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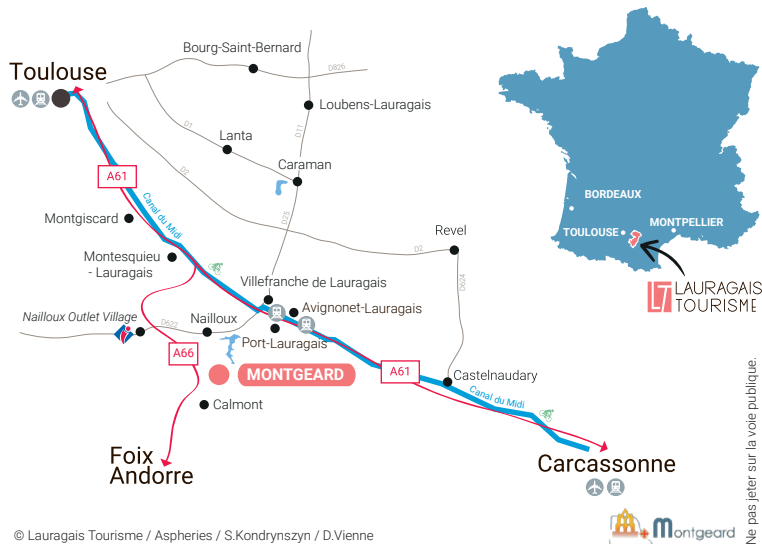
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MONTGEARD

A royal bastide in Lauragais



LAURAGAIS
TOURISME



What is a bastide ?

Bastides were cities or villages built during the XIIIth century in the south of France, after the awful crusade against the cathars (1209-1299). In fact, the crusaders devastated this territory governed by the count of Toulouse to drain it from what was considered as heresy.

This is why after this tragic episode, local lords and the King of France began the rebuilt of the region. In order to do it, a large urban masterplan was set up, to redynamise the land's economy and mostly to rehom the population.

Around 300 bastides emerged between the XIIIth and XIVth centuries in the South-East of France.

Bastides have a common economical mission, since they all hold weekly markets and annual fairs. These new cities have several common elements :

- A checkboard plan (streets cross each other perpendicularly)
- A central square dedicated to markets
- A custom charter, including articles fixing precisely the inhabitants' framework of daily life and defining their rights and duties.



History

Montgeard's bastide was founded on the 21st of June 1317 by the King of France Philippe V le Long's decision. Its creation required the establishment, between the latter and Nailloux's Lord, Hugues de Peytavin, of a pareage contract in which were notified everyone's rights and duties, to share the wealth produced by the new foundation equally.

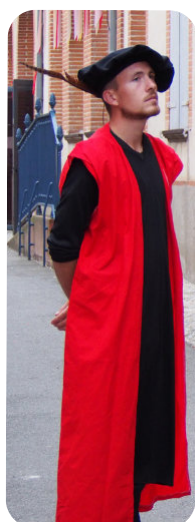
In order to encourage people to come and live in the area, many advantages were given to futur inhabitants. This way, everyone received a bundle to build his house and farm his vegetable garden. But quickly, Nailloux's inhabitants were jealous of the privileges given to thoses from the new bastide : in 1319 they received the same advantages to pacify the tensions, and Nailloux's bastide was from now on tied up to Montgeard's by an Union Deed.

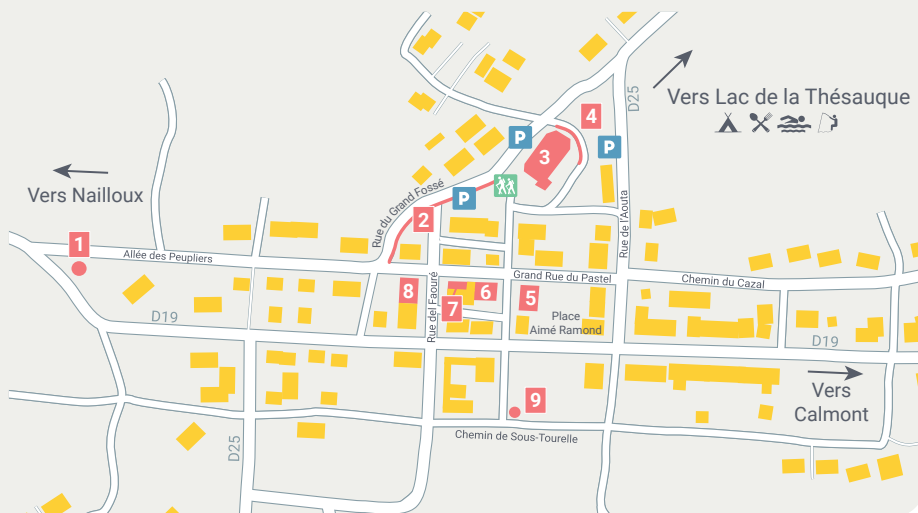
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1 The mill below

Only survivor of the 5 windmills that were in Montgeard in 1788, the latter has the distinctive feature to possess 2 mills since 1845. It belongs to the Calvet family since 1851.

Entirely restored in the years 2000.



2 The old moats

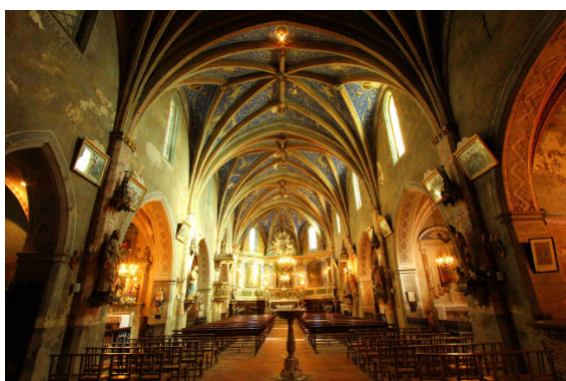
In the Middle-Age the village was protected by ditches full of water, that ran all around the bastide.

Some parts of the moats still had water in the 70s !



3 Church Notre-Dame de l'Assomption

This church was built from 1522 to 1561. Jewel of the gothic meridional architecture, it contains precious testimonies of the town's golden age : the Pise's marble stoup (1516) and the Nottingham's alabaster (XVIth century). Its chapels sheltered the graves of rich pastel traders that financed them : Bernard Durand, Jacques Caussidières, or Pierre de Ganhac.



This tower-bell is unique in Lauragais ! Its base, massive, was initially meant to welcome a huge tower so that the village could be seen from far away. But the project was aborted because of the lack of money and a simple tower-bell-wall was built instead.

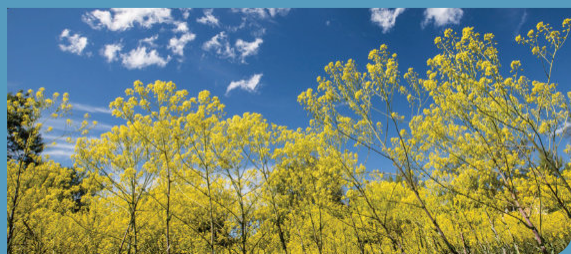


4 Pastel culture

It's a dye plant that made the wealth of Lauragais' merchants during the Renaissance. Once harvested, the leaves were crushed, transformed in a putty (In french, putty means « pâte », that's where the name « pastel » comes from) with which were crafted balls called « cocagnes ».

After several months of drying, these cocagnes were reduced into powder. To fasten the fermentation, they would be poured in stagnated water and urine. Then they would get a powder, the agranat, that would be mixed in a tank with water and whitewash.

Clothes were plunged into it, and when they would be taken out, they would take a permanent blue color after a few minutes. Nowadays, it is the seeds of the plant that play a major role in the creation of cosmetic creams.



5 Private mansion called "Le Château"



It was built from 1555 by Guillaume Durand, the latter had given a part of his wealth to finance the construction of the church. Until 1850, a big staircase tower dominated it. Unfortunately, it was dismantled brick by brick.

Inside, some nice chimneys and beautiful arched pieces from the XVIth century can still be admired (private castle). Guillaume Durand became Lord of Montgeard and Capitoul of Toulouse thanks to his wealth generated by pastel trading.

6 The covered market

It dates back to the XIXth century. It was certainly not located in this place during the Middle Age. In a bastide, the covered market is the economic heart : that is where the weekly markets took place.

At Montgeard, they took place every Saturday. Poultry, salt, tableware, wax were sold ... every transaction was taxed, and the money would go back to the King of France, founder of the bastide. Thieves and cheaters were sentenced to the pillory !

7 Half-timbering houses



Great example of half-timberings in the Grand Rue du Pastel with this elegant gathering of wood and bricks.

These houses were only built during the XIXth century, and it seems like a big part of the bricks used came directly from the dismantling of the « Château »'s tower !

8 The doors of the city and the old monastery

Two fortified doors of which nothing remains gave access to the city : the Cers' door and the Autan's door. These doors were preceded of a drawbridge to cross the moats.

This building is without a doubt one of the town's oldest. We can suppose that the wall on which was leaning the fortified door, at least for its lower part, date back to the origins of the bastide. At the XVIth century, it was a hospital, a monastery and then a girls' school. Nowadays, it shelters social housings.



9 The bartizan

It is the last watchtower of a defensive system that used to include several without a doubt.

It is contemporary at the time of the construction of the « Château » (XVth century) and must have been part of a defense group a lot bigger. The park was also an outbuilding of the castle.



Thésauque lake