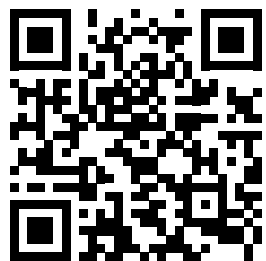


# *Your Own Home in France*

***Buy a Beautiful Holiday Home in France***

**Charming cottages, villas and apartments in the historic centres of exceptionally beautiful French villages, fully furnished and renovated and ready for occupation or holiday letting**



# There is more to France than Paris!

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## *There's so much more to France than Paris!*

Some years ago, when we first visited France, we made Paris our only port of call. We both loved it. The galleries, the bistros, the beautiful boulevards, and a stylish ambience uniquely French, Paris seemed like a dream destination that couldn't be bettered.

### **How limited we were!**

It was only on later visits, bristling with Eurail tickets and hire car vouchers, that we discovered the enormous wealth of things to see and do in **rural France**, and how fascinating and varied were its regions. It was like a whole lot of different countries rolled into one.

The wine villages of **Burgundy**, **Brittany's** diverse coastlines, the sparkling waters of the **Mediterranean**, the haunting alpine vistas of the **Auvergne**, the **Canal du Midi** snaking its way through the **Languedoc** and the fairy tale towns floating in the clouds or nestling in the Massif Central, were just a few of these.

But amongst this dazzling diversity, there were three particular regions that stood out well above the others: **Dordogne, the Loire Valley and, of course, Provence!** We couldn't stop thinking about these wonderful places that offered us delights going beyond anything else in our many travel experiences.

The charming **Dordogne**, with its rolling green hills, châteaux towering above the surrounding Chestnut forests, its Medieval Bastide villages, the dramatically beautiful river, and the amazing variety of cultural, historic, artistic and leisure activities available there puts it squarely on our list of essential destinations in Europe.

**The Loire Valley**, often styled the Garden of France, land of the great Châteaux, ancient abbeys, rugged fortresses staring imperiously over the wandering waterways with pretty little villages sprinkled along them, is the heart of modern France. Home to poets, artists, philosophers and Kings, this living tapestry is so rich that, like the fine wine grown there, it is too tempting to ignore!

But then mesmerizing us in a totally different way we have ... **Provence**.

It's a mystery. What is so compelling about Provence? The rugged beauty, the vestiges of Roman architecture, its Impressionist artistic heritage, unique wine and food, lively outdoor markets, the friendliness of the people who have retained the art of living, the lavender fields basking in the warm Mediterranean sun, all these conspire to exert an irresistible appeal. The Romans loved it - they called it Provincia - and Cézanne and Van Gogh fell under the spell, and we can't resist it any more than they could.

**Yes, these places are wonderful; they bristle with "bucket list" destinations, but that's just the problem: there are almost too many! How to choose?**



## **It was not too long before we understood certain things...**

Hotel stays, though pleasant enough at first, left us with a disturbing feeling of being mere itinerant tourists, without a base, having no real sense of being "at home" in this country we so much enjoyed. Simple pleasures such as buying fish at the local market, cooking at home and relaxing with a bottle of wine over lunch whilst your French neighbours do the same, were not possible; dining out at restaurants was obligatoire. Moreover, being always on the move prevents you from discovering those secret out-of-the-way places - you're confined to the typical and over-visited.

So we decided to buy our own cottages where we, our friends and people like yourselves, could move in, relax, be independent and really feel a part of the daily French life - if only for a week or two. Or three...

### **But where should these cottages be?**

The first part was easy - in **Provence, Dordogne, or the Loire Valley**.

But should they be in the country? ... a small village? ... a big town?... a well known spot or somewhere out of the way? Much thought was given to this. There seemed to be so much to consider!

Large, industrial towns were definitely to be avoided; but so were the picturesque but remote hamlets without a bakery or café in sight.

We steered the middle ground.

The houses should be located in **beautiful, lively villages** with all the amenities - where you can just walk around the corner to buy a croissant, a newspaper or a cognac - but still be only a few minutes ride or drive from the many fascinating attractions of the French countryside.

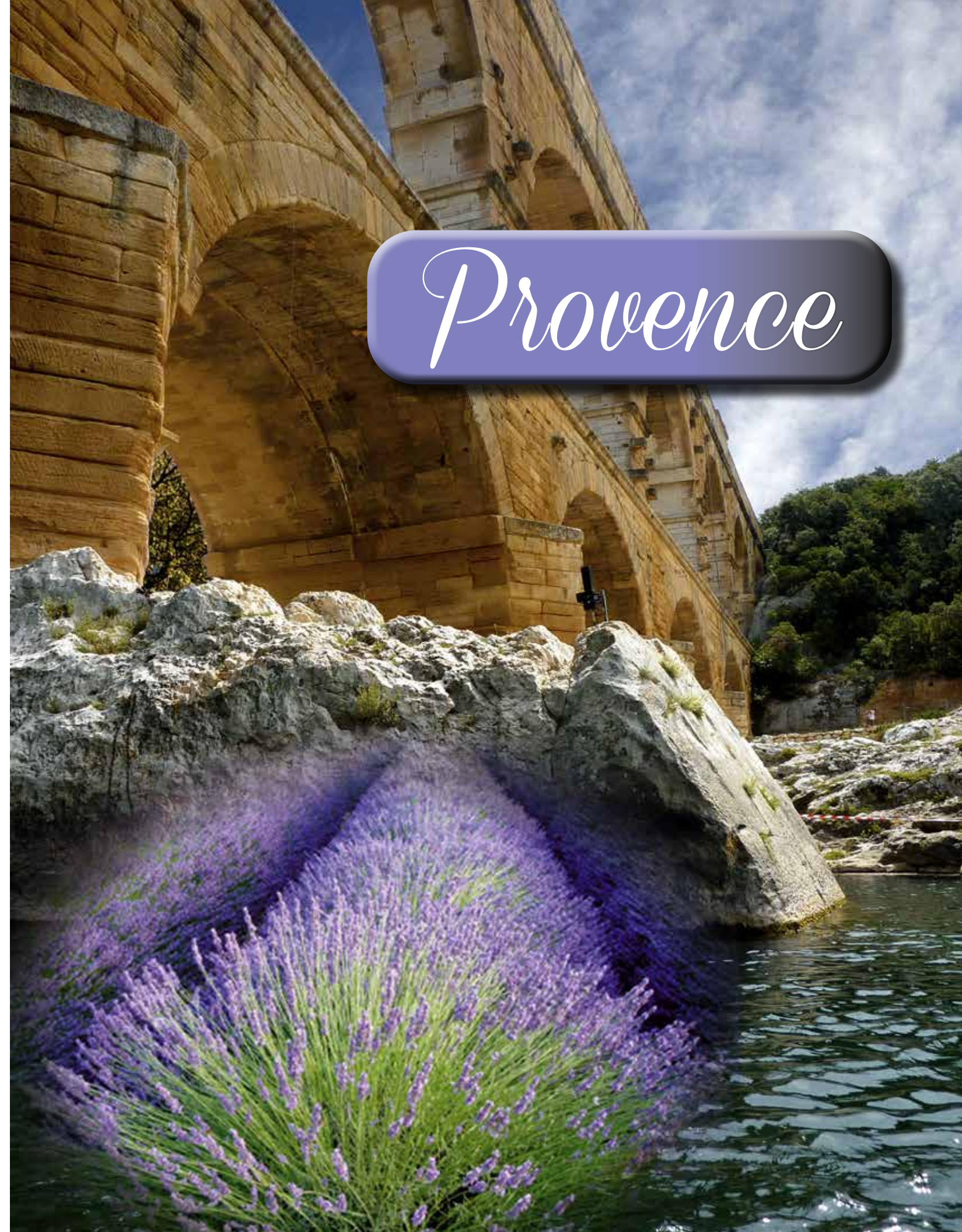
**SO FAR SO GOOD BUT ...** there was one more factor - **a very subtle one, but really the most important of them all.**

### **The towns must be living towns.**

Not towns that had **ossified into tourist museums** and not the "summer vacation" towns that had already been invaded and bought up by expatriate foreigners turning them into places whose French character has been virtually lost.

Of all the villages and towns we visited, many very pretty and interesting, only a small collection really satisfied all of our stringent stipulations. And three of them really appealed.

**And it was in these three places that we bought all our cottages over the years!**



*Provence*



## Your Home in Provence: Uzès

**O**h little town of my youth, said the writer André Gide, "Were you in Umbria the Parisians would flock to visit you!"

His observation is proving correct for after many years, our wonderful village in Provence has been quietly discovered as the gem it always was: *a little miracle town rich in art and history*. Hidden away in the Western part of the region, it was selected in 1962 as one of France's 500 villes d'art, and since then much money has been lavished on restoring and repairing the then tumbling façades. *Not so long ago it provided the perfect stage backdrop for the Gerard Depardieu film, "Cyrano de Bergerac".*



Lynne Gough, French Cottage Guest, 1998

## PROVENCE HUB: UZES

### Your home base in Provence

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### Climate

Summer in Provence is warm with long weeks of perfect weather, average daytime temperatures ranging from 24°-32° during the months of May to September. Sunset is quite late and the nights are comfortably mild.

In autumn the evenings are cooler but very pleasant for an evening walk. Even in the colder months of winter the skies are blue and you can often sit outdoors in the winter sun. The only exception to this is when the celebrated Mistral wind descends from the North-usually in February. This period of wild clear skies (Van Gogh's "Starry Night"), though severe, usually only lasts for a couple of weeks

The Mediterranean light of Provence has a poetic luminosity, which inspired many French painters: Cézanne, Monet, Van Gogh and Picasso amongst them. Each of these produced works portraying some version of this quality. It underscores the atmosphere of nostalgia in the writings of Marcel Pagnol (Jean de Florette). There is a marvellous quality in the landscape that is really very different to our own harsher terrain.



*One of the winter specialities of the region is the elusive...*

## Truffle!!

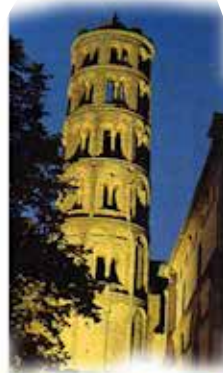
Hidden away in the forests of truffle oaks growing in the region, these can only be found with the aid of a pig or truffle dog. You can discover this rare and highly prized fungus at the market held weekly in the central square. But beware; the price can give you a shock!



## Architecture

There are many historical influences at play in the architecture of this little town and in the surrounding paysage. The legacy of the Greeks and Romans is particularly obvious with many ancient temples, coliseums, monuments and other buildings still standing today. The most famous monument is, of course, the Pont du Gard, located only 15 km away. This marvellously preserved portion of the original 52 km long Roman aqueduct is well worth a visit.

In the historic heart you will find the grand fortified residence of the first Duchy of France. Its oldest section, the rectangular dungeon called the Tour Bermonde, dates from the 11th century. You can climb the steep spiral escalier d'honneur to the top for views over the shimmering tiles of the rooftops. The interior is well stocked with period furnishings, complemented by wax dukes and duchesses in their 16th-century finery. Unique in France, the 12th-century Tour Fenestrelle is a cylindrical six-storey gem, named after the rows of double-lit windows that encircle it, inspired by the towers of Ravenna and Lombardy. Inside the Cathédrale St.Théodorit, is a splendid organ of 1670, the only one in France to have retained its original painted shutters. Recently restored, it is the centrepiece of the end-of-July music festival, **Nuits Musicales**.



## Landscape and Scenery

The countryside around - where fields of asparagus, cherry orchards, forests of truffle oaks and vineyards alternate with scrub lands - is dotted with attractive old villages. Stark geological features contrasting with these cosy little places nestling amongst them make outings in it continually surprising.

## Leisure Activities

Swimming (at the local swimming pool or at the Pont du Gard "beach"), canoeing (along the Gardon river), golf, Montgolfière (hot air ballooning), abseiling, walking, bicycle touring, and an aquatic park for kids are just some of the many sporting activities in immediate reach of the town.

Cultural activities include art and pottery exhibitions, theatre, concerts, dance performances and the famous International festival of Ancient music (Nuits Musicales) held every year in July in the precincts of the Château. Full details of these are available in our guest's guidebook available in each cottage and at the Tourism Office.



## Savouring the Provençal cuisine: restaurants.

More than anything else, it is the celebrated cuisine that has put Provence in the public eye. A chilled rosé, slices of fresh saucisson, salty olives and goat's cheese under the Pont du Gard have made a heavenly repast for many a visitor including Marcel Pagnol and Lawrence Durrell. The range of restaurant dining is staggering - stretching from quaint cafés, Carmarguais fishermen's eating-houses to three-star Michelin elegance.

In each of our cottages you will find a visitors' house book full of suggestions - both our own and also the discoveries of past guests. Please add yours too! French restaurants and bars always have their menus prominently displayed in their windows for passers-by to read and check the prices. The "set menus" offered are generally excellent value. These are typically around 14 euros for two courses and some include a glass of the local wine as well. Restaurant hours are usually 12 pm till 2.30 pm and 7 pm till 10 pm. Lunch is France's most important meal: you may need to book at the popular ones or arrive very early to ensure a place. Restaurants abound in unlikely locations (off the tourist track), which are often truly excellent.

You can tell fairly quickly when you discover one of these gems (perhaps in a basement, an old railway building or in nearby hamlet) by the number of locals patronising it and the happy hum of activity there.

Look for the ones surrounded by many cars and freight trucks at lunchtime for a gastronomic experience extraordinaire!

## Cooking Classes and Wine Tours in Provence

If you have always had a yen to learn more about the Provençal style of cuisine, wine and produce of the 'terroir' by participating in cooking classes and tours, then you may wish to book with our associate for one or several days of his **Culinary Discoveries** programmes. Details are available in each cottage there.



## Shopping and Markets

Blessed with a most wonderful open-air market selling fresh food, an amazing variety of delicious fungi and other local produce, crafts, local artwork, books, antiques, brocante, curios, and clothes, you'll be keen to absorb this wonderful local experience. The days and times this is held, as well as other notable markets in neighbouring towns, is listed at each house.

It is well worth a visit!

You'll also find an amazing variety of shops and boutiques, bars and restaurants, cafés and bakeries, a cinema, jazz-clubs, and galleries. All of this is within two or three minute walk from the houses.

Food prices are similar to those at home, sometimes even cheaper. You can buy excellent local wines for as little as 3 Euros per litre! Try the 'Grand Chemin' gris rosé. Food shops are open all week - some closing Sundays or Mondays.

Most shops close from 12 midday till 2 pm but the "hypermarket" on the outskirts of town is open all day. Banks and Post Offices close at 12 midday on Saturday and don't re-open till Tuesday, but you can use the ubiquitous 'distributeurs de billets' to obtain cash easily with your credit card at any time.

## Antiques and Collectables (brocante)

The village also boasts no less than 19 antique and brocante shops within its walls. There are also some world-class antique boutiques at the nearby villages of Argilliers, Castillon du Gard and along the route to Avignon.



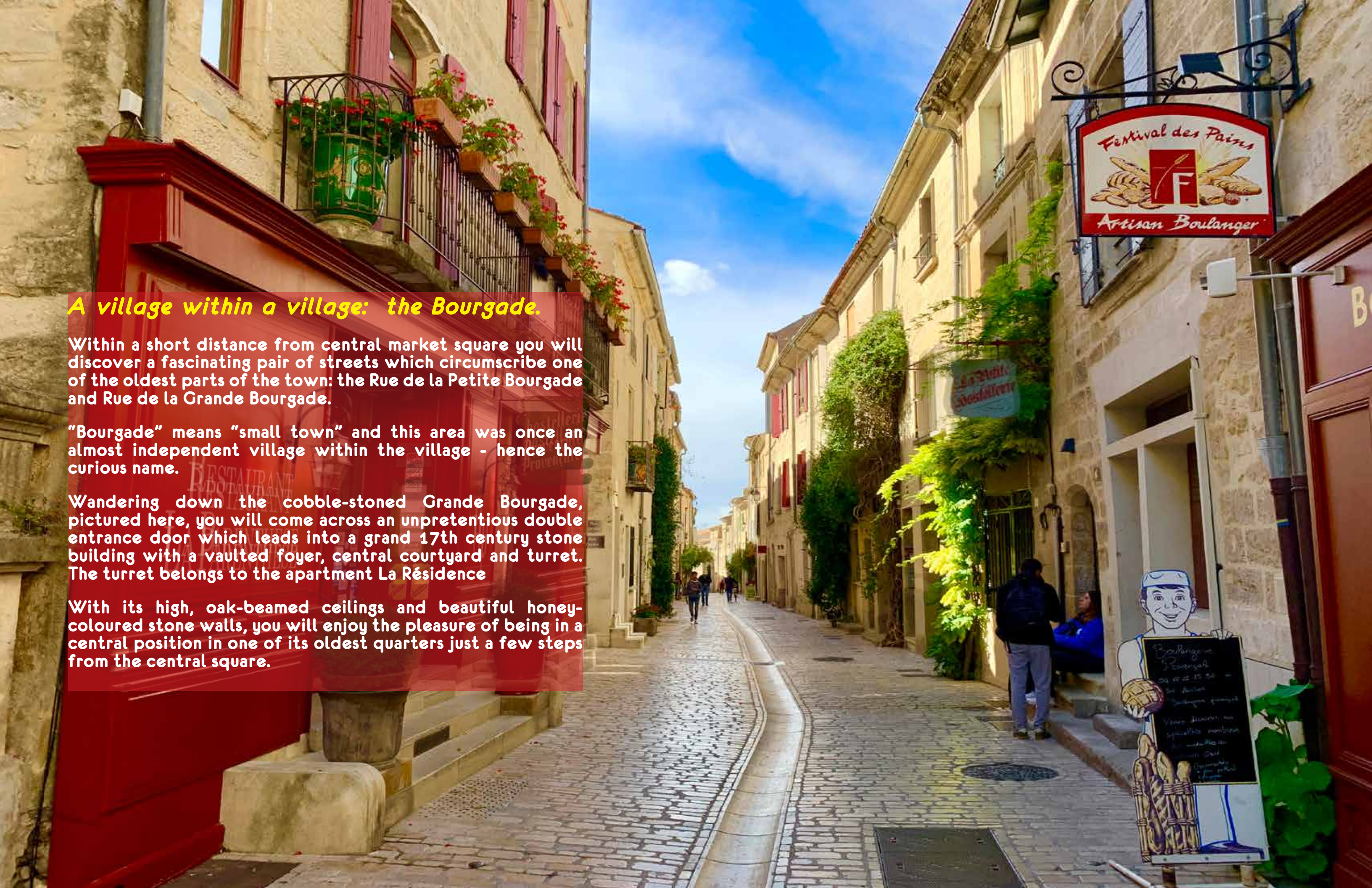
## **A village within a village: the Bourgade.**

Within a short distance from central market square you will discover a fascinating pair of streets which circumscribe one of the oldest parts of the town: the Rue de la Petite Bourgade and Rue de la Grande Bourgade.

"Bourgade" means "small town" and this area was once an almost independent village within the village - hence the curious name.

Wandering down the cobble-stoned Grande Bourgade, pictured here, you will come across an unpretentious double entrance door which leads into a grand 17th century stone building with a vaulted foyer, central courtyard and turret. The turret belongs to the apartment La Résidence

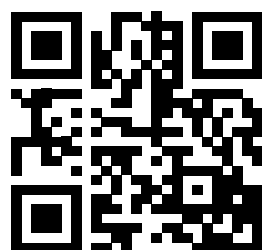
With its high, oak-beamed ceilings and beautiful honey-coloured stone walls, you will enjoy the pleasure of being in a central position in one of its oldest quarters just a few steps from the central square.



**Provence Apartment: "La Résidence", Uzès**  
**268,000 euros including separate private lock-up garage**

**Layout**

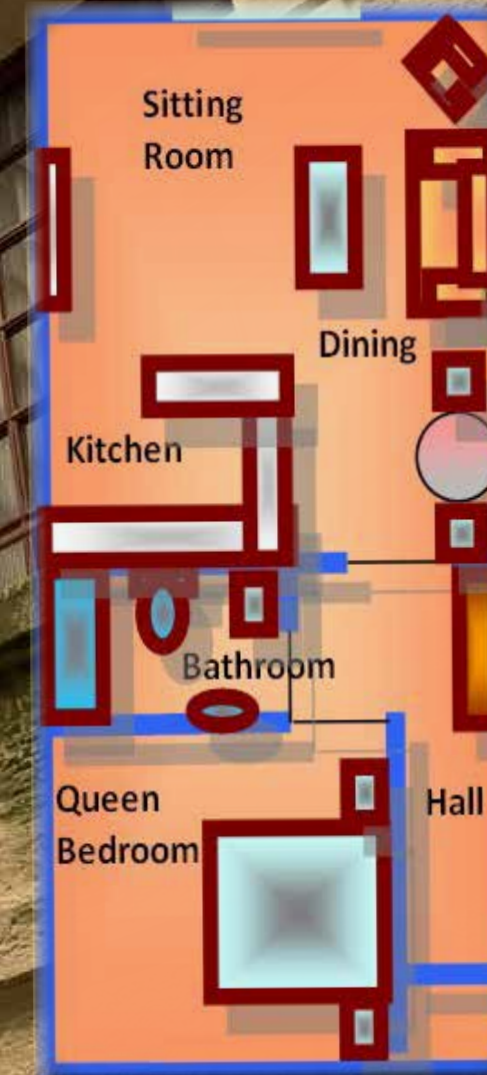
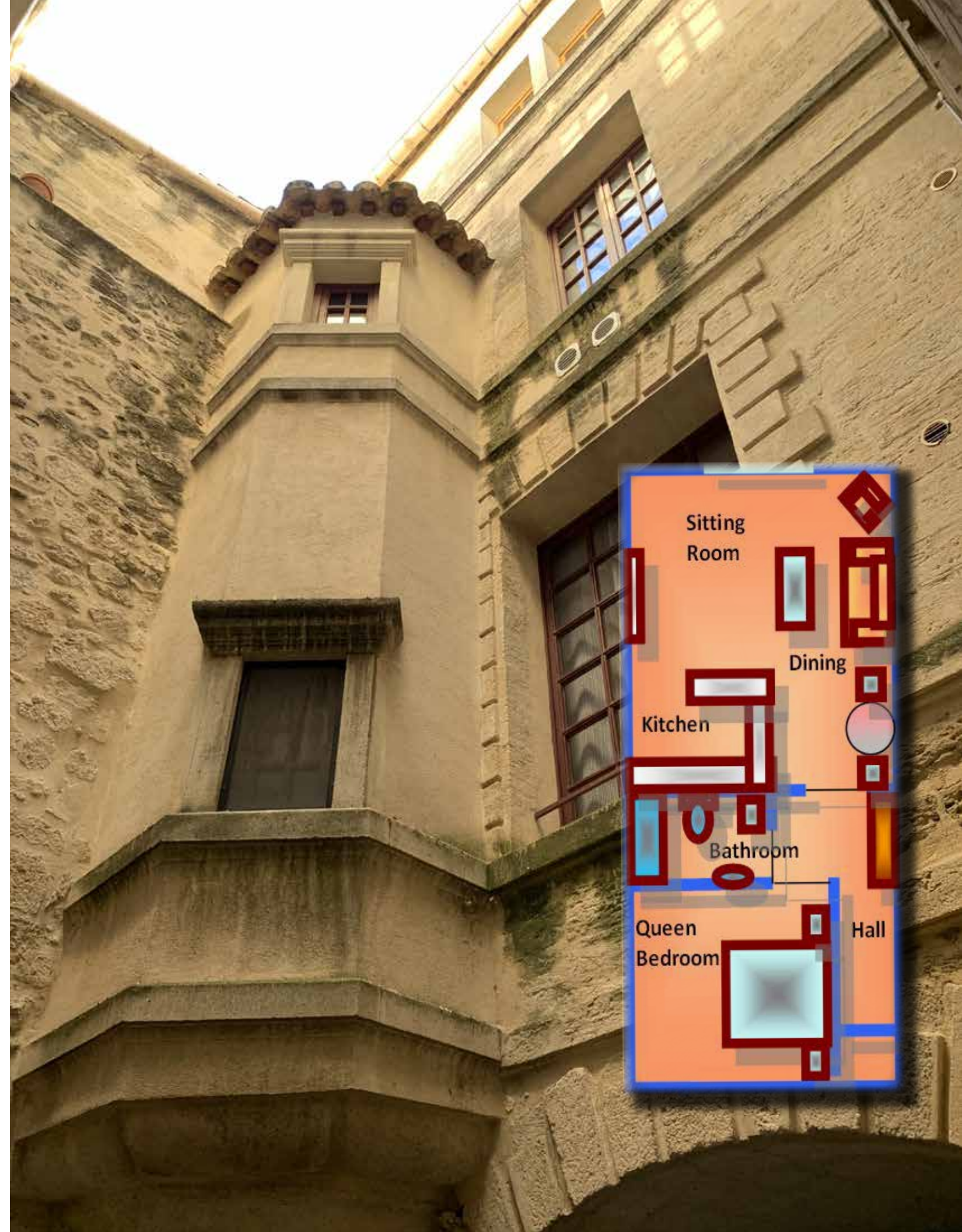
- ▶ The apartment is totally on one level (first floor) and includes...
- ▶ Large sitting/dining room with view of the old street.
- ▶ Bathroom with bath/shower, hand basin, toilet, washing machine and dryer adjacent to the bedroom.
- ▶ Queen Bedroom at rear (quiet) which is air-conditioned. Extra single sofa bed available for a third person or visitor.
- ▶ Apartment is centrally heated, has satellite TV, music, books and phone (unrestricted to most fixed lines in the world)
- ▶ Free broadband internet. USB charging points for phones and tablets, etc.
- ▶ Compact corner kitchen with all necessary appliances (dishwasher, microwave, induction cook top and high quality oven). A full complement of cookware and dinnerware so you can practise your Provençal cookery and eat in grand style!
- ▶ Flash this QR code for a video tour of the apartment.



**Parking**

- ▶ A private lock up garage is provided nearby. This is included in the price.

*La Résidence suits a couple*



Provence Apartment, La Résidence



## OUR FLAGSHIP PROPERTY IN PROVENCE: L'OLIVIER

You couldn't really say that this beautiful traditional house was a "cottage" but neither is it a "villa", really. Some say it is like a small château.

But it is really better described as a large and very old village townhouse.

Actually words fail, as it is quite unique with its unusual layout and character. Large rooms, a very beautiful garden, not one but TWO wine caves - the lower of which even has the vestiges of an old Roman road! (so the town architect has confirmed) - these are just some of the aspects that give this striking edifice its special charm and 'cachet', as the French would say.

Only a very short distance from central market square and belonging to the one of the oldest quarters, L'Olivier's 'modern' history dates back to the 17th century when it was employed in the lucrative silk worm trade, a trade which made the local region a very wealthy place some centuries back.

It abounds in original features, which we have striven to preserve, but one such embellishment was something we ourselves added to the back garden: a 300-year-old Olive tree. This talismanic tree seems to possess a soul as you sit and observe it under the dappled Provençal sunlight, the little ants running up and down its gnarled and noble trunk on their way to ... who knows where?

The house has all modern comforts including central heating and air-conditioning.



## Provence Villa: "L'Olivier", Uzès

1,780,000 euros including separate private lock-up garage

### Layout

#### First Level

- ▶ Large dining room and sitting room with grand open fireplace and view over the garden, the old Cinema and the market garden fields in the distance. **This room has air-conditioning.**
- ▶ Study and library which also serves as a sort of ante room to the bathroom and toilet on the living room level.
- ▶ Fully equipped kitchen with **AGA style** gas cook top and DOUBLE electric oven, microwave, dishwasher, fridge and freezer, etc.
- ▶ This kitchen, leads onto a little terrace with commanding views (ideal for sipping an evening rosé I have found!) and then down a short flight of outdoor steps to a walled garden.
- ▶ A full complement of cookware and dinnerware so you can practise your Provençal cookery and eat at home in grand style!
- ▶ Free broadband internet, USB charging points for phones and tablets, etc.
- ▶ SMART TV with Netflix and French TV available as well as Satellite TV with a large range of English stations (not just news channels).
- ▶ Radio.
- ▶ Telephone with free, unlimited use to fixed phones anywhere in the world and to French mobiles as well.

A set of stairs from the kitchen leads down to the ground floor and the oldest part of the house...



L'Olivier, Second Level



L'Olivier, First Level



L'Olivier, Ground Floor

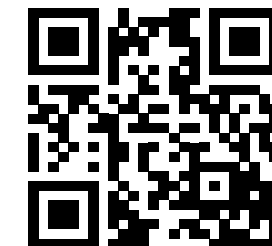
L'Olivier suits from 2 to 12 guests

#### Ground Floor Level

- ▶ A small den area where you can set up your laptop or read a book on the spacious round table.
- ▶ Large, vaulted space which serves as a rumpus room for kids, occasional fourth bedroom with King bed, en-suite shower room and toilet. Two divans that can convert to two double beds. The King bed can also be split into two King Singles.
- ▶ Laundry area with THREE WASHING machines and THREE DRYERS. All necessary detergents are provided by us!
- ▶ Stairs leading down to the two traditional, vaulted wine cellars ('caves').
- ▶ View of Roman vestiges in second cellar.

#### Second Level

- ▶ Three King-sized bedrooms, two with en-suite bathrooms. The occupants of the third bedroom may use the nearby first level bathroom.
- ▶ Air-conditioning (reverse cycle) in all three bedrooms. There is also air-conditioning in the sitting room for the lower levels.
- ▶ Storage robes in all bedrooms for your clothes and belongings.
- ▶ Beds are luxuriously comfortable and large.
- ▶ High quality bed-linen is used and posture-pedic mattresses also; you need never worry about the quality of our beds!
- ▶ Flash this QR code for a video tour of the house.

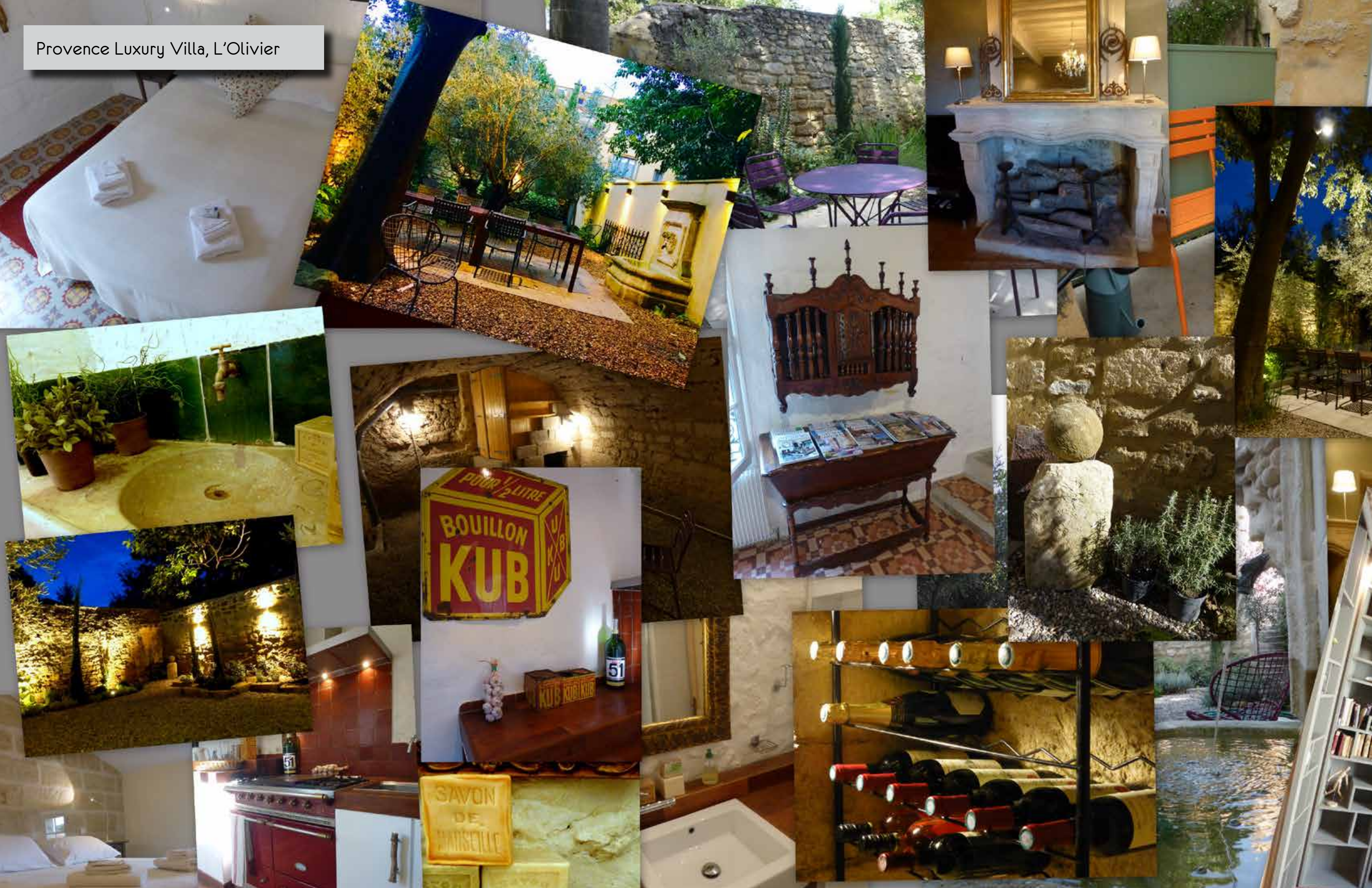


#### Parking

- ▶ A private lock up garage is provided nearby. This is included in the price.



Provence Luxury Villa, L'Olivier



## Walled Garden: L'Olivier

There's something magical about this tranquil garden. The ancient walls surrounding it provide privacy but still allow sweeping views of the azure skies of Provence, skies full of bird life and the sounds of distant bells.

Screened from the hot sun in Summer by the old Alder or 'Micocoulier' trees, you can sit at the table on the terrace near the old Olive tree and read, sip a local wine, dine, talk or just get lost in reverie .

There is a little "mazet" (cabana) with a divan to shelter from the heat - or rain - and various seats scattered about giving many opportunities for a variety of viewpoint.

At night, the whole garden can be lit providing a most beautiful atmosphere, conducive to enjoying the balmy evenings in the warmer months. Even on extremely hot days, the cool evening breezes descending from the nearby Cévenne mountains make the temperature outdoors very comfortable.

The mazet is equipped with an electric Weber barbecue so you can prepare delicious grills for en-plein-air dining without having to return to the main house.

There is also a herb garden where you can pick fresh 'herbs de Provence' to garnish your latest gastronomic miracle.



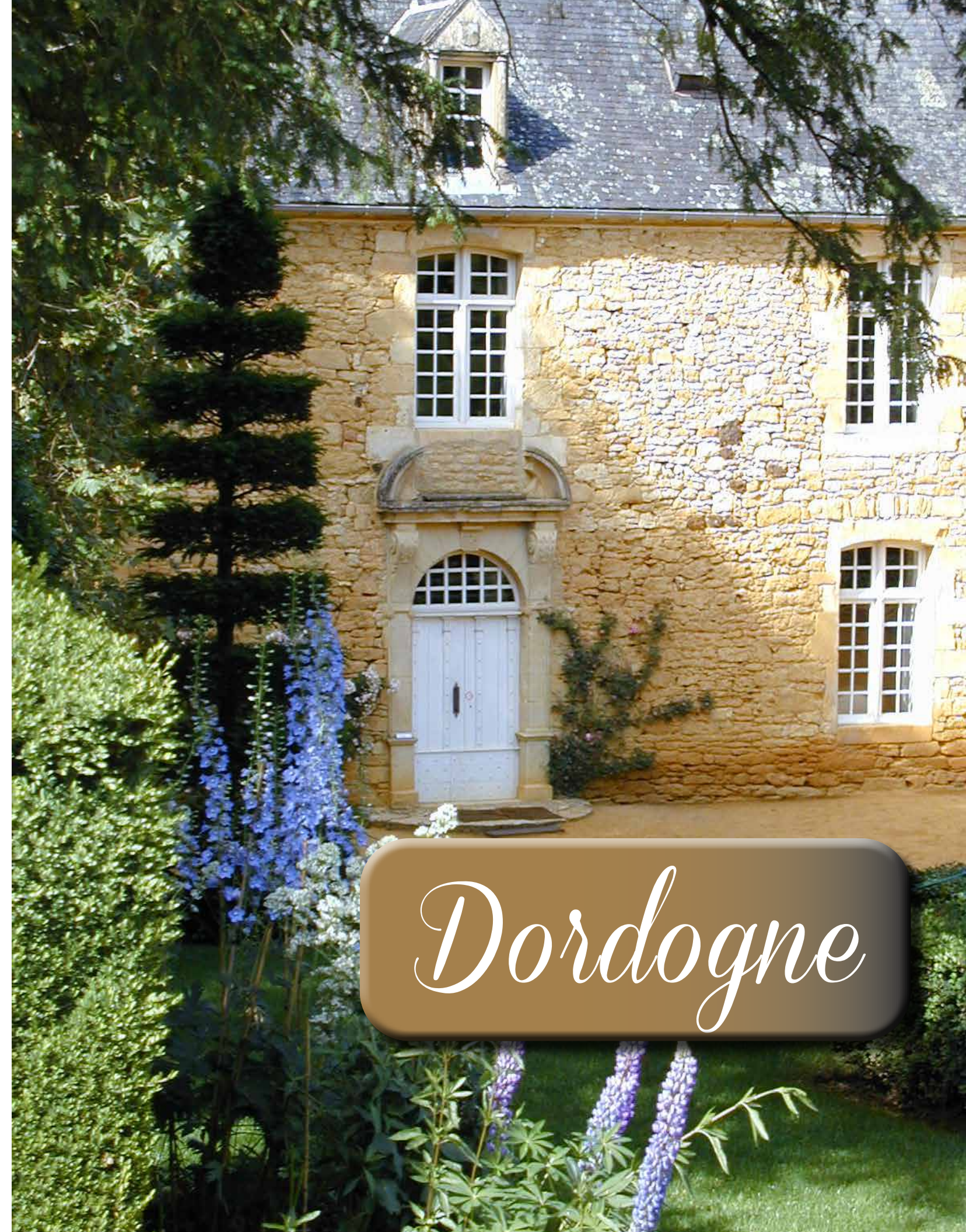
Walled Garden at L'Olivier villa

# *The PONT DU GARD*

*Built by the Romans over 2000 years ago, this amazing feat of engineering still stands intact today and is just 15 minutes' drive from the two Provence properties discussed above.*

*This astounding example of Roman engineering spans the Gardon River at a point where a little river beach offers you the opportunity to picnic or swim under the vestiges of Antiquity - a truly unique experience!*





*Dordogne*

*The Impressive Château de Biron, the largest in the Dordogne, is just a five-minute drive from our village.*



## ***Your home base in the Dordogne, Monpazier***

***Founded in 1284, our hub village is regarded as the model of all the so called "Bastide Villages" because of its perfect layout and the quality of its buildings. Perched on the summit of a gentle hill, it's an ideal base to explore the rich variety of attractions of the Périgord.***



## DORDOGNE, MONPAZIER

### Your home base in Dordogne

Founded in 1284, our hub village is regarded as the model of all the so called Bastide villages because of its perfect layout, and the quality of its buildings. Perched on the summit of a gentle hill, it's an ideal base to explore the rich variety of attractions of the Périgord.



### Climate

Summers in Dordogne are sunny, and can actually be hot (24°-27°) at any time from June to the end of September. This is a beautiful season, and a good time to visit. In some summers, hot weather is interrupted by violent storms, but others have no storms at all. It is possible to eat outside all summer, but evenings in early May and late September can be a little fresh. Summer often continues right through October, when the autumnal tints make walking and wandering a real pleasure. Autumn (October and November) has average temperatures of 16° to 23°, and spring (April and May) reaches 17° to 24°. Winter, usually mild but sometimes cold and dry, is the season when you can buy fresh truffles and other local specialities in the market. Visitors to the many caves in the Dordogne should think of suitable clothing; the weather can be 17 degrees cooler underground than on the surface!



*The perfect view of the Dordogne countryside from Hautfort Château, near Périgueux*

### Architecture

Visitors to the Dordogne, long regarded as one of France's most architecturally diverse regions, should look out for the very distinctive houses, often limestone with steeply pitched roofs, chartreuses (manor houses), quercy houses, dovecotes and dry-stone huts. Ecclesiastical and military buildings are striking too: churches, châteaux, and the remarkable bastides (fortified towns); our village was one of the first, and is now considered the best preserved of these, with more than 32 buildings classed as historical monuments. Its perfect rectangular town plan is built around the central market place, with galleries and houses constructed between the 13th and 17th centuries.

### Landscape and Scenery

The region of the Dordogne is also known as the Périgord. Périgord Blanc (white) is named from the frequent chalky outcrops of rock; Périgord Noir (black) after the dark foliage of oak trees; Périgord Vert (green) after its lush green forests; Périgord Pourpre (purple) after the deep purple of much of the wine produced there.

The area is characterised by river valleys and undulating hills, scenery on a peaceful, re-assuring human scale. Its most famous geological feature is undoubtedly its caves, many of them noted prehistoric sites. Primitive people used the caves for shelter and to create remarkable engravings and paintings, such as those at Lascaux (near Montignac), most of them about 40,000 years old. Other notable caves are at Rouffignac and Combarelles.



## Sports and Leisure Activities

Swimming, cycling, canoeing, fishing, horse riding, golf, walking and visiting local wineries and restaurants are just a few of the leisure activities available. For the more courageous, you can even take breathtaking flights over the tops of châteaux in a locally hired ultra-light plane.

There are numerous opportunities for swimming too: a lovely natural swimming lake with clear, fresh water just 15 mins walk (2 mins by car), a number of river beaches (safe for children) and of course the Dordogne river itself.

You can also hire push bikes locally to tour the surrounding villages. For those intrepid people (who aspire to follow in the footsteps of Jules Verne) you can also take a boat down the underground river in the Gouffre de Padirac.

## Savouring the Périgordian cuisine: restaurants.

Rich and filling cassoulets, duck confit and the most exquisite foie gras are to be found in abundance in the Dordogne. For this is the traditional home of producing every conceivable delight from the gaggles of geese and ducks running about the idyllic countryside. Foie gras is especially delicious when accompanied by a glass of the sweet Monbazillac or Cadillac dessert wine. Trout and truffles, omelettes aux Cèpes and many other heavenly delicacies are to be found in the numerous wayside restaurants - many unpretentious and charming, others expensive.

You'll find our house book bulging with a host of tantalising suggestions!



## Shopping and Markets

Being a living village, you have at your disposal a complete range of shops: alimentation (fruit, vegetables and groceries), butchers, charcuteries (delicatessens), fromageries (cheese), patisseries (pastries), boulangeries (bread), tabacs, newsagents, bookshops, cafés, bars, restaurants, pharmacies, ice-creameries, antiques shops, bicycle hire shops and much more are all within a two minute walk from your door. Every Thursday there is seafood and poultry market under the Medieval Marché aux Cèpes; and every October for three weeks the square is alive with shoppers haggling over this ugly but delicious fungus (Cèpe).

There are many other markets in the neighbourhood - see the current listing in our house book.

## Antiques and Collectables (brocante)

There are four or five shops selling brocante and antiques. The hours of these vary according to the season and the enthusiasm of the proprietors! There is also a rather good boutique of pottery and terra cotta that, though new, are made according to traditional designs. You'll have much fun seeking out treasures like these in the village and nearby.



**Dordogne Villa: "Le Séjour", Monpazier**  
**420,000 euros**

**About the cottage**

"Le Séjour", as the name suggests, is a very comfortable village house in which to spend time enjoying the unique atmosphere and history of the 13th Century village. Only a few steps from the central market place, Le Séjour is a traditional *maison de colombage* or *half-timbered* house.

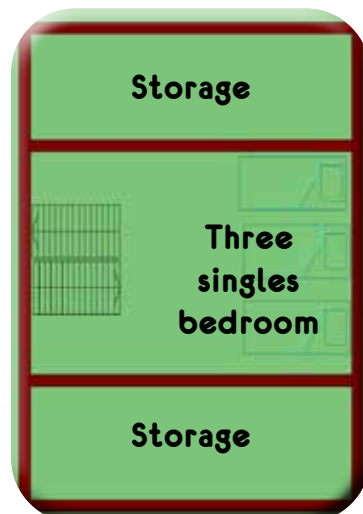
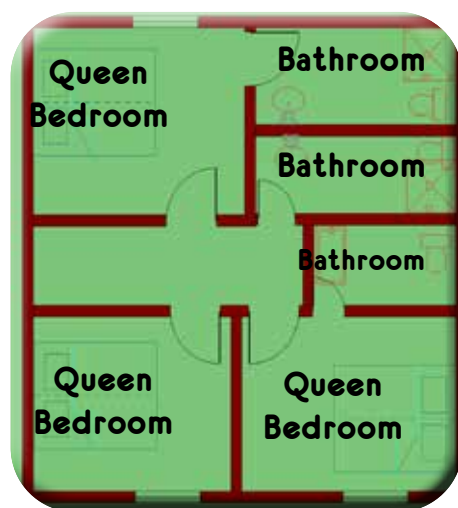
A thoughtful restoration has made this cottage spacious and suitable for larger groups, as well as couples, with several bathrooms and a large kitchen. There are 3 storeys, but all the living areas are on the ground level, including a conveniently located WC.

First floor, 3 bedrooms (2 air-conditioned) with Queen sized beds and 3 bathrooms, one with Spa bath. The grenier (attic) has 3 single beds. With its thick ancient stone walls, the house is cool in summer and the electric central heating makes it cosy and inviting in winter. Parking is available just outside.

**Layout**

**Ground floor**

- ▶ Large open space comprising a living room, dining area and kitchen at the rear.
- ▶ Semi-separate TV and music area.
- ▶ Terra cotta tiled floors with rugs and rendered white stone walls.



- ▶ The dining room has a long table seating 8 - 10 people and is looked over by a reproduction 18th century tapestry giving a baronial air to your banquet!
- ▶ Laundry with washing machine, dryer and toilet.
- ▶ The living room has a lounge, two sofas, a coffee table, Satellite TV connection, SMART TV with Netflix available, telephone and bookshelves with some books in English and French. Also games for children.
- ▶ Broadband internet. USB charging points for phones and tablets, etc.
- ▶ Telephone with free calls to most national and international fixed phones.

**First floor**

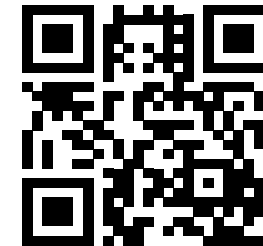
- ▶ Three double bedrooms, (with Queen size beds) two with ducted air-conditioning.
- ▶ Three bathrooms, (two en-suite to bedrooms). One bathroom has a spa bath and a decorative traditional stone sink as well as modern hand basin and toilet.
- ▶ Electric instantaneous hot water showers to accommodate the demand of even the largest groups staying.

**Top floor**

- ▶ Extra bedroom for children or single adults with three single beds
- ▶ Flash this QR code for a video tour of the house.

**Parking**

- ▶ Right outside the house!



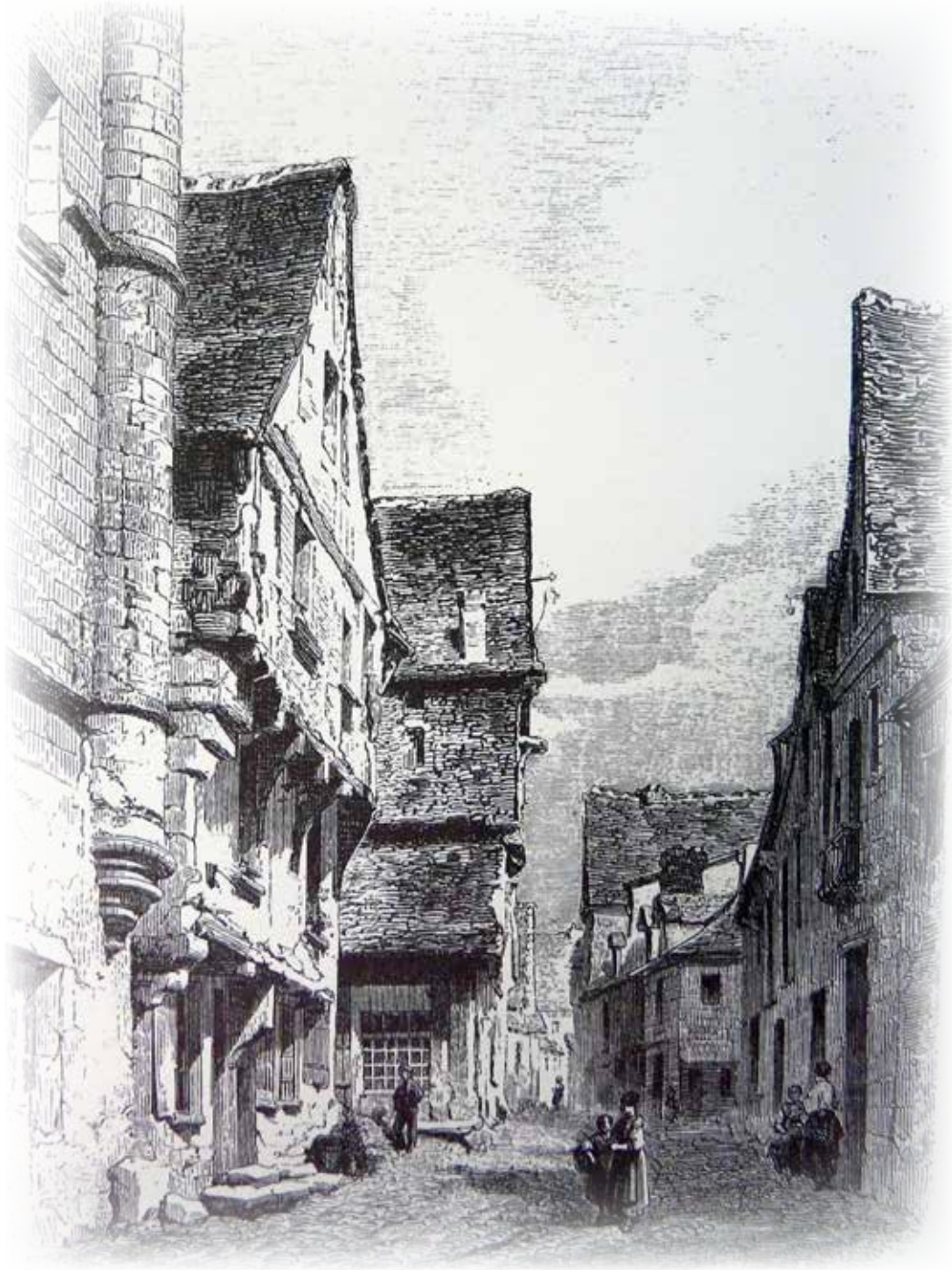
Dordogne Villa, Le Séjour



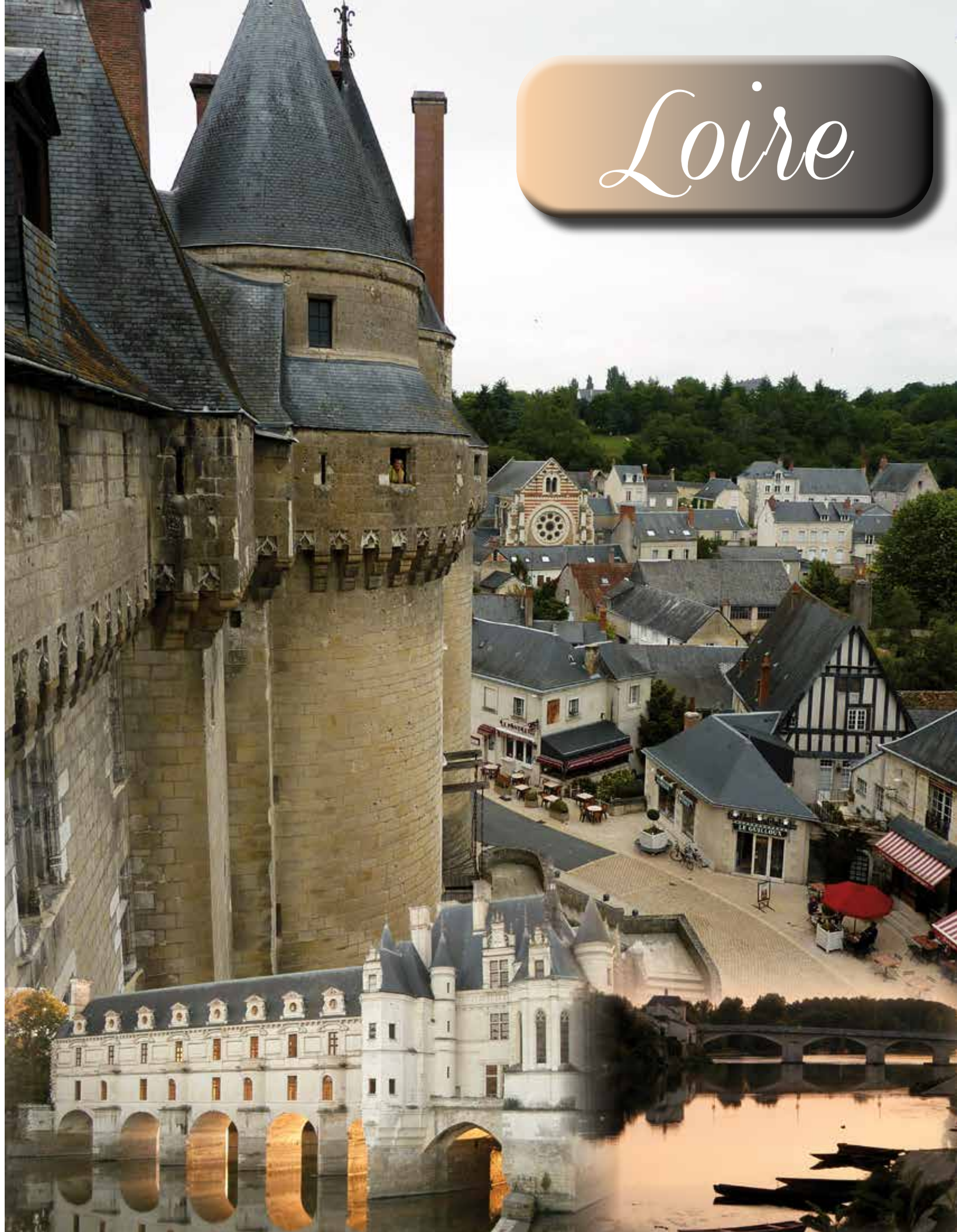
*The Romantically Beautiful Medieval  
Market Square in Monpazier,  
dating from 1284  
The villa is just off this square in a  
quiet and beautiful street.*




# Loire



*Rue Voltaire circa 1680*





***Your home base in the Loire  
Chinon  
Home of the Plantagenet Kings***  
***With origins going back to Roman times when it was a Castrum (Gallo-Roman fortress), our village became an English possession in the 11th century. It was the favoured home of Henri II Plantagenet, who became King of England in 1154, and it was he who commissioned the basis of the present day château. Thereafter followed a prosperous development; fine medieval houses with beautiful decorative features were built - many surviving today - particularly along the Rue Voltaire.***

## LOIRE VALLEY, CHINON

### Your home base in the Loire

*Petite ville, grand renom,  
Assise sur pierre ancienne,  
Au haut le bois, au pied de la Vienne*

*Little town of great renown,  
Perched on stone of long ago  
The wood above, the Vienne below.*

With origins going back to Roman times when it was a Castrum (Gallo-Roman fortress), our village became an English possession in the 11th century. It was the favoured home of Henri II Plantagenet, who became King of England in 1154, and it was he who commissioned the basis of the present day château. Thereafter followed a prosperous development; fine medieval houses with beautiful decorative features were built - many surviving today - particularly along the Rue Voltaire. With so many corners to explore, from the heights of the château, to the vineyards with little restaurants hidden away to the peaceful banks of the beautiful Vienne River, abundant with fish and wild birds, you'll be hard pressed to find the time to fit in the celebrated castles and other historic attractions all so temptingly close!



François Rabelais

### Climate

The Valley of the Loire is exceptional in Northern France for its soft and gentle climate - a garden where you will see palms and plants normally associated with warmer regions. Its unique geographical position allows the warm Atlantic breezes to penetrate and accounts for a relatively mild winter, long and peaceful autumns and warm summers.



### Architecture

The Loire is celebrated for its great châteaux, but there is also a large range and variety of other interesting buildings to see: mills, slate-roofed cottages, grand abbeys and monasteries, the peculiar troglodytic dwellings, frequently still occupied, and the characteristic half-timbered houses that defy gravity with their expanding upper storeys. The "Maison Rouge" is a very fine example of this genre.

The town has a wealth of historic buildings including the Hotel Gargantua with its magnificent tourelle (tower), the 15th Century Hotel du Grenier à Sel, just opposite our cottage La Touraine, and the Chapel of St Radegonde embellished by a beautiful 13th century Romanesque fresco. You'll discover new corners every time you go out for a stroll!

### Landscape and Scenery

Apart from the beauty of its buildings, from opulent to rustic, the Loire is a region of both natural and cultivated beauty. Picturesque streams, fields, forests, and formal gardens make up a varied landscape that has something to offer at every turn in the road. Armed with a picnic lunch ("pique-nique") and a bottle of the local red, you can lunch by the Vienne, the Loire or one of the many other charming locations after your visit to a stately home just around the corner.

## Sports and Leisure Activities

Swimming, cycling, canoeing down the Vienne, fishing, golf, walking and visiting local wineries and restaurants are among the many pleasures available. There are many riverboat and barge trips that operate along the Loire and its tributaries. For horse lovers and equestrians, a visit to the Château of Saumur is a must.



## Savouring the Touraine cuisine: restaurants

Exquisite river fish, hazel grouse in truffle sauce, rillettes, fine cheeses of an unimaginable variety accompanied by one or two of the many fine wines produced in Touraine - reds, whites or rosé - and topped off with a slice of Tarte Tatin swimming in crème fraîche is just one example of a truly kingly repast that, alas, won't be kind to your figure. But this is the region of a highly delicate and sophisticated cuisine: whether you cook at home or visit some of the many little local restaurants, you'll be pleased to take a holiday from your customary sensible diet.



The combination of climate and rich soil enables the production of some of France's best fruit and vegetables and it is here that the true champignons hail from, called erroneously, "Champignons de Paris"

Don't forget to order some "Paires tapées", delicious when marinated and a specialty of this region to top off your Pantagrueian debauch.

You'll make Rabelais dance on his grave!



## Shopping and Markets

You have available a complete range of local shops of every description: alimentation (fruit, vegetables and groceries), butchers, charcuteries (delicatessens), fromageries (cheese), patisseries (pastries), boulangeries (bread), chocolateries, tabacs, newsagents, bookshops, cafés, bars, restaurants, pharmacies, ice-creameries, antiques shops, bicycle hire shops and much more are all within three-minute walk from your door. On Saturday, Sunday and Thursday there is a small local market in the square. For entertainment in the evening visit the many jazz clubs, pizzerias (French Style) or quaint bars like the Café Français shown opposite. Or, if your French is good, you can visit the local cinema.

## Antiques and Collectables (brocante)

There is also a good selection of shops selling antiques, both old and reproduction. The best places may be found on its outskirts.

Keep an eye out for the BROCANTE signs where you'll find fine furniture, paintings, sculptures and decoration items for your garden such as stone statues and wrought iron gates. Your only problem here will be getting them home on the plane...



**Loire Valley Cottage: "La Touraine", Chinon**  
**288,000 euros**

**About the cottage**

The beauty and fame of this little town has been praised by many French poets, the most famous being François Rabelais, who thought that there could be nothing better than to eat, drink and be merry in his blessed birthplace. As you wander through the medieval quarter where many important events in French history have taken place, you will discover many quiet corners; and tucked away in one of these our cottage "La Touraine" may be found. This attractive stone house with its little courtyard garden, grape vine and mansard roof makes a very comfortable and centrally located base for your explorations of the town and surrounding countryside. It is centrally heated and has ducted air-conditioning in the bedroom.

On-site parking, grand master bedroom with a stone fireplace and royal atmosphere are just some of the appealing features of the cottage. The cottage is ideal for a couple, but can accommodate an extra visitor, or up to two young children with the visitors' beds supplied.

**Layout**

**Street Level**

- ▶ Double entrance gate opens onto a small, private courtyard. Under cover lock up parking and laundry under the house with washing machine and dryer. *A small set of stairs leads to...*



**Ground floor**

- ▶ Table for 4, sitting room framed by double French windows opening onto a small Juliet-style balcony overlooking garden and street.
- ▶ Sitting room has Television (satellite) and music system, radio and books.
- ▶ Telephone. Free for calls to most fixed phones.
- ▶ Broadband internet. USB charging points for phones and tablets, etc.
- ▶ Ground floor toilet and hand basin.
- ▶ Well-equipped modern kitchen with oven, cook top, microwave, refrigerator, dishwasher and all necessary utensils and kitchenware.
- ▶ One of the two sofas converts to a comfortable double bed.



*La Touraine, Ground Floor*

**First floor**

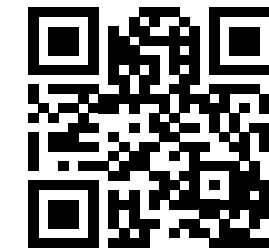
- ▶ Spacious Grand Master Bedroom with rugs, four-poster-style Queen sized bed, château quality wall hangings. **Ducted Air Conditioning.**
- ▶ Very comfortable sitting area with armchairs and open stone fireplace.
- ▶ En-suite bathroom with separate shower enclosure, washbasin & WC.



*La Touraine, First Floor*

**Parking**

- ▶ On-site, right underneath the house.
- ▶ Flash this QR code for a video tour of the house



*La Touraine suits from 2 to 4 guests*



*Master Bedroom in La Touraine Cottage*



Loire Valley Cottage, La Touraine



## LOIRE VALLEY LUXURY VILLA: La Mirabeau

As you continue to wander through the medieval precincts you will discover a lovely little square called "la Place Mirabeau" which is the focus of a little quarter that seems to be a separate village within the town; just nearby our 18th century villa "La Mirabeau" may be found.

This large and handsome stone house with its 11th century courtyard garden, Virginia creeper and mansard roof makes a very comfortable and centrally located base for your explorations of the town and surrounding countryside. It is the companion piece of our other cottage "La Touraine" but is larger, having four large bedrooms and three bathrooms as well as a beautiful little garden courtyard, just off the kitchen.

Parking nearby, grand master bedroom with en-suite, a stone fireplace and three other large bedrooms with facilities near at hand are just some of the appealing features of the house.

As some guests observed, "you have tastefully restored the house to five-star quality with sensitivity to its traditional features - we feel like we are living in the pages of a magazine!"

You will think so too.

The villa is ideal for larger groups or families, but also suits couples who love space.

The house is centrally heated throughout with hydronic gas heating and a beautiful gas ceramic stove on the ground floor. The bedrooms are air-conditioned.



## Loire Valley Villa: "La Mirabeau", Chinon

680,000 euros

### Layout

#### Ground Floor

- ▶ Entrance vestibule with fireplace and room to deposit suitcases, clothes etc.
- ▶ Dining table for 6 to 8.
- ▶ Large sitting room just off kitchen with gas operated fire, two sofas, armchairs, television (satellite) and music system with CD, radio and books.
- ▶ Telephone (unrestricted to most fixed lines in the world)
- ▶ WI-FI internet.
- ▶ USB charging points for phones and tablets, etc.
- ▶ Ground floor toilet.
- ▶ Well-equipped luxury kitchen with large gas cook top and oven, microwave, refrigerator, dishwasher and all necessary kitchenware.
- ▶ Kitchen leads outside into walled courtyard which is sunny, private and protected.
- ▶ Laundry with two washing machines and two dryers.

#### First Floor

- ▶ Spacious Grand Master Bedroom with rugs, King sized bed, lovely stone walls and view of the very quiet street. Double glazed windows.
- ▶ Very comfortable sitting area with armchairs and open stone fireplace.



- ▶ En-suite marble bathroom with shower and bathtub, washbasin & WC.
- ▶ Second King sized bedroom with adjacent second bathroom and WC. This bedroom has a view over the rear garden.
- ▶ The second bathroom is accessible from the staircase for general use.
- ▶ Both bedrooms can be configured with two King Single beds each.

#### Second Floor

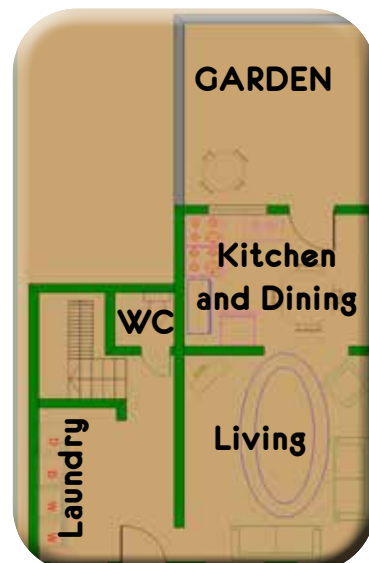
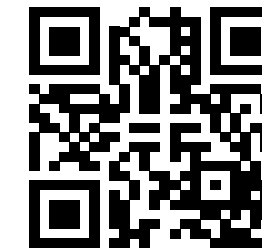
- ▶ King bedroom with rugs and view of the garden courtyard. Extra single bed. Can be configured as three single beds. Half-timbered ceilings.
- ▶ King Bedroom with King bed and additional Queen sofa bed. Can be configured as two twin Singles and Queen sofa bed or just left as small suite with bed(s) and comfortable sofa.
- ▶ Bathroom is accessible from both bedrooms on this floor.
- ▶ Up to two cots can be supplied for multiple families or families with twins!

#### Garden Terrace with BBQ

- ▶ This is just off the kitchen. See details on the next page.

#### Parking

- ▶ There is a space in front of the house for dropping off your things. Street parking is available nearby or in the public free carpark just around the corner near the river.
- ▶ Flash this QR code for a video tour of the house.



La Mirabeau, Ground Floor

La Mirabeau suits from 2 to 11 guests



La Mirabeau, First Floor



La Mirabeau, Top Floor



Loire Valley Luxury Villa, La Mirabeau



### *Convivial Outdoor Space*

Rabelais would have something witty to say about this little 11th-century courtyard, just perfect for indulging in a lunch of the local cheeses, a selection of patés from the shop down on the corner and some deliciously light pastries from the local patisserie just around the corner. Or, more seriously, a bottle of the renowned local red with a more substantial evening repast prepared in your own kitchen just two steps away or on our barbeque.

The high walls enclosing this delightful little spot keep out the direct sun of Summer but still allow the garden to flourish - roses, the wonderfully green and cool creeper, our lovely hydrangea pictured here and various smaller shrubs all seem to thrive in this peaceful little enclave.

The outdoor table and chair set is perfect for four to six and is a nice place to set yourself up to read a book or just relax and think about the things you've visited during the busy day.



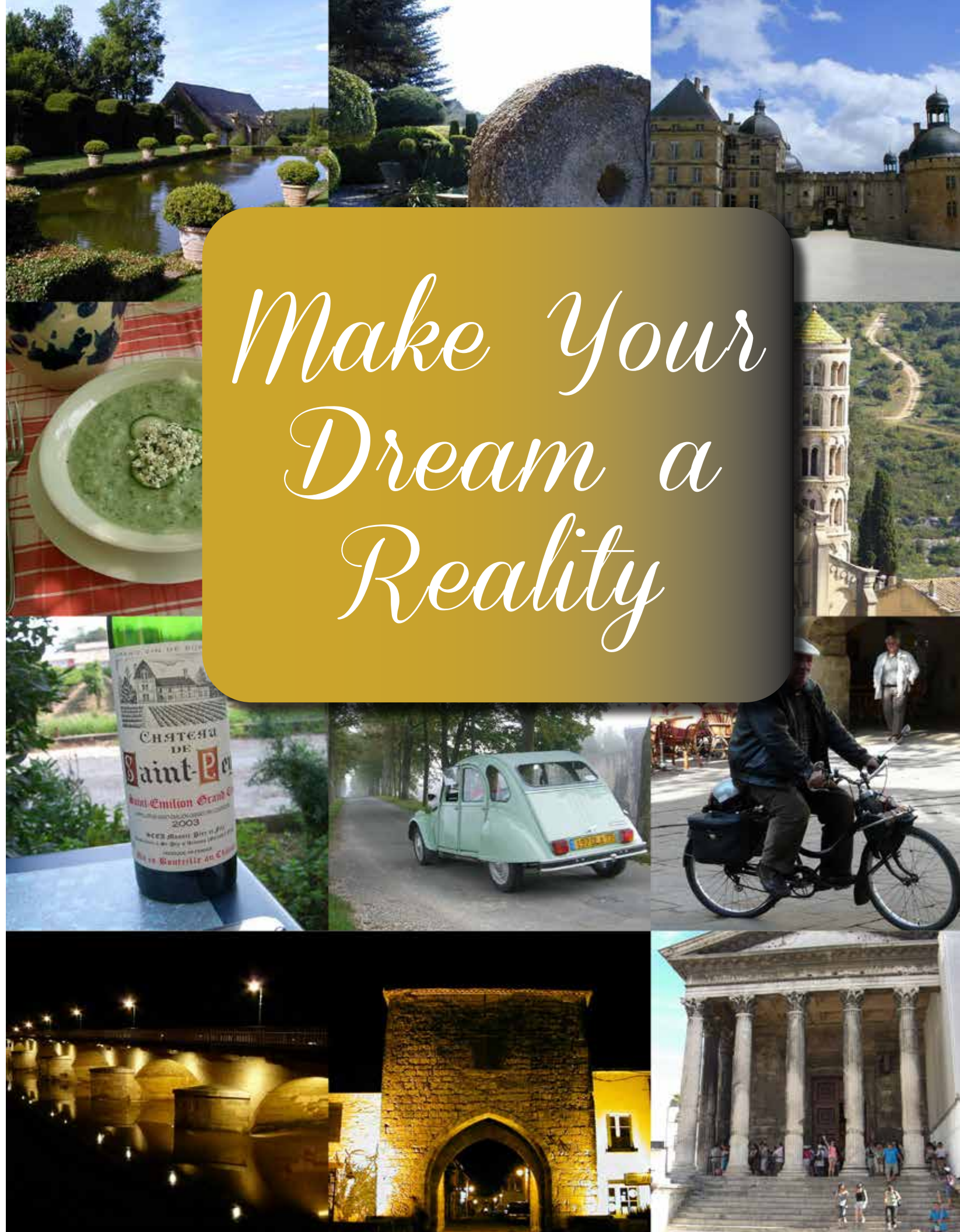
High walled garden at our Villa, La Mirabeau

A traditional flat-bottomed boat (Gabare) is silhouetted against the golden light of a sunset on the Vienne River. The boat has a prominent mast and a canopy. The water is calm, reflecting the warm colors of the sky. The background shows a forested hillside under the soft glow of the setting sun.

### *Traditional Flat-Bottomed Boats on the Vienne River*

Known as Gabares, these traditional wooden barges were the only practical method available before the invention of the steamboat and the development of the railways in the 19th century for transporting goods from the colonies via the seaport of Nantes (downstream) or from Lyons (upstream) to the villages and towns in the Loire Valley.

They are flat-bottomed because the Loire, the Vienne and their tributaries are often quite shallow in parts with unexpected hidden sandbanks and shoals making navigation a hazardous affair.



*Make Your  
Dream a  
Reality*

# Buying French Property

*Buying Property in France can be very simple.  
Here are the steps we recommend to make the process easy.*

- 🐾 Select the property you wish to purchase, having viewed it in person or by proxy and having asked all the usual important questions. We can advise you here.
- 🐾 Go to the local Notaire with us and sign the 'Compromis de Vente' or pre-sale contract. At this meeting you can also sign a document called a 'procuration' which is simply a Power of Attorney authorising the Notaire's clerk to sign the final 'Acte de Vente' (Formal Settlement) document for you so you don't have to come back again to do this yourself. It is also possible to do all these steps remotely using the internet if you wish.
- 🐾 Pay the deposit (usually 10%). This is held in trust by the Notaire.
- 🐾 Wait the necessary two to three months while the Notaire follows up all the required formal procedures including the inspection of the house, technical check, and certification of its being fit for sale.
- 🐾 The Sale Document is signed (for you by the Notaire's clerk if you have given them Power of Attorney), the balance is paid (90% normally) and you become the new owner.
- 🐾 Four to six months later you will receive the formal title by registered post, or you can collect it in person.

*It is a straightforward and safe process*

Being handled entirely by a Notaire, an official licensed by the French Government, there is no possibility of anything untoward occurring. Conveyancing is centrally controlled in France; it is not handled by private lawyers as it is in many countries

## Why Buy with us?

*We provide an easy path to successful ownership in France.*

When you buy with us, you also acquire a trouble-free and successful self-catering vacation property with a long history of solid rentals and with future bookings already in place.

Many seek to buy in France and eventually find something they consider suitable, but alas this is only the beginning of the story. We've all heard of Peter Male's "A Year in Provence". In this celebrated book, we see how the acquisition can be easy but is often just the beginning of a series of many tricky and even farcical situations which are not as amusing to the owners as they are to the reading public. For example, there is usually the need for the property to be restored, which is far more challenging than finding and buying the house. It is not as much fun to do as to watch on TV!

Renovating is especially difficult if you don't have unlimited time to travel to France to oversee the work and correct mistakes as they happen...if you can correct them even then! And now they are ferocious about over-staying your VISA, it is even harder than before.

Then there are the all-important fine details that can make the difference between a happy or an unhappy ownership experience. Let's call them bugs (not the type that crawl). Nobody will warn you about these bugs except us. We learned about them from our 25 years of experience of renovating and holiday letting. You will benefit from our knowledge in ways you might never appreciate; but then that is just the point: that you won't have to go through what we went through to discover these annoying little things!

Even if you manage to negotiate these hurdles, you will next need to find a manager who will keep an eye on your property, a reliable and trustworthy cleaner to clean it, and finally a successful management agency who will attract rentals for you should you wish to do this. This is also harder than it used to be.

When you buy with us, all the following the knotty problems are solved with incredible simplicity! In brief they are:

### *Finding a suitable house*

**Done!** Our houses are already more than suitable; they are fantastic, in both location and quality.

### *Restoration, Furnishing and Equipping.*

The houses are **already beautifully renovated**, equipped and furnished and are 'up and running'.

No "A Year In Provence" nightmares to deal with. We have attended to the bugs (not insects!) referred to above. Prices include all furnishings, appliances and contents, excepting a small number of personal decorative items.

### *Ongoing management*

Our houses already have bilingual local managers (French/English) as well as reliable, loyal cleaning staff.

### *Rentals*

Through our long-established associated booking agency, we attract vacation rentals and keep your house running smoothly and successfully. You won't need to search for ways to let it out yourself and you won't have to deal with your holiday guests. Unless you prefer to do so! (not as easy as it sounds)

# Terms and Conditions

## *Ownership*

You will become the 100% new owner of the house. As such you will then become responsible for all necessary upkeep and repair, though this should not be very much since we have sorted all these problems out already. There would be a certain amount of wear and tear occasioned by any property used for holiday letting, though again our experience is that this is quite minimal. Our guests are well-behaved! You will also be responsible for all the usual expenses of running the house including gas, electricity, water, insurance, council rates, cleaning and management, etc. We can provide estimates of these. Under normal circumstances your rentals would easily cover all these outgoings leaving a good profit. Prices include all furnishings, appliances and contents excepting a small number of personal decorative items.

## *Rental Contract*

**WE ARE SEEKING BUYERS WHO WILL ALLOW US TO CONTINUE TO PROMOTE AND RENT THE PROPERTY EXCLUSIVELY FOR A PERIOD OF AT LEAST THREE YEARS ON THE NEW OWNER'S BEHALF. FOR THIS SERVICE WE TAKE A COMMISSION.**

So no independent advertising on the booking platforms during the contract period.

## *Private Use*

While a rental contract applies, owners may use their houses for their own private stays (or those of friends and family) only. If owners wish to advertise and attract their own rental clients independently, they may do so once the rental contract period is over or terminated early by mutual consent. For more details about this, contact us.

## *Inspection during a contract period*

During the contract period we maintain the right to inspect the property each year with the option to stay in it for up to one week to discover any defects that cannot be discovered by any cursory inspection. We would always choose this period so it would not conflict with potential or existing bookings. The purpose of these inspection stays is to maintain the high standard our guests have come to expect. As part of this arrangement we would provide you with a report and even help to organise repairs if you wished us to.

## *Renovations and refurbishment during the rental contract period.*

These should not be necessary but if you wished to do this then the following needs to be considered. The owner must seek our advice about such works, particularly regarding any potential conflicts with existing bookings which must be honoured. Any alterations to the property or changes to the equipment or furnishings therein should not cause any reduction to the quality or amenity from the point of view of rentals.

# STAY AND SEE

Why not sample the property yourself?

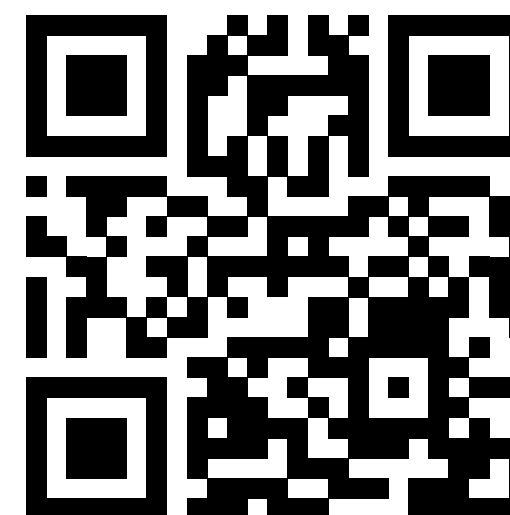
**The very best way to see if a house is for you is to live in it!**

It is also important to **stay in the village for at least one week** so that you can get to know the place and the people.

You will find all our locals are very friendly, unlike other towns which have become too touristy, and you will quickly make friends with the proprietors of the cafes and bars, not to mention your neighbours.

Discover our special offer whereby you could stay for free!

Contact us at [frenchcottages.com](http://frenchcottages.com) for details by scanning the QR code below.



## Travellers' Survival French Word List

Here is a basic set of useful words and phrases.

Yes	Oui
No	Non
Hullo (during the day)	Bonjour
Good evening (at night)	Bonsoir
Hullo (answering phone)	Allo
Please	S'il vous plaît
Thank you,	Merci
Where are the toilets?	Où sont les toilettes?
How much?	C'est combien?
Do you speak English?	Parlez-vous anglais?
I don't speak French	Je ne parle pas français.
I am Australian	Je suis Australien(ne)
A white wine please	Un vin blanc SVP
A red wine please	Un vin rouge SVP
Where is the Office of Tourism please?	Où est l'office du tourisme SVP?
Unleaded petrol	(Essence) sans plomb (SP)
Diesel fuel	Gazole
Excuse me	Pardon
It is good	C'est bon
Good	Bon(ne)
One	Un
Two	Deux
Three	Trois
Four	Quatre
Five	Cinq
Six	Six
Seven	Sept
Eight	Huit
Nine	Neuf
Ten	Dix
Twenty	Vingt
Thirty	Trente
Forty	Quarante

Fifty	Cinquante
Sixty	Soixante
Seventy	Soixante-dix
Eighty	Quatre Vingts
Ninety	Quatre Vingt Dix
Six euros	Six euros
Eight euros	Huit euros
Ten euros	Dix euros
One hundred	Cent
One thousand	Mille
How are you? (a familiar way of talking)	Ça va?
How are you? (polite and formal)	Comment allez-vous?
I'm fine. (in answer to "Ça va?")	Ça va.
I am well, fine, etc. (polite)	Très bien, merci.
A coffee please	Un café, s'il vous plaît.
That one please (when pointing)	Ça, s'il vous plaît
Where is.....?	Où est....?
I am lost	Je suis perdu.
I don't know	Je ne sais pas
I would like a mineral water please	Je voudrais de l'eau minérale SVP
I'd like a beer please (from the tap)	Je voudrais une bière SVP (pression)
Where is the railway station please?	Où est la gare SVP?
I am looking for...	Je cherche.
(I am) sorry	(Je suis) désolé.
Is there someone who speaks English here?	Il y a quelqu'un qui parle anglais ici?
Bad	Mauvais(e)
Terrible	Terrible



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