

LES PRÉALPES D'AZUR

A JOURNEY BETWEEN MOUNTAINS AND SEA



SUMMER

guided tours

OF THE VILLAGES

GRÉOLIÈRES

GOURDON

VALBONNE SOPHIA ANTIPOLIS

TOURRETTES-SUR-LOUP

LE BAR-SUR-LOUP



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DISCOVER THE HERITAGE OF THE VILLAGES OF VALBONNE, GOURDON, LE BAR-SUR-LOUP, GRÉOLIÈRES, TOURRETTES-SUR-LOUP AND DURING FREE GUIDED TOURS ALL SUMMER !

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Did you say "authentic"? It is an adjective that applies entirely to this hinterland of hills, "baous" and plateaus, which extends from Valbonne to the perched villages of the Préalpes d'Azur.

► **First of all, the hills that border the Côte d'Azur**, like a protective amphitheatre, have seen the villages flourish. Valbonne, Chateaufort, Opio, le Rouret, Roquefort les Pins have developed there, some of them around the cultivation of aromatic plants for the perfumers of Grasse, others around livestock or market gardening. Little by little, and with the development of the Côte d'Azur, these villages have grown to include a population of holidaymakers, retirees, and young households seeking a sweeter life in the south. The post-war period and the development of tourism and the arts on the coast and in the nearby hinterland gave a major boost to the development of these villages. The creation in 1969 of Sophia Antipolis, and the installation of hundreds of companies, researchers and universities, completed the boost to the municipalities of this hilly amphitheatre overlooking the sea.

► **Behind the hills, there are the white cliffs of the "Baous"**, split by the gorges du Loup, and, at their foot, the villages of Le Loup, we speak there of Gourdon, Tourrettes-sur-Loup, Le Bar-sur-Loup, as well as Courmes. They are real balconies on the hills and the sea, which clearly claim their difference. Nestled within their ancient walls, they are bastion villages. They too were able to take advantage of the development of the means of communication at the end of the 19th century, roads and railways, to transform themselves and attract new inhabitants, as well as tourists on excursions. The settling of artists and the development of the hotel business have completed giving these villages their reputation as tourist destinations.

► **Higher up, behind the limestone plateaus that make the transition to the high country**, are the medium mountain villages, grouped around the Cheiron mountain: Cipières and Gréolières, but also Coursegoules, Bézaudun-les-Alpes, Bouyon and les Ferres, Conségudes and La Roque-en-Provence. Less easily accessible, further away, they had to reinvent themselves to survive. They have taken advantage of the surrounding nature, and, for some, of the protection of the Préalpes d'Azur Natural Park to develop nature activities, skiing, canyoning, hiking, mountain biking, horse riding. Today, they see the old walls of their bastides reborn, renovated by new passionate inhabitants, attracted by a fabulous living environment, and developing new ideas for activities in this beautiful medium mountain region.

Whether in the southern hills, in the villages of Le Loup, or in those of the hinterland, you will find a varied hotel business, restaurants that give pride of place to Provençal local products, welcoming villages with their festivals and traditions, varied activities.... Were we talking about authenticity? We invite you to browse through the pages of this guide, to discover a region that extends from Valbonne to the perched villages, and which precisely cultivates its authenticity.



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Gourdon.

© Bernard CROISE



Towards Italy

Pays d'Azur





Gourdon and the coast seen from château de Caussols.

© Bernard CROISE



DISCOVER THE PRÉALPES D'AZUR



IDENTITY CARD

8

This guide covers 18 towns or villages in the Sophia Antipolis Urban Community, stretching from the hinterland of Antibes to the villages on the Estéron River.

▶ **The most important municipality** is Valbonne-Sophia Antipolis with 13,190 inhabitants. The least important is La-Roque-en-Provence, with 68 inhabitants.

▶ **The total area of the territory** is 391 km².

▶ **The lowest point** in the territory, 20 metres above sea level, is Roquefort les Pins. The highest point, 1,778 meters, is at Gréolières. (Cheiron Summit).

▶ **The areas of these 18 municipalities** range from 7.1 km² (Le Rouret) to 52.67 km² (Gréolières).

▶ **There are 5 main tourist sites:** Valbonne-Village, Gourdon, Tourrettes-sur-Loup, Gorges du Loup, Gréolières.

▶ **A regional natural park:** the Préalpes d'Azur regional natural park, which includes 47 municipalities, 11 of which are within the territory of the Sophia Antipolis Agglomeration Community, and are therefore included in this guide.

▶ **Four departmental natural parks:** Parc de l'Estéron in La Roque-en-Provence, Parc du Sinodon in

Roquefort-les-Pins, as well as Parc de la Brague and Parc de la Valmasque, partially located in the commune of Valbonne Sophia-Antipolis.

▶ **Europe's leading technology park:** Sophia Antipolis.

▶ **A river classified as an "exceptional river":** the Estéron, which is one of the top three wild rivers in the Alps, with the Soca (Slovenia) and Tagliamento (Italy)

▶ **A remarkable coastal river,** the Loup: 48 km long from its source at 1,217 m to its mouth. Its gorges are one of the main tourist attractions of the region.

▶ **An unusual place,** Caussols: its karst plateau offers a preserved nature with a specific flora and fauna.

▶ **A massif:** the Cheiron (1,778 m) around which 8 of the communes in this guide are grouped.

▶ **The lowest town hall** is Roquefort les Pins (200 m).

▶ **The highest town hall** is Caussols (1,130 m).

▶ **Two Natura 2000 sites:** Les Préalpes de Grasse (communes of Bar-sur-Loup, Caussols, Cipières, Courmes, Coursegoules, Gourdon, Gréolières, la Roque en Provence, Tourrettes sur Loup) and Rivière et les Gorges du Loup (communes of Bar-sur-Loup, Cipières, Courmes, Gourdon, Gréolières, Roque-sur-Loup).

© Bernard BOUÏSE



Place des Arcades, Valbonne.



Crystallized violets.



Château-Mairie de Tourrettes-sur-Loup.



Coursegoules.



Gourdon village.

MUST-SEES

From the hills of Valbonne to the villages of the high country, through the communes of Le Loup, the region is rich in cultural, architectural and natural discoveries. Here are some sites that you shouldn't miss.

Châteauneuf village

Seeing the medieval village of Châteauneuf from the plain is a guaranteed must with an irrepressible desire to visit it. It is a village that clings to the sides of a hill planted with century-old olive trees, wrapped around a natural hillside. The houses are squeezed together around the church, in a harmony of shapes and colours, giving the whole a true Provençal character. The city has made its reputation around the cultivation of perfume flowers, vines and olive trees, as well as market gardening. While remaining faithful to the agricultural and horticultural tradition, the municipality has also diversified its economic activities both in the field of crafts (ceramics, pottery, sculptures) and commercial. It is a real pleasure to stroll through the flowered alleys, discovering the facades, stairs, vaulted passages, and to admire here a nicely restored house, there a garden planted with a magnolia or a palm tree.

► **To discover:** the fountain-washhouse on the town hall square, the church of Saint Martin (10th century) which houses an 18th century altarpiece, the panorama of the Côte d'Azur from the Old Town Hall square, the orientation table.

Valbonne village

In contrast to other older villages, grouped around their castle at the top of a hill, Valbonne was built in the 16th

century, on the plans of a Roman city: in a checkered, rectangular shape, the streets surrounding a central square. On each side of the rectangle, a door was open, allowing access to the city. Of the four gates that opened on each side of the city, only those from the north, south and west remain. You enter the old village through these gates, walking through the busy pedestrian streets, which intersect perpendicularly. Here no stairs or steep alleys, everything is flat or slightly sloping, and easy to access. The village, very inhabited, is constantly animated. Pretty shops invite you to push their doors, restaurants have their charming terraces right on the street. The houses have beautiful facades with ochre plasters, on which pastel-coloured shutters add a touch of Provençal colour. The streets are flowered with succulent plants, bouquets of lavender, virgin vines or bougainvilleas.

► **To discover:** the Valbonne goat farm, the Peyrebelle olive grove, hikes along the Brague.

■ BUREAU D'INFORMATION TOURISTIQUE DE VALBONNE SOPHIA-ANTIPOLIS 1, place de l' Hôtel de Ville VALBONNE

☎ 04 93 12 34 50

tourisme.vsa@agglo-casa.fr

Open Monday to Friday from 9am to 12.30pm and 1.30pm to 5.30pm; Saturday from 9am to 12.30pm. From 15 June to 15 September, also open on Saturday afternoons from 1.30 pm to 5 pm.

Located on the Place de l'Hôtel de Ville, in the village of Valbonne, you will find here complete information about the city and its heritage as well as the local transport network and the many festivals and events organized by the Commune.



General view of Châteauneuf-Grasse.



A street in Châteauneuf.

© Bernard CROISE



Stroll through the streets of Valbonne.

© Bernard CROISE

Tourrettes-sur-Loup

City of Arts, medieval city, city of Violets, secret village, so many qualifiers for such a small village? But yes, Tourrettes-sur-Loup deserves them all. One enters intramural through the old medieval gates, much as one would enter a church. We wouldn't want to disturb too much, but at the same time we want to discover the city, to explore corners and nooks and crannies, alleys, alleys and secret stairs, to see who is hiding there. Craftsmen, no doubt, judging by the shops. Ceramists, potters, weavers, jewellers, perfumers met in Tourrettes-sur-Loup for our greatest pleasure, looking at their looms, workbenches or potter's wheels. This magical village has always attracted artists: Prévret, Sinatra, Cocteau had their habits there. It is necessary to come in March, for the day of the "Autour de la Violette" festival, a celebration of spring in the colours of this delicate flower.

► **To discover:** the church of Saint-Grégoire on the square, the castle, the medieval city, the craftsmen. But also: the Bastide aux Violettes, the Chapelle St-Jean, the Courmettes farm.

■ BUREAU D'INFORMATION TOURISTIQUE DE TOURRETTES-SUR-LOUP

2, place de la Libération
TOURRETTES-SUR-LOUP

☎ 04 93 24 18 93

www.tourettesurloup.com
tourisme.tsl@agglo-casa.fr

Open Monday to Saturday from 9am to 1pm and 2pm to 5pm. Closed on Sundays and holidays, except in July and August. Closed at 5pm from November to March, at 6pm from April to July, at 6.30pm in July and August, at 5.30pm in September and October.

The team offers all year long upon appointment free guided tours of the medieval city and the historical heritage.

Gourdon

It was a fortified place, an eagle's nest, an impregnable tower. It was reached by a vertiginous mule track: 537m of altitude difference! In other words, we only came to Gourdon if we had to. Curiously, it was flowers rather than war that made the village's fortune. By extending into the valley in the 19th century, as far as the hamlet of Pont-du-Loup, the municipality was able to develop at this more favourable altitude the cultivation of perfumed plants, orange trees and olive trees. The 1950s and the development of tourism on the Côte d'Azur did the rest. Today, Gourdon is one of the most beautiful villages in France. Whether you arrive from Le Bar-sur-Loup, the vallée du Loup or Caussols, the view of the village is breathtaking. We must stop the car quickly and immortalize this beauty. Gourdon appears to us on its rocky spur, with its massive Provençal

castle framed by round towers, stone facades and tiled roofs, the bell tower of the church that protrudes... The whole is harmonious and has inspired many an artist. The Côte d'Azur, which sparkles in the distance in its blue setting, completes the picture. We are seized. A walk through the village's alleys leads us to discover some craftsmen's shops: art glassmaker, perfumer or potter. The view of the French Riviera from place Victoria is breathtaking.

► **To discover:** the fountain, the église St-Vincent, the magnificent view from Place Victoria.

■ BUREAU D'INFORMATION TOURISTIQUE DE GOURDON

1, place Victoria
GOURDON

☎ 04 93 09 68 25

www.gourdon06.fr

tourisme.gourdon06@agglo-casa.fr

Open from November to March from 10am to 1pm and from 1.45pm to 5pm. Open from April to June, September and October from 10am to 1pm and from 1.45pm to 6pm. Open in July and August from 10am to 1pm and from 1.45pm to 7pm.

You will find here lots of information and a wide range of self-service documentation. The Bureau d'Information Touristique also has a post office open during the week so that you can send a postcard of your holidays.

The Gorges du Loup

Born at an altitude of 1,200 m in the Audoubert massif, the Loup has dug its way through the limestone of the Pre-Alps, carving its way between the plateaus of Calern, Cavillone and Caussols in the west, and the Saint-Barnabé plateau in the east to form these magnificent gorges. The Gorges du Loup represent the tumultuous section of the river: waterfalls, rapids and siphons are a delight for water hikers. The gorges extend for about 5 km from the Pont du Loup to the crossroads of Bramafan. During the Belle Epoque, they were already a tourist attraction. On Sundays in summer, the Provence railways would dump tourists and locals who would go up the river in search of freshness, a picnic basket in hand, at the Pont-du-Loup station. To visit them, you must take the scenic road D6 which follows the gorges on the left bank of the Loup. Before the 2nd tunnel you can see the spectacular Courmes waterfall, but it is difficult to stop there because there is no parking space. Further on, the waterfalls of Le Saut du Loup offer parking spaces. A viewpoint has been set up to get closer to the Loup and see the falls...

► **To discover:** the Pont du Loup site with the remains of the railway viaduct destroyed in 1944, the Courmes waterfall, the Saut du Loup site, the banks of the Haut-Loup between Gréolières and Cipières.

Find the index at the end of this guide book

The Estéron River

No catchments or discharges, no dams, an open river, crystal clear water, preserved landscapes, the Estéron is indeed an exceptional river. From the slopes of Mont Teillon, where it rises at an altitude of 1,160 m, the Estéron quietly runs its course to flow into the Var, after 67 km of travel. The river benefits from a gentle slope for most of its length, which contributes to making its banks a privileged place for fishing or swimming. In areas where the slope is steeper, the river has dug gorges, a real paradise for canyoning enthusiasts! The Estéron Departmental Natural Park, which covers 20 hectares in the municipalities of La Roque-en-Provence and Roquesteron, was created to allow as many people as possible to access the river in a controlled area. In summer, the developed beaches and natural basins allow summer visitors to cool off in the waters of the Estéron. A fishing course allows enthusiasts to fish for trout or bleak fish.

► **To discover:** The Estéron Departmental Natural Park, the municipality of La Roque-en-Provence, the neighbouring villages of Conségudes and Les Ferres.

Coursegoules

From the road to Vence, Coursegoules appears as a harmonious village, surrounded by its old ramparts, fully representative of the high country. The tourists are not mistaken, everyone stops to take a picture of the village! It is true that nestled on its promontory, with the austere bar of the Cheiron massif in the background and the light of the end of the day on its facades, Coursegoules looks great. It is a village for lovers of old stones, a village of character. Walking through its steep alleys is a journey back in time. Fountains, old washhouses, covered passages, "pountis", houses with stone facades, Coursegoules is a condensed version of the high country. Its location in the heart of a natural area covering the Saint-Barnabé plateau and the Cheiron massif is a godsend for hikers, many of whom frequent the village.

► **To discover:** the ramparts, the chapelle des Pénitents Blancs, the église Sainte Marie Madeleine, the facade of the Freinet school, the residence of Diane de Poitiers,

the views over the valley and the Cheiron, the grain mill, the plateau of Saint Barnabé, the chapelle Saint Michel.

Gréolières

Gréolières flourishes on the southern slope of Cheiron Mountain, at an altitude of 836 m. The village, among the highest in the region, overlooks the vallée du Loup. The Cheiron mass dominates the village, imposing and protective, with its marked hiking routes. Below are the Gorges du Loup, siphons and waterfalls, natural baths and fly fishing. Gréolières les Neiges is located on the northern slope of the Cheiron massif, 18 km from the village of Gréolières. We ski here 21 km as the crow flies from the Mediterranean! The slopes are laid out on the slopes of the Cheiron on nearly 1,000 hectares. The exposure to the north of the Cheiron limits snowmelt. The resort is also equipped with an automatic snowmaking installation on 4 km of slopes. From the top of the Cheiron, one can contemplate a circular panorama, which includes both the coast and the Mediterranean to the south, as well as the Alps to the north!

► **To see:** the ruins of the castles of the Basses and Hautes Gréolières, Saint-Pierre church, the ruins of the Notre-Dame de Verdelaye chapel, the milestone...

► **Things to do:** In winter, downhill skiing, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing. In summer, hiking in the Cheiron massif, canyoning, fishing and swimming in the Loup.

■ BUREAU D'INFORMATION TOURISTIQUE DE GRÉOLIÈRES

Route de Font-Rougères, GRÉOLIÈRES

☎ 04 93 24 10 79

tourisme.greolieres@agglo-casa.fr

From January 1st to March 24th and from July 1st to August 18th: open every day except Monday and Thursday, from 9am to 1pm. From March 25th to June 30th and from August 19th to December 31st: open Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday from 9am to 1pm.

You will find all the information you need to visit Gréolières, ski or snowshoe in winter, hike, paraglide or mountain bike in summer. A wealth of information to fully enjoy the 5,267 hectares of the commune.



Eglise Saint-Pierre in Gréolières.

Walk in the streets of Coursegoules.

© Bernard CROISE



NATURE

From the shores of the Mediterranean to the great plateaus of the hinterland, the territory that extends from Valbonne to the perched villages of the Préalpes d'Azur passes through a magnificent gradient. It makes the big gap between the Mediterranean and mountain levels. It is not uncommon in winter to see the snow-covered plateaus of Saint-Barnabé or Calern while tourists have lunch on the terrace in Valbonne. This geographical location gives rise to magnificent photos, the sunny hills in the foreground,

and the snow-covered mountains of the Mercantour range in the back. This sometimes confusing climate makes all the salt in the region. Where else but here can we find so much difference in climate in an hour's drive?

Small coastal rivers have made their way through this geographical amphitheatre, sometimes in a masterly way, such as the Loup, which has carved spectacular gorges. This area is mainly occupied by wooded areas with urbanized areas to the south and karst landscapes to the north.

GEOGRAPHY

Climate

The region's mild climate is proverbial

It attracts thousands of tourists and residents every winter. The average temperature is 10°C in winter, but on sunny days, you can see a few brave swimmers do lengths in a Mediterranean at 15°C. The rains recharge the groundwater and fill the water reservoirs that are the karst massifs. It is the body of water stored in these mountains that supplies the fountains of villages, rivers and coastal streams.

A remarkable amount of sunshine

The region is said to have around 300 days of sunshine per year. It is therefore rare that the sun does not shine! Indeed the sun is present in all seasons making winters pleasant. Summers, on the other hand, the heat becomes intense on the coast. In this season it is pleasant to seek freshness in altitude. Gourdon, Caussols, Gréolières, are here to refresh you!

The compass rose

The Mediterranean plays a soothing role in local weather. Apart from a few rare winter storms, winds in the region are rather moderate, with the mountains of the high country and the Esterel massif playing a protective role. The prevailing winds are from the east or west, and sometimes from the south.

▶ **The easterly wind:** coming from the Gulf of Genoa, it is generally an indicator of bad weather.

▶ **Mistral:** it is synonymous with good weather. It blows strongly in the Rhône corridor but its effects are largely mitigated in the extreme south-east, protected by the Alps and Esterel mountains which divert it towards the open sea and Corsica. Its violence is feared in the south. In periods of drought, the Mistral fans the slightest forest fire, which then becomes uncontrollable in steep mountain ranges.

▶ **Sirocco:** This is the south wind. It blows from Africa bringing mild air and sometimes sand from the Sahara which covers the snow-covered peaks in winter...



The Caussols plateau with the Calern plateau observatory.



Le Loup.

© BERNARD CROISE

Agriculture at CASA



A territory rich in contrasts

24 municipalities from the sea to the mountains

A high country characterized by livestock farms shaping the large spaces of remarkable biodiversity

A middle country with a diversified agriculture

A coastline that brings together the territory's horticultural and market gardening farms



A few figures

307 farmers in 2018, i.e. **16,3% of farmers in the Alpes-Maritimes department**

36% of horticulturists with traditional crops (roses, carnations, gladioli)

14% of meat and cheese farmers (ewes, goats)

12% of horse and donkey breeders

8% other farmers (fish, bees, poultry, pigs)

16% of market gardeners offering quality local products

8% other growers (perfume and aromatic plants, citrus fruits, vines, red fruits, violets...)

4% olive growers with the Protected Designation of Origin chain « Olive de Nice »



Terroirs of future and innovation

Companies and training centers invested in agricultural research and development (INRA, Lycée horticole et agricole d'Antibes - Vert d'Azur)



A proactive agricultural policy

A 3-pronged agricultural strategy since 2012



Development of a dynamic agricultural land policy

- ✓ **Increase of agricultural areas in PLU's**
- ✓ Financial support to municipalities for **the acquisition of agricultural land**
- ✓ Mobilisation of new land through **the reclamation of agricultural wasteland**



Support for local farms

- ✓ **Supporting municipalities** for the acquisition of agricultural land
- ✓ Study of an agricultural **business incubator** and **test areas** for the installation of new farmers
- ✓ Support for **short circuit** projects
- ✓ Support for **research and innovation projects** in the region



Promotion of a sustainable and quality agriculture

- ✓ Support for **pastoral activities** managing outstanding natural areas
- ✓ Revaluation of the agricultural heritage through the organization of **dry-stone** and **olive-tree maintenance projects**
- ✓ **Raising the awareness of schoolchildren and the general public** to local agricultural issues through the implementation of educational projects and participation in communal agricultural fairs



Relief

A certain number of places or landscapes in the territory from Valbonne to the Préalpes d'Azur are partially protected, particularly with regard to classified and listed sites. The purpose of site protection is to ensure the preservation of natural monuments and sites whose artistic, historical, scientific, legendary or picturesque character is in the public interest. There are two levels of protection:

- classification: it is reserved for the most remarkable sites with a predominantly natural character whose character, particularly landscaped, must be strictly preserved.

- inscription: it is proposed for less sensitive or more humanized sites which, without the need for classification, are of sufficient interest to be monitored very closely. Here are some examples of classified or listed sites or landscapes:

► Classified sites:

The Courmes waterfall. The Baous. The Calern and Caussols plateaus, as well as their buttresses. The church and feudal castle of Gourdon.

► Listed sites:

The chapelle Saint-Etienne and the part of the abandoned village surrounding it, in Gréolières. The old village of Tourrettes-sur-Loup. The village of Valbonne. The villages of Châteauneuf and Opio, as well as their surroundings. The waterfalls of the Saut du Loup. The place Victoria in Gourdon. The Caussols plateau (unclassified parts).

Plateaus

From the Antibes coastline, just look north to see the hilly amphitheatre, and just behind it, the rocky bars of the Baous and the highlands. To the west, the plateaus of Calern and Caussols, in the middle the Cavillone plateau,

in the east the St-Barnabé plateau. The proximity of these austere plateaus to the green hills of the highlands creates a striking contrast. We guess there is a totally different world up there. Only the Wolf managed to cut through this rock mass, and it took him time!

In less than an hour by car we cross the Col de Vence to reach the plateau of Saint-Barnabé, or we climb the Col de l'Écre to reach the plateau of Caussols. This high country offers to the view huge landscapes of karst mountains, dug by dolines and caves. The plateaus also offer magnificent views of the hills and villages of the Côte d'Azur, all the way to the sea.

- **The Caussols and Calern plateaus.** They form a rough karst plateau composed of limestone rocks sculpted by water. At an average altitude of 1,100 m, between sea and mountains, the plateau is dominated to the north by the Calern summit (1,458 m), site of the Côte d'Azur Astronomical Observatory, and to the south by the Haut-Montet which carries a Civil Aviation radar. These plateaus form a preserved natural site. It is accessed by a pretty picturesque road above Gourdon. With an altitude of 1,130 m, the village of Caussols is the highest of the villages in this guide. Shaped for centuries by the uplift of the Alps and then the work of the water, the Caussols plateau, a vast karst plain, is full of hundreds of chasms and caves, these collapses of the ground that leave room on the surface for a gaping hole, but also dolines, collapse basins blocked by sediments, which punctuate this lunar landscape with green patches. A complex network of underground galleries drains rainwater and supplies rivers, springs and fountains in the Pays de Grasse. Some of the caves can reach depths of more than 400 m. By witnessing the Embut de Caussols, a giant funnel that can be seen before arriving at the hamlet of Saint Lambert. This natural cavity is a funnel-shaped chasm in which rainwater disappears. The complex forms a preserved natural site, with a landscape shaped over the centuries



The Calern Plateau.



The bell tower of Bézaudun-les-Alpes and the snowy peaks of the Mercantour.

by pastoralism. Witnesses of this pastoral past, the bories, enclosures, sheepfolds, water troughs dot the landscape. There is a rich and diverse flora and fauna.

► **The Cavillone Plateau.** The limestone plateau of Cavillone dominates the village of Gourdon. It is a landscape of typically Provençal scrubland, dotted with holm oaks and conifers. From the top of the plateau, the view is magnificent over the village of Gourdon below, and the Côte d'Azur in the distance. The site is popular with hikers. It is also a starting point for paragliding flights over Gourdon. There are remains of ancient human activity: remains of a Roman road and oppida, as well as an ancient troglodytic fortress, set in a 200 m high hillside. In some places, we notice the buildings left over time by pastoral activity, which still allows us to maintain the richness of these natural environments today. This area presents strong contrasts between steep cliffs and plateaus, wetlands and drylands, as well as remarkable biodiversity.

► **The plateau of Saint-Barnabé.** Between the Col de Vence and Coursegoules, the plateau of Saint-Barnabé unfolds its magnificent karst landscape, offering a striking contrast when you arrive from the green hills of Vence. The limestone rocks sculpted by erosion give the plateau a lunar appearance. Dolines, mineral expanses carved in lapiaz, dry valleys where holm oaks grow. Nestled between the Puy Subert massif to the north and the Puy de Tournettes-sur-Loup to the south, it escapes maritime influences and opens wide to the west. The charming oasis of the hamlet contrasts with the austerity of the surrounding pastures where sheep herds continue a pastoral tradition. There is a rustic chapel, as well as a curious pile of prehistoric stones: the Champs des Idoles.

These landscapes have been shaped for hundreds of years by agricultural and pastoral activities. Herds thus make it possible to keep the environments open and to host an exceptional biodiversity. Without these pastoral activities, the forest would have totally gained these areas today.

Hills and restanques

The hilly landscape that characterizes the territory extends between the sea and the plateaus, at an altitude ranging from 200 m (Valbonne, Roquefort les Pins) to 300 m (Opio, Le Rouret, Le Bar-sur-Loup) then 400 m (Tournettes-sur-Loup, Châteauneuf). The ancestral cultures of olive trees and perfume plants have left a landscape of terraces, dominated by woods on the top of the hills. But over a large part of the hilly territory, these "restanques" were invested in the second half of the 20th century by residential urbanization.

► **The hillsides** that once housed olive groves, orchards and market gardening now house villas, shopping centres and golf courses. The city nibbles on the forest and the Provençal landscapes. Urbanization has taken place between the valleys of Le Loup and La Brague, in the sectors of Valbonne, Le Rouret, Roquefort les Pins. The large agricultural plots have given way to more or less dense urbanization depending on the sector.

► **The hills** began to be covered with terraces around the 16th and 17th centuries. For farmers, the construction of agricultural terraces made it possible to retain land, as well as irrigation water. These terraces made it possible to develop the most interesting land and the closest to the villages, to plant vines, olive trees, fruit trees and market gardening, cereals and perfume plants.

The karstic plateau of Saint-Barnabé.

© Bernard CROISE



The land retained by the stone walls was no longer gullied during the torrential rainy periods that the region sometimes experiences, and the restanques that cover a large part of Provence's agricultural land became cultivable at the cost of a titanic task of building and permanently maintaining these dry stone walls. The quality of the restanques depended largely on the choice of stones, and the care taken in their construction. At Bar-sur-Loup, Opio, Tourrettes-sur-Loup, the restanques welcomed floral crops such as orange blossom, rose and jasmine, as well as vine and olive trees. Today, many of these remains remain in part of the communes in the hilly region. But when they are returned to nature, they are won by the forest as in Courmes or Le Rouret. The most remarkable restaurants are located in Valbonne, Opio, Châteauneuf, Le Bar-sur-Loup, Coursegoules or Biot.

Rivers

► **The Loup.** It is a small coastal river 48 km long, which originates in the municipality of Andon at an altitude of 1,217 m. It crosses the whole territory by digging its way through the limestone massif of the Pre-Alps, carving its way between the plateaus of Calern, Cavillone and Caussols in the west, and the plateau of Saint-Barnabé in the east to form magnificent gorges. It ends its course in the Baie des Anges, at the boundary of the communes of Cagnes-sur-Mer and Villeneuve-Loubet. The course of this coastal river, rather peaceful in its upper reaches, accelerates in the Gorges du Loup, to find a calmer course near its mouth. In its upper reaches, the Wolf flows from Andon to Gréolières, at the foot of the Audoubert and Cheiron mountains. South of Gréolières, the Gorges du Loup represent the tumultuous section of the river. They

extend over approximately 5 km from the Bramafan crossroads to the Pont du Loup. Cascades, rapids, and siphons are a delight for water hikers. Its bed widens temporarily at the foot of the Bar-sur-Loup to be cashed again in the plateaus of the middle country and finally lead to the narrow plain of its mouth. The wolf keeps a good flow in all seasons, because it is fed by an underground circulation of resurgent water from the karst plateaus of the high country. This flow can become torrential during snowmelt or during periods of high storm activity.

The river forms a line that marks the territory, deeply cutting the limestone plateau at the level of the gorges, and lower, offering a natural cut in urban areas. At its mouth, the encircling of the valley allows this area to serve as a refuge area for many animal and plant species. After the Pont du Loup, the river returns to a calm course, winding between less steeply sloping wooded slopes. It passes at the foot of the perched villages of Bar-sur-Loup and Tourrettes-sur-Loup, then follows Roquefort-les-Pins and Colle-sur-Loup before joining the Mediterranean at Villeneuve Loubet. Once there, the Loup becomes calm as a lamb and finishes its journey in the departmental natural park of the Rives du Loup. The Loup and its gorges are classified as Natura 2000.

► **The Estéron, an exceptional river.** The Estéron River originates on the slopes of the Teillon mount, at an altitude of 1,160 m. Fed by various tributaries, its route leads it from west to east, to the Var river in which it ends its route, 20 km from the Mediterranean. Its banks were inhabited from the Neolithic to the Iron Age, then to the Roman period. In 1760, following the Treaty of Turin, the Estéron became the border between the Kingdom of France and the Kingdom of Piedmont Sardinia (County of Nice).



La Braque River.



Roman bridge over the Loup, Cipières.

With a length of 67 km, the Estéron enjoys a gentle slope for most of its course, which contributes to making it a privileged place for fishing or swimming. However, in some places, the slope is steeper and the river over the centuries has dug “clues” (the local name of the gorges) some of which are very deep, such as the Clue de Saint-Auban (700 m). These clues are frequented by canyoning enthusiasts. With its open water, crystal clear water and unspoiled landscapes, the Estéron appears to everyone as an exceptional river. It is the only river in the Alpes Maritimes on which no dam has been built. Since October 2018, and for 5 years before a new evaluation, the Estéron has been labelled Site Rivières Sauvages. Various criteria have prevailed, such as biodiversity, the absence of dams, and the low impact of withdrawals or discharges. It is a remarkable, fragile environment, hence the importance of respecting everyone by avoiding sites and days of summer overcrowding. The Estéron Departmental Natural Park, which covers 20 hectares in the municipalities of La Roque-en-Provence and Roquesteron, was created to allow as many people as possible to access the river in an area provided for this purpose. A fishing course allows enthusiasts to fish for trout or bleak fish.

► **La Brague.** It originates in Châteauneuf at an altitude of 340 m and travels 21 km before reaching the sea north of Antibes. La Brague crosses five municipalities from upstream to downstream: Châteauneuf, Opio, Valbonne, Biot and Antibes. The streams of La Valmasque and Les Bouillides, which drain the underside of the Valbonne plateau, as well as the Combes and

Horts valleys in the Biot hills, are its main tributaries. With an average slope of 1.7% upstream and 0.4% in the lower valley, the Brague is generally a quiet river... But it should not be forgotten that floods can occur during periods of heavy rainfall, such as in October 2015 when a violent storm brought the Brague out of its bed with catastrophic consequences in the municipalities downstream. In summer, and despite its 4 tributaries, the river suffers from too many withdrawals. Pumping supplies water for gardens, swimming pools and golf courses. Over the past two decades, sampling pressure has increased significantly. The crossing of Sophia Antipolis Park between Valbonne and Biot is the wet sector of the middle valley of the Brague. By traversing the limestone plateau, the river has carved a fairly deep valley that widens on the marly soil of Valbonne. This wetland area is an ecological corridor where protected species are present. The area is quite frequented by the public from the departmental natural park of La Brague. A path, along the river, leads to Biot à Valbonne by foot. Throughout this 9 km long walk in the woods, you can enjoy the shade of alders, ash trees, hornbeams, hazelnuts, laurels and walnuts. The 630 hectares of Parc de la Brague extend to the north and west of the Sophia Antipolis science park, in the municipalities of Antibes, Biot and Valbonne. The lower valley of the Brague shelters some of the last wet meadows of the coastal zone of the department, presenting a remarkable floral richness of protected species, which makes it a real green break. Many migratory birds use this site, which is also particularly rich in insects, as a resting area during migration.

FAUNA & FLORA

Fauna

Most of the animals that inhabit the region hide. You have to go to the high country to have the chance to surprise animals in the wild. On the Esteron side, it is not uncommon to surprise a deer or roe deer at the bend of a road. However, it is more difficult to see the other, more fearful mammals. Fortunately, there are many birds! Many species are sedentary, whether on the plateaus or in the hills, and others, such as migratory birds, are only passing through!

▶ **The wolf.** It was threatened with extinction a few decades ago, and now it is everywhere and is even in the news: attacks on herds on the Caussols plateau, an accident on the A8 motorway involving a wolf (April 2019), TV programme stars. Today, wolves owe their survival to their status as protected species and to the desertification of the rural world. Present in several parts of Italy for more than 30 years, wolves invade Piedmont and soon cross the Alps. They are now on our land. Wolves have been reported on the Caussols plateau, Cheiron Mountain, Courmettes sector. Wolves have always fascinated humans throughout history, feeding mythology, literature or the arts, but also collective fears and fantasies.

▶ **The variable hare.** Also known as ptarmigan, the variable hare is a specialist in camouflage. It owes its *variable* name to the fact that it can be found in all alpine environments (pine woods, alder forests, crests, scree, lawns between 1,500 and 3,000 m), each of which provides a livelihood to its taste. Able to travel long distances and significant elevations (up to more than 1,000 m) quickly, they run away as soon as they feel in danger.

▶ **The black grouse.** A kind of sedentary bird resembling a small heather rooster, its spring bridal parades are fascinating to observe. The black grouse lives in coniferous forests with clearings and peat bogs. Today, the species is threatened by hunting and deforestation in some alpine regions, and also by the expansion of ski areas whose slopes destroy the low vegetation that is essential to it.

▶ **Deer, roe deer, hinds, wild boars, foxes** also inhabit the plateaus and peaks around the Esteron and Cheiron mountains.

▶ **The Red Partridge** is found in the territories around the Cheiron massif and the Caussols plateau: Bezaudun les Alpes, Bouyon, Caussols, Cipières, Conségudes, Courmes, Coursegoules, Les Ferres, Gourdon, Gréolières.

▶ **On the plateaus.** The fauna of the Caussols and Calern plateaus includes more than 150 bird species, some of which are declining, such as the southern shrike or the ortolan sparrow. Insects are also very numerous, with more than 130 species of butterflies and many locusts and grasshoppers, including the very rare hedgehog cricket and the serrated magician. The Calern Plateau is one of the last places where you can still observe the extremely rare Orsini viper

▶ **Natura 2000 inventories.** Ecological inventories carried out as part of Natura 2000 have made it possible to identify more than a hundred remarkable species at European level and in danger of extinction:

- 137 bird species, including a large majority of sedentary and breeding summer species, but also many migratory species: 27 are protected at the European level: peregrine falcon, golden eagle, owl, lark, declining species, etc.



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Sheep, natural park of the Préalpes d'Azur.

Cypress.

© Bernard CROISÉ



- 15 species of amphibians and reptiles protected at European level: the Orsini viper, the agile frog, the Aesculapius snake, etc.
- 15 species of bats protected at national and European level: the large and small rhinolophe (threatened species), the Barbastelle d'Europe, etc.
- 13 species of butterflies of heritage interest, 2 of which are protected at European level: the Success Grid and the Scale of Success.
- 3 aquatic species protected at European level: the white-footed crayfish, the southern barbel and the blageon.

Flora

The territory stretching from Valbonne to the Préalpes d'Azur offers a natural setting with enchanting colours and delicious smells. Whether you are a hiker, an amateur botanist or a simple tourist, everyone will find the pleasure of smelling a bouquet of lavender, crossing a fragrant garrigue, or admiring the hills covered with mimosa. The view of a restanque covered with olive trees, or a row of palm trees are also evocative of this region.

Trees and plants

Typical Côte d'Azur plants are lemon and orange trees, Judean trees, tamarisk, lilac, wisteria, oleander, rhododendron, euphorbia, yucca, bougainvillea, acanthus, agapanthus, valerian...

In the garrigue or scrubland: Thyme, rosemary and many medicinal and aromatic plants find here a favourable ground for their development. In summer, they scent the paths of the garrigue.

In the forests: pines, holm oaks, white oaks, cork oaks, chestnut trees, arbutus trees, almond trees, cedar trees and hackberry trees are found.

In the hills, you will find all varieties of pine trees (maritime, Aleppo, parasol...), the fragrant fig tree,

the eucalyptus, the only tree whose trunk molts, aloe, cactus, prickly pear, or agaves, as well as all kinds of succulent plants...

On the squares, along the roads: the plane tree brings the freshness of its shade to the village squares during the hot season and creates real green tunnels on the roads. Cypress decorates parks and avenues.

► **The olive tree** is the most characteristic tree of the Mediterranean with its tormented shape. Some olive trees are several hundred years old. There are more than 60 varieties of olive trees, but it is the "quailier" which is the most widespread in the territory. It flowers in May and ripens from September to January. Olive wood, very hard with its alternating dark and light veins, is also admirably suited for sculpture and decoration: many common objects and other ornaments are obtained from it. The olive is the fruit of the Midi from which olive oil is made, which gives all its flavour to the most humble of salads. Along with vines and wheat, the olive tree was one of the symbols of wealth in antiquity. The olive tree is also a tree charged with symbolism:

- symbol of light: the elders used olive oil to light up at nightfall. - symbol of wisdom: Plato taught philosophy in the shade of an olive tree.

- symbol of peace, the olive branch is chosen by God to tell Noah that the flood is over and that the water level is decreasing: "*In the evening, the dove returned, and in her beak there was a fresh olive branch! Noah knew that the waters had fallen to the surface of the earth.*"

- symbol of victory, during the Olympic Games in Greece an olive wreath and jars of olive oil were offered to the winners. - symbol of strength, its very compact and hard wood allowed Ulysses to pierce the eye of the Cyclops with an olive grove.

► **The orange tree.** The remaining orange trees are found in private gardens. Ripe oranges are now used to make jam and orange wine.



View over Coursegoules.

► **The palm tree** is also representative of the southern landscapes. Its haughty waist, its large fan-shaped palm leaves evoke the sea and warmth. It decorates beautifully avenues and gardens, giving at first glance an impression of holidays, warmth, carefree. However, in recent years, palm trees on the Côte d'Azur have suffered damage from the red weevil.

Flowers

The region's climate favours the cultivation of all the flowers, which have become a permanent feature of the Côte d'Azur landscape: their abundance makes them the ideal accessory for all carnivals and popular festivals where they are thrown to the crowd by fragrant loads. The cultivation of cut flowers has become one of the main products of the Côte d'Azur and is the subject of intensive activity throughout the year thanks to irrigation and the use of heated greenhouses: all around Grasse, the world capital of perfumes, blooms the rose centifolia, jasmine, lavender, hibiscus, carnation, violet, daffodil, reseda, dahlia, camellia, gladiola, anemone, carnation, iris... The months of February and March see the hills covered with mimosa in flowers. On the Caussols plateau, there are many rare species such as the Oriental fritillary, the Ardoino cytise, the divided dolphin, the grass-leaved iris and various species of pawns.

► **Lavender.** In June, lavender, a small shrub called a *baïasse* in Provençal, blooms. Its bouquets adorn parks and gardens, roundabouts and village squares. Lavender is a symbolic plant of southern France. Its purple flowers arranged in ears and very fragrant are used in a wide variety of fields: perfumery, cosmetics, aromatology... It is harvested, processed and distilled. In ancient times, lavender flower, carefully wrapped in small Provençal motif fabric bags, was placed between the stacks of sheets and in the linen cupboards to perfume them.

► **The carnation.** A symbol of commitment and conjugal fidelity, it is honoured in carnivals and flower battles.

► **The mimosa.** In February and March, the time when the little yellow balls fill the landscape, the mimosa colours the hills with its sunny flowers, and perfumes Provençal markets and houses.

► **The violet.** You can find Parma violet in the Grasse region and Victoria violet in the Gorges du Loup region.

► **The rose.** Whether they are climbing or pompoms, roses scent the markets and gardens of the region..

► **Jasmine.** There was a time when people would get up at dawn, as a family, to pick the precious flower in the dew of the early morning at a time when its slightly damp petals exude the quintessence of their fragrance... Jasmine is a shrub native to India. It has adapted well to the Mediterranean region, to such an extent that of all the fragrant plant crops on the Côte d'Azur, jasmine was for a long time the most important. In our region, Opio grew the most jasmine, with 40 tons per year. Just like orange blossom, jasmine blossom was picked at dawn and by hand. The flowers had to be delivered to the factory within 24 hours. To obtain one kilo of absolute jasmine

essence, you need to collect about 7 million flowers! In other words, natural jasmine is expensive, reserved for luxury perfumes, most of which themselves prefer to use a synthetic version.

Protected species

The ecological inventories carried out as part of Natura 2000 have made it possible to identify 76 species of flora protected at local, national or even European level: Bertoloni columbine, Nice nivéoles, Lis de Pomponne, etc.

Parks & Nature Reserves

The European Natura 2000 network

Remarkable natural areas. Two terrestrial Natura 2000 sites are present between the Mediterranean and the French Riviera: the Grasse and Rivière de Grasse Préalps and Gorges du Loup. These two 24,000 ha sites are classified in the European ecological network as outstanding natural sites to be preserved. As fundamental tools of European natural heritage preservation policy, Natura 2000 sites aim to take better account of biodiversity issues in human activities. These sites are designated to protect a number of habitats and animal and plant species representative of European biodiversity.

► **The Grasse Préalps** are part of the subalpine ranges, formed by limestone massifs, plateaus and cliffs resulting from the geological evolution of the territory. The site is made up of 3 entities: in the north, the upper part of the Cheiron state forest; in the west, it extends from the Loup gorges to the plateaus of Cavillone, Calern and Caussols, to the Thiey mountain; in the east, from the Loup gorges to the municipal boundary of Saint-Jeannet. Covering an area of 18,500 ha, they constitute the first major relief dominating the Côte d'Azur coastline. The wide variety of environments represents an ecological richness between the different plant cover, dry grasslands of the plateaus, forest environments, riverside vegetation. Cliffs can be used as nesting sites for the Golden Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Circaète Jean-le-Blanc, Brondeé Apivore, Grand Duke of Europe, Crave à Bec Rouge. The dry grasslands of the plateaus alternating with wooded areas are favourable to the European Nightjar, the Lulu Lark, the Pitchou Warbler, the Red-backed Shrike, the Ortolan Sparrow and the Rousseline Pipit. Some more mountainous species can also be found here, which are located at the southern limit of their area: the Sire grouse or the Tengmalm's owl (*Source: Nature 2000 / CASA*).

THE REGIONAL NATURAL PARK OF THE PRÉALPES D'AZUR

29

Created in 2012, the Préalpes d'Azur Regional Nature Park occupies a geographical area of transition between the Alpine and Mediterranean environments. It is a space of nature, culture and life. The environments are rich and varied, and some, such as the Calern Plateau or the Cheiron Mountain, represent significant conservation challenges. With its rivers and karst relief, the site of the Natural Park is the water tower of the Côte d'Azur. It is also one of the largest pastoral areas in the Alpes Maritimes.

Identity card

- ▶ Created: March 30th, 2012
- ▶ Location: Department of Alpes Maritimes
- ▶ Number of municipalities in the park: 47 municipalities
- ▶ Area: nearly 90,000 hectares
- ▶ Altitude: from 300 to 1,800 m altitude
- ▶ Population: more than 31,000 inhabitants

People, culture and nature can coexist harmoniously

A regional nature park is not a sanctuary. It is an inhabited and living space, which seeks to build a development model where people, nature and culture coexist harmoniously. Thus the 47 municipalities of the Préalpes d'Azur wish to develop economic activities based on the preservation and enhancement of their natural, historical and landscape heritage.

The Park Charter

The Regional Nature Park Charter is a strong and contractual commitment that commits the various actors (municipalities, departments, regions, States) for a minimum period of 15 years. The main objectives of this charter are:

▶ **To manage natural resources in an exemplary way:** the Préalpes d'Azur is the Côte d'Azur's water reserve. It is important to preserve this resource, both in quantity and quality. The same is true for air, as well as forests.

▶ **To promote village life:** develop shops, crafts and agriculture in small towns to maintain employment and life there. It is also necessary to safeguard pastoralism, which makes it possible to maintain the landscapes and conserve the exceptional biodiversity of this territory.

▶ **To control development:** ensuring that the territory evolves while conserving its landscapes, natural spaces and agricultural lands. Promote the Park, the recreational activities and stays that can be practiced there, while channelling visitors into fragile environments and raising visitors' awareness of respect for nature.

▶ **To enhance the heritage,** to promote their discovery and understanding by residents and visitors through the multiple potential of outdoor activities, stay possibilities, guided tours and events organized on the territory.

From Valbonne to the perched villages, 11 communes are part of the Préalpes d'Azur Regional Nature Park: La Roque en Provence, Les Ferres, Bouyon, Gréolières, Coursegoules, Bézaudun-les-Alpes, Cîpières, Caussols, Gourdon, Tourrettes-sur-Loup, Le Bar-sur-Loup.

Remarkable landscapes

From the hills at the foot of the Baous, to the valleys of the Wolf and the Estéron, through the karst plateaus of Saint Barnabé, Caussols, Calern and the Cheiron massif, the visitor crosses preserved sites. These areas form a habitat for animal and plant species that are sometimes threatened, and the park's mission is to preserve them.



© Bernard CROIX

The hills, olive trees, cypresses and restanques of Châteauneuf.

Unique fauna and flora

The location of the park (from 300 to 1,778 m above sea level) allows typical Mediterranean species to mix with more mountainous species. This territory is home to a third of France's floral species on 90,000 hectares, and many endemic animal or plant species.

Remnants of past lives

Each commune shelters a rich and varied cultural and built heritage: remains of an ancient Celto-Ligurian oppidum, ruins of a feudal castle, chapel, church, fountains and wash houses. On the plateaus, it is the slabs of a Roman road, a milestone, or dolmens that amaze the walker. Bories, sheepfolds, and dry stone enclosures highlight the pastoral character of some areas. At the crossroads of the paths, oratories and crosses evoke the rites and beliefs of the region. Along the rivers, aqueducts, diversion bays and mills remind us that man has lived here for a long time, and invite us to preserve this heritage and transmit this history.

Villages "to meet"

The villages perched in the typical architecture of local stone offer exceptional views of the Mercantour mountain range or the coast. Shelter villages, strongholds and grouped living areas that are economical in terms of land to cultivate, testify to a rich history and varied cultural influences: seigneurie, successive invasions, border line between the Comté de Provence and the Comté de Nice. Today, they are still living spaces, welcoming you with respect for the residents, know-how and art of living. Take the time to stop by.

The Préalpes d'Azur Park implements the main orientations of the charter with its partners, local authorities, institutions, associations and citizens involved. They concern sectors as diverse as the maintenance of agriculture, the development of

responsible tourism, the preservation of natural and cultural heritage, environmental education... A major collective challenge so that life can continue and develop here, while preserving the region's invaluable heritage.

Prepare your hikes!

The Préalpes d'Azur Regional Nature Park is a must for anyone who takes the time to explore it. Whether by the day or over several days, the Regional Nature Park offers many possibilities for discovery: on foot, by bike, by mountain bike, by horse, around meetings and tastings of local products... To do this, it is best to visit www.cheminsdesparcs.fr, which highlights several hiking routes (hiking, horseback riding and cycling) marked out by the Department. Everyone can discover, at their own pace and according to their desires, the landscapes and heritage of the Park. For example: discover or rediscover the paradise trail from Bar-sur-Loup to Gourdon and the Audiberge circuit!

■ PARC NATUREL RÉGIONAL DES PRÉALPES D'AZUR

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The aim of the Préalpes d'Azur Regional Nature Park (PNR) is to boost local economic activities by preserving and enhancing the natural, cultural and landscape heritage. Created at the initiative of local authorities, the regional nature park of the Préalpes d'Azur aims to make the preservation and enhancement of heritage a factor of development. This should be an opportunity for tourism activities, agriculture, businesses as well as residents.

► This park is the 6th largest in the PACA region, and has a population of more than 30,000 inhabitants.



► **The Rivière et Gorges du Loup site**, covering an area of 4,444 ha, extends from the source of the Loup River in Andon to its mouth at Villeneuve-Loubet. The gorges of the Wolf, very steep, separate the plateaus of Calern, Causols and Cavillone, in the west, from that of Saint-Barnabé, in the east. These gorges, renowned for the beauty of their imposing vertical walls, are home to unique habitats: rocky cliffs, annual lawns as well as green oaks and flowering ash trees. The Wolf and its banks are home to a rich fauna and flora of great interest because they are bio-indicators of the quality of the environment and water:

- 4 fish species of community interest: the Southern Barbel, the White-legged Crayfish, the Blageon and the Shad.

- 27 identified bird species are of community interest and of these, 13 species are particularly important for the site where they regularly breed. We can observe in particular the Cincle plongeur and the Bergeronnette des ruisseaux.

- Some caves are known to contain colonies of bats.

- Many species of amphibians and reptiles such as the Viperine Snake are also present. All these species are protected.

- In terms of flora, many mosses can be observed in the gorges area.

(Source: *Nature 2000 / CASA*)

These exceptionally rich areas are particularly fragile: it is important to respect them. During your walks, stay on the marked trails, respect livestock and pastoral activities, stay away from herds and patous, remain discreet for the tranquility of the wildlife and don't leave any waste.

Departmental Natural Parks

Departmental natural parks are areas acquired by the Department, which ensures their virtuous management and organizes the reception of walkers.

► **The Estéron Departmental Natural Park.** Located downstream of the commune of La Roque-en-Provence, it

covers an area of 20 hectares, along the river, downstream of the Pont de France. A parking area on each bank of the Estéron provides access to the park, which offers facilities on either side of the river (picnic area, games). In summer, the developed beaches and natural basins allow summer visitors to refresh themselves in the waters of the Estéron. (swimming allowed in the Departmental Natural Park). A fishing course allows enthusiasts to fish for trout or bleak fish.

► **The Departmental Natural Park of La Brague.**

The 633 ha of Parc de la Brague extends to the north and west of the Sophia Antipolis science park, in the municipalities of Valbonne and Biot. Located on a limestone plateau notched with valleys, this park, whose altitude varies from 40 to 245 metres, offers a haven of greenery 6 km from the sea. Following La Brague, along a 9 km path, there is abundant vegetation (alders, ash trees, hornbeams, hazelnuts, bay trees and different types of oaks and pines). Warblers, blackbirds, cuckoos, little dukes, jays, have made their home in this park. La Brague is populated by chubs and eels, water birds such as water chickens, herons, ducks and woodcocks.

► **The Valmasque Departmental Natural Park.** It develops its 450 hectares on the communes of Valbonne and Mougins, and is divided into 3 sectors: Fugueiret, Fontmerle and Carton. The park is composed of three wooded hills alternating with gently shaped valleys that stretch between the small tributaries of the Brague, Valmasque and Bouillide rivers.

► **The Sinodon Departmental Natural Park.**

Located in the commune of Roquefort les Pins, it offers, on a surface of 30 hectares, vast areas of forest crossed by tracks and paths, making it easy for hikers and sportsmen to access. Wooded areas of holm oaks, Aleppo pines and maritime pines adjoin glades and valleys, sheltering many species in terms of fauna (bats, tree frogs and toads, lizards, snakes, turtles) and flora.



The Gorges du Loup.

VALENTINE GUÉRIN, BREEDER

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A sentinel for biodiversity

It was a kid's dream. Attracted by the alpine universe of the TV series *Heidi*, Valentine Guérin had decided: she would be a shepherdess. With her Bacculaureate in her pocket, she embarked on a "polyculture-livestock" training course at the Lycée professionnel agricole de Digne, then completed her training at the Courmettes farm and in Cipières where she spent the summer seasons. The beginnings are difficult. Valentine launches out with her first herd of 120 ewes in Caussols and then in Cuebris. She then tried to settle in Peyroules with 300 ewes. The experience will last 2 years, before returning to Tourrettes sur Loup with 120 ewes where she works with the shepherd of the Jas Neuf. The years go by with varying fortunes.

Valentine was then hired by the ONCFS (Office national de la Chasse et de la Faune sauvage) as a pastoral technician for the Life Loup program. It is a question of setting up defences for breeders whose herds are victims of attacks by wolves newly introduced into the territory: guard dogs, night-time power parks, shepherd's helpers. It was a very rich period and a kind of revelation. In contact with other breeders, Valentine realizes that she also has something to pass on: her experience.

As the years go by, Valentine follows her path, always in connection with the Courmettes sheepfold where she helps shear or guard the herd. In 2011, fate brought her back to her first profession, breeding. She joins forces with Didier, and they found the GAEC des Monts d'Azur with a herd of 450 ewes. Didier takes care of haying, brushing and fence maintenance. Valentine is in charge of births, among other things. Someone is helping them with the summer pastures.

Today, in addition to her activity as a breeder:

▶ **Valentine Guérin is elected in Tourrettes-sur-Loup**, delegate to the Préalpes d'Azur Regional Nature Park (PNR). As such, it is part of the Trade Union Committee which decides on the actions to be carried out by the NRP in accordance with the charter, or puts



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Valentine Guérin.

the municipality in contact with the NRP for possible funding (shared garden project, restoration of terraces, etc.). Valentine also trains the new NRP ambassadors on all aspects of breeding. (ambassadors: policy officers who raise public awareness about conflicts of use on the territory, and explain the NRP or count the number of visitors in certain sectors).

▶ **She is president of the association "On vous dit Patou"** which raises public awareness about the work of herding, in order to avoid conflicts between breeders and walkers.

▶ **Valentine is part of the collective "Laine Rebelle"**: with Isabelle Johr, elected in Cipières, among others. Together, they founded the collective Laine Rebelle, whose objective is to promote local wool as a semi-finished product (yarn, wool) or finished product (knits, hats, etc.) and to create a clothing industry in the region using semi-industrial machines. The wool, which comes from 3 breeders of Courmettes, Saint-Barnabé and La Malle, is washed in Haute-Loire and spun in Creuse.

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Sheep in the meadow.

*Laine Rebelle.*

Valentine Guérin knows that her profession as a pastoralist breeder is gradually disappearing, under pressure from tourism and land ownership. She insists on the fact that breeders are the daily actors of biodiversity, they are the sentinels. Through its various activities with the NRP, it feels useful for the future and wishes to continue working to promote the Valeur Parc brand: "to offer companies located in a regional natural park to engage in collective and solidarity-based approaches, guaranteeing structuring effects in favour of sustainable development."

To better understand the work of breeders

► **The Estive.** From June 15 to October 30, in the Provençal tradition of transhumance, the herd of 550 animals from Valentine and Didier goes up to summer in Saint-Étienne-de-Tinée, to escape the summer heat of the Courmettes. Up there, the grass is greener, and the temperatures are cooler. The breeders lease the territory to the commune with a Grazing Agreement. During this period of open air, the ewes and their lambs will become fattened. A large helicopter refueling is organized at the beginning of Estive with the financial assistance of the Chamber of Agriculture: croquettes for dogs, salt for sheep, and food for 4 months. During the summer, the shepherd goes down to the village once a week for fresh produce.

► **The Wolf.** Since the arrival of the Wolf in our mountains, there has been a recognition of the profession of shepherd. This additional constraint of predation forced the shepherds to organize themselves, and the state to become aware of the difficulties caused by this new situation. The shepherds had to equip themselves with dogs to defend the herds. Each year, Valentine and Didier lose about 25 animals during 1 to 4 attacks during the Estive. But the attacks are now taking place all year round, wolves are present throughout the region, above the Côte d'Azur.

► **Patous guardian angels.** Of race Mountain of the Pyrenees or Abruzzo, the patous are the guardian angels of the herd. They maintain a security perimeter around the sheep to protect them from intrusion and alert the shepherd of any presence in the area, stray dogs, wolves, hikers or mountain bikers. The patous are not trained to defend the herd, but they grow with the sheep from an early age, sleeping in the sheepfold, and following the herd in all its movements. As the defence instinct develops, the patous ensure the safety of the herd as it moves outside the sheepfold. In summer, where wolf attacks are frequent, patous usually manage to keep wolves at bay, but wolves are more agile and cunning. Walkers, hikers, mountain bikers, be careful, because the patou feels you from afar, and will want to approach to see if you are a danger, especially if you have dogs with you. It is better to stay away and pass off the coast of the herd.

► **Share the territory.** With the development of our leisure civilisation, the organisation and promotion of hiking trails, there are more hikers than ever before. Today, the difficulty is to have to share the territory with walkers who are not always respectful, who do not always understand that if the territory is kept in good condition by people who work there, it is precisely because of pastoral activity.

► **The year of a sheep.** The ewes are of the Southern Pre-Alpine breed. They have on average 1 or 2 lambs per birth. The gestation period is about 5 months. A ewe can be fertilized twice a year, in May and August, but farmers make sure that it only sees the ram once a year. Births therefore take place in September or February. The year of a ewe is punctuated by shearing, fighting (bringing the ewe herd into contact with a ram), calving in September or February, followed by weaning the lambs 3 months later, then the summer from June to October.

ECONOMY

If the region is internationally known for its gentle way of life, the beauty of its landscapes and the reputation of its cultural events, it also benefits from a first-rate economic fabric. For a long time the region was mainly oriented towards agriculture and livestock.

► **The first economic boom occurred in the 18th century** with the development of the perfume and aroma industry in Grasse, which benefited all the surrounding municipalities. Villages such as Chateaufort and Opio, Le Rouret and Roquefort les Pins, Le Bar-sur-Loup and Tourrettes-sur-Loup have started to cultivate perfume flowers or orange trees, which has greatly contributed to their development and has changed their identity.

► **In the second half of the 20th century**, the development of the Sophia-Antipolis technology park boosted the region. New companies have established themselves, attracting new skills, and considerably increasing the number of inhabitants in the surrounding cities. Valbonne, Opio, Le Rouret or Roquefort les Pins took advantage of it. Sophia Antipolis now hosts world leaders in information and communication technologies.

Service sector

Since the late 1970s, Sophia Antipolis has established itself as Europe's leading technology park. It is Pierre Laffitte, a scientist and politician from the region, who dreams of creating an international city of Wisdom, Science and Technology far from the capital. A vast virgin territory, originally formed by 5 municipalities (Biot, Vallauris, Valbonne, Mougins and Antibes), was chosen. Utopia will become a reality.

► **Today, Sophia-Antipolis is a 2,400 hectare technology park** built in the middle of a forest park. With nearly 5,000 researchers and 2,500 companies employing 38,000 people in a technology park 90% of which is composed of green spaces, the initial bet has proved to be an undeniable success with a turnover of 5.6 billion euros, the equivalent of the Côte d'Azur's tourism turnover.

► **The science park also hosts 188 foreign companies** employing nearly 10,000 employees of 64 different nationalities! In this city of knowledge,

centres of excellence radiate: cutting-edge scientific research, information and communication technologies, multimedia, medicine, biochemistry, energy, water management and sustainable development.

► **Sophia-Antipolis also has nearly 5000 students and researchers** from all over the world, which brings undeniable dynamism to the area

► **Unusual.** Both the concept and the name (now a registered trademark) come from Pierre Laffitte, at the time director of the École nationale supérieure des mines de Paris (ENSMP): his wife Sophie (which means *wisdom, science* in Greek) inspired the first part of the name while the second part would come from the ancient Greek name of the city of Antibes.

Tourism

Rich in an exceptional heritage, the Sophia Antipolis Urban Community intends to protect and enhance it. The region offers its visitors a privileged climate that is both mild and sunny. Its unique natural setting between the sea and the mountains, its exceptional cultural and historical heritage, its sun-drenched cuisine are among the essential elements that seduce visitors.

► **Among the municipalities closest to the coast, there are also the most touristic.** The communes of the Loup valley, Tourrettes-sur-Loup, Bar-sur-Loup and Gourdon have enjoyed strong tourist visibility for more than a century, with a clear identification linked both to their status as remarkable villages and to the enhancement of their cultural heritage. Their proximity to the Côte d'Azur is an additional asset and brings them daily visitors. Annual events such as the Gourdon Outdoor Theatre Festival, the Opio Nocturnes, the Orange Festival at Bar-sur-Loup, or the Saint Blaise Festival in Valbonne, attract many locals and tourists.

► **To stand out and attract visitors**, the municipalities of the medium and high countries highlight outdoor sports, hiking, canyoning on the Wolf or the Estéron, speleology, cycling routes, thus attracting regular visitors in need of large spaces. An important work is being done in this direction by the Regional Nature Park of the Préalpes d'Azur.

Sophia Antipolis celebrates its 50th anniversary!

The concept of cross-fertilization has continued for fifty years, and the concept of new technologies continues to be revitalized. The fact that Sophi@Tech, the new university, has established itself there, that the business cluster with its Startups is spreading everywhere, and above all that the first technology park has just been awarded the 3IA label is undeniable proof that the very idea of Sophia Antipolis, between innovation and excellence, is still relevant. In 2019, the 50th anniversary of Sophia Antipolis represents an opportunity to celebrate 50 years of innovation and economic development of the region, to promote the current technology park and its strategic sectors (artificial intelligence, autonomous vehicles, travel technologies, health and sports technologies, biotechnology, water sports) and to consider that the future technology park will confirm its position of excellence among international science and technology parks.

HISTORY

PREHISTORY

Prehistoric footprints exist in the Alpes Maritimes department. Several shelters have been identified, whether they are sinkholes or caves, and in particular:

▶ **At Tourrettes sur Loup: the Pié Lombard Shelter.** This shelter located at the foot of the cliff was occupied during prehistoric times. Neanderthal human remains have been found there. (*Dating: Middle Paleolithic, circa 70,000 BC*).

▶ **In Tourrettes-sur-Loup: the Grotte du Bau Rous** (or Baume obscure). It has been occupied at several times. Human bones have been found there, attesting to a sepulchral occupation. Arrowheads, punches and ceramics have been found that correspond to funeral furniture.

The lower layers of the excavations provided bones from fauna that has now disappeared (notably the cave bear). (*Dating: from the Middle Paleolithic to the Ancient Bronze Age*)

▶ **At the Rouret / Chateauneuf: the Baume Robert cave.** 200 m long, it is one of the most beautiful caves in the department due to its hydrographic network and

A few historical landmarks

▶ **In the 6th century BC** the Greeks of Phokaia founded Massalia (Marseille).

▶ **In the 4th century BC** foundation of Antipolis (Antibes).

▶ **The 3rd century BC** sees the foundation of Nikkaia (Nice).

The territory of the agglomeration community of Sophia Antipolis was then occupied by the Deceates, the Nérusi from Vence and the Massaliotes on the coast.

its many siphons. A flint blade of superior Paleolithic construction and some animal bones were found near the entrance. (*Dating: Upper Paleolithic*).



Borie on the Caussols Plateau.

► **In Valbonne: the sepulchral avenue of Lambert's Death.** This cave was discovered in 1986. The cavity originates on the ground surface itself, and is divided into a series of three rooms connected by vertical passages, up to a depth of 40 metres. Human and animal bone remains and abundant ceramic material have been found. This cave was used as a cemetery for 11 adults, 4 children and 2 newborns. The presence of remains of fireplaces and vases suggests that this cave was also used as a living space. (*Dating: Old Bronze to Final Bronze*).

Dolmens and menhirs

It is likely that since the Neolithic period (6000 to 2000 BC), agro-pastoral populations settled in this territory, attracted by the many springs and rivers, the existence of caves and caverns where they could settle, the possibility of hunting and fishing and the mild climate. The end of the Neolithic period (2000 BC) saw the development of the civilization of the megaliths. Dolmens and menhirs are making their appearance, some examples are still visible in the territory of the communes around Le Loup:

- **At the Rouret:** the dolmen of Clamarquier and the menhir of Castellaras.
- **In Tourrettes-sur-Loup:** the menhir of Courmettes, and the dolmen of Campracier.
- **In Châteauneuf:** the dolmen of Haute Pierre.

► **In Roquefort-les-Pins:** the dolmen of Peyraoutes. The dolmens are home to collective graves. It is generally a rectangular chamber made up of several blocks, vertical slabs covered with a horizontal slab, usually with an access corridor.

Menhirs are blocks erected individually or more rarely arranged in alignments or circles. Their function was probably symbolic. Excavations at the various sites have uncovered numerous skeletons, pottery shards, flints, ornaments and ceramics.

Prehistoric enclosures

In the Iron Age (700 BC), populations began to organize and regroup inside fortified villages, settled on the top of hills or rocky spurs, and known as the Latin *oppidum* (plural: *oppida*). The hilly coastline facilitated this new form of habitat, and *oppida* occupied most of the hills closest to the coast. This type of habitat then developed in the hinterland.

Many stone enclosures, vestiges of *oppida*, or for agro-pastoral purposes, are listed nowadays:

- **In Caussols:** the Mason's Hill, the Planestels, or the Camp des Laves.
- **At Le Bar-sur-Loup:** the Col du Clapier or the Camp de la Tracée.
- **In Gourdon:** the Haut Montet.
- **In Tourrettes-sur-Loup:** the Colle de Naouri, the Camp du Cimetière, the Tourraque.

ANTIQUITY

► **In the 3rd century BC** Rome became the dominant power in Italy, then in the western Mediterranean. From 150 BC onwards, the Romans began to pacify and colonize the region to ensure the safety of their convoys. The interior is occupied by tribes who are waging a permanent war against each other. The Védians, the Nerusi, the Oratelli, the Décéates and the Ligurians, tear each other apart, but in times of famine, they descend from their mountains and plunder the coastal trading posts. The Roman legions helped the cities on the coast to get rid of the barbaric tribes of the hinterland. Thus, it was Massalia who, in 183 B.C., asked Rome to lend a hand against the Ligurian attacks. In 154 BC the Romans helped Nikkaia and Antipolis to get rid of the Oxydians and Deceates. Consul Opimius finally defeated the Deceates on the banks of the Apron, now the Wolf. The country is undergoing a metamorphosis and is covered with roads and monuments

The territory was then crossed by two Roman roads: the Via Aurelia (Julia Augusta for part of its route) from Rome

to Tarascon and the Via Ventiana which connected Vence to Digne (by Coursegoules and Gréolières).

► **In 13 B.C.** While Emperor Augustus himself came to reduce the last rebel tribes and subject them to definitive obedience, all the former colonies of Marseille came under Roman authority. The names of the defeated peoples are inscribed on a gigantic monument erected to the glory of the Roman armies: it is the famous trophy of the Alps or Augustus' trophy, still visible today in La Turbie. The *pax romana* persisted until the end of the Western Roman Empire (476): it was a prosperous period. The Romans administered both shores of the Mediterranean, laid out roads, developed agriculture and trade

► **Many remnants** of the Roman period dot our territory: the Roman bridge at Roquefort-les-Pins, the Aqueduct of Valmasque at Valbonne... On the old Roman road from Vence to Castellane, which crosses the town of Coursegoules, 17 milestones are referenced. In the hinterland, there are remains of farms, foundations of Roman villas, tiles...

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MIDDLE AGES

► **In the 5th century, the end of the Roman Empire.** At the beginning of the 5th century, the Barbarians (Ostrogoths, Franks, Alamans, Burgundians, Vandals) plundered Gaul. The coastline depopulated. The inhabitants sheltered in more secure places and hid behind ramparts, sometimes former "oppida". It was first the Ostrogoths kings who governed the region and then the Franks who conquered Provence in 561. It is Charles Martel, mayor of the Palace of Austrasia, who reigns over Provence. However, the Dukes of Provence remain relatively independent.

► **In the 8th century, Muslim invasions.** At the beginning of the 8th century, the Moors from Spain and North Africa looted the coastline. They attacked the Abbey of Lérins, Nice and Antipolis, and went north to Poitiers where Charles Martel stopped them in 732. In two battles (in 737 and 739) Charles Martel pushed back the Moors and regained power over the Burgundian and Provençal dukes. The Saracens returned and the region, throughout the Middle Ages, experienced the torments of exactions and looting. Christianity spread rapidly throughout Provence. The country is covered with chapels, fortified churches, convents and monasteries. After a troubled period under the authority of the Carolingians, finally driven out by the Burgundians, the first kingdom of Provence was created in the 9th century.

► **The 11th century, feudalism.** At the beginning of the 11th century, Burgundian chieftains settled in the former

Carolingian castles. With the establishment of the feudal system, the lords took control of the populations and encouraged them to gather around their castles. From this feudal period still remains:

- At Bar-sur-Loup: the base of the former dungeon of the seigneurial palace, nowadays occupied by a restaurant.
- In Roquefort les Pins: the remains of Castellans
- In Courmes: the enclosure of the Serre de la Madeleine.

► **During the 12th and 13th centuries,** the region was marked by the takeover by the Counts of Provence of the east of Provence. Nice, Opio, and Châteauneuf, fell into the hands of the Counts of Provence. In the Middle Ages, Bar-sur-Loup was regularly attacked by Saracens and Moors. The village was damaged and destroyed several times. From the 10th to the 15th century, Provence passed from hand to hand. Successively owned by the Catalan Counts and then the Angevins, Provence went through great trials: the wars generated by incessant rivalries between the ruling families, the great black plague (1347-1349) that decimated the countryside, incessant robbery and poor harvests.

► **From the 13th century onwards,** most villages developed around their castles. The castles of Tourrettes, Gourdon, Bar-sur-Loup, Châteauneuf, Opio and Le Rouret date from this period. In 1419, the county of Nice was definitively detached from Provence and attached to the States of the House of Savoy. After the death of King René d'Anjou, who died in Aix in 1480, the region was offered to Louis XI and became French.

FROM RENAISSANCE TO THE REVOLUTION

► **The 15th century** was an era marked by wars, and the villages of the Moyens Pays and Haut Pays strengthened. This era also saw the disappearance of a number of villages that did not resist crises and were declared uninhabited. It was not until the 16th century that these abandoned villages (*Le Rouret, Roquefort les Pins, Courmes, Caussols*) revived.

► **During the 16th and 17th centuries,** instability persisted. Charles V's troops invaded Provence in 1524 and 1536. In 1543, the French, allied to the Turks, besieged Nice. The whole region is once again exposed to looting and massacres. The Spanish took part of the coast and the Lérins islands in 1635 before being driven out in 1637. From 1560 onwards, religious wars broke out: Protestant "Rasats" and Catholic "Carcists" clashed in Provence. In 1574, the castle of Gréolières was attacked by Protestants from Grasse. Until the accession of King Henry IV in 1594, the situation remained confused between ultra-Catholics, moderate Catholics supporting the King and Protestants; religious rivalries often hiding political ambitions.

► **From the 17th to the 19th centuries,** the region experienced a difficult and unstable period, with the territory changing hands several times as battles and

alliances unfolded. In 1691, the county of Nice, conquered by Marshal Catinat, became French again for a short period because the Treaty of Turin of 1696 returned to Duke Victor-Amédée of Savoy all the territories he had lost. In 1706, the Austrian army seized Grasse. Each campaign bringing along loot, rapes, burnings, killings and misery. In 1760, the county of Provence joined the Kingdom of France, and the Duchy of Savoy joined the Kingdom of Sardinia. The Treaty of Turin formalized the borders. The Estéron river became the natural border between France and the county of Nice. The village of Les Ferres, like the neighbouring communes of Conségudes, Bouyon and La Roque en Provence, revert to the Kingdom of France. After the difficult winter of 1788, the social climate was tense. Demonstrations broke out all over Provence, in cities and countryside, and often ended in riots. In 1792, villagers and peasants drove out the nobles and destroyed the castles. On 17 October 1793, during the fighting between the Nice people under the authority of the Austro-Sardinians and the French of the Revolution, Sardinian troops crossed the Estéron to attack Bezaudun. Two days later, on October 19, the Battle of Gillette saw the victory of General Dugommier's French army over General de Wins' Austro-Sardinian army.

FROM THE REVOLUTION TO THE 21ST CENTURY

► **Between 1789 and 1800**, it is estimated that about 140,000 people left France to flee the Revolution, fearing for their lives. Many emigrants took refuge in England, the United States or Canada, but also in the county of Nice where they engaged counter-revolutionary demonstrations. In 1792, the French army of the Convention, commanded by General Anselme, seized the county of Nice, then province of the kingdom of Sardinia. In April 1794, General Dugommier completed the conquest of the county of Nice with the Battle of Gillette. The county of Nice became French again for twenty years.

► **In 1814**, following Napoleon's defeat, Europe was struggling to recover from nearly a quarter of a century of wars and revolutions. The winners of France, the United Kingdom, Austria, Prussia and Russia, bring European countries together in Vienna to rebuild a European order. France, a defeated power, regains approximately its 1792 borders. In the south, it again lost the county of Nice, which returned to the kingdom of Piedmont and Sardinia. La Roque-en-Provence, which had become French in 1760, is now Sardinian again!

It was not until 1860 that Italy ceded Savoy and the county of Nice to France in gratitude for Napoleon III's support for the cause of Italian independence. La Roque-en-Provence became French again! The region's territory is once again being redesigned. The canton of Grasse forms, with the canton of Nice, the Alpes-Maritimes. The department of Var keeps its name but loses the canton of Grasse and

therefore the river Var, which no longer flows into the department to which it gave its name.

► **In the middle of the 19th century**, France was covered with railway lines. The Freyssinet plan projects the construction of a line from Nice to Puget-Théniers, and another line from Nice to Grasse via Vence. The railway quickly opened up all isolated or outlying regions and brought profound changes in lifestyles: farmers were more likely to abandon perched villages and settle on the plains to cultivate fruit, vegetables and citrus fruits. On 23 February 1887, an earthquake with an epicentre in Liguria devastated the entire region. The village of Bouyon, although located 90 km from the epicentre, was partially destroyed, as was the church, which was rebuilt in 1890.

► **In 1940**, Italy declared war to France. In November 1942, the free zone was invaded by the German army following the landing of Allied troops in North Africa. On 27 November 1942, the French fleet scuttled in Toulon to avoid falling into the hands of Axis forces. On August 15, 1944, the VIIIth American army, under the command of General Patch and mainly composed of the 1st free French army commanded by General de Lattre de Tassigny, landed at Le Dramont in the Saint-Raphaël region, liberating Provence in less than two weeks. On August 24, 1944, the routed German army destroyed 3 viaducts on the railway line, including the Pont du Loup bridge. They were never rebuilt again and the line was abandoned.

NOWADAYS

► **In the second half of the 20th century** peace and prosperity came back in the region. The destruction of the viaducts of the Provence railway by a German commando, following the liberation of Grasse by the Allies, put a stop to this mode of transport which had facilitated trade and disrupted habits at the beginning of the century, but the road took over. Tourism begun even more intensely. The pre-war aristocrats were joined by the beneficiaries of paid holidays attracted by the South and the mild Mediterranean climate. New employment opportunities opened up for the inhabitants of the hinterland. Culture and livestock farming brought in less jobs than in tourism, hotels, restaurants or transport. The villages emptied out, their young people leaving to earn money on the coast. However, the creation of Sophia Antipolis in 1970 changed things. With this influx of population, the region had to adapt to new challenges. It was necessary to build new habitats and create new communication roads to facilitate exchanges. The former agricultural

lands were taken over by promoters. Four-lane roads were built. The flower fields or olive groves became golf courses or residences. Valbonne, Opio, le Rouret, Châteauneuf, Roquefort les Pins completely changed with this new population.

► **Today**, we discover the sweetness of life in the hills, far from the frantic activity of the coast. The back country villages also benefit, within an hour's drive, from the charm of their old stones, the hiking trails and rivers. But how to continue attracting tourists from all over the world without killing the golden goose? How can we ensure that roads and rivers do not suffer from overcrowding? The challenge now is to continue to make this region a popular tourist destination and a source of employment, while preserving this way of life, cultural and natural heritage. This is the role of the Sophia Antipolis Urban Community, the Préalpes d'Azur Regional Nature Park and the Departmental Nature Parks. There is no doubt that they will be able to respond effectively.

HERITAGE & TRADITIONS

CULTURAL HERITAGE

Literature

These writers do not come directly from the region of Valbonne to the Préalpes d'Azur, but we can still mention:

► **Jean Giono:** originally from Manosque, his work is set in the rural world of Provence at the beginning of the 20th century. It describes the lives of the little people in the countryside and villages of Haute Provence, near Manosque and the Lure mountain. The people described, peddlers, farmers, notables and priests, are identical to those who lived in the villages of the high country, the communes of Le Loup or l'Estéron. (Read: *Le Chant du Monde, Regain...*)

► **Jean Aicard:** originally from Toulon, he published *Poèmes de Provence* in 1874, which classified him as a poet-writer from this region. In 1908 he published

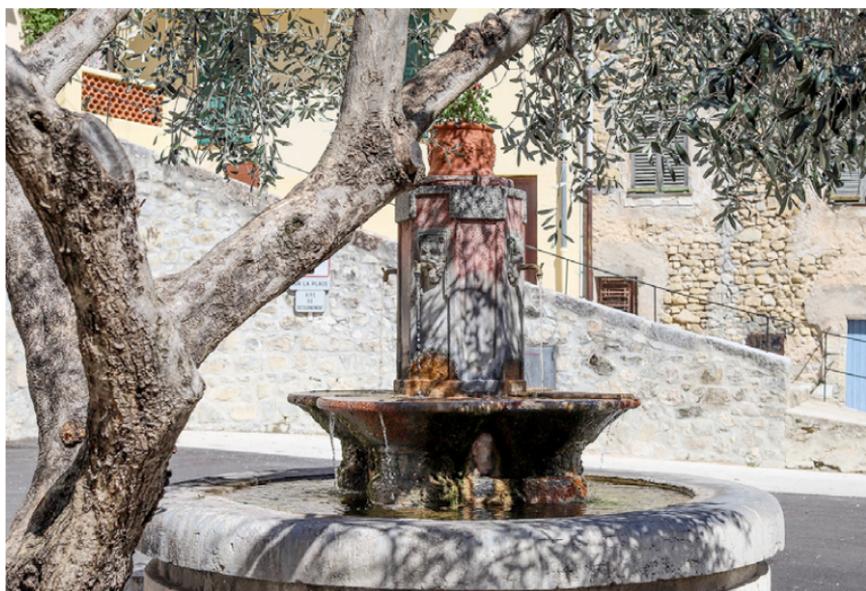
Maurin des Maures, which described the adventures of a friendly poacher who stood up to a gendarme in the Maures massif. Both are in love with the same woman, which brings us close to the world of Pagnol. This story has been used in movies, TV series and comics. (Read: *Maurin des Maures*)

► **Marcel Pagnol:** originally from Aubagne, he directed many films including *Angèle, Regain, and La Femme du Boulanger* (all three inspired by novels by Jean Giono). His cinematographic work describes his childhood memories in the region of Marseille. Later, abandoning cinema, he wrote his childhood memories in Aubagne, (*La Gloire de mon Père, le Château de ma mère*) then described the daily life of Provençal farmers in the Garlaban massif, near Aubagne in a novel in two volumes: *L'Eau des Collines (Jean de Florette and Manon des Sources)*.

ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

Traces of an agricultural and industrial past are visible all around. Agriculture has shaped the landscape by creating terraces and planting vineyards and olive trees, but it has also dotted fields and hills with all kinds of farm buildings, farms and bastides, bread ovens, sheepfolds and bories. The need for water supplies

for fields, people and animals left marks: fountains, water troughs and wells, aqueducts. The industrial past is also visible in some places: lime kilns, magnaneries, paper mills. This past is also the work of previous generations, in a world that is very different from today's.



Conségudes fountain.

The Opio oil mill

Seven generations of millers have here succeeded to preserve and transmit their heritage. This mill is one of the few still in activity that produces olive oil. It is part of a complex whose walls and some of the equipment (grinding wheels, presses, boilers, basins, jars, tanks, canals, etc.) date back to the 15th century. Today, the waters of the Brague are no longer strong enough to activate the mill, it runs on electricity.

► Free guided tour, introduction to the diversity of the vintages. The shop offers local products, decorative objects made of olive wood, and, of course, olive oil!

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The Bastides

In the countryside, Bastides are mansions linked to farms. The farm buildings were arranged around the master's house. The 17th and 18th centuries saw the apogee of Bastides. The nobles of the time who owned a private mansion in the city also wanted a country house. But the bastide was more than that; rather a private mansion in the countryside, at the same time as a source of income. Some Bastides remain in the region:

► **In Opio:** the Grande Bastide. Its olive grove was the largest in the region. It has now been replaced by the Opio golf course. The Château de la Bégude, located on the golf course, is also a former bastide. Also, the Bastide de la Louisiane.

► **In Châteauneuf:** the Magnanerie. Intended for silkworm breeding, the Bastide was surrounded by mulberry plantations until the 19th century. Currently, the old silkworm farm is surrounded by terraces planted with olive trees.

► **At Le Bar-sur-Loup,** the old paper mill was a large bastide. It was active as a paper mill from the 16th to the 20th century.

► **In Valbonne,** the Sylviane estate and the Bermond farm.

Bread Ovens

Many bread ovens operated daily in villages until the 20th century. The days of cooking were of particular



The Opio oil mill.

importance: people contributed to heat the fireplace, each providing its share of wood. Most villages still have a "rue du Four". Nowadays, the search for authenticity and a return to the countryside are pushing municipalities to reopen bread ovens. This is the case, for example, in Coursegoules where the baker uses the communal bread oven every morning. In Courmes, the bread oven is still in operation. In Bouyon, the bread oven no longer works but the town wants to reopen it.

The Bories

Associated with pastoral life, bories are dry-stone huts, shaped like igloos, with domed roofs. They date from the 18th and 19th centuries, a time when pastoralism was the main activity on the plateau.

The bories were mainly summary shelters, which allowed shepherds to store tools and crops, or to take their meals sheltered or by the fire. They could occasionally be used as shelters for the night, or in case of bad weather. The bories are made entirely of stone blocks. They vary in height from 2.60 m to 3 m. They have a base on which rests another level of stone blocks that support the roof. The wall is thicker at the bottom than at the top. There is an average width of about one metre at the base and rather 40 cm at the top. The doors are low, 1.50 m on average, and have a lintel. The floor is made of clay. The walls are inclined so that rain flows out of the borie. A hole is provided at the top of the cabin to allow the smoke from the hearth to pass through. It is in the southern part of the commune of Caussols, in the Claps sector or near the so-called Roman road that most of the bories can be seen, although many of them are in ruins. About forty have been identified. Most of the bories are isolated, but some are grouped together or close to a sheepfold for example. In another sector, a hike from Cipières allows you to visit the Borie de Pons.

The sheepfolds

The sheepfolds were used to shelter the herd (goats, lambs, sheep) as well as dogs and shepherds. They were simple buildings, built all in length, with a single-pitch tiled roof. The oldest ones were made of dry stones. For the more recent ones, the stones could be bound with a mortar. The stable and water trough were on the ground floor, the warmth of the animals being used to warm the men's quarters in the attic just above. At the same time as the men, the attic was also used to store hay. We can see two sheepfolds quite well preserved in Caussols, a sheepfold on chemin des Claps and another in Pierre Haute, the latter being surrounded by a dry stone enclosure allowing the sorting of animals.

The jas

A *jas* generally refers to a large sheepfold. It should be noted, however, that in some areas of Provence or the Southern Alps, a *jas* can also designate a simpler covered shelter for livestock. Three *Jas*, all three in ruins, are still visible north of the town of Tournettes-sur-Loup, at an altitude of about 900 m: *Jas de l'Éouvière*, *Jas Vieux* and

Jas des Bourades. The *Jas Vieux* and the *Jas des Bourades* still have walls 2 m high. *Jas des Bourades* also has a large 24 m x 5 m enclosure that was used for cattle.

The mills

Depending on their type of activity, the mills were located in the village, on the ground floor of a house, or outside, below the village, often by the river. The village mills were powered by animals, horses, mules or oxen. They were called "blood mills". They were used instead for flour, and had a "rotating" wheel that moved on a "dormant" wheel, crushing the seed. These flour mills only ground low-strength seeds. Animal traction or the use of a reduced hydraulic flow was sufficient to make them work. Oil mills were called *defici*, a Provençal term that has now disappeared, but which can be found in old songs or texts. Placed on the banks of rivers or on a diversion aqueduct, they were equipped with large paddle wheels and spoon turbines. The crushing of olives, which are crushed with the stones, required the use of a heavy wheel, driven by a powerful driving force, with the use of large water wheels. These *deficiencies* generally belonged to the municipalities or cooperatives. These oil mills were found in all regions planted with olive trees. They were part of the life of the village and were a meeting place for the inhabitants at harvest time, each owner bringing his harvest to the mill. As early as the 17th century, many oil and flour mills were built along the region's rivers. Several mills have been built along the Brague and Bouillide rivers, even supplying the neighbouring municipalities. On the banks of the Loup, there are the remains of seven former wheat or oil mills. At Bar-sur-Loup, the former paper mill owned a mill.

► **In Le Rouret**, on the banks of the Miagne, there were three oil mills.

► **At Valbonne**, on the banks of the Brague, seven mills are said to have existed. Among these mills, we can note the mill of the Angel (flour mill) whose wheel is very well preserved, the mill of the Gabres (oil mill), disappeared, and the mill of the Verrière (disappeared). From the Eganaude mill, which also disappeared, there are still some elements that have been deposited on Sophie Laffitte Square in Sophia Antipolis

► **In Tournettes-sur-Loup**, you can see the remains of a mill on rue de la Bourgade, on a site nowadays transformed into a dwelling. The Ferris wheel is in place and well preserved, as well as an important aqueduct of narrow section, which brings to the mill the waters diverted from the Font-Luègne by a partially paved reach. It spans the old road of Vence with a single arch. This important facility reflects the importance given to olive oil resources in the 19th century and up to the 1960s.

► **In Courmes**, the Bramafan mill was created in 1900, following the abandonment of the Gourdon mill located 1.5 km downstream on the Loup, at the creation of the catchment of the Pont du Loup. It was a flour mill with two wheels with washer and sorter. The wheat was transported by mule or cart from Courmes, Coursegoules, Gréolieres, Cipières and Gourdon. The mill stopped working in the early 1960s due to a lack of grain to grind.

Mill wheel in Tourrettes-sur-Loup.

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Fountains and water troughs

In a hot and dry region, water is of vital importance. In the Middle Ages, villages were established primarily around a castle, itself located on a hill, and very often far from any source or stream. It was therefore necessary to build systems to transport water to the villages.

The Romans showed a remarkable imagination in bringing water to cities, creating hydraulic systems that were far ahead of their time. The water collected in the springs travelled long distances, crossing the valleys by aqueducts, the mountains by tunnels, while keeping a regular slope so that the flow was constant. As early as the 1st century, the Romans built two monumental structures to supply the city of Antipolis (Antibes) with water. The Fontvieille (or de la Brague) aqueduct had 4.5 km of underground pipelines. The Bouillide aqueduct brought water to Antipolis over a distance of 15 km, requiring the construction of many engineering structures.

Later, in order to bring water to the village squares or to the mill wheel, it was necessary to seek it ever further by collecting springs and rivers, building wells and diversions, and building new water supply structures. At a time when turning on a tap is all it takes to get water flowing in our homes, it is important to remember the work of the elders, and the heritage they have left us. The fountains and washhouses were a first step in the quest for water. No more the chore of fetching water from the river with great effort. The water arrived in the heart of the village, it was enough to bring it home. Likewise, the washing of laundry on your knees by the riverside is over. The washerwomen were standing around the wash-house, a more comfortable position. The population, especially women and children, who were generally responsible for going to the fountain, met around the fountains and washhouses, which became social places. There were also wells. A crank winch had to be operated to draw water from it. These water supply systems belonged to and were managed by the municipalities. Testimonies of a bygone era, fountains and washhouses have become photogenic settings in villages. There are many examples of fountains and washhouses scattered throughout the municipalities. Here are some of them:

▶ **At Bar-sur-Loup**, you can admire a fountain at Seytre Square. The basin receives water through two ornate wrought iron tubes. The ashlar basin is moulded in the upper and lower parts. In Place de la Fontaine, you can see a wash-house topped along its entire length by a wooden bar to drain the laundry. Next to it are a fountain and a water trough made of ashlar.

▶ **In Bezaudun-les-Alpes**, you are welcomed at Place des Tilleuls by the whisper of a covered fountain.

▶ **In Bouyon**, a pretty 4-sided fountain refreshes the inhabitants in the heart of the village.

▶ **In Caussols**: In this highly pastoral area, there are many fountains and water troughs. You can admire a 1933 water trough in Les Gleirettes, near the RD112. A sign indicates that it was built by the Rural Engineering

Department. An old sheep drinking trough, all in length, is also visible at the Embuts de Caussols. In the Claps sector, we can see old tanks designed to retain rainwater. This tank system was the only way to conserve water in this isolated area.

▶ **In Châteauneuf**, chemin de la Grande Fontaine, there is a triple set of fountain-washer-drinking-troughs, fed by a catchment of a spring from La Brague. The fountain was the only water point in the village until the end of the 19th century.

▶ **In Cipières**, a pretty fountain dating from 1893 adorns the village square, with its 17th century washhouse.

▶ **In Conségudes**, a pretty octagonal fountain welcomes visitors to the town hall square. The water comes out of the mouths of ancient human heads.

▶ **In Courmes**, below the village, there is a washhouse covered by a wooden frame and a tiled roof, combined with a fountain of ashlar that supplies it with water.

▶ **In Coursegoules**, you can still admire the washhouse and the adjacent fountain, both covered. The municipality exhibits period photos, very informative.

▶ **In Les Ferres**, an 1893 fountain with two metal pourers is located in the square in front of the Saint-Jacques church.

▶ **In Gourdon**, the beautiful classic 4-sided fountain, dating from 1852, consists of a large basin forming four semicircles. The water comes out of the mouths of ancient human heads. Next to it is the 1870 washhouse, which is part of a building. We can still see a long metal bar that was supposed to be used to drain the laundry.

▶ **In Gréolières**, a large washhouse and fountain are located at the entrance of the village.

▶ **In La Roque-en-Provence**, a pretty covered washhouse, at the bottom of the village just before the French bridge.

▶ **In Opio**, a small, simple fountain dating from 1894, near the Town Hall. Composed of a conical basin it is supported by a vertical stone. In the San Peyre district there is a beautifully renovated fountain-washer that was used by the inhabitants until the end of the 19th century.

▶ **In Roquefort-les-Pins**, a late 19th century fountain with a large stone basin is integrated into the modern urban space of the planning district, opposite the town hall.

▶ **At Le Rouret**, the Troussane fountain and washhouse is located in an outlying district. This 18th century washhouse was one of the few accessible communal water points. It was transformed into a fountain in 1959. In the centre of the village, the Saint-Pons fountain-washer, sheltered by a wooden frame and a tiled roof.

▶ **In Tournettes-sur-Loup**, on the Place de la Libération, there is a fountain and a drinking trough. Next to it, another larger fountain is dug under the rock. Further on, about 1 km from the village is the Font Luègne washhouse (the distant fountain); sheltered by a wooden frame and a tiled roof. This washhouse is shallow, suggesting that the laundresses worked on their knees.

▶ **In Valbonne** you can still admire a fountain from 1834 in front of the old town hall in the heart of the old village. Further on, on the edge of the village, is the Fontaine Vieille. It was the only fountain outside the village to supply it until the beginning of the 19th century. La Brague was then used as a watering trough, which served Antipolis and sewer. As the road has been raised, the fountain now appears to be embedded in the sidewalk. Parts of the Roman aqueduct of La Bouillide, which served Antipolis, are still visible in the Valmasque park.

Religious architecture

During the Middle Ages, Christianity spread rapidly throughout Provence. The country is covered with country chapels, fortified churches, convents and monasteries. At the end of the 4th century, the Roman emperors imposed Catholicism as religion. Bishops and monasteries became even more numerous in Gaul. In Provence, the abbey of Lérins was founded by Saint Honorat at the beginning of the 5th century and became very famous. Antibes was a bishopric until 1244, when it was transferred to Grasse. On the territory of the Agglomeration communite Sophia Antipolis, the Loup was the territorial limit between the bishopric of Antibes-Grasse (Caussols, Gourdon, Le Bar-sur-Loup, Roquefort, Le Rouret, Châteauneuf, Opio, Valbonne) and that of Vence (Courmes, Tourrettes-sur-Loup)

▶ **Parish churches.** Most of the important churches in the region are parish churches. They are the headquarters of the Catholic community.

▶ **The abbey** is a monastery run by an abbot or an abbess (ex: the abbey of Valbonne).

▶ **The Penitent chapels.** They appeared in the 16th century and are often rivals of churches (chapelle des Pénitents Blancs in Coursegoules or Bouyon).

▶ **Country chapels** were built along the roadsides or at the entrance of villages to protect the region from evils coming from outside. They are simple and modest. Most of them were dedicated to a particular saint. Some became important places of pilgrimage from different villages, which gave rise to pagan festivals and sometimes pugilats between young people from the village of the chapel and young people from neighbouring villages (Notre-Dame du Brusci in Châteauneuf).

▶ **The oratories.** Often built at crossroads, they had the same mission of protecting passers-by, peasants or shepherds.

Several architectural trends

▶ **The first Mediterranean Romanesque art** (churches have a massive volume, a single nave, an elegant bell tower, no transept). Notre-Dame du Brusci, in Châteauneuf, or Sainte-Marie de Valbonne Abbey are good examples.

▶ **The second Mediterranean Romanesque art** (improvement of the Romanesque style, from the 11th to the 13th century). Saint-Vincent church in Gourdon, Saint-Trophime church in Opio, Saint-Lambert church in Caussols.

▶ **Gothic art** (less ornamentation, adding an extra floor. End of the 15th century): Saint-Jacques le Majeur church, at Bar-sur-Loup.

▶ **Baroque architecture** (18th century) developed more in the Nice region, close to Italy.

The religious heritage of the region is vast

▶ **Bezaudun-les-Alpes:** the Saint-Martin church, the curious double chapel Saint-Roch and Saint-Sébastien (desacralized), the Notre-Dame du Peuple chapel (former place of pilgrimage).



Cross in Bezaudun-les-Alpes.

▶ **Bouyon:** the Saint-Trophime church, (destroyed by an earthquake in 1890 and then rebuilt), the Saint-Roch chapel (built at the entrance of the village to ward off the plague epidemic), the Saint-Bernardin des Pénitents Blancs chapel.

▶ **Caussols:** the Saint-Lambert church, the cave-chapelle de Calern, the cross-calvary at the junction of the Grasse-Saint-Vallier-Ciapières roads.

▶ **Châteauneuf:** the Notre-Dame du Brusç church (listed in the repertoire of Historic Monuments), the Saint-Martin parish church and the Sainte-Trinité chapel.

▶ **Ciapières:** Saint-Mayeul church and Saint-Claude chapel

▶ **Conségudes:** Saint-Georges church, Sainte-Marguerite and Saint-Paul chapels, Saint-Jean and Saint-Michel oratories.

▶ **Coursegoules:** the Chapelle des Pénitents Blancs, the Church of Sainte Marie-Madeleine, and the Chapel of Saint-Michel.

▶ **Courmes:** Sainte-Madeleine church

▶ **Gourdon:** the Saint-Vincent church (listed in the repertoire of Historic Monuments) as well as the Saint-Pons, Saint-Vincent and Pont-du-Loup chapels.

▶ **Gréolières:** Saint-Pierre church. The ruins of the chapels of N.-D. de Verdelaye, Saint-Etienne and Sainte-Pétronille.

▶ **La Roque-en-Provence:** the fortified church of Sainte-Pétronille, the Saint-Laurent and Notre-Dame de l'Olive chapels.

▶ **Le Bar-sur-Loup:** the church of Saint-Jacques le Majeur (listed in the repertoire of Historic Monuments), the chapels of Saint-Michel, Saint-Claude, Saint-Jean, Sainte-Anne, and the Trinitarian Sisters.

▶ **Le Rouret:** Saint-Pons church and the chapel of Les Pénitents. Several oratories and calvaries.

▶ **Les Ferres:** The Saint-Jacques church, the Sainte-Julie oratory, the Notre-Dame du Broc oratory, the Saint-Valentin rural chapel.

▶ **Opio:** the Church of St. Trophimus, the oratories of Saint-Michel and Notre-Dame, as well as crosses of paths or missions, placed at crossroads.

▶ **Roquefort les Pins:** the church of Notre-Dame de Canlache, and the Sacré-Cœur sanctuary.

▶ **Tourrettes-sur-Loup:** Saint-Grégoire church, Saint-Jean and Sainte-Madeleine chapels.

▶ **Valbonne:** the Saint-Blaise parish church (listed in the repertoire of Historic Monuments, former abbey of Sainte-Marie de Valbonne), the Saint-Bernardin chapel (desacralized), the Saint-Roch chapel, the Paul VI parish centre. Several oratories are scattered throughout the town.

Valbonne, created in the 16th century, and which was designed in times of peace, next to Sainte-Marie de Valbonne Abbey. Each of the communes of Valbonne in the Préalpes d'Azur therefore has a castle, sometimes two as in Gréolières, more or less well preserved. The best preserved ones have sometimes been transformed into hotels, such as in Ciapières or Gourdon. Some villages still have ramparts. Most of the perched villages are surrounded by townhouses.

▶ **In Ciapières,** the 13th century castle, in a classic Provençal style, dominates the village. Completely restored, it is now a hotel.

▶ **In Coursegoules,** the 13th century castle has been redesigned several times. You can still see a part of the round path pierced with loopholes, as well as the gates of the village.

▶ **In Caussols,** remains of the old medieval castle remain on a rocky spur above the hamlet of Saint-Lambert.

▶ **In Gréolières,** two feudal castles are still visible in the village. Gréolières-Hautes, now in ruins, occupied a rocky spur above the current village. The ruins are now on private property. Gréolières-Basse, in the heart of the current village, is partially in ruins and is also private.

▶ **In Baudouin-les-Alpes,** only one rectangular tower of 8 meters high remains of the proud castle of the bishops of Vence.

▶ **In Bouyon,** the 13th century Castrum de Bosisone has disappeared. There are still some sections of walls and the entrance gate... and a square with a magnificent view over the valley.

▶ **In La Roque-en-Provence,** the fortified church of Sainte-Pétronille preserves the defensive memory of the village. Next to the church, you can still see one of the old village gates, a watchtower, remains of the surrounding wall.

▶ **In Les Ferres,** ruins of the old Castrum de Ferris (12th century) remain above the village.

▶ **In Tourrettes-sur-Loup,** the castle located in the heart of the historic village has housed the town hall since the Revolution. Plundered and degraded, it remains of its former splendour a Louis XIII staircase and the 12th century belfry tower.

▶ **In Opio,** the former castle of the bishops of Grasse is nowadays the town hall.

▶ **In Roquefort les Pins,** you can see the ruins of the 11th century Castellus, the Roque Forte overlooking the Loup.

▶ **In Châteauneuf,** the original castle has disappeared, replaced by a 17th century building that looks like an Italian palace.

▶ **At Bar-sur-Loup,** the castle of the Counts of Grasse (13th century) had its ditches filled in and its dungeon reduced. Can't be visited.

▶ **In Gourdon,** the proud Provençal castle is rather well preserved.

Military architecture

With the grouping of houses around seigneurial castles in the Middle Ages, towns and villages developed around an existing stronghold, with the notable exception of

TRADITIONS & WAYS OF LIFE

The advent of tourism in the second half of the 20th century contributed to the development of crafts and the creation of multiple workshops manufacturing objects and products that have always made Provence famous. Crafts shops have developed in all villages, creating animation in the streets and attracting tourists. Some villages such as Tourrettes-sur-Loup have made art crafts a strong brand of their commune, succeeding in welcoming several dozen craftsmen as varied as pottery, ceramics, weaving, leather goods, jewellery creation or sculpture. Many of these creations are not typically Provençal, but Provence has always known how to highlight its craftsmanship and traditions, sometimes perpetuated through cinema or literature, such as the game of pétanque, the tradition of the santons of Provence or the "13 desserts".

The cultivation of vines

Due to its low water consumption, the vine can withstand high temperatures without damage. It is therefore an ideal plant for the region. It develops around Valbonne and Tourrettes-sur-Loup.

► **It was at the beginning of the 20th century** that the grape variety used (or servan), originating from the South-West was introduced in the Valbonne region. With a better ratio than the olive tree, it quickly met great success, to such an extent that in 1929 production rose from 300 to 400 tonnes. The particularity of this grape variety is that it is harvested from mid-October to the end of November, i.e. after the traditional harvest. This late harvest consisted in cutting the bunch by keeping part of the vine shoot, then keeping the bunch in a cool room, soaking it in a jar of water, completed with a small piece of charcoal to prevent the water from rotting.

A very special preservation method, which allowed the wine to age after harvest, provided that the room was

The 13 Christmas desserts

On the return from Christmas Mass, it was traditional to have the 13 desserts, 13 like Jesus and the 12 apostles at their last common meal (The Last Supper). The list is not fixed, but there are some unavoidable ones, like the fougasse, the 4 *mendians* (nuts and hazelnuts, raisins, almonds, and figs, each representing a different monastic order), then the dates (Jesus came from the East), often filled with marzipan, the white nougat (good) and the black nougat (evil). Then we can add calissons from Aix, candied fruits, goat cheese. Not to mention the poor man's share, in case a traveller comes knocking at the door on Christmas Eve.

aerated, the water replaced regularly and the damaged grains were eliminated. Thus the grape is adorned with a beautiful golden color, and acquires a fruity flavor that is unique to it. It was sold with its vine shoot under the name "Servant trendy".

► **The second half of the 20th century** saw the abandonment of the servant's production. Nowadays, the Vigne Communale, created by the municipality of Valbonne in 1995, perpetuates the tradition of the servan. 300 vines are harvested each year by the commune's agents. There is still a grape room on Alexis Julien Street in Valbonne. The Musée du Patrimoine du Vieux Valbonne (under renovation in 2019) is a wealth of information on the golden age of the vine

La Bastide aux Violettes

With the inevitable decline of violets at the end of the 1990s, the municipality of Tourrettes-sur-Loup decided to preserve its history and know-how, which are a major part of the identity of Tourrettes.

In 2001, it was decided to create a violet museum on the Ferrage site, land acquired by the municipality. Initially, the planned project consisted of a small violet museum completed by a "small garden and a mini greenhouse". Two elements will significantly change the size of this project: the municipality's membership of CASA and the action of the Chamber of Agriculture. The project chosen by the municipality and CASA is the Maison des Arts et Traditions de la Violette, which will be both a place of memory and a living space.

La Bastide aux Violettes will allow you to discover the history of Tourrettes, its terroir, its men and women, all the uses of violet and to observe the cultivation methods and the flower in high season by visiting greenhouses. As project owner, CASA financed the project. It has restored the building, fitted out the restanques and built the operating greenhouses. The Chamber of Agriculture, for its part, was interested in the project to extend the farm, which focuses on the production of crystallized violets, around the museum building. The farmer then undertakes to preserve and enhance the cultivation of violets (see *Tourrettes-sur-Loup*).



The cultivation of the olive tree

In the 18th century, olive growing was one of the most important economic activities in the region. In Valbonne, for example, nearly half of the arable land was planted with olive trees. Between the trees, the vines were grown. However, when the grape variety was introduced at the beginning of the 20th century, the interest in Valbonne and the region was such that farmers uprooted their olive trees and replaced them with grapes! Then, affected by frost in some years, by parasites and colonial competition (groundnut oils), the activity will decline to become a craft industry in our time. Nowadays, professional farms are located in the municipalities of Chateauneuf, Opio, Tourrettes-sur-Loup, Valbonne, Le Bar-sur-Loup, Le Rouret, and Roquefort-les-Pins.

► **The AOC Olives de Nice.** The geographical area of the AOC covers 99 municipalities in the Alpes-Maritimes. It is based on the original characteristics of the natural environment (topography, pedology, climatology) and the territory of the Cailletier variety. The AOC imposes certain rules: olives must be harvested when more than half of the olives are wine lees. The olives must be picked directly from the tree, or harvested by gaulage, by placing nets under the trees. Les olives are graded, sorted and washed before being prepared. They must be whole, not crushed, and not broken. The olives are then prepared in brine limited to 12 % sodium chloride based on the weight of water. No chemicals or preservatives other than sodium chloride are allowed.

Horticulture

There are still a few horticultural farms in the area, mainly in the low-lying areas around Valbonne, Opio, Tourrettes sur Loup, Bar-sur-Loup, Chateauneuf or Roquefort-les-Pins. The production is mainly composed of cut flowers, foliage, potted plants and perfume plants. Faced with land pressure, lack of agricultural land, and the difficulty of automating land of a particular topography, the sector is in decline.

► **The orange tree.** Originally, it was the Arabs who, as early as the 9th century, introduced the bitter orange tree to the region. In the 16th century, orange blossom was distilled for the production of perfumed waters and oils. In the 17th century, Princess Anne-Marie de La Trémoille, wife of Flavio Orsini, Prince of Nerola, gave her name to the orange flower extracts. Neroli was the affectionate nickname given to her by her friends. It was the princess who introduced the essence of orange blossom to the French court. This is how Néroli was called the fragrance of orange blossoms. Since 1880, the Bigaradier orange tree has been at the base of the economy of the commune of Bar-sur-Loup, as well as the hamlet of Pont du Loup. In the hamlet of Pont du Loup, located in the communes of Gourdon and Tourrettes-sur-Loup, the cultivation of sour cherries for orange blossom was the main activity and the restanques on both sides of the Loup were planted. At Bar-sur-Loup, the Bigaradier orange trees grew on the terraces and in the village. The picking of the bitter orange blossom marked the life of the inhabitants. From mid-April, at dawn, parents, friends, women and children, everyone was getting started. The flowers were picked by hand by

the women and girls, and delicately fallen into jute bags sewn together, or old sheets, placed under the tree. The leaves were separated from the flowers. The men put the flowers in the bags, and took them to traders who in turn delivered the harvest to the perfumeries of Grasse. The orange fields disappeared at the end of the 20th century. The remaining orange trees are found in private gardens. Ripe oranges are now used to make jam and orange wine. The memory of this glorious era is perpetuated every year at Easter, with the Orange Festival, which brings together old trades, crafts, and gastronomic products made from oranges. Cooperage and still distillation workshops are available. A competition for orange wine and bitter orange jam is organised. A festive day, all in orange, that should not be missed under any circumstances!

► **The violet.** Being the only place in France where violets are grown as the main crop, Tourrettes-sur-Loup deserves its name as Cité de la Violette! It was at the end of the 19th century that the town specialised in the cultivation of violet. Nowadays, only the Victoria variety is grown in Tourrettes-sur-Loup. It grows on small terraced plots of 200 to 300 m². The leaves are picked from mid-October to mid-March. They are grouped in bunches of 25 flowers, surrounded by leaves. At the end of the season, the flowers are more abundant, and the flower is picked without the stem, for confectionery. At the beginning of May and end of July, the leaf is mowed and delivered the same day to the Grasse factories to be transformed into concrete, then into absolute that is used in the composition of many great perfumes. On the first weekend of March, the village of Tourrettes-sur-Loup adorns itself with the colours of violet for a large festive event "Autour de la Violette". Floral art workshop, bouquet composition, perfume and flower cooking workshop, Provençal music and dance are part of the festivities on offer

► **Jasmine and May roses.** Jasmine is a shrub native to India. It has adapted well to the Mediterranean region, to such an extent that of all the fragrant plant crops on the Côte d'Azur, jasmine was for a long time the most important. In our region, Opio grew the most jasmine, with 40 tons per year. The May rose (*Centifolia*) was widely grown in the region, but especially in Opio. Around the village, the fields were scented with rose and jasmine. Urban development and the rise of tourism overcame the cultivation of the May rose, which declined from 1980 onwards. As with orange blossom, jasmine blossom was harvested at dawn and by hand. The flowers had to be delivered to the factory within 24 hours. To obtain one kilo of absolute jasmine essence, you need to collect about 7 million flowers! In other words, natural jasmine is expensive, reserved for luxury perfumes, most of which themselves prefer to use a synthetic version. For the picking of the rose, there too it was necessary to get up early! Harvesting was done in spring (April to June) with dew. The roses were packed in bags by commissionaires who delivered them to the perfumers of Grasse. Every year for the past 20 years, Opio has been honouring the rose with an exciting program of activities. This celebration is an opportunity to celebrate the links between the villages of the region and rose cultivation. In the afternoon, the participants go in procession to the rose field to pick the Centifolia rose, the perfume rose, the heroine of the day!

Orange blossom

Perfumeries used to distill two products:

- ▶ **The essence of Neroli** which is used in the composition of cologne perfumes, after distillation in copper stills. With a ton of fresh flowers, 1 kg of Neroli essence is produced.
- ▶ **Orange blossom water** for pastry. With one tonne of fresh flowers, 700 litres of orange blossom water is produced. It was stored in dark blue glass bottles so that it would not be altered by light. This water was used to perfume pastries, but it was also a popular remedy for digestion, migraine or cough, or even as a sleeping pill for babies!

Arts & Crafts

The santons

Already in the Middle Ages, nativity scenes were played by actors on the square in front of churches at Christmas time. The tradition of having a crib in churches, and sometimes, in Provence, a living crib, has been perpetuated. But the French revolution led to the closure of many churches, putting an end to these representations. It was then that in Provence characters representing "little saints" (*Santouns*) were created so that each family could have its own miniature crib. These small clay characters recreated an ideal Provençal world that perpetuated itself in the popular imagination. During Advent, each family created its own crib, with crumpled craft paper to make mountains and caves, aluminum foil to imitate a river that cascades down the mountain under a small bridge, and a small mirror to represent a pond. It was then enough to pick a little moss to deposit it here and there, add a few small branches or bundles and the decor was set. All that remained was to place the cardboard stable topped by its star (sometimes replaced by a paper cave), the village houses that were lit from the inside with a battery and a bulb, and the crib was ready to welcome the Santons. We would then grab the cardboard box containing the santons from a shelf and all these little people would see

the holiday season again. Then placed in the crib they finished bringing the Provençal Christmas celebration to life. All trades and corporations were represented, in a naive and touching way. So the miller with his bag of flour, the grinder with his millstone, the priest with his hat, the spinner with his spinning wheel, the baker, the fisherman, not to mention the "delighted", the somewhat silly character, a kind of village idiot, who could not be missing from the list. Then Mary and Joseph, the ox and the donkey and Jesus who arrived on the 25th, could be added, all this small world being joined at the epiphany by the wise men. Traditions are being lost, but the world of santons is still alive, as evidenced by the many online shops. Far from industrial santons, some craft shops offer handmade and hand-decorated santons. During Advent, many cities hold popular santon fairs.

Perfumes, perfumed waters

They are manufactured by different methods of extracting natural odorants such as distillation or enfleurage, mainly used for so-called fragile flowers such as jasmine or orange blossom. In Gourdon, La Source Parfumée offers you the opportunity to discover the lavender plantations and aromatic plants in its fields. The family has been distilling for 3 generations! During the Orange Festival at Bar-sur-Loup, you can attend a demonstration of distillation of orange blossom with a still.



Orange jams.

Scented candles

In the land of scents and perfumes, what could be more natural than to find scented candles? Many artisanal factories offer candles with various flavours. Cast in a glass, terracotta or metal cup, and sometimes beautifully representing flowers or fruits, their flavors vary infinitely.

The sundials

It doesn't tick, and you never have to change your battery or reassemble it. We can't transport it. Silent and immobile, the sundial, once utilitarian, is now a wall decoration, the support of a possible meditation on the inexorable escape of time. There are many sundials in Provence, a region that had the advantage of providing an almost permanent sun, allowing the time to be read all year round. Here, the "gnomonic science" (the art of building sundials) dates back to ancient times. All you had to do was plant a stick (a *gnomon*) in the ground, then observe the movement of its shadow, to get a relatively accurate idea of the time. It was in fact an "idea of the hour", not the hour as we know it today.

The sundial is often decorated with a motto or a philosophical message: *Carpe Diem* (seize the present day) or the wise *Horas non numero, nisi serenas* (I only count the serene hours), or in Provençal *Lou tems passo, passo lou ben* (time passes, spend it well)... Sometimes the message is more black, sending the reader back to his inevitable destiny, as in the "ruthless": *Vulnerant omnes, ultima necat* (All wound, the last kills...).

It is better to stick to the wise: "To those who know how to love, the hours are bright..."

Decorative elements are sometimes added to the graduations of time: signs of the zodiac, flowers, animals, often carrying a message. Gnomonics reached its peak in the 18th century, its art was practiced by "dial makers".

The jars

Heirs of Roman amphorae, jars were used to store fresh water, oil or olives... They are nowadays numerous to decorate streets and gardens. Their rounded bellies evoke fullness or motherhood, their terracotta colour brings back to the simplicity of things before. Their presence is reassuring, and we like to see them filled with succulent plants, or carrying a bouquet of lavender. You can find them at every street corner of Provençal villages.

The potteries

Provence has a long tradition of pottery and ceramics craftsmanship. There are still potters in our villages, and we invite you to push their doors in Gourdon, Tourrettes-sur-Loup or Bar-sur-Loup. You will see them leaning over their turn, with this ancestral gesture of joined hands to give shape to a paste made of earth and water. From

their workshops, plates, bowls, candlesticks, all nicely decorated, and sometimes a curious hedgehog carrying grass on his back, as at the pottery of the sheepfold, in Tourrettes-sur-Loup.

Blown glass

You must see the glassmaker at work to grasp all the magic and delicacy of the gestures, a kind of initiatory dance of the glassmaker with fire, cane and molten glass, which leads to the realization of a work of art. Seeing the glassmakers working, one has the impression of great ease, yet it takes ten years of learning to fully master this technique. In Caussols, Alexis Mathelin perpetuates the work of glass at the Gambier glass factory, where he welcomes you to present his unique pieces. In Valbonne, it is Ada Loumani who presents her magnificent vases in her gallery.

Music & dance

The mazurka, the jig, the gavotte are part of the Provençal dances, but they are not native. The farandole is the Provençal dance *par excellence*, the one with which events are generally closed, with dancers inviting spectators to join them.

The group of musicians may include an accordion, a violin and sometimes brass instruments, but the Provençal instruments found there are the fife and the tambourine, which have the particularity of being played by the same person. The drummer hits his drum while playing the fife, a small three-hole recorder.

Traditional sports & games

► **Pétanque.** There are varieties of boules games in the style of Lyonnaise or Picardy, but pétanque is very southern. The name "pétanque" derives from the Provençal name with the words *peds*, *feet*, and *tanca* which means planted, because it is a game where you have your feet planted on the ground to throw your ball. The whole game consists in sending your ball as close as possible to a piglet placed a few meters away, while preventing other players from getting close to it by throwing off their balls. We have the choice to "shoot", or "point", an expression passed in a flowery language popularized by Pagnol's films. Pétanque is popular and friendly, it is a game to play with family or friends and has the advantage of being inexpensive. In recent years, pétanque has become popular in the major cities of the north, and on sunny days we see young Parisian executives leaving the office, dropping their jackets and playing pétanque in the gardens of the Royal Palace or the Tuileries. Pétanque is nowadays the 8th most practiced sport in France.



LOCAL FOOD & GOURMET PRODUCTS

LOCAL SPECIALITIES

The pelotons from the Estéron

Pelotons are a speciality of Nice's countryside, and can be found in the Estéron valley. They are a kind of raviolis, without the dough, more like meatballs. To make them, a meat-based stuffing is prepared and rolled into small balls. Once cooked, they are served with a homemade tomato sauce or a stew sauce.

Pistou soup

A pillar of Provençal cuisine, Pistou soup has its followers, and the preparation takes some time. Each cook has his own recipe, which is often the best, and discussions are going on about whether and when to put this or that ingredient in! The pistou soup is composed of fresh vegetables, zucchini, potatoes, tomatoes, red, white and green beans, and pasta... A sauce with crushed basil and garlic in olive oil is added and you'll enjoy the flavours of Provence.

Courgette flower fritters

One of the particularities of Provence is to eat courgette flowers, in addition to vegetables. We make doughnuts

out of them. All you have to do is prepare a light doughnut batter by making egg whites into snow. The zucchini flowers are grabbed from the base and dipped into the doughnut batter before being thrown into a hot frying pan.

The stuffed vegetables

The stuffing is prepared with meat, petit salé, eggs, basil and parmesan cheese. Then you empty the vegetables: tomatoes, courgettes, large mushrooms de Paris, as well as potatoes for example. We stuff them and hop, 45 min in a hot oven.

The pissaladière

It's a kind of pizza, but with only onions, a little anchovy, olives and olive oil. Slightly sweet, delicious at any time, it can be enjoyed as a dish or as a tapas for aperitif.

The ratatouille

It is a famous traditional scent of Provence. The purists will tell you that you have to cook the vegetables one by one, the hurried ones will cook them all together. Nevertheless, anyway, the result will be succulent. Ratatouille is generally composed of several vegetables: eggplants, courgettes, tomatoes, onions and garlic, red and yellow peppers, not to mention the bouquet of Provence herbs. It can be eaten hot or cold, alone or with meat or fish.

The gnocchi

They are pasta prepared with a mixture of durum wheat or soft wheat flour and potatoes, and poached in water. First of all, we make a purée, to which we add eggs, salt, pepper and oil. Flour is then mixed in, as much as it takes to make a dough similar to a pie dough. We make small rolls of dough from which we cut the gnocchi with a fork. Just put them in a pot of boiling water and wait until they come to the surface, and they are cooked. Tomato and parmesan sauce, enjoy!

Rose or bitter orange jams

The landscape around Opio was shaped for the cultivation of roses and jasmine, which were used by the Grasse perfume industry. Today, this activity has almost disappeared, but we still have the tradition of rose petal jam, which is honoured every year during the Rose Festival. The same goes for Bar-sur-Loup, a city of orange trees, which every year perpetuates the tradition of bitter orange jam for the orange tree festival.

The Peloton recipe

▶ **Ingredients.** 250 g minced cooked meat – 150 g white ham – 2 or 3 eggs – 100 g grated cheese – salt and pepper – flour.

▶ **Preparation.** Mix the finely chopped meat and ham. Season with salt and pepper. Add the whole eggs to bind the stuffing, then the grated cheese. The dough must be fairly consistent, but not too much.... Form small balls the size of a walnut with your floured hands. Place the platoons in a hollow floured dish as you shape them. Make sure they are well floured. When you have no more stuffing, place the platoons in the refrigerator for 1 hour before cooking them.

Boil a large amount of salted water. Place the platoons in boiling water and wait for them to rise to the surface. When they come up, they're cooked. Drain them with a skimmer. Serve the platoons with homemade tomato sauce or stew sauce, and sprinkled with grated cheese.

LOCAL PRODUCE

The terroir offers many products depending on the region. In low altitude areas, we will find more olives, honey or fruit, while the Baous sector honours livestock products, meat or cheese. Most of the time, local products are sold directly, either on the farm or at weekly markets. They will be found in urbanized or more tourist areas, including the Valbonne market (Friday morning), Châteauneuf (Monday morning), Tourrettes-sur-Loup (Wednesday morning) or the Marché de nos Collines in Rouret (all week). In this sector, the Préalpes d'Azur Regional Nature Park aims to develop direct sales from producer to consumer, either at the place of production or through cooperatives or collective sales outlets. The Préalpes d'Azur Regional Nature Park publishes a Guide des Producteurs (*Producers' Guide*) where you can find all the good addresses.

■ LA COOP DES BAOUS

220, route de St Barnabé
COURSEGOULES

☎ 04 93 59 74 78

coopdesbaous@gmail.com

Open on weekends from 10am to 5pm. Picnic area.

On the St-Barnabé plateau, a group of farmers from the Baous hills sell their farm products directly: honey, olive oil, cheese, wine, jams, delicatessen, meat, fruit and vegetables... Animation days are also organized around the profession of farmer, or beekeeping.

■ LE MARCHÉ DE NOS COLLINES

Route d'Opio, LE ROURET

☎ 04 93 77 34 21

lemarchedenoscollines.fr

marchedenoscollines@wanadoo.fr

Tuesday to Saturday from 8am to 7pm. Sunday from 9am to 12.30pm.

Created in October 2003 by 21 local producers, this cooperative is a direct sales point where consumers are invited to test regional quality products. Visits to farms,

demonstrations, tastings, meals to celebrate the seasons, birthdays: the cooperative regularly organises festive events in order to create, if not preserve, a friendly link around the beautiful Côte d'Azur countryside.

Meat, Poultry & Game

The territory of the middle and high lands being quite naturally suitable for breeding, several breeders offer the sale of beef, sheep and goat meat and even cervids. These cooked meats can also be found in the form of pâtés or canned ready meals in Coop and GAEC (Groupement agricole d'exploitation en commun).

► **In Coursegoules:** the Gaec du Cheiron (☎ 06 16 50 27 99), the Domaine St Gilles (☎ 09 83 97 01 68), the Gaec St Barnabé (☎ 06 12 59 29 81), Rémi Malamaire (☎ 06 25 12 70 64) or Alain's farm (☎ 06 60 20 52 23)

► **In Cipières:** the Gaec du Calern, (☎ 04 95 59 99 87)

► **In Tourrettes-sur-Loup:** the Gaec des Monts d'Azur, (☎ 04 93 24 14 63) lou Gail del Pourorc, (☎ 04 93 59 24 47)

► **In Bouyon:** the Gaec de la Chèvre Blanche (☎ 06 07 50 28 06)

► **In Bezaudun:** la ferme des Clapiers (☎ 04 93 59 14 37)

► **In Caussols:** la Galinière (☎ 04 93 09 83 35)

Cheese & Dairy Products

On the Préalpes d'Azur Regional Nature Park territory, more than 200 farmers continue to maintain the landscapes and keep the mountains alive. Pastoralism is the main agricultural activity in the region and the presence of more than 20,000 sheep and goats offers a wide range of artisanal goat cheese production.



Fruit paste.

They are found at different stages depending on the ripening process: fresh, slightly drained cheeses, semi-dry cheeses similar to soft cheeses, and very dry and hard cheeses. Most of these goat cheeses are made on farms on the heights of Cheiron, Courmettes or the Saint-Barnabé plateau. Farms sell their production on the markets of the region, through Coops or Gaecs, sometimes directly to the farm. We can note for example:

▶ **In Gréolières:** the chèvrerie des Grèles, (☎ 06 65 96 45 10)

▶ **In Coursegoules:** the Gaec du Cheiron, (☎ 06 16 50 27 99)

▶ **In Tourrettes-sur-Loup:** the Courmettes cheese dairy, (☎ 06 14 01 21 97)

▶ **In Bezaudun-les-Alpes,** the Clapiers farm, (☎ 04 93 59 14 37)

▶ **In Cipières:** the Gaec du Calern, (☎ 04 95 59 99 87)

▶ **In Bouyon,** the Reine Blanche cheese dairy (☎ 06 07 50 28 06)

▶ **In Valbonne:** the Valbonne goat farm (☎ 06 86 52 38 47)

Fruits & Vegetables

There are seasonal vegetables: courgettes, potatoes and carrots, as well as seasonal fruits, strawberries, grapes, figs, apples and pears, oranges and lemons, and derivatives in form of jams.

▶ **In Coursegoules:** the Domaine St Gilles (☎ 09 83 97 01 68)

▶ **At Le Bar-sur-Loup:** Fany Guerrault (☎ 04 83 05 51 33)

▶ **In Tourrettes-sur-Loup:** Lydie Monini (☎ 06 19 67 15 79)

Mushrooms

▶ **Truffles.** Used in gastronomy, truffles are also used in the preparation of many dishes. Strong in taste, it is used sprinkled in the form of small trimmings to enhance dishes. It can also perfume some cooking oils. Truffles are celebrated in Gréolières and Le Rouret every year.

Bread & Pasta

▶ **The fougasse.** This intertwined bread cake can be found in all bakeries and markets of the region. It is mostly filled with olives, onions or bacon.

▶ **The gnocchi.** This Italian dish is a classic dish from the Provençal hinterland. They are pasta prepared with a mixture of durum wheat or soft wheat flour and potatoes. They are then poached in water and served in sauce with grated cheese.

▶ **Socca.** This Niçoise speciality can be found in the villages of the hinterland. It is a large pancake made from chickpea flour, olive oil and water which, once cooked, is cut with mastery to be served.

© Bernard COUÏF



Fougasses.



Olives from the market.



Tomatoes from the market.

The recipe for rose petal jam

► **Ingredients:** 250 g rose petals, 250 g sugar, one lemon, half a litre of water.

► **Preparation:** Remove the petals from the flowers. Clean them with clear water. Macerate them for 12 hours in cold water with lemon juice added. Drain the rose petals. Mix 250 g powdered sugar in half a litre of water and boil over low heat for 10 minutes. Add the rose petals, and let simmer for another 10 minutes. The jam is ready when a drop deposited on a cold support freezes.

Oils, Spices & Condiments

Olive: The regional olive or *cailletier* is small, crisp, firm and very tasty. Olive paste is a puree of pitted black olives mixed with olive oil, and sometimes flavoured with Provence herbs.

Olive products: There are two types of olive oils: extra virgin olive oil with an acidity level of not more than 1% and virgin olive oil with an acidity level of not more than 2%.

Virgin olive oils have a wide variety of flavours and aromas depending on the fruitiness of the olives and their origin. Today, you can still visit some mills that perpetuate the tradition of making olive oil. These are also the places

where you can taste and buy AOC olive products: olive oil, olive paste, table olives.

► **In Opio,** the Moulin à Huile d'Opio (☎ 04 93 77 23 03)

► **In Tourrettes-sur-Loup:** Le Domaine St Joseph – (☎ 06 09 28 26 59)

The Sophia Antipolis Urban Community offers in its Casa Nature programme workshops "Around the Olive Tree". Harvesting olives, discovering olive growing at the Moulin d'Opio...

Sweets

Honey and hive products

Whether they are lavender, heather, rosemary, thyme or strawberry, you can enjoy honeys from Provence all year round. The apiaries production of the region will be found on markets, and sometimes directly on the property: honeys, bee products, propolis, candles ...

► **In Gréolières,** the Hesperides apiary – (☎ 04 93 59 98 13)

But also:

► **In Coursegoules:** the Coopérative des Baous.

► **Au Rouret:** the Marché de nos Collines.

The Jams

The activities of Opio and Le Bar-sur-Loup have long been based on the production of flowers for the Grasse perfumers. There is still the tradition of making rose or bitter orange jams, which is perpetuated every year during the Fête de la Rose in Opio or the Oranger festival in Bar-sur-Loup. These jams can be found in all markets and shops of the region.

ALCOHOL & SPIRITS

Wines

In Tourrettes-sur-Loup, Domaine St-Joseph produces wines from the Alpes Maritimes, aperitif wines with citrus fruits, as well as olive oil. Domaine St-Joseph – (☎ 06 09 28 28 26 59)

Alcohol, Brandies & Liqueurs

► **Orange wine.** It is made by macerating dried bitter orange peels (and other citrus fruits) in an excellent rosé from Provence. The result is a delectable aperitif, moderately alcoholic, with a beautiful golden red colour that can be drunk chilled in summer under the arbours. To learn more about this wine, go to the Orange Festival in Bar-sur-Loup: Easter Monday. Cooperage,

still distillation, advice on orange cultivation, wine and orange jam competitions....

The recipe for orange wine

► **Preparation.** Macerate the *colannes* (the orange peel ribbons dried in the sun) of 5 bitter oranges, 1 sweet orange, 1 lemon, 1 mandarin, with 1 stick of vanilla, 1 kg of sugar, 5 litres of good wine (red, rosé or white) and 1 litre of fruit alcohol. After 45 days, filter and enjoy... in moderation.

SPORTS & LEISURE

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Hiking

The region from Valbonne to the Préalpes d'Azur is a real paradise for hikers. Whether you are an accomplished hiker or a Sunday walker, there are paths for all tastes. The hills around Valbonne, Châteauneuf, Roquefort les Pins or Le Rouret offer beautiful and easy walks, often with sites of interest, that can be explored at will, and with the family. The Middle Country offers a more varied range of walks, from 2 hours to a day depending on the sector, and for which a minimum of equipment is required. As you climb up to the top, you will find hikes for experienced walkers, with greater gradients.

The paths are perfectly marked and signposts indicate each crossroads. Many municipalities have done a remarkable job in listing the walks on their territory and printing their own guide which can be found in the Tourist Information Offices. Around these hiking trails, services have adapted. Gîtes and inns have organized themselves and offer beds for multi-day hikes, lunches or picnics. The territory is covered by the GR4 and GR51 long-distance hiking trails that cross at Cipières.

► From June to September, the Sophia Antipolis Urban Community offers exciting walks, accompanied by

nature guides, botanists and agricultural engineers. Examples include: *Le Plateau de Cavillone*, *La Flore et l'écologie du Loup*, or *La Flore et la faune des garrigues autour d'Opio*. (The Cavillone Plateau, The Flora and the Wolf Ecology, or The Flora and the Wildlife of the Garrigues around Opio.) (Casa Nature Program).

► We can also mention the Randoxygen guides published by the Alpes-Maritimes department. Each of the three guides *Pays Côtier*, *Moyen Pays* and *Haut Pays* refers to several dozen detailed itineraries, illustrated with maps and photos.

Horse & Donkey Riding

Several horse riding centres offer hikes on the plateaus. A very pleasant way to discover the paths of the plateau of Saint-Barnabé or Caussols at the horses pace. The walks are generally 2 hours, half a day or a day, but for the most adventurous or experienced, some centres also offer 2 or 3 day tours with bivouac!

► The Alpes-Maritimes Departmental Council publishes a *Rando Equitation* guide that offers more than 40 horseback riding itineraries.



At the crossroads of the hiking trails in Coursegoules.

Cycling, Cycle Touring & Mountain Biking

Cycling lovers will find their happiness on the small departmental roads of the middle country, in the valleys of the Loup and the Estéron, towards Coursegoules, or on the massifs around Gréolières or Caussols.

Many circuits are marked out for bike lovers. The Alpes-Maritimes Departmental Council offers the "Boucles d'Azur", itineraries to discover the region, such as the *Circuit des Hauts Plateaux*, a 42 km day trip from Gréolières, or a 15 km *stroll in the heart of Caussol stones*. For mountain bikers, there also a very large choice: nature is there as soon as you leave urbanized areas, and the middle and high countries abound with itineraries, whether on forest tracks or on more technical routes, following mule tracks or transhumance trails on the plateaus. On the arid baous or at the bottom of the valley, mountain bikers will find here many routes to satisfy their lust for adventure in magnificent natural landscapes!

▶ The guide *Randoxygène Rando VTT* published by the Conseil Départemental des Alpes-Maritimes presents about thirty mountain bike tours of all levels.

Swimming

Swimming is possible in secure areas along the Estéron or the Loup rivers. At La Roque-en-Provence, for example, it is possible to cool off in the Esteron waters, from the developed areas of the Departmental Natural Park.

Speleology

The caves and swallow holes of the Caussols plateau, the Cheiron mountain or the Baous offer many possibilities of underground exploration for speleologists. On the Caussols plateau, more than 200 sinkholes are listed. The region has a number of deep caves, up to nearly 500 m deep. Here are some of them:

▶ **Cipières**, Calernaum sinkhole: 481 m, Enclos: 117 m, or Cipiernaum: 112 m

▶ **Gourdon**, Cappuccino sinkhole: 400 m or the Claude web: 338 m

▶ **Bar-sur-Loup**, the Bois de la Malle sinkhole: 275 m or l'Inter: 143 m

▶ **Caussols**, the Chardons Bleus sinkhole: 160 m, or Marthe: 135 m

▶ **Gréolières**, the Degouttaire sinkhole: 138 m, or the Faille de la Bouissière: 104 m.

The practice of speleology must be supervised, and it is therefore recommended to join a club or get a guide.

Adventure parks

These adapted circuits enable you to move from one tree to another in a forest, using monkey bridges, footbridges or zip lines, rope ladders or creepers like Tarzan himself.

▶ **In Gréolières-les-Neiges**, Gréobranche Park is open in summer, and all year round for groups on request.

Mountaineering, Climbing & Via-Ferrata

The Gorges du Loup cliffs offer 50 listed climbing routes, with heights up to 45 metres. The Déversé area is the most difficult sector, but it offers the advantage of a pleasant temperature, even in summer, as the cliffs are cooled by the waters of the Loup that flows below.

Golf

Golf lovers will find their happiness around Opio and Valbonne, where they can practice their swing on magnificent courses lined with pines and olive trees, often with views of the perched villages of Opio or Châteauneuf. This is the case in particular for the Grande Bastide golf course, or the Opio Valbonne golf course. The courses are open all year round.

▶ **Opio Valbonne**: 18 holes – Par 73 - 5 782 m

▶ **La Grande Bastide**: 18 holes – Par 72 - 6 105 m

▶ **Club Med Opio**: 9 holes – Par 30 - 1 380 m

▶ **Victoria**: 9 holes – Par 34 - 2,334 m

HUNTING, FISHING & NATURE

Fishing

The Gorges du Loup offers some beautiful spots, especially upstream the Saut du Loup where the Fario trout breeds. After Pont du Loup, you will find rainbow trouts and even eels. Roque-en-Provence offers beautiful fishing courses, alternating flat parts and fairly deep holes, in a magnificent environment. You can choose between the lower valley of the Estéron downstream, or the Roquesteron cheyron upstream.

▶ **Important**: a fishing licence is mandatory.

Ornithology

Hiking is an opportunity to observe many birds of the plateaus. Migratory birds arrive in spring and you can then observe the Northern wheatear or the Tawny pipit, a kind of sparrow. During fall, you can observe the Eurasian dotterel on its way to Africa. Also many Griffon vultures and Circaetus.

Hiking on the Caussols plateau.

© Bernard CROISE



Astronomy

The large number of high viewpoints, well above from light pollution, with a pure atmosphere, make the region a privileged area for sky observation.

The Observatoire du plateau de Calern, in Caussols, is part of the Côte d'Azur Observatory (OCA). We can observe the solar, stellar and intergalactic worlds. During summer, guided tours are offered, with telescope presentations.

IN THE AIR

From the sky, a region appears in a new light. This is particularly true in this beautiful region, from the hills of Valbonne to the plateaus of the back country. You can take off with a paraglider, and take advantage of the updrafts that go up from the sea to the plateaus for

a long glide over the villages and valleys, with the Côte d'Azur as background.

► From the take-off sites of Gourdon or Gréolières, schools offer paragliding courses and first flights. The flights, lasting 15 to 20 minutes, are accessible to all.

WINTER SPORTS

Gréolières-les-Neiges resort is at bird's eye view 21 km from the sea, is located on the northern slopes of the Cheiron mountain and offers 14 ski lifts and 30 km of cross-country ski tracks at an altitude of 1,500 m! The northern exposure of the Cheiron limits the melting of the snow, and the resort keeps a good snow cover, despite its very southern location

and low altitude. The resort is equipped with an automatic snowmaking system on 4 km of slopes. From the top of the Cheiron, you'll enjoy a circular panorama, which includes both the coast and the Mediterranean, as well as the Alps! Gréolières-les-Neiges also offers snowshoe walks, dog sledding rides, a skating rink...

ADRENALINE SPORTS

© Bernard CHOUË



Paragliding.

White-Water Sports

Canoying is a recent discipline, but one that has quickly become organized. Adapted equipment and coaching allow anyone to venture through the steepest waterways to discover this fun and exhilarating sport. Jumps in green water basins, thrilling slides on toboggans smoothed by centuries, showers under waterfalls, the discovery of an unknown mineral and aquatic world. However, it is important to respect this fragile environment which is inhabited by discreet wildlife. The passage of humans through this natural habitat inevitably has consequences for the environment.

► On the Estéron, the Clue de la Cerise is one of the most popular spots in the department, offering a descent of about an hour, with a succession of long reaches interspersed with short walking zones.

► In the upper Loup valley, the Gours du Ray spot offers a 2-hour descent in a pleasant setting with large basins

► The Conseil général des Alpes Maritimes publishes a guide *Randoxygène Clues et Canyons*.



FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Throughout the year, the municipalities offer activities linked to the terroir, patron saint's days or traditions. Quite often, these themes mix into popular festivals around the celebration of a saint. January is the month of the Truffle, February and March the Violet, May the Orange and the Rose, June has the St-Jean celebrations and sports races. In July and August, concerts are organised by the Departmental Council's Summer Evenings, and of course, July 14th and August 15th are widely celebrated... December is the occasion to celebrate the Provençal Christmas...

Furthermore, in all the villages, activities are offered all year round, around the gardens, music, or neighbours.... For the full programme of these events, get the Guide culturel des manifestations de la CASA, or call the local festival committees.

Celebrations

■ LA FÊTE DE NOTRE DAME DU PEUPLE BÉZAUDUN-LES-ALPES

☎ 04 93 59 72 05

On September 8th or the following Sunday.

Pilgrimage from Bouyon to Bezaudun, (6 km) to celebrate Notre Dame du Peuple, who would have spared the inhabitants of the two villages from the plague in the 18th century.

■ LA FÊTE DU VILLAGE BÉZAUDUN-LES-ALPES

☎ 06 03 83 34 37

Last Friday and Saturday of August.

On the Friday, rock concert from 9pm. On the Saturday, boules competition, barbecue lunch, and evening meal.

■ FÊTE PATRONALE DE LA SAINT ROCH BOUYON

☎ 06 77 24 22 35

From the 12th to 15th August.

Ball with orchestra, fair, boules and belote competition.

■ FÊTE DE LA SAINT LOUIS CAUSSOLS

☎ 06 22 82 75 27

The last weekend in August.

This festival has existed for more than 50 years! Ball, giant meal, boules competition.

■ FÊTE DU TERROIR ET DE L'ÉLEVAGE CAUSSOLS

☎ 06 22 82 75 27

Last Sunday of July.

It is the traditional fair of Caussols: local products, agricultural equipment and farm animals (horses, hens, rabbits, sheep, donkeys) demonstration of the work of shepherd dogs and blacksmith-farriers. Drinks and grills.

■ FÊTE AGRICOLE DU BRUSC CHÂTEAUNEUF-GRASSE

At the Chapelle Notre-Dame-du-Brusc, on the third Sunday of April.

Exhibition-sale of local products, lunch under the olive trees. Traditional dances, shows, musical entertainment, orange wine, olive oil or citrus jam competitions. The chapelle du Brusc is open all day long for visits.

■ LA FÊTE DE LA COURGE CHÂTEAUNEUF-GRASSE

☎ 04 93 42 53 30

The third Sunday of October.

This festival is organized for the benefit of one or more humanitarian associations. Gastronomic and artisanal products based on squash. Animations and games for children.

■ LA FÊTE DE LA SAINT CLAUDE CIPÏÈRES

cippieres.fr

contact@cippieres.org

The first weekend of June.

Petanque competition, torchlight procession, fireworks and ball, mass and St-Claude meal.

■ LA SAVONNETTE DE CIPÏÈRES CIPÏÈRES

cippieres.fr

contact@cippieres.org

The first Sunday of October.

Every year, a memorable soapbox race is organized in the village. Participants prepare their cars all year round to race down the sloping streets of Cippières. Show guaranteed!

■ FÊTE PATRONALE NOTRE DAME DU ROSAIRE CONSÈGUEDES

☎ 04 93 59 07 41

Mid-August.

On Saturdays, mass, children's entertainment and a big ball under a tent with a refreshment bar and fast food. On Sundays, an aperitif of honour and friendship meal. Monday: boules competition, and lunch under the tent.

Find the index at the end of this guide book



Fête de la Saint-Jean in the streets of Valbonne.

Fête de l'Oranger at Bar-sur-Loup.

© BERNARD CROISE



■ FÊTE PATRONALE DE LA SAINT FÉLIX COURMES

The last weekend of August.

Mass, procession around the village, aperitif offered by the town hall, meal on the square and ball.

■ FÊTE NATIONALE COURSEGOULES

☎ 04 93 59 11 60

coursegoules.net
mairie@coursegoules.fr

On the 13th and 14th of July.

Animations, pistou soup, dance evening, petanque competition.

■ FÊTE PATRONALE COURSEGOULES

☎ 04 93 59 11 60

First weekend of August.

Dance evening, boules competition, dinner under the tent, ball.

■ FÊTE DE LA SAINT ARNOUX

GOURDON ☎ 04 93 09 68 25

tourisme.gourdon06@agglo-casa.fr

1st weekend of July.

In the hamlet of Pont du Loup: dinner and ball, boules competition, aperitif, open-air mass.

■ FÊTE DE LA SAINT VINCENT

GOURDON ☎ 04 93 09 68 25

tourisme.gourdon06@agglo-casa.fr

Last weekend in July.

Place Victoria: boules competition, cocktail reception and meal, dance evening with DJ, St Vincent's Mass.

■ FÊTE DE GRÉO LES NEIGES GRÉOLIÈRES

com.fetes.gln@gmail.com

Mid-July.

In Gréolières les Neiges: paella, boules competition, ancient cars presentation, show of the Estivales du Conseil départemental.

■ FÊTE DE LA TRUFFE

GRÉOLIÈRES ☎ 06 14 41 25 37

comitedesfetesdegreolieres@orange.fr

Last weekend of January.

Truffle market. Exhibition and sale of truffle products and local products. Demonstration of truffle dogs. Conference by the truffle growers' union.

■ FÊTE DU PARC NATUREL RÉGIONAL DES PRÉALPES D'AZUR GRÉOLIÈRES

Third weekend of September.

Producers' and craftsmen's market, entertainment, conferences-debates, workshops, hikes and guided outings. Info: ☎ 04 92 42 08 63 - pnr-prealpesdazur.fr

■ FÊTE PATRONALE GRÉOLIÈRES

☎ 06 14 41 25 37

comitedesfetesdegreolieres@orange.fr

Mid-August.

Shared meal, evening of the Estivales du Conseil Départemental, lottery, entertainments and ball. On August 15th, aubade, mass and procession, aperitif and aioli.

■ FÊTE DE LA SAINTE PÉTRONILLE LA ROQUE-EN-PROVENCE

☎ 04 93 05 90 53

Third weekend in July.

Mass at 5pm. Aperitif at 6: 30 pm, offered by the town hall. Dinner together at 8pm.

■ FÊTE DE L'ORANGER

BAR-SUR-LOUP

☎ 04 93 42 72 21

lebarsurloup.fr

tourisme.bsl@agglo-casa.fr

Easter Monday.

It is a festive day, during which many workshops are proposed to visitors: cooperage, distillation with a alembic, advice on the growing of oranges... Market of local producers. Provençal music and dance animations.

■ JOURNÉE DE LA MARINE

BAR-SUR-LOUP

☎ 04 93 42 72 21

lebarsurloup.fr

tourisme.bsl@agglo-casa.fr

End of September.

The village honours the Admiral of Grasse.

■ FÊTE DE LA TRUFFE

LE ROURET

☎ 04 93 77 20 02

Second Sunday of January.

Truffle market, local products and crafts. Visit of the truffle piece of land in the communal wood. Conference on truffles, and advice from the Syndicat départemental des Trufficulteurs

■ FÊTE PATRONALE DE LA SAINT PIERRE

LE ROURET

lerouret.fr

Last weekend of June.

Friday, Youth Evening. On Saturday, St. Peter's procession followed by an open-air mass and lunch on the grass. Festivals and celebrations continue on Saturday and Sunday evenings.

■ FÊTE DE LA SAINTE JULIE

LES FERRES ☎ 06 95 16 99 44

First weekend of August.

Ball, boules competition, show for children. Sunday, procession from St-Jacques church to Ste-Julie chapel. Dinner in the evening.

■ LA FÊTE DE LA ROSE

OPIO

☎ 04 93 60 61 72

tourisme.opio@agglo-casa.fr

Third weekend in May.

Craft market, open-air mass, traditional dances, cooking workshop. Centifolia rose picking in the fields. Horse-drawn carriage rides, distillation of rose water, tasting of rose jam!

■ FÊTE PATRONALE DE LA SAINTE FLORIDE

OPIO

☎ 04 93 60 61 72

tourisme.opio@agglo-casa.fr

Pentecost Sunday.

On Sainte-Floride's day, patron saint of the village: big mass, Provençal dances, aperitif followed by a dinner dance.

■ NOËL PROVENÇAL

Bureau d'information touristique

OPIO

☎ 04 93 60 61 72

tourisme.opio@agglo-casa.fr

Sunday in mid-December.

Santons (provençal figurines) leave from Place de la Font Neuve towards the village, in the typical Provençal tradition. Songs and presentation of the 13 desserts. Santa Claus and entertainments for kids

■ FÊTE NOTRE-DAME DE CANLACHE

ROQUEFORT-LES-PINS

Ville-roquefort-les-pins.fr

Early September.

It is the patronal feast day, with a very rich programme: exhibitions and demonstrations, boules competitions, giant picnic, big ball, open-air mass.

■ AUTOUR DE LA VIOLETTE

TOURRETTES-SUR-LOUP

☎ 06 38 10 21 36

First weekend in March.

Floral art workshop, bouquet composition, perfume workshop and cooking with flowers. Provençal music and dances. Market of local producers and craftsmen.

■ FÊTE DE LA MADELEINE

TOURRETTES-SUR-LOUP

☎ 06 38 10 21 36

The third weekend of July.

Dance meal "Aioli". Mass sung in the church of St-Grégoire.

■ FÊTE DE LA SAINT BLAISE, DU RAISIN

ET DES PRODUITS DU TERROIR

Dans le village

VALBONNE

☎ 04 93 12 34 50

tourisme.vsa@agglo-casa.fr

End of January. Free admission.

This festival is a heritage of Servan grape cultivation. Visit of the communal vineyards, market of local producers, wine, jam and oil competitions. The festival combines tradition and modernity: you will attend to the children's carnival, flower corso, exhibitions, Provençal dances or traditional musical activities.

■ FÊTE DE LA SAINT JEAN

VALBONNE

☎ 04 93 12 34 50

tourisme.vsa@agglo-casa.fr

End of June.

In the village, from 7pm to midnight, St-Jean fires and torchlight procession. Aperitif offered, musical atmosphere.

■ FÊTE DE LA SAINT ROCH

VALBONNE

☎ 04 93 12 34 50

tourisme.vsa@agglo-casa.fr

Around August 15th.

Traditional procession, visit of the communal vineyard, blessing of the animals, aioli, boules competition.

■ FÊTE NATIONALE

VALBONNE

☎ 04 93 12 34 50

tourisme.vsa@agglo-casa.fr

13th and 14th of July.

Ceremonies on July 14th, big ball and fireworks, aperitif offered.

Exhibitions

■ EXPOSITION DE PEINTURES DU VILLAGE

CIPÏÈRES

cipieres.fr – contact@cipieres.org

The second Saturday in July.

Day dedicated to the discovery of the village and its history. Exhibition of paintings, drawings and sketches representing the village and its streets, its inhabitants and the surrounding areas.

Cultural Events / Festivals

■ JOURNÉE CRÉATIVE ET CULTURELLE

BÉZAUDUN-LES-ALPES

☎ 04 93 59 72 05

The first or second Sunday of July.

Giant barbecue.

■ LES NUITS DU BRUSC

CHÂTEAUNEUF-GRASSE

☎ 04 92 60 36 03 – ville-chateauneuf.fr

mairie@mairie-chateauneuf.fr

First weekend in July. Admission fee, reservation on the town's website.

Musicals, circus, rock concerts, theatre or comedy, enough for everyone to enjoy during the 4 Nuits du Brusc evenings. At the Chapelle Notre-Dame du Brusc, at 9pm.

■ THEATRE EN AOUT

GOURDON

☎ 04 93 09 68 25

tourisme.gourdon06@agglo-casa.fr

Open-air theatre, on Place Victoria. August 4th, 8th, 12th, 16th and 20th, 2019.

■ THEATRE LES HIVERNALES

GOURDON

☎ 04 93 09 68 25

tourisme.gourdon06@agglo-casa.fr

The last Friday of November, January, February and March. Salle de la Bigarade, in the hamlet of Pont du Loup.

■ CENTRE CULTUREL LE BON ACCUEIL

2085, Route Départementale

ROQUEFORT-LES-PINS

☎ 04 93 42 48 13

Le Bon Accueil cultural centre offers a monthly exhibition by an artist or prestigious signatures. Renowned artists meet local artists, members of the Photo Club or associations of artists from Roquefort. It also houses the Image Centre, which brings together the media library, the cinema, as well as a room that gives plays and concerts.

Sport Events

■ LE TRAIL DES SOMMETS DE CAUSSOLS

CAUSSOLS

☎ 06 10 28 80 22

letraildessommetsdecaussols@orange.fr

Third Sunday of July.

A sporty way to discover the plateau. Participants have the choice between a 6 km, 15 km or 29.4 km trail for the bravest. There is also a 18.5 km walk.

■ LE TRAIL DE CIPières

CIPières

☎ 06 70 93 61 01

contact@cipieres.org

Second Sunday of June. Registration on the website.

This mythical race also called "Esclapa l'Oeil Trail" takes place in the purest spirit of trail and aims to introduce runners to the beauty of the surrounding mountains.

▶ **In even years**, it is the Grande Coursasse (62 km!) which can be done individually or in teams of 3 torchbearers on 3 courses of about 20 km. The course covers all the villages and plateaus of the surroundings, Gréolières and Gréolières les-Neiges, the Cheiron ridges, Coursegoules, the Saint-Barnabé plateau, the Courmettes peak, Courmes, Gourdon, the Cavillore plateau..

▶ **In odd years**, it is the "Aïeouastouaile" (Highest Trail?) which is simply the most demanding Vertical Kilometre in the world (1,000 metres of altitude difference for a distance of only 3 km...).



Place des Arcades in Valbonne.



Bouyon village.

© Bernard CROISE

FROM PLACE TO PLACE



PRÉALPES D'AZUR

BÉZAUDUN-LES-ALPES

You don't arrive in Bezaudun-les-Alpes by chance. The road passes at the bottom of the village, heading towards the Estéron valley or Coursegoules, ignoring Bezaudun who overlooks it. The hurried traveller may be tempted to pass without stopping, but it would be such a pity. We rather advise you to take your time, and stop in Bezaudun-les-Alpes, to discover this small discreet village, with an undeniable character. Built in the heart of ramparts, the village, hooked to the hills for centuries, is dominated by the tower of the old castle. It is called Bezaudun, because originally, in the 13th century, it was Besaldu, then Bazaudino, and "the Alps", because you only have to look around to understand that you are in the Alps. All around, the view meets only peaks and plateaus: in the south the Chiers mountain and the foothills of the St Barnabé plateau, in the north the foothills of the Cheiron massif, in the east the high peaks of the Mercantour. A harsh, wild and almost uninhabited landscape. At the bottom flows a river, the Bouyon, which starts from the top of the Cheiron massif, to flow a little further down into the Estéron, a tributary of the Var. Like the other villages in this region, Bézaudun has retained its medieval character. The old houses, built in an ochre stone from the mountains, are grouped on the slope, ready to defend themselves against an invader, just like in the Middle Ages. It is best to park at the top of the village, Place du Pourtalet. From the car park, you have a nice view over the summits of the Mercantour. Here stands a

rectangular tower, a witness to the history of Bezaudun. It reminds us that here, in the 13th century, there was a castle that belonged to the bishops of Vence. There are still some vestiges of the medieval ramparts, such as the Porte Haute, under which one passes to descend into the village. Here stands the pretty *Nativité de la Vierge* parish church, topped by its bell tower, which invites you to push its heavy wooden door. During a walk through the steep alleys of the village, you will discover some beautiful stone buildings, characteristic of the region, sometimes built directly on the rock. Vaulted passages lead to other flowered quarries, other decorated staircases: here a crystal rock, there an old watering can. Here in Bezaudun, we say *Carriero' in Provençal*, rather than "street". We stop to photograph the lintels of the houses, some of which are curiously engraved with swastika-shaped crosses from the 16th and 17th centuries.

At the bottom of the village, we arrive at Place des Tilleuls where the fountain is located, above which we discover a pretty map of the village in mosaic. Further on, an orientation table informs visitors about the magnificent environment: to the west, the Cheiron massif (1,778m), to the east, the Chiers mountains and the Mouton d'Anou (1,085m), to the south, the Baou de St-Jeannet (884m) and, just behind, it is the misty blue of the Mediterranean sea which reminds us that we are well in the Préalpes d'Azur, and that it is not far.

- ▶ **Altitude of the municipality:** 560 to 1,340 m
- ▶ **Village altitude:** 880 m
- ▶ **280 inhabitants**
- ▶ Commune of the Regional Natural Park Préalpes d'Azur.
- ▶ **A little history.** There are several remains of ancient settlements in the municipality: debris from Tegulae (the ancient Roman tiles), the remains of a dry stone fortification, which could date from the late Middle Ages or, near Notre-Dame du Peuple, the remains of a dry stone settlement, which could be the site of the old village. In the 11th century, the territory of Bezaudun depended on the castle of Majone, in Gréolières. It was in the 12th century that the name *Besaldu* appeared for the first time, followed by the *Castrum de Bazaudino*. It was not until the 13th century that Bezaudun became a fiefdom, with the construction of the castle between 1224 and 1231, during the battles between the local nobility and the Count of Provence and its captain, Romée de Villeneuve. After the fighting, the castle was in the hands of Romée de Villeneuve, who gave it to the Bishop of Vence in 1233 in exchange for a part of Coursegoules. The castle and the fiefdom of Bezaudun remained in the hands of the bishops of Vence until the Revolution. Bezaudun,

© Bernard CRUÏCÉ



Stroll in the alleys of Bézaudun-les-Alpes.

like the whole region, experienced a turbulent period in the 14th century with several conflicts that destabilized the region. In 1576, Louis Grimaldi de Beuil, Bishop of Vence, gave up tithes, ovens and mills for 600 florins. But the castle remained the property of the bishops of Vence until the French Revolution. On the 17th October 1793, during the fighting between the Nice people under the authority of the Austro-Sardinians and the French Revolution, Sardinian troops crossed the Estéron to attack Bezaudun. Two days later, on October 19, the Battle of Gilette saw the victory of General Dugommier's French army over General de Wins' Austro-Sardinian army.

Sightseeing

► **The remains of the medieval castle.** All that remains a tall rectangular tower of 8 meters high, with a double window, which certainly had a military purpose from the castle of the Bishops of Vence.

► **The Porte Haute.** It is located Place du Pourtalet. It is part of the remains of the village ramparts.

■ LA CHAPELLE NOTRE DAME DU PEUPLE Chemin de la Chapelle

Ask the town hall for the key (☎ 04 93 59 12 34).

It is located about 550 m south of the village, at the end of chemin de la Chapelle. In a Romanesque style, this former place of pilgrimage for the villages of the Estéron has been extensively redesigned. It contains the altarpiece of the Virgin of Mercy, by the famous primitive painter Louis Bréa from Nice (1450-1522), who was very active in the hinterland villages of Nice.

■ LA DOUBLE CHAPELLE ST ROCH ET ST SÉBASTIEN

rue des Jaines

The square building is located at a crossroads at the entrance of the village, near the Place des Tilleuls. The two chapels are superposed. The lower chapel would date from the 15th century and would have been dedicated to Saint Sebastian. The upper chapel, which is more recent,

dates from the 17th century and is said to have been dedicated to Saint Roch. It seems that the lower chapel was abandoned and boarded up after the construction of the upper chapel. The building seems to have lost its religious function after the Revolution.

■ L'ÉGLISE PAROISSIALE ST MARTIN

Ask the town hall for the key (☎ 04 93 59 12 34).

Redesigned, the 12th century church has a bell tower with a small belfry. A tiny cemetery is sheltered against its sides.

Knife & fork

■ LE BISTROT DE BÉZAUDUN

Quartier des Ferrages

☎ 06 22 22 03 83

lebistrotdebezaudun@gmail.com

September to June: open for lunch only, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. In July/August: open from Tuesday lunchtime to Sunday lunchtime. (Weekly closing on Sunday evening and Monday). Reservation imperative. Entrance fees from 5 to 15€. Dishes from 12.50€. Desserts from 3€.

The Bistrot de Bezaudun, located at the entrance of the village, has a breathtaking view over the valley. You can enjoy traditional seasonal cuisine. Everything here is homemade and with fresh produce. With its seasonal specialities, small stuffings, zucchini flower fritters, garden zucchini gratin, pork confit or leg of lamb with thyme and honey, this address is not lacking in charm. Friday nights, you can have pizza in or take-out. Theme evenings are regularly organised (American with hamburger and home fries, tapas, disco, concert evenings).

Leisure

► **Hiking.** Le Mouton d'Anou: an easy hike of about 2h30 over 6,5 km, which allows you to climb to the top of Le Mouton d'Anou and enjoy the remarkable view.



General view of Bézaudun-les-Alpes.



The bell tower of Bezaudun-les-Alpes and the snow-covered peaks of the Mercantour.



BOUYON

Bouyon occupies a key position on a belvedere, at the confluence of the Var and the Estéron rivers. Surrounded by a circl of wooded hills, the village dominates this beautiful region and offers a panoramic view of the surrounding nature.

The territory of the municipality extends from an altitude of 173 m, at the level of the Estéron valley, to 1,224 m, at the top of the Crête de Perrière, which is part of the Cheiron massif. In other words, Bouyon is a big gap between valley and mountain, a perfect situation, as the village offers so many hiking opportunities and nature activities. We are only 30 km from Nice and the French Riviera, but when you arrive in Bouyon, another world awaits you. All you have to do is take the rue des Remparts or the Montée du Château, to go back in time, a time when Bouyon was part of the territory of the Maison de Savoie. We enjoy imagining the lord of Laugier, and later the lords Grimaldi of Bouyon, arriving in the village, greeting peasants and notables, riding through one of the gates of the ramparts to reach the medieval village. Their castle, the Castrum de Bosisone (13th century), stood proudly on its promontory. There are still some parts of the walls, and a gate that nowadays guards the entrance to the Michelis Lefranc square that occupies the historic site of the castle. Today, no more fortified castle but a pretty outdoor amphitheatre where villagers and tourists gather on summer evenings around improvised guitar concerts with a lovely view of the surrounding mountains and valleys. The ramparts have disappeared and are replaced by houses, but the pountis, the covered passages, which can still be admired, mark the old entrance gates of the medieval village. Walking around Bouyon is a delight. A covered passage invites you: it leads to the Place du Four with colourful facades, and which has on the ground a pretty pebble rosette. Here was the old communal oven, now closed. Further on, a paved alleyway leads you straight to a pretty square, with a charming fountain. At the bend of a alleyway you

come face to face with the church of St-Trophime, the pretty Chapel of St-Bernardin des Pénitents Blancs, or the Chapel of St-Roch. And everywhere, beautiful house doors with antique stone lintels. Bouyon chose to turn to the valleys leading to the Côte d'Azur, rather than to the mountains. With its façades and shutters painted in the colours of the south, its gardens planted with white and pink laurels, olive and fig trees, the village clearly displays a Mediterranean touch. In summer, all these essences bloom, which embalm the streets of Bouyon to the delight of tourists, many of whom are there during the summer months.

► **Altitude of the municipality:** From 173 to 1,224 m

► **Village altitude:** 640 m

► **489 inhabitants**

► Commune of the Regional Natural Park Préalpes d'Azur

► **A little history.** The name of the village was first mentioned in 1155, under the name of Buzido. A little later, around 1200, there was a mention of the Castrum de Bosisone. However, the origin of the name Bouyon would come from the Celtic *bud* which meant promontory. In 1351, Bouyon, like the whole surrounding region, was a seigneurie of the Laugier family. It then passed to the Grimaldi lords of Bouyon, thus belonging to the county of Provence, from 1364 to 1385. In 1385, the village passed into the hands of Charles de Duras, then in 1388, Bouyon became the territory of the house of Savoy. The following centuries saw the decline of this isolated region, which had been affected by several earthquakes. It was not until the 17th century that it lived an economic revival. It was only in 1760 that Bouyon, following the Treaty of Turin, returned to Provence, to be attached in 1790 to the canton of Coursegoules.

As in the whole region, the inhabitants lived off their land, cultivating vines and olive trees. A very small part of the territory was under cultivation, the rest being pasture or rock. The goods were carried on mules on difficult roads. On March 24, 1860, following the annexation by France of the county of Nice, Bouyon became French. It is then attached to the Alpes Maritimes department. On 23 February 1887, an earthquake whose epicentre is in Liguria, 90 km from Bouyon, devastated the entire region. The village of Bouyon was partially destroyed, as was the church, which was rebuilt in 1890.

Sightseeing

► LA CHAPELLE ST BERNARDIN DES PÉNITENTS BLANCS

6, place du Tilleul

It has an open facade, with a pretty grid. The chapel is relatively new, and occupies the place of an older church.

► LA CHAPELLE ST ROCH

3, place Saint-Roch

Built in 1714 at the entrance to the village to ward off the plague epidemic then raging in the region, it was



Chapelle Saint-Bernardin des pénitents blancs.

Dominique Arnoux: a rewarding life....

© Bernard GRIFFÉ



Dominique Arnoux.

When you hear Dominique Arnoux speaking about his restaurant La Maison Barnouin, you understand that he is a passionate person. After a catering school, this native of northeast France preferred to leave his native region for warmer skies. He spent 15 years working with the seasons, the mountains in winter, the sea in summer, while competing in several competitions. He is a graduate of Marc Veyrat's Chefs School, and very well placed in the Best Apprentice of France competition. Then he spent a year on the Orient Express where he worked as an employee on this luxury train between England and Venice. Twelve years followed in the hotel business, before Dominique Arnoux decided to return to his original profession, cooking. It is thanks to Jean-Pierre Pernaut's SOS Villages tv program that he learns that Bouyon's town hall is managing the Maison Barnouin, owned by the municipality. He immediately fell under the spell of this former notary's house, transformed

into a restaurant, located in the heart of the village of Bouyon. Dominique Arnoux waited no longer to embark on the adventure. The restaurant has been open since the first of March 2019, and its bistro and restaurant formulas are a delight for tourists and locals alike. The challenge is to succeed in making Maison Barnouin an essential address. By honouring local producers, seasonal and homemade products, we have no doubt that it will be a success.

■ LA MAISON BARNOUIN

12, place de la Mairie ☎ 06 72 86 08 60

www.maison-barnouin.com – maisonbarnouin@gmail.com

restored in 1988. You can admire a painting depicting God sending the plague to St-Roch. The altar has a walnut wood facing from 1731 and a bronze tabernacle.

■ L'ÉGLISE SAINT TROPHIME

3-5, place de l'Église

Rebuilt in 1890, after its total destruction during the terrible earthquake of 1887, it contains an altarpiece of the 15th century from the Ecole de Nice. Its bell tower is attached to the church. At the time of its reconstruction, the bell tower had a pointed roof with 4 slopes, but nowadays the top of the bell tower is flat, with a wrought iron bell tower.

Sleeping

■ LA MAISON BARNOUIN

12, place de la Mairie

☎ 06 72 86 08 60

www.maison-barnouin.com
maisonbarnouin@gmail.com

This former hotel-restaurant, located opposite the town hall, has been renovated by the municipality of Bouyon. The commune offers single or double rooms as a stopover gîte. The rental of the other rural cottages is entrusted to Gîtes de France.

Leisure

Bouyon is ideally located at the heart of a hiking trail network in the middle of the mountains, and also mountain bike trails.

► **The Gorges de l'Estéron.** A 4 h15 hike, starting from Bouyon, of medium difficulty. You'll discover the villages of Bouyon and Ferres, as well as the Clue de la Cerise, on the Estéron river.

(*Randoxygène Guide*).

► **Canyoning.** In the same area, the Clue de la Cerise is ideal for canyoning.

► **Fishing.** There are beautiful fishing courses in the Estéron, alternating flat sections and fairly deep holes, in a magnificent environment.

Shopping

■ FROMAGERIE DE LA CHÈVRE BLANCHE

1139, chemin de Berdine

☎ 06 07 50 28 06

At the Fromagerie de la Chèvre Blanche, Jean Cassar, who has been living there since 1989, was joined by his son Mathieu. They are goat and pig farmers. They offer the opportunity to discover the products of their farms, goat's cheese, (faisselle, fresh or ripened cheeses, logs, tommes, brousse) but also yoghurts, salted meats and meat packages.

Products are available from March to November. The rest of the time, the goats are in gestation.

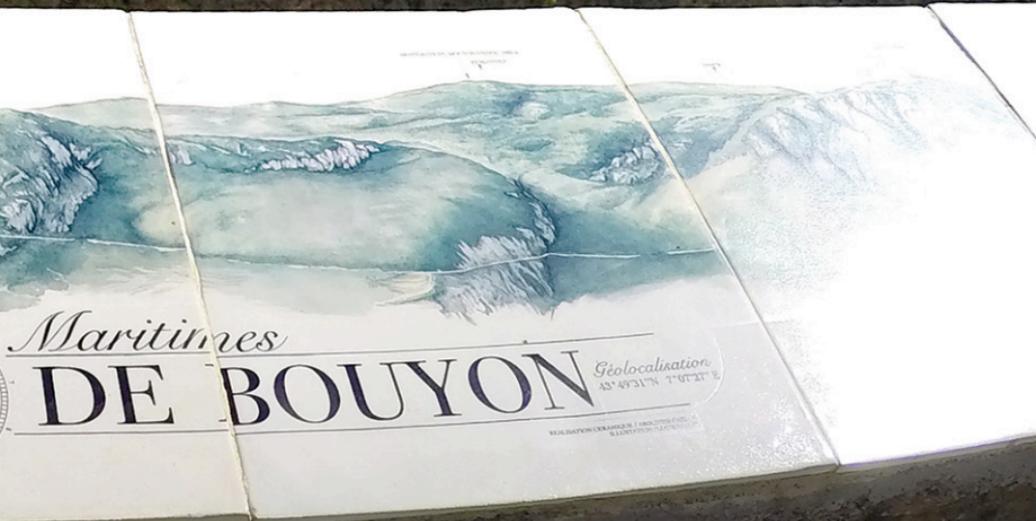
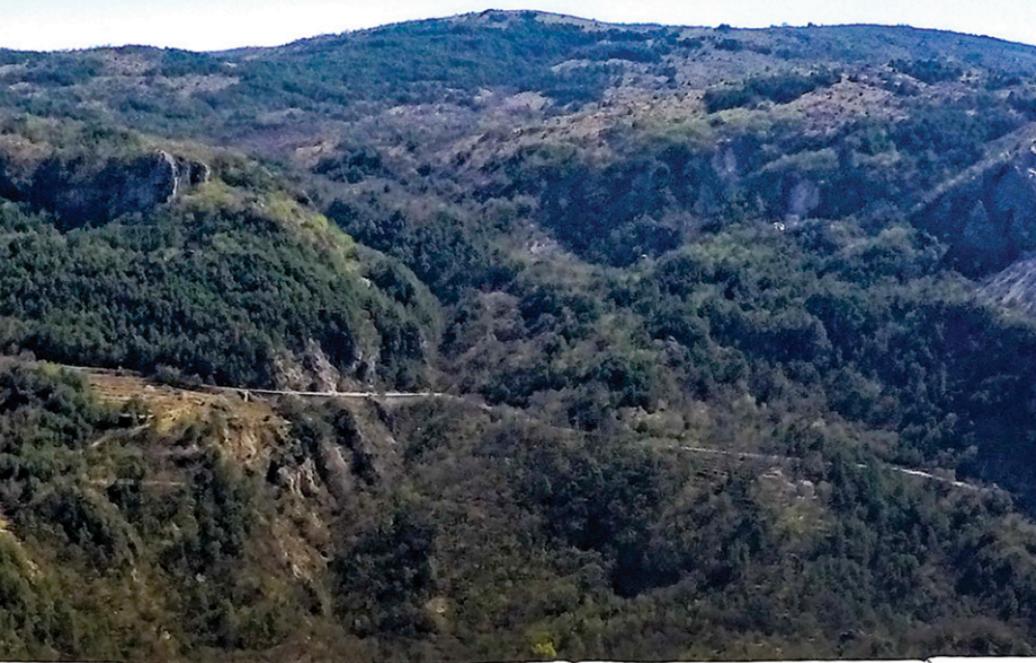
Markets

The small market of Bouyon: The first Sunday of each month, from April to December, from 8am to 1pm. Sale of local products and clothing.

Bouyon orientation table.

© Bernard CROISE





Maritimes

DE BOUYON

Géolocalisation

43° 49' 31" N 7° 07' 27" W

CAUSSOLS

A nature break.... The village of Caussols is located on a rugged karstic plateau composed of limestone rocks sculpted by erosion at the foot of the Alps. At an average altitude of 1100 m, between sea and mountains, the plateau is dominated to the north by the Calern summit (1458 m), site of the Côte d'Azur Astronomical Observatory, and to the south by the Haut-Montet which carries a civil aviation radar. The complex forms a preserved natural site, with a landscape shaped over the centuries by pastoralism. Witnesses of this pastoral past, the bories, enclosures, sheepfolds, water troughs, which dot the landscape. The Caussols plateau is a chaos of grey stones, with sparse vegetation. It offers to the eye only a vast mineral world scattered with rocks sculpted by erosion. Shaped for centuries by rainwater runoff, the plateau is riddled with hundreds of chasms, caves and dolines. We don't come to Caussols by chance. We come here to enjoy the surrounding nature, the calm of the plateau, and the invigorating climate. The geographical situation makes the climate here almost continental, hesitating between the Mediterranean and the nearby mountain, swinging sometimes towards one, sometimes towards the other. Summers are hot and dry. Far from the heat of the coast, the coolness of the altitude makes the stay in Caussols very pleasant. Winters are cold and dry. At the very beginning of the year, the plateau is regularly covered with snow, giving the Causse a soothing Christmas card atmosphere. Spring and autumn are particularly watered, flowing into the network that runs through the kilometres of underground galleries. This climate has favoured the existence of a fauna and flora specific to the Caussols plateau. In summer, you can observe an extraordinary variety of flowers on the plateau: the Pomponne lily, different types of orchis, wild tulips and peonies, narcissus and daphne from the Alps. The animals are not to be outdone, a very varied fauna is present on the plateau. There are wolves and lynx, deer and roe deer, hares and wild boars, as well as vipers. There are also many birds of prey, falcons, eagles, and harriers, as well as owls and lesser dukes.

▶ **Altitude of the municipality:** from 895 m to 1,458 m

▶ **Village altitude:** 1,130 m

▶ **250 inhabitants**

▶ Commune of the Regional Natural Park Préalpes d'Azur.

▶ **A little history.** Here, history seems to have come to a standstill. No treaties or deeds of arms. This inhospitable territory did not attract the lusts of abbots or lords. Over the centuries, the region has remained rather isolated, sparsely inhabited and generally pastoral. In prehistoric times, there were Celto-ligurian oppidums, also known as 'castellaras'. About ten dry stone enclosures still exist today in the localities called La Colle des Maçons, les Gleirettes, les Laves, Ville Vieille, l'Adrech, Basthiard, Troubade, or Pierre-Haute.

Some of these enclosures were used later, since traces of Roman occupation were found there, such as at the Laves camp or at the Adrech pass. It is said that a Roman

road crossed the plateau, but it was rather a pastoral road of medieval origin. In addition, excavations around the medieval village of Villevieille have uncovered ceramics dating back to various periods, from the Bronze Age to the Middle Ages. It was in the 12th century, as everywhere in the region, that the first writings mentioning Caussols appeared. The region was then dependent on the Counts of Provence. From the 14th century onwards, Caussols depended on the neighbouring village of Cipières, located to the north, on the other side of the Calern plateau. In 1640, the village of Caussols was burned down. The habitat then dispersed over the plateau in the form of small farms. In 1790, Caussols regained its independence as a municipality, which did not result in a grouping of dwellings. Nowadays, we still observe a scattered habitat on the plateau, the only groupings of dwellings being located in the hamlet of St-Lambert, around the church, and forming a small village centre around the town hall, or to the west of the village, in the hamlet of Les Claps. The region has lost most of its sheep and goat farms, which have shaped the territory, limiting the growth of plants and contributing to the construction of bories, barns and water troughs, a heritage specific to pastoral activity.

Sightseeing

▶ **Saint-Maurice chapel** is located east of the hamlet of St-Lambert. It is deconsecrated and its altar has been transported to Our Lady of Calern cave.

▶ **The remains of the old medieval fortified castle** is on the north hill of St Lambert hamlet.

▶ **The bories.** Are mainly found in the Claps area, south of the Caussols plateau. It is there that many bories were built in the 18th century.

■ L'ÉGLISE SAINT-LAMBERT rue de l'église

Rebuilt in the 13th century over an ancient church, St-Lambert was renovated between 2000 and 2015 in order to recover its Romanesque style, which had disappeared under too many previous decorations. Its façade is topped by a bell tower and preceded by a porch.

■ LA GALINIÈRE La Celle

4172, RD12

© 04 93 58 15 23

blancmuriel@sfr.fr

In the preserved nature of the Caussols plateau, in the heart of the regional nature park of the Préalpes d'Azur, La Galinière farm is specialised in the breeding of ornamental animals. Miniature ponies, mini goats, "Ouessant" sheep, curly geese, colourful chickens, and even giant rabbits! Something to make the children happy during a guided tour with Muriel. La Galinière also opens to introduce school groups or holiday centres to the diversity of farm animals from March to November, depending on the weather conditions.

Water trough on the Causse.

© Bernard CROISE



Bories and sinkholes....

▶ **The Bories.** These igloo-shaped dry-stone huts date back to the days when pastoralism was the main activity of the plateau. The stones are everywhere, so the main material was easy to find. But it was also necessary to master the technique of building these huts, without cement or mortar, a simple and judicious stacking of stone blocks. This technique has therefore been transmitted over the centuries. Bories can be found throughout the region as far as the Ventoux massif. Bories are therefore associated with pastoral life. These were mainly shelters for shepherds from bad weather, night shelters or sheds

▶ **The dolines.** These natural underground phenomena occur in karstic environments. Rainwater, rather than running off the surface, infiltrates underground, contributing to millennial underground erosion. Infiltration, torrents and underground rivers dig tunnels, and caves under the solid ground, unsuspected from the surface. At some point, the ground above these caves will no longer be thick enough to support its own weight. It will therefore collapse on site, creating a depression of a few metres to a few dozen metres.

▶ **The possibility of Elves?** The Causses, these mid-altitude, vast and arid areas, often isolated, where gaze is lost to infinity, have something fascinating and magical. Perhaps it is the presence of an underground world made up of chasms and caves, which stimulates legends, the possible existence of supernatural beings or the appearance of aliens?

■ LA GROTTÉ-CHAPELLE NOTRE DAME DE CALERN GR4

It is located on the GR4, about an hour's walk from Caussols direction Cipières, at an altitude of 1,300 m. Inside a cave, an altar is surmounted by a statue of the Virgin Mary. The inhabitants of Cipières and Caussols meet there for a pilgrimage in August.

■ L'EMBUT DE CAUSSOLS route départementale N°12

An "embut", in Provençal, is a funnel. A very appropriate word to describe the caves, up to 450 meters deep, in which rainwater disappears. This water resurfaces in the gorges du Loup or feeds the springs and fountains of the region. The Caussols embut is a natural cavity, a

10 m deep abyss in which rainwater from the Caussols plateau disappears. It is not really indicated, but you will find it about 1 km before the village, on the left when you arrive from Gourdon. There is a parking space with a drinking trough for herds.

■ OBSERVATOIRE DU PLATEAU DE CALERN CAUSSOLS 2130, route de l'Observatoire ☎ 04 93 40 54 42 www.caussols.fr marc.fulconis@oca.eu

From May to September, guided tour (mainly outside) every Sunday at 3.15pm (duration about 2.30h). Adult: 6 €. Child: 3 € (from 6 years old). Group visits on request. Shop. Animations. Free parking.



The Embut de Caussols.



© Bernard COUÏE

L'Observatoire du plateau de Calern.

This observation site inaugurated in 1974 under the name of Centre d'études et de recherches en géodynamique et astronomie (Cerga) was first designed as a laboratory for the development and use of new tools, including a single interferometer copy. It is beautifully located on the Calern plateau, in a limestone and half-desert area of 20 square kilometres in the north of the Caussols' plateau. Since 1988, it has been belonging to the Observatoire de la Côte d'Azur (OCA), born from the merger between the Cerga and the Nice Observatory. The scientific life is active and modern here. You observe the solar, the stellar and the extragalactic. During the summer, guided tours allow you to take all measures with presentations of the site and telescopes.

Knife & Fork

■ **L'AUBERGE DE CAUSSOLS**
4313, route départementale 12
 ☎ **04 83 26 39 15**
aubergedecaussols@gmail.com

Open all year round. Open from 9.30am to 9.30pm. Closed on Sunday evening. Low season: Wednesday to Sunday and public holidays. High season: Tuesday to Sunday and public holidays. Menu "Starter, main course, cheese and dessert" at 28 €. Starter, main course and dessert at 25 €. Vegetarian and vegan menus. Reception of groups. Just recently opened (December 2018), the Auberge de Caussols brings a little animation on the plateau. Locals and tourists meet at the bar or for lunch or dinner in the nice room with mountain style tables. The chef, Sébastien and the manager Arnaud are childhood friends. The first one worked for a long time in Thailand, in the luxury hotel business. The second one cooked in New Caledonia, then at the Dumont d'Urville

base in Antarctica. These great travellers met in Caussols to take over the restored Auberge. The team offers a market cuisine and only cooks with fresh products. Note the niçoise ravioli, or the stew with polenta. The cheeses come from the Caussols goat farm.

Sleeping

■ **LE MAS DES CHARDONS**
164, chemin des Chardons
 ☎ **04 93 09 29 93**
www.lemasdeschardons.fr
pierre.dorge1@orange.fr

5 bedrooms. Room from 60 € for one person, 75 € for 2 people. Breakfast included. Dinner at the table d'hôte, aperitif offered and wine included: 27€.

Le Mas des Chardons is located in a relaxing garden, in the heart of nature, a little away from the village. It offers 5 bedrooms with bathrooms, simple and comfortable. You can choose to dine at the large table d'hôtes, with an excellent family cuisine prepared by Mrs Dorge, aperitif, and wine included. Breakfast is delicious, with freshly squeezed orange juice, a good dozen different jams, bread, croissants, and pancakes. The ideal place to discover the plateau while hiking.

Leisure

- ▶ **Hiking.** The plateau is crossed by the GR4, which goes through France from east to west, linking Grasse to Royan, on the Atlantic coast. Many marked courses run through the region.
- ▶ **Speleology.** Several routes are possible on the Caussols plateau, such as the Cresp cave or the Embut de Caussols. To be practiced supervised by caving clubs.

Franck Pinaud: bread in his soul

To make bread, you need three ingredients: flour, water and yeast. And to open Les Délices de Caussols it took Franck Pinaud three ingredients: a fixed idea, a terroir and a bet...

▶ **The fixed idea.** Even as a child, he wanted to be a cook. But too good a student, his parents orientated him to high education. So he went through business school in Sophia. Followed by 15 years in Consulting and Human Resources on the Côte d'Azur, 15 years during which Franck is in charge of retraining for others, but he also thinks about it for himself.

▶ **The terroir.** He compensates by settling in Caussols, where he decompresses on the plateau, far from the hustle and bustle of the coast where he works. Caussols will be his terroir...

▶ **The bet.** And then a discussion with Caussols mayor, and the idea is back... It would be nice if there was a bakery in Caussols. The village lacks shops. Franck took the opportunity and dealt with the challenge.

Of course, it was necessary to think about the idea, to let it rest and to shape it. Already the work of the dough... In 2010, Les Délices de Caussols opened in the former Town Hall in the middle of the village. Now it is time to get started and the beginning is difficult. Franck, who knows nothing about baking, will get on with it and learn everything from an ex-partner in the business. Flours and sourdough, shortcrust and puff pastry, bread and baba pastes, viennoiseries and pastries, soon have no secrets for him...

Nine years later, the Délices de Caussols occupies a central place in the village. The stubborn baker now employs three people, and his creations are on Internet, Facebook and Instagram. Twice a month he "goes down" for the day to a vegetable farmer of sustainable and organic agriculture in Mouans Sartoux, after having informed his 450 local contacts by email, who are fond of his rustic breads. The bakery delivers the Auberge de Caussols, the grocery store, the school, the festival committee... We meet locals but also hikers, cyclists and tourists. There are pissaladières (onion tarts) or orange blossom fougassettes, but also sandwiches and cakes with local names, such as the Sandwich Calern, or the Clap, a "soft biscuit with almond and hazelnut chips, covered with a crispy macaroon" or more fun names like Lili Rose" a lychee mousse with fresh raspberry chips, a Damascus rose mousse, and a grated coconut dacquoise biscuit" (the descriptions are stated with a gourmet malice). Franck describes his values very simply: work, regularity, commitment, honesty. We want to add: perseverance.

▶ www.lesdelicesdecaussols.fr

■ **LES DÉLICES DE CAUSSOLS**
141, place Derégnacourt
☎ 04 93 60 27 62



Franck Pinaud.

Shopping

■ **ATELIER DE LA VERRERIE GAMBIER**
Chemin du Bois Beranger
☎ 06 45 55 58 48
www.verrieriegambier.sitew.com

Alexis Mathelin is one of the last glass blowers, about a hundred remain in France. After his training at Cristallerie Lalique, he completed his knowledge with Mr Gambier, whose workshop he took over in Caussols. He creates unique pieces, sold in the workshop or in art galleries or shops, in France and Europe. He welcomes you to his intimate studio in Caussols, by appointment, to tell you about his art and his passion.

■ **LES DÉLICES DE CAUSSOLS**
141, place Derégnacourt
☎ 04 93 60 27 62

www.lesdelicesdecaussols.fr

Open from Wednesday to Saturday from 6.30am to 6.30pm; on Sunday from 6.30am to 5pm. Closed on Monday and Tuesday. Open on Sundays (open 7 days a week in season, from mid-June to the end of August).

It is impossible to miss the Délices de Caussols, the bakery and pastry shop in the middle of the village square, like an oasis at the crossroads of all the paths on the plateau. Here tourists, hikers, mountain bikers, cyclists as well as locals get their supplies and drinks. Whether for a sandwich, a bottle of water, a delicious cake or a loaf of bread you'll enjoy it! It is imperative to stop by!

Borie in Caussols.

© Bernard CROISE



CHÂTEAUNEUF

Perched on the side of a hill with century-old olive trees, the village of Châteauneuf dominates the Opio plain, and the green hills towards the sea. It offers a magnificent panorama, stretching from the Italian Alps to the Esterel. The medieval village occupies a restricted place, at the top of a hill, but the commune has developed largely, towards the south, up to Valbonne. Châteauneuf, which now has more than 3,000 inhabitants, is ideally located at the crossroads of the region's trade and tourist routes. Châteauneuf is one of those charming villages in the hills that are a refuge for a population in search of calm and authenticity. As a bonus, the town offers a traditional Provençal environment with its olive groves and a plateau with a thousand oaks. Vines and olive trees, market gardening and the cultivation of perfume flowers have made Châteauneuf's reputation. While remaining faithful to the agricultural and horticultural tradition, the municipality has also diversified its economic activities both in the field of crafts (ceramics, pottery, sculptures) and commercial. Thus, the village benefited from the development of tourism in the middle of the 20th century and the development of the Côte d'Azur. Its inhabitants have abandoned cultivation for jobs related to tourism, and Châteauneuf has a new population. The development of Sophia Antipolis between 1980 and 2000 largely contributed to the demographic growth of the municipality, which extended to the Pré du Lac sector to cope with the arrival of new inhabitants.

The medieval heart of Châteauneuf offers visitors all the charm of a postcard village. We park at the top of the village, Place de la Mairie, near an old, nicely restored washhouse. Châteauneuf, like many municipalities in the Pays de Grasse, has many springs, fed by the resurgent waters of the limestone plateau of Caussols, further north.

Plane and fig trees tend to grow near these springs. The large 17th century building with the appearance of an Italian palace, which can be seen from the main square, nicknamed "the castle", was built on the ruins of the fortified castle. Just go down to the church of St-Martin (10th century), whose bell tower can be seen, to grasp all the charm of the place. Covered with a bell tower, it houses an 18th century altarpiece. Our steps lead us to the Old Town Hall Square, which offers a fabulous panoramic view of the Opio plain, and the Côte d'Azur, to the Esterel. All you have to do is walk under the pountis, a covered passage under the old ramparts, to stroll through the flowery pedestrian streets, sometimes shaded by wisteria. Randomly on the stairs and street corners, we will discover interesting windows, some decorated with a carved shell, bicentenary lintels, beautiful doors that have survived through the centuries to our great delight. The stone facades of the houses feature pastel green, grey or blue shutters. Behind the walls, you can guess pretty gardens decorated with magnolias or palm trees. In some places, chairs are placed near the doors. We can guess that on sunny days the neighbours meet there at the end of the day to discuss. On the square, occupied by petanque players, an orientation table informs tourists about the magnificent panorama....

- ▶ **Altitude of the municipality:** from 197 m to 662 m
- ▶ **Village altitude:** 420 m
- ▶ **3,188 inhabitants**

▶ **A little history:** Originally, a *castellaras*, a fortified enclosure dating back to the Iron Age, existed on the top of the hill that houses the village today. In the 12th century, the lords of Opio decided to build a castle on the site of this *Castellaras*, the highest site in their stronghold. There is a first mention of the site in 1153. On the occasion of a reconciliation between the Bishop of Antibes and the Abbey of Lérins, we talk about *Castello Novo*. Other mentions are made of *Castrum de Castello* or *Castro Novo*, and later the inhabitants of Opio settled on the site to seek the protection of the castle. The site became Châteauneuf d'Opio. During the 12th and 13th centuries, the region was marked by the takeover of eastern Provence by the Counts of Provence. Nice, Opio, and Châteauneuf, fell into the hands of the Counts of Provence. In 1257, Châteauneuf d'Opio broke away from Opio.

Over the following centuries, Châteauneuf changed lords three times, passing in 1306 to the family of Grasse-Cabris, in 1400 to the family of Lascaris-Vintimille, then in the 17th century, to the Puget de Saint Marc. Various events punctuated Châteauneuf's history over the following centuries: in the 16th century, a fire destroyed the upper part of the village. There are conflicts between the inhabitants of Châteauneuf and those of neighbouring villages over pilgrimages to the sanctuary of Notre-Dame du Brus, particularly on August 15, 1763. In 1830, the municipality lost part of its territory. The inhabitants of the hamlet of Le Bergier are asking for separation from Châteauneuf, because they are "deprived of religious relief and the most useful roads are impassable".



Place de châteauneuf.

Sightseeing

► **The panorama.** From the medieval village, you can admire a magnificent panoramic view over the Opio plain and the Côte d'Azur. On the Square, where villagers play petanque, an orientation table helps visitors identify cities, villages and hills.

► **The washhouse of the great fountain.** Recently restored, the washhouse, which is fed by the springs of La Brague, has two water tanks and a trough. It is surrounded by century-old plane trees.

■ LE CHÂTEAU

It can't be visited. This building was built on the ruins of the old castle in 1625. It belonged to the princes of Antibes and then to the Lascais family, before becoming the property of the Marquis du Rouret.

■ L'ÉGLISE PAROISSIALE ST MARTIN

Rue de l'église

The Saint-Martin church in the heart of the village dates from the 10th century. Covered with a bell tower, it houses an 18th century altarpiece.

■ ÉGLISE NOTRE DAME DU BRUSC

351, chemin de Notre-Dame-du-Brusc

Listed in the *General Inventory of Historic Monuments of the Alpes Maritimes*.

It seems that the name "Brusc" comes from the Provençal language and refers to a marshy or wet ground. In fact, there are several springs on the site, one of which is located under the church. Recent excavations (1958 to 1975) have uncovered an early Christian cemetery, as well as the walls of a 6th century church and a baptistery from the same period. Today, we can admire this baptistery under a porch in front of the church. The current church,

in Romanesque style, dates from the 11th century. It is 40 m long, which was an unusual size for the time. It was an important place of pilgrimage, linked to the existence of a miraculous spring, perhaps a resurgence. It was damaged during the religious wars, almost completely destroyed, but restored. In the 17th century, Notre-Dame du Brusc was decorated in a baroque style. The church stands in a delightfully Provençal setting, surrounded by olive and cypress trees. A perfect place for meditation.

Knife & Fork

■ LE BISTRO DU GOLF

761, chemin des Picholines

☎ 04 93 77 70 09

Open all year round. Open 7 days a week from dawn to dusk. Open in the evening only by reservation for groups. Single menu at 28 € (3-course meal). Menu: about 15 € (the dish). Dish of the day: 12,90 €. Sunday BBQ at 32 €. Garden. Terrace.

This is a new discovery this year. A chic and bucolic bistro, in the heart of the magnificent Grand Bastide golf course. The restaurant is run by the Château de la Bégude Restoration Team located in Opio. The talented young chef Gabriel Degenne has already worked at the Ciste and the Bégude; He offers a bistro carte, concocted with fresh products and all is home made. A fresh, simple, creative and know-how cuisine. What more can we say? A garden setting at the foot of the hinterland hills. In the beautiful season, you'll enjoy each Sunday (from April to September) a beautiful "barbecue" menu; afterwork aperitifs are also organized from May to September. Finally 4 themed evenings are scheduled during the summer, you will find all details on the Facebook page. (@ Bistrodugolfggb)



Chapelle Notre-Dame du Brusc.

Orientation table, Châteauneuf.

© Bernard CROISÉ



DAVID WATTÉ – GLACIER PAPILLA

88

► A taste for adventure....

In Châteauneuf, if you say “Lemon-Ginger” or “Hibiscus”, you get the answer: Papilla!

In just a few years, this artisanal ice cream start-up has made a name for itself on the sunny Côte d’Azur. One day in 1997, David Watté left the North, his native region for the brighter skies of the South. He worked 15 years there in transport, logistics and boating, before thinking about changing again the course of his life. As a matter of fact, his wife’s parents create and sell ice cream in Luino, a small Italian village on the shores of the Lake Maggiore, and at each visit David is captivated by the taste of their ice cream. So he decided himself in 2012, dropped his job and started the adventure with the help of his Italian father-in-law, David created Papilla. He passes a Glacier certificate and a year after vacherins, Norwegian omelettes, desserts and other delicacies no longer hold secrets to him. At the same time, he trained in Italy with his father-in-law to learn how to make ice cream by his own methods.

In 2013, the first boutique opened in Juan-les-Pins, with a single aim, quality, based on local suppliers. The ice is prepared in a 40m² laboratory. The year after, he opened a franchise in the Old Nice, then another in Juan les Pins. From his lab, David delivers the 3 sale points. In 2015, Papilla was named Best glacier in France by Tripadvisor. This was for the young company an unexpected publicity. Television, newspapers, Papilla went viral! Two years later, in order to consolidate the company, he needed a larger and more productive laboratory while also wanting to get closer to his suppliers, many of whom are in the hinterland.

In 2017, Papilla moved to the Place des Pins in Châteauneuf. In 2018, a new boutique opened in Nice.

One of Papilla’s secrets is that ice is daily prepared. No storage, we work on a just-in-time basis. Every evening the shops place their orders, and the next day is dedicated to manufacturing for delivery the next day. This custom-made production ensures a fresh and creamy ice cream, without preservatives or flavour enhancers, since it is intended to be consumed quickly. The Châteauneuf shop, which also houses the laboratory, sells the ice creams in small pots or cones, but also milk shakes, vacherins, Norwegian omelettes or the very fashionable “verrines”. You can also buy 500 ml to 1 litre containers, in which 1 to 3 flavours can be placed.

Today, Papilla offers 18 flavors. The majority are classic, others, such as olive oil, lavender or violet perfumes, clearly evoke Provence and its specialities! The icing on the cake is that if a customer asks for an out of stock ice cream, David offers to prepare it for the next day! But that’s not all: some customers arrive at the shop in Chateauneuf with a crate of figs from their



David Watté.

garden and David prepares them their ice cream for the next day!

Today, Papilla delivers 4 sale points (Châteauneuf, Juan les Pins, and 2 boutiques in Nice) and their production can also be found at the Segafredo boutique in Cap 3000, at the “Marché de nos Collines” in Le Rouret, and in several restaurants. David Watté is proud of his organization and considers that since the creation of the start-up in 2012, Papilla has fulfilled its objectives: the satisfaction of delicious products made from fresh fruit every day, and being recognized for the quality of its production... This success is also due to his loyal surroundings like friends and family. Professionalism, availability and work did the rest. With 18 perfumes in the boutique, David Watté must add the 19th, which has been floating on Papilla since the beginning: the perfume of adventure!

► A little technique

The base of the ice cream is fresh whole milk, sugar and cream. This mixture must be pasteurized, heated at 85°C, then cooled to - 4°C. This process takes 1h30. The pasteurized mixture obtained is the base in which the glacier will add the natural ingredient that gives the flavour (fresh whole fruit from the local market garden in season, fruit paste for pistachio or hazelnut, frozen fruit out of season)... Then the turbine transforms the final mixture into a smoothy ice cream. This stage takes 10 min for 10 litres of ice cream. The ice is then delicately placed in the display trays, so as to preserve its wave-shaped appearance, then it spends 5 minutes in the freezer before being placed in the display case, ready for tasting.

■ **PAPILLA**
14, Place des Pins
☎ 07 77 23 19 04

■ CHALPIE NATUR'O PATE

ZAC des Mousquettes, 46, route d'Opio

☎ 04 92 60 48 86 – www.chalpie.com

Open Monday to Saturday from 9am to 2pm and 4pm to 8pm; Sunday and public holidays from 9am to 2pm. Lunch formula: 15 € (starter + main course or main course + dessert). Dish of the day at 12 €. Starter + main course + dessert formula: 18 €. Terrace. Takeaway. Caterer.

Three activities in one single place! A fresh pasta factory that offers fresh linguines, tagliatelle, gnocchi and ravioli, prepared on site as well as homemade sauces. A caterer that proposes the dishes of the restaurant to take away, and a small restaurant! In addition to pasta, you can enjoy traditional French and Provençal cuisine. Every day, two suggestions are offered as well as pasta. Pot-au-feu, stew, trout, traditional Nice ravioli or roasted farm chicken can be offered. A friendly place where many people working in the area come for a break between noon and 2pm. Pierre Chalvin, who has been living in Châteauneuf for 10 years, has therefore created a very pleasant all-in-one space, in which he can now accommodate 14 people inside and 12 on the pretty terrace under an olive tree.

■ LA LICORNE

5, Chemin du Cabanon ☎ 04 93 42 74 40

Closed on Wednesday all day, Saturday lunchtime and Sunday evening. Menus from 25 € to 33 € (starter + main course or main course + dessert: 25 €. Starter + main course + dessert: 33 €). Lunch formula: Starter + main course or main course + dessert: 12,50€. Starter + main course + dessert: 16,80€.

Located in the heart of Châteauneuf, the restaurant La Licorne offers a delicious market cuisine. All the dishes are homemade, well presented and tasty prepared with fresh products. La Licorne is a safe bet whether for a quick lunch or a more elaborate dinner.

Leisure

All year long, the municipality offers lively markets, concerts, processions, exhibitions, festivals and shows.

► **More information:** town hall: ☎ 04 92 603 603 / 04 92 609 600 – ville-chateauneuf.fr

■ CLUB HIPPIQUE DE LA BRAGUE

727, chemin du Ranch ☎ 04 93 60 16 10

www.la-brague.com – info@la-brague.com

Office open on Tuesday and Friday from 1.30pm to 6pm, on Wednesday and Saturday from 10am to noon and from 1.30pm to 6.30pm.

Riding lessons, tours, beginners and advanced courses.

Going Out

■ LE TOUCAN

20, route de Nice

☎ 06 99 43 19 69 – www.letoucan.fr

Open all year round. Theater. Theatre lessons. Friday and Saturday from 7pm to midnight.

Change of owner, but the atmosphere is at its best in this café-show that is worth the detour. We go there for karaoke Thursdays and Fridays and Saturdays where live music concerts or plays certainly set the mood. But also

to eat and sip a cocktail... All three at the same time! Roberto welcomes you there with a smile to make you spend the time of an evening, an original and offbeat moment. A warm and friendly place where you don't see time passing by.

Shopping

■ ESAT LA BASTIDE

277, Chemin des Picholines ☎ 04 92 60 33 62
commercial.chateauneuf@afjpr.org

Open from Tuesday to Saturday from 9.30am to 1pm and from 3pm to 6pm.

In sustainable agriculture since 1989, the Bastide offers its gardening and canning products. The store sells the products from their fields, daily picked: seasonal fruits and vegetables. They also offer their preserves: sweet and savoury preserves (onion confit with figs, rose petal confit), condiments (pistou, basil, coulis, etc.), tapenades and olive pastes, toastinades (eggplant caviar, dried tomatoes, red peppers or artichokes) and vegetables in oil. La Bastide also sells soups (pistou, pumpkin, tomato, etc.) and products from other ESATs, wine, deli meats, etc.

■ LA NOUVELLE CRÈMERIE

40, place des Pins ☎ 09 52 37 34 35

<http://lanouvellecreemerie.fr>

Open Tuesday to Saturday from 8.30am to 12.30pm and from 3.30pm to 7.30pm; Sunday from 8.30am to 12.30pm.

Here is a paradise for cheese lovers! Marie-Alix and Pierre created this shop by abandoning their respective professions to live their passion. Pierre chose olive growing and Marie-Alix apprenticed with a great Parisian cheese maker. In their shop, you will find a large selection of products (cheeses, confits, oils, wines...), assortments (trays, boxes...) but also services and advice for events. The trays and boxes can be customized according to your tastes, budget or appetite! You can order trays, boxes, raclette cheese and fondues in advance, on site, by email or by phone.

■ PAPILLA

14, Place des Pins ☎ 07 77 23 19 04

www.papilla.fr – contact@papilla.fr

Open Tuesday to Saturday from 10.30am to 7pm; Sunday from 9.30am to 12pm. Closed on Sunday afternoon and Monday.

Mandatory stop at the Place des Pins in Châteauneuf to enjoy an ice cream at Papilla's. Here delicious and preservative-free ice creams are made daily, which can be eaten in small jars or cones, but also in the form of milk shakes, vacherins or Norwegian omelettes.

Markets

► **Farmers' market.** Place des Pins, every Monday morning until 1pm.

► **Provençal market.** Place des Pins, 1st of May. Crafts (pottery, lace, ironwork...) and local products

► **Young farmers' market.** Place des Pins, first Sunday of July. Tasting and sale of local products, 100% young producers.

CIPIÈRES

Perched on a promontory, and facing the village of Gréolières, on the other side of the Loup, Cipières offers a magnificent living environment, with a breathtaking view of the Cheiron massif and the Loup valley below. The village, located on a secondary road linking Gourdon to Gréolières, is somewhat isolated. However, this situation, which may have worked against it in the second half of the 20th century, is nowadays a guarantee of tranquility and authenticity for visitors, tourists, and people seeking for peace and nature, far from the hustle and bustle of the Côte d'Azur. Dominated by the imposing castle, the houses are tightly packed together, following the plan of the old ramparts. Some have exposed stone facades, others have plastered walls with Provençal colours, but all have pretty pastel shutters in blue or green tones, offering a very pleasant coloured village. On the village square, a pretty fountain refreshes hikers. Cipières is located at the crossroads of the GR4 and GR51 hiking trails. The houses are crowded together, grouped around the church of St-Mayeul, whose bell tower dominates the roofs. The heart of the village is pedestrian, and it is a pleasure to stroll through the intertwining narrow streets with evocative names, which run along the foot of the castle: rue des Confréries, rue Longue or rue

Coulet. Further on, Roumpé Couou ("Break your neck") Street, the well named street, invites you through steep staircases, while avoiding breaking your neck... As you walk along, you will find magnificent coloured doors framed by 16th century stone lintels, a secret passage linking two streets, a terrace nicely decorated with flowery jars of lavender and gladiolas... In some places, a gap between two houses reveals the mountain and the surrounding nature. While climbing up to the foot of the castle, we discover the Mathieu Bridge, a passage under the ramparts, which leads north of the village to a magnificent view of the Cheiron mountain. At the end of the village, in the direction of Gourdon, do not miss to stop at the St-Claude chapel.

- ▶ **Altitude of the town:** 740 m
- ▶ **Village altitude:** 459 m to 1,381 m
- ▶ **390 inhabitants**
- ▶ Commune of the Regional Natural Park Préalpes d'Azur
- ▶ **A little history.** The name of the municipality would come from the Latin *Cippus*, which means milestone. Here, no great historical events. As early as the 12th century, a first village occupied the platform where

© Bernard GROSSE



Walk in the village of Cipières.

Easy hikes from Cipières

- ▶ **The Borie** circuit (3 hours): a nice hike from Cipières, to discover the Collet des Grau de Pons borie.
 - ▶ **The Calern plateau** (4h30): a particularly pleasant tour in an austere environment typical of the vegetation of Grasse's hinterland.
- Parking in front of the multi-purpose hall. Accommodation possible at the St Roch gîte.
More information on the online guides *Randoxygène* and *Terres et Pierres d'Azur*.

the castle is located today. There is a first mention of a family from Cipières in 1152, and its church in 1158. Over the years, Cipières has depended on the lords of Antibes, Fréjus and then the Viguerie de Grasse. The village certainly developed until the 14th century before being subjected, like many villages in the region, to wars and recessions in the 14th and 15th centuries. It developed again in the following centuries. In the 15th century, it was William of Agout, who was Lord of Caussols and Cipières. The communities of Cipières and Caussols, although separated, often had the same lord. In 1795, the two municipalities of Cipières and Caussols, previously linked by the heritage of their common history, were definitively separated. The municipality, which had a thousand inhabitants in 1792, saw its population decrease to 118 inhabitants registered in 1954. However, the stability of the contemporary era and the development of tourism have increased the number of inhabitants to almost 400 people.

Sightseeing

- ▶ **The castle.** In a classic Provençal style, it dominates the village. It dates back to the 13th century, but completely restored in 1951, it is now a hotel. It can't be visited.
- ▶ **A pretty fountain (1893)** adorns the village square, with its 17th century washhouse.
- ▶ **The Roman bridge** over the Loup river. It is an ancient road and was rebuilt in 1763.
- ▶ **La Borie de Pons,** (hike from Cipières) is remarkable for its size and well-preserved state.

■ LA CHAPELLE ST CLAUDE

Route de Grasse

The chapel dates from the 17th century. It is located at the exit of the village, in the direction of Gourdon. It has a remarkable baroque choir and a superb wrought iron gate. The Saint-Claude chapel is listed in the department's General Inventory of Historic Monuments.

■ L'ÉGLISE ST MAYEUL

25, rue de l'Église

The building dates from the 16th and 17th centuries. In baroque style, its glazed tile bell tower is topped by an 18th century wrought-iron belfry. Archaeological excavations have revealed the presence of an ancient necropolis dating from the 2nd or 3rd century. Three churches have followed one another on this site over the centuries. Saint-Mayeul Church is listed in the department's General Inventory of Historic Monuments.

Knife & Fork

■ LES ORMEAUX

125, la Place

☎ 04 93 58 78 70

Open every day for lunch, and in the evening only upon reservation. Dish of the day from 13 €.

At the head of this charming establishment, Margareta and Michel offer you a warm welcome with a local cuisine prepared with fresh products. Everything is homemade. The menu goes according to the seasons and offers only two or three dishes and desserts each day. Located on the village square, the restaurant is a tasty stopover for the hikers who venture in the high country. The terrace on the square is very pleasant and promises a real moment of relaxation. Limited number of places, reservation recommended.



The bell tower of Cipières.

Cipières and the Cheiron massif.

© Bernard CROISE





■ LA VIEILLE VIGNE

10, rue sous Barry

☎ 04 93 32 13 97

Open from Wednesday to Sunday for lunch and dinner. A la carte menu: between 25 € and 35 €. Reception of groups (up to 30 people). Terrace. Panoramic view. English and Italian spoken.

La Vieille Vigne is a must for lovers of local products where traditional recipes of the country are exclusively prepared with fresh and local ingredients. On the menu, you will find some regional specialties: stuffed cabbage (*lou fassum*), veal Marengo, venison terrine, pumpkin ravioli sauce with walnuts, grenadine of veal with Armagnac sauce, wild boar stew with polenta, jugged hare with fresh pasta... As for dessert, treat yourself with the different tiramisus (chocolate and orange zest, with orange) or the pumpkin pie, among others. The setting is nice, the welcome is warm and the terrace is surrounded by a garden where the establishment cooks its own vegetables in season, offers a panoramic view of the Cheiron. To discover without moderation!

Leisure

Ciapières is a paradise for nature lovers: hiking, cycling, fishing, caving, canyoning, aerial sports, sky observation, everything is possible!

▶ **Hiking.** Few municipalities can be proud of having 2 long-distance hiking trails that cross their territory! However, this is the case of Ciapières, which has the GR4 and GR51. From the centre of the village, the two tracks follow the same route, but they separate at the beginning of the path to Andon. The GR4 crosses all of France, from east to west,

through 13 departments. From Ciapières, it allows hikers to reach Gréolières and the Calern plateau (1,458m). It is also possible to make a loop to Gréolières and return to Ciapières via the Amic footbridge over the Loup. The GR51, more poetically called "Balcons de la Méditerranée" links Marseille to Menton. From Ciapières, hikers can reach Gourdon, the Cavillone plateau or the Collet des Grau de Pons.

▶ **Bicycle.** Cyclists and mountain bikers will find beautiful tracks, away from traffic.

▶ **Fishing.** From the Ciapières bridge, fishing enthusiasts can enjoy their passion by going up the banks of the Loup in search of rainbow or fario trouts.

▶ **Caving.** A large part of the territory of Ciapières is occupied by the Calern plateau, which rises up to 1,381 m. This karstic plateau has hundreds of caves that are a delight for speleologists.

▶ **Astronomy.** On the Calern plateau, due to the purity of the sky, an observatory has been set up that depends on the Côte d'Azur observatory

▶ **Animations.** Throughout the summer, Ciapières offers various activities: theatre, jazz, exhibitions, street meals, concerts, sports races... The event schedule is available on the website of the Comité des fêtes de Ciapières (<http://www.capieres.org>).

Shopping

Markets

A **small farmers' market** takes place in Ciapières on Fridays from 5pm to 8pm.



Ciapières facades.

La chapelle Saint-Claude, Cipières.

© Bernard CROISÉ



COURMES

Like every world's end, Courmes must be earned, as if this peaceful village, nestled at the foot of the Puy de Tourrettes, did what it took to avoid being visited too much and keep its tranquility. To discover this haven of peace, you have to go up the Gorges du Loup, taking the D6 which winds overhanging the river, to the crossroads of Bramafan. You can admire the 40 m high Courmes waterfall as you pass, but it is impossible to park there. Once in Bramafan, take the D503 towards Courmes, a dead end that leads to the village. Approaching Courmes by these picturesque roads is already an adventure! Arrived in the village, it is the end of the road. Welcome to Courmes! There is something different here. Perhaps it is the lightness of the air, or rather the feeling of embarrassment that takes us when we get out of the car, as if we were arriving at someone's house? A circular view gives an overview of this ancient village, built on a flat spot in the Courmes mountain, above the valley of the Loup, in a picturesque environment. At first glance, it appears that the heart of Courmes balances between mountains in the north and the Mediterranean in the south. The exposed stone buildings, topped with old tiles, form an almost mineral mass, perfectly anchored in the surrounding nature. The narrow windows, rather rare on this side of the village, add to this impression. But the all-Mediterranean plane tree path that leads to the village, as well as the dashing and ochre-coloured town hall, bearing the French and Provençal colours, are there to show that we are here in Provence.

Most of the houses have been perfectly restored. We can guess that in Courmes there are city dwellers who come on holiday, in search of absolute calm and a purifying nature. The village is small and we quickly go around it.



The village of Courmes.

On the square, benches invite you to sit down and enjoy a moment of tranquility. Here no car traffic noise, no city vibrations, only the wind in the trees and the chirping of birds. There are some beautiful doors, as well as the perfectly restored washhouse. The Sainte-Madeleine church stands on the square, and blends curiously with the adjoining house. All you have to do is push the door to see his gilded wooden altar.

In the car park, hikers are equipped: shoes, backpack, walking sticks. Courmes is the starting point for many excursions, towards the plateau of St Barnabé, the Baous who dominate the Côte d'Azur, or the Puy de Tourrettes.

► **Altitude of the municipality:** from 260 to 1,263 m

► **Village altitude:** 623 m

► **124 inhabitants**

► **A little history.** On 29 September 1176, a certain P. de Corma signed as a witness a charter between Bertrand de Grasse and the Bishop of Antibes. It is the oldest appearance of the village's name, which is derived from the name of the Corma family. In the Middle Ages, the village was located north of the current village, at Les Combes on the Serre de la Madeleine. This original village, whose ruins can still be seen, was surrounded by a wall. The village sees a succession of lords. In 1235, it was Romée de Villeneuve who inherited the fiefdom from the hands of the Count of Provence. Then in 1270 it was the Roux de Cormis, followed later by the Lombards, then the Bancillons. Courmes was therefore a lordship. The inhabitants lived in this rather isolated environment, with a few crops and a little livestock. In the 14th and 15th centuries, wars and instability contributed to depopulating the village. In December 1670, Courmes was visited by Antoine Godeau, Bishop of Vence. Blocked by heavy snowfalls, he said mass in the chapel for the families of the village. The hamlet of Courmes depended on Coursegoules until the Revolution. Finally, we note that in 1944 the local maquis was parachuting weapons and ammunition into the St-Barnabé plateau. In the second half of the 20th century, the development of the Côte d'Azur and the isolation of the village, far from the region's roads, gradually led to the almost total abandonment of the site, as the inhabitants sought their fortune elsewhere. Today, the village is revived, with the installation in second homes of city dwellers in search of nature and peace.

Sightseeing

► **The communal Oven:** always in activity. The fortified square house, an old seigneurial residence, and its Renaissance door

► **The beautiful washhouse,** at the end of the village, nicely restored.

► **The ruins of the old village,** on the Serre de la Madeleine.

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Drinking fountain and hollow path, Courmes.

© Bernard CROISE



■ L'ÉGLISE STE MADELEINE

74, place de l'Église

The 17th century Sainte-Madeleine church blends in with the village's old houses. Its architecture is classic but it has a gilded wooden altar, and an interesting square bell tower, in the shape of a pyramid.

Knife & Fork

■ AUBERGE DE COURMES

3, rue des Platanes

☎ 04 92 60 08 17

aubergedecourmes@orange.fr

Open all year round. From October 1st to May 31st: open from 9.30am to 7pm. Dinner on reservation. From June 1st to September 30th: open from 9.30am to 10.30pm. Closed on Mondays. Booking recommended. Children's menu: 8 €. Dish of the day: 12 €. Starter + main course or main course + dessert: 16 €. Starter + main course + dessert: 20€. Card not accepted.

At the Auberge de Courmes you can have lunch in the pretty room, or on the terrace on sunny days, with the delicious impression of being privileged. Located in the heart of the hamlet, the hostel welcomes hikers and tourists.

During our visit, we noted the menu of the day: country plate, navarin beef and vegetables, Melba peach pie...

Sleeping

■ AUBERGE DE COURMES

3, rue des Platanes

☎ 04 92 60 08 17

aubergedecourmes@orange.fr

5 bedrooms. Single room 65 €; double room from 75 €. Half board: 20 € (per person). Breakfast included. Extra bed: 10 €.

The Auberge de Courmes has recently reopened and this is very good news. It welcomes tourists and hikers in 5 comfortable rooms, in the heart of the village.

Guesthouses

■ LA CASCADE

635 chemin de la Cascade

☎ 04 93 09 65 85

www.cascade06.com

bruno.rouganne@gmail.com



Closed from December 1st to January 30th. 5 rooms. Breakfast included. Rooms from 65€ to 85€ per night depending on the season. Breakfast included. Dinner at the table d'hôte: 27€ per person, (starter, main course, dessert, wine and coffee included).

Eric and Bruno welcome their guests in an exceptional setting: an old sheepfold, located in the middle of nature, overlooking the Gorges du Loup. The rooms are spacious and overlook the garden and the surrounding nature. In the evening, a "table d'hôtes" dinner is offered, a

gourmet cuisine of the day prepared with fresh products. Eric and Bruno share dinner with their guests, and can advise you about tours.

Leisure

Courmes is the starting point for many hiking trails. The GR51 (Balcons de la Méditerranée) crosses the village.

▶ **The Courmes waterfall**, 40 m high.

▶ **The Baous**, the limestone cones that dominate the Côte d'Azur, are nearby.

▶ **The karstic plateau of Saint-Barnabé**, a place for hiking and caving, occupies the entire northern part of the commune.

▶ **Le Puy de Tourrettes** (1,267 m) is the highest peak in the region and offers a large panoramic view from its summit over the Côte d'Azur and the Mercantour peaks

▶ **Equestrian excursions** on the Saint-Barnabé plateau.

▶ **Canyoning and fishing** in the Gorges du Loup.

■ LES GECKOS

3366, chemin départemental 503

☎ 06 75 24 93 40

lesgeckos.fr

contact@lesgeckos.fr

Canyoning from 45 € for half a day, 65 € for a day.

The Geckos offer half-day canyoning in the Gorges du Loup or in the Gours du Ray (Gréolières). Canyoning is walking and swimming down a river, equipped with a neoprene suit, a harness, a helmet and a good pair of shoes. It is a water hike with jumps in the water, natural slides or when necessary rappelling. It is a fun and sportive activity that can be practiced with family, groups or friends.



The village of Courmes.

CONSÉGUEDES

The village is on a slope, nestled in the heart of an abundant vegetation of oaks, pines and fir trees. Two thirds of the municipality are forest areas. In other words, Conségudes is a real paradise for hikers and a haven of peace in the heart of nature... Just like the village, the territory of the commune is all sloping, ranging from 256 m to 1,464 m... The village itself is leaning against Mont St-Paul, facing the forest slope of the Cheiron. The municipality is bounded to the north by the Estéron valley, famous for its swimming and canyoning sites. At the bottom of the village, we are greeted by the facade of the St-Georges church, curiously located a little far away, on the road to La Roque-en-Provence. A staircase connects the church of St-Georges to the village, but you can continue by car to the entrance of the village where you park just before the town hall square. On the square, a pretty fountain decorated with lions' heads makes a refreshing murmur sound, the women of the village knit on the benches. Conségudes is a peaceful village. The town hall has a nice bell tower. On the square, the facades of the houses give a glimpse of the rest of the village. Some have been restored, with ochre plaster and coloured shutters, others retain the austerity of the exposed stones. Take the time to enjoy the magnificent view of the Cheiron, before venturing into the steep alleys. The village is crossed from bottom to top by narrow stairways along which the houses are staggered, and connected by transverse alleys. You need good legs to walk around Conségudes but the walk is charming. The most courageous can climb above the village to the Chapelle St-Paul, which offers a magnificent view of the Estéron valley.

Some covered vaulted passages recall the medieval past of the village. At the bend of an alleyway we discover the Ste-Marguerite chapel, moving by its simplicity. Further on, the old communal oven. The dry stone walls hide peaceful gardens where fig trees and grapevines

grow. Large Provençal jars are arranged here and there, offering the visitor succulent plants and bouquets of fragrant lavender. Everyone puts a touch of green to make the village welcoming.

- ▶ **Altitude of the municipality:** from 256 to 1,464 m
- ▶ **Village altitude:** 640 m
- ▶ **110 inhabitants**
- ▶ **A little history.** It was the Templar Knights who founded Conségudes (Consécuta) in 1159. There was a fortified square there, because 12th century writings relate the presence of the *Castrum de Conségudis*. As early as 1351, there is mention of a church, then in 1388 there are mentions of the village, but not of the castle, which would have disappeared at that time. The territory is then linked to the Ferres territory, 5 km away. Conségudes was at that time located on the territory of the Seigneurie des Laugier. It was around the 17th century that a new village was created, with the creation of a new church dedicated to Saint George, and mentioned in 1715. However, throughout the 18th century, the church of Conségudes would depend on the church of Ferres.

Sightseeing

- ▶ **Chapelle Sainte-Marguerite.** Touching by its simplicity, it was built in the 18th century.
- ▶ **Chapelle Saint-Paul.** Perched on the eponymous mountain, north of the town, it offers a beautiful panoramic view on the Estéron valley.
- ▶ **St-Jean and St-Michel oratories.** They date from the 18th or 19th centuries.
- ▶ **The Bouisse bridge.** Old washhouse and source of the Bouisse.
- ▶ **The Pascaline oak.** One of the oldest and largest in Europe (400 to 500 years old).

■ ÉGLISE SAINT GEORGES at the junction of the D1 and the D 501

The église St-Georges is curiously located at the foot of the village, on the road to Conségudes, as if to welcome travellers. Classically built, this 18th century building has the simplicity of mountain churches. A square side bell tower is attached to the south of the nave. It contains an equestrian statue of St. George overcoming the dragon. At the end of April, on St. George's Day, patron saint of the village, this statue is processed through the streets of Conségudes.

Leisure

- ▶ **Hiking.** Cheiron Mountain offers trails to hiking enthusiasts, but also to mountain bikers.
- ▶ The Estéron, which flows at the north of the municipality, enables to practice many aquatic activities, such as swimming, fishing, canoeing or canyoning.



Chapelle Sainte-Marguerite.



COURSEGOULES

Whether you arrive from the Col de Vence or from Gréolières, there is this moment when you take the picturesque D8 road to cross the small bridge over the Cagne. Coursegoules then appears, a harmonious village nestled on a promontory, with the Cheiron massif in the background. This postcard image summarizes the situation of the village. Its facades face the south and the sun, (we are 20 km from the sea as the crow flies) and the Cheiron behind, with 1,778 m at the highest point, which offers a pure and lively air all year round. Coursegoules proudly claims to be half Mediterranean and half mountainous. Half of the municipality is in a classified site! Part of it extends south of the village on the St-Barnabé plateau, another part extends northwards on the Cheiron massif. The village is surrounded by old ramparts, of which are still some remains in some places. It is a village of character, a village for lovers of old stones, with a beautiful architectural unity. Most of the buildings are built of local stone. The result is a harmonious overall unity, which gives Coursegoules a particularly picturesque character. Scrolling through the medieval alleys and covered passages, you discover a 19th century fountain, a charming porch or a vault. You'll stop to take a picture of a door topped by a carved lintel, perhaps an old mansion? Around an alleyway, you can hear a fountain drizzling: here is the Place du Plat with a picturesque wash-house and a covered fountain to refreshen walkers. Further on, a staircase leads down to the bottom of the village, inviting you to take it. It leads to the Pountis, a covered passage under the old ramparts, which offers a magnificent view of the valley of the Cagne below. After visiting the village, you can refresh yourself at the fountain of the Placette.

The geographical location of the village, which appears when one arrives from Vence as the gateway to the Haut Pays has favoured the establishment of many craftsmen and companies in various sectors of activity. Today, Coursegoules, with more than 500 inhabitants, is one of the villages in the region where economic and tourist activity has grown considerably in recent years. Coursegoules is also a remarkable site identified as part of the Natura 2000 network, which aims to improve the consideration of biodiversity issues in human activities.

▶ **Altitude of the municipality:** from 640 to 1,700 m.

Parking

In season, it is preferable to park on the St-Eloi car park, at the top of the village. Take the Cousègles path which goes up to the village, then turn immediately right ("Parking" sign) on the chemin du Brec, and continue for 2 km. The car park, very central for a village visit, is on the left below the cemetery.

▶ **Village altitude:** 1,002 m

▶ **520 inhabitants**

▶ Commune of the Regional Natural Park Préalpes d'Azur.

▶ **A little history.** Originally the site was occupied by a Celto-Ligurian oppidum. Several Celto-ligure enclosures are listed around the village: the Tower, Corsica, Camp-Reu, Pater Noster, Puy de Naouri. There are also Roman remains: Roman milestones exist at Mares de la Bouissière on the St-Barnabé site. It is also thought that the site of the St-Michel church, 1 km west of the village, housed a Gallo-Roman villa. In the 13th century, Coursegoules was the stronghold of the lords of Villeneuve. In 1636, Coursegoules became a royal city. As everywhere in the region, from the 19th century onwards, the village gradually depopulated until the second half of the 20th century, rising from 600 inhabitants in 1836 to 132 inhabitants in 1962. From the 20th century onwards, the opposite phenomenon occurred. Today the population of Coursegoules exceeds 500 inhabitants.

Sightseeing

■ LA CHAPELLE DES PENITENTS BLANCS

Place du Cheiron

A beautiful Romanesque building, enlarged in the 17th century, it is located at the north of the village.

■ LA CHAPELLE ST MICHEL

Parking above the church.

Access by foot on a marked path.

It is located 1.3 km west of the village. It was probably built on the site of an old Gallo-Roman villa. There is a tombstone on which you can read: "To Fuscus and Favor, sons of Secundus, who died at 19, and the other at 13, sons of... Nicentus and Velia, daughter of Favor, their parents, raised this monument". The building probably dates from the end of the 11th century. It includes a nave with two vaulted sections in pointed barrel, probably built in the 13th century, as a replacement of the framework. You enter the chapel through a broken-arched portal rebuilt in the 13th century. The chapelle Saint-Michel is listed in the department's General Inventory of Historic Monuments.

■ LA DEMEURE

DE DIANE DE POITIERS

A beautiful 17th century building that would have belonged to Diane de Poitiers.

■ LA FAÇADE DE L'ÉCOLE FREINET

Rue de l'Éscaou

Célestin Freinet was a teacher and precursor of the modern school movement. He made the children of the Vence school make a bas-relief on the facade (5 m x 3), from animal to man, showing all the trades of a mountain village. The bas-relief was furnished by a Vallauris ceramist.



NIZAR JOMAA AND MITCHELL DARLAND: ART AND NATURE

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Art is Mitchell, and nature is Nizar. Unless it's the other way round, these two being so close. Mitchell is the artist, and it's nature that inspires him. Nizar is the gardener, but it is art that inspires his horticultural creations. When he goes for a visit his garden, Nizar always brings a shear. Nothing escapes him! As we progress from bamboos to conifers, roses and cherry trees, Nizar cuts, lowers, flaps, while explaining how, in three years he and Mitchell transformed this land to make it become the beautiful garden it is today. It was necessary to prune for the light and open up perspectives, to build walls to support the garden, to build stairs to make it easier to walk, to dig the pond for carps!

However, nothing would have designed this former computer engineer to do gardening. But after 12 years of computer science, then 15 years at the head of an art gallery in Paris, the desire for a different life got hold of him. With Mitchell, they went in search of a place where Mitchell could create. They settled in this former sheepfold in Coursegoules, which the previous owners had transformed into a dwelling house. It is a steep land in large terraces, but this did not put them off and started huge restoration works. Nizar is passionate about gardening. He learned everything about the job, and 3 years later, the Vallon du Brez opened. The region does not lack in gardens. But the Vallon du Brez is the only garden at an altitude of 1,000 m. It has varieties from China, South America or Japan, peonies and clematis, irises and Banks roses. Several painted wooden buildings, large lawns, as well as a pool with Chinese carps, punctuate the visit. Colours change according to the flowers and the seasons. Nizar has planted in such a way that some

plants bud in April, others in May and others in June. September sees the garden adorned with the colours of autumn. Winters are for cutting the wood, working stones and restanques.

One plants, the other paints. Mitchell works with ceramics and wood. He creates patinated wooden boards, on which a mixture of resin and graphite is poured, then sanded. The resin can then be rubbed with paint to add reflections. Lava, volcanoes, Japan are among his inspirations, but his favorite muse is above all the nature that surrounds him and that can be found in his paintings, in an abstract form. He is the one who made all the furniture and lighting in the house.

Since they settled in 2013, they have opened the garden to the outside world. The village school can use it, but the garden is also used for yoga, dance, painting and weddings. In spring the house comes back to life with visits of the garden, and, as soon as the weather gets fine, the 2 apartments on the property are rented for weekends or on a weekly basis. The customers are essentially people from the city in need of nature and tranquility.

Gardens of the Vallon du Brez

Apartment rentals, minimum stay: 2 days (one week in summer). Visit of the gardens from April 15th to October 15th, by appointment. Duration of the visit: 1 to 2 hours. Prices and information on www.le-vallon-du-brez.com

■ **LE JARDIN BOTANIQUE
DU VALLON DU BREZ**
30, route de l'Ourméou
☎ 06 63 11 19 00



Portraits of Nizar and Mitchell, the Vallon du Brez Garden.

■ **LA FERME D'ALAIN**
220, route de St Barnabé
 ☎ 04 93 58 15 23

Adult: 13,50 €. Child: 11,50 €.

Alain's farm is a cattle farm, and visiting it is an opportunity to discover the other animals: horses, goats, ponies, cows, chickens, rabbits, geese and ducks. During the guided tour (2 hours) visitors can practice grooming and feeding animals, milking cows, walking dwarf goats, feeding the goat, collecting eggs or feeding carrots to rabbits. Demonstration of the herding dog's work. La Ferme d'Alain also offers the sale of its production (eggs, dwarf goats and donkeys).

■ **LE JARDIN BOTANIQUE
 DU VALLON DU BREC**
30, route de l'Ourméou
 ☎ 06 63 11 19 00
 www.le-vallon-du-brec.com
 info@le-vallon-du-brec.com

The garden is open from April 15th to mid-November. Guided tour lasts 2 hours, by appointment only. Individual rates: 10 € per person, with a minimum of 4 people. Group rates from 20 people: 8 € per person.

Located just below the village, the Botanical Garden of the Vallon du Brec offers visitors a series of plant discoveries: basins and aquatic plants, small enclosed gardens, cacti and aloe vera of large size... You walk along via footbridges, stairs, gloriettes, which allow varied views of the surrounding landscape. Because if the garden owes much to the talents of its owners – botanists, artists and builders – its success also depends on a careful reading of the environment, followed by an interpretation of the place. The site occupies 2 hectares of land: 1 hectare for the botanical garden and 1 hectare of nature where deers and wild boars roam freely. For art lovers, the Vallon du Brec also offers a visit to Mitchell Darland's studio. (Oil paintings on wood, art objects and ceramic pots).

■ **LE LAVOIR
 DE LA PLACE DU PLAT**
Place du Plat

It was the social bond of the women of the village, who met there at dawn to wash their clothes, gossiping about various stories. Today there is still a wash-house and a fountain. Both are covered. On the walls, old photos of Coursegoules in the past.

■ **L'ÉGLISE
 SAINTE MARIE MADELEINE**
13, rue de la Clastre

Beautiful Romanesque church, in Provençal style, from the 12th century, enlarged in 1658. There is a copy of an altarpiece of Louis Bréa, representing Saint John the Baptist, between Saint Petronilla and Saint Gotthard.

■ **LE MOULIN À GRAIN**
Route du Moulin

Located below the village, after the Cagne bridge when you arrive at Coursegoules, it dates from 1246, and was built by the Templars on a Phoenician model (source

archives Aix en Provence). Nowadays, the mill has been restored, but is not open to visitors. For centuries Coursegoules was known to provide Vence with wheat. The Coursegoules mill ceased to operate at the end of the 19th century. It remained abandoned until 1964, when it was bought and restored by private individuals.

■ **LA PLACE DU CHEIRON**
LA PLACE DU CHEIRON
**LA PORTE
 INFÉRIEURE DU POUNTIS**

Located at the highest point of the village, Place du Cheiron offers a magnificent panoramic view of the foothills of the eponymous mountain.

■ **LES REMPARTS DU VILLAGE**

Coursegoules was built on a rocky peak in a defensive way with the construction of ramparts and three access gates to the village, to the north, south and east. The castle dates from the 13th century, and has undergone several changes. It belonged to the Villeneuve descendants until 1620. When Coursegoules became a royal town, the castle was taken over by the Pénitents Blancs. You can still see a part of the covered way, with loopholes, as well as the village gates.

■ **LES SITES CELTO-LIGURES**

There are many Celto-ligurian remains, stone enclosures, oppidoms, on the sites of Autreville, Campréou, Pater Noster, la Tour. These places are located in the heart of nature, some of them on Saint-Barnabé plateau. They can be reached by taking the hiking trails that criss-cross the municipality's territory.

Knife & fork

■ **L'ATELIER GOURMAND**
Place de la Clastre
 ☎ 06 22 11 06 96

From September to June: open Tuesday all day, Wednesday lunchtime, and from Friday lunchtime to Monday lunchtime. In July and August: open every day. Children's menu: 10 €. Starter and main course, or main course and dessert, around 25 €. Reception of groups (up to 20 people – by reservation only). Terrace. Pizzas on site and to go. 2 terraces, one with panoramic view.

The Atelier Gourmand is held on the pretty Place de la Clastre, in the heart of the village. A varied cuisine based on fresh produce is served, with a special emphasis on seasonal products such as local lamb. The dishes have a reputation for being hearty! While waiting for your meal, you can also enjoy one of the 'aperitifs' proposed by the Chef: Socca, Chacha, Anchoïade maison, Chorizo, Soubressade... The restaurant has two terraces, one with colourful furniture, under the lime tree, the other sheltered under a veranda, with a beautiful view of the Cheiron massif. Amélie also proposes artisanal products: terrines and jams.

■ LE BISTRO DE SOPHIE

37, place Neuve

☎ 04 93 59 11 19

Open all year round. On reservation only. Thursday to Tuesday from 9am (last service at 7pm). Menus from 20 € to 29 € (during the week, starter/dish/dessert formula at 20 €. Weekend: starter/main course/cheese/dessert formula at 29 €). Reservation recommended.

At the entrance to the village of Coursegoules, Sophie treats gourmets with her delicious homemade dishes typical of Nice (raviolis on Sundays, capouns terrine, stuffed vegetables, local lamb...) prepared exclusively with fresh products! An address to remember!

■ LE PETIT CREUX

15-19, place de la Combe

☎ 06 21 62 35 10

Laurence Gourdon welcomes you to her charming tea and creperie house, which also sells bread and local products (olive oil and jam). On sunny days, you can enjoy the delicious sunny terrace while listening to the refreshing murmur of the fountain. This terrace is the meeting place for hikers. When it is cooler, we can relax on an old sofa, in a cosy atmosphere, surrounded by old objects, watering cans, old tools, teapots, and other objects that Laurence has brought back from her travels in Asia.

Leisure

The natural environment of Coursegoules, with 40 km² of natural territory, is particularly suitable for hiking, cycling or mountain biking. Whether you are an experienced

hiker or just for a little walk, dozens of hiking trails will allow you to admire the nature around Coursegoules, rich in fauna and flora!

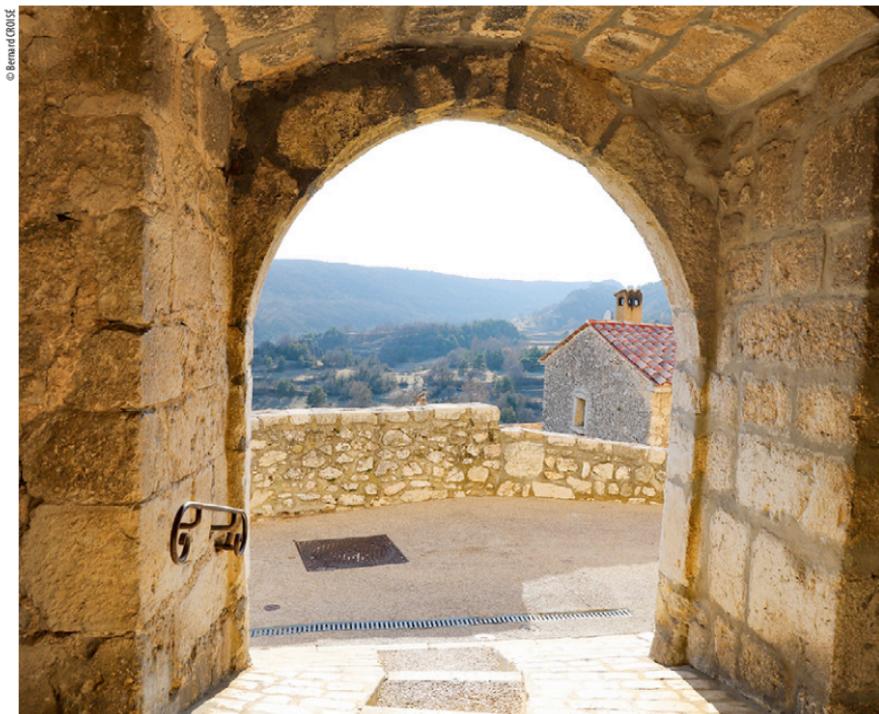
▮ **The plateau of Saint-Barnabé:** from the car park located 800 m before the hamlet of Saint-Barnabé, you can hike on the plateau, to discover the "champ des Idoles", curious limestone blocks eroded by rain and wind, which evoke characters or animals. In St-Barnabé hamlet is a pretty and simple rural church.

▮ **The Vallongues woods:** at the end of the village in the direction of Gréolières, these woods are a cool place to walk in summer.

▮ **Military mile markers:** like our modern mile markers, they were used as distance markers on the old Roman roads. On the old Roman road from Vence to Castellane, which crosses the town of Coursegoules, 17 milestones are referenced. It is easy to see the milestone of Autreville, located on the old road from Vence to Castellane, at an altitude of 1,090 m, on a hike that will take you from Coursegoules to the Taillet ridge.

▮ **The Vieiriou circuit:** 3h30 (also called the Cheiron Ridge). A loop from Coursegoules, which allows you to admire a wonderful panorama over the Alps and the Côte d'Azur as background. On the way back you can visit the Saint-Michel chapel.

▮ **The Saint-Jean Baou:** 4h45. A very pleasant loop to discover the Saint-Barnabé plateau and enjoy a remarkable view of the Loup valley.



The "pountis" and view of the valley.



Saint-Barnabé chapel.

► **Horse riding:** the horse is a very good means of transport to discover the Saint-Barnabé plateau and enjoy this unique environment in the heart of a listed site. Two ranches offer horseback riding or pony rides.

■ FORT APACHE

Col de Vence

☎ 04 93 58 91 43

www.fortapache.ffe.com

At the cross roads to the hamlet of Saint-Barnabé, Pénélope Purtell offers horse and pony rides, boarding, adventure trails and a discovery programme.

■ RANCH EL BRONCO

Col de Vence

☎ 06 08 03 37 96

www.ranchelbronco.com

ranchelbronco@gmail.com

Celia Krzmic and Françoise Merle offer horse and pony rides on the plateau of Saint-Barnabé.

Shopping

■ LA BOUTIQUE

15-19, place de la Combe

☎ 07 86 03 00 55

Next to Le Petit Creux, Magali has a charming boutique in which she offers her own creations, ceramic jewellery (necklaces, rings, bracelets) and clay objects, as well as a whole assortment of dresses and hats, which we enjoy trying on near the fountain of the village.

■ LA COOP DES BAOUS

220, route de St Barnabé

☎ 04 93 59 74 78

See page 53.

■ GAEC DU CHEIRON

1280, route de l'Ourmeau

☎ 06 16 50 27 99

Every day from April to September.

Direct sale of lamb, kid and beef meat on the farm. Goat cheese.

■ LOU BARA DE PAÏS

Rue du Four ☎ 06 19 17 41 55

Open from Tuesday to Sunday from 8am to 12.30pm.

Baked bread in the communal wood-fire oven in the way of the ancient bakery.

In the surroundings

Saint-Barnabé

The Saint-Barnabé hamlet is located in the south of the commune's territory, on the plateau of Saint-Barnabé. You can reach it by car by the road to Vence, turning right on the D302 just before the pass, towards Saint-Barnabé. There is a rustic chapel, as well as a curious pile of prehistoric stones, called the Champ des Idoles. For the record, the plateau of Saint-Barnabé is supposed to be a high place for extraterrestrial demonstrations. Odd encounters guaranteed!

GOURDON

No need wondering why Gourdon is one of the most beautiful villages of France. The site, the view, the architecture, the castle, everything is there. The site, to start with: hung on a rocky peak, at an altitude of 760 m, Gourdon is a real balcony overlooking the Mediterranean sea. The village looks great, built around an imposing feudal castle. Here no ruins, but this beautiful medieval castle, still nearly intact, for our greatest pleasure, with round towers, loopholes and gargoyles. Then, the view: you have to cross the village to Victoria Square, to enjoy a wonderful panoramic view on 80 km of coastline, from Nice in the east to the red hills of the Esterel in the west. As the light changes during the day, islands and hills are tinged with shades of blue and green, a delight for photographers. Finally, the architecture: grouped around the amazing castle, the old buildings have been beautifully restored, forming a harmonious whole and giving the village a particular authenticity. The St-Vincent church and chapels with their Provençal bell towers, give to Gourdon that charming touch that makes the village one of the main tourist attractions of the region. Shopkeepers and craftsmen liven up the picturesque alleys of Gourdon, making the village lively and animated all year round. Gourdon is connected to Bar-sur-Loup by the Chemin du Paradis, a former mule track with a 537 m gradient.

▶ **Altitude of the municipality:** from 157 to 1,335 m

▶ **Village altitude:** 760 m

▶ **450 inhabitants**

▶ Part of the Regional Natural Park Préalpes d'Azur.

▶ **A little history:** The castle was built in phases from the 9th century on the Gourdon cliff, which was from the beginning a fortified place. Property of the Counts

of Provence until the 13th century, Gourdon Castle then passed to the Grasse-Bar family, then to the Villeneuve Flayosc, and the Borriglione family. From the medieval castle, there are still three round towers at the corners and the wall at the north. The rest dates back to the 17th century. The place is a very good example of a Provençal defensive castle. Private property, the castle is definitively closed to public. At the end of the 19th century, Gourdon extended to the hamlet of Pont du Loup in the Loup valley, which helped to develop a perfume plants activity, orange and olive trees, the climate being more favourable.

■ BUREAU D'INFORMATION TOURISTIQUE DE GOURDON

1, place Victoria

☎ 04 93 09 68 25

See page 13.

Sightseeing

▶ **The Fountain.** It dates back to 1852. It was built to bring water to the village.

▶ **The Viaduct:** At Pont du Loup, we can see huge pillars. This is all that remains of the viaduct of the ancient line of the Chemins de Fer de Provence, opened in 1890. Bombed on August 24, 1944, it was never rebuilt, the railway line having been removed.

■ CASCADES DU SAUT DU LOUP

Route des Gorges

Pont du Loup

☎ 04 93 09 68 88

www.cascade-sautduloup.com

Open all year round. Free visits. Every day and public holidays from 10am to 7pm. Single rate: 1 €. Catering (restaurant in season from 12pm to 3pm; snack bar Saut du Loup from 10am to 7pm). Reception of groups. Parking. The Saut du Loup site enables you to approach the Loup river and the waterfalls. You will see the Grande Marmite formed by the erosion of the river in the tertiary and quaternary periods, the Demoiselles waterfalls, the Pétrifiantes, as well as a view point perched on a rocky peak with a panorama from where you can admire them all. A quick and pleasant stopover.

■ CHÂTEAU DE GOURDON

☎ 04 93 09 68 02

www.chateau-gourdon.com

chateaugourdon@gmail.com

The castle is a private property and is permanently closed to public and the collections it housed have all been dispersed.

■ L'ÉGLISE ST VINCENT

5, rue de l'École

In Romanesque-Provençal style, it was built between the 10th and 12th centuries. It houses a beautiful Romanesque font with an angel's head, as well as the reliquary busts of Saint Luce, Saint Juste, and Saint Vincent. The church is listed as a Historic Monument in the Alpes-Maritimes.



Gourdon village.



© Bernard CHASSE

View of Gourdon from Place Victoria.

FROM PLACE TO PLACE

■ LA PLACE VICTORIA

It offers one of the most beautiful panoramas of the Côte d'Azur, from Nice to the Esterel. It is after a visit of Queen Victoria to Gourdon in 1891 that the square was named. An orientation table informs visitors about the landscape.

■ LA SOURCE PARFUMÉE

Parfumerie Galimard, Rue Principale

☎ 04 93 09 20 00

www.galimard.com

info@galimard.com



Open all year round from 10am to 7pm in summer. Until 6pm in winter. Visit of the lavender fields. Ask for more information at the shop. Parking for buses and cars.

More than a hundred years ago, Siméon Roux, a flower broker, producer of perfume plants, and his wife Gabrielle operated orange plantations. In 1946 his son, Joseph Roux, distiller-perfumer and his wife, Jeanne, owner of the old factory of the perfumed source in Gourdon distilled the flowers to collect the finest essences. Now, it is Chantal Roux who welcomes you to the old distillery. She offers the discovery of her flower fields in Gourdon and her new artisanal production of ancient candles. In this good smelling store, flows a source in which you traditionally throw money that is retrieved each year, counted and handed over to an association. The Source parfumée celebrated its 70 years in 2016 and, at the same time, was renamed "La lavanderie de Marie".

Knife & Fork

■ AUBERGE DE GOURDON

Route de Caussols

☎ 04 93 09 69 69

www.aubergedegourdon06.fr

aubergedegourdon@gmail.com

Open every day and public holidays from 8am to 7pm. Closed on Friday from mid-November to mid-April. Menu at €22.50 (starter + main course + dessert). Children's menu: €9.80. Daily special: €12. Set menu: €15 (starter + dessert), €18.50 (starter and main course or main course and dessert). Holiday voucher. Groups welcome (birthdays, seminars, receptions, etc). Terrace. Parking.

At the bottom of the village, the hostel of Roland Chiroleu is a nice and friendly place and houses the paragliding club. The frame and atmosphere is as welcoming as the boss. You'll eat here a local provençale cuisine, rich in fresh flavors with fresh products. Depending on the seasons and the market, Roland offers suggestions on the slate, a choice of pasta and also grills. The dishes are generous. The Provençale plate is a specialty composed of house terrine, chard crisps, barbajans, goat cheese on toasts, panisses, small stuffed vegetables and even sometimes mushrooms in oil. The desserts are unmissable: Fresh fruit gratin, apple charlotte with caramel sauce, seasonal fruit crumble, tiramisu, parfait iced with homemade honey. The afternoon, in the dining room or on the flowered terrace, drinks, waffles, ice cream, sandwiches... He is also an amateur beekeeper and in his secret garden, he picks his honey twice a year, in June (spring taste of thyme and tilleul of Gourdon) and mid September (perfume of lavender). He sells it if he still has some left, so hurry up to go there!

■ LES GRANDS HOMMES

2, rue Armand-Fallières

☎ 04 93 77 66 21

www.restaurant-lesgrandshommes.fr

accueil@restaurant-lesgrandshommes.fr

Closed for annual holidays in December. Low season: open from Sunday to Friday. Open 7 days a week in high season. Booking recommended. Single menu at 22,80 € (25 € in the evening). A la carte from 25 to 30 €. Children's menu: 11 €. Formula: 19,50 € (dish and dessert). Terrace.

View over Gourdon.

© Bernard CROISE





Gourdon pottery.

© Bernard CROISÉ



This is a good place to eat in the heart of the village during a visit to the magnificent alleys of Gourdon. In the afternoon pancakes and drinks are served. The singular name of the place is explained by the dishes named with the name of famous people, who've actually "been up" to Gourdon over the past centuries. We can therefore find on the menu the Napoleon plate, the Louis XV soup, the Garibaldi salad, the Henri IVth poule au pot, and the Queen Victoria crumble.... In order not to overshadow these great men, the powerful Queen (who visited Gourdon in 1891 as attested by the nameplate affixed to the castle) is described as "Great Honorary Man"! The cuisine is traditional, prepared with fresh products and beautifully presented dishes. If possible, have your meal on the roof terrace which offers a panoramic view of the village and the coast line.

■ LA TAVERNE PROVENCALE

Place de l'Eglise

☎ 04 93 09 68 22

www.lataverneprovencale.com
sainte-catherine@wanadoo.fr



Closed at the beginning of December and from the end of Christmas holidays until the end of January. Low season: open every day from 9am to 7pm. Open for lunch and dinner 7 days a week in July and August. Booking advised. Set menu at €24. Children's menu: €14. Checks are not accepted. Groups welcome. Terrace. Parking.

This tavern located in Gourdon is the oldest establishment in the village. Created in 1933 by E. Reymond the restaurant is located in a century-old building. It is also managed by the same family, now Marie-Christine Bousckri. Beautiful stone facade with blue shutters, an open kitchen on the large room, a large terrace that offers a superb panorama on the sea... The place has seen generations of customers, friends and personalities come to enjoy an traditional cuisine. Here, all is provençal: provençal farandole (small stuffed vegetables, tapenade, pies, eggplant caviar), house terrine, stew... trout (almonds, meunière or blue) and crayfish (nage or a la bordelaise) straight from the fish tank to your plate! A daily special is offered for lunch according to the market. Don't miss the almond honey pie, a home made creation. Tea room and shop with traditional products on Sainte-Catherine square.

Leisure

▶ **Hiking.** Gourdon is the starting point for several hikes at all levels: the Paradise circuit (old mule track, altitude difference of more than 500 metres), the Haut Montet, the Cavillone plateau circuit, the Pic de Courmettes

▶ **Caving.** On the Caussols plateau, with the cave of the Cavillone pass or the grotte de l'Ours cave

▶ **Animations.** The municipality organizes many events throughout the year. Concerts, exhibitions, July 14th ball and St. Jean Day fires, as well as patron saint celebrations. Info: tourisme.gourdon06@agglo-casa.fr – ☎ 04 93 09 68 25.

■ ÉCOLE DE PARAPENTE ASCENDANCE

Auberge de Gourdon

Route de Caussols

☎ 06 61 42 08 64

www.ascendance06.com

contact@ascendance06.com

Open all year round. Low season: every day from 9.30am to 5pm. High season: every day from 9am to 6pm. Flight according to weather conditions. First flights: two-seater sensation 90 € (15 minutes); two-seater plus 120 € (30 minutes); discovery day: 140 € (first ground sensations + a first flight). Other services and prices available on the website.

A certified paragliding school which exists since 1990 in the village. It's an outdoor, fun and... peaceful activity, says the owners! So, if you feel like it, you can offer yourself a baptism, an apprenticeship or take lessons. Departure from the cliffs that dominate Gourdon, well protected from the winds, to discover unforgettable sensations. Prices depend on the service.

■ FUN KART

Plateau de la Sarrée, Route de Gourdon

Commune du Bar-sur-Loup à 7 km de Gourdon

☎ 04 93 42 48 08 – www.fun-karting.com

Open all year round. From Wednesday to Sunday from 9.30 am till nightfall. Kid's kart, size 1,30 m minimum: 7,10 € for 5 minutes. Electronic timing, equipment with the European safety standards, mechanical assistance. 270 cc kart, 350 meter circuit, minimum size 1.50 m: 19.80 € for 10 minutes. Kart 390 cc, circuit of 1 180 meters, 16 years old minimum: 43,70 € for 15 minutes.

Looking for strong sensations? Fun Kart is the only kart track in the Alpes-Maritimes. The establishment offers different formulas as well as days for those over 15 years old, whether you are an individual or a company. Choose your time, you have an electronic timing system and can practice safely (helmets, overalls and winter gloves provided) on a 650-metre track entirely privatized. The website displays the maps for the tracks. Ready, steady, Go!

Shopping

Art glassware, soap works, nougat and gingerbread, dried flowers, you'll be spoiled by choice. Some craftsmen offer visits of their workshops.

▶ The list of Gourdon's craftsmen is on the town hall's website: www.gourdon06.fr

■ LA MARQUSETTE

Grandrue

☎ 04 93 09 68 29

Open every day and on public holidays from 10.30am to 6.30pm.

For about thirty years, Francis Saunier has been making perfumed and mellow gingerbread, with no colourings or additives of any kind. He explains the manufacturing process to those who are interested. You will find happiness with all the different varieties: plain, orange, fig and walnut, candied orange, hazelnut cherry, almond apricots. He also went into nougat and prepares hard white nougat with lavender honey and soft black nougat with honey and almonds. Everything is handmade, of course.

GRÉOLIÈRES

Gréolières opens out on the southern slope of Cheiron Mountain, facing the village of Cipières. Located at an altitude of 836 m, the village is among the highest in the region and overlooks the Loup valley. From the valley, the view of Gréolières is breathtaking. Surrounded by vegetation, and the rocky mass of the Cheiron as background, the village seems an oasis of life and nature in the middle of a mineral world. Seen from the road leading to the Cheiron, Gréolières appears below like a pretty Provençal village, with a bell tower and castle ruins, tiled roofs, facades with coloured shutters, and the deep blue-green of the Gorges du Loup in the background. The Cheiron mountain dominates the village, imposing and protective, with marked hiking trails, Provençal essences, thyme, savory, wild lavender. Below are the Gorges du Loup, siphons and waterfalls, natural baths and fly fishing. In such an environment, Gréolières amply deserves its slogan "Breathe the fresh air!". Two castles are still visible in the village, which originally developed around 2 different sites: Gréolières-Basses. (the actual village) and Gréolières-Hautes, which occupied a rocky spur above the current village. The site of Gréolières-Hautes was inhabited from the 11th to the 19th century, but is now abandoned. At the entrance of the central street, you'll see the communal washhouse, which has been nicely preserved. It allowed the local washerwomen to wash their clothes there, without having to kneel down. A little further on, the fountain provided the village with drinking water. It was moved in 1938 to the side of the road to allow vehicles to pass through, but the murmur of its fresh water still enchants residents and visitors. The village is criss-crossed by a few narrow streets lined with houses with exposed stone walls, typical of the Provençal mountains. From the central square, an alleyway climbs the castle hill to the church of St-Pierre, whose bell tower is topped by an elegant typical Provençal wrought-iron bell tower. A little higher up you'll find the Croix du Tricot, on the square with the same name. From this square, you have a nice view of the Cheiron and the ruins of Gréolières-Hautes. Here we are at the foot of the ruins of Gréolières

castle, which reminds us about the powerful past of the village and its tormented history. In summer, the region offers all the charm of the Provençal mountains, whether around the village of Gréolières or the resort of Gréolières-les-Neiges. In winter, activities move to Gréolières-les-Neiges. In addition to the village, the municipality has two hamlets: the hamlet of Saint-Pons, located 5 km east of the village, on the road to Coursegoules and Gréolières-les-Neiges (1,400 to 1,800 m), it is the closest ski resort to the Côte d'Azur. The view of the coast from the summit of the Cheiron is sublime, and extends from Monaco to the Esterel.

- ▶ **Altitude of the village:** 836 m
- ▶ **Altitude of the municipality:** from 472 to 1,778 m
- ▶ **607 inhabitants**
- ▶ Commune of the Regional Natural Park Préalpes d'Azur.
- ▶ **A little history:** As early as prehistoric times, the upper valley of the Loup has been an important communication route between the coast and the Alps, and the territory of Gréolières has been very popular. It is said that there was an oppidum that must have been on the Baou of St-Jean. Later, the Roman road linking Vence to Castellane crossed the territory of Gréolières, helping to make the site a place of passage and stays. There are still many remains of this period: tiles of the Roman road, milestones, tombs. It was in the 11th century, in 1033, that the name of the fortified town of Graulieras appeared on the map of the Abbey of St-Victor, in Marseille: *Vineam unam in Graulieras*. The castle of Gréolières, whose foundations date back to the 5th century, was from the 13th century the stronghold of the Villeneuve – Vence family. In the 16th century, there were religious wars and Gréolières was attacked by Protestants in 1574. In 1592, the Duke of Savoy's troops partially destroyed the castle with 200 cannonballs. It was restored in the 17th and 18th centuries. In 1838, the Vence family, the owner, sold the castle to Jacques Flory, a resident of the village, for 17,000 francs in gold coins.

Gréolières-les-Neiges

Gréolières-les-Neiges is located on the northern slope of the Cheiron massif, 18 km from the village of Gréolières. The road bypasses the Cheiron to the west, passing through tunnels and clues, offering a magnificent panoramic view of the Estéron valley and the Alps mountains at 2 km from the resort. The resort spreads along the road, in the Grand Pré depression, at the foot of the slopes that climb towards the Cheiron. We ski here 21 km as the crow flies from the Mediterranean sea! The slopes are laid out on the slopes of the Cheiron on nearly 1,000 hectares. Far from the big resorts, Gréolières-les-Neiges is perfect for a family stay. The exposure to the north of the Cheiron limits the melting of the snow, and the resort keeps a good snow cover, despite its very "southern" location and the low altitude of the slopes. The resort is equipped with an automatic snowmaking installation on 4 km of slopes. From the top of the Cheiron, you can contemplate a circular panorama, which includes both the coast and the Mediterranean to the south, as well as the Alps to the north!

■ BUREAU D'INFORMATION TOURISTIQUE DE GRÉOLIÈRES

Route de Font-Rougières

☎ 04 93 24 10 79

See page 14.

Sightseeing

▶ **Eglise Saint-Jacques le Majeur** : opened to visits on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10.30am to 12pm. (☎ 04 93 42 70 11)

▶ **The ruins of Hautes Gréolières**, with the castle, the Saint-Étienne (13th century) and Sainte-Petronille (17th century) chapels.

▶ **The ruins of Notre Dame de Verdelay chapel**: (9th century) located along the ancient Roman road.

▶ **The Romanesque église Saint-Pierre** (12th and 13th centuries), located in the village. Several times redesigned, it has a lateral tower topped by a bell tower.

▶ **The washhouse and the fountain**, at the eastern entrance of the village.

▶ **The milestone**, one of the milestones that marked the Roman Ventiana road. These milestones were placed every 1,482 m.

▶ **The Heritage Tour**. The tourist information office publishes an interesting leaflet "Circuit du Patrimoine". It will only take you an hour's walk around the village (1 km) to learn everything about 800 years of Gréolières' history. The circuit includes explanatory panels installed by the Heritage Association of Gréolières.

■ LE CHÂTEAU DE BASSES GRÉOLIÈRES Chemin de la Roche

The ruins of this castle are located in the heart of the actual village, and cannot be visited. It was built in 1070 by Rostang, lord of Gréolières. In the 13th century, the Counts of Provence led an offensive to take control of the upper Loup Valley. It was Raymond Bérenger of Provence who took around 1230, the fiefdom of Gréolières, run by Bertrand d'Aiguines. In 1235, Romée de Villeneuve, Baron de Vence, inherited the castle. The Gréolières fiefdom remained the property of the Villeneuve family until the Revolution. The Middle Ages saw conflicts aiming to link Provence to the France of Charles VIII. After attacks at the end of the 14th century, the castle's defences were reinforced. From 1560 onwards, religious wars broke out: Protestant "Rasats" and Catholic "Carcists" clashed militarily in Provence. In 1574, the castle was attacked by Protestants from Grasse, while Claude de Villeneuve was himself a Protestant. They were rescued by an expeditionary force of Vence residents, who feared that the Protestants would then attack their city. In 1592, it was the Duke of Savoy's troops who besieged the castle and partially destroyed it. The castle was rebuilt around 1600, then restored in 1712. In 1747, another troubled period with the Austrian Succession War, Austro-Sardinian troops bombarded the castle. During the French Revolution, the castle of Gréolières was sold and fell into ruins. It was bought by an individual at the end of the 20th century. The castle of Gréolières is listed in the Inventory of Historical Monuments of the Alpes-Maritimes.



© David VINCE BOE AU



View over Gréolières.

© Bernard CROISÉ



■ LE CHÂTEAU DE HAUTES GRÉOLIÈRES

Route de Gréolières les Neiges

You can see the ruins of the castle above the village. As the 19th century, a castle was built on a rocky spur, north of the actual village, to protect the inhabitants from the Saracen incursions. The current castle, in ruins, was built later, by the Count of Provence, after the fall of Gréolières. The stronghold of Hautes-Gréolières was preserved for some time by the Counts of Provence and was given to the Agoult family. In 1307, Raibaude de Causols, married to Reforciat d'Agoult, lived in the castle. The year 1360 saw the reunification of the 2 sites after the marriage of Bourgette d'Agoult, lady of Hautes-Gréolières, with Giraud de Villeneuve, Lord of Basses-Gréolières and Baron of Vence. The castle of Hautes-Gréolières was destroyed during the religious wars. It will not be restored and is abandoned. In 1787, Hautes-Gréolières ceased to be a parish, and became a village in ruins.

Knife & Fork

■ LA BARRICADE

14, place de la Fontaine

☎ 04 93 59 98 68

labarricade06620@gmail.com

Open from Saturday to Wednesday for lunch; from Friday to Wednesday in the evening. Starters around 10€, dishes from 15 to 20€.

Charline and her husband left their restaurant in Antibes to take over La Barricade. Located in the heart of the village, on the Place de la Fontaine, you'll eat in the charming room or on the shaded terrace. The menu offers a choice of starters, pasta and main courses (burgers, prime rib, Iberian pork pluma or Rossini tuna). The restaurant also offers a menu of delicious pizzas baked in the wood oven. A good address, in the heart of the village of Gréolières.

■ LE RELAIS

1, rue du Ribas

☎ 06 11 05 08 03

p.murati@wanadoo.fr

Open Tuesday to Sunday. Service from 7.30am to 5pm. À la carte: Around €15. Limoncello or coffee offered. WiFi free. For breakfast, lunch or just for a drink, Le Relais welcomes you in the heart of Gréolières. Its terrace with mountain view is an invitation to relax. In the interior, the room is decorated in red tones for a warm atmosphere. You'll enjoy a regional cuisine with Provençal flavors. The generous cafe gourmand is delicious. The chestnut corsican draft beer is also very popular. An address we're happy to come back to. It's better to book on weekends.

■ RESTAURANT DU FONDEUR

900, boulevard du Grand Pré
Gréolières-les-Neiges

☎ 06 60 10 33 30

www.greoskinordique.com

Open from Wednesday to Sunday for lunch.

The Frondeur restaurant offers two places to eat: the Petit Chalet, with a warm and quiet atmosphere, with a fireplace in the corner, or the Cafèt, shared with the Bar and the ski rental, more lively, a place of free exchange where the atmosphere is relaxed. Everything here is homemade. The cuisine is simple and of high quality, and the prices are reasonable. You can enjoy delicatessen dishes, specialties such as tartiflette or Corsican stew, grilled andouillette, spaghetti bolognese, homemade lasagne, or even homemade hot tart with two salmon and leeks. You can end with a homemade pastry: blueberry pie, bourdaloue pie, clafoutis or gourmet coffee.

■ LA VIEILLE AUBERGE

7, place Pierre-Merle

☎ 04 93 59 03 02

Single menu at 23 € (starter, main course and dessert of your choice in the menu). Average price à la carte: 25€.

La Vieille Auberge is centrally located in the village of Gréolières on the main square. The restaurant welcomes you in the pretty room or on the shaded terrace on sunny days. The menu smells good like Provence, you will find specialties from the south, such as the small stuffed vegetables.



Gréolières wash-house.

Marion Luigi: rooted in her territory

Marion Luigi is the director of the joint association of Gréolières and Audoubert resorts. Born in Seranon, a few kilometres from Gréolières, Marion grew up on skis. It was at Audoubert, the twin resort of Gréolières, that she learned to ski. With a mother ski instructor, and a father tracker, let's say that her destiny was already set! After studying in Grasse, then at Politic Sciences in Aix-en-Provence, Marion Luigi wanted to put her skills at the service of her region. She was Director of the Community of Municipalities of the Monts d'Azur, then Project Manager for Territorial Attractiveness and Territorial Marketing for the Community of Municipalities of the Pays de Grasse. As director of the joint association of the resorts of Gréolières and Audoubert, Marion Luigi has various responsibilities in the development, administration and marketing of the stations. She is also responsible for relations with institutions, such as the Préalpes d'Azur Regional Natural Parc, with whom she is currently considering the development of itinerant programmes on foot or by mountain bike, on signposted routes across the massif. The aim is to adapt services, catering, accommodation and transport to promote the development of this activity project. In the current context of global warming, new challenges are emerging for the station of Gréolières. What are the tools to be used to develop the attractiveness of this rural territory, in order to preserve the environment and in a context of respectful tourism? Difficult equation, we will agree. What a long experience for this young woman, whose 9-year-old daughter is already an experienced skier and sportswoman, thus following her mother's footsteps. For Marion, her future is in Gréolières, and nowhere else.



© Bernard CRUSET

Marion Luigi, Director of the joint association of the resorts Gréolières and Audoubert.

Sleeping

■ CHALET ALPINA AQUA RELAX HÔTEL AND SPA***

2985, boulevard du Grand Pré
 ☎ 04 92 11 07 07

alpinahotel-greolieres.fr
contact@alpinahotel-greolieres.fr

Open from mid-July to mid-August, and from the end of December to the end of April. 10 rooms. Double room from 148 €. Half board (from 92€ (in summer) to 117€ (in winter) per person, including breakfast). Breakfast: 12 € (included in the half board or full board). Holiday voucher. Pets accepted (small pets allowed. 10€ supplement per night). Whirlpool bath, sauna.

The hotel re-opened in 2016 after a complete renovation and has a total of 10 rooms: 6 rooms of 25m² with balcony overlooking the Dolines, equipped with upscale bedding, separable beds and a convertible sofa, able to accommodate up to 4 people as well as 4 rooms of 18 to 20m², 2 connecting ones for families. Breakfast is composed of Alsatian sausages, fresh bread, omelette, or Viennese pastries, jams and fruit juices. The bistronomique restaurant, Alsace en Provence faces the slopes, and offers Alsatian specialities in the purest style of an

Alsatian Winstub with the chef's creations as well as the pastry chef's homemade desserts. Relaxation area with Finnish sauna and 240 cm round whirlpool bath with view on the Dolines slopes.

Guesthouses

■ VILLA REGAIN 440 route de Gentelly

☎ 04 89 24 66 94
www.villa-regain.fr
stas.daniel@neuf.fr



4 rooms (breakfast included). From 55 € to 65 €. Dinner at the table d'hôte: 20€. On reservation only. Pets accepted (supplement of 5 €). Whirlpool bath.

Villa Regain offers its 4 guest rooms for a relaxing and natural stay in the Provençal hinterland, just above the pretty village of Gréolières. Villa Regain has been awarded the Qualité Tourisme label, guaranteeing compliance with 400 criteria for the comfort of its clients. A "table d'hôtes" dinner is possible (Reservation required). The hotel offers a Zen space, with whirlpool bath, massage and shop.

► **New service:** rental of electrically assisted bikes.



Gréolières fountain.

Leisure

► **Hiking.** Gréolières is the starting point for many excursions to Cheiron Mountain or to the Gorges du Loup. The GR4 crosses the village. Marked itineraries are proposed all around Gréolières les Neiges and on the Cheiron massif. The Tourist Information Office publishes a leaflet that lists about ten of the main routes, from 2 to 5 hours.

► **Paragliding.** The south-facing exposure of Gréolières and the slopes of Cheiron make the commune a paragliding mecca.

► **Mountain bike rental** and guided tours. Various tracks at all levels are available, in connection with the VTTFFC des Monts d'Azur site.

■ **CENTRE NORDIQUE – LA MAISON DU FONDEUR**
900, boulevard du Grand Pré
Gréolières les Neiges
 ☎ 04 93 59 70 57
www.greoskinordique.com

Half-day rental rates: cross-country skiing from €9, snowshoeing €8, sledging €5. Rental rates per day: cross-country skiing from €12, snowshoeing €10, sledging €7. Information on the snow conditions at the Gréolières-les-Neiges resort. Tips for using the ski area for snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. Cross-country skis, sleds and

snowshoes rental. The Centre de ski nordique also houses the restaurant du Fondeur.

■ CUMULUS: ÉCOLE DE PARAPENTE

854, route de Grasse
Le Pont du Loup
 ☎ 04 93 42 91 18
www.ecolecumulus.com



Discovery flight from 70 €. Discovery day courses on training slope + two-seater flight 195 €. Discovery weekend 275 €. Training slope + discovery tandem 140 €. Discovery day two-seater long flight at 195 €. In this paragliding school located in Gréolières, you can safely learn or improve thanks to the advice and training provided by Pierre Verrier, a state-certified instructor in paragliding and hang-gliding, qualified two-seater, with the support of his professional team. Training courses and trips are regularly organised, and people with reduced mobility can also fly off to the clouds.

■ GRÉOLIÈRES-LES-NEIGES

Station de sports d'hiver
 ☎ 04 93 59 70 02
www.greolieres.fr

Gréolières-les-Neiges was created in 1963 on the north face of the Cheiron at an altitude of 1,450 metres and only 45 kilometres away from Nice. This small family resort has 10 ski lifts, 1 chairlift and 30 kilometres of slopes, including 4 green, 3 blue, 13 red and 2 black slopes, as well as a cross-country skiing track. For several years now, the resort has been equipped with an automatic snowmaking system including 76 snow cannons spread over 4 km of slopes, allowing the production of quality snow and ensuring the early opening of the ski lifts. Very large car parks enable more than 2,800 vehicles to park.

■ PARC GRÉO'BRANCHES

Boulevard du Grand Pré
Gréolières les Neiges
 ☎ 04 93 59 73 17

Open from 10am to 6pm. Open on weekends and public holidays in May and June. Open daily in July and August. Open all year round for groups on reservation. Bambino's: 2€, Minicosto's: 10€, Maxicosto's: 18€.

Small adventurers go on a tree-to-tree adventure on the tree climbing course, with an indian footbridge, a monkey bridge, and a zip line. Three different routes are available depending on how old and how tall the children are:

► Bambino's (3 to 5 years old): 9 workshops under the supervision of an adult.

► Minicosto's (from 1.10 meters): 12 workshops. Unlimited number of tries.

► Maxicosto's (from 1.35 meters): 31 workshops. 2 hours of tour, with departures at fixed times.

Saint-Etienne church, Hautes Gréolières.

© Bernard CRUISE



LA ROQUE-EN-PROVENCE

When you contemplate this charming village dominated by a perched church, it is difficult to imagine his past glory. And when you let your gaze over the blue-green waves of the Estéron river that flows below, who could imagine that this quiet river was once the border between the kingdoms of France and Sardinia, and that custom officers patrolled its banks? The village has changed name, and has known various fortunes, but the site of La Roque-en-Provence as we discover it today hasn't changed much. A pretty medieval village clinging to a rocky peak in a loop of the Estéron. The village is dominated by a church, this was already the case in the 12th century. It is connected to the neighbouring town by the Pont de France, and has been since the 18th century. At the bottom of the village, we stop in front of the covered wash-house, before discovering the tiny square of St-François which shelters the house of the Prior, in reference to Raymond Féraud, troubadour from Nice, and prior at La Rocca in 1295. It was here that he finished writing *La vie de Saint Honorat*, a poetic legend in Provençal language. You have to walk through the alleys and covered passages to find the steep path that leads to Ste-Pétronille church. A small climb of 5 minutes, to enjoy a magnificent panorama: the valley of the Estéron, the bridge of France, the neighbouring town of Roquesteron opposite.

- ▶ **Altitude of the town:** 330 m
- ▶ **Altitude of the village:** from 330 m to 1,575 m
- ▶ **70 inhabitants**
- ▶ Commune of the Regional Natural Park Préalpes d'Azur.
- ▶ **A little history.** A fascinating story, that of La Roque-en-Provence, closely linked to his neighbour, the commune of Roquesteron. The historical past of these quasi-twins alone sums up the adventures and history of the county of Nice. Originally the territory was occupied by a Ligurian tribe, soon replaced by the Romans. Only the right bank of the Esteron was inhabited, i.e. the bank now occupied by La Roque en Provence. It is in the 11th century that mention is made about a lord of the former Castrum de la Rocca, Raymond Rostaing, who allegedly gave land to the Abbey of Lerins to found a priory there. In the 12th century, a watch post and a fortified church were erected. This may be the site of the current Ste-Pétronille Church. The name

The accent is also important!

With or without an accent? That's the question! For the Estéron River, you will of course put an accent, but for Roquesteron, will it require an accent? Well, that's debatable. Before it was necessary, but now it is no longer necessary. This is how life goes and the accents go. So we'll say Roquesteron, without an accent. But do we have to pronounce Roqueusteron, then? For La Roque-en-Provence, and well before that, we needed one, from the time when it was named Roquestéron-Grasse, with an accent please. Today, it is called La Roque-en-Provence, so the question no longer arises.

"La Rocca" or "Rocca Sterone" appears. In the Middle Ages, the village was part of the county of Provence. It is the fiefdom of the Rostaing family of Thorame-Castellane who, by marriage, gave it to the Grimaldis of Beuil. But in 1388, the Grimaldis of Beuil dedicated the Nice county to Savoy. Rocca Sterone is now part of the Duchy of Savoy and the village is now at the border. On the other side of the Esteron, the land is part of the county of Provence. At the end of the 15th century, the village, hung on the right bank, expanded to the more fertile left bank of the river. The left bank (the current Roquesteron) became cultivated and inhabited. The name RoccaSterone then refers to the whole place, inhabited on either side of the Esteron, but each bank belonging to the Dukes of Savoy and the Counts of Provence. It was in 1760 that things became clearer. In that year, the county of Provence joined the Kingdom of France, and the Duchy of Savoy joined the Kingdom of Sardinia. The Treaty of Turin enshrines these rallies. The agglomeration of RoccaSterone is, in fact, divided in two by a border between the Kingdom of France and the Kingdom of Sardinia. The Estéron becomes a border river. The historical part of the town, on the right bank, is now French, and takes the name of La Roque-en-Provence, or La Roque d'Estéron.

And in the middle flows a river...

It is the story of a village that lives happily on the right bank of a river. The years, the centuries pass, our village grows, and extends on the left bank. The fields are more fertile, there is more space and above all, less slope. A bridge is being built to connect the two shores. But men are complex, and their madness is great. Our village does not resist the passage of history and is cut in two by alliances, wars and treaties. Each side will therefore live its own history until the day when history returns to the area and decides that there are no longer two camps, but one and that nothing stands in the way of the reunification of the two parts of the village. But everyone has got used to it and we don't want to share anymore. So each will stay at home. A village on one side (La Roque-en-Provence), and on the other (Roquesteron). And in the middle flows a river. For centuries.



The Estéron River, La Roque-en-Provence.



La Roque-en-Provence village.

© Bernard CROISE



The left bank remains Sardinian and keeps the name of Roccastrone. The two villages are separated by the river and connected by the French bridge. However, residents move freely across the border, enjoying their land and property. In 1860, Savoy became French, and the official border disappeared. La Roque en Provence and Roquesteron are now both French, and there is nothing to prevent a possible reunification. But the two municipalities will remain separate. The left bank, attached to Puget-Théniers, was first called Roquesteron-Puget, before taking the name Roquesteron. The right bank will first take the name Roquesteron-Grasse because it is part of the district of Grasse, then, in 2016, the village will take its name from La Roque-en-Provence.

Sightseeing

- ▶ **The remains of the castle.** Next to Sainte Pétronille, you can still see one of the village gates, a watchtower, remains of the surrounding wall.
- ▶ **The covered laundry room.** It is located at the bottom of the village, just before the bridge.
- ▶ **The chapelle Notre-Dame de l'Olive.** Of its real name Chapelle Notre Dame, this small square chapel, with its open façade, dates from the 11th century. It is built on the Olive site, south of the village, hence its name.
- ▶ **The Chapelle Saint-Laurent.** This small square chapel is located at the top of Mount Gerbières, at 1,058 m.
- ▶ **The Estéron.** With a free flow, crystal clear water and unspoiled landscapes, the Estéron appears to all as an exceptional river. Various criteria were evaluated such as biodiversity, the absence of dams, catchments or discharges in order to give it this adjective. It is important to respect this natural and fragile heritage.

■ L'ÉGLISE SAINTE PÉTRONILLE Route de Conségudes

Dating from the 12th century, it dominates the village. The original building was dedicated to Saint Ariège. With the extension of the village, a new church was built in 1735, but on the other side of the Estéron. The new church receives the objects of the old cult, as well as the name of Saint-Arige. The old church then took the name of Sainte-Pétronille. It was fortified from 1760 (Treaty of Turin), its dominant position allowing it to observe the border towards the Sardinian side, on the left bank of the Estéron. Sainte-Pétronille still looks like a fortified castle, but its double-span bell tower reveals its true function.

■ LE PARC NATUREL DÉPARTEMENTAL DE L'ESTÉRON

It covers an area of 20 hectares, along the river, below the Pont de France. A parking area on each bank of the Estéron provides access to the park, which offers facilities on either side of the river (picnic area, games). In summer, the developed beaches and natural basins allow you to cool off in the waters of the Estéron. A fishing course allows enthusiasts to fish trouts or bleak fish.

■ LE PONT DE FRANCE

This is the historical link between the two shores of the Estéron. In 1760 (Treaty of Turin) the French bridge

marked the border between the kingdoms of France and Sardinia, cutting the village into two parts. At the time, border markers materialized this separation. They were marked on one side with the Lili de France and on the other side with the Croix de Savoie. Do not miss, on the Pont de France, the reproduction of one of these monuments.

Knife & Fork

■ LE VIEUX MOULIN Rue Fortuné-Raybaud

☎ 04 93 02 71 89

www.restaurant-le-vieux-moulin.fr/

Open from Tuesday noon to Sunday noon included. Closed on Sunday evening and Monday. (starter + main course or main course + dessert: 27,50€. starter + main course + dessert: 35,50€)

Le Vieux Moulin is on a magnificent site, at the foot of the village of La Roque en Provence, directly on the river. You can eat there in a pretty bright room with large bay windows opening onto the Estéron. On sunny days, you can enjoy the lovely terrace, bathed by the refreshing murmur of the river, shaded by parasols.

Chef Patrice Gastaud, associated with Joël Laugier from Lou Countea restaurant in Gilette, recently took over the management of Le Vieux Moulin. It offers traditional local cuisine, chard pie, daube, stuffed vegetables, Cians trout cooked on pebbles or in tartar, or platoons, a speciality of the Estéron, balls of ravioli stuffing in daube sauce. Grilled meats or suckling pig, as well as pizzas or pies are cooked in the wood oven. The wine list is not to be forgotten and honours southern wines, with organic and biodynamic wines, such as Clos Réal "Les Davids", a white wine from Provence in Pierrefeu. A beautiful and generous place, in a magnificent setting.

Leisure

- ▶ **Bathing in the river.** Swimming is possible on the banks of the Estéron, in the developed areas of the Departmental Natural Park. It is also possible to swim outside this area, taking the usual precautions, in the many natural basins upstream and downstream of La Roque en Provence.
- ▶ **Fishing.** The Roque en Provence sector offers beautiful fishing courses, alternating flat parts and rather deep holes, in a magnificent environment. You can choose between the lower valley of the Estéron downstream, or the Roquesteron chevron upstream.
- ▶ **Canyoning.** The area offers many hikes, such as the Riou de Cuebris (from Cuebris) or the Clue du Riolan (from Sigale)
- ▶ **Hiking tours.** The GR 510 crosses the region, and there are many trails in the Cheiron state forest
- ▶ **Bike or mountain bike.** The Route des Clues, starting from La Roque en Provence, is a mythical itinerary that can be done in 1 or 2 days. It will take you through the upper valley of the Estéron to discover fabulous landscapes and perched villages.

Defensive chapel of Sainte-Pétronille in La Roque en provence.

© Bernard COUSÉ



LE BAR-SUR-LOUP

Perched on its rock since the 13th century, with an imposing castle that dominates the middle valley of the Loup, the bell tower of the church and the houses of the village that lie below, Bar-sur-Loup looks great. In the Middle Ages, Bar-sur-Loup was a large village that controlled the passage between Grasse and Vence, as well as access to the gorges du Loup. From this glorious past, some parts of the ramparts remain today, as well as the mass of the castle that dominates the village. It was the Counts of Grasse who built the castle between the 14th and 16th centuries. This large rectangular building, rather imposing, is private and cannot be visited. It has kept its entrance gate, as well as three beautiful round towers, which contribute to its proud appearance. The statue of the Admiral de Grasse stands in front of the town hall. This naval officer (1722 - 1788) actively participated in the American War of Independence and in particular in the victory of Yorktown in Virginia (twin city with Bar-sur-Loup)

You have to walk through the pedestrian streets of the historic centre to find the Bar-sur-Loup as it was before. The high buildings, tightly packed together, remind us that the village was built on a defensive plan, gathered at the foot of its castle. The facades of the peripheral houses formed the village walls. We stroll through the steep alleys, taking stairs and covered passages, admiring doors and lintels, stopping to photograph a pretty view of the valley or a sunny square. As you walk, you will discover the Saracen gate, the only surviving medieval gate, or, on the village square, the fountain that still bears the arms of the Grasse-Bar family. We will not hesitate to push the door of the medieval church of St-Jacques le Majeur, to admire a magnificent altarpiece by Louis Bréa. All around Bar-sur-Loup, it is an enchantment of Provençal nature: restanques and espaliers, vines, olive and orange trees, are there to remind us of the village's

past, linked from 1850 to 1950 to the perfume industry. At that time, the bitter orange tree, the Bitter Orange, covered the hills of the Loup Valley and the surrounding area. The memory of this period is perpetuated every year at Easter, with the Orange Festival, which brings together old trades, crafts, and gastronomic products made from oranges.

- ▶ **Altitude of the town:** 320 m
- ▶ **Village altitude:** from 100 to 1,312 m
- ▶ **3,000 inhabitants**
- ▶ Commune of the Regional Natural Park Préalpes d'Azur.
- ▶ **A little history.** Due to its strategic position, at the outlet of the gorges, and with the presence of the river, the site was occupied by the Celto-Ligures, the Gauls and later the Romans. The main practice is breeding. But from the 5th century onwards, there was a sedentary lifestyle, as the population began to build terraces to prevent erosion and keep irrigation water in the ground. We see a first mention of the village in 1078 in the collection of charters of the Abbey of Lerins. The Bar-sur-Loup is referred to as Poncii Albarni. In 1235 it was renamed Castrum de Albarno, in an act of exchange, between the princes of Antibes and the Counts of Provence. The name of the village evolved over the centuries, becoming Lou Barn and then the Bar.
- ▶ In the Middle Ages, Le Bar-sur-Loup was regularly attacked by Saracens and Moors. The village was damaged and destroyed several times. Fortifications and a watchtower were built. The foundations of the castle date from this period (13th century). It was in 1235 that the Counts of Provence ceded the village to the Princes of Antibes. The Grasse family, who were among the princes of Antibes, set up a seignury at the Bar.

The Orange Tree Festival

The queen of Bar-sur-Loup is the Bigaradier orange, the bitter orange. It was the economic engine of the region for many years, its flower, harvested in mid-April, was used in the perfume industry in Grasse. Bar-sur-Loup owes its economic development between 1850 and 1950, as well as part of its heritage. It is celebrated every year on Easter Monday. On this occasion, Bar-sur-Loup, all dressed in orange, honours the know-how of the craftsmen and the traditions of the village. Places and streets are decorated and animated, transforming the village into a large craft market.

It is a festive day, during which many workshops are offered to visitors: cooperage, distillation with a still, advice on orange cultivation... A demonstration of dry stone wall construction reminds visitors of the village's agricultural past. Further on, it is the "colannes", these long ribbons made from the peeling of oranges, that are dried in the sun. They will be used in the production of orange wine, or for perfumery. Gastronomy is not to be outdone. Every year, the orange wine and bitter orange jam competition, hosted by the Aubarnencs club, sees producers and craftsmen compete against each other, coveting the title of best producer of the year, each highlighting their jealously guarded grandmother's recipes.

If bitter orange is used in cooking for the preparation of jams and aperitifs, the zest of this fruit also has calming and digestive properties. It is recommended for the treatment of dyspepsia, to treat palpitations or insomnia, to lose weight and even to regain appetite!





Bar-sur-Loup.

© Bernard CROISÉ



The lords of Grasse – Bar then succeeded each other at the castle, the most famous of them, the Admiral of Grasse, was born there on 13 September 1722. Throughout this period, the village developed, until it became a large village, favoured by its privileged position, at the crossroads of the Grasse-Vence road and the gorges du Loup leading to the villages of the middle country. New shops and businesses, taverns and inns were set up. Fairs and rural markets were held regularly in the village, draining the villagers from the surrounding villages. The network of roads improved and contributed to the economic development of the village. From 1892 onwards, the region was served by the Nice-Digne railway, which is now abandoned.

■ BUREAU D'INFORMATION TOURISTIQUE DU BAR-SUR-LOUP

Hôtel de Ville

☎ 04 93 42 72 21

www.lebarsurloup.fr

tourisme.bsl@agglo-casa.fr

June and September: open Monday to Friday from 9am to 12.30pm and from 2.30pm to 5.30pm. From 1st to 5th July and from 19th to 30th August: open from Monday to Friday, from 8.30am to 12.30pm and from 2.30pm to 6pm. From July 8th to August 17th: open Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 12.30pm and from 2.30pm to 6pm, as well as on Saturdays from 10am to 1pm.

A beautiful village that offers many activities in season, to be discovered through this tourist information office.

Sightseeing

► **Walk in the medieval village.** The tourist information office publishes a map of the village, with explanations of the important sites.

■ CHÂTEAU DES COMTES DE GRASSE

6, Place Francis-Paulet

The castle is private and cannot be visited.

The castle, whose foundations date from the 13th century, belonged to the counts of Grasse, lords of Bar until the Revolution. The most illustrious, the admiral of Grasse, was born there on September 13, 1722. In 1792 the dungeon, symbol of the seigneurial power, was destroyed and the castle looted before being requisitioned by the revolutionary commune which resold it after to the inhabitants in 1832. At that time a lift-bridge with the moss was the only way of access to the imposing castle. The dungeon was a seven-storey tower, a real strategic place to watch the Gorge du Loup until its dismantling. The restored castle's cellars are designed to host exhibitions, seminars, concerts and communal events.

■ ÉGLISE SAINT-JACQUES-LE-MAJEUR

Place de la Tour

☎ 04 93 42 70 11

Open to visitors on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10.30am to noon.

Classified as a Historic Monument, it was built between the 13th and 15th centuries. It has a Gothic nave with a single aisle, a lateral bell tower and superb Gothic portal leaves created by the Grasse woodcarver Jacotin

Bellot. Behind the main altar, an altarpiece assigned to Louis Bréa consists of fourteen pictures painted on a golden background. An extraordinary 15th century painting on wood created by Honoré Alzine, *La Danse macabre*, representing ten men and ten women dancing to the sound of musical instruments, all surmounted by their sinful souls leaving them, probably to abandon them to their sad fate. Saint Michael weighs souls on a small scale at Christ's feet. Death sends its arrow. The devil puts a dead man in the mouth of hell. A poem in Provençal explains the details of this fresco and its origin: during a ball organised by the Count of Grasse in the middle of Lent in 1482, several guests fell dead... The macabre dance is a theme often repeated and illustrated in medieval churches. Its purpose was to encourage the living to think about their final day and to fear the possible punishment that awaited them for their bad behaviour: flames of Hell. At the back of the church stands a strange black marble basin, which is the Countess' old sink saved from the vandalism of the revolutionaries in 1792, and a baroque altar canopy, once gilded.

■ PLACE DE LA FONTAINE ET CHAPELLES

Place de la Fontaine

Water from the fountain comes from the Foux spring. Above the trough, built in 1420, there is an emblazoned stone which is noticeable, whose coat of arms was unfortunately hammered in 1790. The pretty chapelle des Sœurs Trinitaires, built as an extension of the convent of Trinitarian nuns, is located on a small square at the entrance of the village. Several small chapels are scattered throughout the countryside of Baroise. Each of them is dedicated to a saint protector. The chapelle Sainte-Anne, located above the village, on the Terray way, is preceded by an awning. The chapelle Saint-Michel is located at the intersection of Saint-Michel and Sainte-Anne's Road. It is mentioned in an official document in 1475. The chapelle Saint-Claude is located at the entrance to the footpath running from Bar-sur-Loup in Gourdon. This is a chapel with a recently renovated awning.

The Chapelle Saint-Jean is located at the confluence of the Riou and the Loup, named "*Saint-Jean-entre-Deux-Eaux*" in ancient texts. It is dedicated to Saint John the Baptist, the patron saint of the village. A mass is celebrated on June 24th of each year and this pilgrimage leads to rejoicing in the near neighbourhood of Papeterie.

Knife & Fork

■ BISTRO LE DONJON

Place Francis Paulet

☎ 04 93 77 53 92

www.bistrodonjon.fr

info@bistrodonjon.fr

Maitre Restaurateur. Open from Wednesday to Saturday for lunch and dinner; Sunday for lunch. Menus from 41 € to 58 €. Lunch formula: 21 € (dish + dessert and 28 € with starter). 3 course menu at 41€, 4 course menu at 49€, 5 course menu at 58€. Terrace.



Stroll through the streets of Bar-sur-Loup.



Chef Thomas Gillespie has selected the best ingredients of the country to welcome you in this beautiful and charming old-fashioned establishment. All the dishes are homemade and prepared at the last minute, which is sometimes a bit long, but always of a very good quality. While waiting, the team takes care of you and you'll enjoy far niente on the terrace. When time comes, you can enjoy, for example, the saddle of lamb from the Alpilles, roasted à la sauvage, or a supreme of farm poultry from the Landes with yellow wine and morel mushrooms....

■ LA JARRERIE

D 303

8, avenue Amiral-de-Grasse

☎ 04 93 42 92 92

www.jarrierie.com

lajarrerie@orange.fr

Open from Thursday to Monday for lunch and dinner. Booking recommended. Menus from 21 € to 26 €. Every day, 5 starters, 5 main courses and 5 desserts are offered à la carte. Dish of the day: 13 €. Starter + main course: 21 €, Starter + main course + dessert: 26 €. Reception of groups (banquet room for business meals or wedding ceremonies). Terrace.

We change era as we pass the door of this buildin full of history: an old monastery dating from the 17th century, converted in the 19th century into an olive cannery and oils kept in jars that gave the place its name, then a perfume factory and finally a restaurant since 1978. Exposed stones, vaults, large fireplace, candles in the main room... the decor is set. Excellent quality/price/quantity/presentation ratio. Everything here is homemade, even the crusty small loafs of bread. And if the waiting is sometimes a bit long before the first dish, we are rewarded by the result. In the huge kitchen, painted frescos and old wall tiles coexist with pianos and stainless steel equipment, guaranteeing hygiene and cleanliness.

■ L'ÉCOLE DES FILLES

380, avenue Amiral-de-Grasse

☎ 04 93 09 40 20

www.lecoledesfilles.wixsite.com

lecoledesfilles@orange.fr

Open from Friday to Tuesday for lunch and dinner. Menus from 35 € to 45 € (menus with appetizers and mignardises). Lunch formula: 26 € (dish of the day + dessert of the day + coffee (except on Sundays and public holidays)). Starter + main course: 35 €, Starter + main course + dessert: 39 €, Starter + main course + cheese + dessert: 45 €. Terrace.

The former girls' school, which dates back to 1929, has been transformed into a restaurant. You can still visit the old classrooms, with their small wooden desks and white porcelain inkpots. Many ancient school objects decorate the walls. The large classroom of the middle course is now the dining room with a warm ochre colour and exposed beams. Célestin Freinet taught there. The restaurant maintained the same Provençal style. The cuisine is prepared only with fresh and seasonal products. The dishes are changed every week with two starters, two main courses and two desserts à la carte.

Sleeping

Cottages

■ LOCATIONS 06 - GÎTES DE CHARME

614, chemin de saint jean

☎ 06 32 75 51 07

<https://www.locations-06.fr>

Gîtes de France. Open all year round. Tourist furniture from 2 to 4 ****. Gîtes de France 3 and 4 epis. Clevacances 5 keys. From 199 € to 849 € per week depending on the season. Rental per night from 50 € per night. Animals accepted. Thierry and Pascale manage this small intergenerational family structure which includes 7 charming cottages, located in the hinterland, near Grasse and Cannes, exactly at Bar sur Loup and Mougins. The apartments are nestled in the heart of the orange, olive and vegetable gardens that their parents passed on to them. You have understood it well, here you are welcomed with the know-how of a family, in love with its job and the welcome of its guests. The accommodation is spread over several sites and differs in size and layout: apartment, villa with or without swimming pool in the surroundings of Cannes or in the Pays de Grasse. The common denominator? An excellent quality/price ratio and a very warm welcome. It's more than just a rental, it's an "experience" to live. If you are seduced by agritourism, you can indeed share with your hosts their passion and discover, depending on the season, the grape harvest, the picking of tomatoes, courgettes and peppers from the garden in permaculture, the cultivation of the bitter orange tree, picking orange blossom or fruit, discovering the olive tree cultivation and many other things! Welcome to the heart of "l'agritourisme" where friendliness and kindness go hand in hand with comfort!

Leisure

■ **Hikes.** The tourist information office publishes a map of 2 hikes around Bar-sur-Loup: the "Gorges du Loup hiking trail" at the beginning of the Pont du Loup, this trail allows you to go up the Gorges du Loup and enjoy the refreshing waters of the river in summer (at the time of the Chemin de Fer de Provence, this trail was an excursion destination, a station located at the Pont du Loup); the picturesque "Chemin du Paradis" which, at the beginning of the Pont du Loup, climbs the cliff to Gourdon. It can be reached from the village of Bar-sur-Loup.

Shopping

Markets

■ **Market of local producers.** Every third Thursday of the month, from 5.30pm to 7.30pm at the Square Seytre.

■ **Italian market.** The third Saturday of the month, from 9am to 5pm, at the Espace Guintran. Come and discover Italy and its flavours with a market of Italian producers: cheeses, delicatessen, fruit and vegetables, fresh pasta, etc.

LE ROURET

The village of Le Rouret is located on the road going from Grasse to Nice. Its geographical location on the main traffic artery, the D2085, and at the gateway to Sophia Antipolis area, has contributed to its development. The village is built on hills at an altitude of 300 m, and is sheltered by the hinterland mountains, is at 10 min from Grasse and 20 min from the sea.

Le Rouret therefore benefits from the particular micro-climate of this region, which enabled the development of perfume plant cultures. If the cultivation of jasmine, rose, orange trees and violets is no longer perpetuated nowadays, Le Rouret has meanwhile kept a Provençal lifestyle in which it is very pleasant to live. The municipality has managed its urban development while preserving the natural spaces. Le Rouret therefore enjoys a privileged location, in the heart of a typically Provençal nature. The landscape extends to the sea and has hills planted with cypress trees, cork oaks and olive trees. The dry stone terraces bear witness to the agricultural past of the village, and harmoniously highlight the curves of the hills.

The communal woods offer lovely hikes in a magnificent natural space... There is an old sheepfold, recently restored.

The village is organized around its magnificent Provençal square, planted with century-old plane trees, bordered by the town hall, the church of St-Pons and some old buildings, which have seen generations of villagers go by... Everything here evokes calm and serenity. The Rouret offers the peaceful image of a Provençal village for authenticity lovers.

- ▶ **Altitude of the municipality:** 178 to 480 m.
- ▶ **Village altitude:** 300 m
- ▶ **4,000 inhabitants.**
- ▶ **A little history:** The site has been inhabited since the end of the Bronze Age, a period in which men gathered in small communities in the hills, attracted by the softness of the climat and the presence of water and sometimes caves. Later, it was the Romans who established *oppida* or "camps" on the heights. Thus, on the Roman Camp site,

there is a fortified enclosure in which remains have been discovered that bear witness to human activity from the Iron Age to the end of the Roman period, when the inhabitants descended to the hills below. This presence is attested by the discovery of graves in the Saint Pons and Colombier districts.

In the 9th century, a castle was built above the woods, but it was destroyed in 1229 by the Count of Provinces army. The community did not survive the crises of the 14th century, plague outbreaks, wars and famines, leading to its disappearance...

The last lord of the place, Joseph Louis Geoffroy du Rouret, emigrated during the Revolution and his lordship officially became the commune of Le Rouret. It was not until 1830 that the territory was enlarged with the attachment of the hamlet of Le Bergier, which until then had depended on the neighbouring commune of Châteauneuf. The population was then mainly composed of farmers scattered in the hills. Water supply works attracted new inhabitants, and housing began to refocus, forming the appearance of a village that has now become the centre of the commune. At the beginning of the 19th century, wheat, vines, olives and lavender were grown, followed by fragrant plants such as jasmine and rose. The arrival of the Cagnes-Grasse tramway accentuates the development of the region. The line operated until 1928. In the meantime, automobile transport is developing. Roads and trams are pushing people away from crops to work on the coast.

The end of the war and the Roaring Twenties saw the appearance of villas on the hills. Tourism will help the municipality, which is seeing its population increase. However, the Second World War brought this development to a halt. It was not until the 1960s that the town once again enjoyed the boom of tourist activities in the region. Residents stopped working in the fields to work in the city, in factories, in offices or on construction sites. However, the desire to preserve the tradition and the terroir remains very much alive. The commune enlarges with new homes. In 2019, Le Rouret has more than 4,000 inhabitants.

CASA Nature activities

The Sophia Antipolis Urban Community offers many free activities for all, around nature, heritage, gardens and olive trees. Some examples in Le Rouret:

- ▶ **Nature and Heritage Walk:** the Roman Camp with a nature guide. Discovery of buildings and techniques for building dry stone walls. Discovery of the flora of the plateau. History of the olive tree and truffle oaks in Provence.
- ▶ **Restanques building site:** introduction to the restoration of a restanque walls.
- ▶ **Sustainable Gardens Workshop** (Antibes Horticultural High School): Vegetable garden workshop. Use of recovered materials, good associations, useful species, green manures.
- ▶ **Dates and registration** on <https://casa-nature.agglo-casa.fr>

Le Rouret.

© Bernard CROISÉ



The St Pons church in Le Rouret.

© Bernard CROISE





Sightseeing

► **The Castellaras Menhir:** As in the Roman Camp, there is an enclosure on the hill top, with the presence of a monolith, nowadays down. This monolith seems to date from the Neolithic or Bronze Age. Placed on a mound, it could be a burial site.

► **Clamarquier Dolmen:** In the heart of lentisques, pines and oaks, appear three slabs, two pillars and low stone walls, which form a quadrangular room.

■ LE CAMP ROMAIN ET LE BOIS COMMUNAL Chemin du Castellet

At the very end of the Castellet path, the road turns into a track. You have to leave the car and walk up the heights of Le Rouret to the Camp Romain to enjoy a magnificent panorama that extends to the Mediterranean on one side and the Gorges du Loup on the other. All around you is the public woods, a privileged place for walking or to contemplate nature. There are almond trees, oaks, arbutus trees and many fragrant Mediterranean essences. At an altitude of 500 m, there are the remains of the Roman Camp, which was delimited at the time by two arched walls.

■ LA GROTTE BEAUME ROBERT Chemin de Beaume Robert

Among the hidden treasures of Le Rouret, speleology lovers will be surprised to discover an exceptional underground site. The Beaume Robert cave whose underground surface area reaches 4 km² on 3 levels. The network of galleries extends over 4,600 m and includes a main river, with its 2 tributaries, numerous siphons, as well as a gallery decorated with magnificent concretions. To discover the site without danger, you can visit the blog of Christian Verduci, discoverer and explorer of the cave: <http://verduci-christian.e-monsite.com>

■ L'ANCIENNE BERGERIE

Located in the public woodlands, it was built in 1854. It is likely that at that time, there were many sheepfolds in the region, but they disappeared with the increasing scarcity of herds in this part of the region, and their stones were reused.

This one is there to remind us of the agricultural past of the town, a period when wheat, rye and dried vegetables were cultivated, followed by the development of farming. Abandoned for many years, the sheepfold has recently undergone a beautiful restoration giving it back its original character.

■ L'ÉGLISE ST PONS 8, chemin de Saint-Pons

Located in the heart of the village, this church was originally the chapel of the parish of Châteauneuf. It became the church of Le Rouret when the territory of Bergier is attached to the town in 1830. The inhabitants had a bell tower built there in 1852.

The building, with a single nave with flat chevet, is simple and typical of the period. The 3-storey square bell tower,

the vaults painted with starry frescoes and the stained glass window of Saint-Pons are worth noticing.

Knife & Fork

■ LE BISTRO DU CLOS 9, route d'Opio

☎ 04 97 05 08 34

www.hotel-du-clos.com

contact@bistro-du-clos.com



Closed 1 week in December and January. Open from Tuesday to Saturday from 8.30am to 10pm. Booking recommended. Market menu 26 € (3 starters, 3 main courses, 3 desserts of your choice). Children's menu: 8 €. Dish of the day: 13 €. Wine by the glass. American Express. Reception of groups. Terrace. Parking Marché des collines.

This is the second address of the Ettlinger couple which is located 100 m from the gastronomic restaurant Le Clos Saint-Pierre in the south wing of the Maison du terroir du Rouret, bringing the missing link to the culinary diversity. The establishment has a room, with a bar at the entrance, which can accommodate about fifty people, a terrace, with a lounge area of the same capacity, and an adjoining car park with 50 spaces. The vintage decoration includes hooks made of billiard balls or football players tables, old posters (Banania, Kub broth), an old radio set, coffee grinders, a peanut dispenser, coffee maker and kettle-shaped lights... In the kitchen, the chef can be seen by everybody and prepares the carte designed by Daniel Ettlinger with fresh and seasonal local products: fresh goat cheese salad from Les Courmettes, marinated salmon, piece of beef, fish of the day, risotto... A daily special, a market menu, a children's menu, a carte that changes every season and a slate for the daily suggestions: this is the daily offer.

■ LE CLOS SAINT-PIERRE

Place de la Mairie

Quartier Saint-Pons

☎ 04 93 77 39 18

www.hotel-du-clos.com

reservation@hotel-du-clos.com

Maitre Restaurateur. Open all year round. Annual closure in February. From Thursday to Monday for lunch and dinner. Booking recommended. Market menu 57 € (4 courses) or 69 € (5 courses) served for lunch and dinner. Children's menu: 10 €. Lunch formula: 40 € (except on Sundays and public holidays). Checks not accepted.

Here Catherine and Daniel Ettlinger honour Provençal and Italian cuisine. The Chef goes to the market several times a week and prepares two unique menus that change every day. In summer, on the terrace, you'll enjoy the charm of the typical village square with its natural setting. On the daily menu, we noted a Piedmontese Risotto with chanterelles, a roasted farm poultry, or local fishing catch cooked on the plancha. Also note the special menu Alba truffles and black truffles in season, as well as a "special lobster" menu depending on the fishery. A very nice wine list. The room has recently been renovated to welcome you even better.

Sleeping

■ HÔTEL DU CLOS***

3, chemin des Écoles

☎ 04 93 40 78 85

www.hotel-du-clos.com

contact@hotel-du-clos.com



Open all year round. 24/24h reception (languages spoken at the reception desk: French, English, German). 12 rooms (100% non-smoking). Double room from 129 € to 189 €; suite from 176 € to 260 €. Half board: 38 €. Breakfast: 15 € (continental). Extra bed: 20 €. Parking (free outdoor parking). Checks not accepted. American Express, Holiday Cheques. Pets accepted (supplement of 8 €). Receptions and weddings. Internet area. Free Internet connection. Free Wifi. Cleaning service. Restaurant Le clos Saint Pierre 250 meters from the hotel. Product sales. Excursions. Hôtel du Clos is a charming and peaceful stopover located in the heart of a 5,000 square metre green park with century-old olive trees and fruit trees. The 11 rooms that make up this hotel are tastefully decorated to preserve the authenticity of the buildings while offering the comfort of modernity. Icing on the cake: a very personalised breakfast, served in your room, on the terrace or in the room at your convenience, with, in particular, tasty waffles.

Shopping

■ FESTI BIO

Place de la Libération

☎ 04 93 77 20 02

In May. Information at the town hall.

The Festi Bio is a weekend dedicated to the Environment, Organic Agriculture and Sustainable Development. Organic market, responsible and local craft market. Conferences and educational workshops.

■ LA MAISON DU TERROIR

9, route d'Opio

☎ 04 93 77 34 21

www.lemarchedenoscollines.fr

Open Tuesday to Saturday from 8am to 7pm; Sunday from 9am to 12.30pm.

In the heart of the village, the Maison du Terroir houses an agricultural cooperative called "Le Marché de nos Collines", which displays the products of 40 producers of the region, motivated by the desire to offer the fruits of their labour directly to consumers. There are fruits and vegetables, meats and fish, cheeses, eggs, olive oil, wine, honey, but also floral waters, crystallized flowers, violet syrup, etc.). Through this "direct" point of sale, producers want to inform about their natural and eco friendly practices and create a friendly connection around the land and their quality products. The Maison du Terroir also houses a restaurant and exhibition rooms.

■ MARCHÉ DE NOËL D'ANTAN

Place de la Libération

First Sunday of December. Information at the town hall (☎ 04 93 77 20 02).

More than 200 artists, acrobats and troubadours, stilt-walkers and fire-eaters animate the village. Craftsmen and farmers present their products. Distillation of lavender and brandy, farm animals, workshops for children. Many culinary stands offer catering.



Le Rouret, place des Platanes.

LES FERRES

You have to arrive by car by the panoramic road D1, the well named, to discover the Ferres with the almost severe splendour of a mountain village. We can then see the site as the travellers of past centuries have seen it: a fortified village, nestled behind its old walls, dominated by a rocky bar, the Barre de St-Michel which culminates at Mont St-Michel at 792 m. The village settled around the 12th century *Castrum de Ferris*, and developed on the slopes of Mont St-Michel, with the Cheiron forests all around, as if to protect it. You can feel that mountains are not far away. This can be seen in the austere architecture of the houses, some of which were built within the old ramparts. The environment is mountainous, but the colours are Mediterranean. A glance at the facades of the houses reveals shutters painted in green and blue, all Provençal. The massive bell tower of the St-Jacques church dominates the tiled roofs with a protective air, as if it ensured the tranquillity of the inhabitants. Let's enter the village and climb the picturesque alleyways. The discovery of Les Ferres is a delight. We take pleasure in getting lost in this labyrinth of alleys that have seen the centuries pass by, in entering under ancient covered passages that lead to other alleys, in taking a staircase that turns out to be a dead end, in turning around, in discovering a fountain, a small square. A terrace planted with plane trees offers beautiful views over the valley and the surrounding nature, a garden sheltering laurels and lavender scents the whole street, an isolated cypress reminds the visitor that he is in Provence. We cannot help but think of the generations of villagers who walked these streets, the calls of peddlers,

the hooves of mules pounding the old cobblestones, the smell of hearth smoke in winter. Today, the village of Les Ferres is quieter. Tourists stroll there almost as if they were in a church, stopping at a doorway, a facade covered with Virginia creepers, or an old abandoned barn, perhaps dreaming of buying a second home, of renovation, dreaming of the quality of life that could be theirs here. The social heart of the village beats on the square of the recently renovated *église Saint-Jacques*, which is equipped with new stained glass windows.

- ▶ **Altitude of the municipality:** from 180 m to 1,278 m
- ▶ **Village altitude:** 640 m
- ▶ **92 inhabitants.**
- ▶ Commune of the Natural Park *Préalpes d'Azur*
- ▶ **A little history.** From the 12th century onwards, the *Castrum de Ferris* was mentioned. In 1325, the priory of Les Ferres was added to the priory of La Rocca (nowadays La Roque-en-Provence). From 1388 onwards, the seignury passed from the county of Provence to the county of Nice, and the fiefdom of Ferres belonged first and foremost to the Laugier family, whose prominent members included Raymond Laugier, Bishop of Nice. The seignury of the Ferres then passed to three successive families, the Drago, the Balbis and then the Ricci, who were the last lords. 1747 saw the presence of French volunteers in the village during the Austrian Succession War. In 1760, (Treaty of Turin) the village of Ferres, like



Place Saint Jean and its church, Les Ferres.



Fountain, Les Ferres.

© Bernard CHOISE

FROM PLACE TO PLACE

the neighbouring communes of Conségudes, Bouyon and La Roque-en-Provence, returned to the Kingdom of France. The Estéron river becomes the natural border between France and the county of Nice. Following the Revolution, 1,500 men of the Grasse and St-Paul national guards camped at Les Ferres before the Battle of Gilette. The village, which had 300 inhabitants at the end of the 19th century, had 36 in 1990 and 100 today.

Sightseeing

- ▶ **In the streets of the village.** Some doors are curiously carved with motifs from the Basque Country! A lintel carved with floral motifs, at 17 place François Audibert. A beautiful door, at 29 place François Audibert.
- ▶ **Ste-Julie Oratory (18th century).** A small building with an open facade. Saint Julie is the patron saint of the Ferres.
- ▶ **The ruins of the old castle.** A few rectangular ruins remain on a rocky spur above the parking lot of the castle square.
- ▶ **Notre-Dame du Brec Oratory.** On the track leading to the Gorges de l'Estéron, we come across the moving oratory of Notre-Dame-du-Brec, a stone building more than 3 m high
- ▶ **The rural chapelle St-Valentin.** Located to the west of the village, on the Fournets road, it dates from the 17th or 18th century. It is a building with a single nave, like many chapels in the region.

■ L'ÉGLISE PAROISSIALE ST JACQUES

The building dates from the 16th century. Recently renovated, the church of Saint-Jacques now has new stained-glass windows, which lets light enter. It is a church with a single nave. Its massive, three-storey bell tower is typically mountainous.

Sleeping

■ AUBERGE SAINT MICHEL

60 route Mont Saint-Michel

☎ 04 93 58 80 87

4 bedrooms. Double room from 50 € to 60 €. Half board: 55 € (excluding drinks). Breakfast: 5 € (from 5 to 7 €).

Auberge St Michel is located at the entrance of the village Les Ferres and offers 4 rooms in a gîte, for a total of 10 beds. It is mainly a stopover for cyclists. The Inn also offers picnics.

Leisure

- ▶ **Hikes.** The region is a hiker's paradise. Many hikes are possible from Les Ferres, towards the Pont de la Cerise, the Gorges de l'Estéron, the crest of the Estellier or the Vallon des Roubines
- ▶ **Caving.** To the south of the town is the Aven de l'Infernet.
- ▶ **Swimming** in the Estéron.

OPIO

Opio is located in the heart of a wooded region of pines, strawberry trees and cork oaks, and an exceptional climate. Its particular location, in the heart of this touristic region between Nice, Cannes and Grasse, makes it a very popular place to stay. The history of the municipality dates back to antiquity: originally built by a Celto-Ligurian tribe, its name probably comes from the Latin *Oppidum* (fortified camp, located high up). Lordship of the bishopric of Grasse until the Revolution, the village has several remains from the Roman period.

Opio's microclimate has enabled the cultivation of *Centifolia* roses for the perfume industry. This 'one hundred leaf' rose, in reference to its large number of petals, is very delicate. It was already known in Roman times. The village's activities have long been based on the production of flowers for the perfumers of Grasse, as well as the production of olive oil. Thus the landscape around Opio was shaped for the cultivation of roses and jasmine. The winding road leads the visitor to this tiny village that dominates the plain and the ancient market gardens, now occupied by the Grande Bastide golf course. From the square next to St Trophime church, you can admire the green landscape of the Opio plain, with the tiled roof houses in the foreground and the peaks of the Esterel in the distance. The Romanesque church of Saint Trophime houses a medieval baptismal font. It is on Jacques Henri Lartigue square, named after the famous photographer who lived in Opio. In front of the church is the town hall, against which the former bishops' castle stands. A grave marker is sealed in a corner of the building. La Grande Bastide, one of the largest olive groves in the department, supplies the Opio mill.

- ▶ **Altitude:** from 154 to 361 m
- ▶ **Altitude of the town:** 300 m
- ▶ **2,200 inhabitants**
- ▶ **A little history.** In the Bronze Age, an oppidum built by the Celto-Ligurian tribe of the Deceates, occupies the current location of the village. It would have given his

name to the town. This fortified camp was destroyed in 165 BC by the Roman legions of the Consul Lucius Opimius. Until the 10th century, the region was invaded by the Visigoths and Ostrogoths, as well as several Saracens. From the 10th century onwards, the Saracens were expelled by William 1st, Count of Provence. This is followed by a period of stability during which the Opio stronghold is linked to the episcopate of Antibes. From the 12th century, following wars between the Counts of Provence and the Republic of Genoa, the Opio territory became dependent on the Bishop of Grasse, a situation that lasted until the French Revolution. In the 15th century, like many villages in the region, Opio was deserted by its inhabitants following the wars and the plague epidemic. It was not until the 17th century that Opio saw the arrival of a lord named by Louis XIII, Antoine Godeau. A member of the *Académie française* and author of numerous books on the history of the church, Antoine Godeau was definitively consecrated bishop by a bull of the Pope in 1636. Between 1640 and 1650, Antoine Godeau visited Opio several times and asked that St. Trophime be included on the church altarpiece. In 1734, the first Council of Consuls elected by the opidians met in front of St. Trophime Church.

■ BUREAU D'INFORMATION TOURISTIQUE

1, Carrefour de la Font Neuve

☎ 04 93 60 61 72 – mairie-opio.fr
tourisme.opio@agallo-casa.fr

Sightseeing

- ▶ **The former bishops' castle** (17th century) is adjacent to the town hall. A 2nd or 3rd century grave marker is sealed in a corner of the building
- ▶ **The house of the photographer Jacques Henri Lartigue** is located near the St-Trophime church. Guided tours are organized 3 times during summer. Registration at the town hall: 04 93 77 23 18



The Opio plain.



Opio.

© Bernard CROISE



View on the golf course of the Grande Bastide.

▶ **The Oaks area and the 1920s shed:** they can be found at the entrance of the village. This is where the grapes were stored to make the marc de Provence.

▶ **Two oratories** built in 1634 were restored around 1990. They are found on communal roads.

▶ **The washhouse** in the San Peyre area: restored in 1990

▶ **The Aqueduct (17th century)** which served as water supply for the castle (located on the golf course)

■ ÉGLISE SAINT TROPHIME D'OPIO Route du Village

In Romanesque style, it has a panoramic view of the former farmlands now occupied by a golf course. It houses baptismal fonts from the 12th century, a 17th century painting depicting Saint Trophime (Bishop of Arles around 250 AD) and a reliquary of Saint Floride, patron saint of Opio. In the 12th century nave, a half-column from the 4th century suggests that the church was built on the ruins of a pagan temple.

■ PIERRE COMMÉMORATIVE DE LA MORT DE COLUCHE Rond-point Coluche

It is on the RD3, next to the site of the accident where Coluche was hit by a truck while riding a motorcycle. On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of his death, a new stele was inaugurated in 2016.

Knife & Fork

■ **L'OREE D'OPIO**
30, route de Nice
☎ 04 93 09 45 91
www.loreedopio.com
oreedopio@orange.fr

Open all year round. Tuesday to Saturday for lunch and dinner. July and August open Monday and Sunday. Menus from 23,90 € to 38 €. Children's menu: 10,50 €. Dish of the day: 12,50 €.

Here everything is cooked over a wood fire, which gives a special flavour to the dishes. Chef Erik Bernard likes to work with Southwestern products and truffles according to the seasons. The kings of the house are of course the duck breast and the foie gras that we find in all their states: half-cooked, fried, in confit or in salad. Also among the essentials: pizza tartuffo (with truffles), Landes salad, veal stir-fry with artichokes, and in the dessert section, sabayon with figs, peach cocktail with green tea and raspberry, chocolate fondant... Every day we discover a fresh fish from the market, excellent cooked in a salt crust. At the reception desk, Véronique Hurson is attentive to requests. The restaurant has a large covered veranda in a semicircle, very bright and nicely furnished with plants. The two beautiful terraces are a major asset to spend good moments outside when the sun starts shining.

■ **LE MAS DES GÉRANIUMS**
7, route de Nice
☎ 04 93 77 23 23
www.masdesgeraniums.com
contact@masdesgeraniums.com

Open from Tuesday to Sunday for lunch; from Tuesday to Saturday in the evening. Menus from 31 € to 45 € (Logis menu, 3 dishes: 31 €. Mas menus, 3 dishes: 45 €).

Mas des Géraniums is an old building, typical of the French Riviera's back country. Lunch is served in a green setting, in the shade of olive trees and lime trees. The restaurant has a large shaded terrace, a fountain area for aperitifs, a petanque ground, and a large garden. The Chef and his team offer a modern and authentic Mediterranean cuisine. All dishes are homemade prepared with fresh

products. Mas des Géraniums can also organize of all types of events, birthdays, weddings, private parties, cocktails, seminars, etc.).

■ LA SOURCE

1, chemin San-Peyre

☎ 04 93 77 23 21

www.lasource-opio.fr

lasourceopio@orange.fr

Open from Monday to Saturday from 7am to 8pm. Single menu at 15 € (gluten-free menu or vegetarian menu with starter + main course + dessert). Children's menu: 9,50 €. Lunch formula: 15 € (daily special + dessert). Wine by the glass. Terrace. Tobacco shop.

Georges Merat, the manager welcomes you with a smile in this really smart address. The restaurant offers a family cuisine, traditional gourmet dishes such as stew, green pepper rib steak, butcher's beef tartare, old-fashioned omelettes... Everything is fresh and homemade. The service run by Cécile and Georges is very efficient, the terrace has been extended to the car park and can accommodate 50 people. This new space, sunny or shaded depending on the season, is decorated with flower boxes and surrounded by dry-stone walls that isolate it from the main road. A local and foreign clientele likes to meet here for the relaxed atmosphere, the bilingual and competent team that help you with the good deals of the region, and the excellent quality/price ratio. Also tobacco stores, Western Union and Paysafe. For your long stays, 3 double bedrooms are available with a shared bathroom and equipped kitchen. We strongly recommend that you let yourself be tempted by this return to The Source...

Leisure

■ CLUB MED GOLF

Chemin de Tour
Domaine de la Tour

☎ 04 93 09 71 00

www.golf-passion.org

Access: A8, Cannes-Mougins expressway,
Vabonne-Opio direction, D3,
chemin de Tourveste.

Open all year. 9 holes. By 30. 1380 Mr. Architecte: Cabell Robinson. Rates included in the Club Med package. Secured cloakroom. Shop. Catering facilities from 12.30pm to 3pm. Hotel.

On the heights of Cannes, in the heart of the Club Med in Opio, this golf has thirty-seven bunkers and large and shallow greens, making it an excellent introduction and improvement course.

Shopping

■ MOULIN D'OPIO

2, route de Châteauneuf

☎ 04 93 77 23 03

www.moulin-dopio.com

accueil@moulinopio.com

Low season: open from Monday to Saturday from 9.30 to 12.30 and from 14.30 to 18.30. High season: Monday to Saturday from 9.30am to 1.30pm and 2.30pm to 7pm. Low Season, from October 1st to March 31st, closed on Monday mornings, Sundays and public holidays. High Season, from April 1st to September 31st: closed on Sundays and public holidays.

Located at the foot of the old village, the Opio mill has been in operation since 1848. Exploited by the same family for generations, 7 generations of millers have succeeded one another. Today, the waters of the Brague are no longer strong enough to activate the mill, it runs on electricity. It is one of the few mills still active in the region. Free guided tour, introduction to the diversity of the crus. The shop offers products from the region, decorative objects made of olive wood and, of course, olive oil!

■ OPIOM GALLERY

11, Chemin du Village

☎ 04 93 09 00 00

opiomgallery.com

Open Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 9am to 12.30pm and from 1.30pm to 6pm; Wednesday and Friday from 9am to 12.30pm and from 2pm to 6pm.

This space with a refined design organizes exhibitions of contemporary artists of photos and sculptures all year round.

Olive pressing

It takes about 7 kg of olives to obtain one litre of olive oil. The oil is obtained in 5 stages:

- ▶ **Grinding:** the olives are washed and then crushed for half an hour by granite wheels.
- ▶ **Blending:** it lasts 40 minutes. The mill operator must put all his know-how into it in order to obtain a homogeneous paste.
- ▶ **The scourtins:** the paste is spread in a thickness of 2 cm on nylon fibre discs called "scourtins". In the past, they were made of coconut or hemp fibre. The scourtins are stacked around a central axis, the needle.
- ▶ **The press:** the stack of scourtins is placed under a hydraulic press. The mixture of oil and water flows into a tank while the pulp and olive stones remain in the fibres of the scourtin.
- ▶ **Centrifugation:** The oil and water mixture is placed in a centrifuge. This separates the oil from the water.

ROQUEFORT-LES-PINS

It is likely that Roquefort les Pins takes its name from the castle of Castellans, built by the lords of Antibes (Roque designating a building built high up). Since prehistoric times, wise men had chosen this land to settle there. There were caves for shelter, rivers for drinking and plenty of land for hunting and farming. To the north of the current commune, it is around the pretty church of Notre Dame de Canlache (16th century) that the village developed until the 19th century. The vagaries of history did not spare the territory, and it is little by little that Roquefort-les-Pins, which became an independent commune in 1790, built its identity. For a long time divided into hamlets spread over a vast territory, the commune has recently refocused around a new Provençal-style village centre, where you can find housing and shops. The territory of the commune is formed by the northern part of the Valbonne plateau surveyed by the cliffs of the Gorges du Loup. This environment offers the possibility of many walks. Unlike other more touristic municipalities, Roquefort les Pins does not open up at first sight. It is therefore necessary to look for places of tourist interest, with a map in hand. The municipality has understood this well: it publishes a well-informed map, which is available at the town hall and in the media library. With this map in hand, we can go hiking on one of the marked routes in search of these treasures that Roquefort les Pins hides. Here a charming Roman bridge washed by the centuries, and which spans the Miaïne, a tributary of the Loup. Further on, the remains of a ruined borie, a well, an old oven, and other ruins, those of a chapel. Further on, the remains of the towers of a castle overlooking the Loup. Ideally located near the employment areas of Sophia Antipolis and the nearby Côte d'Azur, Roquefort-les-Pins is a place of leisure destination. Tourists visiting the region will be able to choose to stay there, Roquefort les Pins occupying a central location in the middle of a vast tourist area.

▶ **Altitude:** between 20 and 362 m

▶ **Altitude of the town:** 200 m

▶ **6,500 inhabitants**

▶ **A little history.** Archaeological excavations allow us to date the first occupation of the region to prehistoric times (cave de la Péguière), then to the Neolithic, around 3500 BC. (Dolmen des Peyraoutes). Other more recent excavations show the occupation of a site around the Source du Noyer, which dates back to the 6th century BC. Flint tools, arrowheads and bronze jewellery have been found there. It was in the 11th century that the Lords of Antibes founded the first parish whose place of worship was the church of Saint-Pierre (San Peyre). The medieval period therefore saw sustained human activity in the region. The territory of Roquefort will decline in the 14th century, following the Hundred Years' War. It was not until the 16th century that the Canlache chapel was built in the northern part of the current municipality. Its location, at the crossroads of Grasse, St-Paul-de-Vence and Antibes, gave it strategic importance, and village life developed in this area until the 19th century. In the 16th century, the territory of Roquefort saw the arrival of many

families expropriated following the fortification work at St-Paul-de-Vence, and who were granted parcels of land in Roquefort as compensation. The result is a widely dispersed habitat throughout the territory, mainly composed of bastides and farms, grouped into rural hamlets. The beginning of the 18th century saw a succession of wars and crises, resulting in a tax burden that would lead to the impoverishment of the entire territory. Roquefort, which depended on St-Paul, was ceded in 1718 to a few noble families, thus leading to the formation of a co-lordship. It was finally in 1790 that Roquefort was separated from St-Paul, thus becoming a fully-fledged commune, under the authority of a mayor. Water supply works were carried out. The construction in 1884 of another place of worship, further south, in the current Colombier district, contributed to a division between the top and bottom of Roquefort. At the beginning of the 19th century, rural roads and access roads to the town were developed and improved, particularly the Cagnes-sur-Mer road to Grasse, as well as the tramway, which operated from 1911 to 1929. It was not until the beginning of the 21st century that the public authorities settled in the Plan district, thus creating a zone of convergence and reunification of the various districts of Roquefort les Pins.

Sightseeing

■ NOTRE DAME DE CANLACHE Chemin de la Clauserie

It is around this church, built in 1690 on the ruins of an old chapel, that the town developed. Already in the 17th century, the inhabitants liked to gather in front of the church, and it was just opposite that the first town hall was built. Notre-Dame de Canlache became a parish around 1700 and was enlarged in 1862. It has a rather sober design and a pretty bell tower with a belfry, framed by two magnificent palm trees that give it a somewhat exotic look. Away from the modern centre, it is now a very peaceful site.

■ LE PARC NATUREL DU SINODON

Located in the Peïssaut district, it is a leisure area that offers 3 health trails, as well as a forest and geological discovery trail.

Knife & Fork

■ L'AUBERGE DU CLOS DES PINS 35, route de Notre Dame

☎ 04 93 77 00 23

www.aubergeduclosdespins.fr
functions@aubergeduclosdespins.fr

From Tuesday evening for dinner to Sunday noon for lunch, except on Saturday lunch. Lunch formula: 16,50 € (daily specials of your choice & daily dessert or cheese. Available every lunchtime during the week, except on public holidays). Evening and weekend formula – 21,50 €, with daily specials of your choice & daily dessert or cheese. Market menu – 32,50 € with a choice of starters, main courses and desserts or cheese.

Notre Dame de Canlache.

© BERNARD CROISE



Roman bridge in Roquefort-Les-Pins.

© Bernard CROISE







The new city centre with a Provençal style.

In the heart of Roquefort les Pins, the recently renovated Auberge du Clos des Pins offers a Mediterranean cuisine, as well as more exotic dishes, inspired by the chef's travels around the world. You'll eat in the pretty Provençal style room, or on beautiful terraces, in a magnificent garden.

Sleeping

■ MAS SHABANOU

515, route de Valbonne

☎ 04 93 09 68 44

<http://mas.shabanou.com>

info@mas.shabanou.com



4 apartments for weekly rent from mid-June to mid-September and 5 rooms for the night. High season 2 nights minimum. Double room from 109 € to 159 €; studio/apartment from 1 250 € to 1 750 € per week; suite from 600 € to 1 100 € per week. Breakfast included (continental buffet). Secure parking. Holiday voucher. Free Wifi. Catering (table d'hôte (minimum 6 people) at €29.95: appetizer, starter, main course, dessert, tea or coffee).

Magnificent property of the seventeenth century, 100 meters from the village, in a well maintained park of 7,000 m² with a large swimming pool, outdoor kitchen, bar and barbecue. The fully air-conditioned bastide has 5 double rooms equipped with bathrooms, fridge, connecting if needed, rented for the night. In an independent house, they have private terraces, direct access to the garden and to the swimming pool. Also 4 apartments, rented for the week: 1 suite of 50 m², 1 studio with large private romantic terrace opening on the park and mountains, and 2 luxurious apartments with a zen design, one of 53 m² and the other a luxury

studio with jacuzzi. All prices are calculated according to the season and duration. There is a living room with fireplace, a restaurant, a wellness area and free fitness area (massages or personal coach on order). In this ideal environment for relaxing, the warm welcome of your hosts Ingrid and Edwin will make you feel at home.

Leisure

Hikes. The municipality publishes a map with places of interest and 7 signposted hiking routes. Roquefort-les-Pins has 53 kilometres of paths and is developing a policy of enhancing the trails, in conjunction with the development of bicycle paths. The routes are on average 7 to 9 km long and last 2 to 3 hours. For example:

- ▶ Via Aurelia: this route follows the old Roman road, Via Aurelia, which linked Menton to Arles.
- ▶ The Loup: allows you to discover the bread oven, as well as a fountain.
- ▶ Tramway: the path follows the old tramway line between Villeneuve Loubet and Opio.
- ▶ Le Castellas: allows you to discover the ruins of the 9th century castle, the "fortified castle" overlooking the Loup, which gave its name to the city.

Shopping

Markets

- ▶ **Provençal market:** every Wednesday morning, in the village centre: food, textiles, jewellery, miscellaneous.
- ▶ **Marché Notre-Dame:** every Thursday morning, in the Notre-Dame car park: food (local vegetables and delicatessen/ Italian cheeses).



Roquefort Les Pins fountain.

TOURNETTES-SUR-LOUP

Perched on a rocky spur and overlooking the Loup valley, Tournettes-sur-Loup is a charming, typically southern village. The medieval village, with its old narrow streets around the church, its artists, shops and restaurants, attracts many visitors. The village takes its name from the Latin *turris alta*, which can be translated as “high observation point”. From Bar-sur-Loup, you have a breathtaking view of the facades of the old houses stacked above the ravine. Tournettes-sur-Loup is not just a charming medieval village, it is also a haven of peace and work for dozens of artists who live there, finding in the flowery streets of the village the serenity necessary to devote themselves to their art. In addition to the beauty of the place, there is also a cultural and artistic enrichment with potters, ceramists, weavers or jewellers, painters and sculptors who run shops there. You’ll discover the village by strolling through the flowered alleys, stairs and vaulted passages. The houses with their stone facades are deliciously decorated with lots of flowers. The coloured shutters dot the village with pastel touches. Tournettes-sur-Loup is also the “City of Violets” which are abundantly cultivated there as well as olives and orange trees. Every year in March, the “Autour de la Violette” festival takes place, a spring celebration based on the star flower of Tournettes-sur-Loup. This village, by the magic of its particular charm, has always attracted artists. Since 1925, the town has been a place that attracted many silent film screenings at Café Cresp, where Christian-Jaque regularly filmed Fernandel and Jacques Prévert, who lived there in the 1940s. Jean Cocteau, Jacques Prévert, Marcel Carné, Franck Sinatra, Francis Poulenc stayed and worked there.

- ▶ **Altitude of the municipality:** from 47 to 1,246 m
- ▶ **Village altitude:** 400 m
- ▶ **4,000 inhabitants**
- ▶ Commune of the Regional Natural Park Préalpes d’Azur
- ▶ **A little history.** The territory of this municipality is rich in prehistoric sites. The caves of Beaume and Pié Lombard, as well as the Courmettes site, have been frequented by humans during the Paleolithic, then in the Neolithic and reused during the Bronze Age (2000 to 750 B.C.) and the Iron Age. It is also said that a Celto-Ligurian oppidum was located at the site of the present village, and that it was then used as a Roman camp. The first reference to the Tournettes site dates back to 1024. The name *Castrum de Torretis* is mentioned. In the 14th century, with the death of Queen Jeanne 1st, a succession crisis started in the county of Provence. The lord of Tournettes-sur-Loup, Guillaume de Villeneuve, belonged to the town union of Aix that took Charles de Duras’ side against Louis I of Anjou. But the cities of the union of Aix submitted to each other, which led to the rallying of Charles de Duras’ supporters to Louis I of Anjou. Tournettes therefore pays tribute to Louis I of Anjou. The Villeneuve family kept this fiefdom until 1789. During the Revolution, the population installed the Town Hall in the castle.

Parkings

The city of violets is very popular on some days! There is a very central paid parking place de la Libération. If full, the free parking at La Madeleine is at the entrance of the village on Vence side (with a free shuttle bus). Otherwise there is another free parking above the village, near the Bastide aux Violettes.

■ BUREAU D’INFORMATION TOURISTIQUE DE TOURNETTES-SUR-LOUP

2, place de la Libération

☎ **04 93 24 18 93**

See page 13.

■ VISITE GUIDÉE: CITÉ MÉDIÉVALE ET ATELIERS D’ART

Open all year round. Information: ☎ 04 93 24 18 93.

All year round, from Monday to Saturday, guided tour by appointment for groups from 4 people.

In the narrow streets of Tournettes-sur-Loup, craftsmen offer visitors the opportunity to discover their unique and unusual pieces of creation.

Sightseeing

▶ **The medieval village.** Randomly in the pedestrian streets, we discover the barbican, the clock tower or the common oven. All along the Grand Rue are the craftsmen, potters, sculptors, olive woodwork shops, as well as some restaurants. Do not hesitate to go down towards the bottom of the village, and leave the ramparts by the street Portail neuf, to go up to the orientation table.

▶ **The round path.** The south gate of the village (*le Portail Neuf*) gives access to the old round path. From the orientation table starts the old Roman road that once connected Tournettes-sur-Loup to Antibes

■ LA BASTIDE AUX VIOLETTES

Chemin de la Ferrage

☎ **04 93 59 06 97**

bastide@tsi06.com

*Low season: open Monday to Friday from 10am to 12pm and from 1.30pm to 5pm. High season: Tuesday to Saturday from 10am to 12pm and from 2pm to 6pm. Low season from October to the end of March. High season from April to the end of September. Free of charge. Guided tour with a charge for groups on reservation. Visit of the greenhouses from November to March. Guided tours all year round. Shop. It is a museum and farming dedicated to the violet *Victoria Odorata*. Explanations on the different cultures. Sale of bouquets of violets (in season, from November to March) and craft products: crystallized flowers, syrups, soaps. La Bastide aux Violettes is also a remembrance place and a living space, where you can discover the history of Tournettes-sur-Loup and its terroir.*



The village of Tourrettes-sur-Loup.

View over Tourrettes-sur-Loup.

© Bernard CROISÉ





■ L'AQUEDUC DU MOULIN

Rue de la bourgade

The aqueduct is located between the Madeleine car park and the medieval village. Consisting of a single arch, it crosses the old road from Vence to Grasse, now rue de la Bourgade. The oil mill is now private, but you can still see its big iron wheel. This aqueduct testifies the importance of the olive oil industry in the 19th century.

■ CHAPELLES ET ORATOIRES

Tourrettes-sur-Loup is surrounded by several chapels and oratories dedicated to the protection of people, livestock and the village. This same organization can be found in all the villages in the region. The chapels and oratories scattered throughout the countryside were intended to repel epidemics and "evil spirits". Around Tourrettes-sur-Loup are the Saint-Antoine chapel which protected the winegrowers, the Saint-Jean chapel which protected the

crops and herds, the Sainte-Marie-Madeleine chapel, and the Saint-Arnoux chapel. Several oratories are also scattered around the village.

■ CHÂTEAU-MAIRIE

Place Maximin-Escalier

☎ 04 93 59 30 11

www.tourrettessurloup.com

Free admission at the opening days and times of the town hall. Information from the cultural or tourist office.

In 1387, Guichard Villeneuve received this stronghold from the Counts of Provence. The Villeneuve family built the current castle in 1430 by adapting the tower dating from the twelfth century. Covering an area of 400² meters on the ground, it has three floors. The Villeneuve family, then became Marquis and kept the stronghold until 1789. The population later took possession of it and made it their town hall till today. The last Marquis fled but was

Stéphane Furlan: a committed restaurant owner...

© Bernard CRDSE



Stéphane Furlan.

Stéphane Furlan excels at cooking, and is also passionate about cycling. After an international career in the luxury hotel industry in Minneapolis, Houston, Brussels and Cannes, he decided that it was time to change job and wanted to start renting electric bicycles. Between bicycles and stoves, his heart didn't hesitate long. He missed the creativity of the restaurant business, the customers' satisfaction, the stress of the service, he missed it all. In 2016, he made a decision. He started looking for a restaurant in the region to take over, and his choice is the Sansot. The restaurant had to be completely redone, but the magnificent view of Tourrettes-sur-Loup helped his decision. He chose the place, and transformed the restaurant to his liking. A fervent defender of local products, Stéphane Furlan defends the idea to work locally, i.e. employ local staff and make purchases from farmers of the region. In a region where land pressure is high, local farmers must work to conserve agricultural land and avoid seeing this beautiful hinterland disappear forever. At the Sansot, lamb comes from the Domaine des Courmettes, the wine from Denis Rasse in St Jeannet, the vegetables are freshly picked in the neighbouring fields. In return, these same producers advise the restaurant and come to eat themselves. This righteous circle is beneficial for everyone, and quality is on the dish.

Today, Stéphane Furlan is happy to have returned to his passion. Le Sansot welcomes a clientele of tourists, but also regulars. The restaurant has a magnificent view of Tourrettes-sur-Loup, but for Stéphane Furlan, a beautiful view is not enough. You also need a good plate and good products. Local products, of course!

assassinated in Ventimiglia. Abandoned in the eighteenth century, sold as national property, looted, damaged, partly ruined, the castle remains a few things of its former splendour, except the grand balustrade staircase of Louis XIII (restored in the late twentieth century) and the belfry tower, built in the twelfth century. The second floor has three exhibition halls of Contemporary Art, in partnership with the Regional Fund for Contemporary Art (FRAC).

■ DOMAINE DES COURMETTES

Route de Courmettes

☎ 04 92 11 02 32

www.courmettes.com

courmettes@arocha.org

Open all year round, every day from 8am to 8pm.

Organization of different stays: weddings and receptions, retreats, youth camps... And many other events.

The Domaine des Courmettes is above all a magnificent site, located at more than 800 m, at the foot of the Courmette peak. Nature is beautiful here and the place is ideal for various retreats or other events such as weddings. For private individuals, lodges or dormitories can be provided. But that's not all, because the association "A Rocha" which manages the estate also offers many workshops or internships open to all. Feel free to follow their program on the website and participate, as a volunteer or curious person.

■ ÉGLISE SAINT GRÉGOIRE

Place de la Libération

The Lombard-style bell tower has one of the oldest bells in the department, called "la Tourrettane". Behind the main altar is a pagan altar from the 3rd century BC, dedicated to the god Mercury. At the level of the first altar on the right, there is an altarpiece from the school of Bréa. In the choir, a carved wooden altarpiece (17th century).

■ GORGES DU LOUP

www.tourrettesurloup.com

To visit the gorges by car, you have to take, from the crossroads of Bramafan, (north of the gorges) the panoramic road D6 which follows the gorges on the left bank of the river Loup up to Pont du Loup.

A first stop on the site of the Cascades du Saut du Loup allows you to reach a viewpoint and get closer to the falls. We discover the Big Pot, the Cascades des Demoiselles and the Petrifiantes. A belvedere and a landscaped path allow you to observe the river in its most tumultuous course. Further on you can see the spectacular Courmes waterfall on the left, but it is difficult to stop there due to lack of parking space. The gorge ends at the Pont du Loup. In the Belle Époque, they were already a tourist attraction. On Sundays in the summer, the railways of Provence poured at the Pont du Loup station tourists and locals alike, who were going up the river in search of freshness, a picnic basket in hand.

▶ **The Pont du Loup viaduct was destroyed in 1944.** It was never restored and the railways of Provence stopped operating the line. Today, the old line is partly used by the road. The electricity plant under the viaduct, also destroyed in 1944, still operates thanks to water from the Loup. It produces electricity for 12,000 homes. The Loup was also used to power flour and cement mills.

Knife & fork

■ AUBERGE DES GORGES DU LOUP 4, route de Grasse – Le Pont du Loup

☎ 04 93 59 38 01

www.auberge-gorgesduloup.com

info@auberge-gorgesduloup.com

Closed from mid-November to mid-December and from mid-January to mid-February. Open from Tuesday to Saturday lunch and dinner and Sunday lunchtime. Menus from 20 € to 40 €. Carte: around 35 € (dish + dessert). Garden. Terrace.

This establishment offers a tasty menu, inspired by Provençal and Tahitian flavours, with fish marinated Tahitian-style or Tahitian vanilla crème brûlée. As the Chef's wife is originally from Polynesia, where they lived for a few years, their taste for this cuisine from the other side of the world can be explained. Every summer, they organize a Tahitian evening in July: a musical welcome, flower necklaces and a dance show, you'd think you were there. The charm of the hostel extends to its ten rooms.

■ LE CLOVIS

21, Grand'Rue ☎ 04 93 58 87 04

www.clovisgourmand.fr

info@clovisgourmand.fr

Maître Restaurateur. Open from Thursday to Monday for lunch and dinner. Formula dish + dessert at 40 €. Starter + dish at 42 €. Starter + Main course + Dessert at 51 €. Starter + Main course + Cheese + Dessert at 60 €. Tasting menu excluding drinks at 75 €, with food and wine pairing at 110 €.

In this gourmet bistro, you'll enjoy fresh and local products mainly from organic farming. Starred chef Julien Bousseau offers a refined and creative cuisine. The carte changes every two weeks and everything is homemade. For the elaboration of the menu, he chooses seasonal products whose themes are for example green asparagus from Provence, capon from the Mediterranean or the can from Merial, which he uses as starter and main course. The wine list is large enough to match the culinary diversity. And for desserts, we enjoyed the Cléry's strawberries with strawberry juice & mint crumble & jasmine ice cream.

▶ **Just next door,** Clovis opened a wine bar, with delicatessen boards from Matayron and cheeses from the Nouvelle Crèmerie of Roquefort-les-Pins.

■ LE MIEDÉVAL

6, Grande-Rue ☎ 04 93 59 31 63

Closed in December. Closed on Wednesday and Thursday. Open from Friday to Tuesday for lunch and dinner. Single menu at 25 €. A la carte: starters around 15 €, dishes from 22 to 25 €.

Friendly welcome, pleasant setting, a large room nicely decorated, but as Grande Rue is busy, you will be better off on the first floor with a room and terrace overlooking the valley – only in season. Traditional and regional cuisine. Very nice carte of meats, dishes, and local wines at reasonable prices. Specialities: rabbit terrine in jelly, foie gras with armagnac, lamb chops with basil, salmon steak, sea bream fillet with chives cream. And for the desserts, candied orange creme caramel.

Tourrettes-sur-Loup.

© Bernard CROISÉ





**LE SANSOT**
700, Route de Grasse

☎ 04 93 59 03 94

www.lesansot.com

contact@lesansot.com

Open all year round. Tuesday to Saturday for lunch and dinner; Sunday for lunch. Booking recommended. Menus from 22 € to 29 € (starter + main course + dessert). Carte: about 20 € (for one dish). Lunch formula: 19 € (daily special + drink + coffee). Wine by the glass. Reception of groups. Terrace.

Chef Stephane Furlan has just returned to this small restaurant located in Tourettes-sur-Loup. And not just any one: Le Sansot is a sublime establishment, with a panoramic view of the village and the surrounding mountains. The concept? Maintain a resolutely rustic setting, accentuated by old decorative objects found here and there. As for the cuisine, we recognize the chef's signature, who skillfully combines gastronomic recipes and a controlled budget. He was already following the "locavore" (local products only) current at the time of the Litote in Vence..

At Le Sansot, he is a true defender of local products and operates almost in a closed circuit with local producers. It is thanks to this geographical proximity that you can enjoy a beautiful mesclun salad and its julienne of root vegetables, which almost jump directly from the neighbouring fields to your plate!

On the carte: peruginas and braised pork cheeks with homemade gnocchi, or vegetable curry with tofu, coconut and cashew nuts, or the fish of the day and roasted vegetables with thyme..

For the desserts, go for the fruit tiramisu and its Amaretto shot! We also appreciated the carte menu that changes every day. To be discovered with no further delay!

Sleeping

AUBERGE
DES GORGES DU LOUP**4, route de Grasse –
Le Pont du Loup**

☎ 04 93 59 38 01

www.auberge-gorgesduloup.com
info@auberge-gorgesduloup.com

Closed from mid-January to mid-February and from mid-November to mid-December. Tables et auberges de France. Reception from 9am to 11pm. Spoken languages: French, English, German, Spanish. 10 rooms (100% non smoker). Double room from €65 to €80. Breakfast: €10 (continental and €15 American). Extra bed: €15. Closed parking (free). American Express, Holiday voucher. Pets allowed. Seminars. Receptions and weddings. Free Wifi. Cleaning service. Catering facilities (menu from €16 to €32 - carte around €30 - children's menu €12). Satellite TV.

The Auberge des Gorges du Loup is located at the entrance of the Gorges du Loup, it is a beautiful place

for people wishing to explore a very rich and varied natural territory. The owners warmly welcome you with ten comfortable rooms, bathroom or shower, TV and free wi-fi. The rooms are like the authentic Provençal surroundings. You can have lunch on the shaded and very flowery terrace. It is a true country haven, ideal for relaxation. The restaurant room has a distinctly rustic and cosy decoration: huge fireplace, straw chairs, copper pots and a chandelier made from a cartwheel... Here, meals highlight local flavours and the stays have a southern atmosphere in a pleasant rural conviviality.

■ LES RIVES DU LOUP****2666 bis, route de La Colle**

☎ 04 93 24 15 65

www.rivesduloup.com**D 6 between Colle-sur-Loup
and Le Pont-du-Loup.**

Closed from October to April. Double room from 59 € to 89 €; triple room from 69 € to 99 €. Half board: 24 €. Breakfast: 7,50 €. Animals accepted. Wifi. Restoration (simple).

Located in a leisure residence and outdoor camping, the hotel has 8 large simple, comfortable and air-conditioned rooms. A beautiful swimming pool for guests. On-site catering and children's activities are provided in July and August. If you are many, you can choose to rent a wooden chalet or an equipped mobile home for almost the same rate as a double room. Nice accommodation in nature, enjoying the proximity of the coastline (30 minutes). We enjoyed the conviviality of the place as well as the quality of the hospitality of the Taylor family.

Campsites

■ LES RIVES DU LOUP*****2666 bis, route de La Colle**

☎ 04 93 24 15 65

www.rivesduloup.com**D6 between Colle-sur-Loup
and Le Pont-du-Loup.**

Closed from October 1st to March 31st. 116 camping pitches (and 8 hotel rooms). Pitch from 9 € to 29,50 €. Mobile homes from 199 € per week. The Club-house offers a family cuisine for breakfast, lunch or dinner. Continental: €7.50. Menu of the day: 16,50 €. Children's menu: 8,50 €. Snacks, sandwiches, desserts, salads, pasta, omelettes... Internet connection. Wifi.

A very nice place for holidays located between the sea and the mountains, near Gorges du Loup, between Gourdon and La Colle sur Loup. The site is on the banks of the river and you can enjoy many sports activities nearby: delta-plane, paragliding, canyoning, speleology, hiking, mountain biking, climbing, golf... and visits to Provence's neighbouring villages. The coastline is also

close (Cagnes-sur-Mer is 20 minutes by car). The Taylor family and all the staff are bending over backwards to make your stay perfect. Three options are available. First, a hotel room that has eight double rooms with a private bathroom. Then, a hundred mobile homes from 2 to 6 people with equipped kitchen, showers and toilets, garden furniture and spacious pitch. And finally, the traditional camping (15 pitches) where you can set up your tent or your caravan for a stay in the open air. A beautiful swimming pool is open for guests as well as a multi-sports playground. Private parking. Restaurant on site and activities for children in July and August.

Leisure

► **Hiking.** The Tourist Office publishes a leaflet entitled "Promenades et Randonnées balisées" (Walks and marked hikes) which offers 10 walks around Tourrettes-sur-Loup, from 1h30 to 5h. The leaflet is complemented by a map of the region and routes.

■ **FUNTRIP**
11-13, route de Grasse
Pont du Loup
 ☎ 06 19 66 03 65
 www.funtrip.fr
 contact@funtrip.fr

Recommended by the Park.

Avace Funtrip proposes a whole range of outdoor activities in the middle of nature that are warm, friendly and totally safe: aquatic excursions, canyoning, speleology, adventure treks, undersea diving, via ferrata, wild adventure outings, rock climbing.

Shopping

■ **CONFISERIE FLORIAN**
Le Pont du Loup
 ☎ 04 93 59 32 91
 www.confiserieflorian.com

Open every day and on public holidays from 9am to 6.30pm. In July and August: closes at 7pm. In January, closes between noon and 2pm. Open on Sundays.

Regional fruits and flowers are transformed into delicious sweets: jams, flower preserves, crystallized flowers... Guided tour of the workshops.

■ **LA FERME**
DES COURMETTES
Route des Courmettes
 ☎ 04 89 05 87 21
 gabelierb@aol.com

At 3.8 km from the road from Tourrettes to Bar sur Loup. It is best to go there in the morning, when the farm is active (processing of milk into cheese). Visits from February to the end of September. Rates on request.

La ferme des Courmettes is one of the two farms in the Courmettes estate. This beautiful farm is composed

of about 80 alpine goats that graze on the hills of the estate, facing the Mediterranean, at an altitude of 800 m. Several discovery workshops are regularly organized. On reservation, you can visit this place to see the animals live and witness the entire process of artisanal cheese making.

On site, tasting and sales of matured, dry cheeses, with pistou, olive paste and tomme des Courmettes, awarded at numerous competitions. The shepherd, Bruno Gabelier, is also a poet and treats visitors with his flavoured texts.

■ **POTERIE LA BERGERIE**
La Bergerie
67, Grand'rue
 ☎ 04 93 59 35 17
 www.vigroux.com
 damien@vigroux.com

Open every day from 9am to 5pm.

This is an extraordinary and unique place in the village. We are in the basement of a medieval rampart house with low ceilings and massive beams, while the back of the workshop is formed by an impressive natural rock. On either side of the dry stone walls, the shelves display the delicate pieces turned, decorated and fired on site. The establishment is a family story in the kingdom of earthenware, settled in this surprising place for about fifty years. They are the ones who created the small terracotta hedgehog with a lawn fleece that grows on his back: first you have to put in some seeds, water and that's it! Online shop. Damien can do works on order. Do not hesitate to contact him.

■ **LE TRAVAIL**
DU BOIS D'OLIVIER
4, Grand-Rue
 ☎ 0624342935
 www.boisdolivier.fr
 dubosqguillaume@yahoo.fr

Open every day from 2pm to 5.30pm. From June to September open from 10am to 8pm.

Dubosq, craftsman, makes all kinds of olive wood items: salad bowls, fruit bowls, trays, cutlery, sculptures, furniture...

Markets

► **Provençal market:** Every Wednesday and Saturday morning, Place de la Libération Direct sale of local producers: Seasonal fruits and vegetables, honey, olives and olive oil, cheese, charcuterie). Pottery and crafts.

► **Pottery market:** Potters and craftsmen offer their creations, utilitarian or decorative objects. Tableware, jewellery, sculptures.

► **Christmas market:** Local products and seasonal crafts. Foie gras, honey and gingerbread. Animations for children, and Santa Claus.

VALBONNE SOPHIA ANTIPOLIS

Valbonne – Sophia-Antipolis includes the historic village of Valbonne and its outlying districts, as well as Sophia Antipolis, the first European technology park that occupies nearly 60% of the municipality's territory. In 2019, the town celebrates a double anniversary: the 50th anniversary of Sophia Antipolis, and the 500th anniversary of Valbonne! It can be said that the settlement of the technopole on the territory of the municipality in 1969 transformed the life of Valbonne. The village of yesteryear has seen its life turned upside down. From 1,600 inhabitants in 1970 to 13,700 in 2018, the city has had to adapt to new challenges, build, innovate and modify its urban landscape to accommodate a cosmopolitan population of about 80 different nationalities. The challenge for Valbonne was not to lose its roots with this influx of rather wealthy people. The municipality has succeeded wonderfully in this integration, while preserving its rich 16th century heritage and preserving two thirds of its territory in the green zone. The perfect illustration is the Garbejaire – Haut Sartoux district, located in the heart of Sophia Antipolis. This living, cultural and leisure space, founded by a unique architecture in the heart of nature, fits perfectly into a preserved landscape. A historically rural commune, Valbonne Sophia Antipolis has preserved its roots, with the creation of a communal vineyard, a communal olive grove and a communal goat farm! Unlike the other villages in the region, wrapped around an eminence, in a defensive style, the village of Valbonne is built in a checkered pattern on a rectangular plan, the streets framing a central square and intersecting perpendicularly. Because Valbonne was not created in the Middle Ages, but at the beginning of the 16th century, at the beginning of the Renaissance. Here no stairs or steep alleys, everything is flat or slightly sloping, and easy to access.

To enter the village, it is necessary to pass the gates, sometimes "pountis", of old covered passages under the house walls. Of the four gates that opened on either side of the city, only those from the north, south and west remain. The old centre, preserved in this way sheltered from the townhouses, has been magnificently restored and maintained. Walking there is a real pleasure, as the village has so many assets. The houses have beautiful facades with ochre plasters, on which pastel-coloured shutters add a touch of Provençal colour. You can admire the bell tower of St-Blaise, the arcades of the square, or the colourful facade of the Hôtel des Armoiries. The streets are strings of colours with bright and dark effects, enlightened by the vegetal touches arranged by the inhabitants: jars of succulent plants, bouquets of scented lavender, Virginia creeper or bougainvillea climbing a facade. All over charming shops invite you to come in, restaurants have their terraces right on the street, or on the squares. "Here the future has found its roots". This is the motto of the municipality, rich in its complementarity between tradition and future sciences.

- ▶ **Altitude of the municipality:** from 75 to 302 m
- ▶ **Altitude of the town hall:** 227 m

▶ 13,170 inhabitants

▶ **A little history.** In 1199 Guillaume, from the monastic order of Chalais, was looking for a site to build an abbey. It was this abbey, once built, that would generate 320 years later, the village of Valbonne. By the end of the Middle Ages, the Black Death and the severe drought and barbaric incursions caused the desertification of the region, which was ruined and abandoned. In 1519, it became necessary to develop the abbey's lands and thus to repopulate the estate. For this reason, the abbey decided to have the village built by investors, who were responsible for renting the houses to the farmers who came to work on the land. The Prior of the Abbey Don Taxil, accepted the request of the Bishop of Grasse and Abbot of Lérins, Augustin Grimaldi, to create a village near the abbey, to repopulate the region. Augustin Grimaldi, who drew the plans for Valbonne himself, based on the model of Roman cities. The houses on the outskirts of the village served as defensive walls. High and narrow, they had no doors to the outside of the village. The houses, almost identical, were designed on a simple plan: on the ground floor, a shed, on the first floor the living room, on the second floor the bedrooms and in the attic a storage space, with a pulley to assemble the goods. All this was ingenious, and far ahead of its time. *Vallis Bona*, the "good valley" along the coastal river of La Brague, was then repopulated by communities from neighbouring hamlets and the high country. However, the Prior had not thought of bringing water to the village. For a long time, it was from the river that it had to be drawn. The first fountain in the village dates back to 1837!

■ BUREAU D'INFORMATION TOURISTIQUE DE VALBONNE SOPHIA-ANTIPOLIS

1, place de l' Hôtel de Ville

☎ 04 93 12 34 50

See page 10.

The Order of Chalais

The monastic order of Chalais, born around 1120, spread from the Dauphiné to Valbonne, creating 13 monasteries: 10 abbeys and 3 priories. It followed the rule of Saint Benedict and his vocation was pastoral and forestry. It disappeared around 1300, absorbed by the Grande Chartreuse, before falling into oblivion. Valbonne Abbey, a 13th century Romanesque abbey church, is an example of the architectural construction of Chalais art. Today, it appears to be a moving testimony of this order, whose long-buried past is now being rediscovered.



Saint-Blaise Church, Valbonne.

PRÊT A PORTER
HOMMES
DAMES
ENFANTS





Little
Italy

RESTORANTE

RES

Little Italy

Le Cucchiaio del Chef

Risotto alla Chitarra

Polpetta

Frittata alla Toscana

Polci alla Toscana

Sightseeing

► **The first fountain.** Created in 1837 to bring water to the village, it still exists. It is located in rue Grande, in front of the old town hall.

► **The Clausonnes Roman aqueduct.** It was part of a water supply system to the Roman city of Antipolis (Antibes). The water came from Valbonne and Mougins. Remains of this aqueduct can be found in the Valmasque forest.

■ ABBAYE (EX-SAINTE-MARIE-DE-VALBONNE) 1, rue de la Paroisse

It is on the lands of an isolated valley on the edge of river Brague offered in 1199 by Olivier, Bishop of Antibes at the Prads abbey, that abbot Guillaume founded an abbey attached to the monastic order of Chalais which took the name of Monastère Sainte-Marie-de-Valbonne. Refined architecture specific to the order, harmonious volumes, narrow Romanesque type openings, choir with flat chevet, beautiful arch with stony bench reserved

for the abbot, twelve consecration crosses sculpted into the walls, facade gate with three semicircular arches supported on both sides by three monolithic capitals resting on three columns. The life of the Monastery in the order of Chalais was short. The breaking down of its relationship with the Prads abbey dates from 1275. Poverty led to anarchy and affected most of the Order. Sainte-Marie-de-Valbonne was offered to the Lérins abbey as from 1303 but only took possession of it in 1346. Owned by the municipality, it is now under the name of Saint Blaise. The restored convent buildings welcome the permanent exhibition of the "Vieux Valbonne" museum.

■ LA CHÈVRERIE DE VALBONNE

1382, route de Biot

☎ 06 86 52 38 47

chevriedevalbonne@gmail.com

Open from Wednesday to Friday from 4pm to 7pm; Saturday from 10am to 12pm and from 4pm to 7pm. Phone for an appointment for an opening outside these times.

Mohamed Araba: sharing Companion...



Mohamed Araba, owner of the Demeure du Rocher.

Mohamed Araba, a native Berber and Valbonnais since his earliest childhood, studied at the Beaux-Arts and Blot school in Reims. He learned, among other things, the restoration of decorative paintings and ancient frescoes: gilding, frescoes, and gypsum, (*molded or sculpted interior decorations*).

In the purest spirit of duty and the values of Companionship, the young man sets off on a 5-year tour of Europe, which will take him to Venice, the Pro Venezia Foundation on the island of San Servolo, Florence and Barcelona, among other places.

This was followed by a professional career that made him travel through

France and Europe for more than 35 years, restoring with passion frescoes, decorative paintings and sundials on the master-pieces of our heritage, monasteries, castles, churches. The abbey of St-Savin, the castle of Gourdon, and others owe him a new youth.

After these thousands of kilometres travelled all over Europe, these years spent acquiring knowledge and skills in his art, it was time for him to return to Valbonne. Remembering the principles of Companionship, hospitality, trade, travel, community, transmission, initiation, masterpiece, Mohamed Araba acquired this old residence in the village of Valbonne to transform it into a warm guest house. He will welcome modern-day travellers, exhibit works of art, give painting lessons, thus transmitting his passion for art...

At the Demeure du Rocher, Mohamed Araba invites us to travel in the spirit of the themes that are dear to him: friendliness, good wine, art, golf, all this under one roof. In this immobile journey, he will evoke Venice, Barcelona or Brussels, Leonardo da Vinci or the Flemish school, by serving you in a tasting glass a fresh white wine, straight out of the 17th century wheat silo discovered during the works, and which serves as his wine cellar. He will offer you a hike in the backcountry, on foot or on horseback, a game of golf or a sailboat ride. This man has as many strings to his bow as there are colors on a painter's palette!

The 500th anniversary of Valbonne – The 50th anniversary of Sophia Antipolis

In 1519, the village of Valbonne was born from an idea of Augustin Grimaldi, bishop of Grasse and abbot of Lérins. In 1969, an idea of Pierre Laffitte, then director of the Ecole des Mines in Paris, gave birth to Sophia Antipolis, an activity area that would quickly become the first European technology park. 450 years apart, two men, in the same place, were embarking on the adventure of their lives, the creation of a City! In 2019, Valbonne will therefore be 500 years old, and Sophia Antipolis 50 years old. These creations have been successful because they are now linked within the same municipality. This year, the municipality of Valbonne Sophia Antipolis is celebrating this double anniversary with a dazzling programme of festivities. Festivals and celebrations, concerts and exhibitions, treasure hunts, historical hikes, short story competitions will follow one another all year round.

► **Information** at the Tourist Information Office in Valbonne: ☎ 04 93 12 34 50 - www.valbonne.fr – tourisme.vsa@agglo-casa.fr

The municipality of Valbonne Sophia Antipolis has developed this project to preserve its pastoral tradition and its semi-rural and semi-urban character. La Chèverrie is designed as an educational place open to everybody for the promotion of quality products. The construction was partly carried out by the municipal technical services, between the 255 m² goat farm, the 95m² cheese dairy, the 73m² hay storage and the 86m² shepherd's housing. The goatherds, Françoise and Emmanuel have been installed since February 2016 with their 60 goats. They produce cheese all year round and sell it on the farm and at the village market. Françoise and Emmanuel will warmly welcome you to show you their installation and introduce you to their lovely little goats...

► **To be noted.** On Saturday afternoons, other producers come to sell their products (honey, farm products, olive oil).

■ CITÉ ARTISANALE DE VALBONNE SOPHIA ANTIPOLIS

108, chemin de Sainte-Hélène

The Cité Artisanale Bartholomew Beaulieu is unique in the department. It was born from a municipal will to respond to a strong demand for the establishment of professionals. Offering to the inventors adapted premises at competitive price means to maintain the traditional activities in the city and to guarantee a diversification of employment. Located on a wooded area of 2 ha, Cité Artisanale is a reference that still inspires many communities. The young duet of architects from Nice, Comte and Vollenweider as well as Ville Maître d'Ouvrage received "l'équerre d'argent première œuvre" award, given to architects by Groupe Moniteur for this modern and original building that blends perfectly into its environment. Today, Cité Artisanale Barthélemy Beaulieu welcomes about twenty craftsmen on 4,200 m².

■ **VALBONNE VILLAGE**
Place de l'Hôtel-de-Ville
☎ 04 93 12 31 00
mairie@ville-valbonne.fr

At the end of the Middle Ages, the black plague, the great drought and the barbaric incursions had led to the desertification of the region, ruined and left to abandonment. In 1519 on the initiative of the prior don Antoine Taxil and the good will of Augustin de Grimaldi, bishop of Grasse, the village of Valbonne is built around the abbey. Vallis Bona, the "good valley" along the coast of the Brague River is then repopulated by communities coming from neighboring hamlets and the high country. The old village unlike most Provençal villages is built according to a rectangular checkerboard plan based on the model of the Roman cities associating the main street, the perpendicular street and the central square. Real walls of defense, the narrow and high houses did not have doors on the outside. Beautifully preserved, the village has preserved its authenticity over the centuries by developing itself outside the old center.

■ VIGNES COMMUNALES DE RAISIN SERVAN

Until the mid-20th century, Valbonne was primarily an agricultural village planted with olive trees, vines, and flowers dedicated to perfumery. The cultivation of Servan, a species of late white grapes imported from the Southwest in 1910, was developed there. By immersing the bunches into water, they could be kept in their fresh state for several months, the containers are stored in a room commonly called "chambre d'amour". To preserve and perpetuate threatened culture and tradition, the municipality created the communal vineyard of Servan in 1995. 300 vine stocks were planted on a hillside well exposed to Val de Cubert. Each year, the harvests are carried out by municipal officials. Part of the harvest (two thirds) is used to make wine, the other is for local consumption. The finest bunches picked on the shoot are sorted and kept in jars filled with water in which a piece of charcoal is added to prevent the rot of the grapes which remain fresh in a monitored atmosphere. They leave their love room at the end of January and are offered to people who savour them in Saint-Blaise.

Sophia Antipolis, a man's dream...

Pierre Laffitte, a scientist and politician, was born on January 1st, 1925 in Saint-Paul. In August 1960, he was director of BRGM and wrote in *Le Monde* that he regretted the lack of sociological reflection concerning land development. With the ambition to develop training, research and technology transfer, he dreams of a "Latin Quarter in the fields" far from the capital, in the garrigue north of Antibes. He is not taken seriously: "Create a scientific activity in the country of carnival and swimming? Don't even think about it!". However, utopia made its way and despite strong opposition, the idea spreads to initiate an "international city of Wisdom, Science and Technology" near Valbonne, the village where the operation will start. IBM opened a Studies and Research Centre in 1960 in La Gaude, the Aérospatiale is located in Cannes, Thomson-CSF in Cagnes-sur-Mer... Pierre Laffitte is therefore confident that he will attract to the region a capital of skills and finances, alliance which will constitute the beginning of the 21st century. A vast non-urbanized territory is found in the heart of the plateau originally formed by the five municipalities of Biot, Valbonne, Vallauris, Mougins, Antibes, which made it possible to design an innovative development project for the scientific activity area.

The École des Mines, Armines, CNRS, SEMA, INRIA, IFP are the first to be conquered and give their approval. Franlab, a subsidiary of IFP, built the initial building. The Business School, which was cramped in its Nice offices, deployed there and became CERAM. These are the first steps in a great history. Sophia-Antipolis develops in a preserved site where nature is preserved with protected green spaces, places of life and leisure that are organized around a Provençal village square like an ancient agora. To prevent the "city of scientists" from cutting itself off from the surrounding environment, the Sophia Foundation, declared a public utility, was created in 1984. It fulfils a fundamental mission of cultural and scientific animation and develops a concept of cross-fertilization. It makes the link with clubs and associations: exhibitions, concerts, meetings, conferences, theatrical and musical evenings follow one another.

Since 2004, it has intensified contacts in order to facilitate exchanges and prospective reflections. The early pioneers have multiplied. Today, there are 2,500 resident companies, nearly 50% of which have R&D activities; 38,000 direct jobs, 4,500 public sector researchers and 5,000 students. Taking into account indirect jobs, the science park would provide a livelihood for some 100,000 people. It is the largest science park in Western Europe. But Pierre Laffitte dreams that Sophia-Antipolis will assert itself as "an essential pole of a new Renaissance of this Mediterranean that was the mother of our civilisation. A Florence of the 21st century". He wrote it. We believe in it. We remember that he is responsible for the emergence of Sophia, an exceptional environmental achievement over 2,400 hectares, a community of talents with 82 nationalities, an innovative scientific heritage, a unique architecture for which he has laid the cornerstone.

Knife & Fork

■ A LA MAISON

2030, route de Cannes

☎ 04 92 98 97 13

alamaisonresto@gmail.com

Open Tuesday to Saturday, all year round, for lunch and dinner. Dish of the day: 13,90 € (2 choices on the slate).

Formulas starter + main course or main course + dessert: 18,90 €. Starter + main course + dessert: 23,90 €. Terrace.

The establishment offers an original concept that is unheard of in the sector. A retro atmosphere with a vintage decoration that appeals to all generations. Formica furniture and antique objects make up the large dining room, which seats about sixty people. There's even a bed or a corner with table football!

A large terrace is also open as soon as the sunny days return.

Odile Isoul, the mistress of the premises, welcomes you warmly. In the kitchen, Charles offers a fusion cuisine

that varies according to the seasons: wok, meat or fish tartar, burger of all kinds, andouillette revisited or marrow bone. Formulas are planned for lunch. For the evening, we choose à la carte.

And to push the originality even further, an orange 2CV is planted in front of the establishment. Can't miss it!

■ LA BERGERIE

18, rue d'Opio

☎ 04 93 12 94 74

labrebis06560@hotmail.fr

Open from Monday to Saturday in the evening. Carte: about 35 €. Children's menu: 10 €. Lunch formula: 21 €. Menus from 24 € to 30 € depending on the events. Fondues from 18 €. Animations.

The restaurant is in a 16th century building with a large vaulted room made entirely of stone. The atmosphere is charming and intimate. You dine with candlelight, for couples or with friends to celebrate on the cabaret shows. Every evening a small stage is reserved for the pianist singer. On weekends, live entertainment by an

artist or musical group. Themed evenings are regularly organized with an adapted menu; French songs, gypsy jazz, retro, American crooners' revivals, etc. Artists have talent. The main thing is on the plate and you can enjoy a choice of 7 fondues, or a traditional quality cuisine. The dishes are copious and the plates well garnished. The address is famous to lovers of good music and good food who want to spend a friendly moment. Outdoor terrace from April to September, with creation of a summer carte.

■ LE BISTRO BY NAUTIPOLIS

Nautipolis

Complexe aquatique de Valbonne

Sophia Antipolis

150, rue du Vallon

☎ 09 71 00 21 39

www.nautipolis.fr

Open all year round. Every day from 12pm to 3pm; Thursday evening. Booking recommended. A la carte: about 30 €. Children's menu: 9,50 € (dish, dessert, drink). Daily suggestion: 14 € (or 19 €: suggestion of the day + dessert of the day + coffee). Reception of groups (on reservation for groups every day of the week). Garden. Terrace.

Le Bistro is first of all the restaurant of Valbonne's Pool Complexe. Lunch is served in a bright room with a view on the outdoor swimming pool, and the pleasant feeling of being in a holiday club. On sunny days, the Bistro also has a lovely terrace. Most of the customers are people working at Sophia Antipolis district and have a limited lunch time. So the chef made it practical: the formula dish + dessert + coffee is simple and quick. As a starter, you have hearty salads, burgers or club sandwiches. For the dishes, fish (cod steak), meat (minced duck breast, chicken wok) and pasta (penne du Bistro).

The vegans aren't left out, with a vegan starter or a veggie burger. The Bistro also offers a snack formula on certain days of the week, as well as on Thursday evenings (late opening day of Nautipolis).

■ LE BISTROT DE SA VIE

1360, route d'Antibes

☎ 04 93 12 29 68

Maitre Restaurateur. Open from Tuesday to Saturday for lunch and dinner. A la carte: about 60 € (starters around 25€, main courses from 35 to 40€, desserts around 12€). Lunch formula: 23 € (starter + main course or main course + dessert). (Starter + main course + dessert: 26€). Wine by the glass. Discovery Menu: 42€, Savour Menu: 52€, Surprise Menu: 62€.

After having worked for more than 20 years with Roger Verger, chef Daniel Desavie now welcomes you to his restaurant, De Sa Vie, in an elegant and refined setting. Here, the establishment is divided into a gastronomic and a bistro part, it is up to you to choose according to your desires. If your budget can follow, we preferred the gastro part with the lobster, white butter and herbs, the heart of beef fillet, mashed potatoes and onion fondue in red wine or the seabass fillet on an artichoke fondue "à la barigoule".

■ LE BISTROT DU SOMMELIER

21, rue Eugène-Giraud

☎ 04 93 12 17 95

www.lebistrot dusommelier.fr

bistrot dusommelier@gmail.com

Open all year. Closed on Wednesday all day and Saturday for lunch. Set menu at €35 (menu bistro: starter and main course + cheese + dessert). Daily special: €12. Wine by the glass. Lunch menu at €16.50 (daily special + gourmet coffee). Terrace.

Eric and his wife Carine have settled in this little bistro nestled in the heart of the village's streets after having worked in famous houses on the coast. They have completely renovated it, and the red, white and black colors give this place a certain charm. A small outdoor terrace completes the room.

The cuisine is prepared with products from the market: fresh and seasonal. The slate changes every day. You can enjoy saddle of rabbit with dried tomatoes, monkfish a la Provençale or veal liver with parsely. Chocolate fondue will delight gourmets as well as the red fruit or coco-banana crumble. A treat. And let's not forget that Eric is above all a sommelier, hence the name of the establishment. The wine list is astonishing and well-stocked and you can enjoy almost 25 wines by the glass at a very reasonable price. Connoisseurs can also enjoy fine bottles.

■ BLEU LAVANDE

Carrefour des Fauvettes

☎ 04 93 12 28 01

www.restaurantbleulavande.fr

restaurantbleulavande@orange.fr



Maitres Cuisiniers de France. Open from Tuesday to Sunday for lunch and dinner. Booking recommended. From 25 to 35€ for a dish. Lunch formula: 25 € (starter + main course or main course + dessert). Wine by the glass. "Suggestion of the Day" menu (starter + main course + dessert) at 32 €. "Seasonal cuisine" menu (starter + main course + cheese + dessert) for 49 €. Checks not accepted. American Express. Reception of groups. Garden. Terrace. All year round, takeaway sale of fresh duck foie gras. Parking.

In this Provencal decor restaurant, Corinne and Bernard Leclerc's have gained experience over the years. The former Michelin starred chef (remember La Poêle d'Or in Cannes) hasn't lost his touch and enjoys those who are nostalgic for a cuisine based on the essentials. Bernard works in a bright open kitchen, recently renovated and Corinne, his wife, welcomes gourmets to the vast room or on the pleasant terrace along the garden decorated with a small ornamental pool. In the cuisine, the chef offers you: warm Breton lobster salad with spring vegetables, sweetbreads and chanterelles fricassée, suckling lamb, reduced juice, grenaille potatoes or cocoa hot soufflé. And to be sure that our culinary heritage is not forgotten, Bernard Leclerc is reviving forgotten recipes, such as "L'oreiller de la belle Aurore" (the pillow of the beautiful Aurore), a pâté en croûte dedicated to Claudine-Aurore Récamier, Anthelme Brillat-Savarin's mother.

EMMANUEL DURST: THE GOATS FARM IN VALBONNE

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► The pastoral link

We are a little surprised to discover a herd of goats in such an unrural environment, and yet it is in the heart of the commune of Valbonne that Françoise and Emmanuel Durst raise their 80 Alpine goats. As soon as you pass the gate and walk the 50 m path to the farm, you are greeted by the bleating of goats and sheep, and the joyful ringing of the bells. Unlike sheep, which are more fearful, goats come to beg for caresses and rub themselves with pleasure against visitors. With their brightly coloured necklaces, they are immediately endearing!

It was after an internship in a company with a breeder that Emmanuel became aware that he was made for a life in the open air, close to nature. After a professional bac, Breeding of Sheep and meat he continued his studies with a BTSA in Analysis, Conduct, and Strategy of the Agricultural Enterprise in Digne before spending a few seasons in summer at the Courmettes farm in Tourrettes-sur-Loup. Françoise, Emmanuel and their children arrived in Valbonne in February 2017. The municipality, owner of the land, wanted to set up a goat farm on its territory to preserve the memory of its pastoral tradition. After winning the call for applications from the town hall of Valbonne, the small family invested in the site to install the goat farm. The couple bought their first goats, and in March 2018, the goat house opened to the public with the sale of the first cheeses. Located in the heart of a semi-urban area, the goat farm is often perceived by the public as an animal park or educational farm. But this is not the case: the Valbonne goat farm is first and foremost a farm. It is a goat farm and cheese factory, which opens its doors to the public on certain days for the sale of its production. The rest of the time, Françoise and Emmanuel take care of the technical management of the farm: forage feeding, pasture area management, sheepdog training, herd health management, lambing, animal selection, as well as herd management and safety. Not to mention the maintenance of the buildings, and of course, the processing of milk into cheese and the marketing of the latter. The herd, by grazing, also participates in the maintenance and clearing of communal forests and surrounding areas. Goats graze rather high up, while the ten sheep that accompany them feed more on grass or bushes at ground level. The combination of goats and sheep is therefore ideal for the maintenance of undergrowth. Being located

in a semi-urban area still has its advantages: local demand is high enough, and customers are now looking for authenticity. And that's what Françoise and Emmanuel offer: far from intensive production, they raise their 80 goats, transform milk into cheese and market their production themselves. What makes one goat cheese different from another? Mainly animal feeding. The methods are the same, but the tastes vary depending on where the goats feed. As a young girl, Françoise, from the Monts du Lyonnais, used to go to the farm rather than the grocery store to get milk, eggs and cheese. It is a little bit like this idea that guides them today, to make sure that the inhabitants of the surrounding area take the reflex to come to the farm to buy fresh and organic dairy products, meet them to exchange with them, explain their profession, make their company exist in this environment. It is also this relational side that characterizes them, and we feel that customers spend a good time here, not hesitating to linger in this space a little far from the roads and time, a "natural" space with its sounds and smells, and which is not without evoking for each of us the memory of a simpler life, childhood... When you see Emmanuel with his herd of goats and his dog, evolving in the semi-urban environment of Valbonne, you think that he is the link, the link between the feverishness of the Côte d'Azur, and the simplicity of an idealized rural life, which seems very far away today.

► The Valbonne goat farm in a few figures:

80 dairy goats. 10 sheep. 3 herding dogs. 2 breeding rams.

The goats are milked once a day in the morning. 150 litres of milk are produced daily. To make a classic cheese (fresh plain), you need 1 litre of milk. To make a tomme, you need 10 times more. With 150 litres of milk, we make 150 classic cheeses (fresh nature, bricks, logs, pyramids, rolled in spices...) or 12 Peijan tommes. The farm produces an average of 130 to 150 cheeses per day. The cheeses are organic. They are sold at the farm during opening days and hours, as well as in 3 Amaps, and at some cheese shops and restaurants. In 2019, the 80 goats gave birth to 123 kids and goats that will be sold to other herders. September and October: breeding period. February and March: birth period.

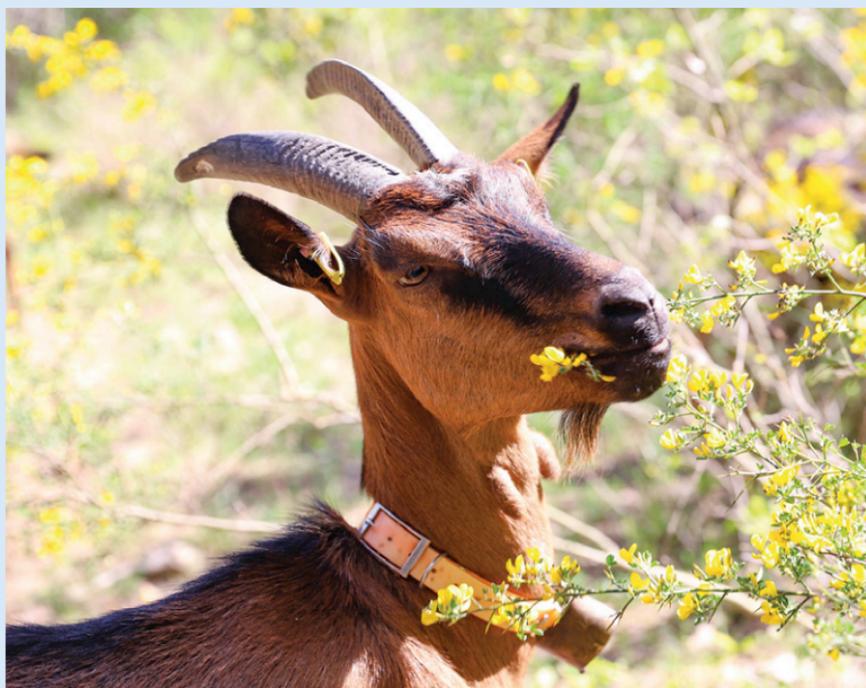
■ LA CHÈVRERIE DE VALBONNE

1382, route de Biot

☎ 06 86 52 38 47



© Bernard CROUË

Emmanuel Durst.

© Bernard CROUË

Emmanuel Durst's goat, Valbonne.

■ LE BOIS DORÉ**265, route d'Antibes**

☎ 04 93 12 26 25

www.restaurant-leboisdore.comle.boisdore@orange.fr

"Maître Restaurateur" label. Open all year. For lunch and dinner, 7 days a week. À la carte: around €50. Lunch menu: €19.50 (main course + starter or dessert, to be chosen in the Menu from the Market and 1 drink of Château Minuty). Daily specials from €15. Menu of the Market €28.50, Menu Gourmand €39.90, Menu Bois Doré €47. Garden. Terrace.

On the road between Sophia and Valbonne, you can reach the restaurant by a private driveway through a green and flowered park. The elegant room is heated by the fireplace, the tables nicely set. With the first sunny days, we prefer the outdoor terrace covered and shaded, allowing you to enjoy nature in a comfortable chair. It is in complete peace that you can enjoy a traditional gourmet cuisine that plays with flavors of the south but not only because two Chefs work together. You can enjoy a gourmet duck plate, several different flavours of foie gras, variations around tomatoes or asparagus in season... roasted lamb, Angus beef, sea bass in salt crust, or Rossini tournedos are the unmissables of the house. Bolder, hte creme brulee with foie gras or artichokes with truffles... Daily arrival of oysters and lobsters. All desserts are home made. The café gourmand offers 4 mini cakes. The kitchen is prepared to the minute, so sometimes you have to be patient depending on the dishes ordered. It is the boss Audrey who welcomes you at the reception and directs the service - we left this very nice Bois Doré with all our senses satisfied.

■ LE CAFÉ DES ARCADES**Place des Arcades**

☎ 04 93 12 00 06

Open all year. Closed only on December 25th and on January 1st. Every day from 7am to midnight. À la carte: Around €23. Terrace.

With a privileged place on the beautiful arcades square of in the heart of the old village, this café welcomes you all day long whether for a drink, a snack, lunch or dinner. The interior room is nicely decorated, mixing modern elements with rustic, old beams and stones on whitewashed walls. The open terrace is well exposed and very pleasant with the first rays of sun. The service is continuous and the ballet of waiters impressive. The atmosphere is that of a brewery, same for the cuisine: simple, traditional and tasty, bistro style. Nice pieces of meat with fries or gratin dauphinois home made, grilled fish, big mixed salads, pasta, pizzas... Desserts and café gourmand.

■ LE CISTE ET LA BEGUDE**Château de la Béguide****Route de Roquefort-les-Pins**

☎ 04 93 12 37 00

www.chateau-begude.comrestaurant@chateau-begude.com

Open all year round. La Béguide: every noon from 12h to 14h30 (open in the evening, except on Sundays when Le Ciste is closed) Menus at 26 and 32 €. Le Ciste: every evening from Tuesday to Saturday from 7.30 pm to

9.30 pm. Menus at 48 €, 68 € and 98 €. Reservation recommended. Wine by the glass. American Express, Diners Club. Reception of groups. Garden. Terrace. Free parking. Takeaway sale: foie gras upon reservation and macarons. The Chef has set up two distinct atmospheres and services at the Château de la Béguide. For lunch, the Brasserie La Béguide offers a Mediterranean-flavoured menu served on the terrace overlooking the golf course at the first rays of sunshine. For dinner, the Restaurant Le Ciste plays the gastronomic fibre with sought-after dishes: duck foie gras with strawberries from Provence, lamb, roasted and crosmequis, white asparagus and organic lentils or the Saint Pierre cooked at low temperature. The Lounge Bar La Terrasse welcomes you to offer you its cocktails and enjoy some tapas.

■ L'AUBERGE PROVENÇALE**Place des Arcades**

☎ 04 93 12 29 73

www.auberge-provencale-valbonne.fraubprov@orange.fr

Open all year round. Every day for lunch and dinner. Card: about 30 €. Children's menu: 13,50 €. Dishes à la carte, from 18 to 23 €.

In the heart of Valbonne since 1965, this inn has acquired over the years a reputation of excellence. It occupies the first floor of an old listed house on the Place des Arcades, the imposing fireplace is lit at noon and evening in low season, the floor tiles are certainly authentic, but the whitewashed walls and ceilings have erased the rustic setting to make it a warm and contemporary place, with a beautiful terrace outside.

The cuisine is resolutely Mediterranean and Provençal but the Chef looks at other worlds and creates inventive recipes with seasonal products.

On the menu you will find osso bucco, back of salmon a la plancha, leg of duck confit or Asian style salmon tartar. Mixed salads, fresh vegetables, pasta and risottos, tartars and carpaccios, some pizzas, cheeses offered by the local cheese maker, complete the menu. The friendly service and reasonable prices will encourage you to discover the address, if you haven't already done so.

■ LA PIGEOT**16, rue Alexis-Julien**

☎ 04 93 12 17 53

www.restaurant-lapigeot.comcontact@restaurant-lapigeot.com

Open from Tuesday to Sunday in the evening; from Wednesday to Friday and Sunday for lunch. From mid-June to mid-September, open every evening. Booking recommended. À la carte: about 25 € (for one dish). No menu, à la carte only. Terrace.

Here is a Moroccan specialties restaurant and its name is a smart wink to some clichés. The two small rooms inside are decorated in an oriental style, lit by lanterns and candles. The intimate and warm setting makes you feel at ease and you'll enjoy the tajines, pastillas, skewers, etc.. Several kinds of couscous lamb, chicken, or mixed meats (defatted) and merguez in the couscous Pigeot. The spices are perfectly dosed and sublimate the flavours. Hearty dishes, perfect cooking, vegetables and semolina at will. You'll also find all the delicious pastries of the Maghreb.

Fast service and friendly atmosphere. When the weather is nice, La Pigeot takes out the carpets, beanbags, coffee tables, and you can settle outside as you'd do overthere, in the street which becomes a comfortable terrace.

Sleeping

■ **LA BASTIDE DE VALBONNE**
107, chemin Font de Cuberte
☎ 04 93 12 33 40
www.bastidevalbonne.com
bastide-de-valbonne@wanadoo.fr



Open all year. 34 rooms. Low season: double room from €95 to €200. High season: double room from €125 to €250. Buffet breakfast: €15 (served in room: €18). Extra bed: €25. The breakfast is free for children under 4 years old. Wifi.

A charming place which has been renovated with taste and harmony in Provençal tones. 34 rooms and large suites with bright refined colours, fully equipped, satellite TV, air conditioning, telephone, wi-fi, safe. Some rooms have a balcony or terrace overlooking the pool and the flowered garden with palm trees and herbs that smell the south. The breakfast is served as a buffet, in the dining room or outdoor on sunny days (extra charge for room service). A perfect haven to relax whatever the purpose of the travel: romantic getaway, family vacation or business trip. Snacks are available in high season. Parking under surveillance. Excellent welcome from Catherine and Fabrizio Ferro, attentive owners who are eager to welcome you at their best.

■ **BEACHCOMBER FRENCH RIVIERA**
3350, route des Dolines
Sophia Antipolis
☎ 04 92 96 68 78
www.hotel-resort-frenchriviera.com
contact@hotel-resort-frenchriviera.com



Open all year round. 155 rooms (from 115 €). American Express, Diners Club. Seminars. Free wifi. Catering (dish of the day and dessert: 23€). Open every day for lunch and dinner). Satellite TV. Hammam, sauna. Golf Academy – Tennis Academy, Padel.

The Beachcomber French Riviera is the luxury resort hotel of the Sophia Country Park located in a 12 hectare park in the heart of the protected forest of La Valmasque. The 155 rooms (Club, Prestige, and 2 suites) are soundproofed, air-conditioned, and all equipped with top-of-the-range amenities. The restaurant 'Le Court Central' serves seasonal cuisine concocted by chef Frankie Quenette. Lunch is served in the air-conditioned room or on the sunny terrace by the superb snowshoeing pool. The refined lounge bar, open every day from 10 am to midnight, favours relaxation and discretion. To relax, the Cinq Mondes Spa is a unique 700 m² space dedicated to well-being and fitness, composed of exclusive treatments. Here the concept of "sport, tennis, art of living" is developed with the Tennis Academy and a Golf Complex.

■ **CHÂTEAU DE LA BÉGUDE**
Route de Roquefort les Pins
☎ 04 93 12 37 00
www.chateau-begude.com



44 rooms. Single room from €90 to €230; double room from €110 to €290; suite from €170 to €500. 2 equipped rooms for disabled guests. Two restaurants: *Le Ciste* and *La Béguède*. A golf 18 holes.

Located in the heart of a protected estate, Château de la Béguède is a haven of peace where tranquility and well-being are the keywords. This 4-star hotel composed of 44 rooms and suites with extra comfort revolves around a bastide and a sheepfold dating from the 17th century. A 18-hole golf course, a swimming pool open in summer and tennis courts are as many amenities you can enjoy during your stay. A gourmet restaurant, *Le Ciste* and a brasserie, *La Béguède*, will allow you to enjoy a tasty mediterranean cuisine. Le Château de la Béguède can also be privatized for events such as weddings, baptisms or birthdays.



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■ **GOLDEN TULIP**
SOPHIA ANTIPOLIS****
120, route des Macarons
 ☎ 04 93 33 73 93

www.goldentulipsophiaantipolis.com



80 rooms (including 22 suites). Double room from 110 € to 160 €; suite from 190 € to 210 €. Breakfast: 17 € (children's breakfast: 9,90€). Catering (fresh buffet or hot buffet, brunch). Hammam, sauna.

Located in the heart of the business park, Golden Tulip Hotel is the guarantee of a relaxing stay. Resolutely modern, the establishment offers many services. The rooms, contemporary and spacious, are equipped with all the necessary comfort for a successful stay. The wine cellar allows you to taste great wines. There is also a space with table football, board games and videos for family stays. The Spa has a swimming pool, a hammam and a sauna, not to mention a complete range of treatments. On the sports side, you can use the fitness room or tennis courts but also the 5 neighbouring golf courses. Le Servan restaurant also welcomes you every day, whether you are staying at a hotel or for business meals.

Guesthouses

■ **DEMEURE D'HÔTES DU ROCHER**

2, rue du Pontis

☎ 04 92 28 17 45

www.lerocher-valbonne.fr
lerochervalbonne@gmail.com

Open all year round. 4 bedrooms. Double room from 160 € to 180 €; suite from 260 € to 280 €. Breakfast included.

An intimate guest house, nestled in the heart of the old village of Valbonne. Le Rocher was born out of the imagination of its owner who created it in his image, retracing the stages of his life, his travels and his relentless artistic quest. A graduate of the Beaux-Arts in Reims and the Blot school, he spent a large part of his life restoring the French artistic and religious heritage. Valbonne is his favorite place and that's where he settled. After the complete renovation of this building rich in history, Le Rocher is now heading for a new life. Two rooms and two suites, decorated in a resolutely refined and contemporary style that art and design lovers will really appreciate. The primary mission of the residence is to organize periodically meetings and conferences around themes combining gastronomy, art, history, literature and culture in general. Table d'hôte service is available on reservation only for private receptions, non-residents are also welcome. A real favorite! This establishment is unique in Valbonne.

Leisure

► **Animations.** In addition to traditional celebrations, the municipality organises festivals, markets, exhibitions and shows throughout the year. In 2019, a special program is created for the double anniversary of Sophia Antipolis' 50th anniversary and Valbonne's 500th anniversary

► **Hiking.** The municipality of Valbonne-Sophia Antipolis has identified 9 hiking routes. The trail map is available at the tourist information office.

■ **NAUTIPOLIS**
Complexe aquatique
communautaire

150, rue du Vallon

Sophia Antipolis

☎ 09 71 00 21 30

www.nautipolis.fr

Open all year round. Aquatic area indoor pools opening: Monday and Tuesday from 7.30am to 8.45am, from 11.30am to 1.45pm and from 3pm to 8pm. Wednesday from 7.30am to 8pm (the sports pool is closed between 1.30pm and 5.30pm). Thursday and Friday from 7.30am to 8.45am, 11.30am to 1.45pm and 3pm to 8pm (11pm on Thursday). Saturday from 12.30pm to 6pm. Sunday from 9.30am to 6pm. Admission: €7.50 (children up to 11 years old: €5.50 - Teenagers 12 to 17 years old: €6). 10 adult tickets: 67,50 € - 10 children tickets: 49,50 € - 10 teen tickets: 54 €. Free - 3 years. Public holidays from 9.30am to 6pm. Closed on January 1st, December 25th, May 1st. Evacuation 30 minutes before closing. Other detailed rates on the website. Guarded cloakroom. Restoration. Fitness area (cardio-training, weight training, fitness) and wellness area (sauna, hammam, whirlpool bath).

A magnificent multi-activity achievement (3,700m² inside and 10,000 outside) that will delight every body with the quality of its services and the choice of activities. This superb setting is entirely dedicated to sport, relaxation and well-being. The aquatic complex has a sports and learning pool (training, competitions, water polo initiation, diving, synchronized swimming), a leisure pool (aquafitness, aquagym, aquabiking), a beginners pool (children and adults), a paddling pool (baby swimming classes) and an outdoor play pool. The fitness area is ideal for cardio training, weight training, fitness, pilates, zumba or sh'bam while the wellness area includes a relaxation room, two saunas, two steam baths, two whirlpools, a caldarium and a sensory shower, an ice cellar and a salt cave! A private terrace facing the south is an invitation to rest. Please note that this space is prohibited for children under 18 years of age. Prepare your swimsuits (shorts are not allowed) and quickly discover this exceptional site which is well worth a visit.

Going Out

■ **LE 24**

3, rue Grande

☎ 04 22 10 22 18

le24sarl@gmail.com

Open from Tuesday to Sunday from 5pm to 12:30am. 7 days a week during the season. Welcomes groups. Terrace.

Le 24 is located in a quiet alley. Here, you can enjoy many cooked tapas, cheese and charcuterie while listening to the groups that come to perform in the establishment. The wine list is not to be outdone with a wide choice

The Servan grape and the St Blaise celebrations

At the very beginning of the 20th century, a grape variety, Servan, was introduced into the region. The particularity of this grape variety is that it is harvested from mid-October to the end of November, after the traditional harvest. The interest for Servan in Valbonne and the region was such that all the farmers wanted to put down their olive trees and replace them with vines! This late harvest consisted in cutting the bunch by keeping part of the vine shoot, then keeping the bunch in a cool room, soaking it in a jar of water. A very special conservation method, which allowed the grapes to age after harvesting. Servan production was abandoned at the second half of the 20th century. Nowadays, the Communal Vine, created by the municipality in 1995, perpetuates the Servan tradition. 300 vines are harvested each year by the commune's agents. The bunches are kept in the jars, according to the traditional method until the end of January and the grapes are offered to the population for St Blaise festival.

of spirits to (re)discover and we will take pleasure in letting ourselves be guided by the expert advice from the waiters. Inside, the decoration is sober and refined. The terrace is pleasant.

■ LE QUEEN'S

22, rue d'Opio

☎ 04 93 12 28 28

thequeenslegspub.fr

queenslegspub@gmail.com

Open all year round. Every day from 4pm to 12:30am. Until 2am on weekends. Pints from 5 €. Snacking. Animations. Concerts (live Music).

In 2019, The Queen's pub famous for its evenings in Valbonne, has changed style: the interior has been completely renovated and has become an even more attractive place, with an atmosphere similar to a mountain chalet with the style of a beer bar, and the possibility of enjoying dishes of cold cuts, cheeses or other snacks of all kinds.

We loved it, the result is a really nice mix. And for those who enjoyed it before, Queen's kept all its old-fashioned entertainment: billiards or table football, but above all local artists on weekday evenings, and a live band on Saturdays. Every other Friday, the bar turns into a club with a DJ who comes to mix until the end of the night.

■ ROOTS

4, rue de la Fontaine

☎ 06 03 52 52 35

www.rootsbar.fr

Open Monday to Friday from 4pm to 12am; weekends from 12pm to midnight. Glass of wine from 3.50 €.

If you are looking for a pleasant and friendly bar, come to Roots to reconnect! Hannah, your host, is Irish and always welcomes you with a smile. At Roots, you can taste wine or about fifty beers from all over the world. Many live music or quizz evenings are organized. There are also dozens of board games to have fun, with a plate of deli meats. In short, it is an ideal place to share a moment with friends or relax after a day at work. For more information on the evening agenda, visit the establishment's Facebook page.

Shopping

■ 365 FROMAGES

22, rue Eugène Giraud

☎ 04 93 75 36 96

www.365fromages.com

**At the corner of rue du Pontis
and rue Eugène-Giraud**

Open from Tuesday to Thursday from 9am to 12.30pm and from 3.30pm to 7pm. Friday, from 9am to 1.30pm and from 3.30pm to 7.30pm. On Saturdays, from 9am to 1pm and from 3pm to 7.30pm. On Sundays, from 9am to 12:30pm. Closed on Mondays.

Delicious cheese lovers, you will find here your happiness among cheeses of great tradition, farmers, local producers and foreign cheeses. The shop also sells dairy products such as milk, lump butter, sour cream and yoghurt. All cheeses are sold in the traditional way or as festive trays, ideal for an original gift! A little extra: meal plates can be taken away for lunch.

■ CRÉATIONS BOSELLI –

BOUTIQUE L'OLIVIEROI

Boutique l'Olivieroi, Place des Arcades

☎ 04 93 12 22 91

www.creationsboselli.com

Open from Tuesday to Saturday from 9.30am to 12.30pm and from 3.30pm to 7pm. Open Sunday morning during summer.

From olive tree to the most precious woods, for exceptional bottles exposed throughout France, Italy, Belgium, Germany, Canada and the United States, Jean-Pierre Boselli, from Grasse, son and grandson of perfume plant producers, discovered wood by chance and began to work on the olive tree wood. The meeting with an importer of precious woods was crucial. He decided to combine his two passions, perfume and wood, and created his first perfume bottles in 1978, cut in the mass and in which a glass reservoir was hidden. They are carved in different woods (amourette, amaranth, rosewood, amarelo, pink ivory, ebony and olive tree). Each spray bottle is a unique and certified piece. The artist also creates furniture and sculptures, including special pieces on request.

■ VERRERIE ET GALERIE

D'ART ADA LOUMANI

Galerie Loumani Ada, Maître Verrier

Place de l'Église

☎ 04 93 12 97 04

www.loumani.fr

ada@loumani.fr

Open Monday to Saturday from 10am to 1pm and from 3pm to 7pm; Sunday and public holidays from 2pm to 6pm.

Located in the old mill near the church, the glass factory houses the exceptional creations of Ada Loumani, a renowned and admired glassmaker master who exhibits in France, Germany, the United Kingdom and United States... This artist masters the technique to create blown glass art works. With his innovative spirit, he developed a process where paintings and decorations are included between two layers of glass. To achieve this, it is necessary to anticipate the expansion of the design during the blowing. He blows a core, cooks it, paints a decoration or a painting, then heats it up in a new layer of glass and gives it its final shape. Each step is long and tricky to trap the color, and ultimately the depth and relief are intensified. The evolution of his work is constant and the inspiration infinite, says Ada Loumani to our great pleasure. He has been awarded the EPV Label (Entreprise du Patrimoine Vivant), which recognizes and promotes excellent craftsmanship.

Markets

■ MARCHÉ DE L'ANTIQUITÉ ET DE LA BROCANTE

Place des Arcades

The first Sunday of the month all day long.

The market gathers about forty professional exhibitors and attracts both tourists and finders of rare pieces. You will find everything: silverware, furniture, jewellery, knick-knacks, books...

■ MARCHÉ DE NOËL

Quartier Garbejaïre

In December. In Garbejaïre and in the village.

► **In Garbejaïre:** workshops for children, small farm, mulled wine and hot chocolate offered.

► **In the village:** crafts and local products, street entertainments, mulled wine and hot chocolate offered.

■ MARCHÉ PROVENÇAL

Place des Arcades

Every Friday morning from 8am to 1.30pm.

Place des Arcades and in the streets of the village, the market invades the squares and streets of Valbonne in a festive atmosphere. You'll find local productions, fruit and vegetables, olive oil, honey as well as craft products and clothing.

ORGANISING YOUR STAY

Courmes waterfall.

© Bernard CROISE



GETTING TO THE PRÉALPES D'AZUR

BY PLANE

Airports

INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

NICE-CÔTE D'AZUR

Rue Costes and Bellonte

NICE

☎ 08 20 42 33 33

www.nice.aeroport.fr

nice.aeroport@cote-azur.aeroport.fr



The Nice-Côte d'Azur airport is the third French airport after Paris (Charles de Gaulle and Orly) and is also the second French business aviation airport after Le Bourget. Built on an area partially reclaimed from the sea, it connects the Côte d'Azur to many destinations around the world. It is divided into two poles: Terminal 1 for international flights and Terminal 2 for domestic flights. Finally, stay alert as there may be some exceptions, so look carefully at your ticket before going to a terminal, even if there are buses connecting them. Many companies have a desk here.

Companies

AIR FRANCE

Nice Côte d'azur airport

Terminal 2

NICE

☎ 36 54

www.airfrance.fr



Service for people with disabilities or reduced mobility (Saphir Service): 09 69 36 72 77 and mail.saphir@airfrance.fr

With its partners, the company offers hundreds of flights per week from Nice-Côte d'Azur airport, some of them direct. Direct flights operated by Air France: Lille, Lyon, Nantes, Strasbourg, Paris, Tel Aviv and Athens. Direct flight to Amsterdam operated by KLM. Direct flight to New York operated by Delta Airlines. HOP! is Air France's low-cost airline offering flights to Biarritz, Caen, Clermont-Ferrand, Lyon, Toulouse, Bordeaux, Lille, Nantes, Brest, Strasbourg, Metz, Nancy, Rennes, Paris and more.

BY TRAIN

Although slower than planes, the train is still practical, especially from the neighbouring departments and regions of the area. The stations of Nice, Antibes or Cannes are convenient to discover the region of the hills and the Pre-Alps of Azure. SNCF trains connect Nice or Antibes to Paris in 5h30, Lyon in 3h30 and Marseille in 2 hours.

SNCF TRAIN STATION OF NICE-VILLE

City center

11, avenue Thiers

NICE

☎ 08 00 11 40 23

www.sncf.com

servicedepresse@sncf.fr

Facebook: @GaredeNice. Desks open 7 days a week from 7.30am to 5.30pm.

Served daily by a hundred TER trains, dozens of TGVs and Ouigo and InterCités trains, Nice's main station is located in the city centre, a stone's throw from the tramway. It serves the entire PACA region, Paris and the metropolises of Lyon, Montpellier, Toulouse, etc. It is the terminus station for the TGV trains coming from the south-east of France and the closest major station to Italy. More information about TERs on the TER Sud Paca website or on the SNCF application. More information about TGV and Intercités on the Oui SNCF website.

GARE SNCF D'ANTIBES

Place Pierre Semard

ANTIBES

☎ 08 00 11 40 23

www.sncf.com

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BY ROAD

By Car

Beware of speed limits applicable throughout the country: 30 or 50 km/h in urban areas; 110 km/h on the entire A8 motorway network (90 km/h between Cagnes-sur-Mer and Nice); 70 km/h, 80 km/h or 90 km/h on other roads. The seat belt must be worn by all occupants of the car, both front and rear. Car seats are mandatory for children up to ten years old.

▶ **When you arrive from the south, the region is served by the A8 motorway, "la Provençale".** Several exits allow you to reach the cities of Valbonne, Châteauneuf or Opio:

- Exit 42, leads you to the expressway D6185, Châteauneuf, Opio, le Rouret, Valbonne-Sophia Antipolis. From Châteauneuf, you can then access Gourdon, then Caussols, or, via the gorges du Loup, Cipières, Gréolieres, or Coursegoules, then Bezaudun-les-Alpes.

- Exit 44 leads to Valbonne-Sophia Antipolis.

- Exit 47 leads to Roquefort les Pins, le Rouret, Châteauneuf and Opio

- Exit 48 is the access road to Coursegoules, via the Col de Vence.

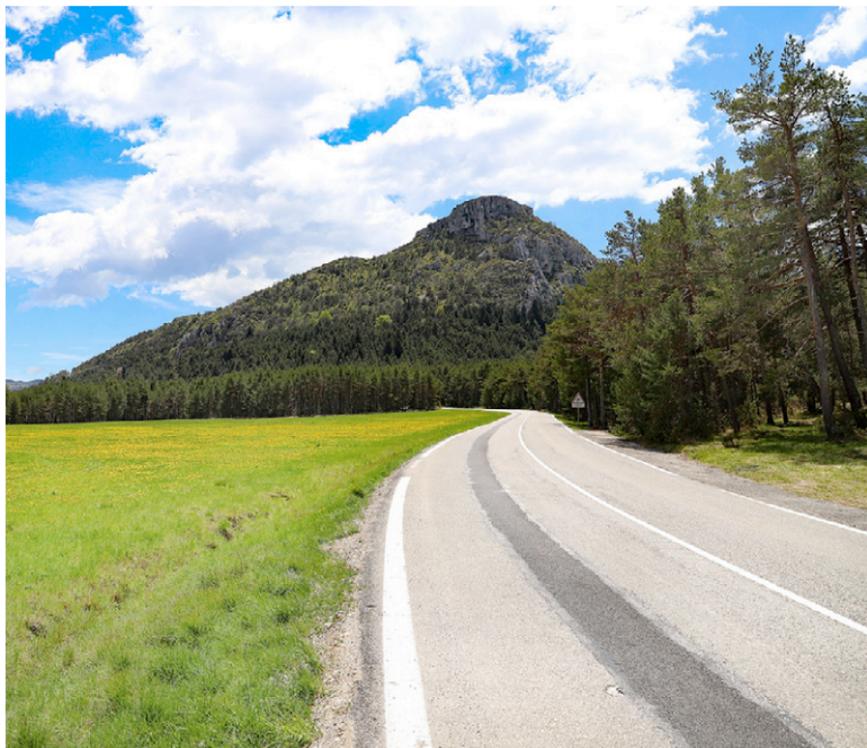
- To reach La Roque-en-Provence, it is better to take exit 51.1, then the D6202b expressway, to Gillette and then the D17.

- Same for Bézaudun-les-Alpes, Bouyon, les Ferres or Conségudes, take exit 51.1, then the D6202b expressway, until Carros then the D1

▶ **For those who prefer to take their time, it is possible to take the national road 7 (RN7),** coming from the west. It takes 4 hours to reach Nice from Aix-en-Provence, but it is worth it, the procession of Mediterranean landscapes is worth the detour.

▶ **From Grenoble, the national road 85,** also known as the "Napoleon Road" in memory of the Emperor's passage in 1815, provides access to the region. After Castellane, take the D2 to quickly reach Gréolieres, Cipières, Coursegoules, Bézaudun. From Digne les Bains, take the N202 / D4202 to reach La Roque-en-Provence and the Estéron valley, via Puget-Theniers.

▶ **For those coming from Grenoble who prefer taking side-tracks by la Route des Alpes,** it is always possible to arrive from Barcelonnette via the Col de la Cayolle or the Col de la Bonnette. Beautiful landscapes guaranteed. Be careful, however, because these roads, among the highest in Europe, are closed in winter. Open from June 15th to October / November, depending on snowfall. These passes will take you to the Var valley, from where you can reach the Estéron valley from Puget-Theniers or Gillette.



GETTING AROUND IN THE PRÉALPES D'AZUR

BY CAR

■ ENTERPRISE RENT-A-CAR Aéroport de Nice-Côte-d'Azur NICE

☎ 04 93 21 82 75

Open every day from 7am to 11.30pm.

It is one of the most important car rentals on the Côte d'Azur: with more than 180,000 vehicles in 1,248 agencies, and is present in 43 countries. Enjoy the all-inclusive rental formula: insurance, taxes, airport fees, gas and additional drivers.

■ RENT A CAR 38, avenue Auber NICE

☎ 04 93 88 69 69

www.rentacar.fr

service-clientele@rentacar.fr

Monday to Saturday from 8am to 12pm and from 2pm to 6.30pm.

Rent a Car offers different rental categories: economy, city, comfort, sedan, minibus, minivan... with the possibility of renting by the hour, the day or more. This company also has a large fleet of commercial vehicles. It should be noted that the company also offers many cinema cars to explore the cinematographic and mythical roads of the Côte d'Azur: the Porsche 356 Speedster (James Dean's), the Aston Martin DB5 (Roger Moore's alias Brett Sinclair in *The Persuaders*), a Jaguar cabriolet (Cary Grant's in *How to Steal a Million* with Audrey Hepburn), the Alfa Romeo Giulietta of *La Dolce Vita* without forgetting Magnum's Ferrari, the DeLorean of *Back to the Future*, the AC Cobra of Steve MacQueen, the Ford Mustang of Goldfinger or the Super Seven Lotus of the Prisoner.

■ TRUCHE LOCATION Nice Ouest

179, boulevard René-Cassin
Hôtel Park Inn
NICE

☎ 08 00 56 75 87

www.truchelocation.com

nice@truchelocation.com

Open every day from 8:30 am to 9 pm. A wide choice of city cars, compact, sedan, minivan, luxury sedan, minibuses and without a licence. Manual or automatic vehicles. Price information on request.

Truche location is specialized in car rentals and commercial vehicles. A consultant will assist you according to your project for a day, a week or a month with the vehicle best suited to your needs according to availability. Truche Location also offers for sale some of their rental vehicles.

■ ULYSSE TRANSPORTS Plaine du Var 234, boulevard du Mercantour NICE

☎ 04 93 71 07 00

www.ulyссе-transport.fr

reseau@ulyссе-transport.fr



Availability 7 days a week.

First transport and support network for people with reduced mobility, Ulysse offers vehicles equipped for people in wheelchairs as well as drivers trained to help people with disabilities.

■ VAN AWAY 61, boulevard du Mercantour NICE

☎ 06 08 43 95 18

www.van-away.com

nice@van-away.com

Open from Monday to Saturday, from 9am to 7pm. Rates and quotes available on the website. From 65 € per day.

Are you a bit adventurous and want to discover the Côte d'Azur in complete freedom? Van Away offers vans, minibuses and small caravans for hire, fully equipped and ready to drive. An excellent alternative to hotels, the latter – very comfortable – allow you to travel the roads of the Côte d'Azur without constraint, whether you are alone or with several people. There will be something for everyone: couples, holidays with friends or sports and cultural trips. Depending on the vehicles, some can accommodate up to 7 people. A very clever idea for a safe road trip.



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envibus

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BY BUS

► **ENVIBUS**, the Public Transport Network of the Communauté d'Agglomération Sophia Antipolis serves all the municipalities that compose this area. Among others, it enables you to reach Valbonne-Village or Valbonne-Sophia Antipolis from Antibes bus station. From Valbonne, other lines allow you to reach Bar-sur-Loup, Chateauneuf, Opio, Roquefort les Pins or Le Rouret.

- Line 11: Bar-sur-Loup, Chateauneuf, Opio, Le Rouret, bus station of Valbonne-Sophia Antipolis.
- Line 12: Antibes, Biot, Valbonne-Sophia Antipolis.
- Line 26: Roquefort les Pins, Valbonne-Sophia Antipolis, Villeneuve-Loubet.

► **ICILÀ D'ENVIBUS** For the most remote sectors, the Sophia Antipolis Urban Community has created **Icilà**, a on demand public transport service that allows passengers to travel on the agglomeration community territory in addition to regular lines. The **Icilà** shuttles do not use fixed routes and do not respect precise schedules. An operator is in charge of booking trips in order to offer a transport solution adapted to each passenger. **Icilà** operates all year round, except on public holidays, Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 12.30pm and from 2.30pm to 5pm.

To book your trip: ☎ 04.92.19.76.33 Monday to Friday: from 6: 30 am to 7pm Saturday: from 9 am to

12 pm and then from 2 pm to 5: 30 pm (except public holidays)

Booking possible on the Internet.

Icilà by **Envibus** allows you to travel in the following sectors:

- Bézaudun-les-Alpes; Bouyon, Conségudes, Coursegoules, les Ferres, la Roque-en-Provence.

- Le Bar-sur-Loup, Caussols, Cipières, Courmes, Gourdon, Gréolières, Tourrettes-sur-Loup.

■ GARE ROUTIÈRE D'ANTIBES

1, Place Guynemer

ANTIBES

☎ 04 89 87 72 00

Open Monday to Friday from 9am to 12.30pm and from 2pm to 5pm. Closed on public holidays.

■ GARE ROUTIÈRE DE VALBONNE

SOPHIA ANTIPOLIS

Rond point des Messugues,

route des Dolines

VALBONNE

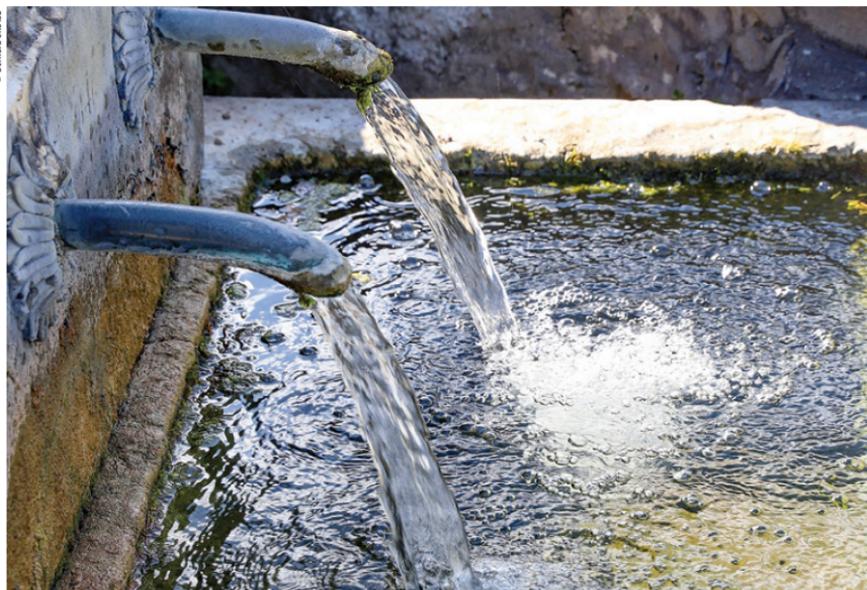
☎ 04 89 87 72 00

Opening hours Monday to Friday: 9.30am-1.30pm/3pm-5.30pm. Closed on public holidays. An ATM is available 24/7.

BY BIKE

The Conseil Départemental des Alpes Maritimes offers several cycling tours in its guide 'Les Boucles d'Azur', including a family tour: 'Balade au cœur des

pierres à Caussols' (15 km), and a 'Circuit des Hauts Plateaux' (42 km) from Gréolières. <http://www.cote-dazur-nature.com>



Le Rouret fountain.

ITINERARIES

NATURE AND HIKING

These are walking tours, day walks, a pretext to put on your hiking boots and go through gorges and plateaus, far from the crowds, to meet a harsh and generous nature, and the pastoral heritage of the plateaus.

► **The Caussols and Calern Plateaux.** When you reach the Caussols plateau from the Col de l'Écre, you meet another world. This karstic plateau crossed by the GR4, invites you to take a stroll. Just before the village, we discover the Embut de Caussols, a natural funnel in which a stream disappears, as if swallowed by the plateau. A small loop by car on the Chemin des Claps, which borders the south of the plateau, allows you to get close to the karst relief and see a borie. A short 2h30 walk will take you to the summit of Haut Montet (1,335 m) which carries a civil aviation radar. You should also take the road to the CERGA observatory to get an overview of the Caussols plateau, and admire the domes that house the telescopes.

► **Cipières.** From Caussols, we descend to Gourdon, and then on the western side of the Gorges du Loup to reach the village of Cipières, which is crossed by two long-distance hiking trails, the GR4 and GR51. When you arrive in the village, you will discover the St-Claude chapel, then, in the village, the St-Mayeul church. A short walk allows you to discover the flowery, colourful and pleasant alleys. From Cipières, you can choose to hike the Borie de Pons, (3 hours) or the circuit

of the Calern plateau, (5 hours) which allows you to approach the karst relief, caves and dolines, but also borries and sheepfolds.

► **Courmes.** Courmes is located on the left bank of the Gorges du Loup. It is a hamlet of a few houses, which can be found at the end of a picturesque 4 km road. The road stops at Courmes. The village is small and we quickly go around it. The Sainte-Madeleine church stands on the square, just push the door to see its gilded wooden altar. On the square, benches invite you to sit down and enjoy this moment of tranquility. A little further down in the village the pretty wash-house has just been restored. A short easy hike of 2 hours allows you to leave from Courmes and reach the St-Barnabé plateau and its karst relief.

► **The Gorges du Loup.** From Courmes, just reach the crossroads of Bramafan, then go down towards Pont du Loup following the left bank of the river. We can stop at the Saut du Loup to get closer to the waterfalls. A little further on, just after a tunnel, you can see the Courmes waterfall on the right, but it is very difficult to stop at this point. Once at Pont du Loup, just park and go up the river on its left bank, by the path that starts after the Florian confectionery. The landscaped trail allows you to easily follow the river and enjoy beautiful views. It is a round trip that can be done with the family, in one hour, to a footbridge that crosses the Loup.

“LE TOUR DU CHEIRON” ITINERARY

It is a circuit that can be done in 2 or 3 days, starting from Gréolières, in a magnificent natural setting, and on scenic roads that allow you to appreciate the wild beauty of this region.

► **Gréolières.** The best way to visit Gréolières is to take the “Heritage Tour”. You can obtain the itinerary of the walk from the Tourist Information Office. It will only take you an hour’s walk around the village (1 km) to learn everything about 800 years of Gréolières’ history. The circuit includes explanatory panels installed by the Heritage Association.

► **Gréolières-les-Neiges** (alt: 1,400 m). If you have time, you can drive to Gréolières-les-Neiges (17 km) for the pleasure of the road and the beautiful mountain landscapes, as well as the magnificent panorama of the Mercantour mountains that we discover 2 km before arriving at the resort. Once in Gréolières-les-Neiges, you will have to return to Gréolières by the same route.

► **Cipières.** From Gréolières, you can make a return trip to Cipières. The Cipières road goes down to the bottom of the Loup valley, where you can stop to admire the pretty Roman bridge, before going up to Cipières. A short tour of the village is essential. The village has the particularity of being crossed by two long-distance hiking trails.

► **Coursegoules.** It is a pretty road that leads from Gréolières to Coursegoules, especially when crossing the woods of Vallongues. When you arrive above Coursegoules, you have a magnificent panoramic view of this very photogenic village, located at an altitude of 1,000 m. Coursegoules is well worth a visit. There are still remains of the ramparts, and medieval gates, pretty fountains and washhouses, a church and two chapels, the picturesque facade of the Freinet school as well as the unexpected residence of Diane de Poitiers. Several catering options will make it a perfect place to stop for lunch. If you feel fit, you can take a short hike to the chapel of St-Michel, above the village.

► **Bézaudun-les-Alpes.** The departmental D8 will then take you to Bézaudun-les-Alpes, gently descending to an altitude of 750 m. We park at the top of the village, Place du Pourtalet, before passing under the Porte Haute, a remnant of the old ramparts. As you stroll through the village, you will discover the church of St. Martin, the double chapel of St. Roch and St. Sebastian, the remains of the medieval castle. A small 600 m walk leads to the chapel of Notre-Dame du Peuple, in a bucolic environment. On the way back to Bézaudun, we will appreciate the magnificent landscape of the village, which stands out on the Mercantour mountains, covered with snow in season.

► **Bouyon.** A few kilometers downhill and we arrive at Bouyon. Here too, the road, as it approaches Bouyon, offers magnificent views of the village, with the Mercantour mountains as a backdrop. A walk in Bouyon will allow you to see the Saint-Trophime church, as well as the St-Roch and St-Bernardin chapels. You would also discover the pretty Place du Four and the orientation table on Place Michelis Lefranc, which occupies the site of the former medieval castle.

► **The Ferres.** From Bouyon, it is the D1 road that bypasses the Cheiron massif, and takes us to Les Ferres. A stroll through the steep alleys of the village will allow

you to see the Saint-Jacques church or the picturesque Ste-Julie oratory, as well as curious lintels and doors on Place François Audibert.

► **Conségudes.** The D1 road then leads you to Conségudes, going up the Estéron valley in ever more beautiful landscapes. We are welcomed in Conségudes by the St-Georges church located at the bottom of the village. A short walk through Conségudes allows you to discover the picturesque Sainte-Marguerite chapel, as well as the oratories of St-Jean and St-Michel. A short one-hour hike to the St-Paul chapel, located above the village, gives you an overview of the valley.

► **La Roque-en-Provence.** Continuing up the Estéron river, on the pretty D1 road, we cross the clue de la Bouisse, and the magnificent Cheiron forest. The road goes down, getting closer and closer to the Estéron, whose green waters can be seen in places. When you arrive at La Roque-en-Provence, you are welcomed by the fortified church of Sainte-Pétronille, which dominates the village from its rock. A walk up to the church allows you to see the pretty view of the village. Once a border village, you can see on the Pont de France the reproduction of a border marker marked on one side of the Lys de France and on the other side of the Savoy cross.

DISCOVER THE FLAVOURS

From the sweet delicacies of rose jam to the more rustic flavours of goat cheese, the region is perfect for discovering the flavours of the land.

► **Opio and olive oil.** The olive of the region is called the *cailletier*. It is small and very tasty. Olive oil is obtained, as well as olive paste, a black olive puree mixed with olive oil, and sometimes flavoured with Provence herbs. Some mills perpetuate the tradition of making olive oil. This is the case of the Moulin d'Opio, for example, which offers

a free guided tour and an introduction to the diversity of the oils. The shop offers local products, decorative objects made of olive wood, and, of course, olive oil!

► **Le Bar-sur-Loup and the orange Bigaradier.** It is the Easter weekend that Bar-sur-Loup celebrates the Bigaradier orange. The village's squares and streets are orange-coloured and many workshops are available to visitors: cooperage, distillation with a still, advice on orange cultivation. The "colannes", these long ribbons



Fête de l'Oranger at Le Bar sur Loup.



© Bernard COUÏSE

Petanque.

made from the peeling of oranges, are dried in the sun. They will be used in the production of orange wine, or in perfumery. The orange tree festival is the occasion for a competition of orange wine and bitter orange jam. Several craftsmen offer these products for sale, but they can be found all year round in shops or at annual village fairs.

► **Opio and rose jam.** On the third weekend in May, the Rose Festival is an opportunity to celebrate the links between the villages of the region and the cultivation of this flower. In Opio there is a craft market with traditional dances, and the participants go in procession to the rose field to pick the Centifolia rose, the scented rose... Throughout the day are offered distillation of rose water, and tasting of rose petal confit, an exquisite treat that is spread for breakfast, just like a jam. Rose petal confit can be found at Confiserie Florian, and in craftsmen's shops.

► **Tourrettes-sur-Loup and La Violette.** The first weekend in March is the Violette festival in Tourrettes-sur-Loup. During this "Around the Violet" day, the village offers workshops in floral art, bouquet composition, as well as "perfumes" and "flower cooking" workshops, all in a Provençal festive atmosphere. All year round, you can visit the Bastide aux Violettes, a free museum dedicated to the emblematic flower of Tourrettes-sur-Loup. You will find all the products from this flower: crystallized flowers, syrups, soaps. Visit of greenhouses and bouquets of violets from November to March.

► **Bread and fougasse.** The tradition of good bread is still alive in the region. When you visit the trays and baous, you will not fail to stop at the Coursegoules baker's, Lou Bara de Pais, to taste his bread baked in the communal oven in the great tradition of village bakery. In Caussols, you will not leave the plateau without having pushed the door of the bakery Les Délices de Caussols.

► **Eggs, cheeses, meat, seasonal fruits and vegetables and farm products.** Several farms offer their products through cooperatives or directly at the farm.

- **The Baous Cooperative:** Hamlet of St-Barnabé, 06140 - Coursegoules.

Open Saturdays and Sundays from 10am to 5pm: Honey, oils, olives, wines, jams, meat, fruit and vegetables, cheese...

- **Le Marché de nos Collines:** Maison du Terroir, 9 route d'Opio, 06650 - Le Rouret Open from Tuesday to Saturday from 8.30am to 7pm and on Sunday morning.

Honey, olives, wines, jams, meat and fish, fruit and vegetables, flours, essential oils... On sale directly in the different farms in the region:

- **In Bezaudun-les-Alpes:** Cheese from cows or goats, sheep or goat meat at the farm of Les Clapiers (☎ 04 93 59 14 37)

- **In Bouyon:** Cheeses, yoghurts and goat's milk products, sheep or goat's meat with Gaec de la Chèvre Blanche (☎ 06 07 50 28 06)

- **In Caussols:** Sale of poultry and eggs at the farm la Galinière (☎ 04 93 09 83 35)

- **In Cipières:** Goat cheese, sheep and goat meat, in Gaec du Calern, (☎ 04 95 59 99 87)

- **At Coursegoules:** Meat and dairy products at Gaec du Cheiron, (☎ 06 16 50 27 99) Fruits and vegetables, deer meat, at Domaine St-Gilles (☎ 09 83 97 01 68) Lamb and kid meat at Gaec St-Barnabé (☎ 06 12 59 29 81), Beef meat at Rémi Malamaire (☎ 06 25 12 70 64) Veal and eggs at Alain's farm (☎ 06 60 20 52 23)

- **In Gréolières:** Goat cheese at the Grèles goat farm, (☎ 06 65 96 45 10)

- **At Le Bar-sur-Loup:** Fruits and vegetables at Fany Guerrault (☎ 04 83 05 51 33)

- **In Tourrettes-sur-Loup:** Cheeses and faisselles at the Courmettes cheese dairy, (☎ 06 14 01 21 97) Lamb meat at the Gaec des Monts d'Azur, (☎ 04 93 24 14 63) Fruits and vegetables at Lydie Monini's (☎ 06 19 67 15 79) Sheep or goat meat at the lou Gail del Pourc, (☎ 04 93 59 24 47)

- **In Valbonne:** Sale of goat's cheese at the Valbonne goat's cheese factory (☎ 06 86 52 38 47)

INFORMATION ON THE PRÉALPES D'AZUR

INTER COMMUNAL TOURIST OFFICE – CASA

■ BUREAU D'INFORMATION TOURISTIQUE DE GOURDON

1, place Victoria, GOURDON

☎ 04 93 09 68 25

See page 13.

■ BUREAU D'INFORMATION TOURISTIQUE DE GRÉOLIÈRES

Route de Font-Rougières, GRÉOLIÈRES

☎ 04 93 24 10 79

See page 14.

■ BUREAU D'INFORMATION TOURISTIQUE DU BAR-SUR-LOUP

Hôtel de Ville, BAR-SUR-LOUP

☎ 04 93 42 72 21

See page 132.

■ BUREAU D'INFORMATION TOURISTIQUE DE TOURRETTES-SUR-LOUP

2, place de la Libération

TOURRETTES-SUR-LOUP

☎ 04 93 24 18 93

See page 13.

■ BUREAU D'INFORMATION TOURISTIQUE DE VALBONNE SOPHIA-ANTIPOLIS

1, place de l' Hôtel de Ville, VALBONNE

☎ 04 93 12 34 50

See page 10.

■ COMMUNAUTÉ D'AGGLOMÉRATION SOPHIA ANTIPOLIS

449, route des Crêtes

VALBONNE

www.casa-infos.fr – info@agglo-casa.fr

CASA was created following the laws of January 2002 on inter-municipality relations. It now includes 24 municipalities: Antibes Juan-les-Pins, Le Bar-sur-Loup, Bezaudun les Alpes, Biot, Bouyon, Caussols, Châteauneuf, Cpières, La Collesur-Loup, Conségudes, Courmes, Coursegoules, Les Ferres, Gourdon, Gréolières, Opio, Le Rouret, Roquefort les-Pins, Roquestéron Grasse, St Paul, Tourrettes-sur-Loup, Valbonne Sophia Antipolis, Vallauris Golfe-Juan and Villeneuve-Loubet. CASA has the responsibility of the following areas: Economic and land development, Urban policy, Housing, Finance, Environment, Travel and transport, Waste management.

MEDIA

Newspapers

■ 2E GUERRE MONDIALE MAGAZINE

NICE ☎ 09 81 30 86 12

www.2e-guerre-mondiale.com

redaction.2gm@hotmail.fr

"Discovery" formula (6 bimonthly issues) 32 € per year. "On all fronts" formula (6 bi-monthly + 2 special issues) 45 € per year. "Blitzkrieg" formula (12 bimonthly + 4 special issues) 85 € for 2 years.

Created in 1985, this bimonthly magazine is dedicated to the Second World War with 80 pages of full reports.

■ VINS & GASTRONOMIE

15, rue Masséna

NICE ☎ 04 89 24 16 05

www.vinsetgastronomie.com

contact@vinsetgastronomie.com

Facebook: [@vinsetgastronomie](https://www.facebook.com/vinsetgastronomie).

Quarterly magazine dedicated to wines and gastronomy with all the new places and products, a list of specialized books, portraits of professionals, recipes of chefs, restaurant reviews, wine and spirits tastings....

■ SOPHIA/MÉTROPOLE MAG

Place Sophie-Laffitte, Bâtiment Agora

VALBONNE ☎ 04 92 93 96 30

www.sophia-mag.com

secretariat@sophia-mag.com

Facebook: [@sophiamag](https://www.facebook.com/sophiamag).

Find in this bilingual magazine all the latest news from Sophia to Monaco: economics, art, architecture, design, entertainment, culture, science or gastronomy. The official magazine of Sophia-Antipolis and the Eco-Valley also has a website that offers resolutely optimistic information on all the economic, cultural and gastronomic news from Sophia-Antipolis to Monaco.

Radio

■ CANNES RADIO

3, rue des Mimosas

Immeuble 16 République, CANNES

☎ 04 93 94 94 94 – www.cannesradio.com

91.5 FM (Cannes) and 91.3 FM (Nice). Facebook: [@CannesRadio](https://www.facebook.com/CannesRadio).

Cannes Radio is a sparkling, fresh and brilliant programme! Radio de la Côte d'Azur is a hit with an ever-increasing audience thanks to its dynamic and varied programming. It broadcasts in the Cannes-Grasse-Antibes area on 91.5 and in Nice on 91.3. Throughout the day, there is a succession of local news, a wake-up call at 6am, an afterwork from 5pm to 8pm, good tips, news, people news, the best of clubbing, house and deep house sound on Saturday evening... Do you like yesterday's hits and today's hits? Then you will probably love Cannes Radio. In addition, gifts, show cases and acoustic concerts by established or emerging artists are to be won every day.

■ **KISS FM – 94.6 FM (CANNES) – 90.9 FM (NICE)**

**Immeuble l'Européen
1390, avenue du Campon
LE CANNET ☎ 08 92 69 18 15
www.kissfm.fr – kissfm@kissfm.fr
Facebook: @kissfmfrance.**

For more than 30 years, Kiss FM has been the "music radio" of the French Riviera, Provence and Mercantour. First independent radio station in the Alpes-Maritimes and a must-see radio station in the Var and Bouches du Rhône, Kiss FM broadcasts a varied programme of current French and foreign hits. It develops its notoriety through numerous partnerships, games and events. Its advantage: proximity. Event creator: not a month goes by without Kiss Fm setting up prestigious operations: V.I.P. meetings with the most famous artists, private showcases, exclusive events such as a mini concert in an airplane or on boats at sea, photo competitions, a musical springboard, singer castings and, every year, Kiss FM Live: an exceptional concert bringing together an audience of singers that is unique in the region. Kiss FM also means regional information, good tips for going out, traffic information, and, every week, many gifts to win.

■ **FRANCE BLEU AZUR
Carré d'Or, 2, place Grimaldi
NICE ☎ 04 97 03 36 36**

**www.francebleu.fr/azur
Nice 103.8 / Antibes 103.8 / Cannes 100.7 / Menton 94.8 / Contes 94.4.**

France Bleu Azur is one of the 44 local radio stations that make up Radio France's network. In Nice, a team of journalists and animators make local information their priority: reports, weather from the coast to the mountains or traffic information to help you get around... The antenna also offers you the opportunity to give your opinion on current events on a daily basis. Health, consumption, cooking, gardening, law, traffic, carsharing, weather, employment, entertainment calendar, environment, heritage and history of the Côte d'Azur... all subjects are covered! On the website, you can podcast the shows, columns and also follow the news live.

TV

■ **FRANCE 3 PROVENCE-ALPES-COTE D'AZUR
☎ 04 92 91 72 00**

Channel 311 on Freebox, Neufbox, Livebox and Alicebox, 480 Bbox, 360 Canalsat, 303 Dartybox,



Oranges, Le Bar-sur-Loup.

325 Fransat, Numericable (LaBox) 920. Facebook: @france3provencealpes.

The national public television channel *France 3* is also dropping out in the regions. *France 3 Provence-Alpes-Côte-d'Azur* is dedicated, as its name suggests, to the departments of Alpes de Haute-Provence, Alpes-Maritimes, Bouches-du-Rhône, Hautes-Alpes, Var and Vaucluse. Regional news topics are offered, reviewing current events, company facts, politics, economics, sports and purely local "mags".

■ **NICE AZUR TV
Nice Ouest
16, avenue Edouard-Grinda
NICE ☎ 04 97 25 81 78
www.azur-tv.fr – redaction@niceazur.tv
Facebook: @AzurTV.**

Azur TV is the 100% local television channel on the French Riviera. It is broadcast in the Nice Côte d'Azur metropolitan area, as well as in Antibes, Cannes, Mandelieu, Grasse, Alpes-Maritimes, Fréjus, St-Raphaël, Draguignan, Golfe de St-Tropez. Their teams of journalists offer a wide variety of programmes: a daily newspaper that is broadcast several times, reports on the region and meetings with personalities, sports and cultural programmes. Personally, we love *La Grande Émission*, *L'interview Culture* as well as *Rencontre Avec...* (which allow you to discover many local personalities). Everything is available for replay on their website.

Internet

■ **WWW.WEBTIMEDIAS.COM
VALBONNE**

**☎ 04 93 00 03 00
jplargillet@webtimedias.com**

The WebTimeMedias.com portal, created in 1999 by a journalist from the written press, Jean-Pierre Largillet, deals with all of the Côte d'Azur's economic activities and more particularly "High Tech".

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COMMUNAUTÉ
D'AGGLOMÉRATION
SOPHIA ANTIPOLIS

CULTURAL GUIDE TO CASA EVENTS

& GO OUT DISCOVER

festivals | concerts | exhibitions
conferences | trade fairs | theaters



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