

#myHauteLoire - n°2

EXPERIENCE

• The magazine that reconnects with simple pleasures •

HAUTE-LOIRE

**THE BEST-KEPT SECRET
IN AUVERGNE**

p.2

DIVE IN!

Our 15 favourite
swimming spots

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File

**Outstanding
sites**

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AUVERGNE
expérience
#myHauteLoire





You don't always have to travel to the other side of the world to experience the extraordinary.

This magazine's 2nd issue is your chance to experience the myriad microadventure that the Haute-Loire has to offer in Auvergne's secret garden surrounded by rolling mountains, volcanoes, springs and wild rivers. Locals and tourism professionals are always delighted to share their top tips on these pages with adventure seekers, lounge lizards and culture vultures.

Marie-Agnès PETIT,
President of Haute-Loire Tourism

Explore and go on an adventure

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Feel the power of
the volcanoes from
Mont Mézenc



MOUNTAIN & VOLCANOES

Understand the world around us

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**OUTSTANDING
SITES**

Soak up and wind down

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[La Tallide](#), bend in the Allier River
in Saint-Vénérand,
the birthplace of Atlantic salmon



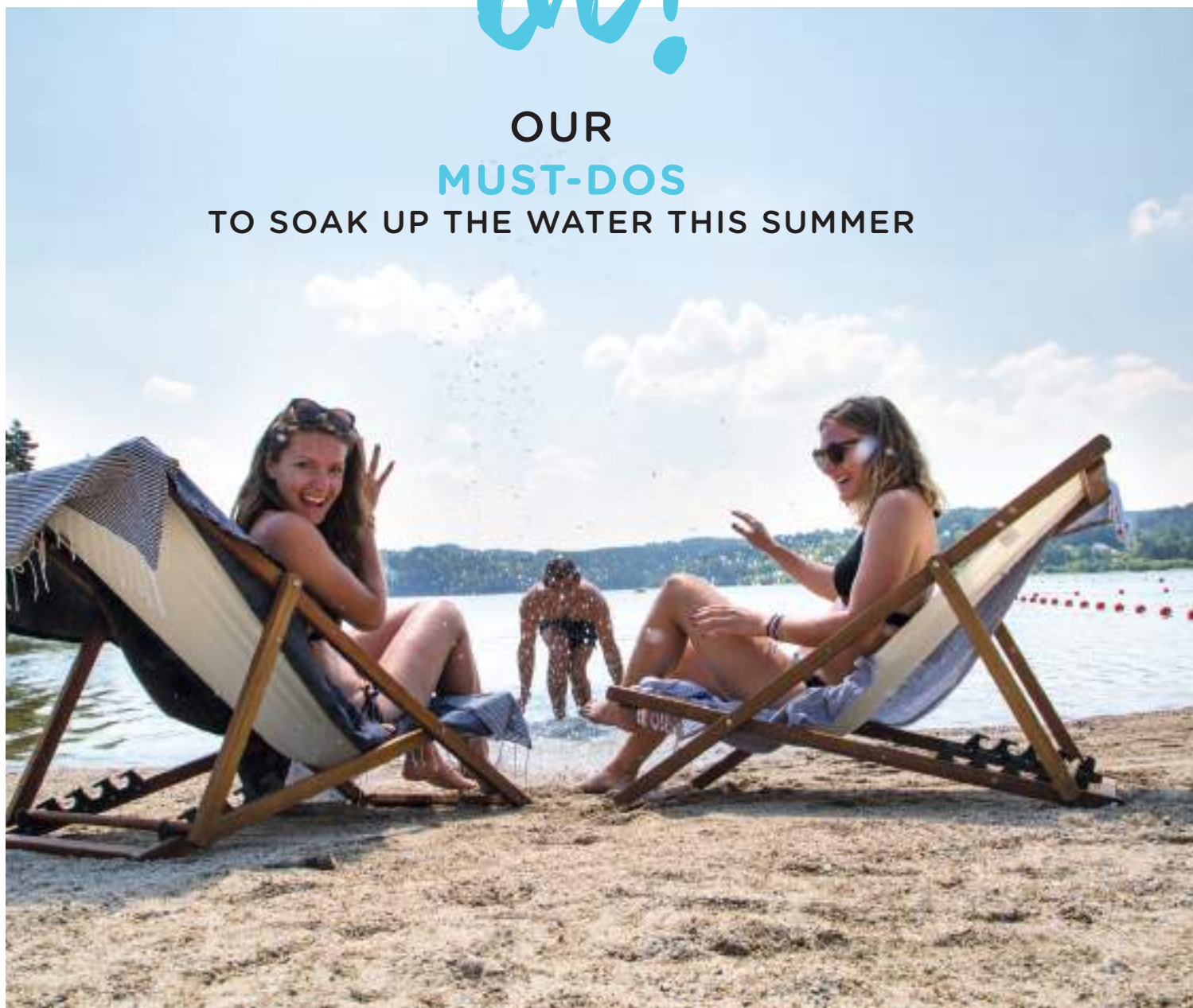
Saint-Julien Basilica in **Brioude**, the biggest Romanesque building in Auvergne (3^e listed site in the Michelin Green Guide)



The radiant abbey in **La Chaise-Dieu**

DIVE
in!

OUR
MUST-DOS
TO SOAK UP THE WATER THIS SUMMER



Sun-kissed lakes

OK, we're not promising you'll see the sunset over the horizon like at the sea. But we promise you'll love messing about in the water and making sandcastles. Without the salt, jellyfish and outrageously expensive ice cream! What else? Space and trees that give you "real shade"!



OUR MUST-DOS



• Find yourself in the Haute-Loire's mini Canada: Lac du Bouchet.

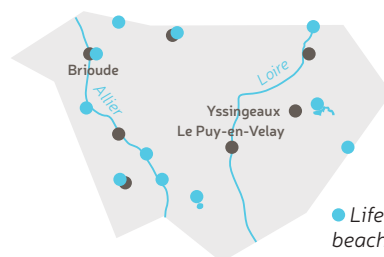
Listen to nature at its purest, reigning in and around this crater lake from an old volcano. Slip from the forest to the leafy beach among the fireweed and forget-me-nots that burst from this forest paradise. After a dip it's time to tackle the lake. What are the options? Pedalos, paddles and even e-bikes. You can take an electric quadricycle to the lake from the village of Le Bouchet-Saint-Nicolas: good times guaranteed!

The "Pavillon Bleu" flag flies over this little spot in recognition of top quality water and exemplary environment management. The same goes for the lake in **Champagnac-le-Vieux** within the Livradois-Forez Regional Nature Park.



• Get bamboozled on Lac de Lavalette:

swimming, pedaloing, paddling, canoeing, rowing, cycling on an e-bike and even sailing on 220 hectares of pure water. The madder you are, the more fun you have so grab your friends and family to try the giant paddle or dragon boat: a dugout with a drummer, helmsman and rowers. Row to the beat of the drum and have a go at water jousting too!



● Lifeguarded beaches

● Towns



Pools like you've never seen before

- Have a go at breaststroke without your eyes stinging in the turquoise **organic lake** in Saugues.
- Take in the jaw-dropping view from cliffside pools on the Gorges de l'Allier and **B&Bs like Art & Création** in Saint-Bérain (photo) and **Clair Matin** in Villeneuve-d'Allier: Françoise and Dominique have set up cosy homes from home by their pool with unobstructed views of Château de St-Illpize.



The wild and intimate gorges to heighten our senses

What do the "atiligériens"* do in summer? They like to get their feet wet, among other things! Any excuse goes: a quick dip after work or an leisurely Sunday by the water. Yup, we're lucky to live in a slice of paradise packed with streaming rivers. Over 3000km peppered with natural pools, little coves with sand beaches and grassy stretches to top up your tan. Fine, we'll share them with you but "ssh!"

OUR MUST-DOS

- Feel small as you mess around under the 90m-high cliff of basalt columns formed by par 4 lava flows in Prades in the Gorges de l'Allier (photo).
- Hunt for crayfish in the Gorges de la Loire, Gorges du Lignon or Gorges de la Borne.
- Bury our feet in the sand on the beaches in Goudet and Pont de Chadron (Haute-Vallée de la Loire).
- Canoe down the Gorges de la Loire and Gorges de l'Allier or go rafting to Monistrol-d'Allier.

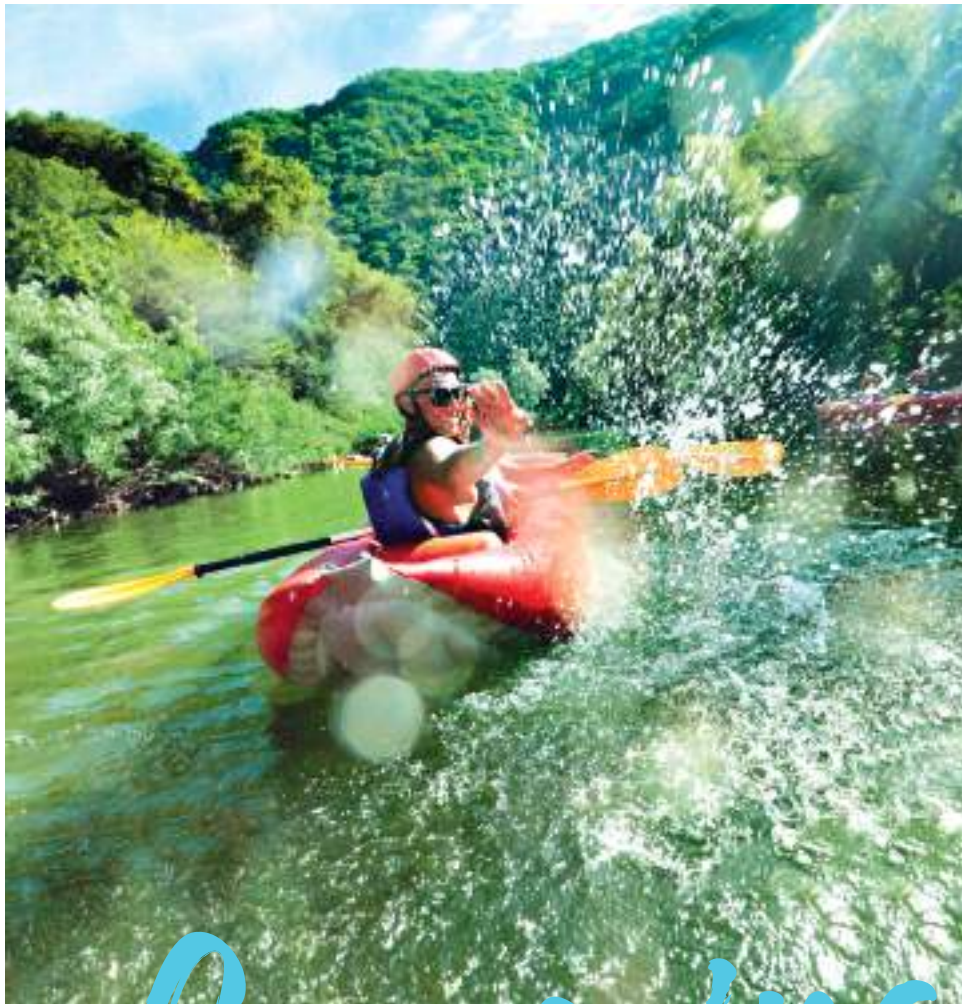
* Atiligériens = people who live in the Haute-Loire



Hot springs to chill out

COSY LITTLE HOMES FROM HOME

- The hot tub with quirky accommodation in **La Roche aux Fées** in Lapte, **Gîtes des Pins** in La Chapelle d'Aurec or **Les Fustes en Pays du Mézenc** in Fay-sur-Lignon (photo).
- Wellness at spas or heated pools all year at **Gîte La Source** in St-Christophe-d'Allier, **Domaine Saint-Roch** in Salzuit, **Le Fort du Pré Hotel & Restaurant** in St-Bonnet-le-Froid or **Hôtel La Découverte** in Les Estables.



Canoeing

**THE START OF AN
ADVENTURE!**

Venturing off the beaten track means choosing another way to paddle. So we're leaving the overcrowded waterways to go on a real adventure: one which opens our eyes to the world so we can get to grips with our surroundings.

SECRETS OF THE STONES

This boat is undoubtedly the most natural way to see the basalt giants and stone villages that seem to watch over the furrowed Gorges de l'Allier. Then we stop for a coffee on the sun-soaked banks of Lavoûte-Chilhac and a stroll in Vieille-Brioude's parks. We set off from Bageasse beach with a guide on a nautical trail® to find out more about these waters teeming with salmon.

Ages 6 and up. Half-day, full day or 3-day trip from Prades to Auzon: 20/25km per day (approx. 5 hrs). Accommodation in B&Bs, stopover gîtes or campsites. Solo or guided village tours.

tonic-aventure.fr
gorges-allier.com
ot-brioude.fr

The Gorges de la Loire from Chazelles (Monistrol-sur-Loire)



RIVER EXPLORER

If you see a canoe with some funny explorers on board with thermometers in one hand and nets and masks in the other: stop! It's Allierypso: a floating scientific base jam-packed with fun-filled educational equipment. A beaver skull is unearthed and the investigation into the rodent begins. Tracks on the beach spark our curiosity that draws us to the semi-aquatic mammals. A discussion about water levels and the river's hydrology is clear as crystal.

Look out for them in summer as you go round a bend between Langeac and Brioude (Les Pieds à Terre).

lespiedsaterre.fr



SAILING THROUGH UNTAMED TERRITORY

Jérôme is passionate about the Gorges de la Loire and it's obvious. When he joins your «canoe» trip it's like he's opening the doors into his own wild land that he wants to protect. He tells us the story of otters, red kites and snowy mespilus. As we're paddling along we can see the natural symbiosis that we're quietly caught up in.

Lavoûte-sur-Loire to Aurec-sur-Loire: velay-eaux-vives.fr.

Hire also available in the Retournac/Bas-en-Basset areas: tourismemarchesduvelayrochebaron.fr
ot-des-sucs.fr

Confolent/Aurec-surLoire :
[parcours 7, 14 ou 24 km, gorgesdelaloire-tourisme.fr](http://parcours7,14ou24km.gorgesdelaloire-tourisme.fr)



FLIRT WITH THE RAPIDS

Go rafting with Olivier on a thrilling adventure in the Gorges de l'Allier. This river is almost inaccessible. On the agenda: white-water rapids, splashing about to your heart's content and stops to dive off the granite rock before a picnic on the sand and pebble beach. The afternoon is more chilled out with a canoe ride down calmer water to Langeac. Then it's a train ride back to Monistrol-d'Allier whilst we relive our exciting adventure.

tonic-aventure.fr

Mont Gerbier-de-Jonc (1551m),
source of the Loire



RECONNECT WITH MOTHER Nature

Here, all roads lead to the source. A source of stamina with trails flirting with the Loire and Allier, 2 rivers that spring up on the edge of the Haute-Loire... or a source of spirituality and history with the Santiago de Compostela route.

Walking these footpaths is a great way to recharge your batteries: go back to basics, reconnect with nature and, along the way, get back to your own nature.

THE LOIRE, THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Everyone in France learns in geography class that the Loire River's source is on Mont Gerbier-de-Jonc. So why not go back up the river right to its source or set off from the source along the wildest part of the Loire?

There are 2 options on a 180km route on the GR® 3 footpath from Mont Gerbier-de-Jonc to the Barrage de Grangent dam. Explore the wildest part of the Loire: it carves out a path winding between rocks, Scotch pines and broom where rare birds like the short-toed snake eagle and peregrine falcon nest.

Along the way you can see the first Loire châteaux standing guard over Europe's last wild river.

Along the way don't forget to fill the cup of your hands with its clear water to freshen up and set off again with your best foot forward.

["GR® 3: Source et gorges de la Loire" hiking guide](#)
rando-hauteloire.fr

IN STEVENSON'S FOOTSTEPS

How about reliving the Scottish writer Robert Louis Stevenson's adventure? He set off from the foot of Monastier-sur-Gazeille in 1878 with his donkey Modestine to cross the volcanic landscapes of the Velay and Cévennes covering 220km in 12 days to Saint Jean-du-Gard. Join the trekking pioneer on a hiking trail named after him. "I travel not to go anywhere, but to go." Don't forget to pack the story of his journey, Travels with a Donkey in the Cévennes, in your bag for your hike.

[GR® 70 "Le Chemin de Stevenson" hiking guide](#)
rando-hauteloire.fr



DIGITAL GR® HIKING TRAIL

Pack light with the first digital pocket hiking guide. It's free too! It guides us as we follow the Allier back up to Brioude to its source at an altitude of 1500m on Moure de la Gardille in Lozère. Hiking the "Sources & Gorges de l'Allier" GR® 470 trail is an ode to landscapes that are as diverse as they are dramatic: rows of gorges, hairpin bends, granite and basalt plateaus, volcanic curiosities, stunning resinous or leafy forests and more. To end the trip on a high, a train ride back along the river on the legendary Le Cévenol railway is a must.

gr470-gorgesallier.com

WALKING LIKE
A PILGRIM
AND MAKING
THE MOST OF
THE PATH IS
A SOURCE OF
INSPIRATION
JOURNEY.

Lu Yongzhong,
painter

GO EXPLORING

With stages lasting between 20 and 25 km, the route is first and foremost a physical challenge. But there's far more to it! From Le Puy-en-Velay Cathedral, a start point for the Santiago de Compostela route, everyone goes on their own journey: self-discovery, friendship, spirituality, nature, creativity etc.



HOW TO GET GOOSEBUMPS EVEN *in summer?*

We wanted to introduce you to our expert adrenalin-seekers in this article: they know how to give us a thrill and banish our inner wimp. And there are lots of them in Haute-Loire, you'll see!



WATER-SKI *with your hair in the wind*

> Saugues has become the Haute-Loire's answer to Biarritz since the arrival of cable-skiing so you can ride on the water: **wakeboard** or **two-person towable** for little ones...

> Bastien's favourite? **Zip-lining**. He's such a big fan that he's set up twenty-odd covering 1.5km above the Gorges de Chamalières-sur-Loire (Tyro sur Loire)

> Philippe set himself quite a challenge: to send you hurtling down the Mézenc on a **sled** even when there's no snow with a rail system reaching speeds of 40km/hr!
(lugikparc.com)

> Kévin is sure of one thing: you won't be able to resist the magical Pradelle volcanic landscapes on board his electric **railbike**
(www.velorail43.com).

You can go on this cycling experience for 4 in Dunières at full tilt with a tourist train ride up driven by Pierre (velorailduvelay.fr)



FLY AWAY *to the clouds*

> Sébastien is the king of **paragliding** on the Mézenc: he discovered this heavenly art when he was 12 and never looked back. The perfect man for a maiden flight.
(altitudeparapente.fr)

> Introducing Monsieur **hot-air balloon**, Jean-Marc. He has held the French solo altitude record since 1997 at 7060 metres! Join him on a wonderful weightless voyage...

> Eric has certainly found the activity that really gives us the jitters (true, we've not tried bungee jumping off the Recoumène Viaduct yet), but we can tell you that **bungee ejection** is the bomb!
([Yssingeaux, domainelarouveure.fr](http://Yssingeaux.domainelarouveure.fr))



SHOOT OFF *with electric energy*

> Richard and Vincent love the Haute-Loire and its little paths taking you to the countryside and mouth-watering experiences. How have they chosen to share it with you?

The all terrain **electric scooter** obviously!
(takumi-sport.com, funtrott.com)

> Guy gets a thrill from anything that needs plugging in. After founding a solar panel company, he's now into any vehicle powered by electricity: he started with **segways** in the middle of the forest, then he launched his fleet of **hoverkarts** and **hoverboards** before bringing in the latest invention: the **electric unicycle**.

(Aurus Way in Tence)

> **Electric mountain biking** is another great way to tackle the rolling Haute-Loire region (guidenaturerandonnee.com, guide with activite-haute-loire.fr, bike hire with sna43.fr at Lac de Lavalette)



TEAR DOWN *the slopes*

> Jérôme has definitely unearthed the perfect spot for **off-road scooters**: the slopes of the Gorges de la Loire near Vorey.

(Vorey, velay-eaux-vives.fr)

> David has created a rider's paradise: 5 tracks where you can compete on **scooters**, **BMXs** and even **drift trikes**, a sort of tricycle made in the Haute-Loire!

(Loudes, lesfousdelaglisse.fr)

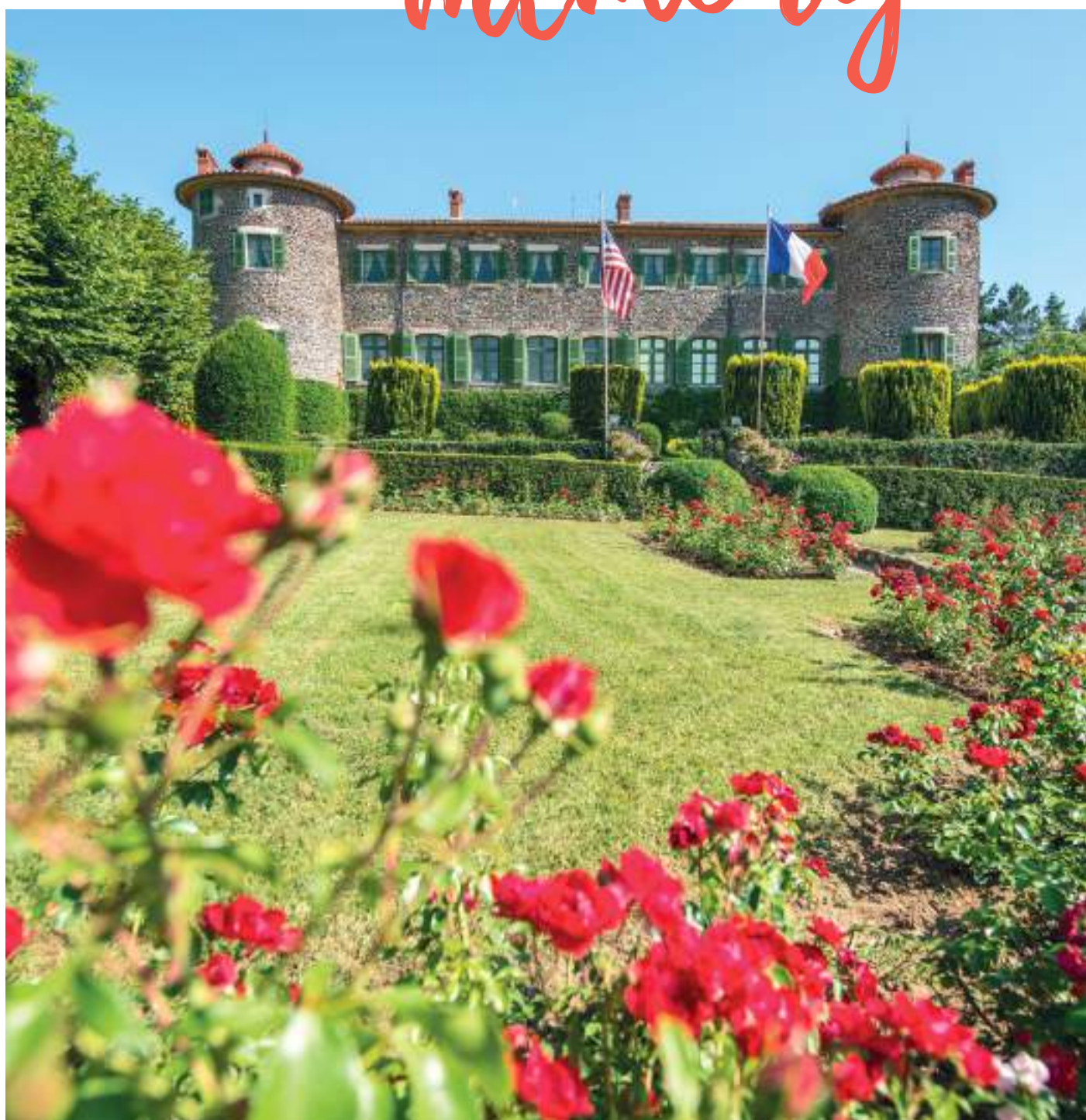


CLIMB *to the top*

> A mini army of professionals await in no less than **7 treetop adventure parks** in the Haute-Loire's forests. Our must-dos?

The park that ends with zip-lines over the Allier in Langeac, the super-challenging park and panoramic platform in Chambon-sur-Lignon, workshops with views of Le Puy-en-Velay and "Bois des Gaulois" in Saint-Paulien: a park with treehouses connected by nets. Suitable for over 2s without harnesses, little ones end their big adventure on a 23m long slide. That's right, they're in for a thrilling treat too!

FROM
History
SPRINGS
memory



Château de Lafayette in the middle of its remarkable grounds

Château de Saint-Vidal



The majestic Forteresse de Polignac on its volcanic spur

LAFAYETTE, FROM THE HAUTE- LOIRE TO AMERICA

How about we get to know the famous Marquis de Lafayette, a hero in 2 countries and a champion of freedom? The "honorary citizen of the United States of America" was born on September 6th 1757 in the Château de Chavaniac-Lafayette. 1777 marked the beginning of his American saga. Alongside George Washington, he became an «iconic» figure for American independence. When he returned to France he played a major part in the French Revolution in 1789 which he threw himself into with ideas he'd brought back from the USA. The Treasury Room even has an original copy of the Marquis' Declaration of the Rights of the Man and of the Citizen. A 300 year old oak tree that has borne witness to the saga stands in the middle of the château grounds.

chateau-lafayette.com

HOMAGE TO THE RIGHTEOUS

Did you know that the tradition for hospitality and spirit of resistance in and around Le Chambon-sur-Lignon really came to the fore during the Second World War?

The villages quietly and naturally transformed following the influx of refugees with almost as many refugees as there were households. Countless Jews and specifically children were saved among the refugees. In 1990, people from in and around Chambon were given a Yad Vashem certificate of honour that distinguishes them as "**Righteous Among The Nations**".

You can explore this period on a historical and educational visit to the remarkable Lieu de Mémoire Museum in Le Chambon-sur-Lignon. A moving journey that encapsulates the fate of the men and women involved in the resistance that was civil, spiritual and armed all in one.

memoireduchambon.com

PEAK OF THE RESISTANCE

Let's visit the Mont-Mouchet Resistance Museum in Auvers. The tale of two cartoon characters, Lucien and Pierrot, depicts the key events that made their mark on this Auvergne resistance memorial site in a sensitive playful way. The 2 heroes joined the Mont-Mouchet group, one of the 5 largest resistance gatherings in France, in spring 1944. What did they do? They stopped the German army from advancing from their base in the South of France to Normandy. Authentic items, documents, photos and videos surround us with the realities of the time and reveal the secrets of the Auvergne Resistance throughout the visit.

resistance-mont-mouchet.com



Brioude

WHERE THE ART IS

How about a stroll around Brioude's streets? On top of the stunning Saint-Julien Basilica adorned by contemporary stained-glass windows by Kim En Joong, the town is teeming with treasures to uncover.

INSPIRATION NOTEBOOK

Saint-Julien Basilica

The breath-taking basilica will blow you away! Auvergne's biggest Romanesque church stands out for its concentric apse and polychrome stones that inspire watercolour painters. The basilica has earned 3 stars in the Michelin Green Guide and is the heart of the town: side porches and pebbles play host to the artists you'll see bent over their work.





Anne Bronner's watercolours



Draw me the old town

Streets lined with amazing buildings, some of which date back to the 15th century, cross paths around the basilica. Soak up the Southern French vibes as you wander the streets around Places aux Herbes and Place Grégoire de Tours.

Corbelled houses and old boutiques

Turrets, sculpted doors, half-timbered houses and wrought iron balconies on old houses spark the imagination! One house in particular grabs your attention with its air of scandal: Maison de Mandrin, the home of a famous smuggler in the 18th century. The walls are also home to old boutiques, bygone trades and café fronts in burnished hues.

Every two years in July, Brioude becomes the muse for watercolour and sketchbook artists with the Biennale d'Aquarelle de Brioude. Fifty-odd international artists, watercolour classes, group pieces, performances and conferences. biennale-aquarelle.com ot-brioude.fr

Let's go...

Delve into these Brioude ideas, experience other artforms and meet the Salmon King.

HDLD - Hôtel de la Dentelle

For people who are good with their hands and have a soft touch, lace is a revived art form that HDLD has propelled into the contemporary and polychrome world. Like a piece of architecture, you can see the work in all its glory and the luxury of silk in haute-couture pieces.

Classes, courses and professional certificates.
hoteldeladentelle.com

Le Doyenné

Le Doyenné is a fully-fledged historical site with its emblazoned ceiling that is now a contemporary art centre. Le Doyenné opened in 2018 to host exhibitions by major artists such as Chagall, Miro and Nicolas de Staël in 2020.

Aquarium Maison du Saumon et de la Rivière (Salmon and River Centre)

Learn everything there is to know about this great migrator that still lives in the Allier River. The aquarium is home to 40 species of fish that shimmer before your very eyes. Unleash your inner biologist in the lab to perfect your knowledge of these aquatic creatures.

aquariummaisondusaumon.com

We've unearthed the little secrets of the "casadei" brimming with experiences of all kinds. And here are 5 reasons to experience magic in this stunning abbey city in the middle of the forest.



"Proud like Artaban and ready to roam the abbey in costume"

5 reasons to visit La Chaise-Dieu

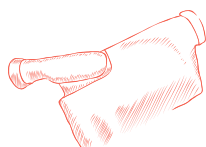
... and a few anecdotes about this radiant abbey!



01

BECAUSE THIS ABBEY IS A GEM

You feel so small when you step into **the huge Benedictine abbey**, an Auvergne heritage gem: after gazing at the 40-pipe organ you can stealthily sneak under the stone jube dominating the nave. Clément VI's tomb watches over the site and awaits us. Then head off to decipher the 26m long macabre dance. There's so much to see... **But joining Isabelle makes a world of difference!** With her cheeky spirit, she draws our attention to the small details that make the place so special. Like the funny little heads that adorn the 140 oak stalls dating back to the 15th century. The French even have a funny name for these corbels: **culs de lampes (translation: lamp bums)!**





02

BECAUSE THERE'S A ROOM WITH MYSTERIOUS ACOUSTICS

"Who is your lover?" is the **fateful question** that Lubin asked his big brother to test the Echo Room's privacy. Whether the architects put in some precise planning to do this or whether it's pure chance, **the room's function is still unknown**. But that only adds to the mystery surrounding this fun-filled sound experience.

03



BECAUSE THERE'S A NATIONAL TREASURE

A one-of-a-kind hanging with **14 tapestries from the 16th century** depicting a series of episodes from the life of Christ and the Virgin Mary has recently found a spot befitting its grandeur: the former Notre-Dame du Collège Chapel unearthed by chance during work in 2010. The tapestries were **primed for 7 years** (no joke!) to give them a new lease of life during their restoration. One of them dropped 7kg in weight from dust and damp! Xavier the guide is unbeatable when it comes to this antique comic strip. He takes us back to the turbulent past to make sense of every little woven detail.

Aren't our little monks top dram(er)?

04

BECAUSE YOU CAN RUN INTO MONKS

We met Jean-Théophane and had a coffee with.... a cake in his likeness!

The **chatty and friendly** monk told us about everyday life with 7 other brothers in the community. They have to pray for at least 5 hours a day! During a walk in the village he explained why gargoyles warded evil away from the building. He drew our attention to these **strange stone faces** sculpted on houses. He taught us why the French expression "**donner un coup de collier**" (put your back into it) took on its full meaning in 18th century La Chaise-Dieu...

We won't tell! We'll let you ask the people you meet in this authentic village yourself.



05

BECAUSE THERE'S LOTS OF THINGS TO DO WITH THE FAMILY

Elisa, Lubin, Gabriel and Mathis were the first to try the **tour in costume** (designed by a local design studio darling!). Abracadabra: gripping their fun-filled notebooks, **they only had eyes for La Chaise-Dieu**. Then there was a choice of: models for a better insight into gothic architecture, learning about the life of a monk and wildlife at the abbey's "zoo".

Since there's more to life than heritage, we took this little group **for a dip and ice cream on the sand** by the lake a few miles from the village. There was even time for a **pedalo race**. But we'll need to come back for **a run around the surround woods**, to try the **open-top train** and watch the shows at the Cziffra auditorium: **theatre, music, dance**, there's something on all year round!



A jam-dropping beach!

• City break in Le Puy-en-Velay •



One day I fell
in love with a
charming villa
whilst watching
a programme. So
we set off on an
adventure into the
unknown:
Le Puy-en-Velay !

Let us tell
you about our
weekend....

Le Puy en Velay

THE PLACE TO BE !



10AM: MARKET, PLACE DU PLOT

Our host, Pierre, told us to head to the heart of town and venture to Place du Plot, "Saturday is market day!" The square is packed with farmers and as you get closer you can't resist sampling their local produce: "artisans" cheese, fresh goat's cheese, saucisson, honey, lentils and more.



12PM: MARKET SPECIAL, PLACE DU MARCHÉ COUVERT

All the mouth-watering flavours whet our appetite so our foodie adventure leads us to Place du Marché Couvert, popular with local producers and farmers where nearby restaurateurs come to stock up. The square is buzzing with life and locals who come to meet up with friends on the restaurant terraces where you have to use your elbows to grab a drink or order the market special.



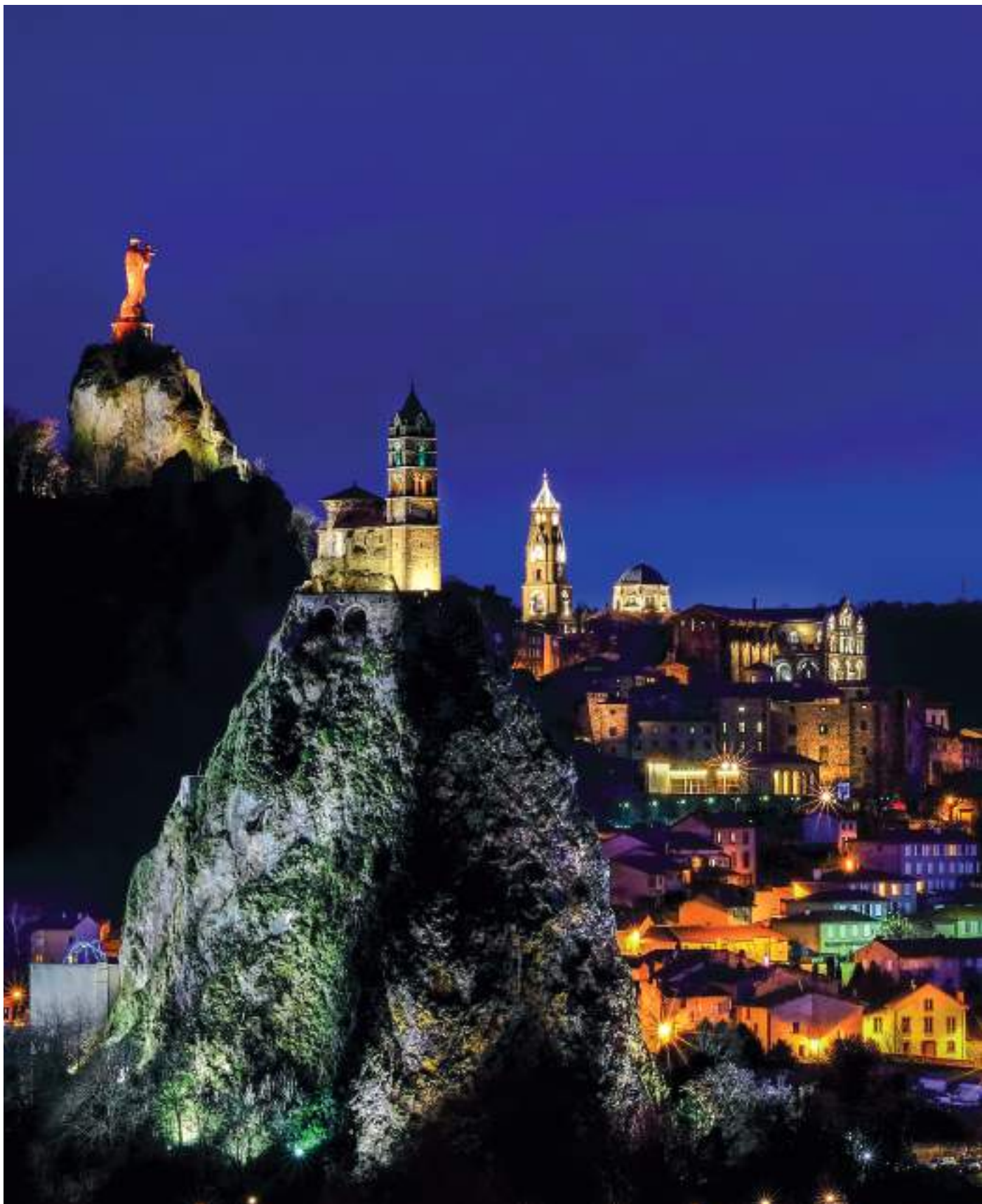
2PM: UPTOWN

Now we're ready to explore the town and its treasures! We leave Place du Plot and wander along the cobble lanes uptown. The street comes out onto Place des Tables with lace and souvenir shops with a retro vibe. Bobbin lace is a well-established tradition and you can see lacemakers bent over their pillows.

Place des Tables gives us a great low-angle shot of the cathedral. The Romanesque cathedral draws on myriad influences from the East to Moor Spain and its ochre hues and arcades are a sight for sore eyes.

We're treated to one of the best views of the city when we reach the forecourt. The cloister clings to the side of the cathedral with jaw-droppingly beautiful mosaics in white, red and black diamonds.

The Notre-Dame-de-France Statue stands behind the cathedral watching over the city. We drink in 360° views with a trip up to the crown with our heads in the clouds! On the way back down, we stop for a coffee with mini desserts in the lovely grounds at Le Camino Museum. Next, we feast our eyes on Rue Chênebouterie which turns into "Arts Street" in summer with designer and artisan pop-up shops.



Be blown away by Le Puy-en-Velay (rated 3* in the Michelin Green Guide), the European capital of the Camino de Santiago, UNESCO World Heritage. A city that's even more magical at nightfall with the Puy de Lumières illuminations

puydelumieres.fr

• City break in Le Puy-en-Velay •



7PM: UNWIND ON THE TERRACE, PLACE DU CLAUZEL

Then it's cocktail time. There are huge terraces on this square to soak up the last sunrays. " Garçon, un mojito auvergnat* s'il vous plait! "

* *Verbena syrup or liqueur, orange juice and Saint-Géron sparkling water (Haute-Loire).*

Alcohol abuse is dangerous.



8PM: AL FRESCO DINNER, RUE CHÈNEBOUTERIE AND RUE RAPHAËL

The streets ooze atmosphere with restaurants serving local specialties and world food alike.



10PM: PUY DE LUMIÈRES CITY ILLUMINATIONS

Night has fallen and the city is dazzling with scenes projected onto the city's best-known landmarks. Rocher Saint-Michel-d'Aiguilhe is showcased by the projection. Tomorrow we'll climb this 82m high volcanic neck.

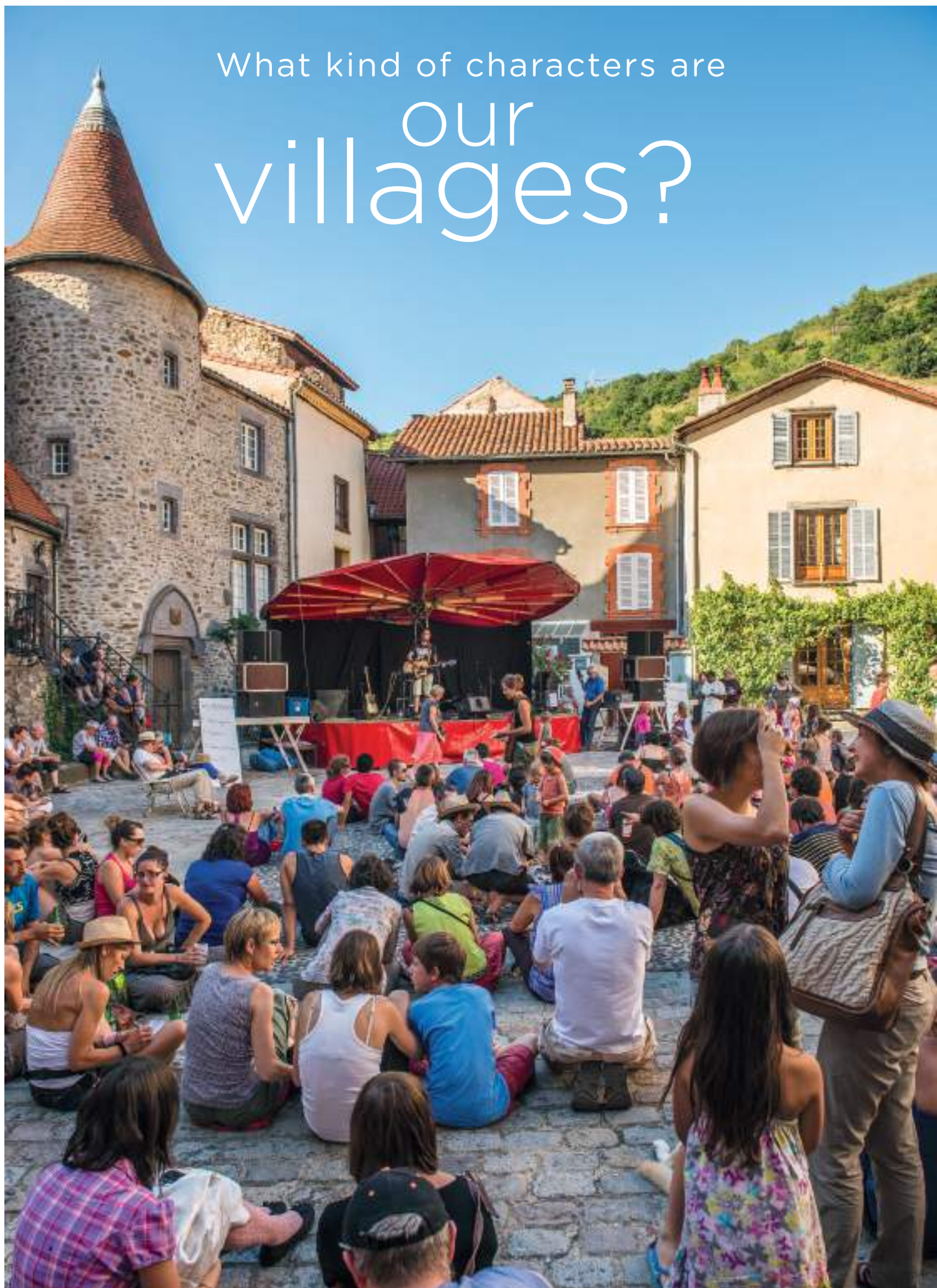
Just based on today, the city has won us over. We know that tonight our dreams will be a kaleidoscope of colours. Tomorrow promises to be another action-packed day with the Crozatier Museum and a relaxing park break at Jardin Henri-Vinay.

Top tip:

The Pass Card en Velay gets you discounted entry to 4 sites (Rocher Saint-Michel d'Aiguilhe, Notre-Dame-de-France Statue, Forteresse de Polignac and Crozatier Museum). lepuyenvelay-tourisme.fr



What kind of characters are
our
villages?



THE *creative one*

< **BLESLE**

The village is bursting with things to do. Soak up the atmosphere at the Music Apéros Festival or unleash your inner wordsmith at the Fesivalet's writing workshops among half-timbered houses. Unearth a beautiful handmade piece at the summer market as you nibble on tasty bread fresh from the oven. There's even an cheeky brewery making one of the Haute-Loire's best craft beers!

La Damoiselle beer:
brasserie-alagnon.fr



THE *fortified one*

^ **AUZON**

Step through the archways into the web of houses, medieval relics, courtyards and terraced gardens leading to the little gem of Romanesque art that is Saint Laurent Collegiate Church.



THE *volcanic one*

ARLEMPDES

Arlempdes and its château lean against a basalt peak as a beacon over the wild Gorges de la Loire. Like a guardian for this natural temple, we borrow the keys to the château from Le Manoir restaurant to unlock the secret.

THE *leafy one*

PRADELLES

Pradelles is a never-ending ticket to adventure lying on the crossroads for GR hiking trails such as the Stevenson, Régordane and Sources & Gorges de l'Allier trails.

rando-hauteloire.fr

• *What kind of characters are our villages?* •



^
THE
"paleogeological" one

CHILHAC

Perched on the volcanic columns towering over the Allier River, Chilhac sparks our curiosity and at any street corner you may encounter the Auvergne mastodon and other mammoth fossils.

museechilhac.com



^
THE
Romanesque one

LAVAUDIEU

Roman art is everywhere, an air of mystery exudes from the cloister, all the ingredients you need for a Roman(esque) holiday. The 2004 film *Crimson Rivers* was shot in this idyllic setting.

abbayedelavaudieu.fr

THE
prehistoric one

SAINT PAL-DE-CHALENCON

Venture outside the market town to the fortified city walls on an educational trail introducing the Chier Marty buffer. Neolithic people came to this rock to polish their axes and adzes.



THE *legendary one*

LE MONASTIER-SUR-GAZEILLE

Legendary bands like the Blues Brothers light up the city famous for its annual brass festival whilst museums tell the tale of fantastic legends and schoolbook stories with a glimmer of yesteryear.

museedes croyances populaires.com
ecolemusee.free.fr

THE *floral one*

SAINT-PAULIEN

A "Fleur d'Or" (gold flower) has been awarded to this village that loves primping its streets and preening its neighbourhood to give us a beautiful bouquet of trees, flowers all wrapped in a lovely earthy bow.



THE *medieval one*

< ALLÈGRE

"Oyez, oyez", the Medieval festival merrily whisks us away to another era with covered stalls, crackling fires and ringing anvils.

alegremedieval.com

Report

IS SAINT-BONNET THE MOST FOODIE VILLAGE IN FRANCE?

What sets Saint-Bonnet-le-Froid apart is the standard of its restaurants with a record number of eateries and culinary awards. Let's find out more about an incredible area from Marie-France Neyron, a "keeper of memory" for this collective adventure.

So tell me...how do you explain the incredible restaurant scene in Saint Bonnet?

It all stems from Saint-Bonnet's location almost 1200 m high at the top of a mountain pass on the edge of the Ardèche and Haute-Loire. Monks from La Chaise-Dieu came here to clear the ground in the Middle Ages. So you needed cafés and taverns for the men clearing the ground. Then stagecoaches began to stop in Saint-Bonnet to eat and sleep. It all began because there was nothing at all...

And then?

Locals stayed here. An example is Chef Thierry Guyot and his wife Cécile at Le Fort du Pré who hail from the Lot region. We're used to seeing snowy winters here. There's a real sense of community. Restaurateurs aren't competitive. They're pleased to see others do well and everyone does well! *[laughs]*.

Chef Régis Marcon must have helped the village become famous?

Régis wasn't going to live in Saint-Bonnet to start with. The Gault et Millau guide brought him to the world's attention. He was offered jobs in Paris, Vichy, and in the end he never wanted to leave his land. He brought a lot of people with him. At the start we couldn't believe it. Then he trained lots of chefs who have stayed here such as 2 Michelin-starred Serge Vieira in Chaudes-Aigues. Régis is proud...He's a driving force, he attracts others, he's very friendly: we never say «Mr Marcon» here, **everyone calls him Régis**.

Why did Régis introduce mushrooms into his dishes?

Here we have a mushroom legacy and the tradition of the mushroom fair that's been running since the Middle Ages. People would pick mushrooms and dry them on ropes in front of the fire in farms. Mushrooms sold for the same price as today at the All Saint's Day fair. They would swap goods with traders for warm clothes, chestnuts, nuts and apples to get through winter. It was a way to survive. The 2-day fair now attracts 40,000 visitors.

Is Saint-Bonnet the land of mushrooms?

Undoubtedly! It's down to its wealth of woodlands, diverse soils and surrounding altitudes: it increases the opportunities!

hautpaysduvelay-tourisme.fr

Pamper yourself after tickling your tastebuds at **Les Sources du Haut Plateau spa**



Régis and Jacques Marcon,
3-star restaurant in Saint-Bonnet-le-Froid

A photograph of two chefs in white uniforms standing in a field of tall grass and daisies. In the background, there is a modern building with large glass windows and a dark roof. The sky is blue with some clouds.

6

restaurants
for 260 inhabitants

3

recognised
by the Michelin Guide:

- Régis et Jacques Marcon (3 stars)
- La Coulemelle (Bib Gourmand)
- Le Fort du Pré (Plate)

100

hospitality/catering jobs
and 260 guest beds

Up to
1 ton

of dried mushrooms sold
at the Mushroom Fair
(1st weekend after All
Saint's Day)

"WHEN PEOPLE COME TO SAINT-BONNET,
THEY SAY THEY'RE BOUND TO FIND A GOOD PLACE TO EAT,
IF NOT THE FIRST THEN IT WILL BE THE NEXT."

• Fine dining •

LE HAUT- ALLIER

wild about

FLAVOUR



Plants are part of the family at this Michelin-starred restaurant. The restaurateur grandma used them in her cooking: nettle soup, dandelion salad and acacia fritters. Philippe Brun and his son Clément are the new generation and taking this tradition to its highest level.

"Every plant has its own identity and different flavour," Clément Brun tells us. Valerian is best for a sharp flavour whilst wild garlic is great for a strong flavour. Something more subtle? Salad burnet and yarrow. "There's a truly vast array of tastes, flavours and colours that vary widely throughout the seasons." Philippe and Clément have the skill to put all of Auvergne's gold onto our plate.

Pont d'Alleyras
hotel-lehautallier.com

Hearty, inventive and delicious dishes

The Haute-Loire's eateries bring you sweet and savoury flavours in amazing local produce: puy lentils, Fin Gras du Mézenc beef, Monts du Velay veal, Noire du Velay lamb, mountain cured meat, Haute-Loire "artisanous" cheese, the Velay's "red pearl" berries, verbena herbal tea or liqueur (Verveine Pagès or artisan Verveine) and more.

These exciting and diverse products are made by people devoted to their land and elevated by creative chefs whose expertise is recognised by countless guides and networks: Michelin Stars, Bibs and Plates, Logis, Toques d'Auvergne, Maitres Restaurateurs and more.
lepuyenvelay-tourisme.fr

Yssingeaux the pastry capital of the world

The National School of Pastry has been world-renowned for over 30 years as a school for professionals in pastry, bakery, chocolate, confectionery and ice cream arts.

The prestigious school may provide 3-year Bachelor degrees in the "Arts of Pâtisserie" but you can also hone your skills on 2-month long courses or even masterclasses for a 1/2 or full day. The best chefs are here and you get stuck in. All the classes are in English: what would you expect from an international school?

ensp-adf.com

Shopping

WHAT TO BRING BACK
IN YOUR SUITCASE?



SWEET TREATS

Give into your sweet tooth with artisan treats : Jam by Bruno Moutcoudiol (Monistrol-sur-Loire) and Régis Billamboz (St-Romain-Lachalm), Confectionery by Le Cheyne and Douceurs du Lignon (Le Chambon-sur-Lignon), «Le goûter du Marquis» Cake (Langeac/Paulhaguet) and «La Pouzzolane du Velay» biscuits.



SAVOURY TREATS

Mushrooms, mountain cured meats and "artisous" cheese. The cheese's unique flavour comes from the tiny cheese mites that age it by aerating the rind. The "artisous" mites are hyperactive: a couple conceives a million babies in 40 days. Now there's a record to beat...

Producers and artists join forces to take their little gems further than the markets:

madeingevaudan.com

Alcohol abuse is dangerous. Please drink responsibly.



RED AND BLACK

Strawberries, raspberries, redcurrants, blackcurrants, blueberries and blackberries grown at over 1000m altitude: The Velay's "Red and Black Pearls": rare and vibrant vitamins!



VERVEINE SOFT OR NOT ?

Whether it's an artisan liqueur for grandpa or a herbal tea for grandma, you should always have some in reserve. Why not use it to put a twist on a classic mojito?



A VEGETABLE PRINCESS

These lentils reign supreme with their delicate skin and slightly floury kernel enabling them to cook quickly. And let's not forget that they're packed with goodness: rich in plant protein, low in fat, they contain twice as much fibre, more potassium, phosphorus and iron! Would you like seconds Popeye?

SAINT-GÉRON MINERAL WATER

Packed with minerals and rare trace elements from the magma, you can hear it let out a soft fizz when it escapes from the bottle designed by Argentine artist Alberto Bali.



FIND YOUR Way

TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRES for expert advice!

BRIOUDE SUD AUVERGNE ot-brioude.fr

- 01 / BRIOUDE (00 33) (0)4 71 74 97 49
- 02 / BLESLE* 04 71 74 97 49
- 03 / LAVAUDIEU* (00 33) (0)4 71 76 46 00

GORGES DE L'ALLIER gorges-allier.com

- 04 / AUZON (00 33) (0)4 71 76 18 11
- 05 / LANGEAC (00 33) (0)4 71 77 05 41
- 06 / LAVOUTE-CHILHAC (00 33) (0)4 71 77 46 57
- 07 / PRADELLES (00 33) (0)4 71 00 82 65
- 08 / SAUGUES (00 33) (0)4 71 77 71 38

IN AND AROUND LE PUY-EN-VELAY lepuyenvelay-tourisme.fr

- 09 / LE PUY-EN-VELAY (2 place du Clauzel) (00 33) (0)4 71 09 38 41
- 10 / LA CHAISE-DIEU (00 33) (0)4 71 00 01 16
- 11 / CRAPONNE-SUR-ARZON (00 33) (0)4 71 03 23 14
- 12 / SAINT-PAULIEN* (00 33) (0)4 71 00 50 01
- 13 / VOREY-SUR-ARZON* (00 33) (0)4 71 01 30 67
- 14 / ALLÈGRE* (00 33) (0)4 71 07 77 09

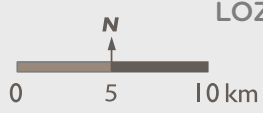
MÉZENC-LOIRE-MEYGAL mezenclairemeygal.com

- 15 / SAINT-JULIEN CHAPTEUIL (00 33) (0)4 71 08 77 70
- 16 / LE MONASTIER-SUR-GAZEILLE (00 33) (0)4 71 08 37 76
- 17 / LES ESTABLES (00 33) (0)4 71 08 31 08



■ Préfecture
● Sous-préfecture

Road and tourist map available for free from the Haute-Loire Tourist Information Centres.



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 Hôtel du Département - 1, place Monseigneur de Galard
 43000 Le Puy-en-Velay - (00 33) (0)4 71 07 41 65
 contact@auvergnevacances.com
 www.auvergne-experience.fr

Join us and share your experience using the #myHauteLoire hashtag



HAUTE-LOIRE



LOIRE-SEMÈNE

gorgesdelaloire.com

- 18 / AUREC-SUR-LOIRE (00 33) (0)4 77 35 42 65
- 19 / AUREC-SUR-LOIRE* (Aire Respirando) (00 33) (0)4 77 73 10 75
- 20 / LA SÉAUVE SUR SEMÈNE* (00 33)4 71 75 69 50

MARCHES DU VELAY – ROCHEBARON

tourisme-marchesduvelayrochebaron.fr

- 21 / BAS-EN-BASSET (00 33) (0)4 71 66 95 44
- 22 / BEAUZAC (00 33) (0)4 71 61 50 74
- 23 / MONISTROL-SUR-LOIRE (00 33) (0)4 71 66 03 14
- 24 / SAINT-PAL-DE-MONS (00 33) (0)4 71 75 06 60
- 25 / SAINTE-SIGOLÈNE (00 33) (0)4 71 66 13 07
- 26 / SAINT-PAL-EN-CHALENCON* (00 33) (0)4 71 66 19 53

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hautpaysduvelay-tourisme.fr

- 27 / MONTFAUCON-EN-VELAY (00 33) (0)4 71 59 95 73
- 28 / SAINT-BONNET-LE-FROID (00 33) (0)4 71 65 64 41

PAYS DES SUCS ON THE BANKS OF THE LOIRE

ot-des-sucs.fr

- 29 / RETOURNAC (00 33) (0)4 71 65 20 50
- 30 / YSSINGEAUX (00 33) (0)4 71 59 10 76

HAUT-LIGNON

ot-hautlignon.com

- 31 / LE-CHAMBON-SUR-LIGNON (00 33) (0)4 71 59 71 56
- 32 / TENCE (00 33) (0)4 71 59 71 56
- 33 / LE MAZET-SAINT-VOY (00 33) (0)4 71 59 71 56

*information point

Haute-Loire
LE DÉPARTEMENT

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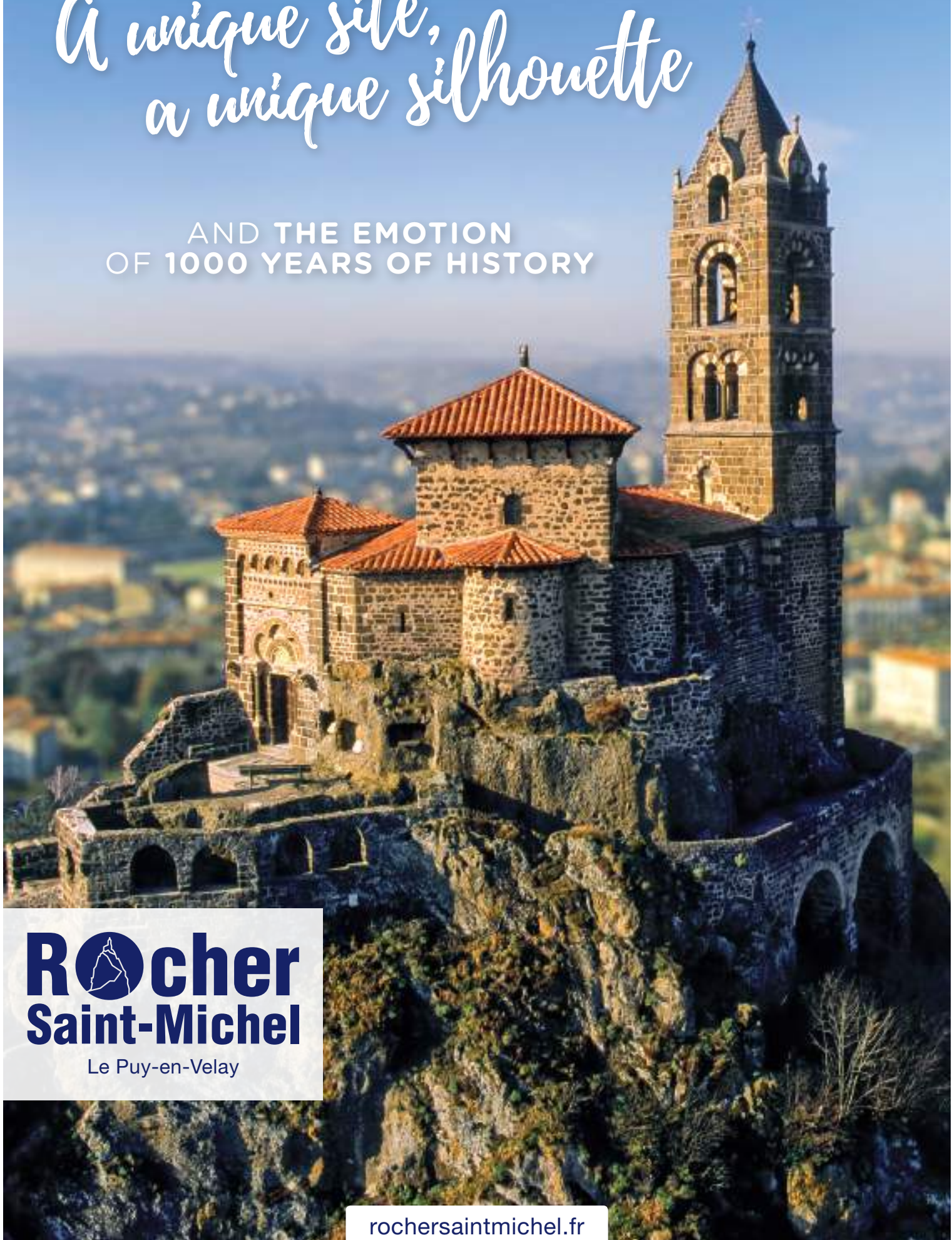
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*A unique site,
a unique silhouette*

AND THE EMOTION
OF 1000 YEARS OF HISTORY



Rocher
Saint-Michel

Le Puy-en-Velay

rochersaintmichel.fr