

# Sarthe Tourisme.

PRESS  
KIT  
2025

 English



Sillé-le-Guillaume © P. Beltrami

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

**Sarthe**  
Tourisme



# La Sarthe.

La Sarthe is synonymous with heritage and nature. The department is blessed with surprising landscapes, and offers an array of unusual activities and rewarding experiences for you to enjoy. Browse our press pack for a wealth of ideas for your features – we hope they'll inspire you to pay us a visit! Here at Sarthe Tourisme, we'd be delighted to meet you!



Have an idea for a feature but need more information?

Contact our press officer: **Maxime Guillon** – +33 (0)6 99 91 83 58 – [m.guillon@sarthe-tourisme.com](mailto:m.guillon@sarthe-tourisme.com)

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# What's new in La Sarthe?

in  
2025

## NEW LODGES FOR NEW EXPERIENCES AT LA FLÈCHE ZOO

### 8 NEW LODGES LOOKING OUT AT THE GIRAFFES

From summer 2025, the Safari Lodge will be offering 8 new lodges looking out over the famous giraffes, zebras, ostriches and antelopes. La Flèche Zoo again promises a memorable night's stay in a spectacular setting, designed and created to celebrate these amazing grazers



### THE EMBLEMATIC HYENA COMES TO LA FLÈCHE ZOO

After the new areas for lions, cheetahs and the African plain where the giraffes live, La Flèche Zoo will be welcoming a new African emblem in 2025: the spotted hyena. Native of sub-Saharan Africa, this is the largest of the hyenas and easily recognised by its short, round ears.

[www.zoo-la-fleche.com](http://www.zoo-la-fleche.com)

## THE RICH WINE-GROWING HERITAGE OF THE LOIR VALLEY REVEALED

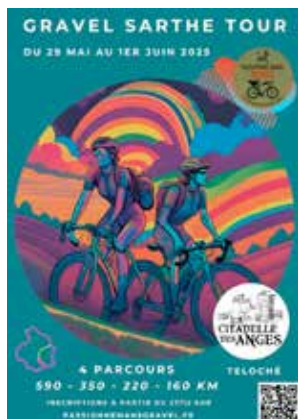


La Chartre-sur-le-Loir is home to a visitor centre devoted to the Jasnières and Coteaux-du-Loir AOC wines. In this elegantly designed venue, complete with a comprehensive wine repository, visitors will gain a real insight into La Sarthe's winemaking culture through the introductory sessions on oenology, plus tastings and

guided visits. Adjacent to the tourist office, the centre offers a unique experience, including a visit of the tufa stone cellar and wine-related walking tours. Wine-lovers will be won over... and will no doubt take home a bottle or two! A must for anyone keen to find out more about winemaking in La Sarthe.

[www.vallee-du-loir.com/a-voir-a-faire-2/la-maison-du-tourisme-et-du-vignoble/](http://www.vallee-du-loir.com/a-voir-a-faire-2/la-maison-du-tourisme-et-du-vignoble/)

## GRAVEL SARTHE TOUR: THE ULTIMATE CYCLING ADVENTURE



The Gravel Sarthe Tour is a brand-new cycling adventure, free from time trials and rankings, set to take place in La Sarthe from 29 May to 1 June 2025. On each stage, you'll set your own pace and choose your accommodation. Will it be a bivouac, campsite or hotel? Take your pick! Along the way, there'll be check-points to register in your

"Adventure logbook", plus refreshments. Choose from four routes, adapted to all levels: 590, 350, 240 or 160 km. Spend a weekend exploring La Sarthe on two wheels and discover its hidden treasures.

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

## THE CALL OF THE FAR NORTH

This year, Sled Dog Ride will open a one-of-a-kind destination on the edge of a forest, where visitors will have the chance to discover the realm of sled dogs. Marion, a specialist in animal mediation,



will lead you through the world of huskies, and Benjamin, an enthusiastic musher, will take you on an exciting cani-rando or cani-kart outing, where you'll experience the thrill of speed and the joy of companionship with the dogs. From 2026, the more adventurous among will be able to prolong the experience and spend a night in an Inuit tent with log burner and wooden decking. A remarkable opportunity, to enjoy with the family!

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

## A STAY IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF LEONARDO DICAPRIO



The Château de Fontenay-sur-Vègre, a medieval gem dating back to the 13th century, will transport you through 800 years of history. It served as the setting for *The Man in the Iron Mask* with Leonardo DiCaprio and enchants visitors with its hexagonal tower, its dovecote with 600 pigeon-holes, its vaulted cellar – the largest in La Sarthe – and the River Vègre, which flows close by. The site can sleep 51 people (15 in the château and 36 in the gîte), and offers sports facilities and bespoke services, making it the ideal venue for family gatherings.

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

## PATRICK CHOLET, SUPPLIER OF HONEY TO MICHELIN-STARRED CHEFS



Patrick embarked on a career in beekeeping in 2015, when he founded Les Cadres Noirs Percherons. He's a master beekeeper, producing outstanding honeys that are acclaimed by Michelin-starred chefs such as Alain Passard and Pascal Barbot. His secret? A cold extraction process that preserves all the honey's natural properties. He offers 11 exceptional honeys, including creamed apple blossom, onion blossom with notes of candied onion, and an intense, woody carrot honey. Winner of the prestigious 2024 Relais Deserts Prix d'Excellence for outstanding craftsmanship, he also produces mead and honey vinegar, ideal for elevating culinary creations. During guided visits of his honey production facility at Bonnétable, Patrick raises awareness on biodiversity. A rare chance to meet a true artisan with unique talent and skills. [www.les-cadres-noirs-percherons.fr](http://www.les-cadres-noirs-percherons.fr)



# Living heritage





## THE CITÉ PLANTAGENËT, A REAL-LIFE MOVIE BACKDROP!

### Did you know that Le Mans is one of the best-preserved historical cities in France?

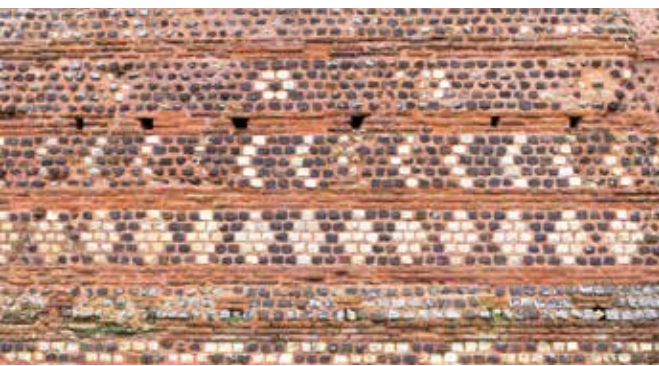
It boasts a rich history and unique architectural heritage and is much sought-after by film-makers from around the world. The Cité Plantagenêt, the historical heart of Le Mans, astounds visitors with the architectural unity found in an area of almost 20 hectares where every street and every facade tell a story. With its well-preserved buildings, mainly built over the 15th and 16th centuries, it offers film crews a real journey back in time. Actor Pierre Arditi sums it up perfectly: "When you make a film in Le Mans, you get the distinct feeling that the entire community falls into synch with the crews who come to capture a story in their hometown."

And these are not just empty words: some of the world's biggest film-makers endorse this view, selecting Le Mans as the backdrop for their films. Major films such as *Cyrano de Bergerac* starring Gérard Depardieu and Philippe de Broca's *On Guard* have been made here. Even Hollywood has succumbed to the city's charm! In 1999, *The Man in the Iron Mask* starring Leonardo di Caprio, and in 2019, *Ford vs. Ferrari* starring Matt Damon and Christian Bale, were filmed in the old town.



Le Mans is a vibrant movie backdrop, fascinating both film-makers and their viewers, a city where the pristine beauty of the past meets the allure of the silver screen. It's hardly surprising that so many cameras are drawn to this location!

[www.sarhetourisme.com/decouvrir/patrimoine-culturel/le-mans-la-cite-plantagenet/](http://www.sarhetourisme.com/decouvrir/patrimoine-culturel/le-mans-la-cite-plantagenet/)



### AN OUTSTANDING GALLO-ROMAN WALL

Built between the third and fourth centuries, this wall surrounded the ancient city of Vindinum, capital of the Aulerici Cenomani Gallic tribe. Along with the walls of Rome and Constantinople (Istanbul), it is one of the best preserved in the ancient Roman Empire. There are 500 metres of the polychrome walls still standing. They feature geometric patterns and are interspersed with 11 towers. This architectural masterpiece reflected the city's power and wealth. Le Mans city council has now applied for UNESCO World Heritage listing for the wall.



# STREET ART TAKES OVER LE MANS

## URBAN ART COLOURS THE CITY'S STREETS

FESTIVAL PLEIN CHAMP, 4-6 JULY

Launched in 2019, the Plein Champ festival brings together an array of international street artists over the first weekend of July. These artists spend three days creating designs live before the public, on mobile structures such as cubes and sections of wall. To add to the festival vibe, there are DJ sets, local food trucks, and more. This free event is a great opportunity for the public to come along and meet the artists. Youngsters can even try and create their own street art at one of the workshops held during the event.

<https://pleinchamblemans.fr/>



1

**SPEAR**  
*Gué de Maulny.*



**BKFOXX**  
*Gué de Maulny.*

## A CIRCUIT THROUGH THE CITY

The mobile structures are then exhibited in every part of the city. The city council also commissions new, large-scale permanent murals every year, which form a circuit that now boasts over 50 works of street art!



2

**C215**  
Created in 2020.  
*Rue de Sydney.*



3

**HEOL**  
Created in 2020,  
2021 and 2022.  
*Rue du Canal.*





7

**TSCREW**

Created in 2024.  
*Place de l'Éperon.*



8

**SETH - Anamorphose**

"Rabbit Hole", created by Seth, was voted the 2nd most beautiful mural in the world by users of the Street Art Cities website in 2022.  
*Rue Jankowski.*



6

**GREMS**

Created in 2024.  
*10 rue Julien Pesche.*

Nouveautés  
2025



5

**MARCO ET L'ARGO**

Created in 2022 and 2023.  
*Place d'Alger.*



9

**WEN2 X FRANÇOIS SCHUITEN**

The city of Le Mans and Bulle, a bookshop specialising in graphic novels, were behind the creation of this mural in the city centre. The work is the result of a joint project involving Belgian comic strip artist François Schuiten and street artist Wen2, and evokes the *falotiers*, the "lamplighters" who lit up our towns in the 19th and 20th centuries.

*Rue des Falotiers.*

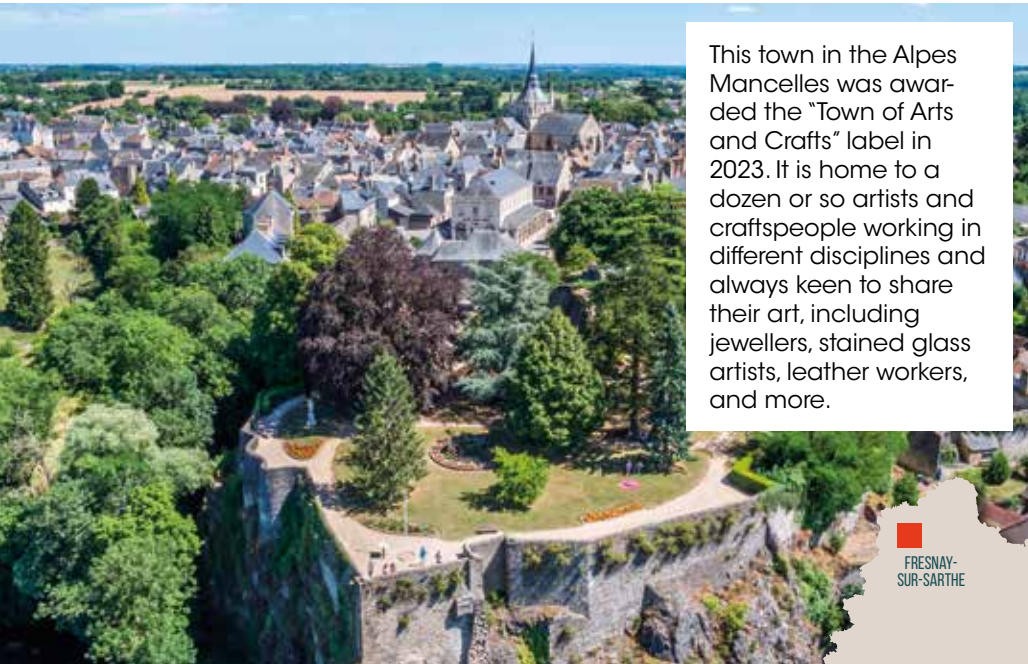
**KASHINK**  
Created in 2020.  
*Boulevard Demorieux.*



4



## MEET THE CRAFT WORKERS IN FRESNAY-SUR-SARTHE



This town in the Alpes Mancelles was awarded the "Town of Arts and Crafts" label in 2023. It is home to a dozen or so artists and craftspeople working in different disciplines and always keen to share their art, including jewellers, stained glass artists, leather workers, and more.



### ONE OF THE LAST WEAPONSMITHS IN FRANCE: PASCAL TURPIN

Pascal Turpin brings unique creations to life! His daggers, swords and knives tell the story of La Sarthe. For example, the Montmirail, made from beams from the castle of the same name, or his folding knives in the shape of some of the iconic cars to have raced in the Le Mans 24 Hours. His latest jewel is the Fresnois, celebrating the village's weaving past

[www.sarhetourisme.com/incontournables/les-petites-cites-de-caractere](http://www.sarhetourisme.com/incontournables/les-petites-cites-de-caractere)



## MALICORNE-SUR-SARTHE, THE EARTHENWARE VILLAGE



Malicorne-sur-Sarthe has been a major hub for French earthenware production for centuries. In 1924, Émile Tessier invented the openwork technique which has since become a local speciality. Today, two earthenware workshops continue the tradition, alongside a museum dedicated to the craft. Awarded the "Town of Arts and Crafts" label, Malicorne is home to several talented craftspeople whose works are the pride of the Arts and Crafts store found on the first floor of the former "mill of colours". With so much charm and creativity on display, this is a destination you won't want to miss!

[www.sarhetourisme.com/decouvrir/artisanat-et-savoir-faire/malicorne-capitale-de-la-faience](http://www.sarhetourisme.com/decouvrir/artisanat-et-savoir-faire/malicorne-capitale-de-la-faience)



### L'ATELIER VÉZANNE AND ITS MINIATURE PAINTINGS

When Clélia Chotard came across an old ceramic inkwell belonging to earthenware maker Léon Pouplard, she had a brainwave: why not use this discarded earthenware to make jewellery? In her workshop, Vézanne, located in Malicorne, she now creates "miniature paintings to wear", blending vintage designs with a contemporary twist. Come and meet her and discover her distinctive creations – artful pieces that elegantly bring the past back to life. <https://vezanne.fr/>



## LA CHARTRE-SUR-LE-LOIR, PARADISE FOR BARGAIN-HUNTERS

La Chartre-sur-le-Loir is a peaceful little village which lives in harmony with the river flowing through it. As you move away from the central square, you'll enter the realm of antique dealers, bric-a-brac stores and artists. A real slice of paradise for bargain hunters, as this village boasts the highest ratio of second-hand dealers per inhabitant, with one for every 100!

[www.sarthe-tourisme.com/decouvrir/artisanat-et-savoir-faire/la-chartre-sur-le-loir-village-des-antiquaires](http://www.sarthe-tourisme.com/decouvrir/artisanat-et-savoir-faire/la-chartre-sur-le-loir-village-des-antiquaires)



LA CHARTRE  
SUR-LE-LOIR



### STEP INTO THE ROARING TWENTIES AT LA MAISON COURTIN

Grégoire Courtin is a dedicated non-conformist, antiques dealer, collector and artist. At La Maison Courtin, he has recreated a 1920s-style brushware store, hat shop and colour merchant's, using period objects still in their original packaging! Soak up the spirit of the Roaring Twenties on a pre-booked tour, or extend the experience by staying in one of the apartments decorated in 1920s style.

[www.sarthe-tourisme.com/maison-courtin-des-boutiques-de-1920-a-visiter](http://www.sarthe-tourisme.com/maison-courtin-des-boutiques-de-1920-a-visiter)



### A WOOD TURNER AND ARTIST – SÉBASTIEN BOUISSET, CARVING MEMORIES

Sébastien Bouisset is a self-taught wood turner who creates sculptures and objects that are truly one-of-a-kind. His signature piece is the "Totem", a made-to-measure creation that emerges from a close dialogue with the customer and brings a lifeless tree back to life. A treasure trove of memories is revealed as, in Sébastien's expert hands, the tree is reborn as a work of art, conveying the essence and history of a place or a person's life.

<https://sebastienbouisset.fr/>

## A HANDS-ON HISTORY LESSON AT L'ÉPAU ROYAL ABBEY

Take the family along to L'Épau Royal Abbey, a remarkable site of Cistercian heritage set in beautiful natural surroundings. With a playbook, interactive quests and creative workshops, you'll be able to explore the everyday life of the monks, discover the permaculture gardens and uncover other hidden treasures. With 13 hectares of parkland, this is also a wonderful place for visitors of every age to relax and unwind.

However, the site goes above and beyond to ensure maximum inclusivity. It offers visual guides in French Sign Language, easy-to-read booklets and even a tactile replica of Queen Bérengère's 13th-century reclining statue, so everyone can engage with this unique heritage.

<https://epau.sarthe.fr/>



## THE MUSEUM OF MECHANICAL MUSIC: STRIKE UP THE BAND!



Delve into the fascinating world of mechanical music and discover some astonishing instruments, such as barrel organs, phonographs, juke boxes, mechanical pianos and more. Philippe Corbin, collector and expert in restoration, will bring these 19th- and 20th-century treasures to life before your very eyes. Meanwhile, Florence, an actor, will guide you like an orchestra's conductor on a joyful, interactive tour of a bistro, ballroom and period cinema... An hour's music, laughter and dancing with surprises in store at every turn. A magical experience for the whole family, in a truly living museum.

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

## ADVENTURE TIME AT THE CHÂTEAU DU LUDE!

Take a trip to this Loire Valley château where visitors big and small will have fun as they explore history. A treasure hunt, maze, escape game and other challenges await you in the gardens and underground passages. Youngsters can dress up as knights and princesses, while the whole family can join in fun activities such as the Prisoner Game. Magical moments and happy memories guaranteed! Embark on an adventure and take home your special collector's badge.

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





# HERITAGE IS CHILD'S PLAY! THE PETITES CITÉS DE CARACTÈRE® IN LA SARTHE



The “Petites Cités de Caractère” – or officially recognised small towns of character – of La Sarthe are celebrating their 30th anniversary! An opportunity to take the whole family out to discover these 10 distinctive towns and villages. Places such as Saint-Léonard-des-Bois, Le Lude and Parcé-sur-Sarthe are real gems, offering a superb blend of history, architecture and leisure pursuits.

In Sillé-le-Guillaume, one of the most popular spots is the Coco Plage leisure park (celebrating its centenary this year), a natural oasis offering an array of activities, from swimming in a lake surrounded by woodland to a treetop adventure course.

At Asnières-sur-Vègre, immerse yourself in the Middle Ages at the Manoir de la Cour, where you can join in a range of hands-on activities such as re-enactments of

noble feasts and combat training!

In Montmirail, the château that towers over the village will whisk you back in time with dramatised tours and events throughout the year.

Mamers is a classified “Station Verte de Vacances” (Green Holiday Resort), and welcomes visitors of every age to discover its rich heritage on foot or by bike, and to make the most of its superb leisure park.

These scenic villages are not simply treasures to admire – they are destinations to share and enjoy with the family. The perfect opportunity to step back in time and have fun at the same time!

[www.sarthetourisme.com/incontournables/les-petites-cites-de-caractere/](http://www.sarthetourisme.com/incontournables/les-petites-cites-de-caractere/)



Sillé-le-Guillaume castle



Parcé-sur-Sarthe



Manoir de la Cour



Fresnay-sur-Sarthe



A young boy in a grey t-shirt and blue shorts is running towards the camera on a dirt path in a lush green forest. Behind him, a woman and a young girl are walking. The scene is bright and sunny, with many trees and green foliage in the background.

# A green getaway



# A HIKING BREAK IMMERSSED IN NATURE

## HIKING TO BOOST BODY AND SOUL

The Alpes Mancelles will captivate lovers of wide-open spaces and unspoiled landscapes. A designated Natura 2000 site, it features rugged rocky slopes and lush valleys with a unique geological heritage. As part of the Normandy-Maine Regional Natural Park, the Alpes Mancelles was awarded UNESCO Global Geopark status in 2024. A truly amazing place for exploration and relaxation.

[www.sarhetourisme.com/incontournables/les-alpes-mancelles/](http://www.sarhetourisme.com/incontournables/les-alpes-mancelles/)



## ADMIRE THE NATURAL SPLENDOR OF THE ALPES MANCELLES

Embark on the "Meanders of the Sarthe" 17-kilometre hike, which will take you deep into the heart of the Alpes Mancelles on a five-and-a-half-hour adventure. Discover the region's iconic landmarks, such as the village of Saint-Léonard-des-Bois, dominated by its majestic hills, and Saint-Cénéri-le-Gérei, officially one of the "Most Beautiful Villages in France", where well-known 19th-century painters such as Corot, Renard and Saïn founded the Saint-Cénéri School. The Domaine du Gasseau will be your starting and finishing point, and offers 11 other routes, including mountain biking, canoeing, treetop adventure courses, trail running paths and horse riding.

The more adventurous among you can try the brand-new GR de Pays des Alpes Mancelles trail, a four-day, 80-kilometre trek through some stunning landscapes.

## WELLNESS AT LA MAISON DU GASSEAU

After all that exercise, it'll be time to unwind at La Maison du Gasseau hotel and restaurant. Dorine and Victoire welcome you in this beautifully renovated property that seamlessly blends comfort, bohemian style and elegance. The restaurant serves local, sustainable fare, including vegetarian dishes that showcase local and seasonal produce. Make the most of the wellness area that offers soothing and energising massages. A stay where nature, sport and wellness come together to appeal to visitors seeking relaxation and a much-needed chance to unplug.

<https://lamaisondugasseau.com/>



## EXPLORE STUNNING NATURAL SURROUNDINGS

With 5,000 km of waymarked trails and 19 Sensitive Natural Areas, La Sarthe is a haven for hiking enthusiasts. Venture through marshlands, forests and bocage landscapes and observe the incredible wildlife, including otters, sparrowhawks, the yellow-bellied toad, and the rare hermit beetle.

## NEW GUIDE: 25 ESSENTIAL HIKES

An invitation to explore La Sarthe's most beautiful hiking paths. Featuring 25 trails with a selection of top picks, varying levels of difficulty and changes in altitude, and all the key points of interest... this guide will be the perfect companion for some memorable outdoor adventures! **To be published in March 2025.**



## NATURE JUST A TRAM RIDE AWAY

Located just a ten-minute tram ride from the centre of Le Mans, the Arche de la Nature is a vast natural area that embodies the main landscapes of La Sarthe. As you wander along its trails, you'll encounter the river, forest and bocage landscapes.

The Maison de la Prairie will thrill visitors of all ages. Open all year round, the site features a barn, a poultry yard, a sheepfold, local animal breeds and a vegetable garden. Meanwhile, at the Maison de l'Eau, you can explore aquariums that house the various species that inhabit our rivers.

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



## FEEL, TOUCH AND HEAR THE FOREST



Carnuta, the Bercé Forest interpretation centre, invites you to explore and understand the world of the forest through a series of fun, hands-on experiences. With an educational exhibition space and year-round events such as performances, storytelling, creative workshops and themed forest outings, there's always something exciting to discover.

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

## HIKING FUN AND THE BELLOWING OF THE STAGS

Starting from the lookout tower in Perseigne Forest, the "La tête et les jambes" hiking trail is a fun, mile-long walk to discover local wildlife, plant life and history. With activity stations, puzzles to solve, a zip line and climbing wall, visitors of all ages will be thrilled! In autumn, join the National Forestry Board for guided tours to hear the mesmerising bellow of the stags. A thrilling and engaging experience for nature lovers and anyone who seeks out new discoveries.

[www.sarthe-tourisme.com/patrimoine-naturel/foret-domaniale-de-perseigne/](http://www.sarthe-tourisme.com/patrimoine-naturel/foret-domaniale-de-perseigne/)







## EXPLORE, BREATHE AND EMBRACE AUTHENTICITY ON HORSEBACK

Embark on an extraordinary equestrian adventure with Parigné Cheval Aventure, which offers 2 to 5-day treks on horseback along some remarkable routes. Explore the forests of La Sarthe, discover the wines of the Loir Valley, or ride through history at the Renaissance Château du Lude and the Cité Plantagenêt, the medieval heart of Le Mans. Each stopover will be a chance to deepen your bond with your equine companion and learn more about the passions that drive the locals. You can choose to stay at the equestrian centre's guest house or select from a range of carefully chosen accommodation along the way. An experience that combines a sense of escape, shared enjoyment and adventure.

<https://parigne-cheval-aventures.com/>

## EQUINE-ASSISTED THERAPY: A JOURNEY WITHIN

At La Bretonnerie equestrian farm, embark on a truly unique experience where horses—mirrors of our emotions—guide you towards what truly matters. Muriel and Samuel will be by your side throughout your stay, helping you reconnect with the present moment, discover your inner strengths, and navigate life's more delicate transitions through equine-assisted therapy. Set in a soothing verdant setting in the tranquil countryside of La Sarthe, make the most of this retreat with a stay in one of two beautifully renovated gîtes on the edge of the Petite Charnie forest. Well-being combined with a sense of escape.

<https://gitesdelabretonnerie.com/>



## A 19TH-CENTURY BROOD-MARE STABLE CONVERTED INTO QUIRKY ACCOMMODATION



Opposite the Château du Lude, the Jumenterie de Malidor is a 19th-century building currently undergoing renovation to provide a wonderful place to stay in a superb natural setting. With support from the French Heritage Foundation, renovation work began in 2020 and is now nearing completion. It features a distinctive semicircular layout where the groom's house was once found at the centre, to make it easier to watch over the horses. The historic site will be transformed, with three former stalls converted into inviting guest rooms, to accommodate two couples and a family. An unforgettable stay in an exceptional setting!

New  
2025



## HUG A COW! AN UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE AT THE FERME DES DEUX SABOTS

Take a trip to this unique dairy farm and explore its barns, designed to be accessible to all, including visitors with reduced mobility. Enjoy a touching encounter with the cows, and then relax with a coffee in the meadow, surrounded by nature.

<http://lesdeuxsabots.com/>

## AN IDYLIC RURAL STAY CLOSE TO THE FARM ANIMALS



Frédéric and Laura Naveau, breeders of Aberdeen Angus cows, welcome you to the Gîte du Plantagenêt, offering three elegant rooms, a spacious, light-filled living area, and an indoor pool. Looking to unplug and unwind? Discover their tiny house, Le P'tiny d'Aliénor, tucked away in the fields for a peaceful retreat among the beautiful cattle. An authentic blend of comfort and serenity!

<https://giteduplantagenet.fr/>

## ALEXIS'S ORGANIC MUSHROOMS: A TASTE ADVENTURE

In a troglodyte cave stretching some 8 kilometres in Mayet, Alexis Fouqueray devotedly cultivates shiitakes, oyster mushrooms, brown button mushrooms and rare varieties prized by chefs. He calls his farm Fungi Fa and offers captivating tours to share his expertise. A unique gourmet escapade you won't want to miss!



## DISCOVER THE SECRETS OF LOUÉ CHICKENS

For over 60 years, the farmers of the Loué Cooperative have nurtured their expertise in free-range farming, Red Label produce and organic methods. Now, around 100 farmers, mostly in La Sarthe, welcome visitors year-round for free tours of their farms. Secure your visit in a few quick clicks via their online platform!

<https://365joursa.loue.fr/>



# WATERBORNE ADVENTURES

## RIVIÈRES DE L'OUEST® - THE WEST'S PREMIER RIVER DESTINATION!



With 283 km of navigable waterways, La Sarthe, Maine-et-Loire and Mayenne form the largest river network to the west of Paris. With its tranquil surroundings, unspoiled landscapes and outstanding heritage, the Rivières de l'Ouest® destination beckons you to embark on a journey of exploration and wonder. Set off on an adventure along the water!

[www.rivieres-ouest.com](http://www.rivieres-ouest.com)

## LA SARTHE, AN ANGLER'S PARADISE

With 4,500 km of wild, navigable rivers, La Sarthe offers an incredible variety of fish such as trout, pike, zander and carp. There are countless fishing spots, suited to beginners and seasoned anglers alike, ranging from family-friendly experiences to fly-fishing opportunities in no-kill zones. If you want to stay and enjoy several days of fishing, you'll find Pêche-certified accommodation, such as the La Terrasse du Loir gîte, where relaxation and family fun go hand in hand, with children's games, a pool and, of course, the river!

[www.sarthetourisme.com/preparer-mon-sejour/activites-loisirs/peche/](http://www.sarthetourisme.com/preparer-mon-sejour/activites-loisirs/peche/)



## SILENT SURFING ON THE RIVER

Head for Aventure Nautique for an unusual aquatic experience! Go surfing on an efoil (or electric surfboard), which will let you glide over the water at high speed, with no impact on the environment. The electric device doesn't create any waves, so is perfect if you want to observe nature while getting your dose of thrills! The leisure park also has a campsite and a bicycle hire service.

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



## LA SARTHE GOES GINGUETTE!



A shaded terrace, a gentle breeze, live music... you'll be won over by our riverside guinguettes. Enjoy a drink, dance and savour the joy in these simple moments.





# On two wheels





## 250 KM OF NATURE AND HERITAGE TO EXPLORE - LA VÉLOBUISSONNIÈRE®

From Alençon to Saumur via Le Mans, this cycle route winds through a number of landmark sites, some of which are listed or have applied for listing on the UNESCO World Heritage list (Alençon lace, the Gallo-Roman wall in Le Mans, and the Loire Valley). La Vélobuissonnière also attracts cyclists with its landscapes, including the Alpes Mancelles with their age-old scree slopes and rugged, hilly scenery, awarded the UNESCO Global Geopark label this year. As it is close to the French capital (55 minutes by high-speed train from Paris to Le Mans), this is a great idea for a weekend or a week's jaunt for city dwellers.

[www.sarhetourisme.com/la-velobuissonniere-v44](http://www.sarhetourisme.com/la-velobuissonniere-v44)



### What to see

Alençon lace—the Alpes Mancelles hills—the Cité Plantagenêt and the Gallo-Roman wall in Le Mans—The earthenware workshops in Malicorne-sur-Sarthe—La Flèche Zoo—the apothecary in Baugé-en-Anjou—Saumur.

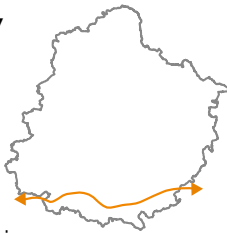
### Did you know?

La Vélobuissonnière was ranked among the five most beautiful bike routes in Europe for 2024.

# CYCLE ROUTES AND SERVICES

## THE LOIR VALLEY BY BIKE - 320 km

This cycle route follows a section of the Loir over a distance of 320 kilometres from its source in Eure-et-Loir to Maine-et-Loire. Along the way, you'll discover a series of picturesque villages and the valley's distinctive vineyards.



The Lude castle



"Le temps retrouvé" shop, La Chartre-sur-le-Loir

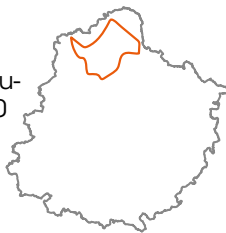


**Château du Lude - the Jasnnières vineyards - the village of antique dealers at La Chartre-sur-le-Loir - the banks of the Loir - the château of the Dukes of Anjou.**

[www.sarthe-tourisme.com/la-vallee-du-loir-a-velo](http://www.sarthe-tourisme.com/la-vallee-du-loir-a-velo)

## LA PETITE REINE - 130 km

Through the fields from one picturesque village to the next, this 130 km bike ride will take you from the Alpes Mancelles hills to the Perseigne national forest, the highest point in La Sarthe!

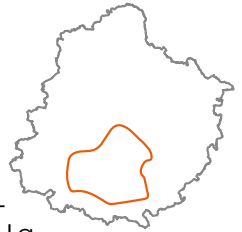


**Le Saosnois greenway - The La Belle Échappée cycle museum, a unique collection of bicycles and objects retracing the history of competitive cycling in France - the Perseigne forest lookout tower - Rillettes tasting in Mamers.**

[www.sarthe-tourisme.com/la-petite-reine-des-alpes-mancelles-au-saosnois](http://www.sarthe-tourisme.com/la-petite-reine-des-alpes-mancelles-au-saosnois)

## LA RONDE DES VALLÉES ET FORÊTS - 185 km

As you pedal through the extensive forests and scenic valleys, you'll come across some of the most outstanding natural and cultural sites of La Sarthe. Starting from Le Mans cathedral, head for the south of the Sarthe where you'll find Bercé Forest, an array of tufa stone houses and the magnificent 19th-century round railway depot, the Rotunda.



**L'Épau Royal Abbey - the prestigious Bercé Forest - the Montabon railway rotunda - La Flèche Zoo.**

[www.sarthe-tourisme.com/la-ronde-des-vallees-et-forets-2](http://www.sarthe-tourisme.com/la-ronde-des-vallees-et-forets-2)

## BIKE RIDES FOR ALL TO ENJOY

### - ESCAPA2

Fabien Garnier, a sports instructor, created Escapa2 so that people with disabilities and the elderly can enjoy a bike ride in complete safety. The tour is adapted to different types of disability. He has two bicycles available. The three-wheeler can accommodate two people for an effortless ride. Meanwhile, the tandem can be used for physical therapy. The rider sits in front of Fabien and will pedal with him, adapting the effort to their condition. <https://escapa2.fr/>





# A LOW-CARBON STAY

Sarthe Tourism has put together a three-day “low-carbon” cycling weekend that starts from Montparnasse station in Paris (a short 54-minute train journey from Le Mans). When you arrive, hire a bike at Brico Cycles in Le Mans (a 10-minute walk from the station), then follow our plan!



Work by Héol, rue Jankowski



Cité Plantagenêt



The Malicorne-sur-Sarthe earthenware factory



Fillé-sur-Sarthe



Campétoile, La Flèche



La Réveuse St Nicolas, Le Mans

## DAY 1

**START: LE MANS**  
**FINISH: LA FLÈCHE**  
**66 KM (5 HOURS' CYCLING)**

*This section of La Vélobouissonnière runs along the River Sarthe, then dips into an area of woodland and bocage. It's an easy route for beginners.*

**WHAT TO SEE?** The island of MoulinSart (watermill and contemporary art centre), the craft and earthenware workshops in Malicorne-sur-Sarthe, and the military academy in La Flèche.

**WHAT TO DO?** Bathe in La Gèmerie lake in Arnage, sample local produce at the La Ménagerie farm in Malicorne-sur-Sarthe, and go surfing on an efoil board.

**WHERE TO EAT?** La Maison Nipa in Fillé-sur-Sarthe or Le Moulin des Quatre Saisons in La Flèche.

**WHERE TO SLEEP?** The Camp'étoiles structures at the Route d'Or campsite, are ideal for cycle tourists. They can accommodate up to four people. Charging points are also available

## DAY 2

**START: LA FLÈCHE**  
**FINISH: MONTVAL-SUR-LOIR**  
**52 KM (3-4 HOURS' CYCLING)**

*Follow the La Flèche-Le Lude greenway, then continue on the Loir Valley by Bike trail along the banks of the Loir, with its rich heritage of châteaux, manor houses and fortified tufa stone mills.*

**WHAT TO SEE?** The Château du Lude, the “Petite Cité de Caractère” of Luché-Pringé, the fortified Mervé mill.

**WHAT TO DO?** Discover the leather goods crafted at the Maroquinerie du Loir in Vaas, taste the cheeses from the Ferme du Frêne in Le Lude, and visit Le Temps d'un Champs educational farm in Montval-sur-Loir.

**WHERE TO EAT?** The guinguette in Thorée-les-Pins or Le Grand Hôtel in Montval-sur-Loir.

**WHERE TO SLEEP?** Le Grand Hôtel is a 3-star Logis establishment and has been awarded the “Accueil Vélo” (bike-friendly) label. The hotel has locked bicycle storage.

## DAY 3

**START: MONTVAL-SUR-LOIR**  
**FINISH: LE MANS**  
**(TRAIN)**

*Take the train from Montval-sur-Loir to Le Mans and then enjoy a day wandering around La Sarthe's enchanting capital.*

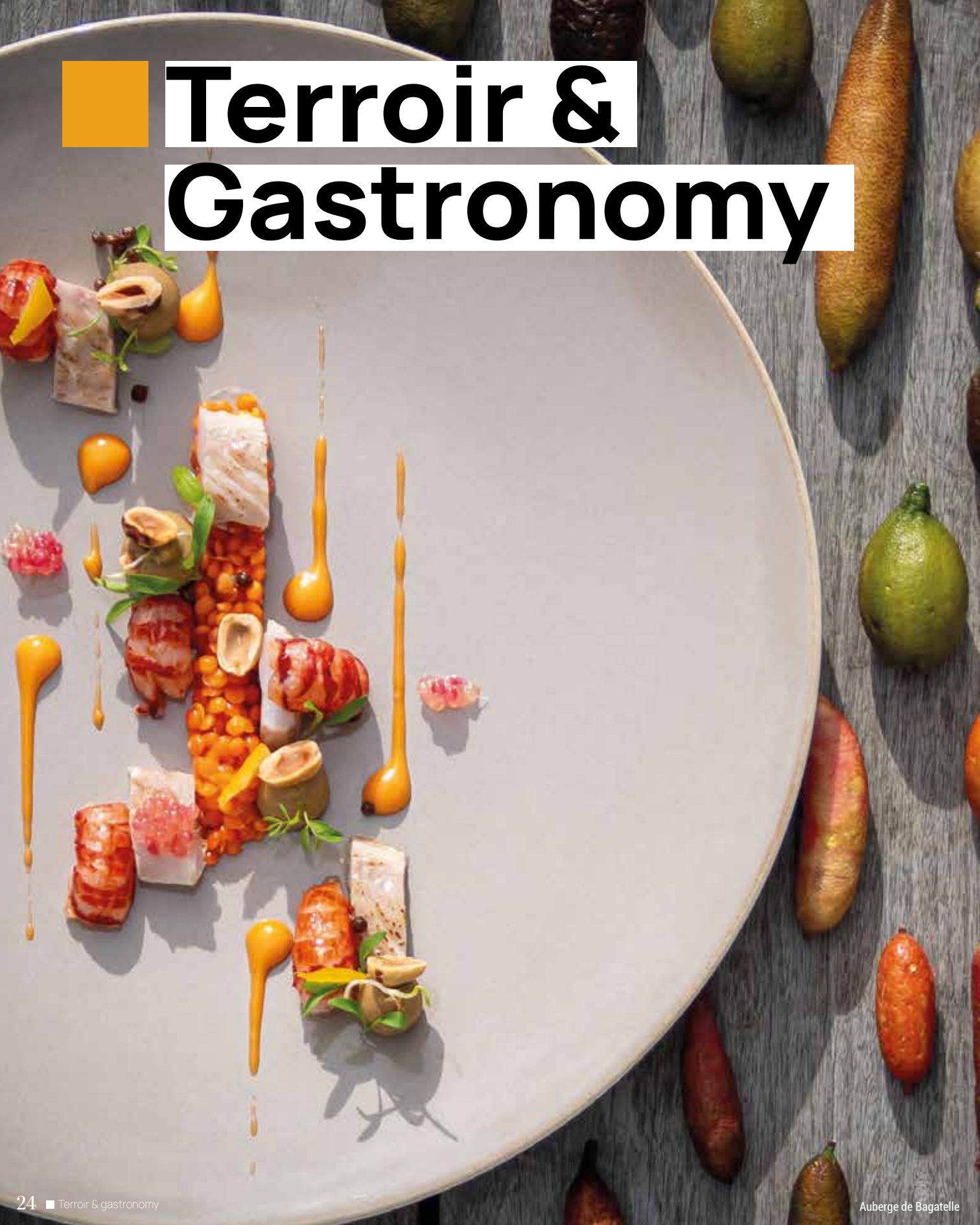
**WHAT TO SEE?** The Cité Plantagenêt (Le Mans medieval district), L'Épau Royal Abbey, and Le Mans' Gallo-Roman wall.

**WHAT TO DO?** Discover the many works of street art, taste the offerings from the Le Sonneur distillery, and take a trip along the River Sarthe on a traditional boat.

**WHERE TO EAT?** L'Épi Curieux restaurant and La Guinguette des Tanneries in Le Mans.

**WHERE TO SLEEP?** In the eco-lodges at the Domaine de l'Épau, in Yvré-L'évêque. These semi-sun-ken structures are very low on energy consumption. There's a swimming pool and a restaurant so you can still treat yourself during your eco-friendly stay!

# Terroir & Gastronomy





## RILLETTE-FLAVOURED EAU-DE-VIE AND 100% SARTHOIS WHISKY



Emmanuel Viton cultivates forgotten fruits in his organic orchard to craft premium eaux-de-vie and liqueurs, highly sought after by Michelin-starred chefs. Visit a distillery where time-honoured traditions meet innovation to showcase flavours such as Girouffe pears, white raspberries and elderflower. Embark on a guided tour, admire the working still and enjoy the tastings! Emmanuel's bold creations definitely deserve recognition, especially the local sensation - rilette-flavoured eau-de-vie! His latest masterpiece? The first-ever 100% Made In Sarthe whisky. An experience to be savoured!

<http://distillerie-dusonneur.com/>

## THE WORLD'S BEST CHEESEMAKER IS FROM LE MANS!



2015's world champion cheesemaker Fabien Degoulet returned to his native Sarthe and opened a different kind of cheese shop in Le Mans - Fromage et ses

Amis. He sells some exceptional cheeses, but also offers a range of his own original creations, such as goat's cheese with cherry leaf, Camembert matured with butter and Timut pepper. In the evenings, Fabien holds tasting workshops, where he pairs cheeses with wine and sake, teaches cheese cutting techniques and shares the history behind various cheeses.

<https://fromageetsesamis.com/>

## HEMP OIL: HEALTH BENEFITS AND FINE DINING



In the heart of La Sarthe, Mont Gauthier produces high-quality organic cold-pressed oils, including a distinctive hemp oil with bold, herbaceous notes. Ideal consumed raw, it combines nutritional benefits and fine dining, with a perfect balance of omega-6 and omega-3, good for the heart, cholesterol and metabolism. Completely natural, free from additives, and cultivated with respect for the environment, this

oil has earned recognition from the Collège Culinaire de France.

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

## TABLISSIME: A SURPRISING GASTRONOMIC EXPERIENCE



Embark on an unprecedented culinary journey with Tablissime, an initiative by Frédérique Besnard, a dedicated and driven entrepreneur from La Sarthe. Her concept brings together talented chefs, local producers and venues steeped in history. Imagine tucking into delicious regional produce inside a former rillettes factory, a manor house, or a 1920s setting recreated by an antiques expert. The tables are elegantly set and the focus is on local craftsmanship, promising an indulgent dining experience that will linger in your memory. A chance to discover La Sarthe in a whole new way. **Facebook :Tablissime**

## GINGER RILLETTES!



There isn't a charcutier or butcher in La Sarthe who doesn't have his own recipe for rillettes. And Steven Ramage loves to go against the grain! He creates recipes that are both delicious and original, like truffle-infused rillettes or, more surprisingly, Thai-style rillettes (with spring onions, ginger and peanuts). His inventive recipes earned him the gold medal in the creative rillettes category at the 2024 Best Rillettes contest, organised by the Confrérie de Mamers.

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

## MAISON NIPA: LOCAVORE AND ECO-FRIENDLY FRANCO-PHILIPPINE CUISINE



Mabuhay! At Maison Nipa, Sharon and Jason Le Glatin celebrate a culinary fusion between France and the Philippines. Trained by names such as Alain Ducasse and L'Auberge de Bagatelle, their menus are never published in advance and always feature hyper-local ingredients, all prepared with an exemplary eco-responsible approach. Sharon and Jason endeavour to elevate every dish with outstanding creativity and commitment, and were named "Young Talents" by Gault & Millau then nominated for the 2023 Fork Awards.

<https://maisonnipa.fr>

## GASTRONOMY AT THE CHÂTEAU DU GRAND-LUCÉ

In the stunning setting of the luxurious Le Grand-Lucé hotel and château, chef Maxime Thomas serves French cuisine with an international twist, using local produce, some of which is harvested directly in the château's vegetable garden. There are a few must-try dishes on the menu, such as the sablé (or shortbread) with Touraine truffles, Jerusalem artichokes and seasonal vegetables, or veal filet mignon from La Sarthe served with roasted carrots and Tonka juice.

<https://chateaugrandluce.com>



## L'AUBERGE DE BAGATELLE: AN ODE TO FUSION COOKING IN LE MANS

Jean-Sébastien Monné trained in some prestigious establishments, such as Les Crayères and La Chèvre d'Or, and brilliantly blends East with West. Animal, mineral, vegetable... this winning trio has become the signature of L'Auberge de Bagatelle and its astonishing fare, with dishes such as roasted monkfish with coconut and saffron from Vaalogé in La Sarthe, or roast venison with cocoa nibs from Ikori. Local flavours in superb harmony with influences from more distant climes.

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





## SILEX: QUALITY AND FLAVOUR SET IN STONE



Young chefs Maité Hervé and Florent Delmas have opened this new restaurant inspired by the nearby Bercé forest with wooden tables, stone walls and an organic, natural decor. They are committed to a resolutely sustainable and local style of cuisine.

A refined, sophisticated style that brings out the best of each ingredient. Try the forest mushrooms in open ravioli, with a milky artichoke and parsley & sage broth.

<http://silex-restaurant.fr>

## LES MÉSANGÈRES: BISTRO-STYLE ELEGANCE IN THE HEART OF THE COUNTRYSIDE

New  
2025



Anthony Boucher, trained by Philippe Conticini and Pierre Gagnaire, is redefining the concept of French bistronomy at Domaine des Mésangères. His cuisine celebrates the local terroir with delicious, elegant dishes, served in a bright setting that blends rustic charm with modern flair. With "La Cave à Manger", tapas and fine wines further add to the enjoyment. With its perfect mix of gastronomy, hospitality and the art of living, this address promises discerning gourmets a truly memorable experience.

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

## Ô SAULE: AN INTIMATE CULINARY EXPERIENCE

Guillaume Chollet was trained by Taku Sekine and has reinvented the dining experience with a 6-course surprise menu, served to just 15 guests at a time. He cooks, serves and chats with his guests, creating a relaxed, "arty" vibe. He's always impeccably dressed and each of his dishes is a visual and gustatory masterpiece. When creativity and conviviality come together, you can expect a remarkable experience.

[www.osaule.zd.fr/](http://www.osaule.zd.fr/)



# Accommodation





## A GÎTE COMMITTED TO SUSTAINABLE TOURISM - LE JARDIN DES 4 SAISONS



Ingrid Ory and Tony Ducreux have transformed a once-derelict farmhouse into an eco-friendly, self-sufficient gîte. Their dedication to sustainability is evident in the timber-framed structure, bio-sourced materials, controlled energy use, and photo-purification wastewater treatment system. The ambitious project also includes a permaculture vegetable garden, beehive, eco-pasturing, and a zero-plastic policy. The accommodation comprises five beautifully designed guest rooms and two gîtes, ensuring visitors comfort and relaxation. An inspiring blend of charm and eco-awareness.

<https://lejardindes4saisons.com>

## A HISTORIC GÎTE, A MODEL OF ECOLOGY - LES GRANDES HAIES

Step back in time with the first eco-friendly Gîtes de France®-labelled holiday home in La Sarthe. This 17th-century manor house, lovingly restored by Anne-Marie and Gérard, combines timeless charm, modern comfort, and a deep respect for the environment. With hemp insulation, geothermal energy, a garden recognised as an LPO (Bird Protection League) refuge, and an outstanding collection of boxwoods left in their natural state, here every detail adds to the authenticity and ecological awareness.

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



## BASK IN PEACEFUL TRANQUILLITY - LE COCOON ASNIÉROIS



Looking for a countryside getaway with a difference? Welcome to Le Cocoon Asniérois, a wooden cabin tucked away near the gorgeous village of Asnières-sur-Vègre (a listed Petite Cité de Caractère). This Gîtes de France® rental offers couples all the comfort they could need: a cosy bed, fully equipped kitchen, and an outdoor Nordic bath for unparalleled relaxation. Extras include electric bike rental, a pétanque court, and breakfast upon request. A carefree experience guaranteed!

[www.sarhetourisme.com/hebergement-localitif/gite-le-cocoon-asnierois/](http://www.sarhetourisme.com/hebergement-localitif/gite-le-cocoon-asnierois/)

# MAJESTIC AND MAGNIFICENT

## SPLENDID ELEGANCE - CHÂTEAU DE LAURESSE

The Château de Laresse, a listed Historic Monument, benefits from a magnificent setting within a 100-hectare estate. Luxury and tranquillity await with seven tastefully decorated rooms, a Swedish bath, sauna, heated pool, a billiard room, and 30 km of trails to explore on foot, by bike or horseback. Stroll among the estate's animals—peacocks, goats and sheep—and visit the gardener's organic vegetable patch. This 17th-century gem immerses guests in a rich blend of nature and history.

[www.chateaudelaresse.com/fr](http://www.chateaudelaresse.com/fr)

New  
-  
2025



## IN MARCEL PAGNOL'S FOOTSTEPS - LE MOULIN D'IGNIÈRES

Marcel Pagnol lived in this magnificent 17th-century mill, renovated in the 19th and 20th centuries, for over 20 years. The mill sits like a ship on the water. Its imposing buttresses on the river side lend it an impressive allure. The property inspired the artist and provided the backdrop for his second film, "Léopold le bien-aimé", starring Michel Simon. Pagnol's study, in which legend has it that he wrote "Fanny" and "César", remains unchanged.

<https://mouлиндignieres.com/>



## CHIC AND BOHEMIAN STYLE IN A 19TH-CENTURY MANOR - LE MADRIGAL



Surrounded by a vast park, this beautiful manor house blends elegance with a charming vintage-market vibe. Marc and Hervé have created a boho-chic ambiance where each thoughtfully curated item tells a story. Upstairs, there are four comfortable rooms, two of which have private bathrooms. Savour an indulgent breakfast on the patio or in one of the lounges—whichever you choose, your setting will be brimming with surprises and character.

[www.sarhetourisme.com/hebergement-localitif/chambres-dhotes-le-madrigal-2/](http://www.sarhetourisme.com/hebergement-localitif/chambres-dhotes-le-madrigal-2/)



## A FRESH NEW LOOK FOR THE HOTEL, RESTAURANT & SPA AT DOMAINE DE LA COURBE

Poised beside the River Loir, the Hôtel, Restaurant & Spa de la Courbe is a beautiful blend of classic heritage and modern sophistication. New owners, Julie and Cédric Chaput, have redesigned the spa, giving it a brand-new sauna and an updated hammam, and have introduced exclusive treatments like the hydrojet bed. In 2025, guests can enjoy the newly renovated rooms and suites, a welcoming lounge, and air-conditioned communal areas. The couple's commitment to sustainability, which has been awarded the Clef Verte label, includes the use of natural and locally sourced products. The perfect place to unwind in a peaceful historical setting.

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



New  
-  
2025

## AN INVITING GÎTE FOR MEMORABLE GET-TOGETHERS - LE SOLEIL DANS LA RUELLE

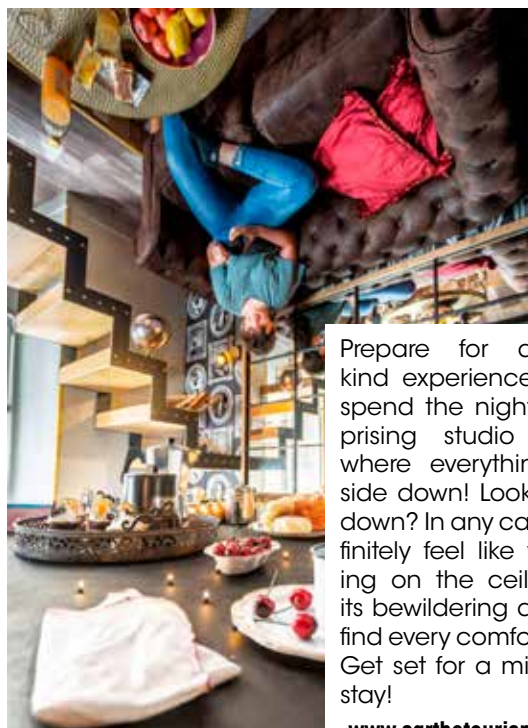
In Yvré-l'Évêque, near Le Mans, the Bourné family has converted an old farmhouse into a characterful Gîtes de France® retreat for up to 15 guests. With a heated pool, jacuzzi, sauna, fire pit, home cinema, billiards and more, there's everything you need for an enjoyable and relaxing stay. Blending authenticity with modern comfort, this gîte is ideal for a memorable break with family and friends. The perfect place to reconnect and unwind.

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



New  
-  
2025

## UPSIDE DOWN FOR THE NIGHT - STUDIO RENVERSANT



Prepare for a one-of-a-kind experience when you spend the night in this surprising studio apartment where everything is... upside down! Look up! Or is it down? In any case, you'll definitely feel like you're walking on the ceiling! Behind its bewildering design, you'll find every comfort you need. Get set for a mind-bending stay!

[www.sarhetourisme.com/hebergement-localif/studio-renversant/](http://www.sarhetourisme.com/hebergement-localif/studio-renversant/)

# SHOPPING

made in Sarthe





5.



6.



7.

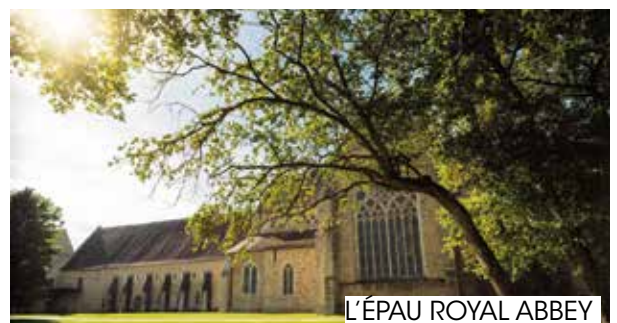


8.



1. Cushions, bags, and more, crafted from beautiful zero-waste fabrics • Facebook : Delphine M
2. An explosion of flavours with Bellanger chocolates, inspired by the heritage of La Sarthe • [www.chocolats-bellanger.com](http://www.chocolats-bellanger.com)
3. Illustrations of Le Mans with a vibrant yéyé style and vintage aesthetic • Les Petits Yéyés
4. Handmade, delightfully scented soaps, candles and accessories! • Facebook : Les plaisirs d'Emy
5. Julie Rocher's poetic pottery creations • Facebook : Les Mains dans la Terre
6. Sarthe's must-try buttery shortbread biscuits • [www.sablesienne.com/fr](http://www.sablesienne.com/fr) ■ [www.maisondrans.com](http://www.maisondrans.com)
7. Natural cosmetics made in La Sarthe • Facebook : Clémence et Vivien
8. Aromatic and medicinal plants for natural well-being • Facebook : Les Prairies des Vermeils

# Not to be missed.





# The sporting & cultural agenda.

9 - 11 MAY

## French Moto Grand Prix

International motorcycling race  
Le Mans.

21 - 28 MAY

## Épau Festival

Classical music festival,  
L'Épau Royal Abbey.

1<sup>er</sup> & 2 JUNE

## Gardeners' festival

A gathering for gardening professionals,  
Château du Lude.

11 - 15 JUNE

## 24 Hours of Le Mans

The iconic sports car race,  
Le Mans

4 - 6 JULY

## Festival Plein Champ

Street Art Festival, Le Mans.

4 - 6 JULY

## Les Affranchis Festival

Street arts festival,  
La Flèche.

JULY & AUGUST

## La Nuit des Chimères

Light shows, Cité Plantagenêt,  
Le Mans.

LATE SEPT.

## Entre Cours et Jardins

Sensory and botanical trail,  
Cité Plantagenêt, Le Mans.

LATE SEPT. - EARLY OCT.

## Faites lire !

Book fair, Le Mans.

NOVEMBER

## Bebop festival

Contemporary music festival,  
Le Mans.

DEC. TO JAN.

## Light and sound experience at L'Épau Royal Abbey

Yvré-l'Évêque.

The GP Explorer event was organised by YouTuber Squeezie and brought together a whole host of influencers at the 24 Hours of Le Mans Circuit in 2022 and 2023. It is expected to return for a third edition in autumn 2025.

List of events known at the time of publishing this press kit. For up-to-date information, please check the calendar of events: simply scan this QR code



## LE MANS CLASSIC - 3-6 JULY 2025



Four days of glorious vintage festivities, close on 700 cars dating from 1923 to 1993 and 1,000 drivers who will battle it out on the legendary circuit to revive the history of the world's greatest endurance race. There'll also be an array of entertainment throughout the event, including an American drive-in, a tour in a vintage bus, concerts, a dance floor straight from the 1960s, and a classic car auction.

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

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



Follow us:



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