

# Sarthe Tourisme.

2023  
**PRESS  
KIT**



English edition



1923 ©ACO / La Sarthe department archives

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

**Sarthe**  
Tourisme



# La Sarthe.

*Visit a department that prizes heritage and nature.  
Surprising landscapes, unusual activities, centuries-old monuments and extraordinary events.  
Discover the treasures tucked away in La Sarthe in this press kit.*



[www.sarthetourisme.com](http://www.sarthetourisme.com)  
[#sarthetourisme](https://www.instagram.com/sarthetourisme)





(1 hr 45 min by car  
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2 hr 34 by train)

(2 hr by car  
54min by train)

(1 hr 45 by car  
44 min by train)

LOUÉ



**BONNÉTABLE**

ÉCOMMOY

(5 hr 38 by car  
2 hr 56 by train)

(2 hr by car  
1 hr 17 by train)

(1 hr by car  
37 min by train)

(1 hr by car  
59 min by train)

Le Mans ©M.Oudoux

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Plantagenet City ©M.Oudoux

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24 Hours of Le Mans ©FIA WEC



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Gîte du Misfon © M.Guillon



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# Not to be missed.



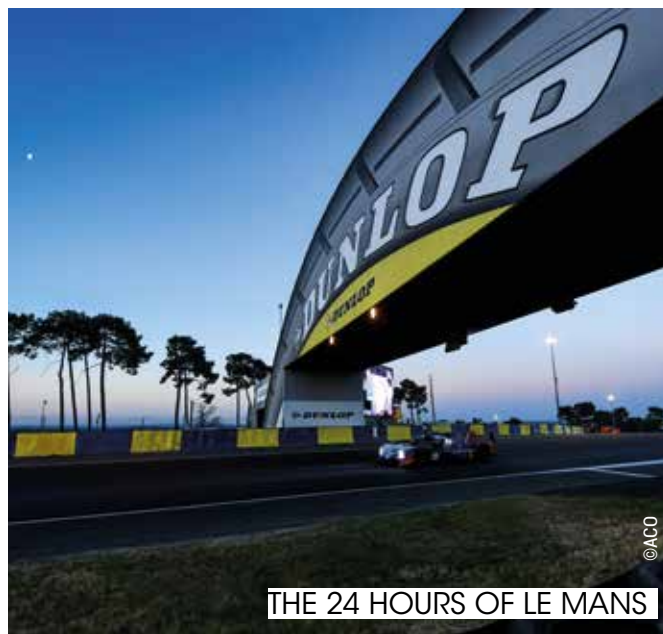
© A. Amiot

THE ALPES MANCELLES



© L. Lagarde

THE CHÂTEAU DU LUDE



© ACO

THE 24 HOURS OF LE MANS





EPAU ROYAL ABBEY



LA FLÈCHE ZOO



THE VÉLOBUISSONNIÈRE®



THE WESTERN RIVERS®



THE PLANTAGENET CITY 7







# A love of the motor car. ■

*La Sarthe is gearing up to celebrate the Centenary of the iconic 24 Hours of Le Mans on 10-11 June 2023.*

*First run in 1923, the race has left an indelible mark on world motorsport history and is part of La Sarthe's identity.*

# 24 HOURS OF LE MANS: 1923-2023, 100 YEARS OF HISTORY!

## THE ORIGINS - LA SARTHE, AN AUTOMOTIVE PIONEER

Why was the 24 Hours founded in La Sarthe? To answer this question, you need to delve into the early history of motoring in France.

Thanks to some ingenious inventors, La Sarthe became a land of automotive pioneers.

### ■ L'OBÉISSANTE, ONE OF THE FIRST CARS IN THE WORLD, CAME FROM LE MANS

in 1873, local inventor amédée bollée created l'obéissante, the very first road-going, steam-powered vehicle. the ease with which his "locomobile" could be driven contrasted sharply with other cars from the same period. despite weighing in at 4 metric tons, it could reach a speed of 40 kph and transport 12 passengers. in 1875, l'obéissante accomplished the feat of travelling from le mans to paris, a distance of 230 km in 18 hours! amédée bollée picked up 75 fines but won his bet! the bollée family built cars until 1931. nine models are on show at the 24 hours of le mans museum, including la mancelle, the first car put into series production.

### ■ THE FIRST GRAND PRIX DE L'AUTOMOBILE CLUB DE FRANCE TOOK PLACE IN LA SARTHE

In the early twentieth century, the Gordon Bennett Cup was one of the most prestigious auto races in the world. The Automobile Club de France, however, was dissatisfied with the rules, which put French manufacturers at a disadvantage, and created its own race, its first Grand Prix. La Sarthe was chosen as the setting for the event. The L'Auto newspaper wrote that "the automobile benefits from much goodwill in the region" and recalled the fact that La Sarthe was also "the Bollée family's homeland", justifying the ACF's choice.

**On 26-27 June 1906**, the 34 cars in the race set off on a 103.18-kilometre course made up of dusty roads – and sometimes wooden boards – linking Le Mans with Saint-Calais and La Ferté-Bernard. Just over 12 hours la-

ter, the Renault AK driven by Ferenc Sisz claimed victory. Only eleven cars finished the race. Après un peu plus de 12 heures, la Renault AK de Ferenc Sisz remporte la compétition. Onze voitures seulement terminent la course.

### ■ GEORGES DURAND'S INGENIOUS IDEA: THE 24 HOURS OF LE MANS

Having previously secured La Sarthe's bid to host the ACF's Grand Prix in 1906, Georges Durand scored another achievement in 1922 at the Paris Motor Show. The local visionary (born in Fresnay-sur-Sarthe, in the Alpes Mancelles area) sealed an agreement with Charles Faroux, head of L'Auto newspaper, and Émile Coquille, a wheel manufacturer, to set up an auto race that they would call the 24 Hours Grand Prix of Speed and Endurance/Rudge-Whitworth Cup. Durand, who was also the founder of the Alpes Mancelles Tourist Board, aimed to give manufacturers an opportunity to test the reliability and solidity of their cars over 24 hours every year.

**On 26-27 May 1923, 33 cars** were unleashed on the 17-kilometre (13.626 km today) circuit for the first ever 24 Hours of Le Mans.







l'Obeissante ©Fonds Bollée - La Sarthe department archives



George Durand ©La Sarthe department archives



Sarthe Circuit 1906 ©La Sarthe department archives



1923 ©ACO / Archives départementales de la Sarthe



1935 ©La Sarthe department archives



1961 ©La Sarthe department archives

# LANDMARK RACES

There have been 90 24 Hours of Le Mans races to date, some of which have left a lasting mark on the event's history. A look back at 6 milestone editions.

## ■ 1923 – THE FIRST RACE

On 26-27 May 1923, 33 cars lined up for the first 24-hour race on the La Sarthe circuit. It rained for much of the event, which was won by the Chenard & Walker driven by André Lagache and René Léonard at an average speed of 92 kph.

## ■ 1930 - WOMEN FIRST COMPETE AT THE 24 HOURS OF LE MANS

On 21 June 1930, Odette Siko and Marguerite Mareuse took part in the 24 Hours of Le Mans with a Bugatti Type 40. They finished seventh after 132 laps. Two years later, Odette Siko and teammate Louis Charavel did even better, finishing fourth in Siko's own car. Her exploit remains the best result for a woman at the circuit to date. A total 65 women have raced the 24 Hours of Le Mans.

## ■ 1955 - THE MOST SERIOUS ACCIDENT IN THE HISTORY OF MOTOR RACING

The 23rd running of the 24 Hours of Le Mans was the scene of an unimaginable motorsport tragedy. On 11 June, the Mercedes-Benz 300, with French driver Pierre Levegh at the wheel, went airborne and crashed into the crowd. The car's explosion and the debris it projected killed 84 people. The scale of the tragedy shocked the world.

Several countries temporarily banned races on open roads and more stringent safety rules were introduced. Mercedes pulled out of all motorsport and only returned to Le Mans in 1998.

## ■ 1980 - THE ONLY WIN FOR A DRIVER/CONSTRUCTOR

Having previously entered a handful of Le Mans races, local driver Jean Rondeau set about building his own racing cars. Produced in five short months, two cars lined up for the 24 Hours in 1976 and made it to the chequered flag, finishing eighth and 21st. In 1980, up against an armada of manufacturers such as Porsche and their unlimited resources, Rondeau clinched the win and put two M379s bearing his name and design on the podium! An exploit that remains unique to this day.

## ■ 2016 – A QUADRI-AMPUTEE DRIVER MAKES HISTORY

Frédéric Sausset lost both arms and both legs to a serious infection. While in recovery, he set himself the ultimate challenge: competing in the 24 Hours of Le Mans. In 2016, he took to the track in a specially adapted car, with two rods connecting the pedals to his thighs and a device fitted to the steering wheel enabling him to accelerate, brake and steer. The team finished 36<sup>th</sup> (out of a grid of 60 cars) and Frédéric became the first disabled driver to take part in the 24 Hours of Le Mans.

## ■ 10-11 JUNE 2023 – THE RACE OF THE CENTURY

The 24 Hours of Le Mans Centenary will be a historical event. With the new regulations introduced in 2020, replacing the LMP1 (Le Mans Prototype) class with hypercars (LMH and LMDH), the big-name manufacturers who helped shape the Le Mans legend are back!

Expect an epic battle between Toyota, Ferrari (back in the top-tier category after a 40-year hiatus), Porsche (holder of the record for the most Le Mans wins), Peugeot and Cadillac!

## ? Did you know?

La course des 24 Heures du Mans est un véritable laboratoire à ciel ouvert pour les professionnels de l'automobile. Le caractère de la compétition les pousse à innover. Revêtement routier, phares antibrouillards, freins à disque, phares à LED ont tous été créés pour la course.





LES 24 HEURES DU MANS 1955  
PROGRAMME OFFICIEL  
Prix 200 francs  
©La Sarthe department archives



Odette Siko en 1932 ©La Sarthe department archives



#6 Jaguar driven by Mike Hawthorn, said to have triggered the accident in 1955  
©La Sarthe department archives



Jean-Pierre Jaussaud in the foreground, and Jean Rondeau ©La Sarthe department archives

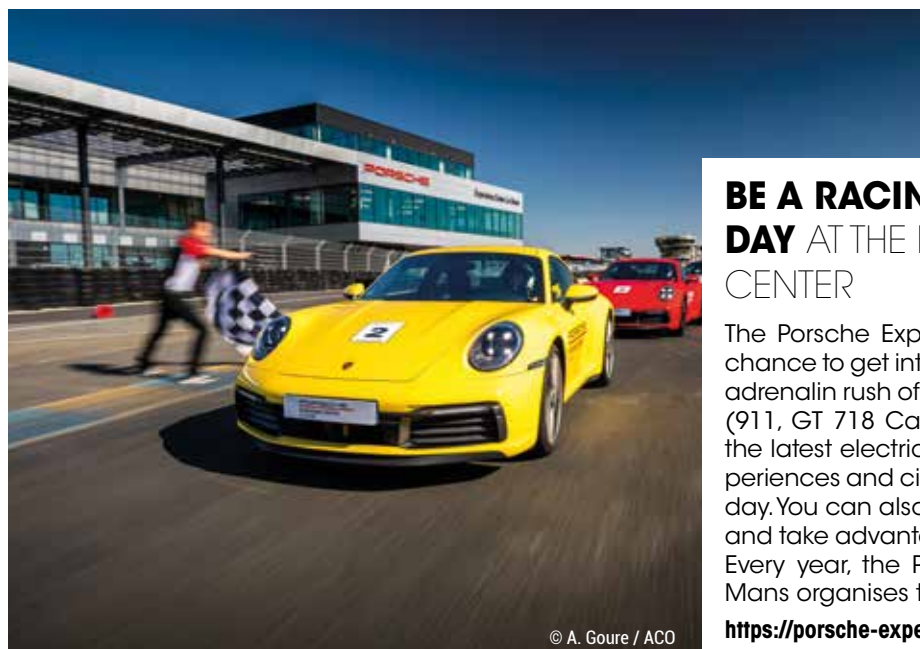
# THE COMPLETE 24 HOURS EXPERIENCE

## BEHIND THE SCENES OF THE 24 HOURS OF LE MANS

Almost 140 vehicles, including some very iconic cars, are on show at the museum. Take a visit to see why the revered race generates so much excitement every year. There are several temporary exhibitions throughout the year.

**New:** as part of the 24 Hours of Le Mans Centenary celebrations, an exclusive exhibition will showcase cars that have won the race or left a mark on its history (dates to be announced).

[www.lemans-musee24h.com](http://www.lemans-musee24h.com)



## BE A RACING DRIVER FOR THE DAY AT THE PORSCHE EXPERIENCE CENTER

The Porsche Experience Center gives visitors the chance to get into the cockpit and experience the adrenalin rush of the racetrack in one of its models (911, GT 718 Cayman, GT4 Clubsport, GT3 RS, or the latest electric Taycan). There is a choice of experiences and circuits, or you can hire a car for the day. You can also go along with your own Porsche and take advantage of one of the centre's circuits. Every year, the Porsche Experience Center in Le Mans organises tours for all of the marque's fans.

<https://porsche-experience-center.fr/accueil>



# LE MANS CLASSIC, THE 24 HOURS OF LE MANS OF YESTERYEAR

29 JUNE – 2 JULY



Le Mans Classic is back again this year to celebrate the 24 Hours of Le Mans Centenary. Four days of glorious vintage festivities, close on 800 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. As the engines roar around the track, there'll be a number of mini "villages" located around the circuit and an exhibition showcasing almost 8,500 classic cars from 60 different marques. 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.

<https://www.lemansclassic.com>

## ? Did you know?

### Target for 2025 - zero greenhouse gas emissions

The aim of the Mission H24 project launched by the Automobile Club de l'Ouest is to produce a completely green racing car that only emits water. The first LMPH2G prototype was introduced in 2020 and was an impressive performer: 0-100 kph in 3.4 seconds and a top speed in excess of 300 kph! The car is still under development and is set to make its 24 Hours of Le Mans debut in 2025.

The car gives a glimpse of the future of motor racing, which aims to achieve zero greenhouse gas emissions.









# Ever-evolving heritage.

*Almost 2,000 years of history separate the Roman wall from the 24 Hours of Le Man circuit. Having been at the centre of influence in medieval times and an innovative hub during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, La Sarthe boasts a very rich heritage. Over the past few years, several cultural sectors have emerged and further boosted the region's appeal.*

## STREET ART AROUND THE CITY

### – FESTIVAL PLEIN CHAMP

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 urban art at one of the workshops held during the event.







Plein Champ / BKFoxx



Plein Champ / Lapin Blanc ©D. Blavette



Plein Champ / Missy ©D. Blavette

## THE FESTIVAL VISITS THE WHOLE CITY

The mobile structures are then exhibited in every part of the city. Every year, the city council also commissions new, large-scale permanent murals. There are almost 30 works waiting to be discovered.

**Facebook : Plein Champ Le Mans**

## + IN THE SPOTLIGHT...

### street artist Seth

In 2022, 39 artists were involved in the festival. They included Seth, who produced a monumental anamorphic work spanning three buildings and six floors in the very heart of Le Mans. His mural is named Rabbit Hole and, with Alice and the white rabbit, offers us with a dizzying visual experience. Visitors to the Street Art Cities website voted his piece the second most beautiful mural in the world.



Plein Champ / Seth ©A. Szczuczynski

## CONTEMPORARY ART

- VIVOIN PRIORY

The Benedictine priory of Vivoin plunges you into a world of Gothic and Renaissance style. The priory is also home to a centre for visual and contemporary arts offering an abundant array of artistic creations and performances. A number of well-known artists come to confront their work with the old building, such as photographer Gérard Rancinan and graffiti artists Ravo Mattoni in 2022.

<https://prieure-de-vivoin.fr>



## LE CORBUSIER, A DIALOGUE BETWEEN ARCHITECTURE AND NATURE

- PIACÉ

Piacé was the focal point of a utopian project to bring art to the countryside, known as La Ferme Radieuse and initiated in 1930 by Le Corbusier and Norbert Bézard. Today's art centre looks back on this venture in its permanent exhibition and offers a circuit showcasing contemporary art, design and architecture with thirty or so works located around the village.

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



## A CONTEMPORARY ART CENTRE ON THE BANKS OF THE LOIR

- LES MOULINS DE PAILLARD

This is a venue for artists' residencies as well as a contemporary arts centre. An array of international artists from all disciplines come here to create, share and produce works subsequently shown across the world. Temporary exhibitions from April to November

<https://moulinsdepailard.wordpress.com/>





## FOLIAGE AMONG THE STONEMWORK

### - JARDINS DE LA MASSONNIÈRE

Surrounding a 16<sup>th</sup>-century manor house, the Jardins de la Massonnière gardens were designed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century by Marguerite Weinberg and her son, the painter Pierre Kendal Bushe. Inspired by English cottage gardens, Pascaline Delmas and Emmanuel Guillemet, state-qualified landscape gardeners, have since worked to restore the gardens and give them a new lease of life.

The arrowslits in the surrounding walls offer glimpses of the landscape and structure the space in which the different gardens are laid out, including a small perennial garden, a formal garden, a vegetable garden, a rose garden, a flower garden, an arboretum... all forming a poetic alliance of stonework and foliage!

**Facebook : Les jardins de La Massonnière**

## QUINTESSENTIAL BOXWOOD

### - VAUBOIN PRIORY

Thierry Juge has been shaping his garden according to his inspiration for almost 30 years. With his lively gaze and never without his straw hat, this true boxwood enthusiast sculpts, shapes and trims every day of the week, creating some real characters that take on a life of their own as the days and seasons go by. A listed Jardin Remarquable since 2014, Vauboin Priory is open to the public on reservation only, to guarantee a quality experience. "To set your imagination free, you need to be alone," explains the gardener. Vauboin Priory received first prize in the 2020 Art du Jardin awards, decided on by a panel of experts, the Signature Foundation and in partnership with the Ministry of Culture.

<https://leprieuredevauboin.fr>



## IN THE SPOTLIGHT...

**Entre Cours et Jardins, the hidden gardens of Le Mans - 16-17 September 2023**

This event is a chance for visitors to discover the horticultural wealth of the Cité Plantagenêt. Horticulturists, nursery owners, florists and artists take over 40 gardens around the area, open to the public. A poetic trail through flowered gardens, the courtyards of private residences, terraced gardens or along secret passages.

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

*All the gardens in  
La Sarthe*



©Les Jardins de la Massonnière



The garden at Vauboin © Clo&Clem

## MINIATURE PAINTINGS TO WEAR - LA VÉZANNE

When Clélia Chotard came across an old ceramic inkwell belonging to earthenware maker Léon Pouplard on the bed of La Vézanne stream in Malicorne-sur-Sarthe, she had a brainwave: why not use this discarded earthenware to make jewellery? And the Vézanne workshop was born! In her small workshop in Malicorne, Clélia devotes her time to creating what she calls "miniature paintings to wear". She selects small scenes represented on old earthenware, reworks them and turns them into jewellery. "It's about letting the past speak and bringing it back to life today. It's a blend of authenticity and modernity," she explains.



## THE SWEET FRAGRANCE OF THE PAST - LA MAISON COURTIN

Entering Grégoire Courtin's shop, midway between curiosity cabinet and apothecary's store, is a little like entering the world of Adèle Blanc-Sec, the famous heroine created by cartoonist Tardi. "Here, I sell things that don't sell," jokes the antique dealer/set designer. As you enter the shop, there's a display case containing a human skull with its bones slightly skewed. The shelves are stacked with old books and bottles. The visit continues in the basement where, new for this year, there is a museum of old shops. Here, Grégoire has reproduced a 1960s garage, a 1900s colour merchant's store, a hat shop from 1880... and an 18th-century cabinet of curiosities!

## GLASS IN EVERY SHAPE AND FORM- LA VERRERIE DES COTEAUX

Nicolas Pinquier always wanted to work with glass. In 2016, with his wife Lucille, he took over the Verrerie des Coteaux workshop and store in Ponce-sur-le-Loir. There, before interested visitors, the couple work the glass to make unique pieces in shimmering colours. Nicolas blows the glass while Lucille uses fusing and thermoforming techniques. There are bedside lamps, paperweights, vases, plates... everyday objects transformed into works of art in their hands. This year, they've also created a complete glass garden next to the studio. This outdoor showroom proves that glass can also enhance our exteriors.

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



## + IN THE SPOTLIGHT...

### La Chartre-sur-le-Loir, a bargain-hunter's paradise.

La Chartre-sur-le-Loir is a peaceful little village which lives in harmony with the river that flows 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 1 for every 100!

<https://abap72blog.wordpress.com/les-boutiques-du-village/wordpress.com/les-boutiques-du-village/>





© Clo&Clem



© P.Beltrami



© P.Beltrami



© Vallée de la Sarthe

## THE EARTHENWARE VILLAGE - MALICORNE-SUR-SARTHE

Over the centuries, Malicorne-sur-Sarthe became one of the main centres for pottery in France, and famous for its openwork creations.

### EARTHENWARE IN MALICORNE, THREE CENTURIES OF HISTORY

In 1747, Jean Loiseau, a first earthenware maker from the Touraine region, moved into the village of Malicorne. With its rich clay soil, an abundance of wood for the kilns and a trading port on the River Sarthe, Malicorne had everything he needed to establish his workshop. At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this became the Faïencerie Bourg-Joly Malicorne.

### OPENWORK CERAMICS AT MALICORNE

In 1924, Émile Tessier created the rare and delicate openwork technique, which became a speciality of Malicorne. Once turned, the piece of raw clay is cut with a sharp blade to create fine openings that recall lace patterns. The openwork adds a touch of lightness and elegance to plates, bowls and fruit baskets. Émile Tessier's workshop later became the Faïencerie d'Art de Malicorne.

### TWO WORKSHOPS STILL ACTIVE TODAY, PLUS A MUSEUM

While there were several earthenware workshops in Malicorne in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, there are only two still in operation today, the Faïencerie Bourg-Joly Malicorne and Faïencerie d'Art de Malicorne. The Earthenware and Ceramics Museum is open for entertaining, interactive visits, adapted for children.

## + IN THE SPOTLIGHT...

### The Moulin à Couleurs in Malicorne

Malicorne-sur-Sarthe has been awarded the national "Town of Arts and Crafts" label and is home to a number of artists and craft workshops (ceramists, wood turners, porcelain painters, etc.). The Arts and Crafts store in Malicorne, housed on the first floor of the former "mill of colours", is the best place to view their talent.



*All the outstanding  
craftspeople*

*The House of Plantagenêt left its mark on La Sarthe. From the centre of old Le Mans, which bears the family's name, to the Château de Montmirail, the scene of a historic meeting, retrace the route taken by this Franco-British dynasty.*

## A LEAP BACK IN TIME

### - THE PLANTAGENET CITY

This is the historic centre of Le Mans and is impressive for its size and harmony. Spanning an area of around 15 hectares, it is the site of a hundred or so timber-framed houses, the oldest of which date back to the fifteenth century. A number of sculpted cornice pillars and engraved lintels tell the story of the town's commercial activity and perpetuate certain legends. The cathedral of Saint Julien, whose spire rises high above the town, provides the link between Romanesque and Gothic architecture. It harbours two treasures: a magnificent 14th-century chapel, decorated with 47 painted angel musicians, and the 12th-century Ascension window, the oldest stained glass window in the world still in place in a cathedral.

[www.sarhetourisme.com/visites-citadines-du-mans](http://www.sarhetourisme.com/visites-citadines-du-mans)



The Plantagenet city ©M.Oudoux



Suspended house, The Plantagenet city ©P.Beltrami

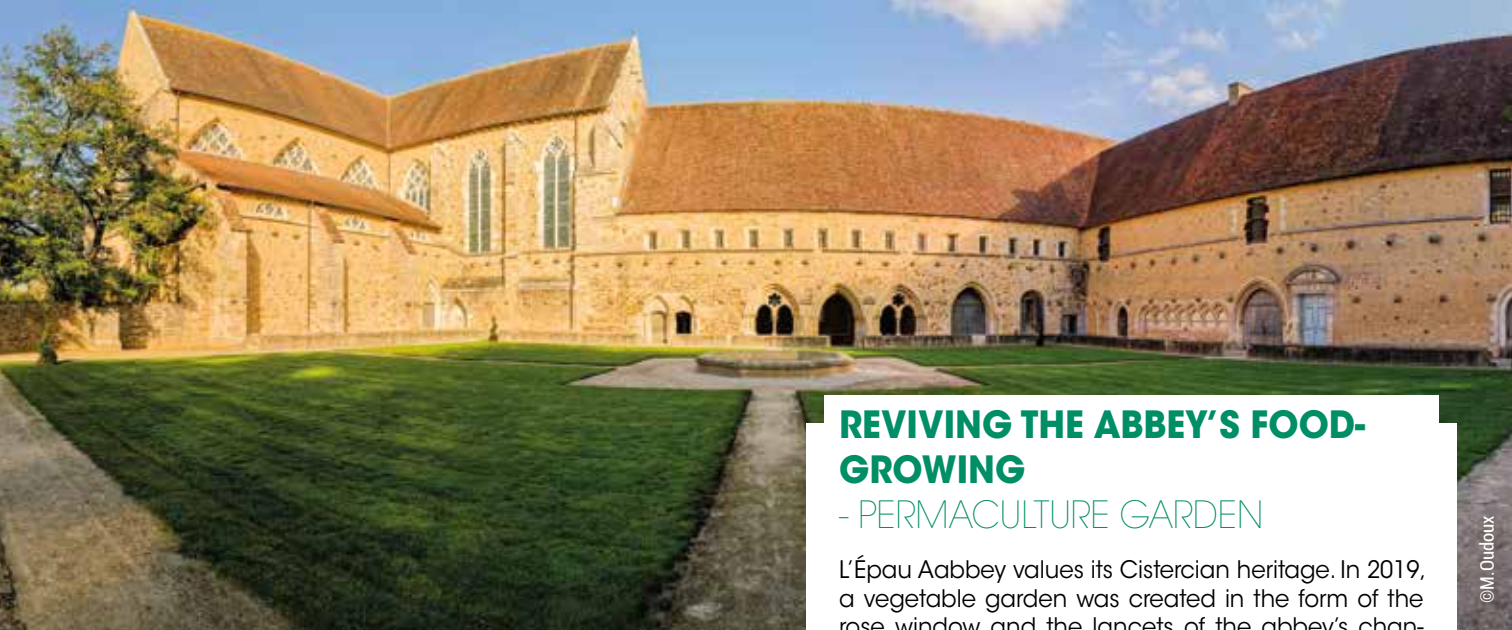


# THE ABBEY AND BERENGARIA OF NAVARRA

## - L'ÉPAU ROYAL ABBEY

Wife of Richard the Lionheart, Berengaria of Navarra decided to found a large Cistercian abbey, L'Epau Royal Abbey, in 1229. The building's architecture respects the order's values of austerity and simplicity to the letter. The abbey is now one of the most significant cultural centres in La Sarthe and each year hosts a major exhibition, a photographic walk in its gardens (with work from Vincent Munier, Hans-Sylvestre and Robert Doisneau, among others), music festivals (classical and contemporary – and light and sound shows at the end of the year).

<https://epau.sarthe.fr>



## REVIVING THE ABBEY'S FOOD-GROWING

### - PERMACULTURE GARDEN

L'Épau Aabbey values its Cistercian heritage. In 2019, a vegetable garden was created in the form of the rose window and the lancets of the abbey's chancel. Following the example of the monks, who were self-sufficient, the gardens supply fresh produce for the restaurant, the Café des Moines, including herbs, vegetables, fruit, eggs and even honey.

© M. Oudoux



## IN THE SPOTLIGHT...

New for  
2023

### Berengaria of Navarra.

Three major events are turning the spotlight on the wife of Richard the Lionheart: the release of a graphic novel and a scientific biography, plus a major exhibition in the abbey all provide a glimpse into the life of this historical figure with strong roots in La Sarthe, and who lived an extraordinary life.

**Until March 2023.**



© CD72

# IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE PLANTAGENÊTS



©M.Guillon

## THE SCENE OF A HISTORIC MEETING

### - THE CHÂTEAU DE MONTMIRAIL

In 1169, the King of England, Henry II or Henry Plantagenet, accompanied by two of his sons, Richard the Lionheart and John Lackland, met the King of France, Louis VII the Younger, and the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Becket, in the grounds of the Château de Montmirail. Their aim was to reconcile Thomas Becket with Henry II. The attempt failed and the archbishop was murdered less than a year later by knights close to the King of England.

## A BUSTLING CASTLE ALL YEAR ROUND

This castle, with its medieval foundations, rebuilt in the fifteenth century, is open all year round. It also has five comfortable and characterful guest rooms. Open for visits in the daytime, the castle hosts concerts and "musical picnics" in its gardens in summer. There is a boutique selling local goods and craft items, showcasing regional know-how. The stables have been renovated and now house a tearoom, reception rooms and seminar facilities.



©M.Guillon



©J.P Berlose

<https://chateaudemontmirail.com>

## HISTORIC KNIVES!

### - L'ASTELLE MONTMIRAIL

Born of a meeting between Pascal Turpin , one of the last edge-tool makers in France, and the Herbelin family, the château's owners, L'Astelle Montmirail provides hand-made knives, some of which are made using old beams taken from the castle.



©M.Guillon



# AN EXTRAORDINARY WALL

*Built between the third and fourth centuries, this wall stretched more than a kilometre surrounding the ancient city of Vindinum, capital of the Aulerci Cenomani Gallic tribe. There are 500 metres of the polychrome walls, which feature geometric patterns, still standing today, interspersed with 11 towers and 3 posterns. Along with those of the two imperial capitals, Rome and Constantinople (Istanbul), the walls of Le Mans are the best preserved in the ancient Roman Empire.*

## A PRESTIGIOUS GALLO-ROMAN FORTIFICATION

Visible from the river, the predominantly red wall was built to impress the populace. The aim of its builders was no doubt to show off their town's power and wealth. The finesse of the diamond, triangle and hourglass patterns and the quality of the construction, with alternating layers of bricks, light limestone rubble and dark brown russet sandstone bound in pink mortar, support this theory.

### ? Did you know?

Le Mans city council has embarked on an application for UNESCO World Heritage listing for its Gallo-Roman wall.



©M.Guillon







# On two wheels. ■

*La Sarthe appeals to cycle tourers.  
As well as the national routes – La Vélobuissonnière (250 km)  
and the Vallée du Loir by Bike (320 km) –  
there's also La Petite Reine (130 km) and the Ronde des Vallées et Forêts (185 km).*

## 250 KM OF NATURE AND HERITAGE TO EXPLORE - THE 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. As it is close to the French capital (55 minutes by train from Paris to Le Mans), this is a great idea for a weekend or a week's jaunt for city dwellers.

[www.sarthe-tourisme.com/la-velobuissonniere-v44](http://www.sarthe-tourisme.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 - Saumur.



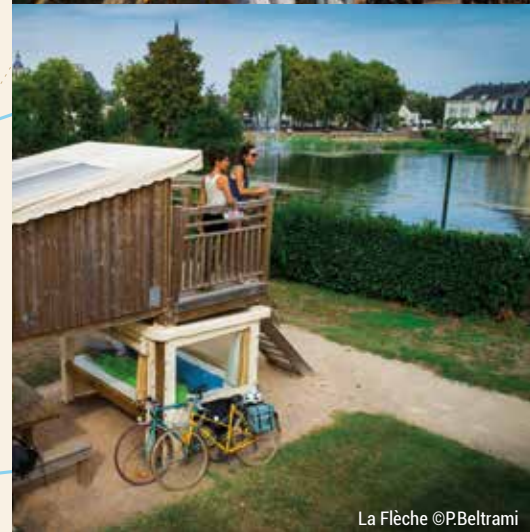




Fillé-sur-Sarthe ©P.Beltrami



Le Mans ©P.Beltrami



La Flèche ©P.Beltrami

## ? Did you know?

Géo magazine ranked The Vélobuissonnière® among the 11 best cycling routes in France in November 2020.

# THE LOIR VALLEY BY BIKE AND THE NEW CYCLING TRAILS

## THE LOIR VALLEY BY BIKE - 320 KM

This cycling 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 variety of picturesque villages and the valley's distinctive vineyards.



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

<https://www.sarthe-tourisme.com/la-vallee-du-loir-velo-v47>

## 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!



**The 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.**

## 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 La 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.**



## IN THE SPOTLIGHT...

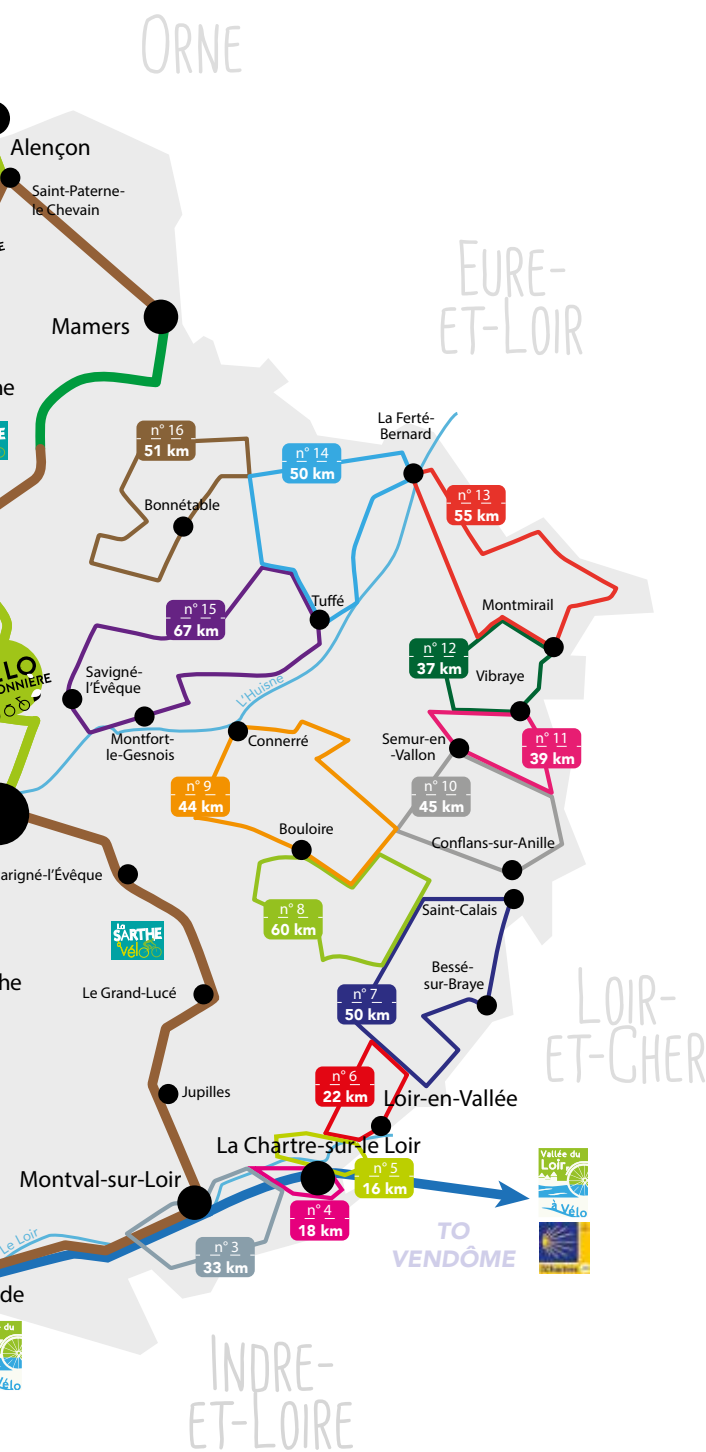
### The new greenway on the Loir Valley by Bike route

La Sarthe council inaugurated a 33-kilometre greenway towards the end of 2022, stretching from the Montabon railway rotunda as far as Bessé-sur-Braye, ideal for everyday cycle commutes but also for cycle tourists on the Loir Valley by Bike route.



- The Vélobuissonnière (V44)
- The Loir Valley by Bike (V47)
- Green Routes
- Regional Trail Noyen/Sarthe - Sablé/Sarthe
- Bike Loop Trails :
  - La Petite Reine (130 km)
  - La Ronde des Vallées et Forêts
- Local Bike Loop Trails





## SERVICES FOR CYCLISTS

### REPAIRS AND BICYCLE HIRE - THE GREEN BIKE

New for  
2023



©F.Pasquier

Romain Galpin

Romain Galpin, a former carpenter, moved into the cycling sector last July when he set up The Green Bike. His workshop is just a stone's throw from the new Loir Valley greenway and there he can take care of any kind of repair, from most minor to a complete overhaul of your bike. He also has around a dozen bicycles for hire, with all the equipment you need for children, such as trailers, front and rear seats and trailer bikes. **Facebook : The Green Bike**

### ELECTRIC MOUNTAIN BIKE HIRE - CHASE THE LINE

New for  
2023



Maxime Davoust

In the heart of the Alpes Mancelles region, on the La Vélobuissonnière route, Maxime Davoust set up this workshop to provide an electric mountain bike hire service for guided or unaccompanied rides (lasting a few hours, a day or several days). Coaching sessions are available for more athletic visitors! Chase The Line also repairs and services bicycles. **Facebook : Chase The Line**

### THE SARTHE BIKE CAFÉ - LA PINCE À VÉLO

In Téloché, a 30-minute cycle ride from the Bercé Forest, La Pince à Vélo is a friendly stopover for cyclists on their travels. This vintage-style bicycle café has a repair workshop and a bar where you can relax and chat with the many cycling enthusiasts you'll find among the clients. There is also a shop selling local Sarthe produce and cycling accessories (vintage T-shirts, caps, etc.).

<https://lapinceaveilo.eatbu.com>







# A land of experiences. ■

*In La Sarthe, life is easy-going but with plenty to do! It's the ideal setting to try your hand at new experiences, such as sailing on a barge, capturing nature on camera, discovering wild-life from around the world, surfing on an efoil board or learning more about the farming world.*

# THE RIVERS OF WESTERN FRANCE



THE RIVERS  
OF WESTERN FRANCE

ANJOU | MAYENNE | SARTHE  
NEW PATHS TO FREEDOM

## NEW WAYS TO FREEDOM - THE RIVERS OF WESTERN FRANCE®

La Sarthe, Maine-et-Loire and Mayenne have joined forces to create the first river destination in western France. With a total 283 km of waterways, this is the largest navigable area west of Paris and the largest network of navigable rivers in France! The rivers of western France are highly appreciated for the tranquillity and diversity of the landscapes they meander through. They have lost none of their natural charm, ferrying travellers and wanderers through an area brimming with remarkable heritage.

[www.sarthe-tourisme.com/rivieres-de-louest](http://www.sarthe-tourisme.com/rivieres-de-louest)



©P.Beltrami



©P.Beltrami



©M.Guillon





# DES ACTIVITÉS SUR LA RIVIÈRE



## WELCOME TO THE "CARIBBEAN-ON-SARTHE !

### - WAKE PARADISE

Wake Paradise is the ultimate spot for wakeboarding enthusiasts! This leisure park was extended in 2022 with the addition of a restaurant and new jumping modules, all against a backdrop of soft sand and palm trees.

**Facebook : Wake Paradise**



©Wake Paradise

## SILENTLY SURFING ON THE RIVER - AVENTURE NAUTIQUE

Head for Aventure Nautique to try something different – 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)**



©M.Guillon



©M.Guillon

## PICNIC ON A TRADITIONAL VESSEL - LA RÊVEUSE ST NICOLAS

La Rêveuse de Saint-Nicolas is a replica of a seventeenth-century flat-bottomed boat, typical to the Pays de la Loire region. She awaits you all summer long on the River Sarthe for a cruise through the history of Le Mans. Take this opportunity to explore the city's extraordinary heritage, from the Gallo-Roman wall, one of the finest in Europe, to the Cité Plantagenêt and the old tobacco factory founded at the turn of the 19th century.

**Facebook : La Rêveuse de Saint-Nicolas**

## RESPECTFUL FISHING FÉDÉRATION DE LA PÊCHE

With 4,500 km of rivers and 50 lakes, La Sarthe is a dream destination for fly-fishers, spinners, bobbers and No-Kill fishers. No-Kill fishing means releasing the fish without harming them and is becoming an increasingly popular pastime. Some fishing spots, such as the fly-fishing area in the Alpes Mancelles, are reserved for this type of fishing.

The Sarthe Fishing Federation is very active and offers a range of sessions with a coach to help you start or improve your fishing skills.



©J.P Berlose

## GET TO KNOW NATURE BETTER

In La Sarthe, there are 17 sites classified as Sensitive Natural Spaces (ENS) and subject to sustainable management. Some ENS sites have observatories and educational trails for observing and understanding the fauna and flora of various ecosystems (marshes, peat bogs, hedgerows, lakes, limestone hillsides, forests, etc.). Otters, yellow-bellied toads, peregrine falcons, bats, and hermit beetles are just some of the species to be discovered in La Sarthe.

[www.sarthe-tourisme.com/la-sarthe-si-proche-si-nature](http://www.sarthe-tourisme.com/la-sarthe-si-proche-si-nature)



Otter



Yellow-bellied Toad



Great Tit



Peregrine Falcon





## OAK TREES - THE KINGS OF BERCÉ

The Bercé Forêt d'Exception site is home to several stands of oak, including the Les Clos stand, one of the finest in France. It spans 8 hectares and contains hundreds of oak trees with an average age of over 300 years and a height of up to 50 metres. The Boppe oak, for example, known as the King of Bercé, measures 44 metres.

## A DIFFERENT LOOK AT THE FOREST - CARNUTA

Carnuta, a centre devoted to the Forest and People, along with the ONF (national forestry board) offer guided visits of the Bercé Forest, which will call on all your senses, with a blindfold walk, a visit with mirrors to observe the canopy, and twilight visits to experience the bellowing of the stags. Carnuta houses a museum with a special fun area where visitors of every age can learn to recognise the sounds of the forest, identify the prints left by wildlife, and measure the height of a tree without a tape measure.



## THE FOREST, THE IDEAL PLACE FOR A STROLL

Like an amazing natural cathedral where the trunks and crowns act as pillars and vaults, the Bercé Forest is ideal for walking, observing nature or simply contemplating. The red-coloured forest roads converge at the many crossroads, which are starting points for hikers, horse riders and cyclists. As summer draws to a close, the bellows of the stags start to echo in the undergrowth.

*Close  
to nature*







©A.Amiot

### **THE MOUNTAINS, JUST 2 HOURS FROM PARIS!** - THE ALPES MAN-CELLES

The Alpes Mancelles are a fragment of the American Massif in the heart of the Normandie-Maine Regional Natural Park. This distinctive landscape is characterised by the unique scree slopes of Saint-Léonard-des-Bois, its steep hills and its forests. The River Sarthe meanders through the rocky reliefs of sandstone and granite to reveal, here and there, a heritage of mills and dams.

### **SPORT AND NATURE** - SAINT-LÉONARD-DES-BOIS

"Saint-Léo", as this characterful village is known, boasts the Petite Cité de Caractère label. Nestled in the Alpes Mancelles, it is the starting point for a number of hikes that will take you to the summits of the two steep hills that surround it. The Domaine du Gasseau is a leisure park in the village, where you can go horse riding, canoeing, climbing or tackle a treetop adventure course.



## HOME OF THE WEAVERS

### - FRESNAY-SUR-SARTHE

Perched on a rocky outcrop, this medieval Petite Cité de Caractère (or small town of character) grew around its textile industry. The cloth made at Fresnay was renowned for its finesse. The Weavers quarter on the banks of the River Sarthe is now a favourite with walkers. The narrow streets, the remains of the castle destroyed during the Hundred Years' War and the listed church, built of Roussard stone, make Fresnay one of the most beautiful villages in La Sarthe. In fact, it was voted the second most beautiful village in France in 2021!



## IN THE SPOTLIGHT...

**The scree**, consisting of jagged Armorican sandstone, was formed during colder climates 2.6 million years ago. The alternating freezing and thawing during the ice age caused the rock to split and shatter.





## GOATS, A MILL AND AN ARTIST - LE MOULIN DE LA RONCE

When you enter this 16th-century watermill, you venture into the realm of Jean Jacquelin, a renowned Parisian poster artist (author of the posters for the film *Casque D'Or* with Simone Signoret). The artist moved from Paris to the family mill in Champrond, nestled in the Perche Sarthois bocage, in the 1960s. Jean set up his studio here while his wife and daughter, Biche Jacquelin, created a goat farm. Today, Biche also manages a number of guest rooms in the mill. The cosy, comfortable interior pays homage to the artist. The studio has been converted into a lounge and displays hundreds of his posters and paintings (featuring the Aéropostale aviation company and the 24 Hours of Le Mans, among other scenes). If you have time, Biche will be happy to tell you all about her father's art. And foodies will enjoy the goat's cheese served at breakfast. A real treat!

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



New for  
2023

©M.Guillon

## AN ESCAPE GAME AT THE FARM

Créé par trois agriculteurs passionnés par les escape-games, Escapedream propose une immersion dans quatre univers pour des parties de 90 minutes environ au cœur de la ferme de vaches laitières. Dans le dernier scénario qui sera disponible en 2023, les joueurs incarneront des poilus pendant la guerre 14-18 et devront tenter de sortir d'une tranchée reconstituée.

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



©Escapedream

New for  
2023

## LA SARTHE, HOME TO FINE PRODUCE



©M.Guillon

La Sarthe is a rural department teeming with some very talented growers and producers. They are proud of their produce and many of them welcome visitors for a tour of their farm.

[www.sarthetourisme.com/decouvrir/loisirs-en-famille/vacances-a-la-ferme/](http://www.sarthetourisme.com/decouvrir/loisirs-en-famille/vacances-a-la-ferme/)



## SAVOUR THE WINES!

### - JASNIÈRES ET CÔTEAUX-DU-LOIR

The south of La Sarthe is well suited to wine-growing. Two appellations d'origine contrôlée (AOC) wines, Jasnières and Coteaux-du-Loir, are produced there and have been awarded the Vignobles et Découvertes label. The winemakers offer an array of experiences, such as a chance to learn the basics of oenology at Domaine de Cézin, a night at a vineyard at Domaine Gigou, or a tour of the "decorated" cellars of Domaine Lelais.

[www.sarhetourisme.com/decouvrir/terroir-et-gastronomie/les-vins-du-loir/](http://www.sarhetourisme.com/decouvrir/terroir-et-gastronomie/les-vins-du-loir/)



©PBeltrami



©noscoeursvoyageurs

## HUG A COW!

### - LA FERME LES DEUX SABOTS

This dairy farm is unlike any other. Its barns are open for visits and every effort is made to ensure they are accessible to all, with an access ramp and raised floor for people with reduced mobility. Visitors can even discover the virtues of a warm hug with a cow! And to round off your visit, you can enjoy a drink outside as you relax, surrounded by the cows!

<http://lesdeuxsabots.com/>

## SAFARI À LA DÉCOUVERTE DES CERFS DU PERCHE

Hop on board a 1960s military truck for a ride out into the vast expanses of La Haie farm to discover the stags of Le Perche. Dominique Vadé has been breeding stags for 30 years and knows everything about their behaviour. He has even contributed to scientific research with

the INRA, France's agricultural research institute. He'll explain everything you need to know about the king of the forest, including their autumn bellowing, their antler cycle and diet.

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



Holidays at the  
farm





# Terroir & Gastronomy.

*La Sarthe is blessed with a wealth of outstanding agricultural produce.  
Which is much appreciated by the local chefs!  
Step inside their restaurants to savour the local specialities.*

# THE BEST PLACES TO EAT IN LA SARTHE



©M.Guillon



## L'AUBERGE DE BAGATELLE, LE MANS

After working in some fine establishments such as Les Crayères, La Chèvre d'Or and Kaiseki, Jean-Sébastien Monné came to Le Mans. In his kitchen, East meets the West in dishes where local flavours are fused with aromas from further afield. Animal, mineral, vegetable... that winning trio has become the signature of L'Auberge de Bagatelle and its astonishing fare (roasted monkfish with coconut and saffron from Vaulogé in La Sarthe, or roast venison with cocoa nibs from Ikori).

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



## MAISON NIPA, FILLÉ-SUR-SARTHE

Sharon and Jason Le Glatin have created a restaurant that reflects their distinctive style, a blend of French and Filipino cuisine with the focus firmly on local produce. Sharon, who trained with Alain Ducasse, and Jason, former second commis at the Michelin-starred Auberge de Bagatelle, really spoil us with the refinement of their compositions. The twice-cooked fattened hen from Cour d'Armoise, sweet potato, avocado-banana guacamole, potato confit in the jus of a roast, the dacquoise and hazelnut praline, kumquat, juniper cream and basil sorbet... are all to die for!

<https://maisonnipa.fr>



©M.Guillon



## LE LUCÉ, LE 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://chateaugrandlucé.com>



©M.Spengler

## L'ÉPI'CURIEUX, PLANTAGENET CITY

In his restaurant on the edge of the old town of Le Mans, chef François Ricordeau's dishes follow his inspiration and the seasonal produce he has at hand: sablé (shortbread) with fresh figs, oyster cappuccino, Sarthe duck fillet with plums and yellow wine, croquant of dark chocolate, beetroot and mozzarella di bufala... a cuisine that changes constantly as the seasons go by. After receiving the "Young Talent" award for the west of France in 2017, L'Epi'Curieux obtained the "Sommelier" trophy for the west of France from Gault & Millau in 2019.

<http://restaurant-lepicurieux.fr/>



©J.P Berlose



©J.P Berlose

## SILEX, CHAHAGNES



Young chefs Maïté 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>



©P.Poulin



©P.Beltrami

## GREAT FOOD AND HOSPITALITY

- LOUISE CUISINE

Louise Fourmont offers a warm and friendly welcome in Viré-en-Champagne. Be prepared for a fabulous atmosphere when you take part in the cookery classes with Louise, a pastry chef, ice-cream maker, chocolate maker and confectioner.

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

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

- FROMAGE ET SES AMIS

After travelling the world, 2015's world champion cheesemaker Fabien Degoulet, born in Le Mans, returned to his native La Sarthe and opened a different kind of cheese shop in the city - Fromage et ses Amis. As well as selling some exceptional cheeses, Fabien offers a range of his own original creations and maturations, such as goat's cheese with cherry leaf, Camembert matured with butter and Timut pepper, or goat's cheese with wasabi. In the evenings, Fabien can show you which cheeses go with which wines or even sake, how to cut different cheeses and will teach you the history of certain cheeses.

**Facebook : Fromage et ses amis**



©M.Guillon





©M.Guillon

## A PREMIUM, ENTIRELY LOCAL EAU-DE-VIE

### - DISTILLERIE DU SONNEUR

Emmanuel Viton always wanted to be a farmer. That dream came true when he opened his distillery in Le Mans, as he uses his own orchard to create top-of-the-range liqueurs and eaux-de-vie. The Distillerie du Sonneur is simultaneously a specialist alcohol store, a tasting venue and a place to prepare fruits with his still. It is open to the public for some fascinating – and delicious – guided visits. You won't want to miss the very surprising Rillettes liqueur!

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

*For other tasting opportunities in La Sarthe*



## NOT TO BE MISSED

### LES RILLETTES DU MANS ET DE LA SARTHE



©J.P Berlose

Rillettes de la Sarthe are made from pork, cooked slowly over a low heat in fat and seasoned with salt and pepper. As succulent and as mouthwatering as it comes!

### LE SABLÉ

First introduced at the court of Louis XIV by the Marquise de Sablé, the Sablé is a small crumbly biscuit, rather like a shortbread, made from flour, butter and sometimes egg yolk.

<http://www.sablesienne.com/fr/>

<https://www.maisondrains.com/>



©B.Martin







# Accommo dation. ■

*An eco-friendly tiny house, a quirky seventies-style gîte or a romantic château...  
Our favourite address in La Sarthe in 2023.*

## NEW LIFE FOR THE COUNTRYSIDE

### - GREENOPIE À VALENNES

This is an ambitious rural revitalisation project that includes accommodation, a vegetable garden, a restaurant and a grocery shop. The vegetable garden provides ingredients for the restaurant, while the accommodation offers visitors a place to stay. The rentals are refined and understated, with living areas designed to be shared. The inviting restaurant is named Jour de Fête after the Jacques Tati film, and serves dishes made from exclusively local ingredients.

In fact, it was named "Best Village Café" by the 2023 Fooding Guide.

[www.greenopie.fr/accueil](http://www.greenopie.fr/accueil)



©M. Guillon



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

Marcel Pagnol lived in this magnificent 17th-century mill, renovated in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> 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, while on the garden side its harmonious curves and the weir that stretches as far as the eye can see are quite simply enchanting.

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://moulindignieres.com/>



©Clo&Clem



## JOURNEY BACK TO THE 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

### - LA TEMPLERIE

Located in the heart of the town of La Flèche, this 18th-century mansion has 4 guest rooms and large grounds with a swimming pool.

The rooms are all named after illustrious personalities from the Age of Enlightenment: Canaletto, Rousseau, Mozart and Emilie du Châtelet. Nathalie Polomack, owner of La Templerie and a trained interior designer, has lovingly decorated the rooms in a simple and understated way that is very easy on the eye. The result is extremely pleasing.

[www.latemplerie-chambre-hote-la-fleche.fr](http://www.latemplerie-chambre-hote-la-fleche.fr)

New for  
-  
2023



©M. Guillon

New for  
-  
2023

## THE SORCERER'S RETREAT

### - LES INSOLITES DE JSK

From the four-poster bed and the clawfoot bathtub to the fanciful frescoes and crooked doors, every detail transports the visitor to the world of witchcraft. This wonderfully comfortable setting also boasts a gorgeous terrace with an outdoor whirlpool that looks out over the hills of the Alpes Mançelles. Kids even have their own separate room, reached through a hidden trap door!

<https://www.insolites-jsk.fr/repos-des-sorciers.html>



©Les insolites de JSK

All  
accommodation



## ECO-LODGES ON THE EDGE OF LE MANS - DOMAINE DE L'ÉPAU



These three semi-buried structures are barely visible as you enter the Domaine de l'Épau. Yet they house six lodges, each with a large wooden terrace offering views of the Arche de la Nature, a 450-hectare natural preserve on the outskirts of the city. The estate's energy-efficient eco-lodges are ideal for a peaceful night away from the urban hustle and bustle.

The Domaine de l'Épau also includes a restaurant and seminar venue with a clear environmental commitment.

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

## A ZEN-INSPIRED STAY IN THE ALPES MANCELLES – MAISON DU GASSEAU

Set in a gorgeous building in the unique setting of the Alpes Mancelles, the chic and charming guest rooms and restaurant of Domaine de Gasseau are ideal for a relaxing getaway surrounded by nature. When they are not out hiking along the rugged hillsides, guests can enjoy the entirely local and eco-friendly cuisine plus a wellness area (foot reflexology, massages, etc.) for a welcome health boost.

There is an array of nature-based activities (canoeing, climbing, horse riding, etc.) on offer nearby.

<http://legasseau.fr>



## A STAY AT BEAULIEU FARM – PARCEL TINY HOUSE

Set on an organic poultry farm, this tiny house has solar panels and a water tank so that it remains self-sufficient. The large glass doors overlook a lovely meadow where you can observe the wildlife as you sip on your coffee in the cosy interior. A country-style breakfast (with organic eggs from the farm) and farm tours with the owners can be included in the package. There are also electric bicycles for hire.

[www.parceltinyhouse.com/location/ferme-de-beaulieu-sarthe](http://www.parceltinyhouse.com/location/ferme-de-beaulieu-sarthe)





## QUIRKY OR HIGH-END



### A HAVEN OF GOOD TASTE – LE CHÂTEAU DE SAINT-PATERNE

It is said that the Château de Saint-Paterne was once a love nest for Henri IV... Here, Charles-Henry and Ségolène de Valbray offer a warm welcome in their family residence, converted into a luxury 10-room hotel with lovely grounds and a heated outdoor pool. A highly romantic experience awaits, including dinner lit by dozens of silver candle holders.

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

©D.E Cohen

### LEAP INTO PSYCHEDELIA IN LA SARTHE – GÎTE DU MISFON



©Gîte du Misfon

The Misfon gîte (6 separate rooms) whisks you back to the 70s with its teak sideboards, armchairs covered in fluffy blankets, black and white tiles, shaggy rugs and vinyl records. Sip on a drink beside the (heated) pool and gather round the large table with its funky styling for a joyful blast from the past.

<https://gite-du-misfon.fr/>

### ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL HOTELS IN THE WORLD – L'HÔTEL DU GRAND-LUCÉ

Château du Grand-Lucé boasts impressive 18th-century tufa stone facades and extensive gardens. The rooms give guests a taste of everyday life for French nobility of that time. Jean-Paul Gaultier's creations are complemented by the decorative paintings of Jean-Baptiste Pillement, famous for his work commissioned by Marie-Antoinette. In 2020, Condé Nast Traveller magazine named Le Grand-Lucé as one of the 86 most beautiful hotels in the world. The hotel is part of the Leading Hotels of the World network.

<https://chateaugrandluce.com>



©M.Spengler

# Shopping made in Sarthe.

## CHOCOLATE RACERS - BELLANGER

An original selection named Tertre Rouge after one of the famous corners on the 24 Hours of Le Mans circuit. We bet that these chocolates will soon race their way to your mouth!

[www.chocolats-bellanger.com](http://www.chocolats-bellanger.com)



## PORTRAIT OF A CITY - LA PUCE DE SAINT-OUEN\*

Pure lines that sketch cityscapes but also portraits. Creations that feature on lamps, mugs and tote bags. Lovely souvenirs that are worth checking out.

<https://lapucedestouen.com>



## JEWELLERY FROM OLD CERAMICS - ATELIER VEZANNE

Jewellery made from broken or chipped old ceramic plates transformed into original designs forming miniature paintings that you can wear.

<https://vezanne.fr>





## HEAD JEWELLERY

- JOLI MINOIS \*

Head jewellery, combs and hair clips made in eco-responsible style from surplus leather for a stylish yet bohemian look!

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



## MANDALA, EVERYWHERE YOU LOOK

- FOXIE MANDALA \*

Lovingly hand-painted, dishwasher- and microwave-safe tableware... Foxie Mandala's creations are sure to win you over!

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

## LOCAL GOURMET TREATS

- ATELIER JEANTAINÉ

Les gourmands auront du mal à résister à l'atelier Jeantainé. Goûter le pavé de Roussard, c'est goûter l'histoire de la Sarthe.

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



\* PRODUCTS YOU'LL FIND IN THE AU CŒUR DES ARTISTES STORE IN LE MANS.

Facebook : Au Cœur des Artistes - Le Mans



## LOVE LA SARTHE? GIFT LA SARTHE!

- THE 72 GIFT VOUCHER

The 72 gift voucher is a community-minded gift that supports local businesses. Take your pick from over 72 quirky, romantic, relaxing, thrilling or gourmet experiences found all over La Sarthe!

[www.sarthe tourisme.com/leboncadeau72](http://www.sarthe tourisme.com/leboncadeau72)

# Cultural diary.

**12-14 MAY**

**French Moto Grand Prix**

International motorcycling race,  
Le Mans.

**MID-MAY**

**Festival de l'Épau**

Classic music festival  
L'Épau Royal Abbey.

**3-4 JUNE**

**Gardeners' festival**

A gathering for gardening professionals and amateurs  
Château du Lude.

**10-11 JUNE**

**24 Hours of Le Mans**

24 Hours of Le Mans world-famous  
car race, Le Mans.



**29 JUNE-2 JULY**

**Le Mans Classic**

One of the world's greatest  
classic car meetings, Le Mans.

**1-2 JULY**

**Festival Kikloche  
Puppets, theatre,**

concerts for children.  
North Sarthe.

**JULY**

**Festival Plein Champ**

Urban arts festival,  
Le Mans.

**7-9 JULY**

**Festival Le Son des Cuivres**

Music festival showcasing  
brass instruments,  
Mamers.

**8-9 JULY**

**24 Heures Rollers**

Team roller-balding race,  
Bugatti Circuit in Le Mans.

**JULY & AUGUST**

**La Nuit des chimères**

Light shows,  
Cité Plantagenêt, Le Mans.

**23-26 AUGUST**

**Festival de musique  
baroque**

Sablé-sur-Sarthe.

**16-17 SEPTEMBER**

**Entre cours et jardins**

Sensory and botanical trail,  
Plantagenet city Le Mans.

**23-24 SEPTEMBER**

**24 Heures Trucks**

Truck racing grand prix,  
Bugatti Circuit, Le Mans.

**END SEPT.-EARLY OCT**

**Faites lire !**

Book show and festival,  
Le Mans.

**NOVEMBER**

**Bebop festival**

Contemporary music festival,  
Le Mans..

**NOVEMBER TO JANUARY**

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

Yvré-l'Évêque.

List of events available  
at the time of writing this press kit.  
For latest information, please refer to the  
agenda by scanning this QR code.







Gardeners' festival, château du Lude ©P.Holley



Épau Royal Abbey ©CD72



BeBop Festival ©S.Duarte



Festival Plein Champ ©D.Blavette



24 Hours of Le Mans ©M.Hecker



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