

Southwest France: Along the Canal du Midi

Reading List

Floating through France: Life Between Locks on the Canal du Midi

by April Orcutt, Mary Jean Pramik, Ann Kathleen Ure, Lynn Branecky, Larry Habegger, Cristie Marcus, Linda Watanabe McFerrin, Connie Burke, Joanna Biggar

Floating through France: Life Between Locks on the Canal du Midi is filled with travel essays, poetry, and photos capturing the spirit of the Canal du Midi. What was once a short cut for bustling commerce in the seventeenth century is now the setting for modern tales. The journey is like no other in France.

This anthology takes the reader through a rich tour of the area with musings that are entertaining, educational, heartfelt, enlightening and bubbling with humor. In "Matters of Trust," writer Ethel Mussen hands her bag over to a stranger and gets something else in return. Ann Ure confesses how the camaraderie on the boat quickly changed her from introvert to extrovert. Writer and insomniac Christi Marcus finally gets some shut-eye when she tucks into her cramped sleeping spot below deck, as told in "Destiny."

Narrow Dog To Carcassonne

by Terry Darlington

'WE COULD BORE OURSELVES TO DEATH, DRINK OURSELVES TO DEATH, OR HAVE A BIT OF AN ADVENTURE...'

When they retired Terry and Monica Darlington decided to sail their canal narrowboat across the Channel and down to the Mediterranean, together with their whippet Jim. They took advice from experts, who said they would die, together with their whippet Jim.

On the *Phyllis May* you dive through six-foot waves in the Channel, are swept down the terrible Rhône, and fight for your life in a storm among the flamingos of the Camargue. You meet the French nobody meets - poets, captains, historians, drunks, barges, men with guns, scholars, madmen - they all want to know the people on the painted boat and their narrow dog. You visit the France nobody knows - the backwaters of Flanders, the canals beneath Paris, the heavenly Yonne, the lost Burgundy Canal, the islands of the Saône, and the forbidden ways to the Mediterranean.

Aliens, dicks, trolls, vandals, gongoozlers, killer fish and the walking dead all stand between our three innocents and their goal - many-towered Carcassonne.

Canal du Midi A World Heritage Site: Travel Guide Canal du Midi - 2019

by Jérôme Sabatier

The Canal du Midi, completed during the reign of Louis XIV, is extraordinary in its scope, representing one of the major works of civil engineering. Its conception, the ingenuity required by Pierre Paul Riquet to feed water to the canal and the creation of dozens of water features along its route, all testify to its exceptional technological innovation. It opened a safe and fast navigable link between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, thus providing commercial prosperity to the regions it crossed in the three centuries of its use.

At a length of 240 kilometers, the Canal du Midi was the largest construction site of its time and today remains the oldest canal in Europe still in operation. Beyond the technical challenges overcome by Pierre Paul Riquet, it is the aesthetics of his architecture and the landscapes created that make the Canal du Midi so unique.

Here you'll find all the information necessary to prepare your trip and your stay along the Canal du Midi in order to discover this exceptional site of indisputable universal value. You will find the following under the sections for the site : the reasons for its selection for the World Heritage list, the history of the site, many practical informations (Tourist Offices, suggested tours, museums, events, transports), and a selection of accommodation and restaurants. Prices and opening hours shown are for 2019.

You'll also find tips (transport, pricing, activities ...), anecdotes and all the possibilities for family-friendly visits to encourage children and families in their discovery.

Carcassonne: The History and Legacy of the Castles, Campaigns, and Crimes in France's Fabled Walled City

by Charles River Editors

Posted by the Porte Narbonne, or Narbonne Gate, the entrance of the fabled La Cite in Carcassonne, is a striking bust that is often missed upon first glance, for it is overshadowed by the exquisitely preserved, millennia-old citadel in its background. But standing before the porte, her face draws one in – round, with plump cheeks, thin arches for eyebrows that follow the shape of her large, downturned eyes, wavy hair peeking out of her wimple – reminiscent of the “celestial” suns with human faces often seen in the bedroom décor of a hip, teenage girl from the '90s. Gaze upon her

from a certain angle and distance, and it seems as if one of the iconic conical roofs behind her doubles as a russet-hued hennin. Garbed in a fine gown with flower accents embroidered on her sleeves and a fussy wimple and veil, the joyfully radiant face that welcomes visitors into the citadel hardly appears to be the “heroine” type. Rather, the way she is depicted here is what usually springs to mind at the mention of a classic damsels in distress. That being said, while this particular damsels was indeed distressed, she relied on no one to not only save herself from the plight at hand, but the entire citadel itself. This damsels, as inscribed on the plaque underneath the bust, is the beloved Dame Carcas, often billed by the locals as the star of the town's origin story.

Carcassonne today is the capital of the Aude department in the Occitanie region of southwestern France, about 58 miles from Toulouse. It lies by the “eastward bend” of the glittering cobalt waters of the River Aude, which serves as a barrier between the two towns of the city: the Cité and the Ville Basse. It is the old Cité that attracts most of Carcassonne's visitors (3 million of them each year), for it houses the historic fortress that looks like it came straight out of a fairy tale and supposedly became the muse behind the captivating castles featured in Walt Disney's acclaimed 1959 classic Sleeping Beauty. But this breathtaking town is so much more than just the perfect spot for wedding shoots and social media narcissism, for it is a place that oozes medieval history.

Carcassonne: The History and Legacy of the Castles, Campaigns, and Crimes in France's Fabled Walled City examines the origins of the site and its sweeping history. Along with pictures depicting important people, places, and events, you will learn about Carcassonne like never before.

Complete Bordeaux

by Stephen Brook

The wines of Bordeaux are universally recognized as being among the finest in the world and in this fully revised and updated edition of his classic text, renowned wine expert Stephen Brook provides an unrivalled survey of the region and its wines.

The Complete Bordeaux offers detailed information on the many communes and appellations of Bordeaux as well as descriptions and assessments of all its major properties. As well as incisive portraits of the leading properties and their produce, Stephen Brook provides a detailed look at Bordeaux's lesser-known areas and chateaux.

There is also an invaluable vintage guide to the last four decades. Bordeaux encapsulates an incredible 13,000 wineries throughout 54 appellations and this book includes a thorough explanation of Bordeaux's history, terroir, and winemaking styles.

French Dirt

by Richard Goodman

A story about dirt--and about sun, water, work, elation, and defeat. And about the sublime pleasure of having a little piece of French land all to oneself to till.

Richard Goodman saw the ad in the paper: "SOUTHERN FRANCE: Stone house in Village near Nimes/Avignon/Uzes. 4 BR, 2 baths, fireplace, books, desk, bikes. Perfect for writing, painting, exploring & experiencing la France profonde. \$450 mo. plus utilities." And, with his girlfriend, he left New York City to spend a year in Southern France.

The village was small--no shops, no gas station, no post office, only a café and a school. St. Sebastien de Caisson was home to farmers and vintners. Every evening Goodman watched the villagers congregate and longed to be a part of their camaraderie. But they weren't interested in him: he was just another American, come to visit and soon to leave. So Goodman laced up his work boots and ventured out into the vineyards to work among them. He met them first as a hired worker, and then as a farmer of his own small plot of land.

French Dirt is a love story between a man and his garden. It's about plowing, planting, watering, and tending. It's about cabbage, tomatoes, parsley, and eggplant. Most of all, it's about the growing friendship between an American outsider and a close-knit community of French farmers.

"There's a genuine sweetness about the way the cucumbers and tomatoes bridge the divide of nationality." --The New York Times Book Review

"One of the most charming, perceptive and subtle books ever written about the French by an American." --San Francisco Chronicle
