



# Loire: all the essentials

Press pack 2022

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**Loire**  
LE DÉPARTEMENT

[loirestory.com](https://loirestory.com)

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## INTRODUCTION

Loire is an unsung beauty

A beauty thanks to a whole host of killer charms; unsung because so many of her treasures are unsuspected by outsiders. But probably not to the 757,000 inhabitants of this Department in the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region. Department?

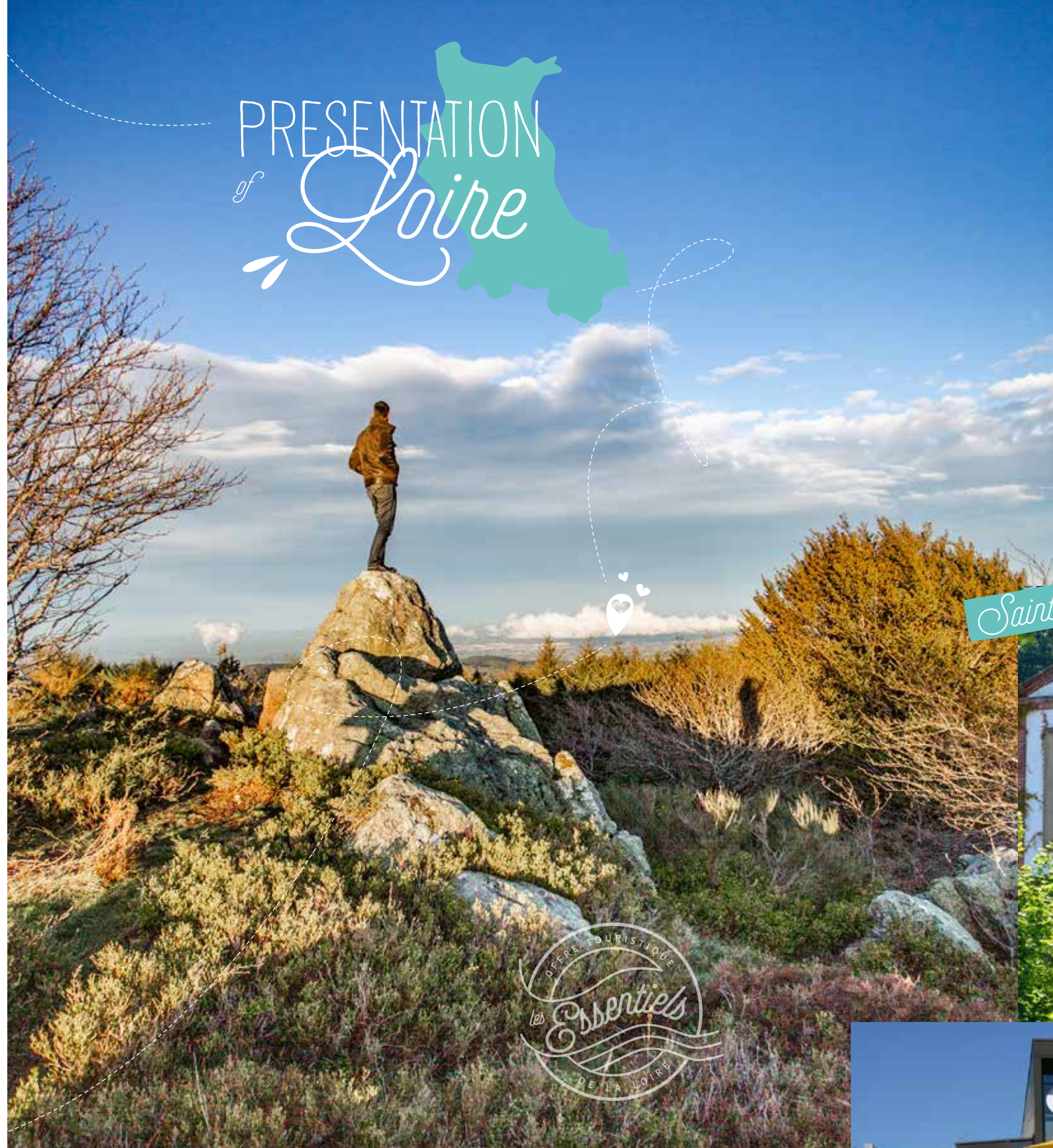
Yes, that's right!

The Loire is well-known for its châteaux, but the other fabulous thing about the River Loire is its length, 1,000 km, making it one of France's longest rivers. Its importance is such that it has given its name to the Department through which it flows south to north, whose Préfecture city is the innovative Saint-Étienne.

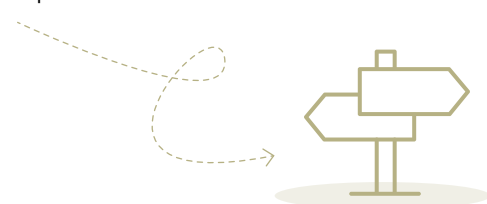
Covering an area of 47,181 km<sup>2</sup> and bordered by the Saône-et-Loire, Rhône and Isère, Ardèche and Haute-Loire and Puy-de-Dôme, the Department of Loire is extraordinarily diverse. Great landscapes, historic monuments, sporting activities, cultural events, local specialities, and much more: we wanted to show you all the most enchanting aspects of our Department of Loire, so that you too can make the most of it.

*Welcome to the land of a thousand and one marvels.*





Let's begin our journey round Loire with a general presentation of what makes it so special. You'll see, you'll soon begin to feel like you know the Department.



## HISTORY

- Traces of a Palaeolithic human presence found at the Villerest site (Loire Gorges).
- Segusiavi: the first Gallic tribe to live in the region (c. 200 BC).
- Creation of the Department of Loire during the French Revolution (1793) when the Department of Rhône et Loire was split in two.
- Industrialisation from the 19th century onwards: coal mining, steel making, forges, armaments manufacturing and textiles: ribbons, laces and braids, silk, cotton and weaving.
- Advent of the service economy from the 1970s, with advanced technologies and design.

## GEOGRAPHY

- Varied landscapes: expanses of moorland in the Hautes Chaumes, peaks in Pilat, a myriad of lakes in the Forez plain, steep-sided Loire Gorges, the Matin mountain valleys...
- The main mountains: Monts du Forez, Monts de la Madeleine, Monts du Lyonnais, Pilat.
- Several plains: Plaine du Forez, the Bassin Roannais.
- In the early 19th century, this was a rural Department and the main town, Saint-Étienne, had a population of 25,000! That was before the demographic explosion brought by the Industrial Revolution.

*Saint Galmier*



*Saint-Bonnet  
le-Château*

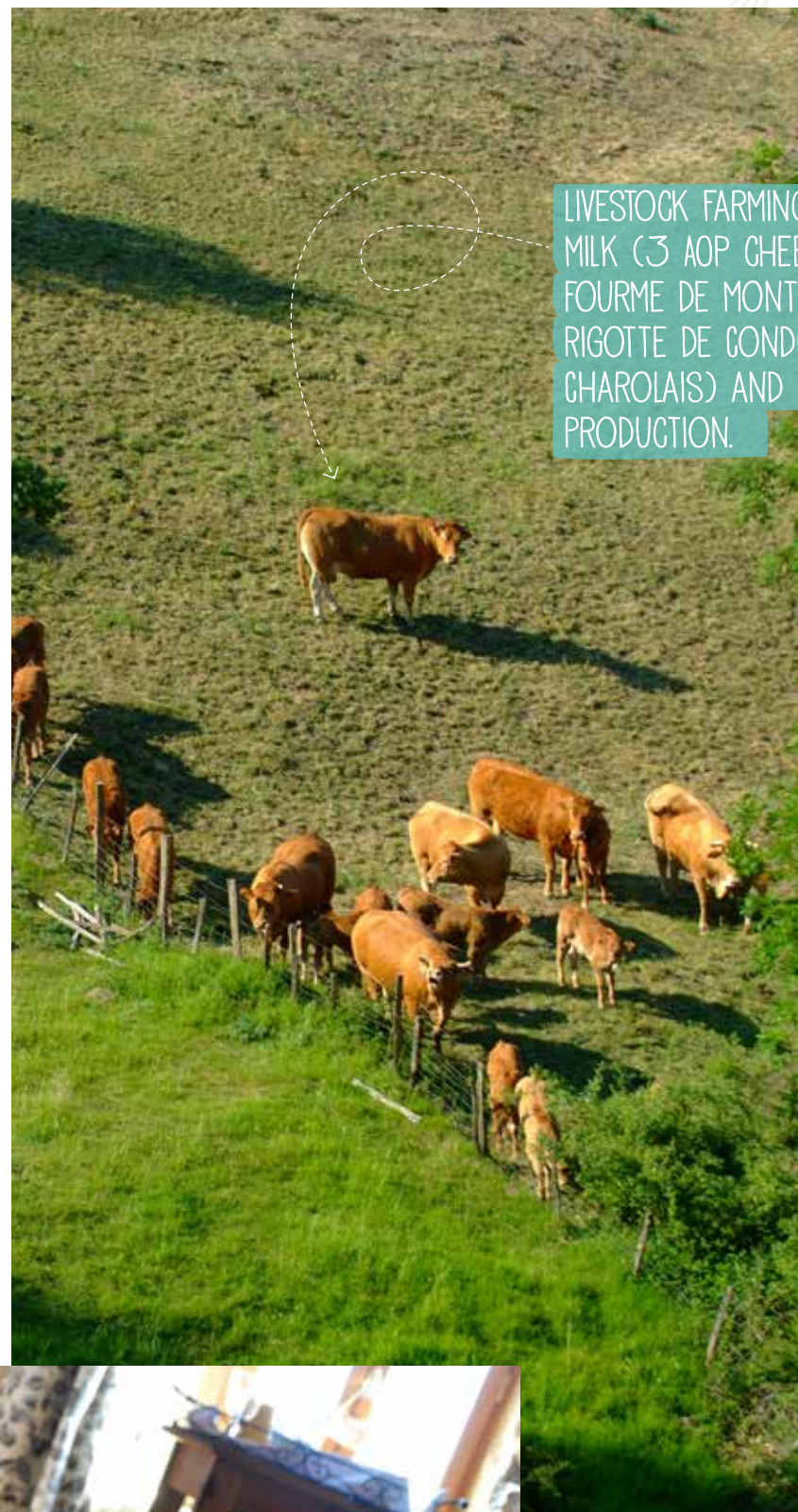


## ECONOMY

- **Source: Key Figures 2019  
Chamber of Commerce and Industry of  
Lyon Métropole Saint-Étienne Roanne**

Loire, "territory of competitiveness" occupies a central position in the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Region and, with 50,000 business establishments and a workforce of 281,000, boasts an unsuspected economic vitality. With its longstanding dense industrial fabric (textiles, engineering and agri-food), the Department is now reinforcing its know-how in other fields, digital technologies, optics and design. The presence of two competitiveness "poles" and eight clusters typifies the entrepreneurial dynamism and the strength and excellence of research in the area. Loire is also a hub at the heart of national and European highways: A89 Bordeaux/Roanne/Lyon/Geneva. It has 29,000 students and 1,200 researchers, lecturers and PhD students work in 40 laboratories, while a hundred or more companies have a Research & Development department. The Department is also a pilot district in Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes for design and eco-innovation with the Cité du design, the CIRIDD and the Pôle Écoconception.





LIVESTOCK FARMING: MILK (3 AOP CHEESES, FOURME DE MONTRISON, RIGOTTE DE CONDRIEU AND CHAROLAIS) AND BEEF PRODUCTION.

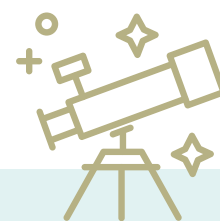
## AGRICULTURE

- 231,500 ha of farmland, 3,200 farms and 9,120 agricultural workers. The Department is marked by its relief, 48% of the land is agricultural land and 30% is covered by forest.  
*Source: Loire Chamber of Agriculture*
- Livestock farming (3 AOP cheeses, Fourme de Montbrison, Rigotte de Condrieu and Charolais) and beef production, with the Charolais breed dominating. There are also strong sheep and pig farming sectors.
- Arable farming: wine-growing (3 areas of vineyards and 5 AOCs: Côtes du Rhône - Saint-Joseph, Condrieu, Château-Grillet - Côtes du Forez, Côte Roannaise), fruit tree farms (2 geographical sectors, Pilat and Jarez, (table apples are the main fruit produced in the Department, and it produces 3% of France's cherries), horticulture (3 rose breeders), market gardening, cereal crops.
- Horse racing: 2 national level race tracks (Feurs and St-Galmier) and horse breeding.
- Forestry: for over 25 year, Inter Forêt-Bois 42 has been working to develop the timber industry in the Department and now has over 150 members.

## TOURISM

- 24,250 bed in tourist accommodation in the Department, with 5,710 hotel beds (85 establishments), 7,100 beds on campsites (43 sites), 6,390 beds in individual accommodation (gîtes, furnished accommodation, B&Bs and chalets and static caravans), 5,040 beds in collective accommodation (126 establishments).

*Source: Service Permanent d'Observation Touristique (SPOT Loire - issue 30)*



## FOCUS ON THE DEPARTMENT OF LOIRE'S QUALITY LABELS

- > **Vignobles et Découvertes** for wine tourism destinations **Forez, Roannais aux racines de la Loire** and **Vallée du Rhône Condrieu Côte Rotie** a part of which is in Loire
- > Sainte-Croix-en-Jarez, "**Plus Beau Village de France®**"
- > Charlieu and Saint-Galmier, "**plus beau détour de France**"
- > Twelve villages of character: "**Village de Caractère**"
- > Charlieu, Saint-Bonnet-le-Château and Le Crozet are Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes "small towns of character" "**Petites Cités de Caractère®**"
- > La Loire "**Département fleuri**" (Department in bloom)
- > Saint-Étienne **UNESCO City of Design**
- > Le Corbusier-Firminy heritage site: the first one to be **inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list**
- > **Six Rural Resorts ("Stations Vertes")**: Saint Galmier, Saint-Germain-Laval, Usson-en-Forez, Villerest, Violay, Saint-Just-en-Chevalet
- > Usson-en-Forez, "**Famille plus**" resort (the only one)

Marols

VILLAGE OF CHARACTERS



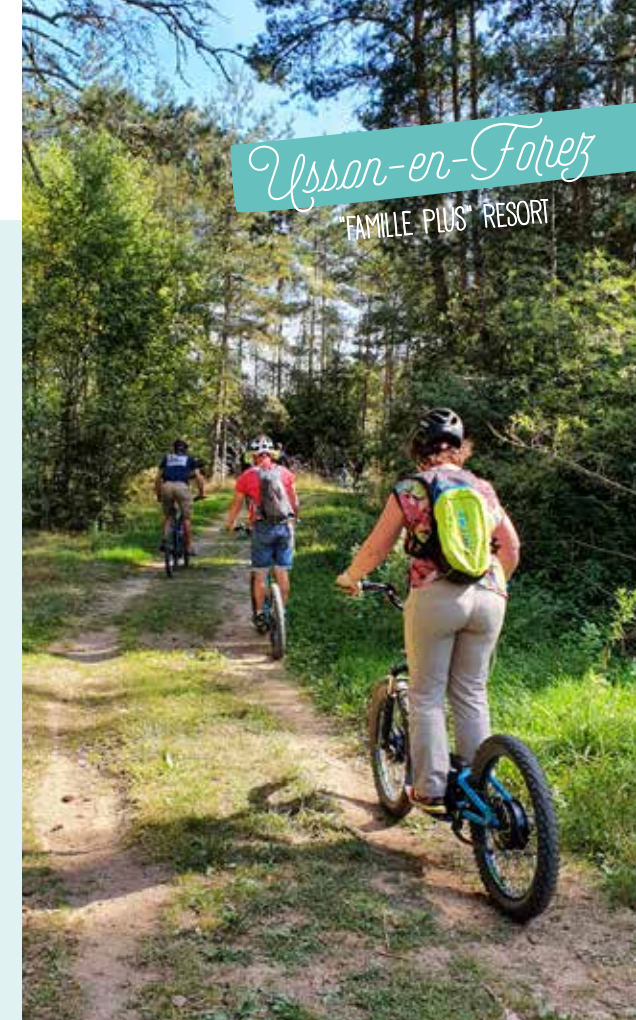
## ACCESSIBILITY FOR ALL

Loire has 75 "Tourisme et Handicap" sites, proof of the commitment and determination of local tourism providers to be as inclusive as possible and welcome guests with special needs to use their facilities as autonomously as possible.

We are the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Department with the second largest number of such sites.



Usson-en-Forez  
"FAMILLE PLUS" RESORT







LANDSCAPES TO TAKE YOUR

## Breath Away

Loire wouldn't be Loire without its majestic landscapes. The landscapes are extremely diverse, ranging from towering cliffs to panoramic views to vineyards and medieval sites. As an old French saying goes: "All tastes are in nature". In other words, there's something for everyone, so everyone will be happy in Loire. We'll leave you to choose, but here is a taster of some of the Department's unmissable landscapes.

### LE ROANNAIS

In the north of the Department, the Roannais, where the Loire valley widens, opens up to the influences of the Bourbonnais and the Charolais areas.

Roanne, a town whose name is known worldwide as a centre for gastronomy, is at the heart of an area that can only be qualified as "irresistible".

As well as its reputation for fine food, the Roannais possesses a real cultural dimension with a unique concentration of Villages of Character offering an outstanding heritage and authentic *art de vivre*.

Water is everywhere: the 36 km long Villerest lake is the longest lake on the river Loire. And as the river meanders through the Department, it offers a series of points of view as awesome as they are magical.

A greenway, the Véloire, runs alongside the Canal de Roanne and is a delight for cycle tourists.

With its varied landscapes and wide open spaces, the Roannais offers multiple facets, with 490 hectares of oaks making up the forest of Lespinasse, the largest forest property in the Department, the Arboretum des Grands Murcins in Arcon or the peatland at La Verrerie offering some fantastic walks. The Monts de la Madeleine, a mountain range that extends from the Monts du Forez, planted with conifers and culminating at an altitude of 1164 m, mark the boundary between the départements of Loire and Allier.

### FOREZ

A natural region stretching from the plain to the high plateau known as the Hautes Chaumes, Forez has been a "Pays d'art et d'histoire" (Land of Art and History) since 1998. Montbrison, its historic capital, has Loire's largest architectural ensemble, with 18 listed buildings. The diversity of its heritage is exceptional: from Villages of Character to Renaissance châteaux to medieval castles, Forez shares its history.

It is also home to a wide range of unique know-how: petanque boules, the art of goldwork embroidery and rich range of flavoursome *terroir* products, such as the inescapable Fourme de Montbrison cheese.



### Hautes Chaumes

FEATURING TRADITIONAL SHEPHERDS' COTTAGES KNOWN AS JASSERIES, STILL USEFUL TO TODAY'S HIKERS

The Monts du Forez are situated just on the edge of the forest beyond which lies Auvergne. Their highest point is Pierre-sur-Haute at 1634 m. Dotted with magmatic rocks (granite) and metamorphic rocks (gneiss), wooded with ash and fir, the landscape contrasts with the moors and peatlands of the Hautes Chaumes, where you'll also see the traditional shepherds' cottages, *jasseries*. The Jasseries de Colleigne regional nature park is a Natura 2000 site. The plain of the same name extends over 750 km² to the east of the Massif Central at an altitude of 350 m. In this plain covered by clayey, granitic soil, water is a constant presence. Crossed by the Loire running south to north and irrigated by the Canal du Forez, it is dotted with 300 lakes covering a total area of 1500 ha.

### FOREZ-EST

In the eastern part of the Department of Loire, the Forez-Est area encompasses the Monts du Lyonnais and the Monts de Tarare, and enjoys sunrises over rolling countryside and picturesque villages. The scenery is lovely, and this is a great place for walking, along paths that sometimes have interesting tales to tell, like that of the monorail. And if horse riding, cycling, mountain biking are more your thing, there are plenty of opportunities for all of those. Mont Boussuivre is the high point, at 1004 m. At the top is the Tour Matagrín, a circular stone tower built in the 1870s and which has since become a tourist attraction with a 360° orientation table and panoramic views over 14 Departments. Forez-Est, land of weavers, still resonates with the noise of the looms. There are several museums that pay tribute to the skills of the peasant weavers when weaving was a cottage industry. The textile industry still has a strong presence today.



Pilat

OFFERS A WIDE RANGE OF OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES THAT WILL APPEAL TO THOSE OF A SPORTY NATURE

## PILAT REGIONAL NATURE PARK

Straddling the départements of Loire and Rhône, Pilat Regional Nature Park covers the Massif du Pilat, whose highest point is the Crêt de la Perdrix at an altitude of 1431 metres.

There's no shortage of "crêts" or peaks in Pilat and the views are spectacular. But Pilat also has other atmospheres to offer: high plateaux, Pilat rhodanien with its vineyards and orchards, the Pays du Gier...

70,000 hectares of countryside between Saint-Étienne and Lyon, ideal to get out in the open, breathe in some pure air and take advantage of the multitude of outdoor activities on offer.

There's plenty of history and heritage too, with two Villages of Character, Mallevall and Sainte-Croix-en-Jarez, an old Carthusian monastery that is classed as one of France's most beautiful villages.

In addition to a unique environment, you can enjoy a host of outstanding local produce, Pilat apples, Rigotte de Condrieu cheese and some excellent wines (Saint-Joseph, Condrieu, Château-Grillet).

## LOIRE GORGES

As it meanders through an undulating relief of eroded hills, the Loire has carved out steep gorges, which over the years became an important point of passage.

The river's meanders have shaped a series of strategic points that have long been occupied by humans, as evidenced by the Dolmen des Échandes and the Oppidum d'Essalois. Later chapels, keeps and châteaux were built to watch over the farmlands. Today the gorges are filled by the Grangent dam (built in 1957) to form a lake dotted with little islands and peninsulas, an exceptional landscape and an important site for biodiversity. The variety of the fauna and flora is recognised at European level, with the site classified as a Natura 2000 site and protected as part of a regional nature reserve.



Le Petit d'Âne

GLORIOUS

GARDENS

Room

In addition to the contemplative scenery of the Loire valley there are also man-made landscapes. Over the centuries, various spots in the Department have been enhanced by lovers of botany and the preservation of biodiversity, culminating in the award of the "Département Fleuri" (Department in Bloom) distinction in 2017. An overview of these gardens of a thousand and one scents.

## SAINT-MARCEL-DE-FÉLINES

### BOTANICAL CHÂTEAU

Listed as a historic monument for over 40 years, the Château de Saint-Marcel-de-Félines is framed by an exceptional set of stone walls and Roman tiled roofs. As well as the elegance of its château, its 6 towers and its moat, this estate stands out thanks to its contemporaneous garden: *bouligrin* lawn, box hedge maze, groves opening onto *salles de verdure* and sculptures.

● [chateaudesaintmarceldefelines.fr](http://chateaudesaintmarceldefelines.fr)  
04 77 63 54 98

### NOTE:

Every year in October, the garden hosts the "Vieilles Pierres, Jeunes Plantes" (Old Stones, Young Plants) festival which celebrates local plants and crafts.

## LA BÂTIE D'URFÉ GARDENS

### HYMN TO THE RENAISSANCE

Listed as a historic monument since 1912, the Château de la Bâtie d'Urfé boasts some remarkable gardens. Laid out between 1546 and 1558 in Saint-Étienne-le-Molard, the garden consists of a refined composition of 16 beds of box and yew trees, the ultimate expression of topiary art in the 16th century. Entirely enclosed by crenellated walls they are centred on a rotunda and a fountain.

● [loire.story.com](http://loire.story.com) | 04 77 97 54 68

Château de la Bâtie d'Urfé



Laid out between 1546 and 1558 in Saint-Étienne-le-Molard

## CHÂTEAU DE BOUTHÉON

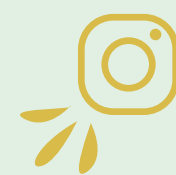
### THE ART OF GARDENS

The Château de Bouthéon's botanical garden is one of the most fascinating in the Department of Loire, possibly in the entire Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region. In this haven of Loire greenery, you can breathe in the subtle scents of its rose gardens, orchards and medicinal plants, stroll through the French formal gardens or taste the produce from its organic vegetable garden.

### NOTE

A "Festival of the marrow and autumn flavours" takes place every year in October. Grown by the market gardeners on the banks of the Loire, the marrow is honoured over a two-day festival.

● [chateau-bouthéon.com](http://chateau-bouthéon.com) | 04 77 55 78 00



## 8 INSTAGRAMMABLE SPOTS

### unmissable, confidential, wild

- **Le Pêt d'Âne à Dancé**, a unique belvedere on the Loire's largest meander
- **Château de Couzan** in Sail-sous-Couzan, an impressive panoramic view over Forez and the Monts du Lyonnais
- **Le Crêt de la Chèvre** in the Massif du Pilat, views as far as the eye can see!
- **Château de la Roche** in Saint-Priest-la-Roche, a fairytale château
- **La Grande Pierre Bazanne** in the heart of the Hautes Chaumes area of Forez... a unique landscape at an altitude of 1400 metres
- **Loire Gorges**: the view as you leave Queret will take your breath away
- **La Chapelle Saint-Sabin**: an extraordinary location
- **Gouffre d'Enfer dam**: an incredible site just a stone's throw from Saint-Étienne





## PÉPINIÈRES PAUL CROIX

### ROSES EVERY WHICH WAY

Situated in the town of Bourg-Argental, these nurseries were created in the 19th century by Adrien Sénéclauze, an experienced botanist and horticulturist. They now count some 20,000 rose bushes laid out in beds, an exceptional collection of plants and groves with statues, fountains and arches. In 2010, the rose gardens made their mark when they were awarded the "Jardin Remarquable" (Remarkable Garden) seal of approval.

## AND ALSO

### MEDIEVAL GARDENS

The symbolism of their layout is what makes these gardens special and they have an undeniable charm. There are several in the Department, including Saint-Haon-le-Châtel, Saint-Romain-le-Puy, Salt-en-Donzy, Montrond-les-Bains.



Écopole du Forez



La Tourbière de la Verrerie

### MAISON DU PARC NATUREL RÉGIONAL DU PILAT | PÉLUSSIN

Installed in old silk spinning mill, the Regional Nature Park visitor centre allows the visitor to understand the different milieux that make up the Massif du Pilat. The visit is very interactive and a must before discovering the Park itself.

● [pilat-tourisme.fr](http://pilat-tourisme.fr) | 04 74 87 52 00

### LES GRANDS MURCINS | ARCON ARBORETUM

In an exceptional site, the arboretum is a collection of full-size trees, with over 250 native and exotic species. A chalet houses a permanent exhibition on the environment of the Monts de la Madeleine.

● [loire.story.com](http://loire.story.com) | 04 26 24 92 86

### MAISON DES ETANGS DU FOREZ | ARTHUN

In the heart of Forez, the Maison des Étangs du Forez (Forez lakes centre), situated in the Réserve de Biterne (an animal and hunting reserve) offers an interactive indoor exhibition on the historical, human and natural heritage of the Forez lakes.

● [maisondesetangsdufactorez.fr](http://maisondesetangsdufactorez.fr) | 04 77 76 23 12

### ÉCOPOLE DU FOREZ | CHAMBÉON Ornithological reserve

In the heart of the Forez plain, the Écopôle du Forez offers an ideal way to discover the natural environment of the banks of the Loire. Built on old gravel pits that have been redeveloped as lakes and alluvial forest, this spot has the region's largest bird reserve (355 ha).

● [ecopoledufactorez.fr](http://ecopoledufactorez.fr) | 04 77 27 86 40

### GRAVIÈRE AUX OISEAUX | MABLY

40 hectares on the banks of the Loire, a stones throw from Roanne town centre. The Gravière de Mably gravel pit is a place to discover and observe the wild wetland fauna and flora, which includes some remarkable species. The Maison de la Gravière visitor centre has a permanent exhibition on this environment.

● [loire.story.com](http://loire.story.com) | 04 77 78 54 29



## A CLOSER LOOK AT CHAMBOEUF

### 1st Garden Village in Loire – a "4-flower" village

Birthplace of Antoine Meilland, the world's leading rose breeder with his famous "Roses Meilland". Today Chamboeuf is a "Village-Jardin" (Garden Village). Based on the idea that the urban does not replace nature, but exists in its midst, a themed plant-based itinerary has allowed the village to appropriate the MEILLAND story and give heritage and cultural meaning to its green spaces policy. Visitors can follow a walking circuit punctuated by floral tableaux and 5,000 rosebushes that burst into an explosion of colour and scents during the season. Also, don't miss the Maison de la Rose, a fine tribute to the famous rose breeder.



Saint-Haon-le-Châtel



## PROTECTED

# Areas

The diversity of the natural environments in the Department is presented in the guide to natural areas in Loire, which lists no less than 25 outstanding sites.

From the Roannais to Pilat, taking in the Monts and the Plaine du Forez, nature here is majestic, abundant, omnipresent: exceptional forests, high-altitude peat bogs, the Hautes Chaumes in Forez, the banks of the Loire and the lakes, all of the providing habitats for numerous species of plants and animals. From a geological point of view, the basalt crags are evidence of the volcanic phenomena that shook the Department 30 million years ago.

THE GUIDE DES ESPACES NATURELS SENSIBLES (GUIDE TO SENSITIVE NATURAL AREAS) IS AVAILABLE ON THE WEBSITE [LOIRE.FR](http://LOIRE.FR)



## A CLOSER LOOK AT THE LOIRE GORGES

### Centre d'interprétation des Gorges de la Loire et du barrage de Grangent – Château d'Essalois à Chambles

With a fun, innovative museographic presentation using multiple media, the Gorges de la Loire and Grangent Dam interpretation centre is organised into three main themed exhibition halls: water (the hydroelectric dam and the issues round electricity production, water management, etc.), architectural heritage (industrial, civil engineering structures, housing, etc.) and the landscapes and nature of the Loire Gorges.

● [Smagl.com](http://Smagl.com)

### Maison de la Réserve Naturelle Régionale des Gorges de la Loire | Saint-Victor-sur-Loire

#### New layout and scenography in March 2022

With exhibitions, guided tours and different events and activities organised all year round, the Loire Gorges Nature Reserve visitor centre takes you to the heart of protected natural area in the Loire Gorges. With animations and hands-on materials and media, the centre has really gone to town to ensure the whole family can learn in a fun way.

● [reserve-regionale-gorges-loire.fr](http://reserve-regionale-gorges-loire.fr) | 04 77 90 86 83



With a clear focus on respect for nature, ecological practices and access to well-being, the Department of Loire is packed with natural sites where you can get out in the open, disconnect or get your fill of thrills...



## HIKING

With 9,000 km of waymarked trails and 73 hiking clubs, Loire is a hikers' paradise, and all the more so as 5 GR trails run through or alongside it:

### ● GR®3

The first official Grande Randonnée hiking trail to be marked out in France, this trail is atypical in several ways: its length, 1200 km which takes it from Ardèche to Loire-Atlantique, passing through the Loire Valley, therefore crossing 3 regions and 12 départements, its close proximity with one of Europe's last wild rivers and its surrounding areas...

In Loire, after slipping through the Loire Gorges, the GR®3 follows the steep slopes of Forez and the Hautes Chaumes plateaux as it continues on its way towards Puy-de-Dôme and beyond.

### ● GR®7

Although this trail is still relatively (too) little known, this exceptional route takes you from the Ballon d'Alsace all the way to Andorra, tracing a diagonal line following the drainage divide across France through 4 regions and 18 départements. In the Department of Loire in particular, it is a must for those who like to walk ridge lines, this one running between the Matin mountains and the Massif du Pilat. **The 1500 km itinerary is about to be completely upgraded...a new "topo guide" is due to be published early in 2022**

### ● GR®89

The GR®89, between Lyon and Clermont-Ferrand is known as the humanists' trail. Walked by Montaigne in the 16th century when he had just been elected Mayor of Bordeaux, this 153 km eponymous trail follows the footsteps of a man who trod the soil of the Department of Loire with a joyful curiosity.

Like the illustrious thinker and writer of the Essays, you are invited come down from the Monts du Lyonnais to reach Feurs, then Boën-sur-Lignon, before passing onto the other side of the Monts du Forez near Noirétable to finish up in Puy-de-Dôme. On your way, don't miss the Château de la Bâtie d'Urfé: and the village of Montverdun with its magnificent priory.

### ● GR®765

As well as following two paths that go on to Santiago de Compostela, the GR®765 dips up and down through forest, past water bodies and vines. Whether you go from Cluny to Puy-en-Velay (315 km) or from Lyon to Puy-en-Velay (185 km), you will be walking impeccably marked out paths that take you through the vineyards of the Côte Roannaise, along the Loire Gorges and over the Monts du Lyonnais to reach the Plaine du Forez.

9000 KM OF  
WAYMARKED TRAILS,  
73 HIKING CLUBS.



### ● GR®42 & GR®65

Why join these two GR trails together? Because they offer two of the most enjoyable walks across the Massif du Pilat.

### ● GR®42

Entitled "From Pilat to the Mediterranean", this trail with its 452 km of nuanced aesthetics takes you along the Rhône balconies starting with the deep valleys of the Massif du Pilat near Saint-Étienne and then onto the summits with their vast open spaces.

### ● GR®65

The Via Podiensis or the "Route du Puy" is the most famous and most popular of the trails making up the Way of St. James. Starting in Geneva, in Loire the itinerary takes a 40 km long green route from Condrieu to Le Tracol.

### ● VIA SANCTI MARTINI

The Via Sancti Martini is to hikers what the Santiago de Compostela is to pilgrims. Inaugurated in 2016 after being made a European Cultural Route, this 2500 km itinerary crosses Europe from east to west following in the footsteps of St. Martin of Tours.

Of the 1000 km that are situated in France, over 120 km go through Loire. A perfect opportunity to some stunning walks around the villages of Saint-Martin-Lestra, Feurs, Nervieux, Villereest and Ambierle.

### ● ORIENTEERING COURSES

The topography of the Department lends itself particularly well to orienteering and it has 9 permanent courses to try for some truly relaxing sporting moments.

### ● TRAIL RUNNING

With some truly beautiful waymarked trails, the Department has over 200 km of itineraries for trail runners: randotrail and vertical half-kilometre courses, orienteering events, etc. When it comes to trail running, the Department is at the top of the game.

## ESPACE TRAIL MASSIF DU FOREZ

### A playground for beginners and experienced trail runners

15 courses have been laid out with 4 starting gates: Ambert, Usson-en-Forez, Chalmazel Station and Col de la Loge. With new circuits due to be added in the village of Chalmazel eventually the Trail Space will have 21 courses.

● [tracedetail.fr/fr/massifduforez](https://tracedetail.fr/fr/massifduforez)



## A CLOSER LOOK AT SPORT-NATURE VILLAGES & PÔLES NATURE

To organise and structure the nature sport offer with attractive tourist destinations is the ambition behind the "Village Sport-nature" label created by the Department of Loire. 11 municipalities (8 villages and 3 "pôles nature" spots) have taken up the challenge and have undertaken to provide a range of "sport-nature" activities with sports and tourists facilities suitable for all. The first two municipalities to be officially awarded the "label" are:

### SAINT-RÉGIS-DU-COIN

In the heart of the Pilat Regional Nature Park, this sport-nature village offers a dense network of waymarked trails, which visitors can try out accompanied by specialised coaches.

● [poletrail.fr](https://poletrail.fr)

### VIOLAY

This is definitely the place for your next adventure! Paths and trails run through the woods and along the ridge lines to offer fantastic panoramic views all round the Tour Matagrén, a tower perched at an altitude of 1004 metres, along the GR7 which follows the drainage divide. Numerous other activities are on offer.

● [www.violay1004.fr](https://www.violay1004.fr)

### SAINT-VICTOR-SUR-LOIRE

The future Pôle Nature is boosting its offer activities with:

- > An area specially dedicated to orienteering
- > Climbing with the renovation of the Le Mousset and Les Révotes sites.

**Two new villages were awarded the "label" in 2021: Cordelle and Belmont-de-la-Loire.**

- > **Cordelle** offers: mountain biking, hiking and rowing with a Natura 2000 water sports centre
- > **Belmont-de-la-Loire** offers: mountain biking, hiking and trail running







DID YOU KNOW  
THAT THE FIRST BIKE IN  
FRANCE WAS MADE IN  
SAINT-ÉTIENNE?

## CYCLING HOLIDAYS

If you know the history of the bicycle, you will know how its close ties are to the Department of Loire. Did you know, for example, that the first bike in France was made in Saint-Étienne?

In the 19th and 20th centuries the city set itself up as the capital of the two-wheeler. The 1920s were the golden age of the bicycle Saint-Étienne. The offer was plethoric and Paul de Vivie, alias Vélocio, brought cycling holidays to the masses.

Today the 1886 brand is designing and assembling bikes in Saint-Étienne. Its name is a nod to the year when the first bicycle was made in Saint-Étienne by the Gauthier brothers!

LOIRE.STORY.COM/VELO-EN-LOIRE

### THE VÉLOIRE

The Véloire is the Department of Loire's cycle trail.

Situated in an area of high environmental sensitivity (banks of the Loire, *bocage* landscapes) and high heritage interest, the route runs across the Department from Iguerande in Saône-et-Loire to Montrond-les-Bains.

At times a greenway (Voie verte) (between Roanne and Saône-et-Loire), at others a cycle trail (50 km between Roanne and Montrond-les-Bains), the Véloire will eventually be extended with a section close to the River Loire, which will take cyclists to the outskirts of Saint-Étienne and then, later, allow a connection with the ViaRhôna.

Linked to the main axis of the Véloire, the local authorities have created a network of 20 to 50 km local loops that take quiet back roads that nevertheless offer a rich tourist experience, as well as range of distances and levels of difficulty that mean there is something for everyone.

These itineraries are currently being marked out and, when complete, will constitute a good cycle touring offer covering the whole Department.

### THE VIARHONA

The ViaRhôna is unquestionably one of the gentlest, most historical and most gastronomic cycle trails you can do and one that everyone should do once in their life. Altogether it covers more than 800 km running along the River Rhône, the banks of Lake Geneva and all the way to the beaches of the Mediterranean, but 12 km of its route cover the slopes of the Pilat rhodanien, passing by Gallo-Roman towns and famous vineyards.



## A CLOSER LOOK AT THE PASSES

For the sportiest among you, there are no less than seventeen emblematic passes

to try covering a total of 220 km - most of them equipped with mileage markers. They include the Col du Béal, the Loge des Gardes, the Crêt de l'Oeillon, the Col de la Loge, the Croix de Chaubouret, the Croix de l'Homme Mort, the Croix Trévingt, the Croix des Echarmeaux, the Croix Cazard, ...

### MOUNTAIN BIKING

Don't forget that the Pilat Regional Nature Park was a precursor when it comes to mountain biking.

The Park is listed by the French Cycling federation (FFC) as a VTT/FFC site and it offers 35 trails spread across eleven villages, in four different categories: cross-country for the sportiest riders, Enduro for those looking for thrills, family for a slower pace and electric mountain bike trails for those who want to enjoy a ride without overdoing it.

See all the cycling and mountain biking possibilities at Pilat on

PILAT-TOURISME.FR



## A CLOSER LOOK AT THE LARGER MOUNTAIN BIKING AREA IN FRANCE... WHICH PASSES THROUGH LOIRE

In August 2020 the VTT/FFC areas of Le Massif des Bois Noirs and Ambert-Crêtes du Forez were joined up at the Col des Supeyres pass (Puy-de-Dôme). The resulting area now offers mountain bikers 2400 km of tracks and 105 circuits, including 340 km of new tracks to join up with Chalmazel-Jeansagnière. Two courses, one covering 50 km, which passes through the Col du Béal pass and another 30 km one then join the circuits at the Pays d'Ambert area. The area is spread out over four départements (Loire, Puy-de-Dôme, Allier and Haute-Loire) and is now the largest in France: It stretches from Saint-Nicolas-des-Biefs (in the Bourbonnais area) as far as La Chapelle-Geneste in the north of Upper Loire. Mountain bikers can discover fantastic panoramic views and picturesque villages on these trails.

See the list of specialist providers offering accompanied mountain bike outings:

LOIRE.STORY.COM

BOISNOIRS.FR



## AND ON HORSEBACK

It would be an understatement to say that there is an equestrian tradition in Loire, France's second largest horse breeding region after Normandy, with two race tracks, Feurs and Saint-Galmier, which hold national race meetings and prestigious horses that set the race tracks aflutter: Mick d'Angérieux or Neulise and more recently Briac Dark selected for the Prix d'Amérique in 2017...

Equestrian tourism in Loire is necessarily very present: there are many riding centres, some offering treks lasting several days in the Loire countryside.

The Departmental committee in charge of equestrian tourism has recently drawn up a list of riding trails across the entire Department.

CDE42.FFE.COM



# Thrills and Outdoor Activities

If you've got your feet on the ground, your head in the clouds and strong nerves, Loire will appeal to you. Whether it's up in the air, in the water or on land, the Department has a range of adventures to offer you, each more surprising than the last. And even some distinctly original ones...

## GET SOME HEIGHT

### LE PÔLE VERTICAL | PLANFOY

Le Pôle vertical is nothing short of a goldmine for climbers. Beginners, experienced climbers, experts, children, teenagers, adults: everyone is catered for in the activities offered by this association that is very committed to the Pilat territory. From the reception centre in the village of Planfoy, you can access several free courses and hire equipment at very reasonable rates. Once you are kitted up, you can head for the rocky site at Le Gouffre d'Enfer, which is equipped for safe climbing with ropes and ladder systems. Then it's up to you to choose between the via ferrata for children and adults, the mountain course for children and adults, the sports climbing course with 180 routes at grades 3 to 8a+, or the great routes with 13 itineraries. So many different playgrounds all offering spectacular views over the Pilat Park and new sensations.

● [polevertical.fr](http://polevertical.fr) | 06 07 80 20 15

### NOTE

In 2020 Chalmazel inaugurated a new via ferrata at the Rocher de l'Olme site. Classed as easy (F) and just 120 m long, it is ideal for families and beginners who want to get their first thrills climbing. Equipment available for hire at the site.

Find all the providers in Loire that can take you flying, here:

LOIRE.STORY.COM



Via Ferrata



## TAKE THE PLUNGE

When it comes to water and white water sports, it's not always easy to choose between the activities on offer:

### IN PILAT REGIONAL NATURE PARK

#### ESPACE EAUX VIVES DU PILAT RHODANIEN | SAINT-PIERRE-DE-BŒUF

Looking for real thrills? Original activities on a 700 metre-long stretch of specially set-up river. You choose: rafting, whitewater swimming kayaking and canoeing... and on the site, there are supervisors, snacks, camping facilities and collective accommodation. Picnic areas by the swimming area, cycle outing on the Via Rhona.

● [espaceeauxvives.com](http://espaceeauxvives.com) | 04 74 87 16 09

## AROUND SAINT-ÉTIENNE

### OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES CENTRE

SAINT-JUST-SAINT-RAMBERT

Situated on the tranquil, green banks of the River Loire, the St-Just St-Rambert outdoor activities centre offers canoe trips into the Loire Gorges.

Other fun activities are also available at this centre: archery/blowgun and target games, all-terrain scooters, orienteering.

Fun discovery activities on calm waters and hikes for all in the Loire Gorges.

● [b2lf.com](http://b2lf.com) | 06 72 91 24 64

### MARINA

SAINT-VICTOR-SUR-LOIRE

A stone's throw from Saint-Étienne you'll find one of France's largest inland marinas, with over 300 boats berthed here all year round. Enjoy the lovely sandy beach and nature all around.

The 365 hectares of the lake make this an ideal place for water-based activities such as canoeing and kayaking, windsurfing, motorboating, water skiing, pedalos and even angling.

It is from this site that the company "Les Croisières dans les Gorges de la Loire" offers electric boat trips on board the Grangent in a setting that will take your breath away. Different possibilities (discovery cruise, aperitif outing, lunch cruise, etc.).

## AROUND ROANNE

### PORT OF ROANNE

A marina in town, near the Véloire, gives Roanne some extra cachet. In the 19th century, the port played a big role in the town's economic development, although today it's clearly a leisure marina, the starting point for the quiet canal that links Roanne to Digoin.

● [Port-de-roanne.fr](http://Port-de-roanne.fr) | 04 77 72 59 96

### OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES CENTRE | VILLEREST

Not far from Roanne, the 36 km-long Villerest lake is the longest lake on the river Loire. The tourist centre at Villerest-Commelle-Vernay has a multi-activity area on the riverbank, offering numerous activities such as kayaking or paddle boarding.

The site also offers boat trips to discover Villerest, from Bully marina and the edges of the high-perched village of Saint-Jean-Saint-Maurice.

● [loire.story.com](http://loire.story.com)



Saint-Victor sur-Loire

THE 365 HECTARES OF THE LAKE MAKE THIS AN IDEAL PLACE FOR WATER-BASED ACTIVITIES

### PORT OF BRIENNON

On the canal from Roanne to Digoin, this charming little port offers a pleasant stopping-off point for pleasure boaters, and on the quayside the "freshwater sailors" are ready to take you on their barge, the Infatigable, for a canal boat trip with commentary describing the life of the sailors.

And just nearby you can hire canoes, kayaks or choose a combination outing: canoe out, bike back.

● [briennon.fr/port-de-plaisance](http://briennon.fr/port-de-plaisance) | 04 77 60 80 73

### PORT OF BULLY

Just below the Presle bridge in a delightful spot, you can hire canoes and motor boats and there is also an area for angling.

● [port-de-bully.fr](http://port-de-bully.fr) | 04 77 65 23 36

### PORT OF LA CAILLE

SAINT-JEAN-SAINT-MAURICE

This a well-kept secret, an adorable little marina at the Villerest dam just below Village of Character Saint-Jean-Saint-Maurice.

This is quite simply an exceptional spot.

● [loire.story.com](http://loire.story.com)

### LOIRE ROWING BASE | CORDELLE

Maybe it's time to try your hand at rowing? A calm, relaxing activity, perfect for a family outing, this activity is an ideal way to potter about the calm waters of the Loire in an outstanding natural setting. A discovery package is available with instruction for complete beginners to familiarise them with the basic technical gestures. For those who already know the ropes, a 13 km course sheltered from the crosswinds awaits you. Finally, for professionals, it is possible to join intensive group sessions on a 2000-metre course marked with coloured buoys.

● [baseavironloire.com](http://baseavironloire.com) | 06 46 76 26 64





FLY FISHING  
RESERVOIR

Usson-en-Foréz



FIND YOUR  
FAVOURITE PLAYGROUND  
IN LOIRE !

### ANGLING

As well as its majesty the Loire, which flows right across the Department, the network of waterways is dense: rivers, streams, volcanic lakes and other water bodies are all an integral part of the local landscape. Keen anglers will find superb, top-level fishing spots, two fly fishing reservoirs at Noirétable and Usson-en-Foréz, special stretches in open or closed waters for still-fishing or family days out. A place designated as a "Station Pêche" (Angling resort): Villereest, and a no-kill area has even been identified at Estivareilles.

● [www.loire.story.com](http://www.loire.story.com)

### THERMAL SPAS

Come and take the waters at **Montrond-les-Bains**, the Department's only thermal spa. The quality of its thermal waters allows them to be used to treat conditions of the digestive tract and nutritional disorders, and they are also recognised as beneficial in the treatment of rheumatism.

Or maybe you just want to get away from it all? In this case the "LES ILÉADES" thermal spa, just next door, offers 2500 m² of relaxing spaces.

● [lesthermes-montrond.fr](http://lesthermes-montrond.fr) | 04 77 94 67 61

● [www.lesileades-montrond.fr](http://www.lesileades-montrond.fr) | 04 77 20 08 00



### THRILLS

Welcome to the kingdom of fun, unusual, amusing activities - there's something for everyone:

At the foot of the ski runs at the **Chalmazel resort**, you can **hire mountain bikes, electric mountain bikes, fat scooters, karts and electric all-terrain scooters** or book accompanied outings with a State qualified French instructor.

Also in Chalmazel, **Hêtre en Forez** offers an outdoor activity that promises to take you back to your childhood: **tree climbing**. Accompanied by a specialised instructor, you start your climb equipped from head to toe, with ropes and harnesses, showing the greatest respect for the trees. In this exceptional setting - a magnificent forest of ash trees next to the river - you can also take part in some sensational workshops, and even spend a night suspended in a hammock...

● [hetreenforez.com](http://hetreenforez.com)

Whizzing down from L'Oeillon to the Rhône valley **on a scooter** is a must in the Pilat Regional Nature Park. Several providers offer this activity, along with others such as mountain biking, Nordic walking, biathlon, etc.

Unique in the Department, the **devalkart de Graix** is one to try... Drive a low-slung vehicle, go at your own speed, zip down the tracks entirely safely and without polluting? It's all possible with these non-motorised karts on rubber wheels. And to get back up the hill? A ski lift awaits you, so that you can really make the most of the thrill of the descent.

● [pilat-tourisme.fr](http://pilat-tourisme.fr)

*And also.... Some ten treetop adventure parks offer multiple courses in exceptional natural settings*



Chalmazel



THIS PLACE IS A  
PARADISE FOR CROSS-  
COUNTRY SKIING,  
CLASSIC OR FREE,  
SNOWSHOE  
OUTINGS,  
DOG SLEDDING TRIPS

Le Bessat

## Winter Thrills and Spills

### CHALMAZEL SKI RESORT

At altitudes up to 1640 m, Chalmazel can certainly hold its own when it comes to winter sports. In this family mountain resort, you have access to everything you need for all the winter activities. Here's a brief overview:

**Ski runs:** 12 km of ski runs culminating at a high point of 1648 m, with 4 km equipped with snow canons to make artificial snow; a children's snow club with moving walkway; eight ski lifts including a detachable chairlift.

**Sit skis:** Three sit skis are available at the resorts so that persons with reduced mobility can also enjoy the pleasures of the downhill runs.

### Waymarked ski touring courses

**Snowfun** - choose from: snowscooting or snowkiting - kitesurfing all its forms - skiing, snowboarding or mountain-boarding, and more.



**Not forgetting the Col de la Loge, a Nordic domain situated a stone's throw from Chalmazel:** 78 km of cross-country skiing and skating trails, waymarked, compacted and secured, five snowshoe trails, two sledding areas, dog sled outings on a new 7 km trail.

● [station-coldelaloge.fr](http://station-coldelaloge.fr) | 04 77 24 93 22

### PILAT

Over at **Monts du Pilat**, just 20 minutes by car from Saint-Étienne and barely an hour from Lyon, the **Espace Nordique des Monts du Pilat** situated at an altitude varying between 950 and 1300 metres, offers 3 Nordic domains: **Le Bessat-Les Grands Bois, Burdigues and Saint-Régis-du-Coin**. Named the 3 Nordics by Nordic France, this is a paradise for cross-country skiing, classic or free, snowshoe outings, dog sled trips, etc. The landscapes are sumptuous and vary from majestic fir forests, a large open plateau with unobstructed views of the peaks of Pilat and the Alpes.

### NOTE

Every winter, the "Bougez dans les Monts du Pilat" (Get moving in the Monts du Pilat) programme offers action-packed days: hiking with sled dogs, laser biathlon, trail outings, Yukigassen, Evvo fitness, trapper nights in a Tchoum tent and a Nordic children's snow club.

Finally, whether you are in Pilat or Forez, we invite you to try, at least once, one of our Veillées Nordiques, an ideal way to discover the slumbering nature of Forez and Pilat at a cosy evening with mulled wine and a mountain dinner.

● [pilat-tourisme.fr](http://pilat-tourisme.fr)



FUN FOR ALL THE

## Family

Loire stands out thanks to its diverse landscapes and the historical scope of its heritage. But that's not all. This is a Department where everything is designed so that families can have fun together: playgrounds, recreational parks, educational farms, escape games, and lots more, including some unusual nature explorations:

### ESSENTIAL THINGS TO DO

#### ESPACE ZOOLOGIQUE

SAINT-MARTIN-LA-PLAINE

Although the town is a remarkable heritage site with the remains of the Gier Roman aqueduct for example, the main attraction lies elsewhere: in the zoo created in 1972 by the Thivillon family. Initially populated with local animals (foxes, badgers, magpies), the park is now home to some rare animals taken in by an association, Tonga Terre d'Accueil: felines, reptiles, chimpanzees and lowland gorillas, one of whom, Platon, was for a long time the zoo's emblem. Besides just observing the animals, you can take part in rewarding and informative educational activities: discover the zoo keeper's job, the gorillas' or the wolves' feeding time, or take a family guided tour.

● [espace-zoologique.com](http://espace-zoologique.com) | 04 77 75 18 68

Saint-Martin-la-Plaine



TAKE THE TIME, REDISCOVER THE PLEASURE OF A FAMILY BIKE RIDE OUT IN THE COUNTRY.

### NEW WAYS OF HIKING

#### LE MONDE DES PENTES

In the heart of the Pilat Regional Nature Park, **Le Monde des Pentes** (The World of Slopes) is a fun walk in the forest that visitors can take their time over, to recharge their batteries and to learn about the secret life of the soil. You go up to the trees and stroke them, you walk barefoot, you listen to the owls hooting, you go and look at different artistic installations nestling in the pine woods. Laughter and wonder are guaranteed on this walk ideal for children aged 3 to 10.

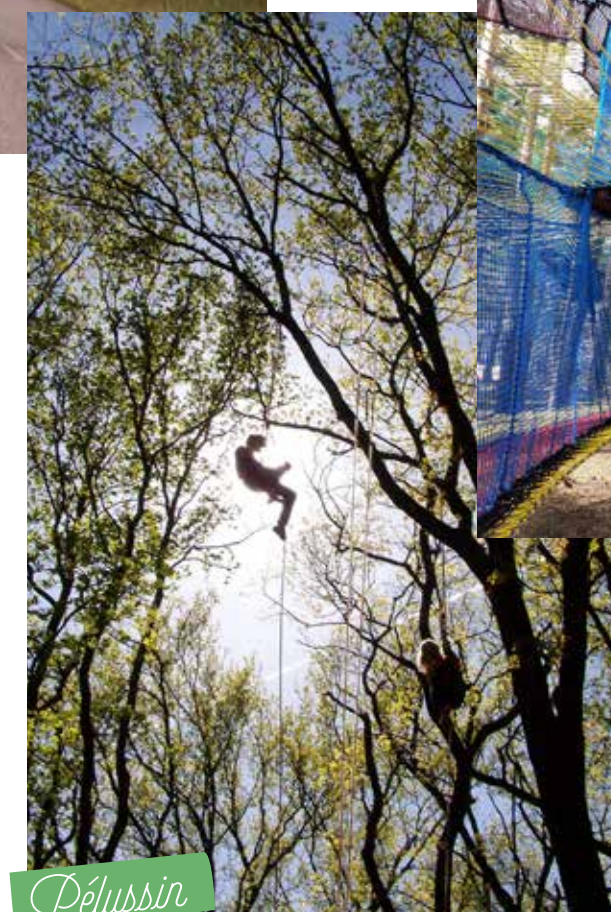
In the same vein, why not try the sensory journey imagined by **La Ferme de Servanges** in the Monts du Forez, between meadowland and forest. Barefoot again, this time you will be meeting some amazing natural elements, through a heroic fantasy treasure hunt. Finally, try the small barefoot trail - admission is free - at the Donzy medieval site in Salt-en-Donzy.

● [lemondedespentes.fr](http://lemondedespentes.fr) | 04 77 39 63 49  
[parcours-pieds-nus.la-ferme-de-servanges.com](http://parcours-pieds-nus.la-ferme-de-servanges.com)  
 06 88 55 02 99

#### ALTIFIL-PARCABOUT® | BURDIGNES

The Parcabout®, an innovative aerial course concept that guarantees fun for all in total safety, with the family or with friend. The principle of a Parcabout® is to suspend nets among the trees, so that participants can roam about above them in total safety without the restrictive harnesses you have to wear on the usual treetop trails and adventure parks. The Parcabout® is a special kind of theme park that offers relaxation, emotion and thrills all at the same time, in total freedom, whilst guaranteeing absolute respect for nature and the trees.

● [altifil.fr](http://altifil.fr) | 09 72 60 88 29



Pélussin



Burdignes

#### TREE RAMBLING AND AND SUSPENDED BIVOUACING, SAMBALA ET BAOBAB | PÉLUSSIN

"The Tree verse" (a sort of ramble from tree to tree): You will learn the rudiments of handling a rope: we get kitted up, I climb, you secure me, and then we swap over. Once you are up in the tree tops, you're on the squirrel route, you ramble through the trees without ever touching the ground, a roped team of tree-nauts! Possibility of bivouacing in the trees depending on the number of participants.

Activity suitable for individual and families

● [grimpearbres-randonnees-pilat.com](http://grimpearbres-randonnees-pilat.com)

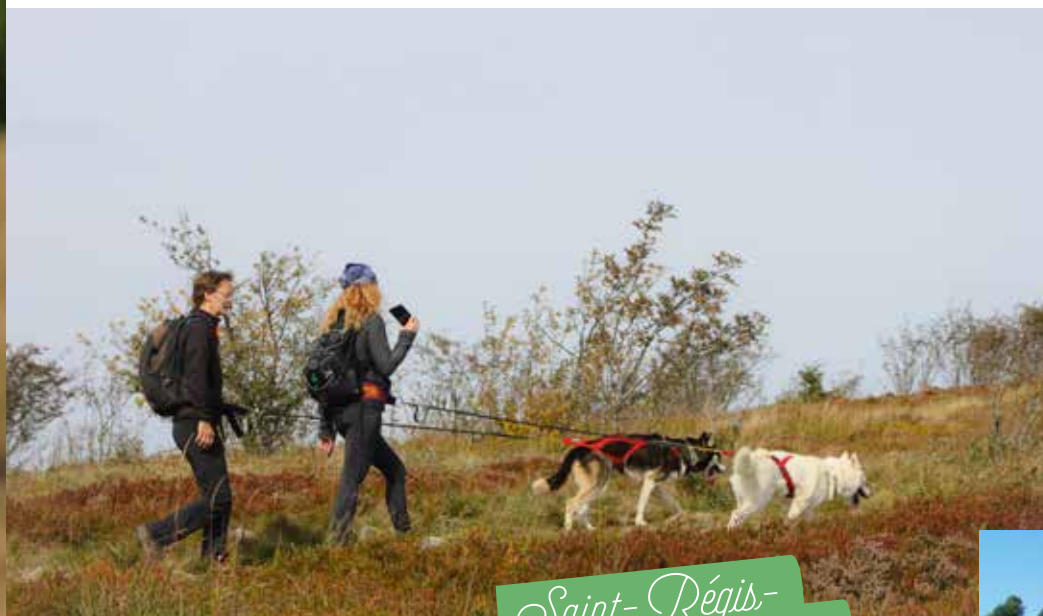
#### VIRONS VÉLO IN MARLHES: FAMILY CYCLING CIRCUITS

4 circuits of increasing degrees of difficulty (from 4.8 km to 12 km) on the back roads and tracks around the village of Marlhès on the high plateaux of Pilat

● [pilat-tourisme.fr](http://pilat-tourisme.fr)







*Saint-Régis-du-Coin*

### HIKING WITH SLD DOGS HIKING WITH DONKEYS

**At least a hike that children can enjoy!**

Hiking with sled dogs, isn't that an activity everyone has dreamt of trying? Accompanied by the musher, you get to spend quality time with these enthusiastic, energetic Nordic dogs. In winter, they pull you on their sleds. In summer they take you for a walk - or run. You'll be surprised at the speed! Hiking in the company of a donkey, now that's different. This is a chance to get to know an animal that children adore. There are several firms in the Department offering day outings or treks lasting several days.

● [loire.story.com](http://loire.story.com)



### THE ONLY "FAMILLE PLUS" RESORT IN LOIRE | USSON-EN-FOREZ

Usson-en-Forez, on the boundary of Forez and Auvergne is the only municipality in the Department of Loire to have been awarded the "Famille Plus Nature" label. But it is one that is richly deserved by a destination dedicated to nature, *art de vivre* and leisure activities of all kinds: waymarked hiking trails, a folk museum, chalets to stay in, typical Forez farms, and much more.

● [familleplus.fr/fr/usson-en-forez](http://familleplus.fr/fr/usson-en-forez)



A LABEL THAT IS RICHLY DESERVED  
BY A DESTINATION DEDICATED TO NATURE...



### TREASURE HUNTS

#### BALUDIK

Have you got a smartphone? If you have, and you are interested in seeing the Loire from a different angle, it's time to download the free Baludik app. Two budding investigators - Capucine and Coline - will accompany you on an hour-long trip as you work out a series of clues left here and there around the Department's Villages of Character. Choose from trails with names like The Alchemist of Charlieu, The Miraculous Stones of Montacher, or the Secret of the Sauvign Fourme. Others will follow. Whichever one you choose, it's a great way to have fun with the family and discover the hidden treasures of some supremely mysterious places!

● [loire.story.com](http://loire.story.com)

#### ADVENTURE-GAME BAGS IN PILAT

This time, no need for a smartphone. To play, all you need to do is go to one of the tourist offices in Pilat and buy an adventure-game bag. Choice of four adventures: Tiluss and the Village of Stars in Montchal (Burdignes), Drosira and the Musical Peat Bog in Gimel (Saint-Régis-Du-Coin), Klakelo and the Secret of the Snows (Le Bessat), Liberty and the Toy Factories (Saint-Julien-Molin-Molette). Immersed in a fascinating world, spend an intense hour as a family investigating fantastic legends together, with these treasure hunt games that will get your brain boiling. Cards, stages, clues, indices, tests, challenges, orientation... A perfect way to have fun, think hard and visit some of the loveliest villages in the Monts du Pilat.

● [pilat-tourisme.fr](http://pilat-tourisme.fr)

#### TRAIN DE LA LOIRE | COMMELLE-VERNAY

The 1 hr 30 ride with commentary on board the little train is completed by a game for the family to play together, "Mysteries and balls of earth, the Loire river bank games that embellishes the world". A fun, historical outing along the old railway track.

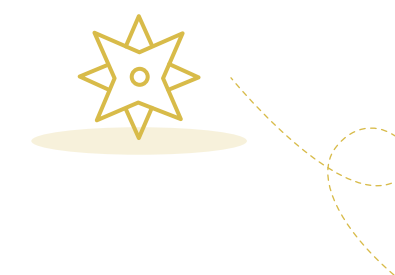
● 04 77 68 58 12

#### PANIQUE EN CÔTE ROANNAISE

Are your children (and yourself) investigators at heart? If so, rendez-vous in Ambierle to solve a mysterious riddle connected to wine growing, alongside a dream team of detectives: Edmond Baravin and Justine Baratine. The story goes: some vine stocks have been brutally pulled up on some plots. Where are the suspects? Who are they? Why did they do it? Explore the vineyards as you follow a series of clues in four stages, by car or on your bike.

Open all year round, all you need to take part in this unusual mystery trail is an investigation kit, which you can buy at the Côte Roannaise wine cellars in Ambierle or Saint-Jean-Saint-Maurice.

● [leroannais.com](http://leroannais.com)



### FUN

#### MUSEO'PARC DU MARINIER | BRIENNON

At the Briennon marina, the children's playground (ages 3 to 12) has been laid out in a wooded space, with miniature golf, water games, trampolines, slides, a zipline and puzzle-type games.

● 04 77 60 12 42

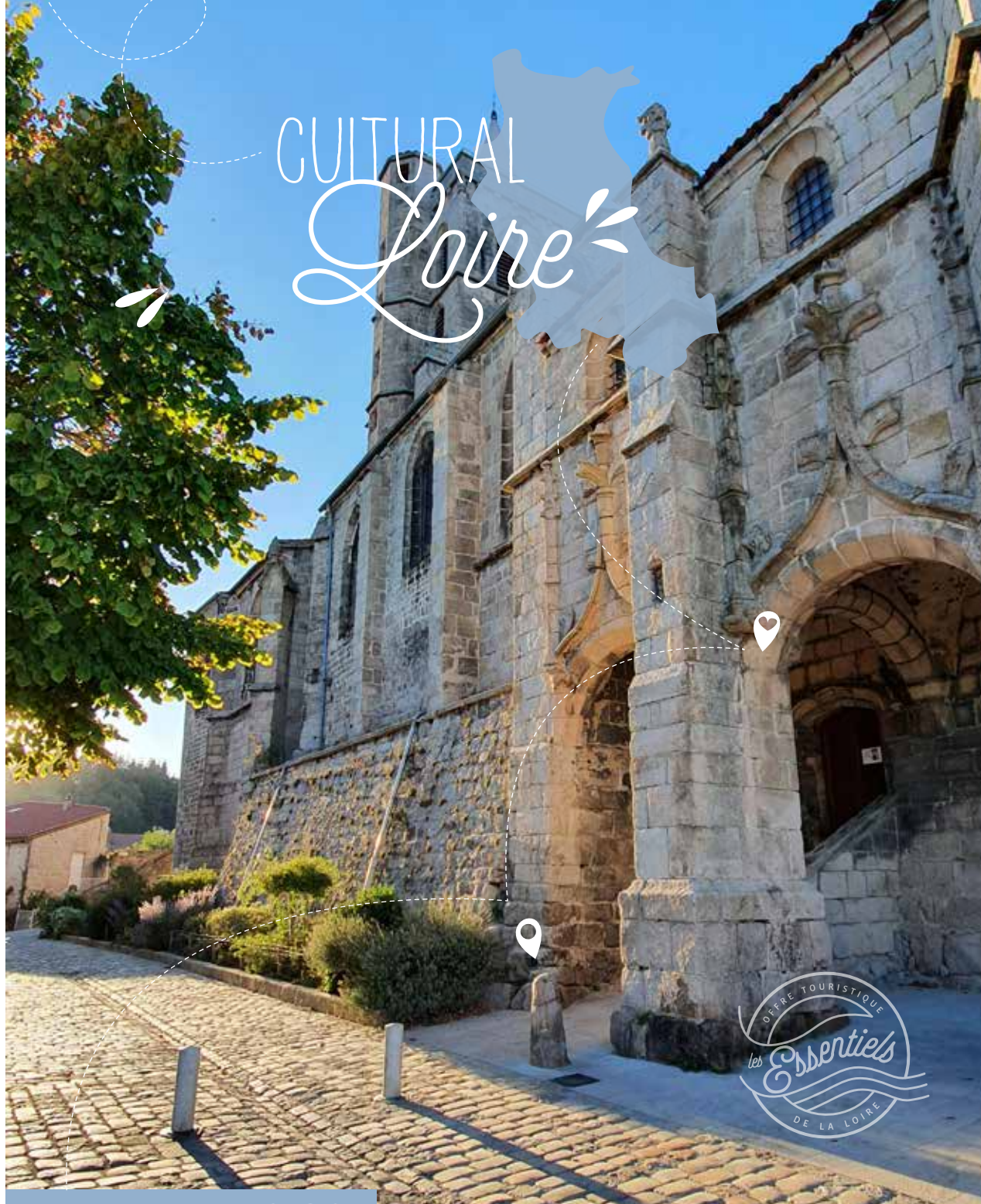
#### EXPLORA | SAINT-ÉTIENNE

Situated in the Puits Couriot mining museum park, Explora Lab and Explora Parc invite young and old to have fun taking part in sensory experiments and workshops, trying out DIY science. The variety of activities on offer guarantees an enjoyable, captivating time will be had by all.

● [explora.saint-etienne.fr](http://explora.saint-etienne.fr)







CULTURAL  
*Loire*

VILLAGES OF

*Character*

The Department of Loire has developed a special "label" for its villages marked by a prestigious past and an atypical charm. Twelve of them have been named Villages de Caractère (Villages of Character).

LOIRE.STORY.COM/FR/VILLAGES-DE-CARACTERE

## IN PILAT REGIONAL NATURE PARK

### MALLEVAL

Situated on a rocky outcrop, overlooking the Gorges du Bataillon and de l'Épervier, Mallevall stands among some exceptional vineyards (Saint-Joseph, Condrieu). This old fortified village once secured the road linking the Rhône valley to Forez and Auvergne. It presents a medieval landscape intertwined with numerous buildings of character and the remnants of a 12th century castle.

### NOTE

**Heritage orienteering course**

**In the delightful setting of this village of character, you can look out for 4 sets of clues corresponding to trails of differing levels. An amusing way to stroll round and discover this exceptional site, combining orientation and observation.**

### SAINTE-CROIX-EN-JAREZ

Right in the heart of Pilat Regional Nature Park lies one of the most beautiful villages in France (Plus Beaux Villages de France®), Sainte-Croix-en-Jarez. This is the only example of a Carthusian monastery - founded in 1280 - that has become a village. It offers numerous activities for visitors throughout the year.

• [chartreuse-saintecroixenjarez.com](http://chartreuse-saintecroixenjarez.com)  
04 77 20 20 81.

## IN FOREZ

### CHAMPDIEU

In the heart of Forez, Champdieu offers a rich and varied heritage that bears witness to over a thousand years of history. The jewel in its crown, the Benedictine priory, has retained its cloister and Romanesque church built over a crypt. The old fortified town has developed around this medieval ensemble and the modern village has grown outside the town walls, between hills, basalt outcrop, lakes and water courses. The Centre de l'Art Roman en Forez features a permanent exhibition on the "Monks and Builders of the year 1000".

### MAROLS

A village that developed in the Middle Ages thanks to its proximity to the old Roman military road, Marols retains a remarkable military and religious heritage. Known for the numerous artists (sculptors and painters, in particular) who have taken up residence here, the village offers a land art trail, with a series of artworks that blend in beautifully with the landscapes around them.



*Saint-Bonnet-le-Château*



*Mallevall*

THIS MEDIEVAL VILLAGE ONCE SECURED THE ROAD LINKING THE RHÔNE VALLEY TO FOREZ AND AUVERGNE

### MONTARCHER

The Forez stronghold built on a rocky outcrop at an altitude of 1160 metres, Montarcher boasts amazing panoramic views of the Alps, the Monts du Velay and Puy-de-Dôme.

### SAINT-BONNET-LE-CHÂTEAU

Situated at an altitude of 850 m, Saint-Bonnet-le-Château resembles Mont Saint-Michel with its collegiate church standing on a headland dominating the whole town. The old town centre also has a wealth of other interesting features, 15th and 16th century houses, cobble streets, etc. Saint-Bonnet-le-Château is a member of the "Petites cités de Caractère" network in Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes.

### NOTE

**The mummies vault underneath the collegiate church can be visited with a virtual reality headset.**

### SAUVAIN

Standing in the middle of an unspoiled landscape Sauvain extends as far as the highest point in Loire, Pierre-sur-Haute (1634 metres). This former fortified medieval village features an impressive architectural unity, with numerous stone buildings. Here heritage goes hand-in-hand with high plateau landscapes where heather and blueberries grow and the local AOP cheese Fourme de Montbrison is produced.





*Saint-Haon-le-Châtel*



## LE CROZET

A former medieval stronghold dominated by the church and crenellated round tower, a remnant of the old castle, this outstanding village also features some magnificent 16th century houses as well as half-timbered houses dating back to the 12th and 13th centuries. From the keep, the panoramic view over the Roannaise hills is stunning. **At the end of 2021, Le Crozet joined the "Petites cités de Caractère®" network in Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes.**

## NOTE

The Biennale du Verre (Glass Biennial) will be taking place on 27 and 28 August 2022. This event, which celebrates heritage whilst promoting contemporary creation, is a living demonstration of the infinite creativity that is possible with this noble material, glass.



## IN LE ROANNAIS

### SAINT-HAON-LE-CHÂTEL

Saint-Haon-le-Châtel has the particularity of being the smallest municipality in Loire, with an area of just 87 ha, but also of constituting an open air museum. Roaming the streets of this village situated on a rocky outcrop at the foot of the Monts de la Madeleine means walking through ten centuries of history and civilisation in a setting of undisputed charm.

### CHARLIEU

#### "Plus beaux détours de France"

For a long time Charlieu was a prosperous town inhabited by traders and artisans. Over the centuries it gained a Benedictine abbey, a major example of Romanesque art and a remarkable Clunisian site.

The visitor centre is an important museumographic space that recreates monastic life, the parish church and the fortifications in particularly lively way.

The village also features more than twenty half-timbered buildings and many alleyways dating from the Middle Ages. Since the end of 2019, Charlieu has been a member of the "Petites cités de Caractère®" network in Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes.



*Charlieu*

### AMBIERLE

Originally a Benedictine abbey, Ambierle became a priory in the 15th century. The village has preserved the splendid Flamboyant Gothic abbey church with a polychrome glazed tile roof.

Inside, visitors can admire the coloured and gold altarpiece depicting scenes from the Passion and placed on the high altar, as well as 36 carved wood choir stalls and stained glass windows dating from the 15th century.

*Le Crozet*



*Saint-Jean-Saint-Maurice*



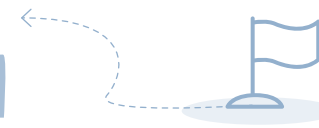
### SAINT-JEAN-SAINT-MAURICE

Dominating the Loire, Saint-Jean-Saint-Maurice offers outstanding views over the river and the Joeuvres Celtic oppidum. As you stroll through its charming lanes, the village reveals a remarkable medieval heritage: former keep, castle walls, church with walls entirely covered in frescoes, the elegant Manoir de la Mure built in the 17th century. An inexhaustible source of inspiration, the village is also home to several passionate craftspeople.

## NOTE

The Biennale des bijoutiers créateurs (Creative jewellers' biennial) is major artistic event. The next edition is due to take place in November 2023. This impressive exhibition and fair echoes the policy of promoting the creative art trades pursued by Roannais Agglomération.

AN ENDLESS SOURCE OF INSPIRATION, THE ARTS AND CRAFTS CENTRE SHOWCASES THE THE SKILLS OF SEVERAL PASSIONATE CRAFTSPEOPLE.





THE

## Towns

## SAINT-ÉTIENNE

A GREAT LADY  
WITH A STRONG CHARACTER

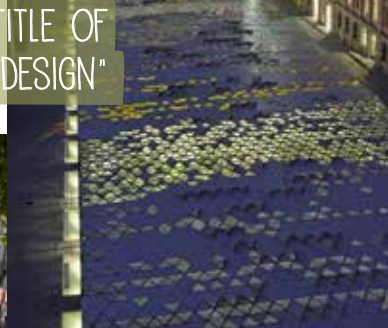
The first city to be granted the "City of Art and History" label back in 2001, Saint-Étienne is distinguished by an unusually strong architectural and industrial heritage inherited from the 19th and 20th centuries and is profoundly marked by an industrial past centred on weapons, the bicycle and ribbons. Now a benchmark for design, with its title of "UNESCO City of Design", Saint-Étienne symbolises the successful transition to creativity and innovation. A third tram line inaugurated in autumn 2019 serves the city's cultural quarter, where the Comédie de Saint-Étienne theatre, the Zénith concert hall, Le Fil (contemporary music venue) and the future Ceysson & Bénétière art gallery are all situated.

The city is the Prefecture for the Department and the second largest conurbation in the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Region. It gained Métropole status in 2018. It is also a city in the country, with the Pilat Regional Nature Park and the Loire Gorges just outside its boundaries.



## LES HALLES MAZERAT:

The Mazerat market halls, built in 1872, are the centre of a rehabilitation project in the Ursules neighbourhood, which aims to create a site focused on *art de vivre*, conviviality and above all local gastronomy, which will host around a hundred events a year! Since September 2021, 24 independent local food traders have made up this traditional market. Large tables are available for Epicureans to share inside the market and on the large tree-shared terraces. Everyone is free to come and taste the products and home-made dishes or to take them away to taste at home.

TODAY NOW  
A BENCHMARK  
FOR DESIGN,  
WITH ITS TITLE OF  
OF "UNESCO CITY OF DESIGN"

► **Musée des Verts:** The only museum in France dedicated to a football team, the museum invites visitors to learn the history and anecdotes of the famous Greens, Saint-Étienne football club. Mythical! The visit can be combined with a visit to the famous Geoffroy Guichard stadium, known locally as the "Cauldron".

[museedesverts.fr](http://museedesverts.fr) | 04 77 92 31 80

## ► Ateliers conservatoire des Meilleurs Ouvriers de France

Are you ready for an unusual trip through time? At the heart of a former Saint-Étienne school, the Ateliers et Conservatoire des Meilleurs Ouvriers de France (Workshops and Conservatory of France's Best Workers) invites you to admire over fifty exceptional pieces, dating from 1924 to the present day.

[ateliers-conservatoire-mof.com](http://ateliers-conservatoire-mof.com) | 04 77 74 57 79



MYTHICAL!  
THE VISIT CAN BE  
COMBINED WITH A VISIT  
TO THE FAMOUS GEOFFROY  
GUICHARD STADIUM.

## ESSENTIAL SITES

► **Cité du design:** Inaugurated in 2009 on the site of the old ordnance factory, the *Manufacture d'Armes* in Saint-Étienne, this centre aims to raise awareness of design.

[citedudesign.com](http://citedudesign.com) | 04 77 49 74 70

## NOTE

The 12th Biennale internationale design Saint-Étienne 2022 will run from 6 April to 31 July 2022, offering six main exhibitions designed to "explore bifurcations".

"Bifurcations. Choosing the Essential" is the general theme of this Biennale.

[biennale-design.com/saint-etienne/2022/](http://biennale-design.com/saint-etienne/2022/)

► **Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain:** With 3,000 m<sup>2</sup> of exhibition space and over 20,000 works, including 1,500 design pieces, the museum has one of the largest collections of 19th, 20th and 21st century works in France.

[mamc.saint-etienne.fr](http://mamc.saint-etienne.fr) | 04 77 79 52 52

► **Musée d'art et d'Industrie :** A former "Palais des Arts", this museum shows visitors the strong ties between industry and the arts. It has three permanent collections: bicycles, weapons and ribbons.

[musee-art-industrie.saint-etienne.fr](http://musee-art-industrie.saint-etienne.fr) | 04 77 49 73 00

► **Musée de la Mine:** Situated on the site of an old mine, the Puits Couriot, this museum consists of a number of buildings illustrating the lives of the miners and includes a visit of an underground tunnel to discover how they worked in the mine. A footbridge leads to the museum and the park.

[musee-mine.saint-etienne.fr](http://musee-mine.saint-etienne.fr) | 04 77 43 83 23

## ROANNE

## ELEGANCE AND GASTRONOMY

An hour from Lyon and Saint-Étienne, Roanne is a resolutely modern and dynamic town. Built along the River Loire with what was historically a very busy port, the town has always had a reputation for industrial dynamism and has been able to rely on a powerful economic base (engineering, agri-food industry, textiles, now a digital centre). This spirit of conquest can also be found in the sporting fervour around the town's emblematic basketball team, the "Chorale". On the cultural front, Roanne offers some remarkable cultural events such as the "Roanne Table Ouverte" (Open Table) festival and the "Ciné-court animé" (animated shorts) festival.

In addition, Roanne is known as a capital of gastronomy thanks to several prestigious symbols: the legendary Maison Troisgros which has for ever marked the history of the town, Maison Pralus and its famous "praluline" and the chocolates of François Pralus, an outstanding master chocolate maker.





## ESSENTIAL SITES

### › Le Musée des Beaux Arts et d'Archeologie Joseph Dechelette

The museum houses a substantial collection covering different areas, but especially ceramics (in the 17th century Roanne became a centre of great renown for its earthenware), painting and African arts. It organises numerous temporary exhibitions throughout the year.

[museederoanne.fr](http://museederoanne.fr) | 04 77 32 68 77

### › La Halle Diderot

In this unmissable attraction for gourmets, we find fresh fruit and vegetables, chocolate makers (François Pralus) and several holders of the Meilleurs Ouvriers de France (Best workers in France) award, including M. Chavrier, fishmonger; the Maison Mons, cheese refiners; Maison Thivoyon, coffee roasters, etc.

### › Factory shops

In the pedestrianised streets of Roanne or in the surrounding municipalities, reflecting the presence of a local textile industry, you'll find bargains in the many shops displaying factory prices: La Fée Maraboutée, Devernois, Griffon, Docks du blanc...

### NOTE

Dedicated to lovers of good food, the art, culture, music and new sensations, every year in October the "Roanne Table Ouvert" (RTO) festival helps to spread the town's reputation far beyond the region's borders. The festival offers discovery workshops and gourmet tasting sessions, but the highlight of the festival is its festive dinner-shows, which alternate gastronomic meals with jazz, pop rock, electro or classical and opera concerts. Truly outstanding events.

● [roannetableouverte.com](http://roannetableouverte.com)



Roanne



## SAINT-GALMIER

### PLUS BEAU DÉTOUR DE FRANCE

This is one of France's "most beautiful detours" and well worth the visit.

The town keeps its promise as a cheerful, picturesque site with a hint of a holiday atmosphere.

The town is full of flowers (a "4-flower" town in bloom) and the streets are constantly full of life. It is here that Badoit, one of France's most prestigious mineral waters, springs forth, already naturally sparkling. Take the time to try it *in situ*!

Saint-Galmier



## MONTBRISON

### HISTORIC CAPITAL OF FOREZ

The town cultivates a gentle *art de vivre* and has conserved many buildings that bear witness to its prestigious past.

There is a busy cultural life and the town centre with its bustling shopping streets stretches along the very pleasant Quais du Vizezy. The Saturday morning market really is a must! It has existed since the 12th century and brings together local producers and other travelling traders for a colourful display and plenty of eatables to try.

## ESSENTIAL SITES



### › La Collégiale Notre-Dame-d'Espérance

This is the most emblematic monument in Forez. The construction of this Gothic church took over two centuries (1223-1466). To reflect the image of the powerful earldom of Forez, Guy IV wanted this collegiate church to be strong and imposing. Today it is the largest Gothic church in the Department of Loire.

[loireforez.com](http://loireforez.com)

### › The Diana heraldry room decorated with 1728 coats of arms

built in the 13th century, this room features a ceiling decorated with 1728 coats of arms: it is a unique site in France. It also contains a library with 30,000 books.

[loireforez.com](http://loireforez.com)

### › The historic town centre

With 18 listed monuments, the old capital of the earldom of Forez is the largest heritage site in Loire.

[loireforez.com](http://loireforez.com)

### › Musée d'Allard

This is one of the oldest museums in the Department of Loire, organised around three main collections: natural sciences, the world of childhood (highlighting a rich industrial heritage concentrated on the "GéGé" toy firm in Moingt) and a Fine Arts section.

[facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com/museeallard) | [museeallard](http://museeallard.fr) | 04 77 96 39 15

### NOTE

"Les Journées de la Fourme et des Côtes du Forez". This festive weekend honours two Forez AOPs: Fourme de Montbrison cheese and Côtes du Forez wine. It takes place in October every year.



## SAINT-JUST-SAINT-RAMBERT

This is a town that combines everything that is desirable in a town: heritage with the medieval Saint-Rambert quarter and the Saint-André church, the largest Romanesque church in Forez, relaxation with the Loire and the leisure facilities on its banks, *art de vivre* with the Sunday morning market, one of the most typical in the Department.

### NOTE

The "C'est tout Chocolat" fair which takes place every November, in the heart of the historic town centre, brings together some thirty chocolate makers and *pâtisseries* who come to share their passion with a public that is as curious as it is keen to taste the wares.



# A Site in a Glass of its Own

## LE CORBUSIER | FIRMINY

### THE LARGEST LE CORBUSIER SITE IN EUROPE AN EMBLEMATIC TOURIST SITE AUVERGNE-RHÔNE-ALPES

The inscription of Le Corbusier's work on the UNESCO World Heritage List confirms his role as an absolute reference, theoretically and artistically, for 20th and 21st century architecture and the Modern Movement.

Le Corbusier built his largest architectural ensemble in Europe at Firminy in the 1960s. It consists of the Stadium, the André Wogensky swimming pool, the Unité d'Habitation with its nursery school and roof terrace, Saint-Pierre church, with its astonishing light and acoustics, and the Maison de la Culture, which is one of the 17 Le Corbusier sites making up a transnational serial property inscribed since 2016 on the UNESCO World Heritage List as an "Outstanding Contribution to the Modern Movement".

● [sitelecorbusier.com](http://sitelecorbusier.com) | 04 77 61 08 72



Saint-Nizier  
sous-Charlieu



### THE CORDELIERS CONVENT IN SAINT-NIZIER-SOUS-CHARLIEU

Founded in 1280 by a community of Franciscan brothers, the convent has had an eventful history. Today all that remains of the buildings are the cloister, the church and the monks' "library". The great cloister, Rayonnant Gothic in style, is meticulously decorated. The adjoining church (late 14th century), is remarkable for its visible timber work dating from the end of the 17th century and its 14th, 15th and 16th century wall paintings.

● [loire.story.com](http://loire.story.com) | 04 77 60 07 42



Montverdun

## MAJOR SITES

# Religious



As well as the monuments mentioned in the section devoted to Loire's Villages of Character, the Department of Loire also boasts a wide range of emblematic historical religious sites. We have chosen five to highlight, for their rarity, their singularity and their audacity. But if you go out and roam the districts mentioned here, you are sure find some of Loire's hidden treasures - it's like a Russian doll, there's always another surprise inside.

### THE CISTERCIAN ABBEY OF BÉNISSON-DIEU

This extraordinary monument surprises with its sheer scale and grandeur. And yet of the Abbey founded in the 12th century, only the church remains, with its remarkable polychrome glazed tile roof and 51 metre high belfry.

● [loire.story.com](http://loire.story.com) | 04 77 60 12 12



THIS EXTRAORDINARY  
MONUMENT SURPRISES  
WITH ITS SHEER SCALE  
AND GRANDEUR.



Pommiers

### THE PRIORY OF MONTVERDUN

This Casadean priory (congregation of Chaise-Dieu), a listed historic monument, stands high on a basalt outcrop in the heart of the Plaine du Forez. The peak offers a 360° view over the Monts du Forez and the Monts du Lyonnais.

The walk (very easy) between Mont d'Uzore and Pic de Montverdun, two volcanic knolls that rise out of the Plaine du Forez, is an absolute must.

● [loire.story.com](http://loire.story.com) | 04 77 97 53 33

### PRIORY OF POMMIERS

Adjacent to a Romanesque church renowned for its outstanding acoustics, the imposing Priory of Pommiers has withstood the tests of time. A doorway into a treasury of arts, it takes you on a surprising cultural journey: medieval underground rooms, cloister, chapter room, refectory, monks' cells, timber work, parlours, and more.

● [loire.story.com](http://loire.story.com) | 04 77 65 46 22

### PRIORY OF SAINT-ROMAIN-LE-PUY

Dominating the plain, planted strategically at the summit of a cone of basalt, it still proudly sports the traces of its past splendour.

Saint Romain le Puy priory church is one of the most prestigious milestones of Romanesque art in Forez. Be sure not to miss the medieval garden, "Le clos d'Hildegarde", a truly timeless space evoking the sacred garden.

● [aldeburtus.fr](http://aldeburtus.fr) | 04 77 76 92 10



SAINT ROMAIN LE  
PUY PRIORY CHURCH  
IS ONE OF THE  
MOST PRESTIGIOUS  
MILESTONES OF  
ROMANESQUE ART IN  
FOREZ.



## MUSEUMS DEDICATED TO LOCAL KNOW-HOW

Loire is a Department of many talents. So now's the time to discover its know-how Whether it is ancestral, traditional or current, it remains synonymous with great creativity and a high level of dynamism.

### MAISON DES GRENAIÈRES GOLDWORK EMBROIDERERS | CERVIÈRES

A workshop and museum that is unique in France, the Maison des Grenadières gives pride of place to what has been one of the ancestral forms of know-how in Haut-Foréz since the 19th century: embroidery with gold thread. In this little place nestling the medieval village of Cervières, discover the history, originally military, then civilian of this rare and precious craft, as well as the skills of embroiderers and some more contemporary creations.

● [grenadières.com](http://grenadières.com) | 04 77 24 98 71

### MUSÉE DE LA SOIERIE ANCESTRAL SILK TECHNIQUES | CHAR- LIEU

Renowned for its exceptional silk cloths destined for *haute couture* and high end soft furnishings, Charlieu has opened a museum in tribute to this special know-how. Based in the old Hôtel-Dieu since 1992, the Musée de la Soierie (Silk making museum) displays traditional old machinery, luxurious silk dresses, locally made fabrics and projects a film on the manufacturing of a fabric.

● [musees-de-charlieu.webnode.fr](http://musees-de-charlieu.webnode.fr)  
04 77 60 28 84

#### NOTE

Every year, on the first weekend of September, "Les Grandes Fêtes de la Soierie" festival is held. This event, which has been recognised as intangible cultural heritage, offers a rich, diverse programme, including ceremonies at the Corporation des Tisserands (Guild of Weavers).

### ATELIER-MUSÉE DU CHAPEAU A FERENCE IN HAT-MAKING | CHAZELLES-SUR-LYON

Known for having been the French capital of the rabbit hair felt hat since the Crusades, Chazelles-sur-Lyon has now paid tribute to this unique know-how by setting up the Atelier-Musée du Chapeau (Hat Workshop-Museum) in the old Fléchet factory. The museum tells the story of the hat-making heritage, highlighting the different steps involved in making a felt hat. An extraordinary gallery of 400 hats gives an idea of the imagination that went into designing and making hats.

● [museeduchapeau.com](http://museeduchapeau.com) | 04 77 94 23 29

#### NOTE

Every two years a hat-making event, the *Rencontres Internationales des Arts du Chapeau*, is held and hat designers take part in a competition to create a hat on given theme. The hats selected (about thirty) by a panel of fashion professionals are put on display in a summer exhibition. The prizes are presented and the designed received over a festive weekend which includes a fashion show. *Rendez-vous* in spring 2023 for the next edition.



### Cervières



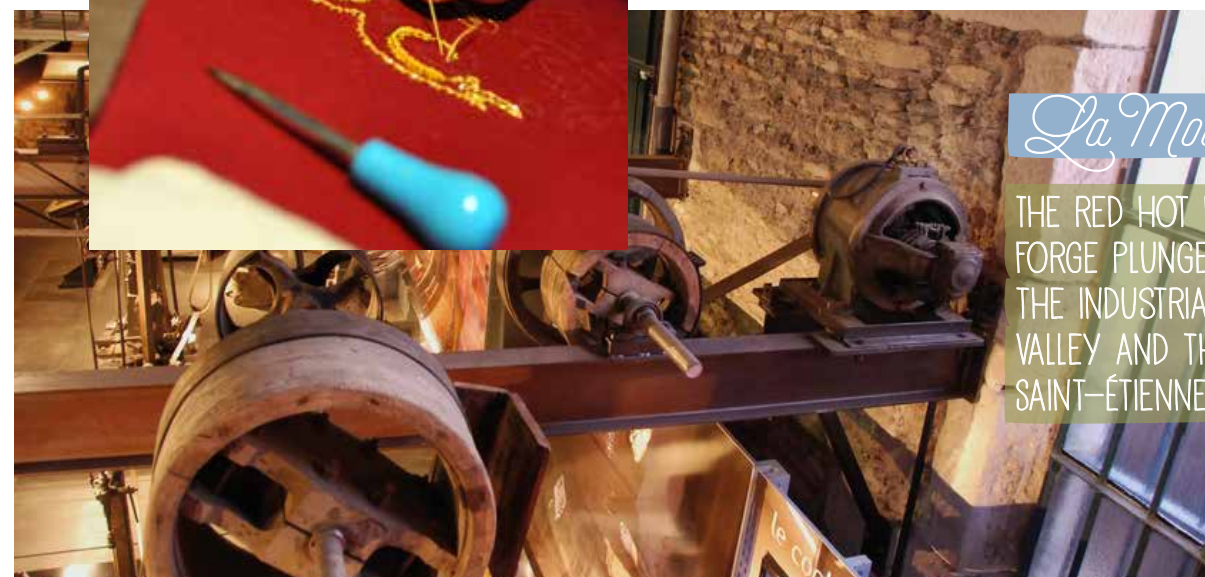
### MUSÉE DU TISSAGE LAND OF WEAVERS | BUSSIÈRES

In the heart of the Matin mountains, Bussières has long been a leading centre for weaving and high-end silk fabric making. The Musée du Tissage (Weaving Museum) tells the story of this unique know-how through visits to weaving looms, some of which are very old.

● [museedutissage.com](http://museedutissage.com) | 04 77 27 33 95

### La Mourine

THE RED HOT HISTORY OF THE FORGE PLUNGES THE VISITOR INTO THE INDUSTRIAL PAST OF THE GIER VALLEY AND THE AREA AROUND SAINT-ÉTIENNE. A MUST.



### MUSÉE DE LA CRAVATE ET DU TEXTILE | YARN FOR EVERYTHING | PANISSIÈRES

In 1945 Panissières was dubbed "Capital of the Tie", such was the sheer scale of the production of fabric for neckties. But it was far from being the only know-how! The museum, based in an old textile mill, bears witness to the variety of textile manufacturing that went on in Panissières. It informs visitors on the history of weaving and its specialities, including neckties, bolting cloth, silk cloth and damask. **Closed for refurbishment in 2022.**

● [musee-de-la-cravate.com](http://musee-de-la-cravate.com)  
04 77 26 23 46 ou 07 84 32 74 56

#### NOTE

The Museums of Bussières and Panissières are stakeholders in the *Terre de Tisseurs, Terre d'Excellence* (Land of Weavers, Land of Excellence) operation in the Matin mountains area: 21 municipalities have joined together to promote the textile history of their region.

### THE 48H DE LA CRÉATION TEXTILE

This flagship event organised every November by the Musée de la Cravate et du Textile in Panissières and the Musée du Tissage et de la Soierie in Bussières proposes a range of activities and events, including a textile market, a design competition, activities at the museums and a fashion show. The 2022 edition will run from 31 March to 3 April.

### MAISON DES TRESSSES ET LACETS A MYRIAD OF COLOURS | LA-TERRASSE SUR-DORLAY

Based in an old textile mill on the banks of the Dorlay river, the Maison des Tresses et des Lacets (Braids and Laces museum) bears witness to a rich industrial past that dates back to the early 19th century and is closely tied in with clothing and interior decoration practices.

● [tressesetlacets.com](http://tressesetlacets.com) | 04 77 20 91 06

### LA MOURINE MAISON DES FORGERONS | SAINT-MARTIN-LA-PLAINE

French visitors, on entering the Maison des Forgerons (Blacksmiths' museum) often spontaneously start humming a famous song about metalworkers entitled "Hands of gold" (B. Lavi-liers). The red hot history of the forge plunges the visitor into the industrial past of the Gier Valley and the area around Saint-Étienne. Unmissable!

● [maisondesforgerons.fr](http://maisondesforgerons.fr) | 04 77 93 45 80





Sauvain

## MUSEUMS DEDICATED TO THE TERROIR AND LOCAL HISTORY

Richness of the *terroir* and local produce, homage paid to local people's lives, these museums provide a window onto a recent past and make the link with the present.

### MUSÉE ALICE TAVERNE | AMBIERLE

This museum, which opened in 1951, bears the name of its creator, Alice Taverner, who wanted to record the way of life in the Roannaise and Forez countryside in the years between 1840 and 1940.

● [museealicetaverne.fr](http://museealicetaverne.fr) | 04 77 65 60 99

### MOULIN DE VIGNAL | APINAC

Follow the sound of the water until you reach the Vignal water mill in the Andrable valley and step into a bygone age.

The wheels of this mill built in 1783 are still turning. A fine discovery that is allowing the miller's trade to live again, perpetuating ancestral working methods. The museum has been awarded the "Famille plus" label and is working to offer families a quality experience.

● [moulindevignal.fr](http://moulindevignal.fr) | 04 77 50 80 23 | 06 78 55 94 75

### CHÂTEAU DE BOËN-SUR-LIGNON | MUSÉE DES VIGNERONS DU FOREZ | BOËN-SUR-LIGNON

Housed in a listed 18th century Château the Musée des Vignerons du Forez (Forez winegrowers' museum) tells the story of the winegrowers' daily lives from 1850 to the present day.

● [chateaumuseeboen.fr](http://chateaumuseeboen.fr) | 04 77 24 08 12

### MUSÉE HOSPITALIER | CHARLIEU

The Hôtel-Dieu in Charlieu closed its doors as a hospital in 1981. In its 18th century building the Musée Hospitalier (Hospital museum) has been created instead. It reconstitutes wards dating from the late 19th century to the 1950s and features a fascinating apothecary's room, itself a listed historic monument.

● [musees-de-charlieu.webnode.fr](http://musees-de-charlieu.webnode.fr) | 04 77 60 28 84

### MOULIN DES MASSONS | SAINT-BONNET-LE-COURREAU

In the heart of a hamlet of farms and mills whose oldest traces go back to the 12th century, a group of enthusiasts have revived production of toasted rapeseed, walnut and hazelnut oil, like at the beginning of the 19th century.

Noises, odours and flavours are all on the menu for this trip back into the region's traditions and ancestral know-how. Shop selling the oils and other artisan products.

● [moulindesmassons.com](http://moulindesmassons.com) | 04 77 76 86 45



Moulin des Massons

### MUSÉE DE LA FOURME ET DES TRADITIONS | SAUVAIN

Now this is an institution... The Museum is housed in a group of exceptional 15th century buildings, an old farm and an old shop, and is entirely dedicated to the rural history of the Monts du Forez and, in particular, the birth of Fourme de Montbrison cheese in the *jas-series* (shepherd's cottages) up on the Hautes Chaumes plateau.

● [museedelafourme.com](http://museedelafourme.com) | 04 77 76 30 04

### NOTE

Cheese dairies specialising in making Fourme de Montbrison are open to visitors.

### ECOMUSÉE DES MONTS DU FOREZ | USSON-EN-FOREZ

The Écomusée (folk museum) is situated in buildings that once belonged to the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph, and it houses the treasures of Alexandre Folleas, an observer of life in Haut Forez in last century and insatiable collector of everyday objects. The highly inventive museography has won many prizes.

● [ecomusee-ussen-en-forez.fr](http://ecomusee-ussen-en-forez.fr) | 04 77 50 68 87



Écomusée des Monts du Forez

THE ÉCOMUSÉE HOUSES THE TREASURES ALEXANDRE FOLLEAS OBSERVER OF LIFE IN HAUT FOREZ

## MUSEUMS THAT TELL GREAT HISTORY

### MUSÉE D'HISTOIRE DU 20<sup>E</sup> SIÈCLE | RÉSISTANCE ET DÉPORTATION | ESTIVAREILLES

This Museum of the History of the 20th Century, the Resistance and Deportation was created by a group of Secret Army resistants and the municipality of Estivareilles and it tells the story of the French Resistance in Loire and the events surrounding the Department's liberation in August 1944.

● [loire.story.com](http://loire.story.com) | 04 77 50 29 20

### MUSÉE DE FEURS | FEURS

The Musée de Feurs has recently been revamped, and now features a brand new exhibition on the 2nd floor on the life and works of Charles Beauverie, a late 19th/early 20th century landscape painter. On the 1st floor, the museum plans a new exhibition on the history of the town of Feurs, the surrounding area and the local population. Due to open in 2022. The ground floor is dedicated to temporary exhibitions, and their number and variety mean there are plenty of reasons to visit and revisit this museum housed in a fine late 18th century private mansion.

● [loire.story.com](http://loire.story.com) | 04 77 26 24 48

### MAISON DE L'ARMORIAL | SAINT-MARCELLIN-EN-FOREZ

An interpretation centre on the fortified towns and villages of Forez, the Maison de l'Armorial is based in an elegant town house in the medieval town, where visitors can see the Guillaume Revel's Armorial. This fabulous document contains a series of sketches and studies of the towns, villages and strongholds villages in 15th century Forez.

● [loire.story.com](http://loire.story.com) | 04 77 36 10 90





## UNCLASSIFIABLE

### CONVENT OF THE SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH | CHAZELLES-SUR-LAVIEU

The precious and enormous collection of objects brought back from all over the world by Daniel Pouget, a famous ethnologist from Loire has found its place at the "convent of curiosities in Chazelles-sur-Lavieu.

● [couvent-des-curiosites.com](http://couvent-des-curiosites.com) | 04 77 76 59 29

### MUSÉE DES CIVILISATIONS DANIEL POUGET | SAINT-JUST-SAINT-RAMBERT

Within the walls of this former priory there is an astonishing collection of local and extra-European ethnography. Perusing it is a kind of world tour of civilisations.

● [loire.story.com](http://loire.story.com) | 04 77 52 03 11

### MUSÉE DE L'HEURE ET DU FEU GUY CHAMPREMIER | VILLEREST

This Museum of Time and Fire is the work of a relentless, but enlightened collector, Guy Champremier.

This museum presents the history of the making of fire, with diverse collections of objects and lighters, as well as collections on the theme of clock making.

● [museedelheureetdufeuvillerest.fr](http://museedelheureetdufeuvillerest.fr) | 04 77 69 71 97



OPEN YOUR EYES AND EARS WIDE AND GET READY FOR AN IMMERSIVE DIGITAL PERFORMANCE-TOUR THROUGH TIME.

### IMMERSIVE INTERPRETATION CENTRE ON THE FIRST RAILWAY LINE | ANDRÉZIEUX BOUTHEON

Did you know that **the first railway line on the European continent** dates from 1827 and that it was built in Loire, **between Saint-Étienne and Andrézieux**? The good idea here? **To relive the story in the company of the pioneers of the railway!** Climb aboard, the locomotive is about to leave.

Open your eyes and ears wide and get ready for an **immersive digital performance-tour through time**. So get on board, the adventure of the train starts here!

● [aventuredutrain.com](http://aventuredutrain.com)



La Bâtie d'Urfé



Champoly



Château de Montrond-les-Bains



Le Château de la Roche



Le Château des Marcilly Talaru



## THE CHÂTEAUX OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LOIRE

Everybody has heard of the Châteaux of the Loire, but not so many are aware of those that dot our department... For the Loire is actually full of magnificent buildings. Here are few emblematic estates to prove it:

### CHÂTEAU DE BOUTHÉON | ANDRÉZIEUX-BOUTHÉON

Overlooking the Plaine du Forez, the Château de Bouthéon is one of the finest monuments in the Department of the Loire. Eight centuries of history set in splendid grounds. The site also has the Forez interpretation centre, an aquarium on the River Loire and reception rooms that can be hired for family and professional events.

#### NOTE:

Visitors can now enjoy a brand new scenography, which includes a simulation of navigation on board a *ramberte* river boat.

● [chateau-boutheon.com](http://chateau-boutheon.com) | 04 77 55 78 00

### CHÂTEAU DE CHALAIN | CHALAIN-D'UZORE

This very fine residence was transformed into a *château de plaisance* during the Renaissance and it undeniably has a great deal of charm, with its Italian gardens with ponds and centuries-old trees harmoniously completed by box hedges.

● [loire.story.com](http://loire.story.com) | 04 77 97 13 12

THE CHÂTEAU WAS BUILT BY THE EARLS OF FOREZ IN THE 12TH CENTURY TO SECURE THE REGION.





Le Château de Bouthéon



### CHÂTEAU DES MARCILLY TALARU | CHALMAZEL - JEANSAGNIÈRE

Dominating the village of Chalmazel, intact since 1231, the Marcilly Talarus' fortified house is astonishingly authentic. It has managed to keep its tall round towers with machicolations and its rampart walk. This is a real castle straight out of the history books, and it even has four very comfortable rooms to stay in.

● [chateau-chalmazel.com](http://chateau-chalmazel.com) | 04 77 24 88 09

### CHÂTEAU DE VAUGIRARD | CHAMPDIEU

A listed historic monument, this is a typical example type of early 17th century pleasure architecture. A walk in the grounds with their centuries-old trees is a must.

● [chateau-de-vaugirard.business.site](http://chateau-de-vaugirard.business.site)  
04 77 58 33 88

### LES CORNES D'URFÉ | CHAMPOLY

This is the ancestral home of the d'Urfé family. Built between the 12th and the 16th centuries, the Château d'Urfé is a fine medieval building, and the view from the keep is quite exceptional.

● [chateaudurfe.org](http://chateaudurfe.org) | 06 46 86 28 33

### CHÂTEAU DE MONTROND-LES-BAINS

This château is one that must not be missed: the imposing medieval building, remodelled in the Renaissance is situated in the centre of Montrond-les-Bains. The Château was built by the Earls of Forez in the 12th century to secure the region. The Renaissance saw it turned into a place for revelry and grandiose festivities - like those that take place every two years for the medieval festival, on the first weekend in August.

● [loire.story.com](http://loire.story.com) | 04 77 06 91 91

### LA FORTERESSE DE COUZAN | SAIL-SOUS-COUZAN

SPECTACULAR! The medieval fortress of Couzan, built on a rocky outcrop above the Lignon, offers you a spectacular panoramic view over the Plaine du Forez.

● [www.ladiana.com](http://www.ladiana.com) | 04 77 96 01 10

### THE CHÂTEAU DE LA BÂTIE D'URFÉ: ODE TO LOVE | SAINT-ÉTIENNE-LE-MOLARD

This is "THE" Château of the Department! Built in the 11th century, this monastic barn was transformed four centuries later into a family manor house under the impetus of the d'Urfé family. One of its descendants, Claude, who was Francis I's ambassador in Rome, gradually gave it its Renaissance style. In 1534, he arranged his residence to meet the codes of the new art and philosophical thinking of the time. A decorative success praised a few decades later by his grandson Honoré in his *roman-fleuve* "L'Astrée".

● [loire.story.com](http://loire.story.com) | 04 77 97 54 68

### CHÂTEAU DE SAINT-MARCEL-DE-FÉLINES

As soon as you arrive in Saint-Marcel-de-Félines you'll immediately feel the urge to enter the château.

The colour of the stone reflecting the sunlight, the imposing towers, the grounds you imagine behind the walls... everything is inviting in this splendid fortified house restored in the 16th century in an Italian Renaissance style and now a listed historic monument.

● [chateaudesaintmarceldefelines.fr](http://chateaudesaintmarceldefelines.fr)  
04 77 63 54 98

### CHÂTEAU DE LA ROCHE | SAINT-PRIEST-LA-ROCHE

It seems to have sprung up out of the river - and been anchored there on its rocky outcrop since the 13th century.

In this idyllic setting, let yourself be carried away by the two riddles proposed in the form of an escape game and enjoy discovering the château in an unusual fashion.

● [lechateaudelarochefr.fr](http://lechateaudelarochefr.fr) | 04 77 64 97 68

### CHÂTEAU DE SURY | SURY-LE-COMTAL

Between town and garden, the Château de Sury, built in the 13th century, was entirely remodelled in the 17th century. Its extremely simple façades are in sharp contrast to its magnificent decorated interiors. The gardens are very pleasant with their ornamental lake.

● [loire.story.com](http://loire.story.com) | 04 77 30 18 80

## HOW ABOUT BRANCHING

Out?

To discover another Loire, a different side, unusual, unexpected... here are a few of our suggestions, maybe something will catch your eye?

## SPECIAL-KNOW-HOW

### SAINT-JUST GLASSWORKS | SAINT-JUST-SAINT-RAMBERT

Created by Royal Ordinance by King Charles X in the 19th century, the Saint-Just glassworks stands on the banks of the Loire. Two centuries later, it continues to perpetuate its ancestral know-how, producing mouth-blown sheet glass used for glazing. A unique opportunity to see the glass-makers at work!

● [visitesloireforez.com](http://visitesloireforez.com)

### TOURNAIRE MAÎTRE ARTISAN D'ART JOAILLER | MONTBRISON

The Maison Tournaire opened its doors in 1984 in Montbrison. In the space of three decades it has opened branches in Lyon, and then Paris, on the famous Place Vendôme. Proof of the talent of Philippe and Mathieu Tournaire, two iconoclastic jewellery designers who like to make unique, timeless pieces from the noblest of materials: yellow, white and pink gold and precious stones. On occasion the workshop in Savigneux opens its doors to visitors.

● [philippetournaire.com/france](http://philippetournaire.com/france)

### ABIESSENCE | VERRIÈRES-EN-FOREZ

You only need to stop off at Verrières-en-Forez, in the heart of the Monts du Forez, to get intoxicated. With wine? No, with essential oils, floral waters and macerated oils. Most of them are made on site in the distillery next to the shop from conifers and plants picked on the 12 ha of organic land that Abiescence owns. They offer a wide range of products for every need, in every season.

● [abiescence.com](http://abiescence.com)

## SEE THINGS DIFFERENTLY

### CHÂTEAU DE GOUTELAS CULTURAL CENTRE | MARCOUX

If Forez has a soul, it must be somewhere around the Château de Goutelas. The history of this venue is unique. It has won over some of the biggest names: Duke Ellington even dedicated a song to it. As well as providing accommodation, the Château belongs to the European Network of Cultural Encounter Centres. It offers an original cultural and artistic programme and organises a unique festival focused on cabins called "Abris de Fortune".

● [chateaudegoutelas.fr](http://chateaudegoutelas.fr)

### LE CARRÉ PÉTANQUE | SAINT-BONNET LE-CHÂTEAU

Saint-Bonnet-le-Château is the world capital of petanque boules with Obut, a manufacturer with a worldwide reputation for its know-how. Created by OBUT, the Carré Pétanque combines the pleasure of a good meal with the practice of petanque on a site specially designed for the purpose.

● [carrepetanque.fr](http://carrepetanque.fr)

### SEGWAY OUTINGS AMONG THE VINES | PIERRE-DE-BOEUF

Discover intuitively and effortlessly, the efforts, the beauty and variety of the surrounding countryside on a Segway! This is a one-person electric vehicle, a fun, ecological way to get about. Segway outings around some of the renowned vineyards: Condrieu, Côte-Rôtie and Saint Joseph.

● [gyropodescondrieu.fr](http://gyropodescondrieu.fr)

### HEAD OFF IN SEARCH OF ELLA AND PITR'S GIANTS

They are all over Saint-Étienne and the surrounding area. Ella and Pitr, artists from Saint-Étienne, whose gigantic works are known internationally, have embellished the city with their poetic giants. See the garage doors in Rue Henri Gonnard, the wall painting at the Ateliers Weiss, the one at Châteaureux railway station... In January 2020, for the 20th anniversary of the Rotonde, the scientific culture centre of the Ecole des Mines engineering school in Saint-Étienne, they drew one of their trademark characters on the roof. Then to finish, take a walk in Saint-Chamond to see the huge fresco on the Piney dam wall - it's pretty spectacular!







FINE FOODS...

## and Innovation

The Department of Loire is renowned for the variety of its gastronomy and the quality and prestige of its tables, some of them (largely) Michelin-starred! Numerous guides are agreed that they offer a very good quality-price ratio (Gault & Millau, Hubert, Le Routard, Le Fooding).

Maîtres restaurateurs - 17 in Loire - guarantee tasty, quality cuisine made, whenever possible, from local produce.



### MICHELIN-STARRED TASTINGS

#### TROISGROS, PRESTIGIOUS ADDRESS "LE BOIS SANS FEUILLES"

Gastronomic restaurant  
3 Michelin stars 2020

This family-run restaurant has maintained its 3-star rating in the Michelin Guide uninterrupted for 50 years. After arriving in Roanne in 1930, Jean-Baptiste and Marie Troisgros opened the original restaurant, which was then taken over by their sons, Jean and Pierre, then their grandson, Michel and finally César - and soon Léo. Almost 25 years later, the restaurant won its first Michelin star, then a second a decade after that, followed by the third, most prestigious one in 1968. Today, the emblematic figure is Michel. In 2017, along with his wife Marie-Pierre and their son César, they left Roanne to build a luxurious estate in Ouches, 8 km to the west.

The restaurant "Le Bois sans feuilles" is a unique place designed by architect Patrick Bouchain. The whole atmosphere suggests a desire to concentrate on the essential, both in the space and in the kitchen.

● [troisgros.fr](http://troisgros.fr) | 04 77 71 66 97

#### LE PRIEURÉ | AMBIERLE

Gastronomic restaurant  
1 Michelin star 2020

In the heart of a village of character, this gastronomic restaurant with its pared-down, contemporary décor is based in a fine granite building. Chef Thierry Fernandes is a native of the Roannais, and he gives star billing to local produce in his inventive and surprising cuisine.

● [leprieureambierle.fr](http://leprieureambierle.fr) | 04 77 65 63 24

#### NOTE

"Les Tables Roannaises" is an association of 15 restaurateurs in the Roannaise regions who are passionate about cooking and whose aim is to promote local gastronomy.

#### CHÂTEAU BLANCHARD | CHAZELLES-SUR-LYON

Gastronomic restaurant  
1 Michelin star 2020

Before becoming the Château Blanchard, the Chazelles-sur-Lyon establishment was a milliner's residence. The building's history has been preserved in spite of the modernity of the interior renovation. The aromas and flavours and good Loire produce are given pride of place and combined according to the seasons by chef Sylvain Roux and his brother Frédéric, sommelier.

● [hotel-chateau-blanchard.com](http://hotel-chateau-blanchard.com) | 04 77 54 28 88

#### LA SOURCE | SAINT-GALMIER

Gastronomic restaurant  
1 Michelin star 2020

At the heart of the Domaine de la Charpinière (4-star hotel), let yourself be carried away by the talent of chef Antoine Bergeron and his team. "Rising star of the French new generation, offering a cuisine that sparkles with a thousand colours and flavours just a few hundred metres from the Badoit spring."

● [lacharpiniere.com/fr/hotel-restaurant/restaurant-gastronomique-la-source](http://lacharpiniere.com/fr/hotel-restaurant/restaurant-gastronomique-la-source)  
04 77 52 75 00



#### Troisgros

THIS FAMILY-RUN RESTAURANT HAS MAINTAINED ITS 3-STAR RATING IN THE MICHELIN GUIDE UNINTERRUPTED FOR 50 YEARS.



La Praluline

A DELICACY CREATED  
IN 1955 BY AUGUSTE  
PRALUS, CREATOR OF THE  
EPONYMOUS BAKERS.

Chocolat des Princes

Fourme de  
Montbrison

A CASCADE OF

## Specialities

Is it because the Loire is a land of *gastronomes* that it produces so many delicious specialities or is it the other way round? It's hard to say with any certainty. The only thing we really are sure of is the unrivalled quality of the local creations. The lines that follow bear witness to this.

### SWEET DELICACIES

#### PRALULINE, THE CHAMPION

Praluline is a brioche made with almonds from Valencia (Spain) and hazelnuts from the Piedmont, lightly toasted, coated in sugar and then crushed before being delicately incorporated into the soft dough. A delicacy created in 1955 by Auguste Pralus, creator of the eponymous baker's.

● [chocolats-pralus.com](http://chocolats-pralus.com)

#### CHOCOLATE, WHAT A STORY

The first chocolate factory was created in Loire in the 18th century, with the Maison Escoffier. Closely linked to the Department's industrial history and the public's love of chocolate, between 1880 and 1970 Saint-Étienne had numerous chocolate factories, which employed large numbers of local people.

#### OVER IN SAINT-ETIENNE

Many chocolate factories still exist in Saint-Étienne, in particular the iconic **MAISON WEISS**, which opened its first shop in 1883 under the impetus of Eugène Weiss. Pioneer of *Haut Chocolat*®: a visit to the shop in the city centre, a veritable Saint-Étienne institution, is a must... as is a trip to the workshops on the outskirts of the city, where a range of activities and tastings are on offer.

● [weiss.fr](http://weiss.fr)

As for **CHOCOLATS DES PRINCES**, they have existed since 1897. Specialised in making quality products, the firm has its own speciality the "grêlon du Pilat"; this delicious chocolate ganache with hazelnut milk was crowned Best Chocolate in France in 1976, a year dear to local hearts! Since then, numerous other creations have been added to the range. Visits of the manufacturing plant are regularly organised.

● [saint-etienne-hors-cadre.fr](http://saint-etienne-hors-cadre.fr)

#### OVER IN ROANNE

François **PRALUS** is one of just a few chocolate makers to venerate the god Quetzalcóatl to the point of making his own chocolate directly from cocoa beans. Mad about this black gold, which has its *grands crus* just like wine, François Pralus even owns his own plantation in Madagascar.

● [chocolats-pralus.com](http://chocolats-pralus.com)

**REVILLON CHOCOLATIER** in Roanne is also unique; this firm is famous for its chocolates in sparkly twist wrappers that are a delightful addition to the Christmas festivities. The shop in Roanne town centre shows just how diverse its production is.

● [revillonchocolatier.fr](http://revillonchocolatier.fr)

Also in Roanne, **BERTRAND CHOCOLATIER**, was identified as one of France's 10 best chocolate makers in 2018. The *Club des Croqueurs de Chocolat* gave it its Talent Award for its passion fruit and cherry domes.

● [www.bertrandchocolatier.com](http://www.bertrandchocolatier.com)

Numerous new artisan chocolate makers are perpetuating the history of chocolate in Loire.

#### CHARLES CHOCOLARTISAN SPREADS

I CIVENS

*Roland Charles was born and grew up in Loire. His overriding love of chocolate and all good things led him to become an extraordinary Master Artisan Chocolate Maker, who has specialised in making high quality spreads - palm oil free of course! The range has expanded, and it's difficult to choose between Nutoloire, Laïka cookies, Bianka... But if you want to know all about it, don't miss the chance to book a visit or take part in a tasting workshop.*

● [pateatartiner.fr](http://pateatartiner.fr) | 04 77 26 86 51

### ALL ABOUT CHEESE

#### FOURME DE MONTBRISON ©SGR

THE QUEEN OF LOIRE CHEESES!!

Fourme de Montbrison is the perfect cheese for lovers of cow's milk cheeses. A blue-veined cheese made with raw milk from the Hautes Chaumes, this speciality of the Department of Loire has benefited from an AOC since 1972 and an AOP since 2010. And since November 2018 it has been inscribed on the UNESCO national intangible cultural heritage list. Cheesemakers Fromagerie des Hautes Chaumes, won a gold medal in 2019 for their Fourme de Montbrison AOP in the "cow's milk" category, and it was also elected "best" cow's milk cheese in France in the Fromaniac cheese competition in 2019.

#### LA RIGOTTE DE CONDRIEU

A feast for fans of goat's cheese. Presented in cylinders 4 to 5 cm wide and 2 cm high, this speciality from the Massif du Pilat is a soft cheese with a bloomy rind. AOC since 2009 and AOP since 2013, Rigotte justifies the strength of its taste by extremely rigorous preparation and irreproachable treatment of the goats.

● [rigottedeconduieu.fr](http://rigottedeconduieu.fr)

#### LA MAISON MONS...

CHEESEMAKER AND RIPENER OF EXCEPTION

Always on the lookout for the best products and producers who still work the traditional way, Maison Mons will have 250 different cheeses aging in its cellars at any one time. An old railway tunnel in Ambierle has been converted into an exceptional cheese cellar which allows the firm to offer a virtually exclusive range of products.

● [mons-fromages.com](http://mons-fromages.com)

### AND FRUITS

From the Pilat apple, queen of flavours, a hybrid born of the Golden Delicious and Gala apples, to the cherries and red fruits produced on the Jarez hills, Loire fruit promise unlimited flavour and pleasure.

#### NOTE

"La fête de la Pomme"

Pélussin celebrates its apple growers with a popular festival organised on 11 November every year.







22 MUNICIPALITIES  
IN LOIRE PRODUCE  
WINES UNDER  
THIS APPELLATION,  
WHICH OFFERS MORE  
FREEDOM TO THE CREATIVE...



Chavanay

## WITH A GLASS OF WINE

### FOREZ, ROANNAIS

#### "THE ROOTS OF LOIRE"

Since 18 June 2020, this has been the 11th destination to be granted the **"Vignobles et Découvertes"** "label" in Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes.

The 63 partners involved in this initiative have signed a partnership agreement that requires them to abide by a detailed set of rules for each type of activity: wineries that receive the public, accommodation providers, restaurants, tourist offices, tourist and leisure sites, events.

● [loire.story.com](http://loire.story.com)

### LA CÔTE ROANNAISE | AOC

Covering a 20 km long hillside, the vineyards are present in 14 municipalities. Gamay reigns supreme here and the granitic soils suit it perfectly. Light and balanced with notes of wild blackberries and bitter cherries, annual production is 10,000 hectolitres produced by thirty winegrowers.

● [coteronnaise.fr](http://coteronnaise.fr)

#### NOTE:

Throughout the summer season Roanne tourist office organises encounters with winegrowers, tasting visits, discussions, etc. and also an oenotourism rally called **"Panique en Côte Roannaise"** that takes participants on a fascinating tour on the back roads through the vineyards of the Côte Roannaise.

● [www.leroannais.com/](http://www.leroannais.com/)

### LES CÔTES-DU-FOREZ | AOC

The vineyards are on basalt and granitic soils, 150 ha spread over 17 municipalities.

The dominant grape variety here is black Gamay with white juice. Côtes du Forez reds represent 80% of the production, while rosé accounts for 10% of the appellation. 10 independent winegrowers and a cooperative winery give life to these supple, convivial wines that can prove themselves to be very subtle.

● [vignobleduforez.fr](http://vignobleduforez.fr)

### PAYS D'URFÉ WINES

The link between the Forez vineyards and the Côte Roannaise vineyards, the IGP Urfé white wines allow the vineyard to offer a very varied range of wines. They are made with different varieties, Viognier, Chardonnay, Pinot noir, Roussanne, Pinot gris.



Badoit

### LA LOIRE VOLCANIQUE

An association created in November 2019, Loire Volcanique groups together the wine-growing regions of Auvergne, St Pourçain, Forez and Roannais.

Today it has 36 members, 15 of which are in Côte Roannaise and 9 in Côtes du Forez.

### THE NORTHERN CÔTES-DU-RHÔNE

#### EXCEPTIONAL CRUS

Known under the appellations Condrieu, Saint-Joseph and Château-Grillet, these wines tell the story of terroir unique in the world. Its origins go back to Antiquity, and the wines, in the past served at the tables of popes and kings, are an ambrosia that is still in demand. Made with Viognier grapes, **the Condrieu AOC**, pure liquid gold, gives delicate, elegant wines. Pairing it with a piece of Rigotte de Condrieu cheese produces a moment of infinite grace.

**Saint-Joseph** is very present in the south of the Department, where the vines flourish around the villages of Chavanay, Mallevall and Saint-Pierre-de-Bœuf.

The red wines are made with Syrah grapes, the only red variety within the appellation, and they have an aromatic character marked by elegance and finesse. Roussanne and Marsanne grapes are used to make the Saint-Joseph whites.

#### Château-Grillet

Since 1936, this jewel of nature has been one of the smallest and most prestigious French *Appellations d'Origines Contrôlées* producing a single white, one of the greatest.

● [chateau-grillet.com](http://chateau-grillet.com)

#### NOTE

The oenotourism destination Condrieu, Côte Rotie, which has been awarded the **Vignobles et Découvertes "label"**, also extends across the Department of Loire and involves several partners, winegrowers, accommodation providers and restaurateurs.

### WINES FROM THE RHODANIAN HILLS

Here it is not a *terroir*, but a river, the Rhône, that federates the Rhodanian Hills IGP (protected geographical indication). It covers 430 hectares, spread across five Departments, Rhône, Loire, Ardèche, Drôme and Isère. 22 municipalities in Loire produce wines under this appellation, which offers more freedom to the more creative winemakers, who can play around with assemblies, in particular adding Merlot, Pinot noir or Gamay into the reds.

#### NOTE

The Chavanay wine market is an annual event not to be missed. It takes place on the second weekend of December and draws large numbers of producers.







### THE STRENGTH OF WATER COMES FROM THE SPRING

Wise words in this Persian proverb, perfectly in tune with the mineral richness of Loire.  
The Department is dotted with prolific springs, and it has produced two lightly sparkling mineral waters, Badoit, Saint-Alban & Parot.

### LIQUEURS ENJOY A REBIRTH IN FOREZ

From the historic Cristille de Noiretable, a plant-based liqueur (40°) with stimulating and digestive virtues, and which has been made since the end of the 19th century, to the **"Breuvage de l'apothicaire"** (Apothecary's concoction), made with an organic verberna, the Department and the Forez area have become masters in the production of liqueurs, most often made from plants gathered locally: at Chalmazel, **La Source Distillerie** makes liqueurs from wild, melliferous plants picked in the Loire mountains as well as making a Forez pastis, and bringing out a hemp vodka in 2021. At Saint-Marcellin-en-Forez, César Triouleyre offers **Sapinette** and **Serpolette** and the Forissier family are famous for their **"Verveine du Forez"** verberna liqueur and for their spirits, including an artisan gin called "Le Lièvre Blanc" (The White Hare).

### CRAFT BREWERIES

In need of refreshment? Try one of the Department's artisan beers. There are more than ten breweries in the area. Each with its own specificity and know-how

### NOTE

The Hachette beer guide 2021 highlights several creations from the vats of five Loire-based breweries: Brasserie Stéphanoise (Saint-Étienne), Farlodoise (Chazelles-sur-Lyon), Brasserie de la Loire (Saint-Just Saint-Rambert), Brasserie des Notes en Bulles (Montbrison) and Brasserie la Canaille (Sail-sous-Couzan).

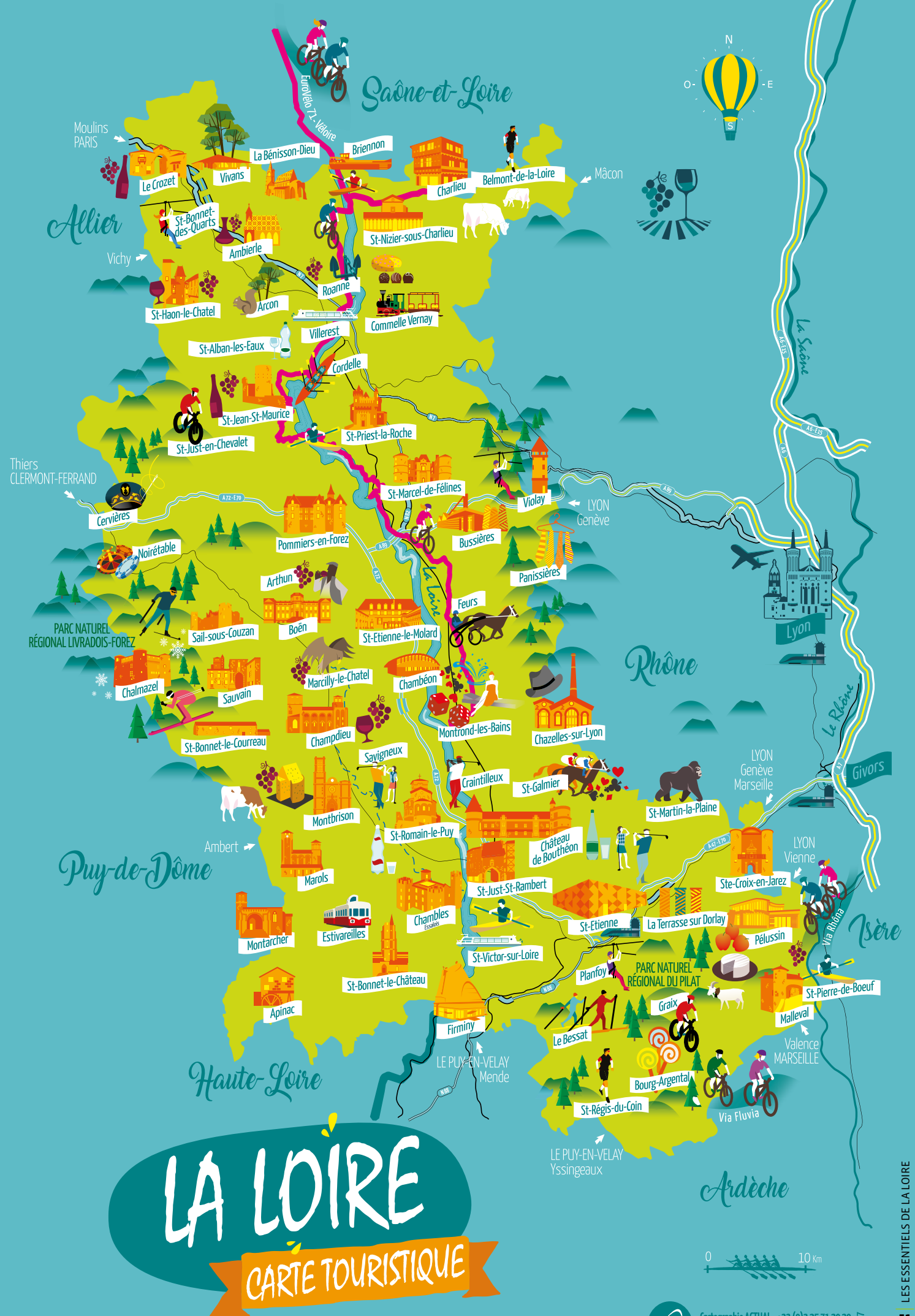
### SAKE!

Surprising as it may seem, it is even possible to find craft sake in Pilat. After living in Japan, Grégoire Bœuf decided to start making his own sake in his home town of Pélussin, along with a Japanese master brewer. Producing an estimated 30,000 litres a year, he hopes to popularise this rice wine with some of the great tables in the region and in France. Know-how to share.

● [leslarmesdulevant.com](http://leslarmesdulevant.com)



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