

# *Dordogne Valley*

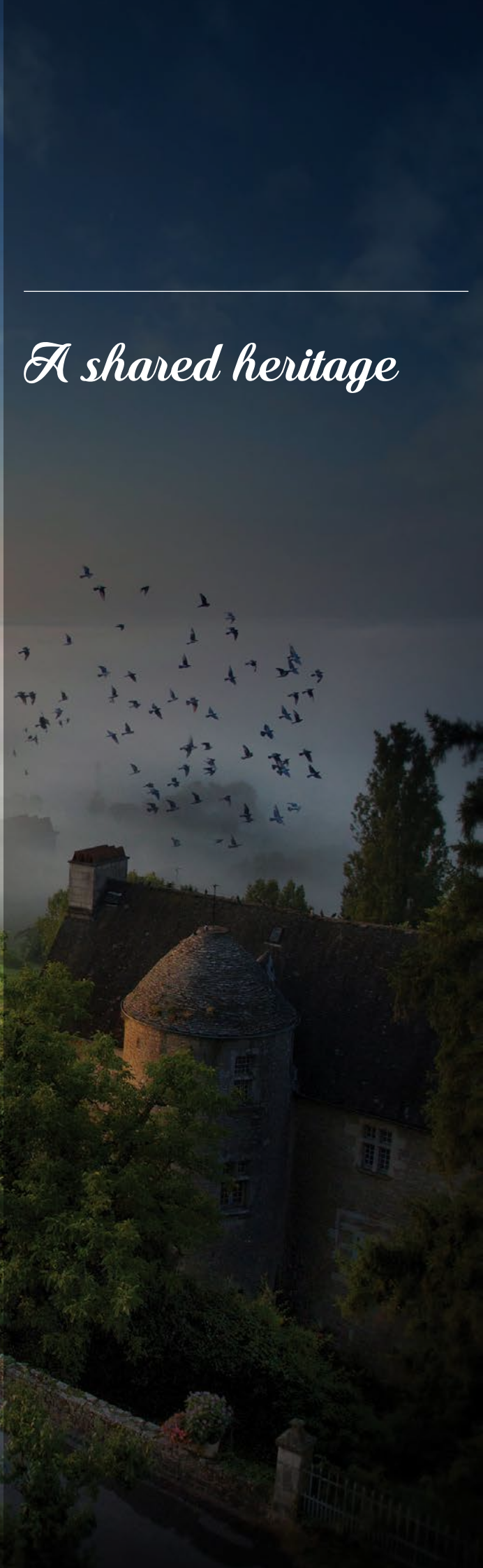
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*A shared heritage*





The Dordogne Valley covers a vast area in the South West of France, which starts in the mountains of the Massif Central and ends in the plains to the east, near Bordeaux, where the Dordogne River empties into the Gironde Estuary to eventually join the Atlantic Ocean.

Coming to the Dordogne Valley is exploring an area to which Time has been kind. Its rich traditions and heritage accumulated over millennia – scenic, architectural, historic, cultural and gastronomic – are still very much present and alive.

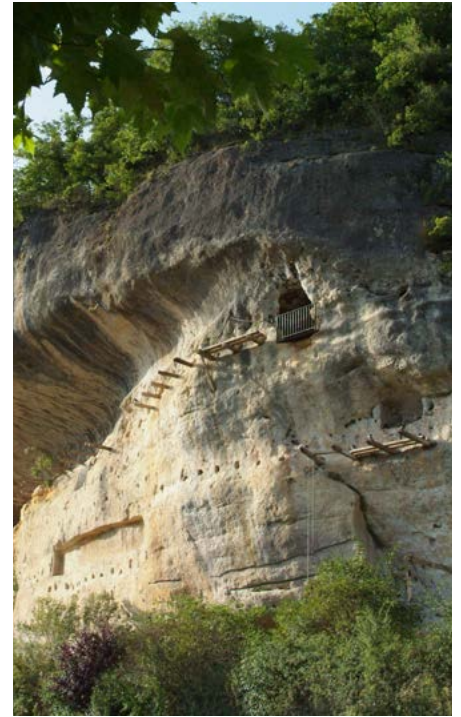
At the core of the valley, the Dordogne River passes through 6 French départements, binding them together like a blue-green ribbon, and its course traces an arc through the centre of France which has earned it the nickname, France's smile.

This waterway, from earliest times until the 19th C., was a vital trade artery, as were all navigable rivers, and the busy river traffic brought prosperity to many a settlement established on the banks.

With virtually no industry, a dramatic range of differing and unspoilt landscapes, a rich heritage including some of the best preserved prehistoric sites in the world as well as buildings throughout the ages, a rich variety of flora and fauna, plenty of opportunity to practise outdoor sports and activities and of course the art de vivre cultivated by its local inhabitants over the centuries with its tempting gastronomy, the region has plenty to offer its visitors.

The two airports which serve the region, Brive-Dordogne Valley airport to the east and Bergerac Dordogne Périgord Airport to the west, provide easy access to this enchanting area.





The waters of the Dordogne River start life amongst the volcanic landscape of the Cantal as a torrent in the steep, narrow valleys of the granite uplands.

It then matures into a river as it crosses the Quercy limestone plateaux and passes along deep, ever wider valleys bordered by impressive cliffs in the Dordogne department and finally broadens out into its alluvial flood plains as it joins the Gironde estuary.

Amongst its diversified forms including backwaters, deep pools, islets, gravel pits and banks there live a number of protected and remarkable species such as otters, mink, salmon, trout, sturgeon and eels.

In the upriver gorges there are impressive hydro-electric dams and deep forests.

Between the Xaintrie and the Quercy there is the port at Argentat, witnessing the period when wooden boats, called gabares took their goods down river; the ancient sanctuary of Rocamadour, visited by pilgrims for centuries, clings to the side of the cliffs and there are astonishing geographic features like the huge gouffre at Padirac with its underground stream, which has welcomed tourists for nearly 120 years.

As it makes sweeping curves through the department of the Dordogne it passes medieval villages such as La Roque-Gageac, bastide towns like Domme and castles such as Castelnaud-la-Chapelle and Beynac.

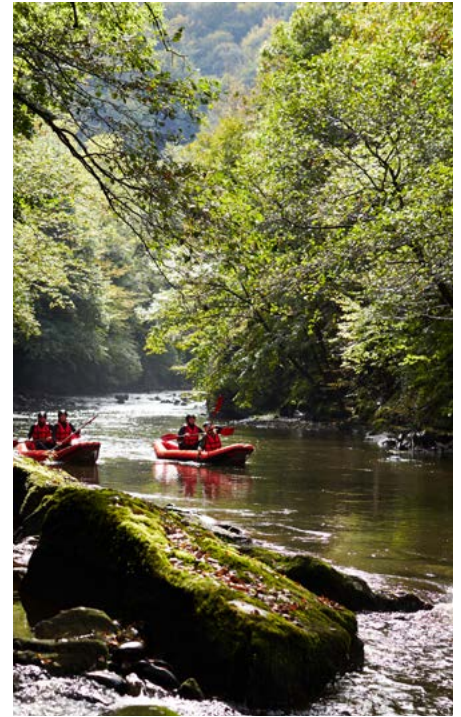
Along one of its tributaries, the Vézère, we find one of the most important concentration of prehistoric remains in the world including the famous cave paintings at Lascaux, other prehistoric caves, and troglodytic dwellings carved into cliff faces which witness the length of time man has enjoyed living in the area.

As the valley widens the beautiful stone village of Saint-Emilion appears among the vines and finally the river arrives at Libourne, a peaceful port on the river banks, the last town before it joins the Gironde.

### *The Unesco Biosphere Reserve of the Dordogne Basin*

The 24,000km<sup>2</sup> Dordogne Basin, including the river and its tributaries, was designated a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO in 2012. This recognises not only the natural wealth of biodiversity within the area and the primordial role played in this by the Dordogne river and its tributaries but also the efforts made by local communities to preserve it and to promote sustainable development. It is hoped that this international recognition will stimulate awareness of the natural environment, inspiring imaginative, environmentally friendly solutions to the problems of territorial management, development and energy needs.





Throughout the region there are opportunities to enjoy the thousand and one flavours which come together to create its reputed gastronomy the world over.

There are truffles, foie gras, walnuts, chestnuts, duck and geese products, charcuterie and cheeses which can be bought at the farmers' markets to be found in many of the towns and villages along the way and tasted in its hundreds of restaurants including several listed in the Michelin Guide. There are also of course prestigious vineyards producing some of the most famous wines with 10 AOCs in Libourne, Saint-Emilion, Pomerol and Fronsac and 13 AOC in the Bergerac region.

Culture, the arts in all their variety and crafts, ancient and modern are also very much apparent. Concerts, music festivals, theatre, museums, artisan fairs and workshops open to the public are to be found all over the area and there are traditional festivals and lively village fêtes to enjoy.

There are numerous opportunities to get onto the river itself by hiring canoes or joining a trip on a gabare which reminds visitors of the traditional, bustling river trade which existed until the end of the 19th century. Fishing is also popular along the river and its tributaries in all categories, amateur and professional.

Nature lovers and people who enjoy outdoor sports in general are especially well catered for as you can go climbing, canyoning, walking, biking and horse riding throughout the region. Whether you are looking for an active or a contemplative holiday or a mixture of both there is something to suit everyone and activities are adapted to all ages. People here are very conscious of the benefits of their unhurried local lifestyle, and enjoy sharing it with visitors, who are considered as welcome guests.

And that's an invitation which is very difficult to refuse!



## The 'Most beautiful villages in France'

One of the must-sees in this area includes several villages belonging to the select group, known as '*Les Plus Beaux Villages de France*'.

This association was founded in 1982 by Charles Ceyrac, who was then Mayor of Collonges-la-Rouge in the Corrèze. The purpose of the group is to preserve and enhance the heritage of member villages in order to make them better known, so that they can attract more visitors and develop their local economy, thus helping to keep them alive and viable.

Today the association includes 153 villages spread all over France. Membership is not given lightly with only about 1 in 5 applications ending in success. Villages must satisfy very strict criteria relating to their population, the quality and state of conservation, and the efforts made by the village council to ensure that it is appreciated and cared for.

In the Dordogne Valley there are eighteen classified *Most Beautiful Villages in France*.

Salers	Saint-Amand-de-Coly
Tournemire	Domme
Curemonte	La Roque-Gageac
Collonges-la-Rouge	Castelnaud-la-Chapelle
Turenne	Beynac-et-Cazenac
Saint-Robert	Saint-Léon-sur-Vézère
Autoire	Limeuil
Loubressac	Belvès
Carennac	Monpazier



**Salers** is an unspoilt 16th century village which stands at an altitude of 950m and presents a harmonious whole with houses made of dark lavastone and topped with turrets. There are several classified historic monuments to admire including the old baliff's court, the Maison de la Ronade with its five storey high tower and the Maison des Templiers which houses a museum exhibiting the town's folklore and past. The Church of Saint Matthieu contains treasures in the form of five 17th century Aubusson tapestries, a tomb and a polychrome lectern. Nearby there are fantastic panoramic views over the puy Violent and surrounding green valleys. There are 400,000 visitors a year.

**Tournemire** in the Cantal mountains, is a charming, leafy village which is dominated by Anjony Castle, a magnificent, tall, square building with four round towers. The fourteenth and fifteenth century typical Cantal style houses with stone lauze or slate roofs cluster round the twelfth century Romanesque church. The château d'Anjony has been owned by the same family since it was built in the early 15th century and is open to the public with rich furnished rooms and remarkable 16th century frescos.



**Euremonte** is built on a ridge between two valleys and boasts three châteaux which are tightly grouped around an attractive covered market place and 12th century Romanesque church. There are also several fine noble residences as well as a corn exchange dating back to the early 19th century. The village developed during the 11th century when it came into the possession of the Viscounts of Turenne. Two other churches stand outside the main village. The 11th C. Romanesque La Combe is one of the oldest in the Limousin and the other, the 12th C. St.Genest is now a museum of sacred art.

**Collonges-la-Rouge** is well known for its red sandstone buildings which give it a distinctive nature, reflected in its name. It was the favourite dwelling place for nobles and officers from the nearby court of the Viscounts of Turenne and they built fine residences which resemble small chateaux. You can wander among the streets and admire the buildings including one with a mermaid holding a comb and mirror, sculpted onto an outside wall and a fine 12th century church, Saint Pierre. Fine local craftwork and products are available in the little shops around the village.



**Turenne** was the stronghold of a powerful viscountcy that ruled over Limousin, Périgord and Quercy for nearly ten centuries. It is built on a conical hill which is crowned by the César and le Trésor towers which are the remains of the medieval château from which the viscounts ruled the area. There are wonderful views from the hilltop and steep lanes wind down through the village with its 15th to 17th C. turreted town houses in grey-white limestone and more modest dwellings with lauze, stone slab or slate tiles.

#### **LE CLOS MARNIS in Turenne**

A fine group of buildings erected in 1771 by the Guild of White Penitents (so called for the white cloaks and hoods they wore when doing charitable works). The 5 cosy bedrooms have a view of either the castle or the village. Table d'hôte meals available on reservation.

[closmarnis.online.fr](http://closmarnis.online.fr)

#### **CHATEAU DE MARSAC in Meyssac**

A red sandstone building, situated on a hillside 4km from Collonges-la-Rouge, the Château de Marsac is surrounded by 11 hectares of woodland, meadows and orchards with breath-taking views over the villages of the Dordogne Valley. The four extremely spacious bedrooms are decorated in contemporary style. Reiki and Reflexology are on offer for the well-being of visitors and there are relaxing areas around the swimming pool and orchard where the owner grows her own organic herbs, vegetables and fruit.

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



A shared heritage

Dordogne Valley



The medieval village of ***Saint-Robert*** is built on a ridge on the border between the Corrèze and the Dordogne departments. It was originally built around a Benedictine Monastery by followers of Saint Robert. Over the centuries there were violent religious clashes but a fine 12th C. fortified Romanesque church with an octagonal bell towers remains intact as well as several stately stone houses. The village has great charm with its old noble homes, its narrow streets and remains of fortified gates.

***Autoire*** is nestled into the hollow of a cirque near to a spectacular thirty metre waterfall. In the 15th and 16th C this sheltered situation attracted wealthy residents who had fine houses built and earned it the name "Petit Versailles." Dominating the valley is the Château des Anglais which was used as a lookout post, and sheltered brigands during the Hundred Years War. There is an attractive fountain and the church, 11th C Romanesque in origin with later alterations has been beautifully restored.

***Loubressac*** is perched on the edge of a plateau and offers a wonderful panoramic view of the Dordogne valley and surrounding castles. The village is made up of charming medieval houses built of ochre stone and capped with pointed roofs. A manor dating back to the 15th and 18th C is worth visiting as is the church of Saint Jean Baptiste. In the past the village was fortified and remains of one of the gates still exist.

**LA GRANGE DES MANOQUES  
in Prudhomat**

Close to the mighty fortress of Castelnau Bretenoux, sleep safe and sound in one of the four spacious B & B guest rooms (all with private facilities) set up in buildings which formed a farming hamlet in the 19th C. Comfort, peace and privacy guaranteed.

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

**LA TERRASSE  
in Meyronne**

Overlooking the river Dordogne, this beautifully-restored château offers comfortable rooms in total harmony with the noble spirit of the place.

[www.hotel-la-terrasse.com](http://www.hotel-la-terrasse.com)

The Saint-Pierre Church in ***Carennac*** has a beautifully carved doorway and a cloister which contains a fine 15th century sculpture of Christ's entombment. The village has elegant Renaissance houses with sculpted windows and there is an exhibition centre in the Château des Doyens which invites you to discover the historical treasures of the local region. The village lies on the banks of the River Dordogne.

***Saint-Amand-de-Coly*** is a small village not far from Montignac and is notable for its 12th century fortified abbey church built by Saint Augustin monks. Its imposing mass and vertiginous height dominates the village. You can visit a large tobacco barn which has been beautifully renovated and see the communal bread oven, pigeonnier and the old 18th century hospital building. There is a signposted walk that runs along the edge of the church and into the surrounding countryside.





**Domme** is a fortified village, perched on a breathtakingly high cliff which was built under the orders of Philip III the Bold in the thirteenth century. Early on, its fortified entrance, La Porte des Tours, was prison to 70 Templar Knights who wrote moving testimonies to their faith on the stone walls, which can still be seen. Under the 18th C market place you can go underground to visit a natural cave with stalactites and stalagmites. Above ground you can admire the stone houses and buildings and look across the Dordogne Valley from the edge of the cliff.

**La Roque-Gageac** is a long, narrow fortified village with beautiful, historic cream stone houses nestled between the Dordogne River and a south facing cliff. The buildings are mirrored in the waters of the river where you can have a ride in a replica of the traditional flat-bottomed boats, gabares which used to trade here. The village is an ancient possession of the bishops of Sarlat and from earlier times there are the remnants of a troglodytic fort high up in the cliffs. It benefits from an extraordinary micro climate which has allowed the development of a luxuriant tropical garden along its charming stone alleyways.

The village of **Castelnaud-la-Chapelle** overhangs the confluence between the Dordogne and the Céou rivers and faces the beautiful villages of Beynac-et-Cazenac and La Roque-Gageac, with panoramic views across the Dordogne Valley. It is characterised by a series of terraces linked by narrow streets which climb up to the fortified chateau on the summit which can be visited, and houses an important collection of weapons and armour. Another nearby castle is the Château des Milandes, owned at one time by Josephine Baker.

The charming village of **Beynac-et-Cazenac** on the banks of the River Dordogne is dominated by its majestic medieval fortress standing high on the cliffs above. It was once in the possession of Richard the Lionheart and is now open to visitors. Its spectacular setting has been used in around a dozen films and the views of the village and river valley below are some of the most spectacular in the region. The village, itself, built in creamy limestone with "lauze" stone slab-roofed houses lies on the steep slope between the river and the chateau and visitors can walk among its narrow streets and admire the river from its banks.

**LA BELLE ETOILE  
in La Roque-Gageac**

This hotel at the foot of the cliffs that rise above the village possesses all the charm of an old residence and has been run by the same family for three generations. A comfortable, restful place, it forms an ideal base from which to explore the beauties of the area.

[www.hotel-belle-etoile-dordogne.fr](http://www.hotel-belle-etoile-dordogne.fr)

**BALCON EN FORET  
in Beynac**

Bed and breakfast in a superb group of buildings typical of Perigord with 2 hectares of grounds in a lovely setting above the Dordogne, and standing on a lane leading to the centre of Beynac. Very spacious suites, with fireplaces in the local style.

[www.guests.ladordogne.info](http://www.guests.ladordogne.info)





**PRESBYTERE D'URVAL**  
*in Urval*

In the heart of the medieval village of Urval, the "Presbytère d'Urval" is a B&B art gallery. This 18th century property offers three comfortable B&B rooms in which contemporary furnishings and works of art contrast with the traditional architecture. However, [www.presbytere-urval.fr](http://www.presbytere-urval.fr)

**LA MAISON ANGLAISE**  
*in Monpazier*

These two spacious apartments decorated in contemporary style occupy the first floor of a late-19th century house in the heart of the bastide of Monpazier. This elegant property also boasts an outdoor swimming pool and terrace. [www.lamaisonanglaise.fr](http://www.lamaisonanglaise.fr)

*Saint Léon sur Vézère* is a peaceful village, situated on a meander of the river Vézère. It is well guarded by its châteaux, the Manoir de la Salle at the entrance to the village. Château de Ciernas above the river and Château de Chabans and hosts the Music Festival of the Périgord Noir in its beautiful 12th Romanesque church. You can hire audio-guides for an interactive walk around this authentic medieval village.

At the point where the Rivers Dordogne and Vézère meet, stands the medieval village of *Limeuil*. It has had a turbulent history, surviving Viking invasions and the Hundred Years War. Today it is a peaceful place with its tranquil riverside setting and panoramic gardens, where you can take part in traditional craft workshops during the summer and discover its themed gardens. There are three fortified gates which bear witness to its history and it has one of the most beautiful Romanesque churches in the area, Saint-Martin.

*Belvès* is a medieval town perched on a rocky spur above the Nauze valley in Périgord Noir, with magnificent views over the surrounding countryside. There are 7 medieval bell towers, a magnificent church and several fine noblemen's houses. The town was in a strategic position and was besieged several times during the 100 Year's War but its fine architecture was undamaged. In the centre of the town you can go underground to visit troglodytic dwellings which were lived in from the 13th to 18th C.

*Monpazier* is regarded as the prime example of a bastide town among the 300 which exist in South-West France. It was founded by Edward I of England in 1284 and has changed very little from those days. It is labelled a "Grand Site National" with no less than 32 classified historic buildings. The town is perfectly quadrilateral and the streets run parallel to the longest sides from one end of the town to the other. Its centrepiece is an arcaded main square, Place des Cornières which is surrounded by medieval and seventeenth-century houses.





## *Heritage of the Dordogne Valley, an enchanted river in a natural landscape*

People have enjoyed living in the green and verdant environment of the Dordogne Valley from prehistoric times and have made use of the landscape to suit their needs during the changing centuries.

Earliest man found shelter in the caves and cliffs and later, in times of war, fortresses and fortified homes used natural features to give them defence by building on high rocky spurs.

In more peaceful times the local stone could be used to build homes of great beauty, which bring harmony to the villages and towns of the region.

The lack of modern industry has meant that the area has preserved its original beauty.

## *Towns and city sketches*

There are many attractive towns to visit in the Dordogne Valley which have retained the charm that have led people to live there for many years.

Many have been distinguished by the title 'Town of Art and History'.

This label is given to towns which enjoy a rich heritage and which seek to share their treasures with visitors through cultural tourism, exhibitions, guided visits and other activities.





## Tulle



The administrative capital of the Corrèze is **Tulle**, from where François Hollande celebrated his victory when he became President.

The city grew up around an abbey recorded in the 7th C. Elevated to the status of cathedral in the 14th C., its 12th C. church was transformed as the town rapidly developed, and the 75m high belltower still stands sentinel above it.

Tulle is confined in the deep, narrow valley of the Corrèze river and the fascinating old quarters, rising steeply up the slopes, are threaded with many flights of steps to give access to the different levels. They give the city its distinctive character along with old wooden balconies still seen on some houses.

It has long been famous for its lace and accordion manufacture, as well as arms factory. The Musée des Armes provides an overview of the history of armaments in France and elsewhere, recalling this part of our heritage. A small city (fewer than 17,000 inhabitants), Tulle has an attractive, unspoilt atmosphere, which invites you to stroll through the old streets (a bit of effort required for the steps) and explore to your heart's content.

### LES 7

#### in Tulle

Excellent cuisine right in the city center. The young chef Cyril Auboiron cooks seasonal and locally-sourced food. In a design dining room, authentic cuisine. [www.restaurant-les7.fr](http://www.restaurant-les7.fr)

### L'OREE DES BOIS

#### in St Pardoux-La-Croisille

close to Tulle

At one end of the village stands a comfortable granite-built 17th C. residence, elegantly set in verdant grounds, on the fringe of the woods. Two guest rooms on the first floor. Breakfast served beside the swimming pool, home-made jam and cakes! Refined table d'hôte menu.

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



## Brive-la-Gaillarde



**Brive-la-Gaillarde** stands in the alluvial plain of the River Corrèze. This lively, forward-looking town of some 50,000 inhabitants is by far the largest in the Corrèze. Set between two ridges providing great views over the closely-packed slate roofs of the old town, Brive is renowned for its excellent regional cuisine and rugby fans will certainly have heard of the local team's prowess.

Located where four different rock types meet, a wide variety of produce is available thanks to the fertile soils that makes it an important centre for fruit and vegetables which are sold in its reputed markets along with other regional specialities.

The old centre originally developed around St Martin's church and is now largely pedestrianized. The well-restored mediaeval and Renaissance quarters shelter a wide range of shops, boutiques and cafes, giving Brive a relaxed, pleasant atmosphere.

Historical and architectural heritage, modern out-of-town shopping centres, Brive is a growing urban destination that has much to offer the visitor including various festivals and events. One of France's most important book fairs - Foire du Livre - is held here every November.

### LE COLLONGES

#### **in Brive-la-Gaillarde**

Situated in the attractive town centre, the three star Le Collonges Hotel is ideally placed for chic shopping in boutiques in beautiful historic buildings. The Rugby Stadium, the conference centre and the railway station are all within easy reach

[www.hotel-collonges.com](http://www.hotel-collonges.com)

### HOTEL ADONIS

#### **in Brive-la-Gaillarde**

An unusual hotel built at the beginning of the 20thC in the Haussman style and entirely renovated. On fine days, visitors staying in this town centre hotel, appreciate the exceptional interior courtyard garden and the veranda is a pleasant place to have breakfast. The renovated bedrooms and their price are appreciated by guests.

[www.adonis-hotel-brive.com](http://www.adonis-hotel-brive.com)

### CHATEAU LACAN

#### **in Brive-la-Gaillarde**

A charming hotel situated close to Brive town centre. A warm welcome awaits you and there are 15 comfortable and spacious rooms, each with their own, individual character. You can relax in the large garden and the bar/restaurant where all your needs are catered for. Come to Château de Lacan for a unique experience.

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



### LA TABLE D'OLIVIER

#### **in Brive-la-Gaillarde**

With a large choice of fresh and local products, the chef fully created a refined, singular bold and inventive food from the starter to the dessert. The restaurant menu is regularly renewed and changed depending on seasons. Every 15 days, a new dish is added to enrich the menu.

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

### CHEZ FRANCIS

#### **in Brive-la-Gaillarde**

Only two steps away from the Brassens Market this special restaurant where the walls are decorated with signatures from famous writers and comedians who were present at the famous book fair 'Foire du Livre' in autumn. Tasting the flavors of the market in a bistro atmosphere.

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



## *Terrasson-Lavilledieu*

The little town of *Terrasson-Lavilledieu*, whose origins go back beyond the Gallo-Roman period, is set in the Vézère valley (one of the major tributaries of the Dordogne) not far from Brive.

It has always been an important river crossing, where north-south and east-west routes meet, and the Pont Vieux, which has spanned the river since the 12th C., bears witness to this long history of travel and exchanges.

If you climb up to the top of the Malpas cliff, you get a wonderful view over the river, the roofs and old streets of the town and the 15th C. St. Sour church.

*Les cluseaux* are a real curiosity: they are underground shelters, whose history is shrouded in mystery, but the fact that most are equipped with a source of water suggests that they might have been used as refuges in troubled times.

Enjoy a stroll through the gardens inspired by 17th and 18th C. styles, and the contrasting *Jardins de l'Imaginaire*, which are a modern garden must-see.

### **LE MOULIN ROUGE in Terrasson**

A short way outside the town centre, this smart, modern complex with two single storey hotels, two large restaurants and conference facilities is ideal for both leisure and business purposes.

[www.hotel-dordogne-perigord.com](http://www.hotel-dordogne-perigord.com)

### **LES AGAPES in Terrasson**

Set in the old quarter of the town, close to the church, this restaurant with its ancient stone walls and shady terrace provides refined, delicious cuisine prepared from seasonal produce.

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



## *Figeac*



***Figeac***, also a 'Town of Art and History', has been designated as a 'Grand Site Midi-Pyrénées': one of the major attractions in the Midi-Pyrénées Region.

The city owes its existence to the foundation of a Benedictine abbey on the banks of the river Célé. Now the Lot's second largest town, it grew rapidly as the abbey prospered, and in the 13th and 14th C. was home to rich merchants whose business took them throughout Europe and the Mediterranean. Their wealth built some very fine town houses, and explains the lovely mediaeval aspect of Figeac's well conserved, semi-pedestrianised town centre.

The town was also home to Champollion, who cracked the code of hieroglyphics, and there is now a museum dedicated to him and to the writing systems of the world. Figeac is an invitation to stroll through a living history book which has adopted - and adapted - modernity without losing its delightful personality.

### **LES PRATGES in Figeac**

An oasis of greenery in the town itself, this fine 19th C. town house offers three guest rooms which open on to grounds planted with old trees: magnolias, palms, cypresses...

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

### **LE RELAIS DE LA TOUR in Capdenac-le-Haut**

A charming hotel in one of the Most Beautiful Village in France.

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



## Sarlat



**Sarlat**, another worthy 'Town of Art and History', grew up beside a Benedictine monastery probably founded in the 9th C. The settlement developed next to the monastic enclosure, and by the 13th C., was a thriving, bustling town peopled by merchants, shopkeepers and craftsmen. Naturally, the well-off members of the bourgeoisie wanted their houses to reflect their wealth and status, and these elegant buildings in honey-coloured stone still line the narrow, winding streets.

Sarlat was the first town in France to benefit from the loi Malraux in the 1960s which led to the renovation of the entire medieval city centre. The city has the highest density of classified buildings per metre square of any town in Europe.

Many of its monuments are famous: the house where La Boétie was born, the Lanterne des Morts and the cathedral. Another attraction is the discovery of the town from the sky. A glass lift in the bell tower of the old church of St Marie takes you beyond the top of the tower from where you have a 360° panoramic view of the town below.

Every Saturday morning the market offers many local delicacies on sale set against the backdrop of this extremely attractive historic town.

It's easy to imagine yourself back in the past, especially after dusk, as you wander along the city in the modern gas lamplight...

### LA RAPIERE in Sarlat

Right in the centre of the old town, the chef cooks only fresh local produce, plus fish and seafood.  
[www.larapriere-sarlat.com](http://www.larapriere-sarlat.com)

### LE PRESIDIAL in Sarlat

The building, in an idyllic setting in the old town, was once the Law Courts, but there's no argument about the quality of the food: the chef serves the classics of the Périgord area, such as fresh ceps or black truffles in season, but with his own individual touch.  
[www.lepresidial.fr](http://www.lepresidial.fr)



## Périgueux



Home to 39 listed buildings and historic monuments, the city of *Périgueux* boasts one of the largest conservation areas in France.

Périgueux, an officially recognised '*Town of Art and History*', is home to a unique architectural ensemble.

From the ancient Gallo-Roman city '*Vesunna*' to the medieval-Renaissance town and fine 18th and 19th century buildings, Périgueux offers no less than 2,000 years of history.

Its Saint Front cathedral forms part of UNESCO's Way of St James World Heritage Site.

Périgueux is renowned for the traditional food markets which take place around St Front cathedral on Saturday and Wednesday mornings throughout the year and for its duck and goose markets held every winter.

A large night market showcasing the region's gastronomic specialities takes place in the heart of the historic town from 7pm onwards on Wednesday evenings in summer.

The diversity of food events and activities allows each one to enjoy tastings of local produce.

### **HOTEL MERCURE in Périgueux**

Just a stone's throw from *Saint Front cathedral*, the hotel is located in the city centre and close to the highway. It has comfortable, air-conditioned rooms featuring all the necessary amenities. A pleasant view over the leafy square provides calm and serenity throughout your stay. Want to unwind after a day of meetings or tourism? Come and enjoy a regional specialty in the Périgourdin bar. [www.mercure.com/Perigueux](http://www.mercure.com/Perigueux)

### **L'ESSENTIEL RESTAURANT in Périgueux**

In the city centre of Périgueux, the Michelin-starred restaurant *L'Essentiel* offers a delicate cuisine that combines tradition and modernity. [www.restaurant-perigueux.com](http://www.restaurant-perigueux.com)



## Bergerac



**Bergerac** is another town whose history is inextricably linked with the River Dordogne and has a quay where the gabare boats tied up on their way from the Massif Central to Bordeaux.

In this *Town of Art and History* there is a delightful Renaissance city centre where you can wander among the charming streets and admire the statue of Cyrano de Bergerac, made famous for his great nose in the play by Edmond Rostand.

The town is of course also famous for its wine and you can find out all about its 13 AOCs appellations at the Maison des Vins de Bergerac.

### **LA TABLE DU MARCHÉ COUVERT in Bergerac**

The restaurant *La table du marché couvert* offers a creative cuisine full of flavors, a trip for the scents and a discovery with seasonal menus. Come back to school with cooking lessons at home or at the restaurant.

[www.table-du-marche.com](http://www.table-du-marche.com)



## *Saint-Emilion*



*Saint-Emilion* is a medieval jewel, perched on a rocky headland among the vineyards that have existed here for centuries.

Its vineyards were the first in the world to be listed as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO – as a cultural landscape – in 1999. Its origins go back to the 8th century when a monk named Emilion decided to settle here. The wines are still promoted by the Jurade, a wine brotherhood which was created in 1199 by King John of England.

You can stroll through the steep streets of the town, visit wine cellars and taste the local speciality, delicious, golden macarons.

### **HOSTELLERIE DE PLAISANCE in Saint Emilion**

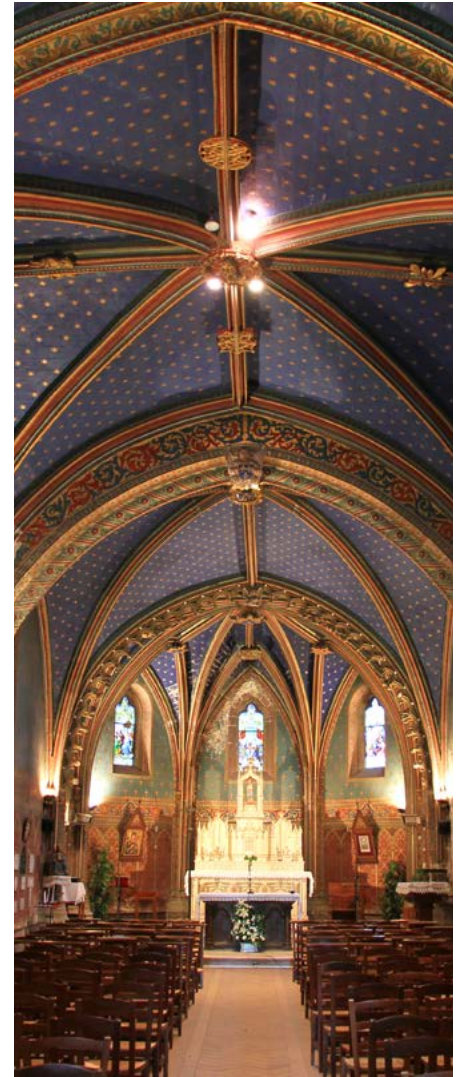
The chef, Cédric Béchade creates a culinary identity in harmony with the soul and spirit of this magnificent house of Gironde, with respect for tradition and magical local products.

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

### **LOGIS DE LA CADENE in Saint Emilion**

Family-owned restaurant established in 1848 in an XVIIIth century building in the heart of the pedestrianised part of town. Gastronomic cuisine. Private rooms.

[www.logisdela cadene.fr](http://www.logisdela cadene.fr)



## *Libourne*

Established in 1270 under the orders of King Henry III of England, *Libourne* is an English fortified port located on the confluence of the Isle and the Dordogne rivers and not far from the Gironde Estuary.

It established its wealth as the first port on the Dordogne, 100 kms inland. Most of its trade was in wine where boats loaded with barrels, wood and salt, were loaded up.

Its attractive architectural heritage makes it a charming town, particularly noted for its central square surrounded by arches, its 15th century town hall, its quays and its must-see market which has been held on the central square three times a week for 600 years!

### **CHEZ SERVAIS in Libourne**

Located in the town centre, Chez Servais is one of the best-known restaurants in the Libournais. The chef, Pierre Servais, serves gourmet cuisine with fish specialities. A perfect balance of dishes, wine and service.

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

## *Small cities you really shouldn't miss*

This part of France has retained a very strong identity, and many people here, whilst enjoying all the benefits of modernity, nevertheless have a lifestyle which takes account of the changing seasons and the cycles of Nature.

This sense of continuity exerts a powerful charm over visitors, many of whom return again and again.

The places mentioned here are all particularly attractive; but the list is by no means exhaustive: come and decide on your own favourite!





Let's begin with the little town of **Argentat**, in an idyllic setting on the river Dordogne.

Its name comes fittingly from the Celtic **Argentoratum** which means 'passage of the river'. Its heyday was in the 18th and 19th century when river trade developed.

Wood for stakes in the vineyards and wine barrels were transported to the Bordeaux area in flat bottomed boats called locally '**courpet**,' and further down river '**gabares**'.

The elegant buildings with stone slab '**lauze**' or slate roofs and turrets and wooden balconies along the quayside stand testimony to those days.

### **Nests for Nature lovers nearby Argentat**

Get really close to nature in the Dordogne Gorges. Set in beautiful oak and chestnut woods, 5 tree-houses await you, each with a terrace and lovely views over the river Dordogne. Ideal for families, friends or couples, they are built in locally sources wood and provide all the comfort of a modern structure. Breakfast is delivered to the foot of your tree, to be pulled up by the earliest riser ! You can also order food baskets for other meals such as gourmet or vegetarian. Everything in this exceptional environment invites you to relax and dream sweet dreams.

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

Following the Dordogne downstream, you come to **Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne**, which owes its existence to an abbey founded in the 9th C. by one of the Turenne family, rulers of much of this area for centuries.

**Beaulieu** means '**beautiful place**' and it is certainly aptly named. Charming old houses encircle the former abbey precincts: all that now remains is the church itself and the chapter room, but it's certainly worth stopping to see. The 12th C. Romanesque church has an exquisitely carved tympanum, depicting the Last Judgement, over the south doorway, considered a masterpiece of its time.

If you turn up in May, you may find yourself in the middle of a strawberry festival, adding extra savour to your visit.

### **LE BEAULIEU in Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne**

Ideally located in a peaceful, rustic setting, the hotel *Le Beaulieu* features bright, spacious, personalised rooms and suites brimming with charm, elegance and modern comforts with free WiFi. The gourmet restaurant *La Table de Catherine* finds inspiration in the outstanding products that Périgord has to offer.

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

### **Aubazine**

The buildings of **Aubazine** - in the Corrèze - are situated in a hilly wooded landscape, clustered around a 12th C Cistercian abbey, which is the best preserved in the Limousin.

A **beautiful walk** takes you along the extraordinary 1500 metre long canal hewn out of the rock by the ingenious and daring monks to bring water to the site to irrigate a fishpond, gardens and work three mills.

The **abbey** is also known for one of France's most famous designers, **Coco Chanel** who lived there with the nuns for six years until she was eighteen, after the death of her mother. She learnt to sew there and her later work was surely influenced by the strange and sober beauty of the place.

### **LES FLOTS BLEUS in Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne**

In an absolutely idyllic setting on the banks of the Dordogne, this *Logis de France Nature Silence* hotel offers snug and comfortable 'nests' with terraces providing lovely views. Foie gras, cepes, strawberries and local wines figure on the menu.

[www.hotel-flotsbleus.com](http://www.hotel-flotsbleus.com)



**Martel** is also called the *Town with Seven Towers* which were used for lookout posts or even prisons in the Middle-Ages. It was a rich town at the beginning of the 12thC, situated on the crossroads of a merchants' route. In the 19thC its fortunes were revived by the sale of truffles and you can now ride on the steam train route which transported the black diamond along the cliffs of the Dordogne.

**Saint-Céré** was an important commercial centre in the Middle-Ages. In the 20th C the *Château de Saint-Laurent* above the town became home to artist **Jean Lurçat** famous for his tapestries and you can visit his home and there is a gallery with some of his works on show. It is also called '**Little Venice**' due to canals constructed to prevent flooding.

**Souillac** on the banks of the River Dordogne is worth a visit for its beautiful **12thC Romanesque abbey** with its three cupolas and magnificent sculpture of the prophet Isaiah. The *Museum of Automata* houses a collection of 18th and 19th mechanical toys and automata.

### **Rocamadour**

Every year around a million and a half visitors and pilgrims flock to *Rocamadour*, built in a vertiginous setting against a cliff face with its houses and churches clinging against the rocks and making you marvel at how it was ever built.

Ever since the 12th C pilgrimages have flocked to the shrine of **St Amadour**, often en route to **Santiago de Compostela**. They would climb the 216 stone steps on their knees to reach the ecclesiastical city with its seven chapels, including the **Basilique St- Sauveur**, the **Chapelle de Notre-Dame** devoted to the 12th C. Black Madonna sculpted out of walnut wood and the **Chapelle Miraculeuse** which contains the tomb of St. Amadour, the hermit who first lived on the site.

It is no wonder that Rocamadour has been designated a '**Grand Site**', one of the major attractions in the Midi-Pyrénées region and that two of its churches have been classified as UNESCO World Heritage sites.

#### **LE RELAIS SAINTE ANNE in Martel**

This luxurious, elegant 3 star hotel and restaurant 'with charm' is hidden in surprisingly large, mature grounds right in the well-preserved mediaeval town of Martel. Food - sourced from the market only a few minutes' walk away - is available all day, served on the terrace, in your room, or by the pool; and evening dinner can be enjoyed beside a log fire or out on the terrace. Go on: spoil yourself.

[www.relais-sainte-anne.com](http://www.relais-sainte-anne.com)

#### **LE PAVILLON SAINT MARTIN in Souillac**

A hotel? No, more of a superior guesthouse where a warm, sincere welcome awaits you just a short walk from the market and lovely old abbey church.

[www.hotel-saint-martin-souillac.com](http://www.hotel-saint-martin-souillac.com)

#### **LE BEAU SITE in Rocamadour**

Set in the heart of the mediaeval village, this hotel enjoys unrivalled views of the shrines and of the Alzou valley.

[www.bestwestern-beausite.com](http://www.bestwestern-beausite.com)



## *Medieval heritage, castles and bastide towns*

Many of the architectural riches of the Dordogne Valley were created in the medieval period when the Hundred Years War raged and Kings and Lords on both sides of the conflict built fortified castles, churches, towns and villages to protect themselves from attack.



## Fortified castles



The **Château de Val** was built in the 15th century and has been perfectly preserved. It stands proudly on its own small peninsula jutting into the lake formed by the creation of the Bort-les-Orgues hydro-electric dam and its reflection in the still waters shows just how elegant the building is. From the St Blaise gothic chapel to the immense furnished rooms there is a surprise round every corner. There are frequent, prestigious art exhibitions and concerts during the summer.

The **Tours de Merle** are set in a dramatic landscape high above the River Maronne which runs in a gorge below and are the remains of a feudal stronghold where seven towers were built between the 12th and 13th C, each one belonging to a different lord. When peace came the site gradually fell into ruins. Now it is part of a 10-hectare park with a reconstituted farm, a medieval garden and medieval activities such as falconry.

**Château de Castelnau-Bretenoux**, built in red stone, dominates the Dordogne Valley from its rocky spur. It was built between the 13th and 17th centuries. It was saved from ruin by a Comic Opera singer, Jean Mouliérat in 1896. He restored it and installed a collection of furniture and art to represent the different periods of the château.

Since 1115 the fortified **Château de Beynac** has stood supreme on a rocky outcrop 152 metres over a sheer drop to the Dordogne River below. A visit spans five centuries of history in the footsteps of Richard the Lionheart and Simon de Montfort and the barons and lords of Beynac lived there until the late 18thC. From the top of the 14th century keep tower there is a breath-taking view of the Valley of the Five Castles.

The **Château de Castelnaud-la-Chapelle** was founded in the 12th C and is a perfect example of a medieval fortress. It houses an important collection of weapons and armour and powerful siege machines have been recreated and placed in strategic positions. Its situation is impressive, high up on a rocky spur.

The **Château de Bidoire** has recently been restored and opened to the public. It was a fifteenth century private château situated in the heart of the Monbazillac vineyards. Some of the rooms have been furnished to recreate the atmosphere of a family home at the period of Marquis de Foucauld who was owner of de Bidoire at the end of the nineteenth century.

Perched on a cliff overlooking the Beune Valley, you can visit the dramatic ruins of the 12th and 16th century **Château de Commarque**. The Keep tower is still intact and you can climb to the top which gives magnificent views. At the base of the cliff are troglodytic dwellings and one of the finest prehistoric cave wall sculptures of a horse has been found there.

The **Château de Biron** is an exceptional castle which has been used in many films and television series. It represents many different architectural styles and was owned by the Gontaut-Biron family from the 12th to the 20th C. They were one of the four baronies of the Périgord, along with Beynac, Bourdailles and Mareuil. The main periods are Medieval and Renaissance.





## Bastides



**Bretenoux** is a particularly well conserved example of a bastide town with its checkerboard layout, its half-timbered houses and cobbled market place. There are houses from the 15th, 16th, 17th and 18th centuries which evoke a rich past.

Founded in 1284 by Jean de Grailly, the Seneschal of Aquitaine, on behalf of King Edward I of England, **Molières** is a delightful village with the added charms of a Gothic church and the ruins of a fortress. The bastide was planned along regular lines and all its streets converge in the central square. Only the *Bayle House*, also known as the 'porch,' is all that remains of the arcaded square which used to provide shelter for the shops.

The bastide of **Domme** was built on the order of Phillippe III the Bold in the 13th C., just after being built, its *Porte des Tours* (Tower Gate) would be used as a prison for 70 Knights Templar who would leave mysterious engravings on the inner walls. Under the 18th C. market hall, there is the entrance to a 450-m long series of natural geological caves and an enchanted world of concretions. From the top of its rocky spur, this medieval village exceptional views of the Dordogne Valley.

Located along the borders of the Périgord, Quercy and Upper Agen area and founded in 1261 by the seneschal Guillaume de Bagnols, **Villefranche du Périgord** is the oldest bastide in the Périgord. As you stroll through its lanes, you'll see the market hall square still surrounded by the 12th-century archways and the 19th-century church built according to the plans of Abadie, the architect of the Sacré Coeur of Montmartre in Paris.

**Monpazier**, dating from the 13th C. is an architectural jewel regarded as the most beautiful bastide village among the 300 examples in the South-West. It is also classified as one of the Most Beautiful Villages in France.

The building of the bastide town **Beaumont-du-Périgord** was ordered in 1272 by King Edward I of England. It retains its medieval atmosphere with its imposing fortified church and the only remaining part of its defensive walls, the Luzier gateway and its narrow streets.

The first of the English bastides to be built was **Lalinde** in 1267 by Henry III. It developed due to river trade and fishing as it is on the banks of the Dordogne. The tourist office is in an attractive Renaissance house with a public garden from which you can sit and admire the river.

**Eymet** is one of the rare bastides in the South-West on the banks of a river, the Dropt, which, with the warmth of its old stone gives it immeasurable charm. It is a historic town with modern comforts and has everything to satisfy a visitors every needs.





## *Come into the gardens*

Natural beauty is everywhere in the Dordogne Valley but there are also magnificent parks and gardens where people have used wonderful settings as a background to introduce planting and landscaping to great effect.

While some have been there for centuries, others are more recent.



At ***Sothys Contemporary Botanical Garden*** you step into an elegant and harmonious garden created by local cosmetics company Sothys, in 2007.

Its 4 hectares are divided into themed gardens and areas inspired by beauty and cosmetics. There are beautiful classic French, Japanese and Rose gardens and a White, Egyptian, Perfume and Sun area.

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

About 12kms east of Collonges-la-Rouge you can travel the world in a remarkable 2-hectare botanical garden, ***Lostanges***, which has species from all the temperate zones of the globe. Paths wind through the different areas representing different regions which take you from Canada to Patagonia, Siberia to New Zealand in an afternoon.

[www.jardin-de-lostanges.com](http://www.jardin-de-lostanges.com)

In Varetz, just north-west of Brive, stands the Château de Castel Novel, now a four-star hotel, where the famous French author, Colette stayed on many occasions between 1912-23. She grew up with a great love of animals and plants and ***Les Jardins de Colette*** close to the château, are a contemporary evocation of six regions of France she knew and loved during her life. There is an intricate maze in the form of a butterfly.

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

As the name suggests, the 13 garden areas at ***Les Jardins de l'Imaginaire*** in Terrasson stimulate the imagination as well as the physical senses.

There are water gardens, a rose garden, a fine display of fuchsias and literally thousands of trees and shrubs. It makes for a unique and special place to visit, set above the old town and the gardens have received several official accolades.

[www.jardins-imaginaire.com](http://www.jardins-imaginaire.com)

The gardens of the medieval, furnished ***Château de Losse*** on the banks of the Vézère are classified as Remarkable. They are inspired by the gardens as they were in the 16th and 17th C and are in the French style with box and hornbeam pruned into geometrical borders and beds which contain roses, lavender, and wisteria, beautiful against the warm stone of the château.

They are to be found within the château walls or on the terrace overlooking the river.

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





The *Jardins du Manoir d'Eyrignac*, not far from Sarlat are unquestionably the most beautiful French style gardens to be found in the Périgord Box, yew and cyprus are sculpted, by hand into magnificent forms. The white rose garden together with the Spring, Vegetable, Flower and Flowering Meadow gardens add poetry. The elegant manor house has been owned by the same family for 500 years.

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

The *Gardens of Marqueyssac* lie on cliffs above the Dordogne Valley and are the most visited gardens in the Périgord. Laid out in the 19thC in the grounds of a manor house they offer more than six kilometres of shaded paths bordered by 150,000 hand-pruned box trees a hundred years old. At the height of the garden is the Belvedere, which at 130 metres above the river gives an exceptional view of the Dordogne valley. On certain evenings in the summer, the gardens are illuminated by thousands of candles.

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

The *Château de Milandes* is a 15th century château best known for its association with the music hall star, Josephine Baker. You can learn about her history in the castle and enjoy the formal garden outside, which has low box hedges forming large rectangles filled with an explosion of colourful bedding plants. Steps lead down to a formal park area with large trees, clipped topiary and large lawns with falconry displays on it.

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

Standing at the top of the medieval village of Limeuil – one of the 'Most Beautiful villages' in France – the *Jardins panoramiques de Limeuil* overhang the point where the rivers Dordogne and Vézère meet and offers a panoramic view of the village and its surroundings. The 2 hectares shelters themed gardens – Color, Witches, Water, Bugs... -, educational games and informative paths with adapted guided tours for groups or schools.

[jardins-panoramiques-limeuil.com](http://jardins-panoramiques-limeuil.com)

In Velines, about 10kms east of Sainte-Foy-la-Grande, stand the *Jardins de Sardy*. Created in the fifties, the gardens surround a 18th C. building and are inspired by the English and Florentine gardens styles. The gardens offer an exquisite combination of foliage, water and architecture and a glorious, sensual riot of colour and scent.

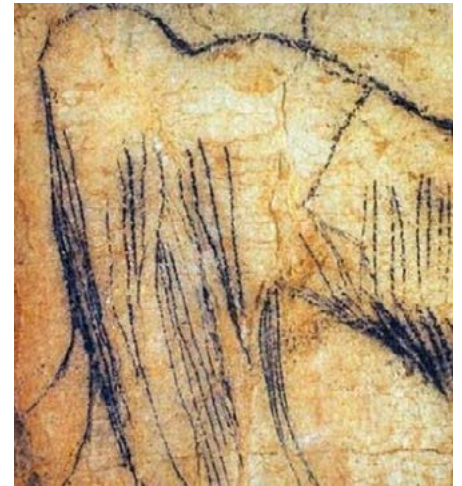
<https://jardinsdesardy.com>



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*Caves and chasms,  
entering the underworld*





The great beauty of the Dordogne Valley is not only to be found above ground in its rolling hills, dramatic gorges, fertile dells and unspoilt landscapes, but also underground where the limestone geology has led to the formation of magnificent caves and chasms over millions of years.

Early on humans discovered these natural shelters and left traces of their existence.

Many of them are concentrated in the Vézère Valley. Here there are 147 prehistoric sites dating from the Paleolithic period and 25 decorated caves which are interesting from an ethnological and anthropological, as well as an aesthetic point of view because of their importance in the history of prehistoric art.

The Prehistoric sites and decorated caves of the Vézère Valley were included on the UNESCO World Heritage list in 1979.

The most famous cave of the area is **Lascaux** at Montignac.

Discovered in 1940 and made a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1979, Lascaux cave is one of the great masterpieces of prehistoric art.

It is around 200-metre long in total and is made up of alternating almost circular chambers and corridors. They are decorated with paintings and engravings of many different animals and enigmatic signs, which are remarkable for their detail, rich colours and lifelike quality.

[www.lascaux.fr/en](http://www.lascaux.fr/en)

#### LASCAUX

The newly opened **Montignac-Lascaux Parietal Art International Centre (CIAP)** contains a reproduction of almost the entire original cave created using the most up to date virtual and imagery technology to make the experience as realistic as possible for visitors. It feels dark and damp with muffled sounds just like the atmosphere inside a real cave, and the paintings look exactly like those in the original cave which are too fragile to be exposed to visitors.

The centre is also the place to learn all about prehistoric art in all its aspects.

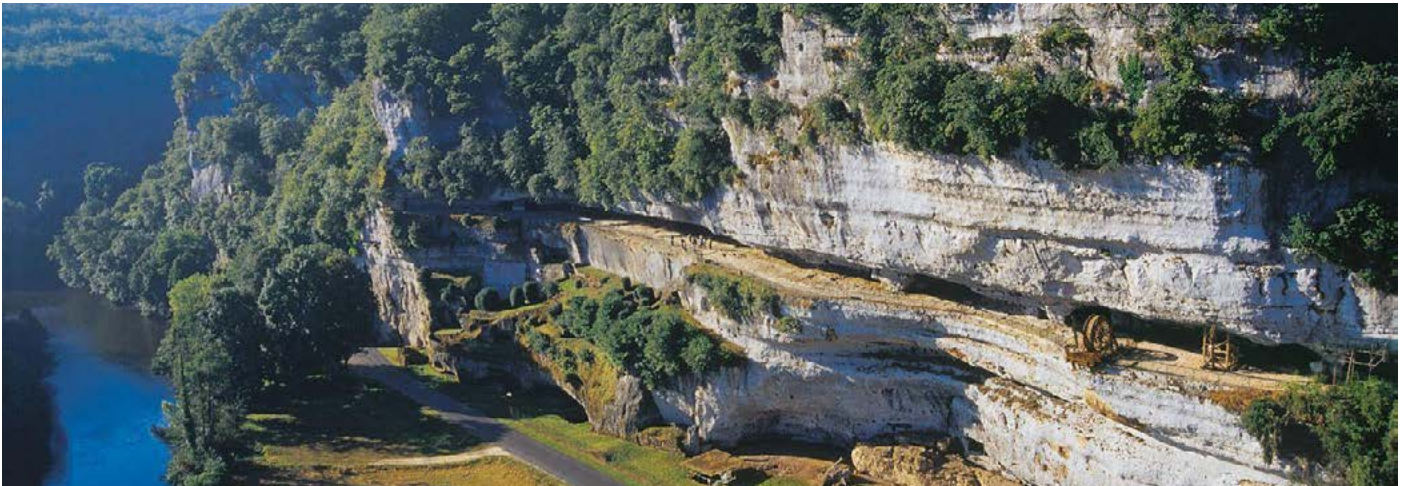
[www.lascaux.fr/en](http://www.lascaux.fr/en)

The Lot has its own Lascaux, the **Grottes de Pech Merle**, decorated with horses, mammoths and bisons, some of which are spotted.

Human presence is tangible with outlines of human hands on the walls and fossilised footprints on the ground.

What you can see here are the originals !

[www.tourisme-lot.com](http://www.tourisme-lot.com)



At *Les Eyzies-de-Tayac* in the Vézère Valley there are a wealth of caves to visit.

The first ever human representation of a fish is to be found at the *Abri du Poisson*.

There are more than 200 representations of animals and signs at the *Grotte de Font-de-Gaume* and more than 800 engravings at the *Grotte des Combarelles*.

Just a few kilometres away at the *Abri du Cap Blanc*, at Marquay you can admire the best sculpted prehistoric frieze open to the public.

[www.lascaux-dordogne.com](http://www.lascaux-dordogne.com)

Archaeological excavations of sites in and around *Les-Eyzies-de-Tayac* show evidence of prehistoric human settlement.

The *Ferrassie shelter* is famous for its eight Neanderthal tombs and a Neanderthal human skeleton was found at the important *Le Moustier* site.

*La Micoque* is crucial for understanding the early Palaeolithic period and there are traces which show 300,000 years of human occupation, and the shelter discovered at *Laugerie-Haute*, 2km from Les-Eyzies-de-Tayac, is one of the biggest in the region.

[www.lascaux-dordogne.com](http://www.lascaux-dordogne.com)

The *Roque Saint-Christophe* is situated 80 meters up a cliff face and is one-kilometer long.

Man lived here for 55,000 years. By visiting the site you will understand how people used the natural clefts in the cliff to create a troglodytic city, a place where they could live, cook, worship and defend themselves.

There are replicas of the ingenious machines they invented and a 3D film to bring its history to life.

[www.roque-st-christophe.com](http://www.roque-st-christophe.com)



The **Gouffre de Padirac** is a spectacular natural chasm which forms a gaping 75-meter-deep hole.

For years it was known as the "Devils Hole" and it wasn't until 1889 that an intrepid explorer, Edouard-Alfred Martel dared to venture in and discovered the underground river flowing below.

Ten years later it was opened to the public and now there are more than 450,000 visitors a year who enjoy a trip on a boat 103 m under the ground and a walking tour of the vast internal caverns which are the second largest open to the public in Europe.

[www.gouffre-de-padirac.com](http://www.gouffre-de-padirac.com)

Near the Gouffre de Padirac, also in the Lot, there are the **Grottes de Lacave** which you enter by a little train and the **Grottes de Presque** with its magnificent columns.

[www.grottes-de-lacave.com](http://www.grottes-de-lacave.com)

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

South of Brive at Nouailles, in the Corrèze, the **Gouffre de la Fage** has two galleries with a multitude of stalactites and impressive natural columns. It also shelters one of the biggest colonies of bats in Europe.

[www.gouffre-de-la-fage.com](http://www.gouffre-de-la-fage.com)

The biggest cave you can visit in the Dordogne is the **Gouffre de Proumeysac**, nicknamed the Crystal Cathedral.

In July and August, a light and music show enhances the natural beauty of the stalactites and stalagmites.

[www.gouffre-proumeysac.com](http://www.gouffre-proumeysac.com)

At Le Buisson-de-Cadouin the number, quality and variety of mineral formations at the **Grottes de Maxange** make it one of the most beautiful caves in France.

[lesgrottesdemaxange.com](http://lesgrottesdemaxange.com)



*Harnessing the power of  
the Dordogne river*



The power of the water flowing through the Dordogne Valley has been harnessed to produce electricity creating magnificent dams and lakes which many of them are open to the public.

The first in the chain is at *Bort-les-Orgues*, and is 120 metres high and the fourth biggest in France.

Nearly all of them are in the Corrèze including the 79m high *Chastang Dam* and the *Newic Dam* where you can enjoy a walk with wonderful views along the top of the dam.

In the Dordogne department at the *Tuileries Dam* you can witness a unique experiment to allow young salmon to descend the river in a special lift which avoids the turbines.

### *La Dordogne de villages en barrages*

*walk and cycle trail, yellow and white signs.*

From Bort-les-Orgues to Argentat, overhanging the Gorges of the Dordogne, this 150 km trail reveals spectacular landscapes and breathtaking views. Built and natural heritage complete each other and lead you along the river, known by the ancient sailors for being impetuous and wild.

[www.dordogne-villages-barrages.fr](http://www.dordogne-villages-barrages.fr)





## *Open air sports and activities*

The waters of the Dordogne Valley vary from rushing torrents at the source to a gentle, broad river downstream.

The variety of the river landscapes offers a broad range of sporting and leisure activities on and in the water with fishing, boating and swimming in what is the cleanest river in France.

You can also enjoy, walking and nature spotting on its cliffs and banks and admire it from above from a hot air balloon or paraglider.



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At a height of 1,886 metres, the ***Puy de Sancy*** is the highest point of the Massif Central and the place where the river which gives its name to our valley begins.

Two mountain streams, the Dore and the Dogne join on its slopes to form the Dordogne.

The crystal clear stream crosses Mont-Dore and the Bourboule and then carves its way through the Avèze gorges.

A tidal bore - '***mascaret***' - is a spectacular natural phenomenon which only occurs in about sixty places in the world.

One is formed at the confluence of the rivers Garonne and the Dordogne when the incoming tide from the sea moves upstream for 3,000 metres until it comes to the Ile Cazaux where the river narrows and the resulting force of water forms a wave.

It happens twice a day, so 730 times a year and around 50 of those are noticeably high and attract surfers, canoeists and spectators.



*Go with the flow*





There is nothing better than paddling your own canoe and floating down a river which is so clear you can see down to the bottom and so inviting on a hot, summers day that you can pull in on a beach and dive into the refreshing, clean waters.

Along the length of the Dordogne from **Argentat** to **Beynac** and just a little further downstream there are numerous opportunities to indulge yourself, your friends and family in this delightful activity.

According to whim and ability you can choose between **varying lengths of route**, making it a half day or day trip. The most sportive ones can also hire a canoe for several days and explore a good chunk of the river, stopping off in campsites overnight.

Upstream, the river has a wilder aspect, running through **gorges and dramatic empty landscapes**.

Further down, as you head for the meanders of the Dordogne department you pass through chateau land and can admire many of the most famous castles from a different angle, **Marqueyssac**, **Castelnaud** and **Beynac** are all close together and can be viewed on a trip in a single afternoon.

### CANOT RABASKA

a unique form of boating in the Aquitaine.

A '**Rabaska**' is an American Indian style, 9-meter long, stable canoe which seats 15 and is ideal for group outings. You will be accompanied by a monitor who will talk you through the scenery as you pass by.

[www.canoe-rabaska.com](http://www.canoe-rabaska.com)



### USEFUL GABARE ADDRESSES

From Spontour

[www.cc-gorges-haute-dordogne.fr/gabare](http://www.cc-gorges-haute-dordogne.fr/gabare)

From Argentat

**LA SPONTOURNOISE**  
[gabarrescaminate@orange.fr](mailto:gabarrescaminate@orange.fr)

From Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne

**L'ADELE & CLARISSE**  
[www.vallee-dordogne.com](http://www.vallee-dordogne.com)

With views of some of the most impressive castles

From La Roque Gageac

**GABARRES LES CAMINADES**  
[gabarrescaminate@wanadoo.fr](mailto:gabarrescaminate@wanadoo.fr)

**LES GABARES NORBERT**  
[www.norbert.fr](http://www.norbert.fr)

From Beynac

**LES GABARRES DE BEYNAC**  
[www.gabarre-beynac.com](http://www.gabarre-beynac.com)

Private motor boats are not allowed on the river, which means the peace of your journey is never interrupted by the noise and pollution of speedboats.

Other rivers in the Dordogne Valley also offer canoe trips. You can paddle past major prehistoric sites and beautiful villages such as Saint-Léon-sur-Vézère on the **River Vézère** and enjoy the countryside on the **Dronne river** up to Brantome.

The Dordogne was the first river in France where you could have a go at the new sport, **Stand Up Paddle**, where you stand on a board with a long paddle and guide yourself along the water. Now there are many opportunities on the local rivers to try this up to the minute activity.

If you prefer not to pilot your own vessel you can have a trip on a replica of a traditional **gabare**, the boats which traded on the river in the 18th and 19th Cs, taking wood downstream for use in the wine and barrel-making industries.

Guides will explain the history of the areas you pass by and tell **tales of the intrepid boatmen** whose journeys downstream were often fraught with danger.

They will also point out the **local fauna and flora** as you pass by. If you are lucky you may see a kingfisher, gleaming turquoise as it flashes along the bank, or a kite wheeling high above.



## USEFUL ADDRESSES

Professional service-providers offer one or several day canoe trips:

**SAFARAID DORDOGNE - CANOË NATURE**, in Monceaux-sur-Dordogne, Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne and in Vayrac  
[www.canoe-kayak-dordogne.com](http://www.canoe-kayak-dordogne.com)

**PORT LOISIRS**, in Martel, Gluges/Creysse  
[www.portloisirs.com](http://www.portloisirs.com)

**COPEYRE CANOËE**, in Souillac  
[www.copeyre.com](http://www.copeyre.com)

**CARENNAC AVENTURE**, rafts and canoe for rent in Carennac  
[www.copeyre.com](http://www.copeyre.com)

**PÉRIGORD AVENTURE LOISIRS**, in Vitrac  
[www.perigordaventureloisirs.com](http://www.perigordaventureloisirs.com)

**AVENTURE PLEIN AIR**, in Saint Leon sur Vézère  
[www.canoevezere.com](http://www.canoevezere.com)

There are several opportunities for Paddle boarding, and other nautical activities:

**STAND UP PADDLE PÉRIGORD**  
[www.sup-perigord.com](http://www.sup-perigord.com)

**ESCAPADE NATURE PAYS D'ARGENTAT** canoe-kayak, stand up paddle, archery, via ferrata, climbing  
[www.escapadenatureargentat.com](http://www.escapadenatureargentat.com)

**LAC DE LA TRIOUZOUNE**, water sports and leisure centre  
[www.neuvic-correze.net](http://www.neuvic-correze.net)

**RETENUE DE BORT-LES-ORGUES**  
[www.bort-artense.com](http://www.bort-artense.com)



Access to the river need not only be by boat. There are numerous beaches along its banks where you can picnic, relax and take the plunge if you so wish.

With minimal industry and no big cities the Dordogne river is the **cleanest** in France and it is a treat to be able to swim in unpolluted waters in the modern age. All ages from the youngest children upwards appreciate the simple pleasures of an afternoon on the beach.

Away from the rivers there are plenty of **lakes** with opportunities to sail, wind-surf, canoe, water-ski, swim or simply enjoy an afternoon on the beach.

Some are on the lakes formed by the hydro-electric dams, such as the **Lac de la Triouzoune** at Neuvic - in Corrèze - the **Lac du Tolerme** - north-east Lot - and some are natural such as the **Lac du Causse** near Brive-la-Gaillarde in Corrèze.

**Fishing** has long been one of France's favourite pastimes, and there's no better place to indulge in it than along the Dordogne and its tributaries as well as in lakes.

The fact that the area has been designated as a **Biosphere Reserve** by Unesco is an indication of the quality of the environment and the variety of wildlife.

In fact the waters are now so clean that salmon have been successfully reintroduced - but you're not allowed to fish for those!

However there are plenty of species which you can take, including shad, bleak, carp, barbell, pike, zander, perch and many more.

Fly-fishing is a very popular sport here, and enthusiasts even breed special *coqs de pêche* (fishing cocks), whose feathers are used as lures for trout and grayling.

Holiday fishing licences are easily obtained: details and other information are given in a guide to angling available from all local Tourist Offices.

You'll soon be hooked!

LA CROIX BLANCHE  
LA MEJANCERIE BASSE 0,4km  
GRAMAT

*Fun on the ground*

ROCAMADOUR PAR PISTE EQUESTRE  
ITINERAIRE CONSEILLE PAR TEMPS HUMIDE  
ET PERIODE DE CRUE

BLANAT (Etape ) 2.5km  
ROCAMADOUR 7.5km  
(déviation équestre)



IN DU SAUT  
POUR (TRES TOILE)



There are miles and miles of footpaths and tracks to discover by **bike**, on **foot** or on **horseback**.

You can choose between **cycle routes** developed throughout the valley.

In the Corrèze there is a 146km long '**véloroute**' - a route dedicated to non-motorised transportation - between **Peyrelevalade** in the north and **Liourdres** in the south. For those who love mountain biking, the north of the department has the biggest network of routes in France. There are 50 circuits through breath-taking scenery from 4 to 51 km long.

In the Dordogne, you can follow the river on the **old Sarlat to Souillac railway line** which has been turned into a cycle route. It is mostly on the flat, so ideal for families. You can also walk and roller and it is accessible for wheelchairs.

From **Castelnaud la Chapelle** - in the Dordogne - there is a very pretty 25km route along the river **Céou** to the **Abbaye Nouvelle** in the Lot.

Going towards the ocean, the **river Isle** provides another riverside route 100km from **Périgueux** to **Le Pizou**, on the borders of the Gironde.

*Why not have a cycling holiday?*

#### **CORREZE CYCLING HOLIDAY**

Samantha and James Parry offer a place to stay, advice, and bikes to hire at [www.correzecycling.com](http://www.correzecycling.com)

The Dordogne Valley is a **walker's paradise** with a vast choice of sign-posted paths through varying landscapes.

In the Corrèze, the river carves through deep gorges and there are walks with stunning views. A real delight is to walk in the commune of **Marcillac-la-Croisille** for a 4.5km walk which takes you to the **Jardin de Bardot**, an unusual garden with peaches, strawberries and grapes growing on terraces created on steep slopes.

Near the same village is a 12km walk with stunning views from the **Roc du Busatier**. Another two, the same length, are to the west of **Bort-les-Orgues** with an exceptional view over the Dordogne gorges at the **Site de St Nazaire**, and south-west of **Neuvic**, which has a superb view of the confluence of the **Dordogne** and the **Sumène** rivers at the **Belvédère de Gratte-Bruyère**.

There are no fewer than 150km of footpath to choose from in the area of the hydro-electric dams between **Bort-les-Orgues** and **Argentat**.

Also, not to be missed is the '**Voie de Rocamadour**', an ancient pilgrimage route to Rocamadour which takes you through well-known names such as **Aubazine**, **Colonges-la-Rouge** and **Martel**, but with new discoveries hidden round each bend of the path.

[www.chemin-de-st-jacques-voie-de-rocamadour-limousin-haut-quercy.fr](http://www.chemin-de-st-jacques-voie-de-rocamadour-limousin-haut-quercy.fr)

There are more than 60 walks in the Lot where the routes can be downloaded from a website or from an app, some of which are also suitable for bikes. You can choose between walking by the water, hiking in the vines, discovering pretty villages, or gasping at dramatic landscapes with indications of time, length and difficulty for each one.

[www.vallee-dordogne.com](http://www.vallee-dordogne.com)

In the Dordogne you can go back in time, on a 3-5-day hike along - or even on the river by canoe - accompanied by an amusing and informative guide, **Chemins de Terre et d'Eau**, written by an English traveller, **Harrison Baker** who gives you background detail about life in the Périgord in the 19th C., on a route from **Sarlat** to **Cadouin**.

Along the **Vézère Valley** you can also walk with history as you follow a 90 km route with 5-7 days potential walking, with informative sign posting to take you '**in the footsteps of Lascaux man**'.



Of course, many of the paths in the Dordogne Valley are also ideal for those who like to travel on **horseback** and you can easily sign up for an equestrian holiday.

There is no shortage of equestrian centres offering day treks or longer stay holidays.

Circuits range from 20 to more than 100 kms long and allow you to combine your passion for horses with the chance to discover this region.

La **Ferme Equestre de Mialaret** offers a 5-day guided trek for experienced riders in the **Xaintrie** region of the Corrèze, across its granite plateau overlooking the Dordogne Valley and passing extraordinary sites such as the **Tours de Merle**.

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

**Cheval Rando**, in Creysse close to the river Dordogne.

Philippe Della Vedova offers a variety of rides starting from the farm. Accommodation on site enables you to spend some time amongst the horses, unless you prefer to follow Philippe on a longer trail, such as the **Equirando**.

[cheval-rando.ffe.com](http://cheval-rando.ffe.com)

[chevalerando.e-monsite.com](http://chevalerando.e-monsite.com)

### **Ferme de la Haute-Yerle**

Located near the river Dordogne, 3km from Limeuil, La **Haute-Yerle** offers themed guided rides ranging from one to several days.

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

Games of **golf** can easily be arranged.

The **Coiroux course** near Aubazine takes you over a gently undulating course, through varied types of woodland.

[www.golf-coiroux.com](http://www.golf-coiroux.com)

**Brivegolf course** in the **Planchetorte valley** has a tree-lined watercourse which provides an interesting natural hazard.

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

The **Domaine de Sauvignoux** and its 9 holes golf course lies on the boundary between the Corrèze, the Lot and the Dordogne in Puy d'Arnac.

[www.domaine-de-savignoux.fr](http://www.domaine-de-savignoux.fr)

**Souillac Golf and Country Club** in verdant, undulating countryside, is the Lot's only 18-hole golf course providing challenges for experienced golfers, but still giving beginner's a chance!

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

The **Château de Lissac** is a charming 12th-15th and 18thC château situated on the Corrèze limestone plateau close to Brive-la-Gaillarde and at the entrance to the Périgord. There are five, extremely comfortable large bedrooms with character. From the grounds there is an exceptional view over the **Lac de Causse**. Easy access to Sarlat, Rocamadour and Collonges-la-Rouge.

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

The 3-star hotel and restaurant **Les Trois Soleils** is situated in a beautiful setting near the magnificent Renaissance **Château de Montal** and its golf course. This very comfortable hotel has another ace up its sleeve, or rather its chef's toque: a gourmet restaurant with one Michelin star.

[www.3soleils.fr](http://www.3soleils.fr)

The **Château de Montal** is a jewel of the French Renaissance with a façade displaying delicate sculptures evoking the life of Jeanne de Balsac.

[www.chateau-montal.fr](http://www.chateau-montal.fr)



The **Montal course** near **Saint-Céré** has a beautiful 16th C. château as a backdrop on the hill above it. The **Château de Montal** is a jewel of the French Renaissance with a façade displaying delicate sculptures evoking the life of Jeanne de Balsac.

Golfers have plenty of choice.

[www.golf-montal.fr](http://www.golf-montal.fr)

[www.chateau-montal.fr](http://www.chateau-montal.fr)

In **Monestier**, within easy reach of Bergerac, the **Château des Vigiers** forms the centre-piece of a spectacular 27-hole golf course. Opened in 1992, it is arranged in three 9-hole loops, giving three 18-hole combinations. A restaurant and a hotel are located on the property.

[www.vigiers.com/golf-breaks-france](http://www.vigiers.com/golf-breaks-france)

Surrounding the 17th C. Château, the 9-hole golf course **Les Merles** is open all year round. The club has a restaurant and a hotel on site.

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

In Siorac en Périgord, not far from Sarlat, golf lovers can choose between two golf courses. One, the **Golf de la Forge** offers a 9-hole course that leads you through woodlands, streams, small lakes and more.

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

The other one, the **Golf de Lolivarie** with its 18-hole golf course, run alongside a stream amid a landscape of large oak trees, poplars and willows.

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



*Airs above*



## *Reaching for the skies*

For those that like climbing there are plenty of tree top adventure trail parks with thrilling zip wires between stations. They are graded to suit all ages and abilities.

The Falaise des Corbeaux is a natural climbing site nearby Bergerac.

In the *Jardins de Marqueyssac* at Vitrac you can climb along the cliffs, a hundred metres above the river, well secured by harnesses and after the first, perhaps apprehensive steps you can enjoy the thrills of the **Via Ferrata** and the views it gives which are like no other of the Dordogne Valley.  
<http://marqueyssac.com/animations>

### **ESCAPADE NATURE PAYS D'ARGENTAT**

canoe-kayak, stand up paddle, archery, via ferrata, climbing

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

### **PARC NATURE EVASION**, nearby Brive

[www.parc-nature-evasion.fr](http://www.parc-nature-evasion.fr)

### **ROCAMADOUR AVENTURE**

[www.rocamadour-aventure.com](http://www.rocamadour-aventure.com)



## Up in the air

### **MONTGOLFIADES**

#### **Rocamadour**

23rd - 24th September 2017

The biggest hot-air balloon festival in Europe: the amazing sight of dozens of balloons filling the air and taking part in races.

[www.rocamadour.aerostat.fr](http://www.rocamadour.aerostat.fr)

If you'd like to see the Dordogne Valley's cliffs, wooded slopes and hilltop villages from a very different angle, you could opt for a pleasure flight in a **hot-air balloon**, or more daringly take off from the cliffs for a tandem flight in a **hang-glider** or **paraglider**.

Gliding silently above the countryside will give you a magnificent bird's eye view of the layout of the landscape below, revealing hidden gems that you would never see from the ground.

### **CORRÈZE MONTGOLFIÈRE**

To get yourself aloft, contact Sikka and Frédéric (Two flight zones: Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne/Collonges-la-Rouge/Curemonte/Turenne & Brive/Pompador).

Every day on reservation 15th March to early November.

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

### **ROCAMADOUR AÉROSTAT**

[www.rocamadour.aerostat.free.fr](http://www.rocamadour.aerostat.free.fr)

### **MONTGOLFIÈRE DU PÉRIGORD**

Flights from Beynac and La Roque Gageac

[www.montgolfiere-du-perigord.com](http://www.montgolfiere-du-perigord.com)

### **PERIGORD DORDOGNE MONTGOLFIERES**

Flights from Saint-Cyprien

[www.perigord-dordogne-montgolfieres.com](http://www.perigord-dordogne-montgolfieres.com)

### **MONTGOLFIÈRE ET CHATEAUX**

Flights from Beynac

[www.montgolfiere-chateaux.fr](http://www.montgolfiere-chateaux.fr)



## *A taste of the Dordogne Valley*

Few aspects of our local lifestyle are more important to both residents and visitors alike than the really *good food and wine* available everywhere here.

You can find it in simple country inns or village bistros, brasseries, or establishments with Michelin stars. Some of the finest chefs have been attracted to the area and families who have been here for generations and passed on their gastronomic knowledge offer up veritable feasts to their guests.

But we're not just talking about restaurants; it all starts literally at ground level, in fields, orchards and vineyards, where produce of the highest quality begins its life. Many of our products have official quality certification such as AOP, AOC or Label Rouge.

They are all to be found on the numerous markets which flourish in this area. Towns and many villages have once or twice weekly markets throughout the year; whilst in summer, local Farmer's Markets, where you can sometimes stay and eat, spring up in many places



The Romans were the first to introduce **wine** into the area and though the very upper reaches of the valley were not conducive to the grape, the lower reaches still are and their reputation increases as you move downstream.

### *Vin Paillé*

Grapes are hand-picked and placed on trays to dry out to concentrate their flavours in this traditional method used to produce the sweet white or red vin paillé or straw wine. It can be served as an aperitif, or with foie gras, cheeses and desserts.

[www.vin-paille-correze.com](http://www.vin-paille-correze.com)

### *Coteaux de la Vézère*

Vineyards could be found everywhere until the outbreak of phylloxera in the late 19thC after which only the most established survived. However, in the south of the Corrèze there has been a recent revival of an ancient wine, so well reputed it was drunk by monks at Cluny in Burgundy. Fifteen friends decided to plant vines on the exceptional soil in 2003 and now produce a range of quality dry and sweet whites, reds and rosés.

[www.coteaux-vezere.fr](http://www.coteaux-vezere.fr)

### *Coteaux de Glanes*

This is one of the smallest recognised vineyard areas in France, situated in the Lot, and another one where commercial production is recent. Its seven growers work as a co-operative producing easy-drinking reds and rosés with spicy, floral notes.

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

### *Vin de Domme*

In Florimont-Gaumier, about 20 km south of Domme, 7 passionate wine-growers have revived since 1994 a vineyard with a famous history. Today, with 21 acres, they produce two types of rosés and different red wines with one of them being elevated in oak barrels. The "Cave du Vin de Domme" organises wine tasting and visit of the vineyard.

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

### *Bergerac wines*

Bergerac's vineyards have incredible diversity, producing reds, dry whites, rosés, sparkling and sweet wines. The wine region, on both sides of the Dordogne River encompasses 93 villages and over 12,000 hectares of vines producing **13 Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée** (AOC): well-known names from the region are **Monbazillac, Montravel, Pécharmant, Rosette** and **Saussignac**.

[www.vins-bergerac.fr](http://www.vins-bergerac.fr)

The ***Saint Emilion wines*** from the Gironde have international recognition and there are **12 appellations** concentrated in this rich area where climate, soil, geography and history have produced such names as **Lalande de Pomerol, Côtes de Bordeaux** and **Crémant de Bordeaux**.

[www.vins-saint-emilion.com](http://www.vins-saint-emilion.com)

### **LA SALAMANDRE DISTILLERY near Sarlat**

In Temniac, 4 kms away from Sarlat, this traditional family distillery produces fruit spirits, liqueurs and aperitifs, plus jars of fruit in alcohol, from the finest crops grown in the region and picked at just the right moment. The recipes and methods used have been handed down in the family for years, and the results prove that the old-timers knew a thing or two...

[www.distillery-salamandre.com](http://www.distillery-salamandre.com)



The region also has a tradition of excellent **liqueurs and aperitifs** based on local plants.

In the mountain pastures of the Auvergne a root is painstakingly searched out and dug up from where it grows wild to be used in ***Gentiane liqueurs*** where different recipes are used across the region to give a choice of aperitifs. The original was produced by Couderc in the Cantal.

Delicious alcoholic drinks, part of our culinary heritage, can be discovered at the **Denoix Distillery**, installed in the heart of Brive since 1839. Apéritifs and liqueurs based on walnuts and red fruits grown locally, macerated, distilled and blended with fine Armagnac or Cognac are made, along with ***La Moutarde Violette de Brive*** (a mild, tasty mustard flavoured with grape must). The same equipment, methods, recipes and ingredients as in the 19th C. are still used - and the results are every bit as good as then!

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

### **THE LOUIS ROQUE DISTILLERY in Souillac**

At the **Louis Roque distillery** in Souillac, a secret and subtle mixture of different plum varieties has been passed on down the generations to produce ***La Vieille Prune***, a fine, smooth plum brandy.

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



### ***AOP Rocamadour goat's cheese***

This small, flat, round, creamy cheese, first mentioned in the 15th C, is part of the "cabécou" family which means 'little goat' in the ancient, local langue d'Oc language. Very mild and creamy when young, it gets stronger and drier when allowed to mature. *Rocamadour* is the centre of the appellation area. It is irresistible with bread, in salads, toasted, with walnuts or even warmed.

[www.aop-rocamadour.com](http://www.aop-rocamadour.com)

Just north of Rocamadour, you'll find the ***Borie d'Imbert***, a goat farm and dairy. You can visit the goats in their large, bright, airy stable (they're very friendly!) and watch the production of cheese from their milk through special windows in the dairy walls.

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

### ***Cabécou du Périgord***

Not part of the AOP, the *Cabécou du Périgord* is a trademark that recognises goat cheese producers whose farming process meet a series of breeding and manufacturing specifications.

[www.cabecou-perigord.com](http://www.cabecou-perigord.com)

At the threshold of the Auvergne, the Dordogne Valley benefits from its rich pasture lands that produce exceptional cow's milk cheeses: ***Cantal***, reputedly one of the oldest cheeses in the world (eaten by the Romans!); ***Salers***, made traditionally from Salers cow's milk; ***Bleu d'Auvergne***, a blue cheese, first produced by a young pharmacist in 1854, and ***Saint-Nectaire*** are some of the cheeses partly produced on the Dordogne valley.

### **LA TOUPINE**

#### ***in Brive-la-Gaillarde***

(Michelin Bib gourmand)

In a welcoming modern setting, Olivier Maurin puts all his experience into serving a cuisin full of flavour and originality, making maximum use of local, seasonal produce !

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

### **LE GRAND BLEU**

#### ***in Sarlat***

This restaurant, about 10 minutes walk from the old town centre, offers highclass food based on seasonal locally sourced produce. The chef, Maxime Lebrun, takes as his inspiration the traditional cuisine of the area, whilst giving it his own personal touch. The atmosphere in the dining room is simple, pleasant and convivial.

[www.legrandbleu.eu](http://www.legrandbleu.eu)

Lush green pastures and the famous chestnut-coloured Limousin cattle combine to produce excellent milk-fed, naturally raised ***veal*** (not in cages). The tender, delicate pinkish-white meat has **Label Rouge** status; and *Objat's* market is recognised for the consistently high quality of the meat sold here.

***Quercy lamb*** (AOP) is also to be savoured and it too spends its time in the open air amongst the oak trees.

In the Périgord, the duck and goose bring a special note to the table. The fattened birds (not force-fed, as such; the food goes into a storage pouch, the crop, and they digest it as and when they want) give liver for **foie gras** and meat for **confit, magret**, etc.

Foie Gras is a real delicacy, prized and enjoyed by the local population. There are over 60 producers, farmers, artisans and canners who control the quality and provenance of their product via the ***Canard à foie gras du Périgord*** IGP. The confit is an ancient method of preservation: the meat is salted, rinsed, and cooked very gently in its own fat until tender and then, most often, stored in tins. It is traditionally served with pommes Sarladaises, potatoes sautéed in the fat of the bird which has been used to preserve it.



### **AOP Périgord walnut**

This nut originally came to the area with the Romans, but has made itself thoroughly at home here, and walnut groves are to be seen almost everywhere, throughout the Corrèze, the Lot and the Dordogne (Périgord is the old name of the Dordogne département).

Very good to garnish salads and accompany cheeses, walnuts are sold in the shell but also transformed into delicious cakes, biscuits, confectionary and an excellent oil. They are also distilled into liqueurs, spirits and a fine, local aperitif, 'vin de noix' (walnut wine).

### **LES QUATRE DEMOISELLES in Saillac**

*Les Quatre Demoiselles* is a walnut museum where you can eat and drink in Saillac, Corrèze which is the centre for the *Marbot*, one of the four varieties of the AOP Périgord walnut. Discover the culture and the culinary, medical and botanical secrets of this small but surprising nut and taste its applications in the bistrot.

[www.4demoiselles.fr](http://www.4demoiselles.fr)

Fruit and nut trees thrive in the fertile conditions of the Dordogne Valley.

The *Borrue*, the *Josette*, and the *Rousse* are local varieties of **chestnut** which give a touch of luxury to our dishes today, but which in the past were used when food was scarce.

There has been a revival and the Corrèze is now the second department for chestnut production.

A very pleasant way of trying our traditional cuisine is to visit a **Ferme Auberge** or **Farm Inn**, where you can enjoy a meal on a working farm, prepared largely from their own produce.

Near Martel, the **Moulin à l'Huile du Lac de Diane** run by the Castagné family serves meals in a converted hunting lodge, with a walnut oil mill installed on the ground floor. Here, their walnuts are lightly toasted and milled to produce a limpid golden oil, excellent for making salad dressing.

[www.moulin-martel.com](http://www.moulin-martel.com)

As well as enjoying a good meal, you can visit the mill and find out about their farm products. There is also a walnut oil mill to visit near Terrasson: **Le Moulin de Maneyrol** in **Pazayac**, and, in **Ste. Nathalène** near Sarlat, there's a 16th C. working water mill, both of which produce high-quality, flavoursome oil in the time-honoured way. Tastes good... and it's healthy, too!

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

### **CHATEAU CANTECOR near Rocamadour**

The perfect hideaway. This 12th C. château with its lovely view over the Dordogne valley was once a residence of the Marquise de Pompadour. Nowadays, its watch tower is a gîte 'with charm' for 2 or 3 people, and in the grounds, perched four metres up in the oak trees, there is the ultimate dream cabin complete with pigeon-tower and private terrace. There's plenty to do here, with 5 hectares of woods and meadows, 2 swimming pools and a former bread-oven made into a barbecue. Your dream come true? From 50€ per night per person, breakfast included.

[www.chateau-cantecor.com](http://www.chateau-cantecor.com)

### **AU HASARD BALTHAZAR in Martel**

In the mediaeval heart of the town, this restaurant serves high-quality local specialities - confit, cassoulet, foie gras - prepared in their own conservation unit and also available to buy in the associated shop. "Acabatx d'intrar" written on the door (don't stand out there, come in!) sums up the generous, welcoming philosophy that informs the food.

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



Known for nuts, the Dordogne Valley is a home of plenty also providing a wide diversity of fresh fruits, softly ripened under the sun.

**Blueberries** grow on the mountain slopes of the Cantal and the locals know well just where to go to find them.

**Apple** orchards are abundant around Bergerac and the Corrèze is famed for two old varieties, the **Reinette** and the **Sainte Germaine**, the latter taking its name from the village of *Saint-Germain-des-Verges* where it was discovered 1750-1760.

**Strawberries** are another delight to be found on local market stalls. Around *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* in the Corrèze, 700 tonnes are cultivated each year, the stars being the delicate, scented **Gariguettes** and **Mara des Bois**. The Dordogne is France's biggest producer of strawberries.

**Plums** also grow locally. In Carennac – Lot – the **Reine-Claude** Greengage flourishes. This little queen has its own festival, in the summer!

### LE ROC DU BERGER

**just outside Rocamadour**

In this beautiful modern structure in wood, set amongst truffle oaks, the kitchen team provides authentic local cuisine using truly local produce sourced from nearby farms and businesses: lamb, duck, wine, beer, bread, vegetables... Meat is grilled before your eyes in the dining room on a huge barbecue, and you can also enjoy your meal outside on the terrace if you wish.

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

### LE CHATEAU DE LA GREZE

**close to Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne**

This 18th C. residence dedicated to the horse, the great passion of the France family, has everything you need to keep you happy: grounds with ancient trees, a swimming pool overlooking the countryside...and 5 guest rooms 'with charm'. *Table d'hôte* meals on request, prepared from fresh farm produce.

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

Hidden underground beneath the trees, the highly prized **black truffle**, or tuber *melanosporum* – also named 'black diamond' – is a mushroom that has to be hunted out. It likes alkaline soil, and the limestone rock of this area is its ideal terrain. Pigs were once used to hunt them out, as they have a very acute sense of smell, and naturally root for them; but as pigs aren't always the most amenable of creatures (given half a chance, they'll snaffle the mushroom themselves), trained truffle hounds now usually do the job. You can find this supreme delicacy in the markets from December to February every year, in particular those in *Sorges*, *Saint-Alvère* and *Périgueux*.

The soil and climate also favour gastronomic **mushrooms** which grow above ground and in season conversation among the locals focuses on who has found the first **cèpes** and **girolles**.

# Markets, fairs and food festivals



## Local farmers' Markets

In summer, these markets are a great opportunity to meet local farmers and find out about the rich and diverse produce of the Dordogne valley, from fruit and vegetables to preserves, pâtés and jams. Only producers from the surrounding area are allowed to have stalls, and there is usually a festive atmosphere, with the opportunity to stay and make a meal from the products you have bought.

## Summer Markets

Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne, Beynac-et-Cazenac, Carennac, Chartrier-Ferrière, Lacave, Lachapelle-Auzac, La Roque Gageac, Miers, Monceaux-sur-Dordogne, Saillac, Sainte-Féréole, Souillac and Voutezac le Saillant

## Foires grasses

**Brive-la-Gaillarde, November to February**  
Markets specialising in the sale of foie gras, truffles, goose and duck products.  
[www.brive-tourisme.com](http://www.brive-tourisme.com)

## Truffle markets

**Sarlat**  
**Every Wednesday December to February,**  
2.30 pm Place de la Mairie.  
Wholesale truffle market  
**Every Saturday December to March**  
rue Tourny  
Specialised retail market, all truffles checked and calibrated.  
[www.sarlat-tourisme.com](http://www.sarlat-tourisme.com)

## Truffle market

**Sainte Alvère**  
**Every monday 26th November 2016 - 27th February 2017**  
[www.truffe-perigord-noir.com](http://www.truffe-perigord-noir.com)

## Truffle Fair

**Cuzance, 10th December 2017**  
Make the acquaintance of the renowned Tuber Melanosporum or black truffle, one of the most valuable fungi on the planet. Its scent is like no other  
[www.visit-dordogne-valley.com](http://www.visit-dordogne-valley.com)

## Truffle Festival and Foie Gras and Truffle Academy

**Sarlat, the 3rd weekend of January**  
Renowned chefs from Sarlat and from Michelin-starred restaurants in the area come together to give demonstrations of and lessons in the preparation of these iconic specialities. The Academy gives young chefs the chance to be creative with these delicacies.  
[www.sarlat-tourisme.com](http://www.sarlat-tourisme.com)

## Walnut Festival

**Sarlat, February**  
An opportunity to discover all the good things that can come from a walnut with activities and stands devoted to its products. There is also a competition to find the best local walnut oil.  
[www.sarlat-tourisme.com](http://www.sarlat-tourisme.com)

## Fest'Oie Goose Festival

**Sarlat 3rd Sunday in February each year**  
The goose comes to town in a big way. Find out everything there is to know from egg to feather... fun workshops for children, gigantic meal based on specialities this generous bird provides.  
[www.sarlat-tourisme.com](http://www.sarlat-tourisme.com)

## Fair of strawberry

**Nabirat, 30th April 2017**  
Every year, on the last Sunday of April, the small village of Nabirat hosts more than 3,000 visitors for the strawberry fair. A giant strawberry tart, local producers and craftsmen stalls, shows and games for children and adults.  
[www.perigordnoir-valleedordogne.com](http://www.perigordnoir-valleedordogne.com)

## Strawberry Festival

**Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne, 14th May 2017**  
Strawberry market, giant tart, food stalls, hot-air ballooning etc.  
[www.visit-dordogne-valley.com](http://www.visit-dordogne-valley.com)

## Cheese Festival

**Rocamadour, 15th May 2017**  
The local AOC Rocamadour goat's cheese is obviously to the fore, but there are many other fine cheeses of all kinds from the region to be sampled, along with wines from the area and other products.  
[www.visit-dordogne-valley.com](http://www.visit-dordogne-valley.com)

## Fête de la Prune Dorée

**Carennac, 7th August 2017**  
The golden greengage plum in all its forms: fresh, in tarts and cakes, jams, chutneys, distilled... come and try all these delicious products made locally.  
[www.visit-dordogne-valley.com](http://www.visit-dordogne-valley.com)



### *L'assiette de Cyrano*

#### **Bergerac, August**

The famous Bergerac personality gives his name to a good food and wine festival where the visitor can choose between different menus proposed by restaurateurs in the town centre at reasonable prices, each with a different theme ranging from Périgordian specialities to international cuisine. Wine producers team up with restaurateurs to serve their wine. Music and free shows in the street accompany the festival.

[www.ville-bergerac.com](http://www.ville-bergerac.com)

### *Festival of Regional Cattle Breeding*

#### **Brive-la-Gaillarde, end of August**

Presentation of cattle, goats, pigs, sheep, draught horses, poultry and birds. A real farm in the middle of the town with different animations. Horse drawn carriages and pony riding. Sale and tasting of regional products, kitchen demonstrations. Processions of confraternities.

[www.brive-tourisme.com](http://www.brive-tourisme.com)

### *Journée du Goût et de la Gastronomie*

#### **Sarlat, September**

You can taste local products, take part in cooking workshops and learn from demonstrations at a festival dedicated to local gastronomic delights and join in a walk following sheep as they are herded from their summer to their winter pastureland.

[www.sarlat-tourisme.com](http://www.sarlat-tourisme.com)

### *Randonnoix*

#### **around Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne, last Sunday of September**

Come out of your shell on this themed walk, which takes you to meet walnutgrowers and to taste their walnut-based products.

[www.visit-dordogne-valley.com](http://www.visit-dordogne-valley.com)

### *Chestnut and Mushroom Festival*

#### **Villefranche-du-Périgord, October**

All day long you can buy roasted chestnuts and fresh apple juice as well as local products at a farmer's market and participate in chestnut walks, competitions and meals and there is a cèpe mushroom market in the afternoon, if the conditions have been kind enough to let them grow!

[www.dordogne-perigord-tourisme.fr](http://www.dordogne-perigord-tourisme.fr)

### *Chestnut Festival*

#### **Beynat, 15th October 2017**

Market selling chestnuts in various forms and products based on them. Traditional presentation and tasting of The Giant Chestnut on Sunday afternoon.

[www.visit-dordogne-valley.com](http://www.visit-dordogne-valley.com)



### *Fête de la Noix (Walnut festival)*

#### **Thegra, 30th October 2017**

Festival with the walnut in the starring rôle: fresh, dried, in cakes, sweets and biscuits, as oil, distilled... it's crunch time!

[www.visit-dordogne-valley.com](http://www.visit-dordogne-valley.com)

### *Fête du Safran du Quercy*

#### **Cajarc, end of October**

Two days dedicated to the precious redgold spice obtained from the saffron crocus, cultivated and used here for centuries. Market (foods and craftwork), saffron meal prepared by some of the Lot's best chefs, entertainment.

[www.visit-dordogne-valley.com](http://www.visit-dordogne-valley.com)



# Portraits of Chefs



## Vincent ARNOULD

Chef at  
**Le Vieux Logis** restaurant  
Trémolat

Using the best and the freshest of local products; duck, walnut oil, cèpes, truffles, foie gras this award winning chef creates dishes to attract the eye as well as the palate.

He won the prestigious *Meilleur Ouvrier de France* award in 2007 and for the past ten years has used his skills to revisit local Périgordian cuisine.

He is particularly careful in sourcing his ingredients and changing the menu according to season.

### *Le Vieux Logis*

24510 Trémolat

05 53 22 80 06

[www.vieux-logis.com](http://www.vieux-logis.com)

Michelin star Chef at  
**La Tour des Vents** restaurant  
Monbazillac

## Damien FAGETTE

Damien Fagette was sixteen when he started his career in the restaurant where he is now chef.

He delights in using fresh products and is immensely creative and energetic so that there is a change in menu every week.

He has brought a creative and contemporary vision to local ingredients and pays particular attention to seasoning and sauces.

His dishes are veritable works of art.



### *La Tour des Vents*

Moulin de Malfourat

24240, Monbazillac

05 53 58 30 10

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

## Nicolas SOULIE

Michelin star Chef at  
**Castel-Novel** restaurant  
Varetz

Nicolas SOULIE received *a star on the Michelin guide* in 2010, renewed in 2016, and was *elect-ed «Young Talent»* in the region by *Gault Millau 2011*.

This distinction rewards an atypical route. Within two years, he knew how to propose a cooking in the traditional bases, accommodated by a touch of modernity by honoring every day his country and calling on most of the time to the local producers.

### *Castel-Novel*

19240 Varetz

05 55 85 00 01

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





Michelin star Chef at  
**La Table d'Olivier** restaurant  
Brive-la-Gaillarde

## Pierre NEVEU

In the historical quarters of Brive-la-Gaillarde, *La Table d'Olivier* is renowned as the place to eat for gastronomy lovers.

The 33-year-old chef Pierre Neveu delights with its creative cuisine, from starters to dessert, made of fresh and seasonal produces.

As a reward of its talent, he received a star on the Michelin guide in 2015, renewed in 2016.



### *La Table d'Olivier*

3 Rue Saint-Ambroise  
19100 Brive-la-Gaillarde

05 55 18 95 95

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



## Alain LACOSTE

Rocamadour AOP Producer  
**La Ferme Lacoste**  
Rocamadour

Alain Lacoste and his mother look after 150 Alpine goats on their farm on the limestone plateau near Rocamadour.

The goats feed on the pastureland and the fresh grass gives good flavour to their milk which mother and son transform into the traditional, small, round soft goat's cheese known as **Rocamadour**. They are the last farm to use the milk, twice a day, fresh from the goat, to start the cheese making process so as to benefit from all the qualities of the unpasteurised milk.

### *Ferme Lacoste*

Les Alix

46500 Rocamadour

05 65 33 62 66

Producers  
**Le Moulin à l'huile de noix**  
Martel

## CASTAGNE Family

**Three generations** of the same family share the work at this **walnut farm** which also offers meals.

Grandfather and grandson make walnut oil using traditional methods, Mum runs the Ferme-Auberge, Dad is in the fields and the youngest has his own wine bar and restaurant, close by in the centre of Martel.

This walnut mill is a real family business!



### *Le Moulin à l'huile de noix*

Route de Saint-Céré

46 600 MARTEL

05 65 37 40 69

[www.moulin-martel.com](http://www.moulin-martel.com)

## *The men and the women of the Dordogne Valley*

Nature has created the dramatic landscapes of the Dordogne Valley but it has been marked and moulded by the people who have lived here in the past and by those who live here still.

Some places are particularly and inextricably linked with the personalities who have dwelled within their walls.



*People  
and the places  
they have made  
famous*



**COCO CHANEL** and the Monastery at *Aubazine*

The luxury brand *Chanel* owes part of its inspiration to the monastery at Aubazine, in the Corrèze.

It was there that Coco Chanel spent 6 years of her life from 1895 to 1901, from the age of 12 to 18. There was an orphanage there at the time and Gabrielle Chanel, later to become Coco, was left there with her two sisters by their father after the death of their mother.

It was there **she learnt to sew** and her later preferences for beige, black and white and simple lines surely came from life with nuns. The **octagonal cap to Chanel No 5** resembles the abbey's tower – and the company logo is markedly reminiscent of the interlacing designs on the stained glass windows...

[www.visit-dordogne-valley.co.uk](http://www.visit-dordogne-valley.co.uk)

*Castel Novel* and the *Jardins de Colette*  
Varetz

**COLETTE**

When Colette the famous novelist married she came to live at **her husband's family château, Castel Novel** at Varetz in Corrèze.

It was a place she loved: *"There is no-one, -thousands of animals-, simple food with a touch of garlic, beautiful countryside, silence ..."*

Now the château is a hotel with a one star Michelin restaurant.

Nearby are the *Jardins de Colette* with **six gardens** representing the regions the author loved and a **maze** in the form of a butterfly called *Bel Gazou* after Colette's daughter, who grew up here.

[www.castelnovel.com](http://www.castelnovel.com)  
[www.lesjardinsdecolette.com](http://www.lesjardinsdecolette.com)



**Simone DE BEAUVOIR** *Uzerche*



Simone de Beauvoir, famous for her book *'The Second Sex'*, spent her holidays in her grandfather's house at Saint-Ybard near to Uzerche. She was happy here and evokes her love of the Corrèze countryside in *'Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter'*: *"I was enchanted by the profusion of colours and smells. Everywhere, there were secrets I burned to discover, in the green fishing waters, in the slopes of the meadows, under the ferns with their sharp edges, and in the hollows beneath the undergrowth."*

You can walk a trail *'In the footsteps of Simone de Beauvoir'* at Uzerche with ten sign-posts telling the story of her life and her works.

[www.uzerche-tourisme.com](http://www.uzerche-tourisme.com)



## Josephine **BAKER** Château des *Milandes*

The Twenties and Thirties music hall star, Josephine Baker spent ten years living in the **Château des Milandes** which she turned into a **home for the 12 children she adopted** from different countries from all over the world.

She was forced to leave the castle in 1969 when the upkeep of the building ruined her financially.

Now you can discover her extraordinary story at the château, which is reflected in 15 of the rooms she lived in; the dressing room, the Art Deco bath room, the kitchen, dining room and bedrooms and a grand room with remarkable 15thC woodwork in which there is an exhibition in memory of the work Josephine Baker carried out during World War II.

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

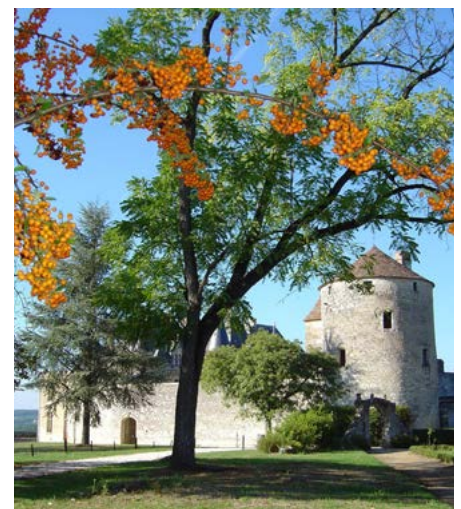
## *Château de Montaigne* Saint-Michel de Montaigne

## Michel de **MONTAIGNE**

The château where the famous 16th C. writer and philosopher Montaigne wrote and thought was badly damaged by fire in 1885, but the tower, where he carried out much of his writing was spared by the flames and can be visited.

It offers an insight into the way he thought with the inscriptions he had carved on the beams, reflecting his philosophy of life. He spent his last days there and when he was too weak to go downstairs a hole was made in the wall to connect his room with the chapel so he could hear Mass.

[www.chateau-montaigne.com](http://www.chateau-montaigne.com)



## Jean **LURÇAT** Château de *Saint-Laurent-les-Tours*

**Jean Lurçat**, the artist famous for his tapestries came to the Lot in 1941 to join the **Resistance Movement** and he fell in love with the abandoned château at *Saint-Laurent-les-Tours* near *Saint-Céré*. *'If I can't buy it, I'll die'*, he said.

He moved in after the war and created some of his most beautiful tapestries there and decorated his home with his own tiles, wall-paper, designs on the walls and ceiling, marking it with his own extraordinary and individual talent.

Unaltered since his death, it makes for a fascinating visit.

[www.saint-laurent-les-tours.fr](http://www.saint-laurent-les-tours.fr)



*Contemporary  
artists and craftsmen,  
both traditional and modern*

**Pierre  
SHASMOUKINE**

**Artist** and owner of *Gorodka*

Pierre Shasmoukine bought a small area of forest in 1970 and since then has turned 2 hectares into a uniquely original artist's kingdom with a series of 8 indoor and 3 outdoor galleries.

There are more than 500 works of contemporary, surreal, installation, conceptual, humorous and land art which make for a visit which can never be boring.

*Gorodka*  
Sarat-La-Caneda  
05 53 31 02 00 / 07 85 46 45 85  
[www.gorodka.com](http://www.gorodka.com)

**Martin  
WALKER**

*Writer*

Author of several novels and the **police detective series 'Bruno'**, the **Scottish** journalist Martin Walker divides his time between Washington and the Dordogne, where he owns a house in the country.

The main hero in his food-inspired detective novels set in the Dordogne is **Commissaire Bruno**, a municipal policeman with somewhat unconventional methods.

In real life, Bruno is no other than Pierre Simonet, the municipal chief of police in the village of **Le Bugue**, in the **Vézère valley**. The success of his novels has attracted new visitors to the Dordogne hoping to meet and follow in the steps of their police hero!

For the *latest news on Bruno*, visit  
[www.brunochiefofpolice.com](http://www.brunochiefofpolice.com)

**Clément  
BOUSCAREL**

*Storyteller*

Young and passionate, Clément Bouscarrel tells tales of his native **Quercy**, in French and in the local **Occitan language**, sharing his love of all that is dear to him about the region: the **Dordogne River**, the gabares, the limestone plateaux, medicinal plants and even fairy stories.



**Chantal  
JEAN**

**Artist** and owner of *Rocavitraux*

A 13thC house at Rocamadour houses a workshop where craftsman, Chantal Jean creates and restores stained glass windows.

You can visit all year round but must ring in advance.

*Rocavitraux*  
Rocamadour  
05 65 33 73 10  
[rocavitraux@wanadoo.fr](mailto:rocavitraux@wanadoo.fr)



**Hubert  
FAURE**

*Le Moulin de Cougnaguet*

From his strong accent we know straightaway that Monsieur Faure is a true local and he gives a warm regional welcome to his 14th C flour mill, situated on the edge of the astonishing turquoise blue waters of the river Ouyse, at Calès.

He is amusing and passionate about the history of his mill and will willingly share a glass of '**eau de prune**' with visitors in his authentic, old kitchen, which seems to belong to another age.

*Moulin de Cougnaguet*  
Calès  
05 65 38 73 56  
[www.cougnaguet.com](http://www.cougnaguet.com)



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## *Festivals and fun in the Dordogne Valley*

The historic towns and villages, castles, churches, lovely landscapes and, sometimes even the spectacular caves of this area make a perfect backdrop to all kinds of events and festivals. They cover music, both modern and classical, theatre, cinema and outdoor sports.





## Music festivals

### *Festival Jazz Pourpre*

**Bergerac, May** (dates not yet defined)

A jazz and blues festival organised during Bergerac's "Arts in May" event every year, with well-known artists as well as new ones to be discovered. There is the "in" festival with two quality programmes with internationally known artists in the Cultural Centre and the "off" with free concerts in the attractive Cloître des Récollets.

jazzpourpre@orange.fr  
[www.jazzpourpre.com](http://www.jazzpourpre.com)

### *Festival Jazz en Chais*

**Bergerac, March-November**

Jazz en Chais offers a various range of jazz concerts organised in wine cellars throughout the Bergerac area.

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

### *Souillac en Jazz-Festival Jim Copans*

**Souillac, 15th - 22nd July 2017**

Fresh and unconventional, the programme of this festival puts on always surprises audiences with the original nature of its concerts. The aim is to bring together jazz musicians from widely differing cultures to facilitate exchanges that can enrich us all. A different approach to jazz for a different public!

[www.souillacenjazz.net](http://www.souillacenjazz.net)

### *Brive Festival*

**Brive, end of July** (dates not yet defined)

What began as a simple summer entertainment has developed over thirteen years to become the top contemporary music festival in the Limousin. It is urban, chic and great for all the family with a line up including international stars, French artists and music and dance from all over the world.

Facebook: [Brive Festival](#) – to follow all the festival news.

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

### *Saint-Céré Festival*

**Saint-Céré, 29th July - 13rd August 2017**

New productions of opera are staged in some of the Lot's most beautiful venues, such as the Château de Castelnaud-Bretenoux. The festival is well known for launching new talent and there is an 'off' with free concerts.

[www.festival-saint-cere.com](http://www.festival-saint-cere.com)

*Festivals and fun in the Dordogne Valley  
 Music festivals*

### *Périgord Noir Classical Music Festival*

**Périgord Noir area, July and August**

World renowned artists love to come to play in the most prestigious classic music festival in the Dordogne. From the very first, the organisers wanted to share their passion for music with the inhabitants of the Périgord and their project has grown in stature and size since 1983. There are now concerts in some of the most beautiful settings the region has to offer including the *Abbaye de Saint Amand de Coly* and the *Jardins du Manoir d'Eyrignac*.

05 53 51 61 61

contact@festivalduperigordnoir.fr

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

### *Saint-Emilion Jazz Festival*

**Saint-Emilion, July** (dates not yet defined)

What could be better than a partnership between wine and jazz during the sultry, summer days in the medieval town of Saint-Emilion where there is a gastronomic market and a pop-up wine bar where you can taste the local grand-crus alongside wonderful jazz concerts.

[www.saint-emilion-jazz-festival.com](http://www.saint-emilion-jazz-festival.com)

### *Eco friendly Ecaussystème Festival*

**Gignac, 28th, 29th and 30th July 2017**

Programme to be announced

20,000 music lovers gather at the small village of Gignac in the north of the Lot, close to the Brive-Dordogne-Valley airport for a lively rock, electro, pop and jazz festival which has grown in popularity from year to year and attracts big stars (Iggy Pop in 2016). It has impeccable eco-principles and everything possible is done to minimise pollution and avoid waste of energy and resources with debates on ecological topics.

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



### *Festival de la Vézère*

**Vézère Valley around Brive-la-Gaillarde**

**July-August** (dates not yet defined)

Internationally renowned artistes and young prodigies rub shoulders at the Festival de la Vézère, where everybody who is anybody in classical music is to be seen. This itinerant festival offers a wide artistic diversity: opera evenings in the setting of a castle, choirs, poetry, concerts, music workshops for children.

[www.festival-vezere.com](http://www.festival-vezere.com)

### *Festival L'été musical en Bergeracois*

**Bergerac area, August 2017**

Programme to be announced

The concerts of this classical music festival take place in some of the most beautiful settings of the Bergerac area heritage: churches, abbeys, castles or outdoor

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

### *Festival de Musique Sacrée*

**Rocamadour, 5th – 26th August 2017**

Programme to be announced

Sublime music in a sublime setting --- what better surroundings could there be for this three-week festival of sacred music than the ancient place of pilgrimage that is Rocamadour? There are around fifteen concerts by world-class artists plus musical visits and an introduction to church music for children.

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

### *Festival des Nuits de Nacre*

**Tulle, September** (dates not yet defined)

The old town has a long association with the accordion, which is still manufactured here. Nuits de Nacre brings together musicians from diverse musical traditions who love the instrument for 90 concerts in 4 days, and has, in the past, welcomed such stars as Dee Dee Bridgewater, Johnny Clegg and Juliette Greco.

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



## Cinema festivals

### Sarlat Film Festival

#### November

The Festival du Film de Sarlat is one of the major cinema festivals in France and as you wander the streets of the town you may be lucky to spot some of the most famous and important French directors and actors who come in November to present their latest films.

There is a special programme for film students who come from 600 lycées to enjoy the festival.

[www.festivaldufilmde-sarlat.com](http://www.festivaldufilmde-sarlat.com)



## Sports festivals

### Ultra-Trail Aqua Terra

#### Bort-les-Orgues, July 15, 2017

This is an important sporting event for runners, walkers, horse-riders and cyclists with different circuits from athletic to family level among the stunning, rocky landscape of the upper Dordogne valley. The longest is the 101km *Tour des 3 Lacs* race, followed by the challenging, mountainous 65km route, the *Tour du Lac*. The shortest is 5 km long.

[www.trail-aquaterra.com](http://www.trail-aquaterra.com)

(tel: 05 55 96 02 49)

### Dordogne Intégrale

#### From Argentat to Castelnaud-la-Chapelle May 27 2017

The Dordogne Intégrale is an "extreme long distance" kayaking event. It is 130km long and takes place on the river Dordogne taking participants past some of the most stunning landscapes in the Corrèze, the Lot and the Dordogne departments. It is open to everyone, whether licensed or not and is an opportunity for keen, kayak amateurs to pitch their talents against some of the top athletes in the sport.

[www.visit-dordogne-valley.co.uk](http://www.visit-dordogne-valley.co.uk)

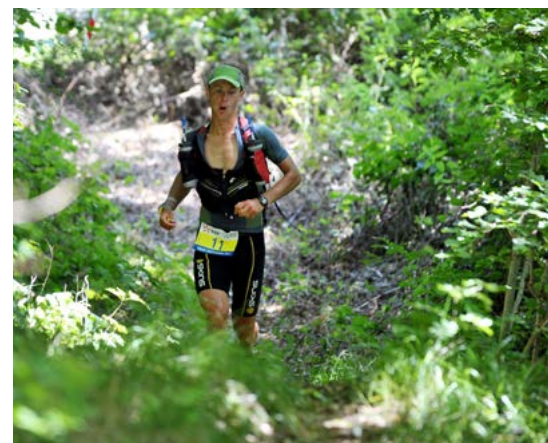


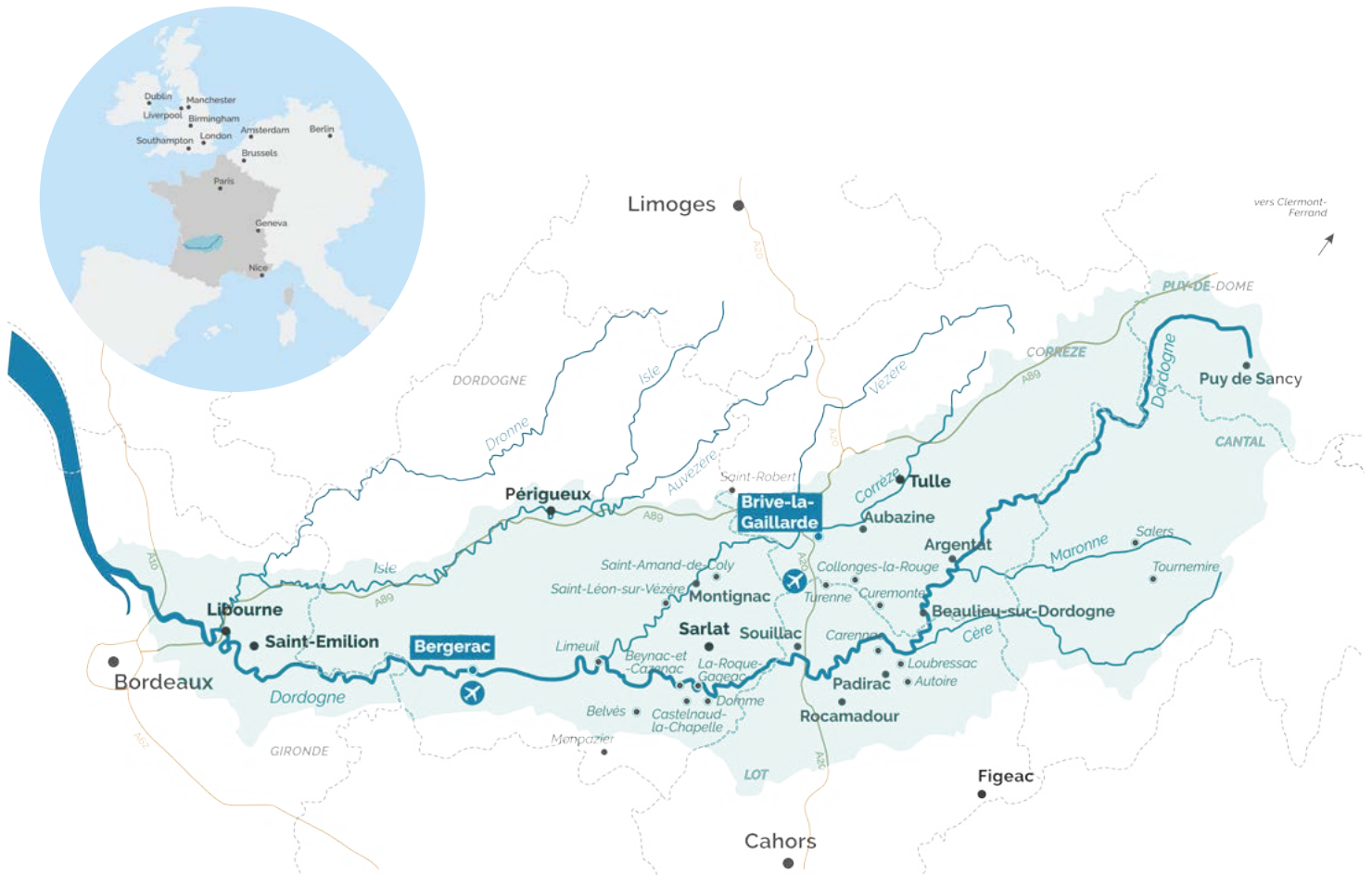
### Ultra-Trail du Périgord et de la rivière Dordogne

#### Lalinde, May 27, 2017

Participants can choose between 2 distances (48km and 110km) and 4 circuits. The race takes runners through 12 villages amongst the most beautiful in the area, revealing beautiful castles and ancient mansions lost in the Dordogne Valley.

[www.ultra-trail-du-perigord.com](http://www.ultra-trail-du-perigord.com)





## How to get there

### BY AIR

**Brive Dordogne Valley Airport** flights

Tel: +33 (0)5 55 22 40 00

[www.aeroport-brive-vallee-dordogne.com](http://www.aeroport-brive-vallee-dordogne.com)

Ryanair from London Stansted

Hop! from Paris.

**Bergerac Dordogne Périgord Airport** flights

Tel: +33 (0)53 22 25 25

[www.bergerac.aeroport.fr](http://www.bergerac.aeroport.fr)

British Airways from London City

Ryanair from London Stansted, Liverpool, Nottingham East Midlands, Bristol, Bruxelles-Charleroi

Flybe from Birmingham, Edinburgh, Manchester, Southampton, Exeter

Transavia from Amsterdam

IGavion from Nice

### BY TRAIN

From Paris Austerlitz the line serves Limoges, Brive, Souillac, Gourdon and Cahors.

### BY ROAD

From Paris on the A20 motorway

From Lyon and Bordeaux on the A89

## Press Contacts

### Régine CHASSAGNE

Corrèze area

Tel: +33 (0)6 40 36 49 62

E-mail: [rchassagne@correze.fr](mailto:rchassagne@correze.fr)

### Marielle LACOMBE

Dordogne valley area in the Lot

Tel: +33 (0)5 65 33 22 05

C.: +33 (0)6 67 86 92 62

E-mail: [m.lacombe@vallee-dordogne.com](mailto:m.lacombe@vallee-dordogne.com)

### Anna CREPIN

Lot area

Tel: +33 (0)5 65 35 80 86

C.: +33 (0)6 28 67 53 10

E-mail: [anna.crepin@tourisme-lot.com](mailto:anna.crepin@tourisme-lot.com)

### Micheline MORISSONNEAU

Dordogne Perigord area

Tel: +33 (0)5 53 35 50 05

C.: +33 (0)6 70 41 98 58

E-mail: [promo1cdt24@orange.fr](mailto:promo1cdt24@orange.fr)

### Katia VEYRET

Sarlat and Périgord Noir area

Tel: +33(0)5 53 31 45 46

C.: +33(0)6 77 85 37 91

E-mail: [k.veyret@sarlat-tourisme.com](mailto:k.veyret@sarlat-tourisme.com)

## Websites

### Corrèze Tourist Board

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

### Brive Tourist Board

[www.brive-tourisme.com](http://www.brive-tourisme.com)

### Lot Tourist Board

[www.tourisme-lot.com](http://www.tourisme-lot.com)

### Dordogne Valley Tourist Office

(in the Lot)

[www.visit-dordogne-valley.co.uk](http://www.visit-dordogne-valley.co.uk)

### Dordogne Tourist Board

[www.dordogne-perigord-tourisme.fr](http://www.dordogne-perigord-tourisme.fr)

### Sarlat Tourist Office

[www.sarlat-tourisme.com](http://www.sarlat-tourisme.com)

### Terrasson Tourist Board

[www.ot-terrasson.com](http://www.ot-terrasson.com)

### Saint-Emilion Tourist Board

[www.saint-emilion-tourisme.com](http://www.saint-emilion-tourisme.com)

Welcome to  
Dordogne Valley



#dordognevalley