



Office de Tourisme
St-Guilhem-Le-Désert
VALLÉE DE L'HÉRAULT

Welcome to "vallée de l'Hérault"

Grand Site of France
and UNESCO heritage



Outstanding
landscapes
and sites



'Grand Site de France Gorges de l'Hérault'

In 'vallée de l'Hérault'

This 'Grand Site de France' is a revitalization place of awakening senses and spirituality

An absolute alchemy of nature and culture, the site is situated at the heart of remarkable landscapes. Set between the hills of Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert, the Hérault gorges and the Piemont of Languedoc, a vast sun-drenched landscape of vineyards, the river Hérault winds its course. The groove the river has created over millennia and which fetches

up to the 'pont du Diable', (11th century), offers to visitors a rugged landscape with gorges that frame the medieval town of Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert and the Clamouse Cave.

It is in the heart of the 'Val de Gellone' that Guilhem, cousin of Charlemagne, founded the abbey of Gellone in 804. Today, the abbey and the 'Pont du Diable' are classified as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, as part of the French section of Santiago de Compostela Way.



Site characteristics



10 municipalities:

Aniane, Argelliers, Brissac, Causse-de-la-Selle, Notre-Dame-de-Londres, Montpeyroux, Puéchabon, St-Guilhem-le-Désert, St-Jean-de-Fos et St-Martin-de-Londres.

About **6,000 inhabitants / 21,000 hectares**, of which 8,800 hectares of classified site.

2 monuments listed as World Heritage by **UNESCO**; two Natura 2000 sites.

To transform this volume of visits, with its potential for disruption into something of value

Since 1991, the 'Grand Site the France' has the management of these main axes: management of traffic flows, restoration of heritage and reception of visitors (650,000 people each year).

The guarantee of quality label - a protected site involved in sustainable management...

Awarded for 6 years by the Ministry of Ecology, the label 'Grand Site de France des Gorges de l'Hérault' is carried by the Communities of Communes: Vallée de l'Hérault, Cévennes Gangeoises and Sumé-

noises and Grand Pic Saint Loup. They have made a long-term commitment to implement a responsible and sustainable management scheme.

The values of the Grand Site de France exceed the perimeter of the 10 municipalities concerned by the labeling. They are supported and shared by all the villages in the 3 Communities of Communes.

The 'Grand Site de France Gorges de l'Hérault' is also classified 'Grand Site Occitanie'.

Discover the villages of this classified 'Grand Site de France'

In 'vallée de l'Hérault'



Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert

Ancient spiritual stopover on the Saint James of Compostela way, the medieval city of Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert is an indispensable step during any visit to the Hérault valley. **Classified as amongst the most beautiful villages of France**, it stretches its alleys along the Val de Gellone, following the Verdus stream. The village is the perfect setting for **Gellone Abbey, an absolute jewel of early Romanesque art in the Languedoc.**



Montpeyroux

The Castellans, sentinel of Time

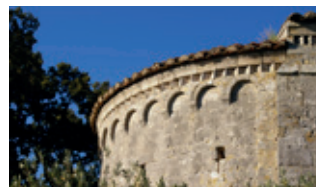
In the heart of a renowned vineyard, it enjoys a rich heritage including the **'castellas', exceptionally fortified structures** from the 13th century, which today still seems to stand guard over the Valley. From the entrance of the village or from the 'Chapel du Barry,' the ascent is easy. **A family stroll down the paths of history!**



Puéchabon

Circular Village from the Middle Ages, in the heart of the garrigue

Puéchabon is a village in circular configuration built in the 11th century around a long disappeared fort. The ancient castrale church of Saint-Peter is the oldest existant structure. Particularly well preserved, Puéchabon is a village set in the garrigue



(scrubland) where holm oaks and olive trees rule. **Two kilometers from the village**, along a path, scented with thyme and rosemary, lies the romaneseque **chapel of Saint Sylvestre des Brousses, just waiting to be discovered and ideal for a picnic!**

Saint-Jean-de-Fos

The potters village with glazed shimmers

St-Jean-de-Fos first came into existence in the 11th century along with the construction of the 'pont du Diable'. **Ceramic production** started in the 15th century and was at its peak in the 19th century. Today, numerous workshops continue this ancient skill. **Every year in August**, there is a potter's market, one of the **oldest and biggest** in France. Since 2011, Argileum, the house of the pottery has opened its doors to offer you a unique insight into the heart of a historic tradition that's very much alive!



Aniane

The city of Saint Benoît

Benoît d'Aniane, reformer of the Benedictine order, created the Saint-Sauveur Abbey in 782. The abbey prospered and more than

300 monks gathered at Aniane, before going to spread the Benedictine message throughout the empire. Destroyed during the religious wars, the abbey became alternately a textile mill, a prison and a reform school. **Today the abbey is undergoing an ambitious programme of restoration.** It remains the heart of this charming medieval village, renowned for the exceptional produce of its vineyard!



Argelliers

The 'Green Paradise' Surrounded by vast areas of scrubland that have been occupied since Prehistorical times, the village is now famous due to the discovery of the **oppidum Roc de Pamplona** dating from the 5th and 6th centuries. It's the town where **Max Rouquette**, a famous Occitan poet was born. Walking in the Hérault Valley reading his poems will help you get a better understanding of the area.



Passerelle
des Anges



The villages of the vallée de l'Hérault

The authenticity and the southern charm



Arboras

On the first foothills of the Larzac plateau, this linear village situated on a hillside offers a magnificent panorama of the plain. By following the road which leads to the village, you arrive at Mont Saint Baudille (837m) the high point of the valley...

- 👉 *Old Bridge on the Rouvignous dating from the XVIIIth century, passage onto the path of Santiago de Compostela.*

Aumelas

For almost 1 000 years, the imposing silhouette of the « Castellat » (castle in the Occitan dialect) has pride of place on the Causse d'Aumelas in the magnificent landscape.

- 👉 *This must be discovered on foot: Family walking and hiking.*

Belarga

Belarga offers a place of relaxation on the banks of the Hérault which it dominates by six metres thanks to the quai of Font Pétourle.

- 👉 *The remarkable ruins of the medieval mill.*

La Boissière

In the heart of the scrub-land, the village whose name evokes the Box tree, is a group of hamlets and mas, ideal for family walks.

- 👉 *Parish Church, Saint-Martin de Valras, Fontaine place Négrou.*

Campagnan

This small medieval village was to be transformed by the creation of a railway line towards 1871 which would contribute to the expansion of the wine trade.

- 👉 *The small station still visible and very well preserved.*

Gignac

At the crossroads, the lively market town, rich in history and tradition is at the heart of the valley. The day of the Ascension, the Donkey Martin, totemic animal and protector of the village, is celebrated (Senibelet).

- 👉 *Church of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce and way of the Cross, the facades of the heart of the town, market on Saturday morning,...*

Jonquières

A vine growing village in a T shape, typical of the villages in the lowlands.

- 👉 *The old chapel, which became the parish church of Saint-Jean-l'Evangeliste rebuilt in the XVIIth century.*

Lagamas

Between vineyards and scrub-lands, this village centres around the Church of Notre Dame des Garrigues built in 1870.

- 👉 *The Siphon de Lagamas, the only construction on the Canal de Gignac built at the end of the XIXth century to combat phylloxera.*

Montarnaud

On the Path to Santiago de Compostela (GR 653) Montarnaud is a village of the scrubland rich in history.

- 👉 *The Castle and Romanesque Castral chapel Notre-Dame-du-Fort of the XIIth century.*

Plaissan

Typically Languedocian, this wine-growing village wraps around the old quarter which is called " Quartier Haut ".

- 👉 *Fontaine Roqueblave, walk up to the ruins of the Saint-Mamert Chapel.*

Popian

Headquarters of the only Carolingian Viguerie of the valley, the village also has the most ancient castle of the land, noted as early as 996.

- 👉 *The clock tower, the village oven, the wash house at Vannes de l' Aurelle.*

Le Pouget

Established on a " pioch " (Small Nipple) particularly characteristic of languedocian medieval towns, this circular village conceals treasures of medieval architecture.

- 👉 *The Dolmen of Gallardet is a monumental building, a rare relic of prehistoric civilizations...*

Pouzols

This charming village has a medieval toponym linked to water: Posol which means small well.

- 👉 *Saint-Amans church, beautiful surrounding gate, topped with a tower and an old belfry.*

Puilacher

Engraved into the heart of the wine-growing plain as a village of integral charm.

- 👉 *XVIIth century castle, extraordinary modern home with a monumental facade dating back to the beginning of the 1920s.*

Saint-André-de-Sangonis

In the heart of the valley, between vineyards and olive groves, the small town with its rich past is especially accessible.

- 👉 *The belfry and its enclosures, its fountains, its animal totem « Black Pig ».*

Saint-Bauzille-de-la-Sylve

Or the beautiful wooded place... Canals, " rieux ", washhouses and fountains characterize this charming wine-growing village.

- 👉 *Unusual, The tower of Chappe (XIXth century), coded system of optical communication by semaphore.*

Saint-Guiraud

The village enjoys an exceptional perspective with views to a large part of the plain of the Hérault and the Mont Saint-Baudille.

- 👉 *Chapel of the Black Virgin (XVth century), trail to the rock of virgins.*

Saint-Pargoire

The circular village wraps around its church, making the design of a snail shell. The snail is, quite rightly, the totem animal of the small city as it saved them from the famine in the XVIIth century.

- 👉 *The Southern Gothic style church is among the most beautiful constructions of the Herault region of the end of the middle-ages.*

Saint-Paul-et-Valmalle

Lined with olive trees, almond trees and vines, the village was for a long time a stop-off on the road between Montpellier and Lodève.

- 👉 *Many capitelles (shepherd's shelter made of dry stones) which attest to the significant pastoral activity that the village was familiar with.*

Saint-Saturnin-de-Lucian

Located at the foot of the Larzac plateau, this wine growers village is dominated by the picturesque rock of the two Virgins, a real Belvedere on the valley.

- 👉 *The Trail of the wine of poets, a primitive and resounding walk!*

Tressan

Located on a hill surrounded by vineyards the village, formerly fortified, exudes a typically southern charm.

- 👉 *From the village, the beautiful views on the wine plain.*

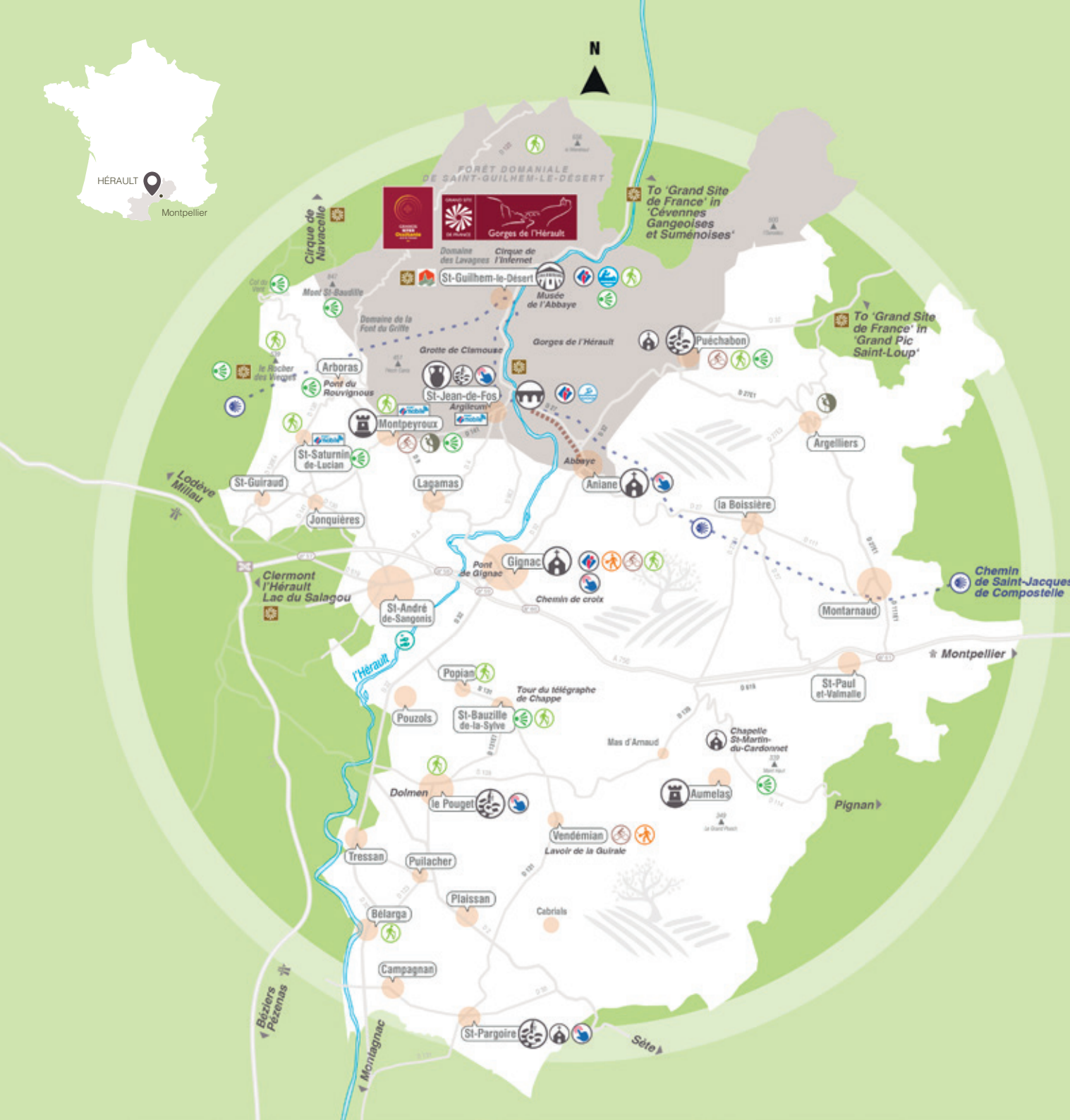
Vendémian

Situated between plain and scrubland, Vendémian was the «capital» of the table wine grapes with its wonderful chasselas grape and its servants.

- 👉 *Like at Gignac, they still play a typically Languedocian ball game: the tambourin.*



Vallée de l'Hérault



-  Outstanding religious building
-  Castle
-  Abbaye de Gellone
-  Pont du Diable
-  Pottery
-  Classified one of the Most Beautiful Villages in France
-  Tourist office Information
-  Classified Site
-  Rambles/starting points
-  Mountain bike circuits/starting points
-  Climbing site
-  Federal fishing course
-  Canoe
-  Supervised bathing (pont du Diable)
-  Tambourine
-  St James' way to Santiago-de-Compostela
-  Circular village
-  View point
-  Free WiFi
-  Power point Information
-  Digital touch terminals
-  Cycle path
-  Area of 'Grand Site de France' and 'Grand Site Occitanie' in the Hérault Valley

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Chemins de Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle en France
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