

# Pays Saintonge Romane



2020 Edition



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

Pays de   
**Saintonge**  
▲ romane







## Welcome in Saintonge Romane



## A Guide to Saintonge Romane

The Guide to Saintonge Romane (the Saintes area) details the beauty spots, historic buildings and places of interest in the vicinity that are well worth a visit during your holiday.

It also gives an insight into local history, traditions, and summer or annual festivities and festivals. Local tourist offices will be only too delighted to provide more information and assistance during your holiday.

From all of us here in Saintonge Romane, a very warm welcome! The map will help you to organize your outings and plan your routes.



## Table of contents

<b>Saintes, a town of Architectural and Historic interest</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Touring to the West of Saintes</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Touring to the South of Saintes</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Touring to the East of Saintes</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Country recreation</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Seasonal recreation</b>	<b>17</b>

### Photos:

- Front cover
- Romanesque church: M. Chaigneau
- Chaniers ferry and restaurant: M. Garnier
- Vineyard: J.-P. Boulesteix
- Theatre: Le Moulin Théâtre
- Back cover
- Boating: M. Garnier

## CHARENTE-MARITIME

### When land and sea meet

This is an area dappled in light, an area where life is lived at a gentle pace, an area where blues blend shamelessly with greens. Here, more than anywhere else, land and sea become as one. Along its 460 kilometres of coastline, Charente-Maritime has more than 110 fine sandy beaches, and its mild climate is ideal for a spot of rest and relaxation. The islands, bathed in warm sunshine, their landscapes softly brushed by sea breezes, are redolent with the scent of mimosa, maritime pines and hollyhocks. The stocky outline of Fort Boyard forms the figurehead of a vast set of coastal fortifications that reflect five hundred years of military architecture. The Aunis and Saintonge areas of Charente-Maritime are steeped in culture and history, thanks to their 400 Romanesque churches. Get away from it all in a warm-hearted, friendly area that has more than one surprise up its sleeve.







# Saintes

## A Town of Architectural and Historic Interest

Built in the 1<sup>st</sup>-century A.D. on the banks of the River Charente and Gallo-Roman capital of Aquitaine for one hundred years, this flower-decked town boasts many reminders of Roman times, the Middle Ages and the 18<sup>th</sup>-century (map F9).

**The Germanicus Arch** was built by the Romans at the entrance to the bridge that carried the Roman road across the Charente. It was moved to its present site in 1843.

### The Gallo-Roman amphitheatre

was built in a small valley and had a seating capacity of seventeen thousand. Only the first storey has survived to the present time.

**The water supply for the Roman baths** in Saint-Saloine was carried by an aqueduct (p. 15).

**Remains of the town walls** can be seen in Rue des Récollets. The walls were erected in the 4<sup>th</sup>-century using stone from earlier buildings (temples, mausoleums, etc).

### The church dedicated to St. Eutrope

was built by Benedictine monks to an unusual layout. Two churches, built one above the other, were linked by a single nave that was destroyed after the French Revolution. Both churches contain beautifully carved capitals. The Flamboyant Gothic spire dates from the 15<sup>th</sup>-century.

**The Gothic cathedral, St. Peter's,** was built in the 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> centuries over a Romanesque building. The doorway below the incomplete belltower-cum-porch, is decorated with angels, bishops and prophets.

**The nunnery known as the "Abbaye aux Dames"** was founded by Agnes of Burgundy and Geoffroy Martel. It was consecrated in 1047 and given to Benedictine nuns who were particularly influential in the Saintes area until the French Revolution.

Now restored, the abbey is used for musical events. On the first floor of the abbey buildings, which underwent reconstruction in the 17<sup>th</sup>-century, there is a permanent exhibition relating the abbey's history. Only a few traces of the cloister have survived. The abbey buildings were rebuilt in the 17<sup>th</sup>-century. A few traces of the cloister remain. The "Parcours" is a 13-stage visitor trail through the abbey explaining its history and architecture through the history of music with 3D sound.

**The minster or abbey church** (12<sup>th</sup>-century) is topped by a bell tower shaped like a pine cone. The sculptures on the doorway illustrate episodes from the story of the Apocalypse of St. John.



© Gala - Office de Tourisme de Saintes



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© Gala - Office de Tourisme de Saintes



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© Musée de Saintes



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© Office de Tourisme de Saintes



© Jean-Bernard Forgit



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© Jean-Bernard Forgit

**The Archaeology Museum** is entirely devoted to the Gallo-Roman civilization. It includes architectural features, sculptures, epigraphs, everyday objects.

**L'Échevinage** (15<sup>th</sup>-century) is the Museum of Fine Arts. Its belfry symbolises the privileges granted to the town by Eleanor of Aquitaine in 1199.

This houses the Art Gallery and its painting collections of art works by the Flemish and Dutch Schools of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>-centuries, and by the French School of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>-centuries. It also contains ceramics made in the Saintes area between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>-centuries.

### Hostelry Gardens

Open to the public daily, Tuesdays to Saturdays. Entrance via the media library, Place de l'Échevinage.

1. The Germanicus Arch
2. Roman amphitheatre
3. The crypt in St-Eutrope's Church
4. Abbaye-aux-Dames
5. Head of August (1<sup>st</sup>-century) – archaeology museum
6. View of the bell tower on St. Peter's Church from Ruelle de l'Hospice
7. The Hostelry, Place de l'Échevinage
8. Hostelry gardens
9. Bernard Palissy



9

### BERNARD PALISSY

c. 1510 - 1590. He learnt the art of ceramics in Saintes and La Chapelle-des-Pots. His quest for the secrets of glazing, which he documented in his *Art de Terre*, lasted for twenty years. Just as he was about to succeed, he ran out of wood so he burned "tables and floorboards" in his kiln. His mottled polychrome glazed pottery and large serving dishes decorated in relief with animals and plants made him famous.



### INFORMATION

Tourist Office, place Bassompierre, near the archaeological Museum, Tel. +33 (0)5 46 74 23 82





## Saintes (contd.)



© Alhaye-aux-dames

**Saintes Festival**

In Saintes, music is always a unique experience, a blend of curiosity and pleasure heightened by the beauty of the surroundings. The Saintes Festival is one of the best-known music festivals in Europe. In line with its emphasis on new talent, it invites numerous performers, singers, instrumentalists and ensembles that will undoubtedly be big names in the music world in years to come.

From 18<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> July 2020.  
For information, phone  
+33 (0)5 46 97 48 48 and  
[www.festivaldesaintes.org](http://www.festivaldesaintes.org)



© CEF

**The Saintes visitor train**  
Wending its way through the town from May to September, the train provides a 50-minute trip with on-board commentary in French and English. The train leaves from the Germanicus Arch and passes by all the main historic buildings, through the old town, along the riverbanks etc.

**Boating on the Charente**

**On board the "Bernard Palissy" III.**  
Half-day or full-day boat trips leave from Saintes, near the Germanicus Arch.

**All aboard the river barge**  
Trips lasting from an hour to 90 minutes, a gentle way to discover the history of Saintes, the life of the barges, and the flora and fauna on the river banks. For children: "Boat trip with stories" and "Pirate cruise". In May to October.

**On board an e-boat**  
Every afternoon in summer, you can skipper your own e-boat on the River Charente. You don't need a licence to take one of these quiet little boats out on the river and they're easy to steer. They seat 5 or 8 people.

**Aquarelle aquatic center**

A large aquatic and leisure centre with winter and summer pools including a wave ball, a beach volley court, a relaxation area (steam room, sauna and spa) and two squash courts. Open all year. Tel. +33 (0)5 46 92 35 05

1. Saintes Town
2. The theatre
3. E-boat
4. The barge on the River Charente in Saintes
5. Aquarelle aquatic center
6. Pierre Loti
7. The Château de la Roche Courbon in Saint-Porchaire

**INFORMATION AND BOOKING**

Tourist Office,  
place Bassompierre,  
Tel. +33 (0)5 46 74 23 82



© M. Camber



© Pays de Saintonge Romane



© Office de Tourisme de Saintes



© Office de Tourisme de Saintes



© CDA de Saintes

**PIERRE LOTI**

*"Who will save from death a forest with a feudal castle in its depths, a forest so old nobody knows its real age, the castle of the Sleeping Beauty?"*  
Pierre Loti's appeal in Le Figaro newspaper of 21<sup>st</sup> October 1908 was read by a young industrialist, Paul Chénereau, who brought the Château de la Roche-Courbon back to life.

# Touring to the West of Saintes

**The Château de la Roche-Courbon in Saint-Porchaire**

is one of the most beautiful country houses in the Saintes area, built and fortified in the 15<sup>th</sup> century (map C7). Altered by successive owners, it has gained in charm and elegance what it has lost in fortifications.

Interior: drawing room with painting on wood, Louis XIII chamber and a typical Saintonge kitchen. From the balustraded terrace, there is a view of the superb formal French gardens.

In the grounds, there is a fine vista from the flight of steps at the end of the park towards the lake and house.

Guided tour of the house all year, from 10 a.m. to noon and from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., except Thursdays between 15<sup>th</sup> September and 30<sup>th</sup> April. Also closed on Sunday mornings in winter.

Tour of the gardens, park and grottoes open to the public all year from 10 a.m. to noon and 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. May to September from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Closed 25<sup>th</sup> December and 1<sup>st</sup> January. In January Open on Saturday and Sunday afternoons only. Information: tel. +33 (0)5 46 95 60 10

**Saint-Porchaire:**  
Gothic church.

**Écurat:** Romanesque church.



© P. Saligne





## Touring to the West of Saintes (contd.)

### Port-d'Envaux

This river port was a bustling place until the 19<sup>th</sup>-century. Freestone, paper, salt, fertiliser, wine and cognac were shipped from here, mainly to England (map E7). The ship owners' houses on the banks of the Charente give the village its unique character. Le Pré Valade on the banks of the Charente has been laid out as a leisure area.

### The Château de Panloy

A fine example of Louis XV architecture in Port-d'Envaux. Inside: Beauvais tapestries, Louis XV panelling, a hunting trophy gallery etc. In the park: perfectly preserved 17<sup>th</sup>-century dovecote, stables, a chapel, outbuildings etc. Closed Mondays except in summer. April, September and October: 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. In May and June: 10 a.m. to noon and 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. In July and August: 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. everyday. Tel. +33 (0)5 46 91 73 23

### Les Lapidiales (map E7)

500 metres from the village, the old stone quarries are the setting for sculptors in residence from May to September. They sculpt on the working faces on subjects evoking the four elements: water, earth, air and fire.



© S. Verne

Visitors welcome to wander around the site. Tel. +33 (0)6 76 82 11 02. The location is open to visitors throughout the year.

### The Château de Crazannes - 15<sup>th</sup>-c. (map E7).

A Flamboyant Gothic façade adorns a manor house flanked by a mighty round tower with battlements. Guided tours: Closed on Thursday except 1<sup>st</sup> June to 31<sup>st</sup> August. April, October, November and December: 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. May, June and September: 10 a.m. to noon and 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. July and August: 10 a.m. to 12.30 a.m. and 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. Closed 25<sup>th</sup> December and from January to March. Tel. +33 (0)5 46 90 15 94

**Crazannes stone** (map D7) Overrun by lush vegetation, this old stone quarry forms a maze steeped in history, where Nature reigns supreme. Guided tours from March to 15<sup>th</sup> November. Advanced booking recommended.

The history of the quarry and the techniques used to extract the stone are illustrated in tableaux and films in the museum. Guided tours from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 1<sup>st</sup> November along the Quarriers' Trail (10 flights of steps, 280 steps). Booking recommended. Follow Genny the Common Genet's Trail for a visit without a guide (no flights of steps). Open: 15<sup>th</sup> June to 14<sup>th</sup> September: daily 10 a.m. to noon and 2 p.m. to 5.30 p.m. 1<sup>st</sup> April to 14<sup>th</sup> June and 15<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> September: daily 10 a.m. to noon and 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. 1<sup>st</sup> October to 1<sup>st</sup> November: Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday: 10 a.m. to noon and 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. Tel. +33 (0)5 46 91 48 92. Access via the D 119 and RN 137 roads or from the motorway service area at Crazannes.

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© Jean-Christophe Chaudron

© J. Villégier



1. Port-d'Envaux
2. The Château de Panloy
3. The Château de Crazannes
4. Crazannes Quarry
5. The Lapidiales in Port-d'Envaux
6. The church in Geay
7. Medieval garden of Trizay
8. Trizay Abbey
9. Bois fleuri lake in Trizay

© St de Trizay

© St de Trizay

© G. Eclé

© J. Villégier

### Church of Our Lady of the Assumption in Geay

This church is outstanding for its austere decoration, modillions with turned brackets and faceted apse (map D6).

**In Romegoux**, light floods into the Gothic church through a huge modern stained-glass window.

**In La Vallée**, don't miss the Romanesque church and the dolmen known as La Pierre Levée.

### The Romanesque church in Beurlay

has a fine chevet that is typical of the Romanesque style in the Saintes area (map B6). Interior: carved capitals. In the village, see the Freussin spring and wash-house.

### Sainte-Radegonde Romanesque church (11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>-centuries).

**Trizay Abbey** (11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup>-c.) The church has an outstanding polygonal layout (map B6). Multifoil bays let light into the chapter house which has ribbed vaulting. The priory also includes an undercroft, dormers, vast refectory and the Prior's bedchamber, decorated with murals, medieval garden. Discovery trail with a 3D model of the 12<sup>th</sup>-century monastery and a kids' sightseeing game in booklet form. Modern Art exhibition all the year.

Open everyday:  
3<sup>rd</sup> February to 5<sup>th</sup> April: everyday 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.  
6<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> April: everyday 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.  
1<sup>st</sup> May to 27<sup>th</sup> September: everyday 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. to 7 p.m.  
28<sup>th</sup> September to 11<sup>th</sup> November: Monday to Friday 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.  
Saturday, Sunday and public holidays: 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.

### Bois fleuri lake in Trizay

Open all year Children's play areas, one-day fishing permits. Tel. +33 (0)5 46 82 34 25



© Philippe César

**"Les Jardins de Compostelle" (gardens),** (the Gardens of Compostela) is a flower garden overlooking Bois Fleuri lake. It is a modern garden covering 2 hectares inspired by Hispano-Moorish designs in 6 sequences – the rose garden, the spring, the grotto, the grand canal, the knot gardens and the cloister. Fountains and water features add a decorative touch to the various basins and ponds. Open daily April to October: 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. (ticket to buy to the Abbey).

The nearby church in **Monthérault** is one of the earliest examples of Romanesque architecture in the Saintes area.

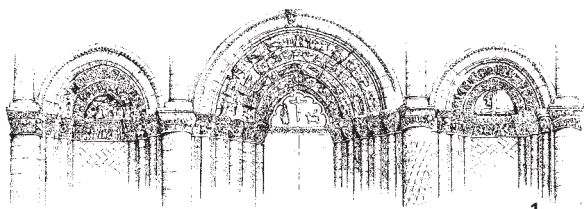
### INFORMATION

Tourist Office, Abbey, Tel. +33 (0)5 46 82 34 25





## Touring to the West of Saintes (contd.)



Dessin N. Sweeney

**Pont-l'Abbé-d'Arnoult** (map B7). The church in St. Peter's Priory (12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>-centuries) was a daughter-house of the abbey in Saintes. Superb carvings decorate the main doorway and two arches. The town gate adjacent to the church was once part of the 13<sup>th</sup>-century town walls. The priory buildings are visible from the exterior.

**The Romanesque church in Saint-Sulpice d'Arnoult** has an entrance decorated with birds and bunches of grapes.

**The church dedicated to St. Nazaire in Corme-Royal** Altered and fortified in the 15<sup>th</sup>-century (map C9), it was once part of an ancient priory (12<sup>th</sup>-century). The West Front is carved with parables of the Wise and Foolish Virgins, the Virtues and Vices, two saints, a man carrying weapons and an abbe. On the coving of the doorway, Christ is showing the Gospels. Interior: the stoop was carved out of an old capital turned upside down. It is decorated with acanthus leaves.

**In La Clisse**, the capitals in the church date from the Early Romanesque period. Between the church and the town hall, a pleasant walk through woods leads to a "gariote", a small drystone building of a type used formerly as field shelters for farm workers. (map C9)

### INFORMATION

Tourist Office,  
3, avenue André Malraux,  
17250 Pont-l'Abbé d'Arnoult,  
tel. + 33 (0)5 46 74 57 85

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© Michel Garnier

© Michel Garnier

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### Wildlife park and kids' play park in Sainte-Gemme

A 7-hectare park in which to see animals from all over the world coupled with a play park specially designed for children with a roundabout, playground and pony rides. Open April to 1<sup>st</sup> November: Wednesday, Saturday, Sunday and public holidays 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Open daily during the summer and public holidays.

Tel. + 33 (0)5 46 94 70 33

### The 12<sup>th</sup>-century St. Martin's Church in Nieul-lès-Saintes

has a doorway carved with figures dancing and playing musical instruments. Inside it has an early roof of intersecting ribs. Romanesque capitals in the church in Saint-Georges-des-Côteaux, at the transept crossing. Carvings of lions, dragons and wickerwork patterns.

### The Romanesque Church of Sainte-Gemme

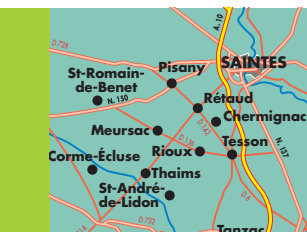
Sainte-Gemme had been a daughter-house of La Chaise-Dieu since the 11<sup>th</sup>-century but the church and monastery were not built until the 12<sup>th</sup>-century. Don't miss the narthex in the church (the entrance is decorated with flowers and foliage), the Romanesque carvings, the monastery buildings, the ethnography museum, the mediaeval sculpture collection and the 3D models of the priory in the Middle Ages. Church open daily. Priory open May to November, Sundays only, 2 p.m. to 6.30 p.m. Advance booking required at other times.

### The mediaeval castle of Nieul-lès-Saintes

comes to life every summer for music camps, concerts, etc. (map D8). Guided tour by the owner of the drawbridge, towers, curtain walls, battlements, mediaeval chamber and underground chamber by appointment only on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons from 13<sup>th</sup> July to 24<sup>th</sup> August from 2.30 p.m. to 6.30 p.m. Tel. +33 (0)5 46 93 71 48

1. The West Front in Pont l'Abbé
2. A close-up of the West Front in Corme-Royal
3. The Romanesque church of Saint-Sulpice-d'Arnoult
4. The church of La Clisse
5. "Gariote" in La Clisse
6. A vegetable grower's greenhouse in the Arnoult Valley
7. The mediaeval castle of Nieul-lès-Saintes
8. The children's petting farm in Sainte-Gemme
9. The Romanesque church of Sainte-Gemme





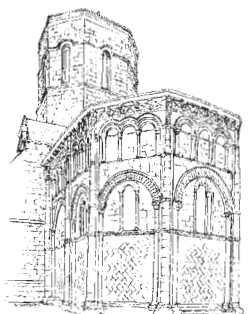
## Touring to the South of Saintes

**In Chermignac,** the doorway to the church is carved with imaginary animals and monsters; interior: four brackets carved with figures of lovers, acrobats, musicians and a thinker (map E10). 15<sup>th</sup>-century Hosanna Cross.

### The Romanesque church of Notre-Dame de Rioux

Its design is very similar to the layout of the church in Rétaud (map D11). The Saintonge-style main doorway is topped by a Madonna and Child set in an almond-shaped mandorla. In the chancel is a painted wooden group sculpture (16<sup>th</sup>-century) representing St. Catherine's mystical marriage. The chevet is particularly ornate.

**The Romanesque church in Rétaud** is a skilful combination of stonework, geometric patterns, colonnettes inspired by the Ancient Greeks and Romans, and carved brackets, across all three levels of the chevet (map D10).



© Dessin N. Sweeney

1

### The Romanesque church in Meursac

A Gothic chevet stands next to the Romanesque nave (map C11). The chancel leads to a monolithic crypt. **Romanesque belltower in Thézac.** In Pisany, 17<sup>th</sup>-century covered market (map C10).

### The Romanesque church, in Thaims,

is built on the site of a Gallo-Roman villa of which traces can still be seen in the crypt (map C11). A "small museum" in the chancel contains marble from the Roman villa, including a picture of Epona, the goddess who protected stables. Opposite her is Bacchus, set against a grape harvest. One of the carved capitals represents the Holy Women at the Tomb.

**Romanesque churches in Tanzac:** late 13<sup>th</sup> and early 14<sup>th</sup>-century murals; **Jazennes; Villars-en-Pons:** superb Romanesque capitals; also in **Saint-Simon-de-Pellouaille.**



© J. Villégier

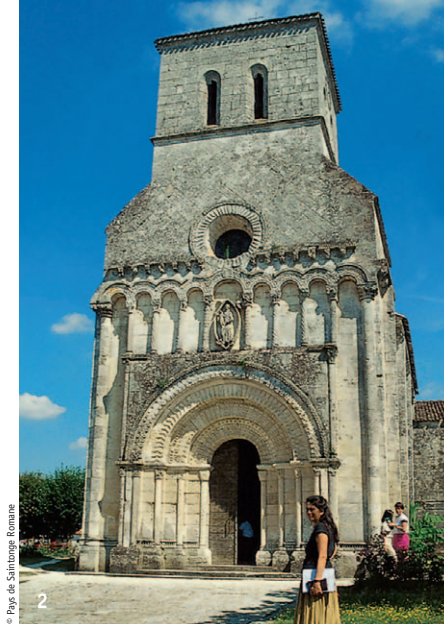
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3



2



5



6



7



8

### INFORMATION

Gémozac,  
Tel. +33 (0)5 46 94 50 16

### The Romanesque church in Tesson (map E11)

the West Front includes a carving of two figures, a pilgrim with a stick and a bandit holding an axe. They are a reminder of the dangers that lay along the road to Santiago de Compostela. Near the church is a 15<sup>th</sup>-century Hosanna Cross.

### Château Guynot estate.

Enjoy a tour of the cellars, distillery, 18<sup>th</sup>-century ice house, tree-filled parklands and 18<sup>th</sup>-century vaulted cellar. Open 10 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. and 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., Monday to Friday, September to June. Saturdays and Sundays with advanced booking. Tel. +33 (0)5 46 91 93 71

### St. Peter's Church in Gémozac

The spire towers over the vineyards (map E13). The 19<sup>th</sup>-century mansions were built for cognac and pineau merchants. Prehistoric collections are on display in the media library.

1. The church of Rétaud
2. The church of Notre-Dame de Rioux
3. The Holy Woman at the Tomb Capital of church in Thaims
4. St. Catherine's mystical marriage, Church of Notre-Dame de Rioux
5. Cognac cellars
6. Funerary tower in Saint-Romain-de-Benet
7. Murals in the church of Tanzac
8. Brackets of Rétaud's church



### Le pineau des Charentes

Legend has it that pineau des Charentes is the fruit of the vine and the result of pure chance. During the grape harvest in 1589, a wine grower mistakenly filled with grape must a barrel that already contained cognac. He noticed that there had been no fermentation so left the barrel to one side in his wine cellar. A few years later, when he was about to empty the barrel, he discovered a clear, delicate liquid with a mild, fruity flavour. Pineau des Charentes was born. It can be white, red or rosé and is drunk chilled, as an aperitif or dessert wine.



The wine growers open the doors of their domain. Come to discover them!

The alcohol abuse is dangerous for the health. Consume in moderation.





# Touring to the East of Saintes

## Chaniers

Life in this old village of stone houses on the banks of the Charente is still dependent on the river. A ferry crosses it here from May to October (map G10). The chevet on St. Peter's Church (11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>-centuries) was fortified in the 15<sup>th</sup>-century. At the top are roofed battlements. A capital is sculpted with a representation of Aliénor d'Aquitaine. The apsidal chapels contain 14<sup>th</sup>-century Byzantine frescoes.

## The royal mill on the Bain

Built in the 17<sup>th</sup>-century on Colbert's orders, 800 metres upstream from Chaniers, it now attracts anglers, rowers and family groups.

## In Dompierre-sur-Charente, (map H10)

the last hand-operated ferry crosses the river, watched over by a Romanesque church.



© M. Garnier

## Canoeing

Days and courses for beginners at the Canoe/Kayak Club in Dompierre-sur-Charente.

This school has been awarded two stars by the French canoe/kayak federation. It provides quality services in many areas – hospitality equipment, premises, activities, canoeing itineraries, etc. (map H10). Tel. +33 (0)5 46 91 15 47



© Conseil Général de la Charente-Maritime



© M. Garnier



4



© E. Roaige

1. The ferry in Chaniers
2. The mill on the Bain
3. Chaniers
4. Notre-Dame Chapel, built between 1995 and 1997 in Colombiers
5. The Seugne Marshes
6. Colombiers, a 12<sup>th</sup>-century capital in St. Maclou Church
7. Saint-Sauvant

## Interpretive Trail through the Seugne Marshes

Starting from the church in Les Gonds (map F10), this signposted 6-kilometre walk takes visitors through the various types of landscape in the Seugnes delta including natural meadows, fields of crops, alluvial ash groves, trees on the river banks and poplar groves.



2

© M. Garnier

# Touring to the East of Saintes

(contd.)



## The church in Colombiers

The four capitals in the crossing, beneath the bell tower, form one of the most outstanding sets of Romanesque sculptures in the Saintes area (map G11).



6

Dessin N. Sweeney

The chapel "Notre-Dame" at "La Font Loreau" 300 metres further along the D 234 road was built by a wine producer between 1995 and 1997, using mediaeval building techniques. It is open daily and is used by pilgrims on their way to Santiago de Compostela.

## The Seugne Marshes

The river divides into countless arms (called "Seugnes" here), forming a strip of greenery dotted with mills or small harbours such as the one in Courcion (map F10).

This is a cool, restful area best seen by bike, on foot or by canoe, with the guidebook ("topo-guide") available from Saintes tourist office.

## The visitors' centre (Maison de la Seugne) in the small town of Courcory

hosts a permanent exhibition on the flora, fauna and traditional arts, crafts and trades in the valley.

Town Hall,  
tel. +33 (0)5 46 93 18 23

## Romanesque churches in Berneuil, La Jard and Montils.

## The mediaeval village of Saint-Sauvant

The fortified Romanesque church overlooking the village (map G9) and the 12<sup>th</sup>-century Saracens' Tower were once part of the fortifications.



Dessin N. Sweeney





## Touring to the East in the Coran Valley

### "Les Bujoliers", a museum in Saint-Césaire (map G9).

A traditional Saintonge house with furniture and items dating from the 19<sup>th</sup>-century including a superb collection of headdresses ("coiffes"), its original distillery and its "bujours" (ceramic laundry tubs).

Also: collection of pottery illustrating the history of ceramics in the Saintes area since the Gallo-Roman period and a room explaining the geology of the Coran Valley. In the hamlet of "Les Bujoliers" adjacent to Saint-Bris-des-Bois. Visit daily, 2.30 p.m. to 6 p.m., with advanced booking. Tel. +33 (0)5 46 91 98 11

### Paleosite in Saint-Césaire (map G9), Interactive Prehistory Centre.

Its scientific patron is Professor Yves Coppens. Shows on a giant screen, 3D animation, facial morphing, arm wrestling with Neanderthal and a full scanner, etc. provide an interactive, emotional trip through time. Special prehistory events throughout the year. Along the outdoor path, visitors are given a view of everyday life in the villages settled by Neanderthal Man, homo sapiens etc. in the form of life-sized tableaux.

1<sup>st</sup> April to 5<sup>th</sup> May and July and August: 10.30 a.m. to 7 p.m. every days. May, June and September: 10.30 a.m. to 7 p.m.: Closed Monday and Tuesday. In October, open only during public holidays, Saturday and Sunday. Tel. +33 (0)5 46 97 90 90

### The Fontdouce Abbey near Saint-Bris-des-Bois

Founded in 1111, its land stretched from the Angoulême area to Aunis where the Benedictine monks worked the salt marshes (map H8). Tours of the chapter house with its twelve-span ribbed vaulting, the remains of the abbey church, the scriptorium, the chapels and locutory. Visit with your family and try «The Search for the Missing Manuscript» and «Murder in Fontdouce».

April to June then September and October: open daily, 10.30 a.m. to 6.30 p.m., Saturday 10.30 a.m. to 5 p.m. July and August: open daily, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Open all year for groups with advanced booking. Numerous special events throughout the year. Tel. +33 (0)5 46 74 77 08.

### The Cognac Museum in Migron (map I8)

Tour of the distillery, herb garden, vineyard and winegrower's museum. There is so much to do and see. Enjoy a game that reveals the secrets and aromas of cognac, visit an exhibition on Havana cigars, chocolate and coffee, watch an audiovisual presentation or take a beginner's course on cognac tasting. End the visit with a tasting session. Open daily 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> September from 10 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. and 2.30 p.m. to 6.30 p.m. November to march: please check tour times. Guided tours by the winegrower. Tel. +33 (0)5 46 94 91 16 and +33 (0)6 18 06 39 26

1  
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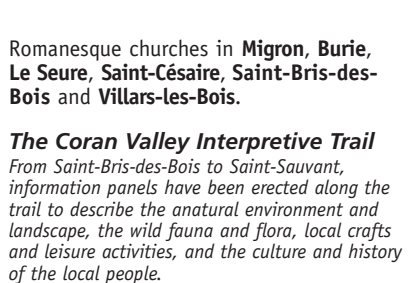
2  
© Pays de Saintonge Romane



3  
© Musée des Bujoliers



4  
© Pays de Saintonge Romane



5  
© J.P. Galand



Romanesque churches in Migron, Burie, Le Seure, Saint-Césaire, Saint-Bris-des-Bois and Villars-les-Bois.

### The Coran Valley Interpretive Trail

From Saint-Bris-des-Bois to Saint-Sauvant, information panels have been erected along the trail to describe the natural environment and landscape, the wild fauna and flora, local crafts and leisure activities, and the culture and history of the local people.



In Fontcouverte, the golf course still includes a few piles from the bridge built for the aqueduct. The spring that supplied the water to the aqueduct can be seen in La Font Morillon; Romanesque church in the village (map F8).

### The fountains in Vénérand

A delightfully cool spot in summer (map G8). A Roman pipe in the 17<sup>th</sup>-century mill. The wash-house at the fountain in La Roche dates from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The village church is Romanesque.

### St. Martial's Church

(12<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> centuries) in Le Douhet (map G7). Has an ornate Romanesque doorway. Inside are murals dating from the 14<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Nearby, in Ecoyeux, a fortified Romanesque church dating from the 15<sup>th</sup> century (map G7).

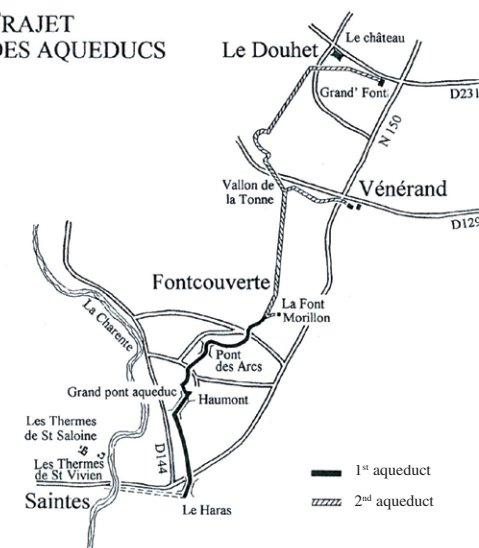
### The Gallo-Roman aqueduct of Saintes

In the late 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, the Gallo-Romans founded a town, Mediolanum (Saintes), at the end of a road designed by Agrippa that began in Lyon. As soon as the town was founded, it was more than likely the first capital of the vast province of Aquitaine. The construction of infrastructures such as the baths and public fountains, and the desire for a comfortable lifestyle, generated huge requirements for drinking water. Bridges and aqueducts were designed to carry water to the town.

Two aqueducts were built in succession, the first in Fontcouverte (late 1<sup>st</sup> century BC) carrying water from a spring in La Font Morillon and a second (mid 1<sup>st</sup> century AD) that brought water from two springs, in Le Douhet and Vénérand.

Explore on foot using the PR 3, 8 and 9 signposted hikers' paths.

### TRAJET DES AQUEDUCTS



1 and 2. Paleosite in St. Césaire

3. Musée des Bujoliers

4. Panorama on the vineyard of Villars-les-Bois

5. Chapter house of Fontdouce Abbey

6. The Roman Fountain in Vénérand

7. The Cognac Folk Museum in Migron

© Pays de Saintonge Romane



# Country recreation

What takes your fancy? Walking, riding or cycling? Testing the fishing in a local stream? Cruising along a river? Taking a dip in a swimming pool? Relaxing on the banks of a lake? They're all great ideas.

**Walking**  
Usually indicated by white and yellow markings, the footpaths form circular walks where you can go at your own speed, in a group or with your family. Some of them are connected to the network of long-distance waymarked footpaths (GR's) that have red and white markings.

**INFORMATION, RAMBLERS' GUIDES WITH MAPS**  
Tourist Offices, Comité Départemental de Randonnée Pédestre, Tel. +33 (0)5 46 26 34 77. Ramblers' guides are also on sale in bookshops and at newsagents'.

**Riding**  
Many of the riding stables and pony clubs offer sport and recreation for experienced riders and beginners: riding for beginners, day treks, riding holidays.

**INFORMATION**  
Tourist Offices.

**Freshwater angling**  
With its lakes, marshes, ponds and rivers such as the Antenne, Arnoult, Bourru, Boutonne, Bramerit, Brédoire, Briou, Bruant, Charente, Coran, Dandelot, Escambouille, Loubat, Né, Nie, Padome, Rochefollet, Roi, Saudrenne, Seudre, Seugne, Soie, Sonnoire, Sureau and Trézence, the Saintes area is famous for its Category 1 and Category 2 angling.

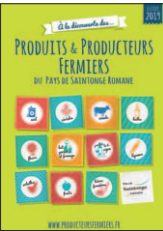
**Open-air swimming pools**  
Whether you swim like a fish or just like jumping about in the water, you'll find an open-air pool to suit you in Gémovac, Meursac, Pont-l'Abbé-d'Arnoult, Saintes, Saint-Césaire.

**Beaches with amenities**  
in Port d'Envaux and Chaniers.

**Recreational lakes**  
in Trizay, Cadeuil, Saint-Césaire, Rioux.



*The strength of a goats' milk cheese, the sun-drenched aromas of seasonal fruits, the softness of a golden honey, the character of a local wine..., the terroir of Roman Saintonge is to be savoured.*  
Find farm producers in the guide "A la découverte des produits et des producteurs fermiers" (Discovering farm products and producers) in Tourist Offices.  
Web site: [www.producteursfermiers.fr](http://www.producteursfermiers.fr)



# Seasonal recreation

Join the colourful crowds at local markets. Tickle your tastebuds with local flavours. In short, "chill out"!

**Monthly fairs**  
**Corme-Royal:** 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday.  
**Gémovac:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday.  
**Pont-l'Abbé-d'Arnoult:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday.  
**Saintes:** 1<sup>st</sup> Monday.

**Markets**  
Their stalls are heaped with all sorts of mouthwatering products and essential, or unusual, items.  
**Chaniers:** Wednesday.  
**Corme-Royal:** Thursday.  
**Gémovac:** Friday.  
**Pisany:** Friday.  
**Pont-l'Abbé-d'Arnoult:** Friday.  
**Port-d'Envaux:** Thursday.  
**Rioux:** Thursday  
**Saintes:** daily except Monday.  
**Saint-Georges-des-Côteaux:** Wednesday.  
**Saint-Porchaire:** Wednesday and Saturday.

Get out of your shell and take part in local festivities.

**INFORMATION AND BROCHURES**  
Calendars of events are available from Tourist Offices.

**Daytime and evening sight-seeing tour of the Saintonge area**

**Evening Tours**  
In July and August, guided tours of churches and villages punctuated by artistic performances

**"Romanesque outings for food lovers",**  
In September and in October. Daytime guided tours of churches and villages with tasting sessions on farms selling local produce.

**PROGRAMME AND INFORMATION**  
Tourist Offices, Saintes and [www.paysaintongeromane.fr](http://www.paysaintongeromane.fr)





## Tourist Offices

### SAINTES

Place Bassompierre, 17100 Saintes  
Tel. +33 (0)5 46 74 23 82  
[accueil@saintes-tourisme.fr](mailto:accueil@saintes-tourisme.fr)  
[www.saintes-tourisme.fr](http://www.saintes-tourisme.fr)

### TRIZAY

Abbaye, 17250 Trizay  
Tel. +33 (0)5 46 82 34 25  
[tourisme.trizay@wanadoo.fr](mailto:tourisme.trizay@wanadoo.fr)  
[www.abbayedetritzay17.fr](http://www.abbayedetritzay17.fr)

### PONT-L'ABBÉ-D'ARNOULT (in summer)

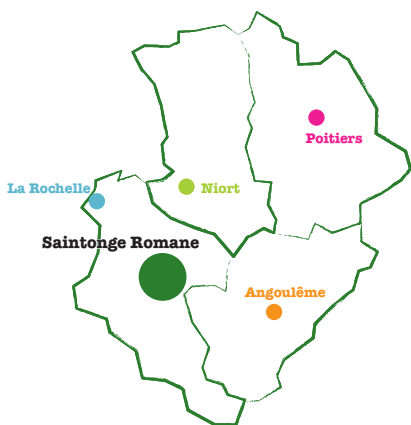
3, avenue André Malraux  
17250 Pont-l'Abbé-d'Arnoult  
Tel. +33 (0)5 46 74 57 85  
[contact@tourisme-pontlabbedarnoult.fr](mailto:contact@tourisme-pontlabbedarnoult.fr)  
[www.tourisme-pontlabbedarnoult.fr](http://www.tourisme-pontlabbedarnoult.fr)

### PORT D'ENVAUX (in summer)

Point informations touristiques  
Mairie, 1 place des halles  
Tel. +33 (0)5 46 91 73 31

### PAYS DE SAINTONGE ROMANE

9 rue de Courbiac  
17100 Saintes  
[www.payssaintongeromane.fr](http://www.payssaintongeromane.fr)



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