Normandy Tourist Board makes nature a priority and manages the region's Parks and Gardens Club, which encompasses more than 100 sites to discover.

TO SEE

The Avranches Plant Garden

In bloom since the 19th century, the Avranches Plant Garden is home to an impressive variety of flowers. Camellias, hydrangeas and magnolias have helped build the park's reputation, and writers Guy de Maupassant and Victor Hugo sought inspiration here. Today, it is an emblem of incredible Norman botanical heritage. Another reason to visit: the breathtaking view of the Bay of Mont Saint-Michel.



© Pixabay

The Étretat Garden

This is a magical place overlooking the sea. Recently opened, these gardens at Étretat are resolutely avant-garde: a marriage of modern art, design and lush green landscapes that respect the park's original poetic dimension and spirit.

Claude Monet's Gardens

These gardens were home to Claude Monet, and also his greatest source of inspiration. Art lovers will be awestruck by the Nymphaeas Workshop, while nature enthusiasts will marvel at the gardens. Glycine and azaleas enliven the park, giving this glorious Historical Monument a changing appearance throughout the seasons.

D-DAY CLUSTER

On June 6th, 1944, the Landing Beaches made history by becoming the greatest battlefield of all time. History for peace and liberty is expressed under open skies in natural settings, as well as in the museums of the Battle of Normandy.

EVENTS

- May 26 to June 10: D-Day Festival Normandy

For its 12th edition, this festival celebrates the anniversary of the Allies landing in Normandy on June 6, 1944, and the newfound freedom this brought.

- June 15 to September 22: Cathedral of Light

Come admire the magnificent sounds and light show on the facade of the Rouen Cathedral. The theme of this not-to-be-missed summer event: William the Conqueror and the Vikings.

→ <http://en.normandie-tourisme.fr/normandy-tourism-1-2.html>

Normandy

Dieppe



We welcome you year-round so you can discover this magnificent destination which combines the coastal resort and its cultural heritage. Come for an unforgettable experience in a unique setting. Whether you are young or not-so-young, sporty or not, a fan of cultural visits, of gardens, castles, or sensational events, Dieppe-Maritime Tourism offers a great variety of activities that will help you forget your day-to-day life. Ready for a breath of fresh sea air onboard the privateers' own boats, or a flight over the Alabaster Coast's cliffs in a small plane ULM?

You can, of course, opt for a quieter ride aboard Dieppe's little tourist train....



© Yann Pelcat

The Dieppe-Maritime area is home to a great number of parks and gardens. Although most are secret, five of them open their gates to visitors. These five remarkable places will enchant both botany enthusiasts and the uninitiated with their poetic settings and walks.

TO SEE



© Le Bois des Moutiers

gardens surrounding it only add to its rich, traditional style.

[Moutiers Park in Varengeville-sur-Mer](#)

Founded in 1898 by Guillaume Mallet, the Moutiers forest park is made up of a superb architect's house and magnificent gardens. The gardens are internationally renowned, and boast the labels of Historical Monument and Remarkable Garden.

[The Vegetable Garden at Château de Miromesnil in Tourville-sur-Arques](#)

This garden, which lies next to Château de Miromesnil, is the perfect alignment of flowers, fruits and vegetables. The French

[The Vasterival Garden in Sainte-Marguerite-sur-Mer](#)

Le Vasterival, a garden created by Princess Greta Sturdza, has all it takes to seduce amateurs and the greatest botanists, with more than 10,000 species including some of the rarest.

[The William Farcy Floral Park in Offranville](#)

The William Farcy lies on 2.5 hectares of land, and is a succession of themed gardens. It is undeniably charming, with its lake, stream and waterfall - not to mention its more than 2,500 species of plants and one hundred rose bushes.



© Offranville

EVENTS

- **September 8 to 16:** Dieppe International Kite Festival

For one week, thousands of kites following the theme "A Fantastic World" will enliven the sky over Dieppe.

→ <http://uk.dieppetourisme.com>

Normandy

Le Havre



→ <https://www.lehavretourisme.com/en>



Normandy's leading city, Le Havre is full of surprises.

Abound with a sense of freedom and discovery, this is a truly modern sea-facing city. Le Havre city centre is renowned for its industrial architecture, which has given it UNESCO World Heritage status. Le Havre is also rich in green heritage, with some 750 hectares of enchanting forests, parks and gardens.

TO SEE

[The Hanging Gardens](#)

This park, labelled a Remarkable Garden, is a natural part of Le Havre's landscape and offers a green sensorial escape. Overlooking the Bay of the Seine River, the park's 17 hectares provide exceptional views of the sea, port and city.

[Rouelles Park](#)

Rouelles Park, which covers nearly 160 hectares, has a number of architecturally amazing tourist attractions, from its perennial garden to the manor and its noteworthy collection of traditional objects.



© E. Levilly

[The Silent Garden of the Carmel Monastery](#)

Right in the heart of Le Havre, this silent garden is a haven for contemplation, meditation and prayer. The space, which is open to everyone, is ideal for those seeking a moment of inner-reflection.

[Saint-Roch Square](#)

Located halfway between the beach and the city centre, Saint-Roch Square is two hectares of peaceful walks surrounded by beautiful specimens like the Virginia tulip, the Atlas cedar and the eucalyptus.

[The Graille Abbey Gardens](#)

The Graille Abbey is of great historical importance, and is surrounded by gardens rich in rare species, including the Irish yews and the centuries-old Lebanese cedar.

EVENTS

- 10th anniversary of the Hanging Gardens
- **Summer 2018:** A Summer in Le Havre - Season 2

Two to three months of festivities, celebrating more than 500 years of Le Havre.

Normandy

Juno Beach



→ <http://www.junobeach.org>

The Juno Beach Centre is a commemorative venue honouring the 45,000 Canadians who perished during WWII. It is an emblematic cultural site of Normandy, and represents the war efforts of Canada's entire population. It was created in 2003 by veterans and volunteers, its main mission being to make this (his)story better-known through educational and commemorative actions.

The Importance of the Poppy



Along the sites of the D-Day Landings in Normandy, you will often find red poppies. In Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia and other countries, the poppy has become a symbol of grief, hope and remembrance for the individuals who fought and died during all wars.

The origins of how and why the poppy gained such a prominent place in the act of remembrance date back to the First World War, when this delicate flower would grow on lands that were once battlefields. The lands of the Belgian region of Flanders inspired Canadian physician Lieutenant-Colonel John

McCrae to write the famous poem, "In Flanders Fields" in 1915, which references the poppies that bloomed between the newly constructed graves of soldiers who had died in battle. Soon after the war, McCrae's poignant poem inspired many Commonwealth countries to adopt the poppy as a symbol of remembrance. Individuals continue to wear artificial poppies each year on November 11, the anniversary of the Armistice agreement that marked the end of the First World War, and a day of remembrance and recognition of all those who served in military operations. In Normandy today, throughout the year poppies are placed on beaches, as well as museums and memorial sites dedicated to the D-Day Landings. Families whose ancestors served in the Second World War often leave poppies at various sites along the beaches in tribute to their loved ones.

In Normandy, as in many regions and countries around the world, the poppy remains an enduring symbol of grief, remembrance and gratitude for those who have served and made the ultimate sacrifice during the Second World War and all wars.



© Pixabay



The Occitania - Sud de France Regional Tourist Board can help you organize your trip, from planning itineraries, finding accommodations, cruises, and even restaurants.

Spanning from the Pont du Gard to Gavarnie in the Pyrenees, and from the Dordogne Valley to the Mediterranean coastal resorts, Occitania - Sud de France is a destination abound with world-famous sites: Albi, Lourdes, the Canal du Midi, Saint Cirq Lapopie, the Pic du Midi, the Pont du Gard, Montpellier...

You'll also find all the best of what France has to offer in
©H. Argance

Occitania – Sud de France: heritage, culture, river cruises, seas, mountains, spiritual journeys, nature (40% of the territory is protected), wine, gastronomy, city trips...

TO SEE

[The Pont du Gard, on the road "From Ancient Europe to World Heritage"](#)

UNESCO has chosen the Pont du Gard, the only site in France, as part of a new tourist itinerary, "World Heritage Journeys of Ancient Europe." This journey encompasses eight listed sites, all of which were selected not only for their historical significance and exceptional universal value, but also for their focus on sustainable development.

[Château de Bournazel and its exceptional gardens](#)

Château de Bournazel in the Aveyron department is considered to be one of the most beautiful Renaissance castles in the South of France, known notably for the quality of its sculpted decor and its innovative architecture.

The Montauban Gardens: an extraordinary park

Look out! Rhinoceros, tigers and lions are right behind the bushes, and just around the corner with the park's new augmented reality application. This usually quiet garden in Montauban has become the world's first "mini public theme park" operating via visitors' mobile phones.

EVENTS

- The Way of Saint-James: 20 years a part of UNESCO

It's been 20 years since the Way of Saint-James became listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

- March 3 and 4: L'Art des Jardins Show

A meeting place for plant enthusiasts, this year's *L'Art des Jardins* will focus on the language of flora.

- April to October: The Cévennes National Park Nature Festival

A variety of activities are being organized, including strolls and hikes, guided visits, performances... You'll find everything you need to discover the area through its seasons.

- June 4: Reopening of the Gallo-Roman Villa of Séviac

After one and a half years of renovations, restoration and enhancement of the ancient mosaics, the Gallo-Roman villa of Séviac, in Eauze, is about to reopen its doors to the public.

- From June 16 to September 23: Picasso at the Fabre Museum

The "Donner à voir" exhibition provides a fresh look on a dozen or so of Picasso's milestone moments.

→ <http://www.tourism-occitania.co.uk>



CARCASSONNE: A UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE



Carcassonne boasts two UNESCO World Heritage Sites: its Medieval City and the Canal du Midi. Visitors here are immediately immersed into 2,000 years of history, and can admire Europe's most imposing medieval city, which is in an exceptional state of conservation. The 16th-century banks of the Canal du Midi border the Bastide Saint Louis, the new city built in 1247.

EVENTS

- July 15 to 31: The Carcassonne Festival

This unique summer festival takes place in the heart of the old city, and showcases a number of different themes, with theater, circus, opera, dance, and music concerts. The Carcassonne Festival is one of France's largest, and the programming keeps getting bigger and better, with a growing number of national and international artists.

- July 14: Embracing the City

More than 70,000 people gather on the shores of the Aude River to celebrate the national holiday. An incredibly colourful fireworks display lasts for more than 25 explosive minutes, and ends with an awe-inspiring grandiose finale.

- End of August: The Carcassonne Feria

Typical of the South of France, this festive event fills the streets with salsa, flamenco and Occitan musicians. For several days, young and old alike wander around the city to the joyful rhythms in the air.



© Pixabay

→ <http://www.tourism-carcassonne.co.uk>



The Nîmes Tourist Office's convention bureau and receptive service offer tailor-made programs to help you discover this diverse city's rich heritage, originality and *art de vivre*. Our team of professionals is at your disposal to develop your programs, prepare quotes, make reservations and ensure a personalized follow-up of both turnkey and customized bookings for your group, private and business clientele. Nîmes: the new must-see destination for your clients in 2018 - 2019!

© Ville de Nîmes

Roman History Museum: the countdown has begun

More than 5,000 works - some of which will be revealed to the public for the first time -, will be exhibited around a 3,500m² space, depicting over 22 centuries of the city's history! Throughout their visit, guests can stay interactive via the latest technologies (augmented reality, computer graphics...) on more than 65 multimedia devices. On the ground floor, a transversal space allows open access to the archaeological gardens, where ancient vegetables have been reintroduced and planted to represent Roman cuisine.

Regional gastronomy will also be showcased here, with two restaurants: one fast food and one fine dining establishment run by grand chef, Franck Putelat. Putelat is from Carcassonne and has been awarded two Michelin stars, a silver Bocuse and a 17/20 rating from Gault & Millau. Top your visit with an ascent to the green rooftop terrace, which offers a spectacular 360° view of Nîmes.



© S. Ramillon - Ville de Nîmes

Nîmes, a candidate for UNESCO World Heritage: "Antiquity to the Present"

This UNESCO World Heritage recognition would be an acknowledgement of the work the City of Nîmes has undertaken over the last few years to help valorize its heritage. It would also have great symbolic significance for the generations to come, who will be responsible for pursuing the city's development while drawing inspiration from its past. UNESCO jury deliberations: July 2018.

EVENTS

- From April 28 to 30: 9th Edition of Spartacus - the Great Roman Games

All weekend long, shopkeepers play their roles (good-humouredly, of course!) within their themed villages: The Estate of the Gods, The Gladiator Village, The Village of the Indomitables... Les Halles is transformed into a Roman market, and the Fontaine Gardens come alive with re-enactment performances, demonstrations and free workshops. A 100% Romanesque weekend!

- From May 17 to September 16: Picasso/Dominguin Exhibit at the Musée du Vieux Nîmes et des Cultures Taurines

Ceramics, engravings, and drawings give life to this exhibition, which also includes a rare architectural project for arenas, designed by both artists.

- From October 18 to February 24, 2019: Political Picasso at the Carré d'Art

The exhibit is dedicated to Picasso's social engagement, and focuses on his work from 1937 to the early 1950s.

→ <https://www.ot-nimes.fr/index.php?L=1>



Don't leave out Toulouse! This city at the very heart of South Western France cannot be summed up by only its title of European Capital of Aeronautics, but by its vibrant mix of innovative development, heritage and festivities.

TO SEE

The Museum Gardens: a living museum in the city centre

Stroll under the shade of the sustainable building, plunge your hands into the soil of gardens growing vegetables from around the world, or get caught up in the wild reeds of the forgotten path... The Museum Gardens, located around Maourine Pond at the heart of the Borderouge district, are a place of discovery and wonderment for people young and old, novices and enlightened enthusiasts alike.

Gardens of the Line: central to an upcoming major cultural tourist site

Along the former runway of the emblematic Aéropostale aviation line, three hectares have been landscaped to feature the atmospheres of the three continents crossed by Aéropostale - which celebrates its 100th anniversary in Toulouse in 2018! Open since June 2017, the gardens are made up of children's games, rest areas and informative panels on the countries served by the Aéropostale line



The Toulouse Violet: the essential emblematic flower

Board an authentic 1930s barge to discover the history of this small, purple flower that has been the pride of Toulouse since the 1850s. This original venue is home to an exhibition space, a boutique and tearoom.

EVENTS

In 2018, Toulouse becomes European Science Capital!

- **February 3 and 4:** The Violet Festival
- **July 3 to June 30, 2019:** Exhibit at the Toulouse Museum: "Easter Island: the Navel of the World"
- **July 9 to 14:** 8th edition of the European science event, "EuroScience Open Forum" (ESOF)
- **March 17 to September 24:** The Augustins Museum of Fine Arts is hosting a grand exhibition dedicated to the Renaissance.
- **December:** Centenary commemorations of the launch of Latécoère Airlines, which connected Toulouse to Barcelona, Africa (Dakar), and South America (Chile).

→ <https://www.toulouse-visit.com>

Paris Region

Château de Chantilly



Discover one of the jewels of France's cultural heritage. Located in a preserved natural setting, close to Paris and 20 minutes from Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport, the Domaine de Chantilly was built up from the Middle Ages by its illustrious owners: Constable Anne de Montmorency, the Bourbon-Condé dynasty and subsequently Henri d'Orléans, Duke of Aumale. Today it is home to the Château, the Gardens and the Great Stables.



Over 115 hectares, the Château de Chantilly's park is the glorious result of creations built up over various eras: the gardens *à la française* designed by André Le Nôtre in the 17th century, the Anglo-Chinese gardens from the end of the 18th century, and the English gardens built in the 19th century.

The large French parterre provides the most dazzling views of the visit. It includes vast mirrors of water, numerous jets and fountains as well as an exceptional set of statues. Of all the gardens created by André Le Nôtre, Chantilly was his favourite

© Jérôme Houyvet

The Anglo-Chinese garden was designed by architect Jean-François Leroy in 1773 for Prince Louis-Joseph de Bourbon-Condé (1736-1818). It includes a Hamlet of five, small rustic houses, which were an inspiration for Marie-Antoinette's own hamlet in Versailles.

Finally, the English garden is located between the Château and the Great Stables. It was designed during the Restoration in 1819 by architect Victor Dubois for Prince Louis-Joseph de Bourbon-Condé, and is enhanced by romantic structures such as the Temple of Venus. Twice a year it plays host to the Chantilly Flower Show, the gardening world's leading event.



© Jérôme Houyvet

EVENTS

- June 16 to October 14: Painting the Races - Stubbs, Géricault, Degas

Domaine de Chantilly will host the first exhibit dedicated to the birth and development of horse racing painting, an emblematic theme of modernity at the time. The exhibition is curated around three major artists: George Stubbs, Théodore Géricault and Edgar Degas.

- May 18-19-20 and October 19-20-21: Flower Show

This is a not-to-be-missed exhibition and sale event in the gardening world.

- From April 1 to June 28, and from September 16 to November 4: The Equestrian Show "Nature"

In 12 scenes, this show tells the tale of the immutable link between man and nature. The horses' dress and the fabulous costumes by Monika Mucha reflect the colours of the seasons, seasons no longer controllable by the truculent character of Mother Nature. A new take on the Four Seasons!

→ <http://www.domainedechantilly.com/en/>

Paris Region

Château de Versailles



©EPV Thomas Garnier

Part of the UNESCO World Heritage of Humanity list for the past 30 years, the Château de Versailles is one of France's most beautiful realizations of 17th-century art. Housing the Hall of Mirrors designed by Jules Hardouin Mansart, it was successively a hunting lodge and a seat of power.

At the foot of the palace, the gardens created by André Le Nôtre are characteristic of the famous "French garden." The Gardener to the King mastered this formal style perfectly and made great use of it in Versailles, particularly along the Grande Perspective. The royal estate of Trianon, designed for more intimate moments, is home to the Grand Trianon and Petit Trianon palaces, as well as the Queen's Hamlet. The estate contains

architectural gems and magnificent gardens, while its diversity and ornamentation give it a unique charm.

TO SEE

The Groves

Created by famous architect André Le Nôtre, the groves of Versailles have undergone numerous changes over the centuries. Fountains and statues adorn this space, which is where the King often strolled.

L'Orangerie

Only accessible during guided visits, the majestic orangery is but a few metres from the Château. Its main gallery is more than 150 metres long, and is home to orange trees, palms and oleanders from all over Europe.

The Parterres

The gardens, located right in front of the Château, extend out into different parterres. A combination of water and green spaces, these surfaces create impressive visual effects, from where you can admire Le Nôtre's elegant botanical embroidery.

The Pools and Fountains

Water, which reflects the sky and the light, is an essential element of the Château de Versailles gardens, whether it is cascading within the groves, or gushing from the fountains. The pools, landscaped from the 1670s onwards, represent the four seasons.



©EPV Thomas Garnier

EVENTS

In 2018, the Château de Versailles is curating two grand exhibitions:

- From June 18 to September 16: Jean II Cotelle (1645-1708), Grand Trianon

This is the first exhibit dedicated to Jean Cotelle, the 17th-century painter who seems to have disappeared from memory. His career will be presented in its entirety, culminating in his most famous work: the Grand Trianon gallery bearing his name.

- From October 6 to February 3, 2019: Louis-Philippe and Versailles, Château de Versailles

→ <http://en.chateauversailles.fr>

Paris Region

Compagnie des Alpes : Grévin & Parc Astérix



Compagnie des Alpes is a major player in the leisure sector, focusing on three historic activities:

- World leader in ski resort management, with 11 ski stations in the French Alps region;
- Eight theme parks including Parc Astérix, Futuroscope, and Walibi;
- Four Grévin Wax Museums in Paris, Montréal, Prague and Seoul, as well as Chaplin World in Switzerland.

Astérix Park

→ <https://www.parcasterix.fr/en>



Start with adventures galore, shows and attractions for all tastes, challenges for young and old, and fantastic Gallic flavouring... The ingredients of this magic potion have been tried and tested by millions of visitors! There are 40 attractions and five major performances, all staged in a lively *Gaulois* setting, making Astérix Park a fun and funny, convivial place for the whole family.

Astérix Park is located near Paris Airport and boasts 6 thematic environments and two hotels located in the Park with 150 rooms each. New hotel opening on March 31, 2018: La Cité Suspendue.



NEW IN 2018

La Cité Suspendue

In April 2018, Parc Astérix is opening La Cité Suspendue, a brand new 150-room hotel just a few minutes' walk from the park itself.

Respectful of the local environment and wildlife, this establishment is made up of three Villages that represent the founding groups of the town: the Potters' Village, the Artists' Village and the Druids' Village.

- The Potters' Village is a dreamlike setting, where thousands of immense jars and amphorae illustrate the activities of the artisans.
- The Druids' Village, kingdom of sorcerers, is the most mysterious of the three, where great runic symbols decorate every object.
- The Artists' Village, exuberant and flamboyant, boasts reddish hues and stylised animals adorning the walls.

The 150 rooms are comfortable and immersive, and can sleep up to 5 people. From the bedrooms to the restaurant, the entire decor has been designed to take guests on a journey into a world that is welcoming and authentic.

A Ruckus In The Farmyard: A New Family Show

The animal-themed "A Ruckus in the Farmyard" show introduces us to a Roman soldier who has "accidentally" stumbled into the Gaul village by the foot of Assurancetourix the Bard's tree. Around ten farm animals (chickens, ducks, rabbits, pigeons...) decide to get rid of him in a thousand and one different ways!

L'Aérobar Viking

Located in the Viking Zone, this new-generation bar turns on itself, offering a unique if not dizzying experience. Visitors, who are perched 40 metres up, can truly claim to have had their heads in the clouds.

→ <https://www.compagniedesalpes.com/en>

Paris Region

Citadines Apart Hôtel & The Crest Collection



Ascott's European portfolio includes 46 three-to five-star properties in 7 countries, including 27 Citadines in France: Cannes, Genève Ferney-Voltaire, Grenoble, Lille, Lyon, Marseille, Montpellier, Paris, Strasbourg, Toulouse, and Nantes (opening in 2019).

In 2016, Ascott launched a new collection of serviced residences, The Crest Collection, uniting three properties in Paris: La Clef Louvre Paris, La Clef Tour Eiffel Paris, and La Clef Champs-Élysées Paris (opening in 2018). They offer a refined and tailored experience by combining the space and soft comfort of an apartment with the excellence of personalized service.

Citadines Apart'hotel is the ideal home in the city. It is a unique concept embracing guests' individuality, with a tasteful, contemporary decor. In order to meet all guests' requirements, services are provided on demand and adapted to the active lifestyle of residents staying in city centres. The wide range of services enables guests to personalize their stay according to their needs and budget. Citadines offer a range of studios for one or two persons as well as two-bedroom apartments with fully equipped kitchens for up to six persons.

NEW IN 2018

Opening of a new boutique residence in Paris: La Clef Champs-Élysées

La Clef Champs Élysées Paris residence is opening its doors in 2018.

Located in a Haussmann-style building in the heart of the 8th arrondissement, this residence is nestled between the Trocadéro and the Champs-Élysées. Another one of the capital's most famous monuments, the Arc de Triomphe, is but a few steps away.

70 rooms laid out over 4,700m² provide all the necessary comforts to help you experience Parisian lifestyle. French charm is right on your doorstep, with not only the greatest couture brands, but also a selection of bistros, restaurants and bakeries.



→ <https://www.citadines.com/en/index.html>

Galleries Lafayette



The Galleries Lafayette flagship store is located in the heart of Paris next to the Opera house. It is the largest and most famous department store in France and has become a major tourist attraction due to its unique architecture and its prestigious selection of French and international fashion, beauty, accessories and home decoration.

KEY SELLING POINTS

- 1st European department store, founded in 1893
- 3,500 brands, from the affordable to prestigious
- Specific shopping offers and services dedicated to foreign tourists
- Breathtaking views of Paris from the 7th floor terrace
- Weekly fashion shows with online registration
- Guided tours to discover the heritage of the famous building with its Neo-Byzantine dome
- Wine tasting sessions, make-up workshops, fashion conferences and more
- Personalized services by a multilingual staff
- Digital campaigns with drive to store attractive offers



Paris Under Strawberries



In 2013, Galleries Lafayette offered to host this project to help "green" Paris, and today, more than 100m² of strawberries, raspberries, edible flowers and aromatic herbs are growing there. This unique urban garden can be admired from the department store's panoramic terrace.

The goal of this sustainability project is to bring citizens together to experiment with production methods relevant to today's food and ecological issues. By developing innovative cultivation techniques adapted to the urban environment, we're supporting the evolution of food-growing practices and

passing on know-how to the younger generations.

Vertical vegetal supports have been set up on the rooftops of Galleries Lafayette to increase space while maintaining flexibility. Cultivation is out-of-ground and organic, with roots being grown in a closed environment packed with microorganisms - a good way for our food to escape urban pollution.

→ <https://www.gallerieslafayette.com/>

Loire Valley

Château du Clos Lucé



© Leonard de Serres

After accepting an invitation from François the 1st, Leonardo da Vinci settled in Amboise in the autumn of 1516. He crossed the Alps at age 64 and worked at Clos Lucé until he died, in his room, on May 2, 1519.

The Château du Clos Lucé mission, led by the Saint Bris family since 1954, is to transmit the legacy and patrimony of this Renaissance genius to the public.

TO SEE

The Leonardo da Vinci Park

This top cultural attraction is a veritable journey of discovery, on the trail of Leonardo da Vinci's visionary genius. Enter the universe of Leonardo's creativity, enjoying a walk that is both fun and educational...

Leonardo's Garden

Château du Clos Lucé brings to life the Master's botanical drawings, geological studies and landscapes. Spread out over a hectare, Leonardo's Garden is a real outdoor museum, landscaped and planted in the spirit of da Vinci's drawings and paintings.



© Leonard de Serres

EVENTS

For 2018, Château du Clos Lucé has tailored its cultural agenda to revolve around the theme of human flight.

- April to December: "From the Dream of Flight to the Conquest of Space"

This scenographic tour around the Renaissance Terrace of Leonardo da Vinci's Park retraces the evolution of inventions linked to human flight, showing the influence da Vinci's observations and intuitions have had on modern aeronautics.

- April to December: "Leonardo da Vinci in Virtual Times"

Virtual and interactive animations allow us to understand the mechanisms designed by Leonardo da Vinci. Visitors are invited to experience the machines of the genius artist in 3D via a digital touch table.

- July and August: "The Fascination With Flight, in the Head of Leonardo da Vinci"

Four nocturnal events invite spectators to dream with Leonardo da Vinci. In the square of Château du Clos Lucé, the Cour des Contes will present its original, poetic and musical interpretation of da Vinci's imagination and thoughts on flight.

→ <http://www.vinci-closluce.com/en>



The Loire Valley is sure to enchant you with its joyful symphony! Listen for the galloping of the gladiators' horses and the lions roar at the Puy du Fou, voted best theme park in the world. Or discover, in silence, the hundreds of masterpieces by De la Tour, Ingres, Chagall, Kandinsky, and Picasso at the new art museum in Nantes...

TO SEE

© A. Lamoureux

In the Loire Valley, the "sweetness of Anjou" Anjou has been cultivating its passion for flowers since the Middle Ages, leading it to become, in the 19th century, the national crossroads for plants and trees. Its horticultural reputation is obvious in its landscapes, its parks, châteaux and gardens, which seek to express the right balance between tradition and innovation. And let's not forget its impressive vegetal collections and numerous celebrations dedicated to plants!

The Loire River, which crosses the province like an arched bow, channels the maritime influence and gives it its alluvium-rich soils. Anjou is one of the botanically richest plain areas in the country, growing 1,700 vegetal species of the 5,000 recorded in France, including Mediterranean and even tropical plants.

Today, Anjou is a globally-recognized plant centre: 1,400 companies and 30,000 jobs on 45,000 hectares of specialized crops and wine production, leading to 65% of the Loire Valley's horticultural activity. The Maine-et-Loire department (Anjou) is now ranked first in production amongst the French regions.

The greatest plant adventure at Terra Botanica

This first educational fun park devoted to plants cultivates 110,000m² of gardens, aquatic areas and greenhouses, and is enhanced by nearly 40 attractions and original activities.

It's an extraordinary setting with multidimensional scenography, where "Generous Plants," "Coveted Plants," "Mysterious Plants," and "Domesticated Plants" flourish. These four different universes invite young and old alike to explore the vegetation from all its angles, and to uncover the mysteries of nature. The various stages



© Terra Botanica

of plant conquest are depicted, from the first scientific expeditions to the work carried out in laboratories today, helping visitors travel from the early spectacles of nature to an understanding of life. This concept, new in Europe and part of an approach for sustainable development, is a veritable showcase for Angevin horticulture. Terra Botanica: a journey through time, space and the senses, and a great adventure for all!

EVENTS

- June 15: 24h of Le Mans

Each summer Plantagenêt City revives its chimeras, right next to where whirling cars race for 24 hours, promising a phantasmagoric night in Le Mans!

- June 23 and 24: Anjou Vélo Vintage

This weekend in Saumur has a lively, undeniably *guinguette* ambiance, with old vintage bikes and rides, a festival village and friendly folks dressed in retro-style.

- From July 7 to 9: Four stages of the Tour de France

Feel the thrill of the Tour de France 2018, which is off to a great start on the Island of Noirmoutier.

→ <https://www.paysdelaloire.co.uk>

Loire Valley

Le voyage à Nantes



© F. Toms.

Nantes, in the south of Brittany and just two hours from Paris by TGV, is often considered to be France's most creative city. Along the Green Line of the Voyage à Nantes self-guided tour are nearly 40 art installations, an art museum, a giant mechanical elephant, year-round exhibits, a neighbourhood focused on creativity, street art displays... Nantes, the city criss-crossed by art!

This city is also the ideal gateway for discovering Brittany, with Nantes, Rennes and Saint-Malo sharing a willingness and capacity to reveal their

territory to a large, international audience. Their itinerary goes all the way up to Mont-Saint-Michel, stopping via unknown treasures, secret beaches, landscapes adorned with art, and a long list of worthwhile addresses...

TO SEE

***Les Machines de l'Île*, an art project to strengthen tourism**

The Machines are an absolutely original artistic and touristic project. Born from the imaginations of François Delarozière and Pierre Orefice, it is at the crossroads of the imaginary worlds of Jules Verne, the mechanical universe of Leonardo da Vinci, and Nantes' industrial history. Today, these monumental mechanical moving structures fit perfectly into the urban fabric.



© F. Toms.

Nantes, Green Capital

In 2013, Nantes became the first French city to earn the title of European Green Capital, and according to the *Villes Vertes de France* observation committee, it was the second greenest French city in 2017.

The Plant Garden and its national collections of magnolias and camellias

In 2016, it was awarded the international Garden of Excellence label, the ultimate recognition for a collection of camellias. This garden is home to a wealth of exotic plants, brought back by the captains of Nantes at the request of Louis XV.

New in 2018: Nantes, Rennes, Saint-Malo and up to Mont St-Michel - a modern journey of an old territory

Eight days, seven nights, from April to October: a new itinerary has been launched to get to know Breton culture. This tour showcases the heritage while also livening it up with interventions by creators, designers, graphic designers, and more... This itinerary offers a contemporary look at the landscapes, natural and cultural heritage of the area.

EVENTS

- From June 30 to August 26: The Travel Event

Each summer, Voyage à Nantes enlivens the sensory and poetic urban trail of the same name, with fifty surprising stops. See ephemeral and perennial installations, and works of art. Experience convivial venues, and unexpected encounters. Savour local products grown in the gardens of the city centre.

→ <https://www.levoyageanantes.fr/>



© Mairie Antibes Service

Antibes Juan-les-Pins is the second largest town of the Alpes-Maritimes department.

In terms of hotel accommodation, Antibes Juan-les-Pins can lay claim to a wide range of quality offers. Investments have been made as befitting the wish for quality and taking into account visitors' demands. New three and four**** hotels are opening and new brands are expected to be launched very soon.

The city remains a must as a winter destination, with the old city (Old Antibes) combining the paradoxical qualities of being both a magnet for tourism and an essentially

authentic city known for its exceptional quality of life. Not to mention the beauty of Cap d'Antibes, a green lung at the heart of the Côte d'Azur where sports lovers gather to run, practice yoga, paddle, cycle, and more.

TO SEE

The Rose Garden, La Roseraie

The vegetable, aromatic herbs and flower garden, which covers some 1,650m² of land, was originally cultivated so that the woman of the house, who also took care of the garden, could embellish her family's everyday life. It is with this in mind, as well as with a desire to revive the tradition and horticultural know-how, that the city of Antibes has transformed this garden with a collection of 800 varieties of roses.

Thuret Garden is a must-see!

In 1857, Gustave Thuret discovered a wild and wonderful Cap d'Antibes. He bought five hectares, had a villa built and began the creation of a fabulous park, one of the first acclimatization gardens on the French Riviera. Now, having been left to the State by Thuret's heirs, the property is managed by INRA, the French National Institute for Agricultural Research.



© F. Trotobas, ville d'Antibes)

Exflora Park

Exflora Park is a five-hectare public garden in Juan-les-Pins. Built around a large olive grove, it regroups the different expressive styles of Mediterranean gardens, from Ancient Rome to the exuberant 19th-century Riviera.

L'espace Mer et Littoral

On a rocky promontory at the southern tip of Cap d'Antibes, this natural Mediterranean site is located on 2.2 hectares, which includes 400 linear metres of coastline. A breathtaking opportunity to enjoy green spaces and the sea!

EVENTS

- From May 10 to 20: The Antibes Floralties

To celebrate the arrival of spring, nature's re-awakening and the return of warm days, Antibes Juan-les-Pins is organizing a new event entirely devoted to flowers and gardens.

- From July 14 to 22: Jazz à Juan

This is the oldest jazz festival in Europe.

→ www.antibes-juanlespins.com

The Overseas Regions

Martinique



Martinique, at the heart of the Caribbean, is part of the Lesser Antilles. More than 400,000 residents make up this plural, mixed society, which co-exists on a territory that's 80km long and nearly 39km wide.

Rich with varied landscapes, Martinique borders the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. Its highest point, Mount Pelee, gives the island its characteristic relief.

TO SEE

Balata Garden

Founded in 1982 by Jean-Philippe Thoze, the Balada Garden only opened its gates to the public in 1986, and is named after the trees that were once so abundant on this land. Thoze was charmed by the old farm-like country house, and began clearing around it. Over time, he created the garden as it is today, with its more than 3,000 tropical plants. The tropical colour palette is a feast for the eyes, as you stroll amidst the cannas, hibiscus, South American bromeliads, porcelain roses, heliconias, anthuriums, and, yes, wild orchids...



© David Giral



© David Giral



© David Giral

EVENTS

- From March 17 to 24: Martinique Surf Pro

About one hundred male and fifty female competitors are expected to congregate at this magical spot for an incredible event that's sporty, cultural and musical all at the same time. Exceptional waves, top-level surfing, an enthusiastic crowd and professional organization make Martinique Surf Pro the Caribbean's not-to-be-missed international surfing event.

→ <http://us.martinique.org>

The Overseas Regions

The Guadeloupe Islands



A few hours by plane from Montréal, there is a slice of France nestled in the tropics. Make that five slices: Basse-Terre, Grande-Terre, La Désirade, Les Saintes, and Marie-Galante. Welcome to Guadeloupe Islands —an archipelago of discoveries!

Whether your wish to lay back on the beach, navigate from island to island, connect with the exuberant tropical nature, or go out to encounter local people, best keep all your options open! In the Guadeloupe Islands you get it all in just one trip.

TROPICAL FOREST

With the lushness of its captivating flora, its rivers and waterfalls, the Guadeloupe Islands were designated a World Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO. Immerse yourself in the tropical forest with its numerous hiking trails.

CARIBBEAN HERITAGE

Feel the beat of the carnival or Gwo-Ka drums, and dance to languid or unbridled rhythms. Or you may prefer to travel through time on the coffee and sugar cane trails...

CREOLE FLAVORS

Spices, fruits, rum... Guadeloupe is delicious, with its culinary art inspired by African cuisines for its basic ingredients, Indian for its spices, and French for its subtle alliances and pastries. Your taste buds will adore this journey.



TO SEE

The Deshaies Botanical Gardens

The Deshaies Botanical Gardens opened its doors in 2001. This unique floral and animal park was created on a property belonging to the humourist Coluche, and was entirely remodelled by landscape architect, Michel Gaillard. Exceptional plants abound here, with rare essences and multiple species. As you stroll throughout the gardens, you'll be blown away by the abundance of the Caribbean basin's floral diversity.

The Vanibel Estate in Vieux-Habitants

The Vanibel Estate has been able to reconcile agricultural heritage through the cultivation of coffee, vanilla and banana, along with the local architecture, as represented in its accommodations. Here, the Nalson family welcomes guests as friends, and offers an animated guided visit, which expresses their passion for their coffee and vanilla cultures. A true awakening of the senses.

The Aquaculture Park in Pointe-Noire

The Pointe-Noire Aquaculture Park is a 2.5-hectare site designed to help discover aquaculture. There are ten ponds here, where red mullets and ouassou are raised (the only ouassou hatchery in the Caribbean!), a landscaped green area with citrus trees, royal palms, bamboos, mango trees, papyrus, breadfruit trees... Come to do a bit of line fishing, to enjoy a picnic and relax with the family.

EVENTS

Beginning of November: arrival of the Route du Rhum

→ <http://www.lesilesdeguaadeloupe.com/tourism/en-FR>

Overseas Regions

Saint-Martin



Saint-Martin is a small Franco-Dutch island surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean and Caribbean Sea.

It covers an area of 88km², and boasts a wealth of natural resources, perfect for watersports enthusiasts and nature lovers year-round.

Its flourishing gastronomy and nightlife have helped build the island's unique identity, which over the years has transformed Saint-Martin into an unsurpassable sun destination.

Saint-Martin, affected by one of the worst natural disasters

On the night of September 5-6 of last year, Saint-Martin was hit full-on by hurricane Irma, with a violent force never seen before. The damage left by the hurricane was devastating.

The tourism industry was directly hit by this catastrophe. Nevertheless, emergency and state services, along with the community of Saint-Martin, have been working together to rebuild the island and restore normal operations.

Saint-Martin open to business !

Last September, Saint-Martin lived through one of the worse incident of its history with the passage of Hurricane Irma whose strength and violence were never recorded before.

Our tourism industry has been seriously shaken. Nevertheless, Saint- Martin, «la Friendly Island» is recovering at a great pace. Roads and beaches have been cleared. Many restaurants, bars and businesses have reopened. The available hotel rooms along with a number of guest houses and villa rentals are now reopened.

Grand Case International Airport is open since September 23rd offering daily flights from and to Guadeloupe, Martinique and St Barth. Princess Juliana Airport offers direct flights to and from the Caribbean, the US and Europe.

The Serenity and adventure can still be found on the Friendly Island of Saint-Martin. Experience diversity at its best with over one hundred nations sharing cultures and fusing cuisines to make the island stop like no other in the Caribbean.

Bathed year round in the sunshine, the island's vegetation consists of sprawling beaches and scenic trekking trails. Hypnotic sunsets, enticing nightlife, good deal shopping and activities for couples, families and newfound friends await you.

→ <http://www.stmartinland.org>

Tours Operators

Club Med

Enjoy hassle-free all-inclusive vacation with Club Med including comfortable accommodations, gourmet cuisine, sports & activities for all ages, in beautiful ski or sun destinations. For ski enthusiasts, our Samoëns Morillon resort in the French Alps, opened in December 2017, at one of the most picturesque ski destinations in France, is perfect for families looking for that ultimate ski-cation. Passionate about golf? Your next destination is sure to have you hitting the green! Nestled between the sea and the mountains, Opio en Provence is a family and sports resort, featuring a wide array of activities for all, including Club Med CReACTIVE by Cirque du Soleil. And for tropical escapes to the French West Indies, Club Med Buccaneer's Creek in Martinique and Club Med Caravelle in Guadeloupe will charm you with their large choice of land and water sports and their colorful Creole spirit.



Philibert Travel & Events



© Alexander Chaikin

We work for the DMC incoming department in Lyon, and organize stays and round trips on the French territory. We have been a coach company for 92 years now, with our tourism department existing for more than 40 years and our incoming agency for 15 years. Philibert Travel is still owned by the same family that started the company.

We offer two types of services, as listed in our two brochures:

tailor-made Leisure programs for groups and individuals throughout all of France, and Business opportunities in terms of seminars, incentives, and/or team-buildings in Lyon and our region, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes.

Our strengths are numerous:

- We are an incoming agency as well as a coach company, which means we can manage entire projects for you, with one single contact;
- We speak French, English, German, Italian and Greek;
- All our offers are tailor-made to your clients' needs and requests;
- We select the right suppliers and negotiate with them, sharing the benefits of our long-term experience on the territory;
- We focus on and guarantee three key elements: quality, service and knowledge of our destinations.

Groupe Voyages Québec (GVQ)

Groupe Voyages Québec (GVQ) is a Québec-based company that has been specialized in coach travel and guided tours for the past 40 years. Considered a major player in Québec's tourism industry, GVQ designs its own packages, has its own team of guides, and develops trips for all types of groups. GVQ also holds the following trademarks: Groupe Voyages Québec, Imagine Events and Shows, GVQ Canada and GVQ Travel.



© Shutterstock

GVQ continually offers new circuits around France. Our offer is exceptional, exclusive and adapted to the increasingly diverse expectations of tourists. You can choose either a longer tour, or a shorter trip concentrated on one or two cities to deepen your knowledge of the regions. Either way, there is so much to offer visitors.

The company also presents a wide range of tours, which include classic destinations such as Paris, Normandy, Provence and the French Riviera, as well as lesser-known regions like Alsace, the Alps and South West France.

So what are you waiting for to see the world more closely?

Island Dreams by Tours Chanteclerc



Tours Chanteclerc has been showing its clients the world for more than 47 years, always maintaining a high level of quality with all of its products and services.

We offer group programs that cover all of France in one circuit, or in several regional tours.

Since 2015, Tours Chanteclerc has enhanced its offer with more charming itineraries, involving a maximum of 14 people per group. These tours include rural journeys through the backcountry, topped with unique local and culinary experiences. We also offer trips to French Polynesia, as well as skiing holidays in the French resorts via our ski division, Tours Altitude.

Kensington Tours

Kensington Tours creates tailor-made privately guided travel experiences made from the world's finest things.

Each trip is customized with care by a dedicated Destination Expert according to your clients' wants and needs, including everything from chef's table dining experiences to award-winning tours designed around major events like the Monaco Grand Prix to tours of France's top wineries. Get in touch today to discover what's possible.

We offer:

- Privately guided tours led by experienced local guides
- Custom itineraries to more than 90 countries managed by skilled Destination Experts

Unique only-in-France experiences (Loire Valley châteaux, star-spotting in Cannes, romantic Parisian getaways, and more.)



TravelBrands

TravelBrands is one of the largest independent wholesalers in Canada, offering hotels and tours across most of France. We work with all major airlines on a year-round basis, and offer FIT products, specialized tours via our Exotik brand, as well as car rentals. Paris is our main destination, with hundreds of hotels and selected tours, including a Champagne tasting for two and small group cooking classes. The French Riviera is also a key area, where we offer hotels and Pierre & Vacances apartment accommodation. We also organize cycling and hiking tours within our Exotik Brand.



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NEW FOR 2018

We've included a hotel in the Bordeaux region as part of our Culinary Collection in our Experience program.

Air France: Official Partner

Air France and travelling pleasure

Air France makes each flight a moment of real pleasure of the highest quality. With our trademark attentive service and sophisticated products, we never cease to elevate our offering aimed at Canadian travellers:



- Flights year round from **Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal**, up to **33 a week** during the peak summer period;
- New shuttle bus service connecting **Quebec City (Sainte-Foy) and the Montréal-Trudeau airport**, via a 52-seat coach equipped with free wifi;
- Introduction of the brand new **Boeing B787 Dreamliner** on Paris-Montreal flights effective May 1;
- Contribution of Michelin starred chef **Daniel Boulud** to the Business class menu, exclusively on flights out of Air France's 3 Canadian departure cities.

Air France connects **more Canadian cities to more French cities** than any other airline. We operate a dense and effective network, both within France and worldwide.

Air France flies to 25 airports in metropolitan France, and when you add the TGV high-speed train station inside the Paris-Charles de Gaulle airport and our Air+Rail service, the number of **cities we serve across metropolitan France** rises to **34**. We also fly to **Corsica** from Charles-de-Gaulle, meaning even more easy connections for Canadians.

We tirelessly continue to amplify our focus on our customers with innovative solutions intended to simplify the travel experience, e.g. Air France Connect, our mobile website and a host of iPhone and Android apps. We are also very active on social media, especially in Canada. Follow us on Facebook and Twitter to keep track of what we're up to and any promotions.



Other Carriers

Air Canada



Air Canada is the largest airline in Canada to provide domestic and international flights to more than 200 airports on six continents.

Canada's national carrier is listed as one of the 20 most important airlines in the world, and

transports more than 41 million clients each year. Our services to France are now more complete than ever, with four direct flights from Montreal to Paris, Lyon, Marseille and Nice, followed by direct flights from all of our hub airports.

Air Transat



Leisure travel specialist and partner of travel agents, Transat has been inspiring wanderlust to Canadians for 30 years. Be it down South or in Europe, on land, at sea or in the sky, its teams are committed to providing travellers with the best vacation experience, from their travel inspiration to their actual holiday.

Air Transat's transatlantic program is the most diversified on the market and features multiple direct flights to seven cities in France. Paris is accessible year-round via Montreal and Toronto, while Bordeaux, Lyon, Marseille, Nantes, Nice and Toulouse are available from May to October. For Western Canadian travellers, Air Transat flies from Vancouver to Paris, Nice, Nantes, Marseille, Lyon and Bordeaux from May to October, as well as from Calgary to Paris. Transat is also recognized for its wide array of packages, guided tours, cruise packages and à la carte options for visiting France.

Transat was recently named best tour operator for the fourth consecutive year at the 18th annual Agents' Choice Awards, organized by Canadian Travel Press, Travel Courier and TravelPress.com. Air Transat was also voted Best North American Leisure Airline at the Skytrax annual World Airline Awards in July 2017, for the sixth year in a row. Committed to the sustainable development of the tourism industry, Transat is involved in several corporate responsibility initiatives and has been awarded Travelife Partner status.

Rail Europe North America Inc.



See the Real Europe with Rail Europe.

A little planning can mean a lot more traveling. Traveling by train will enhance your entire European experience: no airport hassles or wasted time, and more leisurely gourmet dining as you gaze through panoramic windows while being whisked from city centre to city centre. It's no wonder trains are so popular, so make sure you book in advance to get the most choices at the best prices.

Rail Europe, which represents more than 35 railways in Europe, offers a large variety of products in addition to the traditional train ticket, most notably the Rail Pass, the equivalent of a travel card.

Present on four continents, Rail Europe employees offer their help and expertise to nearly four million clients each year.

Rail Europe allows travellers from America, Asia, Oceania, Africa and the Middle East to easily plan and book their train travel in Europe, along with complementary tours and activities.



EVENTS

Calendar of Parks and Gardens Events in 2018

- 2018: [10 years of Le Havre's Hanging Gardens](#)

This remarkable hanging garden has been a natural part of Le Havre's landscape since 2008, and provides a green sensorial escape. On 17 hectares overlooking the Bay of the Seine River, the park offers exceptional views of the sea, port and city.

- February 3 and 4: [The Violet Festival in Toulouse](#)

The Violet Festival pays tribute to Toulouse's iconic flower: a violet with double flowers, bearing up to 40 purple petals, with its interior laced in white. This violet began a glorious century in 1850, earning Toulouse its nickname as "The City of Violets." Since 2015, Charles de Gaulle Square in front of the Toulouse Tourist Office has been adorned with a flowerbed radiant in local violets.

- April 24 to November: [27th Edition of the International Gardens Festival in Chaumont-sur-Loire](#)

"Les Jardins de la Pensée," or Gardens of Thought, is the theme of this edition, in which 30 new gardens will be revealed to the public through original, contemporary scenographies.

- May 8: [Alterarosa Flower Festival in Avignon](#)

This event celebrates roses and explains how new varieties are created each year. Alterarosa, supported by the French Society of Roses, promises a majestic setting for this, its 14th edition.

- May 10 to 20: [The Antibes Floralties](#)

To celebrate the arrival of spring, nature's re-awakening and the return of warm days, Antibes Juan-les-Pins has, since May 2016, been organizing a new event entirely devoted to flowers and gardens.

- May 18 to 20, and October 19 to 21: [The Flower Show at Château de Chantilly](#)

This sale-exhibit is a must in the gardening world, with more than 200 exhibitors gathering in the park of the Chantilly Estate. Nurseries, botanists, landscape architects and amateurs of all kinds meet here to share and enjoy their common passion.

- June 1 to 3: [The Garden Rendez-vous throughout France](#)

This "Rendez-vous aux Jardins" event has been organized by the French Ministry of Culture and Communication since 2003. This year's theme is "The Europe of Gardens," and its goal is to communicate on the art of gardens through different approaches, including workshops, exhibitions, public gatherings, nocturnal openings, and more...



- June to August: [The Lieux Mouvants Festival in Lanrivain](#) (Brittany)

Each summer, the festival program includes innovative performances and visits of ephemeral gardens. Embark on a discovery tour of magical and unknown villages, gardens and sites.

Big events in France

In 2018, Toulouse becomes European Science Capital!

<https://toulousescience2018.eu/>

March 21: Good France

On 21 March in 150 countries Goût de France / Good France will bring together over 3,000 restaurants and 150 embassies **over five continents** in a celebration of French gastronomy. Chefs from around the world will come together for a meal to celebrate the vitality of French cuisine and unite around the joint values of sharing and pleasure in a planet-friendly and healthy way. From haute cuisine to quality bistro food, **offer a French-inspired meal in your restaurant and participate in this great celebration**

<https://www.france.fr/en/campaign/gout-france-good-france>

May 27: Mont Saint-Michel Marathon

Nearly 5,000 runners will race along one of the world's prettiest bays, on a circuit that runs from Brittany to Normandy. <http://www.runinmontsaintmichel.com/fr>

May 27 to June 10: Roland Garros Tennis Tournament

One of the world's four major tennis tournaments will take place in Paris, starting May 27

<http://www.rolandgarros.com/>

June 15: 24h of Le Mans

Each summer Plantagenêt City revives its chimeras, right next to where whirling cars race for 24 hours, promising a phantasmagoric night in Le Mans! <https://www.lemans.org/>

June 14 to 18: Bordeaux Wine Festival is 20!

Bordeaux Fête le Vin is celebrating its 20th anniversary in grand style, with 30 of the world's most beautiful sailboats. <https://www.bordeaux-fete-le-vin.com/>

July 7 to 29: Tour de France

Dozens of cyclists will pedal more than a thousand kilometres through France, in 21 stages, to reach the famous finish line on the Champs-Élysées. <http://www.letour.fr/fr>

August 1 to 12: 10th Edition of the Gay Games in Paris

Nearly 15,000 participants from 70 countries will partake in this competition, which helps promote fundamental values like respect, tolerance and diversity. <https://www.paris2018.com/fr/>

September 25 to 30: Ryder Cup

This year France welcomes the Ryder Cup, the 3rd most publicized sporting event. During this competition, a European team will face an American team for the trophy. <https://www.ffgolf.org/Ryder-Cup>

November 4: Route du Rhum Departure in Saint-Malo

For its 40th edition, more than 100 solo sailors will start the race from Saint-Malo and sail towards Guadeloupe. This unique event only takes place every four years so don't miss it! <http://www.routedurhum.com/>

Exhibitions

Major exhibitions

- **Leonardo da Vinci at Château du Clos Lucé in Amboise**, Centre-Val de Loire (2018-2019)
- **Napoleon, Images of the Legend at the Arras Museum of Fine Arts**, Hauts-de-France (October 7, 2017 - November 4, 2018)
- **Le Corbusier at the Soulages Museum in Rodez**, Occitanie (December 16, 2017 - April 29, 2018)
- **Chagall – Malevich, Pompidou Center in Paris** (March 28 - July 23)
- **The Empire of the Roses**, masterpieces of 19th-century Persian art at the Louvre-Lens, Hauts-de-France (March 28 to July 22)
- **Gustav Klimt – an immersive digital exhibition**- Atelier des lumières, Paris (April 13 to December 31)
- **500th Anniversary of the Renaissance**, Centre-Val de Loire (May to September)
- **The Burrell Collection** at the Cantini Museum in Marseille (May 17 - September 23)
- **Picasso, Donner à voir**, at the Fabre Museum in Montpellier, Occitanie (June 16 - September 23)
- **Goscinny and the Cinema**, at the Cité internationale de la bande dessinée et de l'image in Angoulême, Nouvelle-Aquitaine (June 19 - December 31)
- **Picasso-Méditerranée** at the Picasso Museum in Paris (2017-2019)
- **Claude Monet** at the Museum of the Sea and Navy in Bordeaux (June)
- **Picasso's Blue and Rose periods** at the Orsay Museum in Paris (September 18, 2018 - January 6, 2019)
- **Color prints from Raphael to Rubens**, at the Louvre in Paris (mid-October 2018 - mid-January 2019)
- **Miró, The color of my dreams**, at the Grand Palais in Paris (October 2018 – January 2019)
- From October 6 to February 3, 2019: **Louis-Philippe and Versailles**, Château de Versailles
- From October 18 to February 24, 2019: **Political Picasso at the Carré d'Art**

Openings

Grand openings in 2018

- Opening of the Rennes Convention Center in heritage site: **Le Couvent des Jacobins**, Brittany (January)
- Opening of the **Lafayette Anticipations Corporate Foundation** in Paris (March)
- Re-opening of the **Longchamp Racetrack** as Paris Longchamp, Paris Région (April 8)
- Opening of **l'Atelier des Lumières**, a digital arts center in Paris (April 13)
- Opening of the new **Roman History Museum** in Nîmes, Occitanie (June 2)
- Opening of the new **Museum of the Sea and Navy** in Bordeaux, Nouvelle-Aquitaine (June)
- Re-opening **Nausicaa**, one of the world's largest aquariums in Boulogne-sur-Mer, Hauts-de-France (July)
- Opening of the new **Samaritaine and Cheval Blanc Hotel** by the LVMH Group in Paris (end of 2018)

About Atout France, the France Tourism Development Agency

Atout France, the only state operator in the tourism field contributes to the enhancement of the attractiveness of the France destination and the competitiveness of its businesses and sectors. Thanks to its 33 offices in 30 countries, Atout France covers 78 intervention markets with the close collaboration of the embassies and has a precise knowledge of the international tourist customers and the actors of the distribution.

Atout France supports more than 1,200 professionals (institutional tourism and private companies) in their international development. In total, more than 2,800 promotional operations are organized each year. They target the general public, in particular through a strong digital strategy (a powerful website, france.fr , 3 million fans on social medias, 5,5 million qualified contacts) as well as communication campaigns or editions. International press and tourism professionals are also continuously kept aware of the advantages of the destination (trade shows, prospections, fam trips, conferences, etc.).

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