

THE ESSENTIAL CULTURAL SITES OF PÉRIGORD

PRESS DOSSIER 2026



DORDOGNE-PÉRIGORD

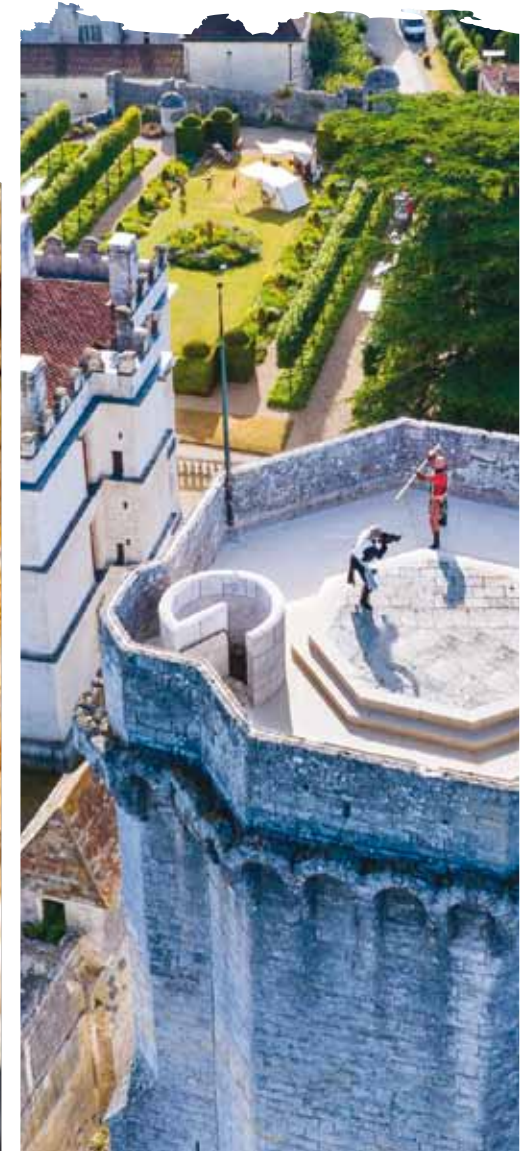


TABLE OF CONTENTS

- P2 Semitour Périgord – Transmitting & Championing an Exceptional Cultural Heritage**
- P4 Welcome to Périgord**
- P6 Highlights from 2025**
- P9 Looking Ahead to 2026**
- P10 The Cultural Sites of the Vézère Valley – The Eternal Valley**
- P30 The Medieval Heritage of Périgord**
- P44 Our Commitments**
- P47 Practical Information & Contacts**

SEMITOUR PÉRIGORD TRANSMITTING & CHAMPIONING AN EXCEPTIONAL CULTURAL HERITAGE



ANDRÉ BARBÉ
Chief Executive Officer of Semitour Périgord

For over 25 years, under the leadership of André Barbé, Semitour Périgord has established itself as the leading private operator in the management of cultural and tourist sites in the Dordogne. Every year, more than 800,000 visitors from all corners of the world discover these exceptional places – unmissable destinations in Périgord.

Our mission? To offer a unique and constantly renewed experience, thanks to our expertise and our passion for heritage.

With eight emblematic cultural sites – including the prestigious Lascaux IV, International Centre for Cave Art – as well as three accommodation and leisure sites, we offer far more than a simple visit: a total immersion in the heart of History and art.

Our promise? A warm and professional welcome, visits rich in innovation, activities suited to all audiences, and unforgettable experiences that showcase an exceptional cultural heritage.

“As guardians of a precious treasure, we are committed to championing, transmitting and making this unique heritage accessible. With an ever-creative approach, we seek to awaken curiosity and wonder, whilst inviting each visitor to reflect upon our History and our Humanity. Join us in this timeless cultural adventure and discover the many facets of a living heritage that resonates across past, present and future generations.”

ANDRÉ BARBÉ



WELCOME TO PÉRIGORD

Welcome to a true sanctuary of nature, history and the art of living. Whilst our territory unfolds across four distinct shades, it also reveals itself across all eras. From Prehistory and Antiquity to the Middle Ages, Périgord is an open-air history book. As the cradle of humanity, it is home to 15 UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

At the heart of this fertile land, Semitour Périgord works tirelessly to enhance the region's appeal and is already setting its sights ambitiously on 2026.

This press dossier is an opportunity to celebrate the most significant moments of the past season and to outline the goals of the new year ahead – one that promises to be full of wonderful surprises.

Our commitment to promoting, championing and transmitting our heritage and its assets remains stronger than ever.

THE SITES OF SEMITOUR PÉRIGORD



TRAVEL AGENCY

Semitour Périgord

- 1 LASCAUX IV (International Centre),
- 2 LASCAUX II
- 3 PARC DU THOT
- 4 PREHISTORIC SHELTERS OF LAUGERIE-BASSE
- 5 GROTTES DU GRAND ROC
- 6 CADOUIN CLOISTER
- 7 CHÂTEAU DE BIRON
- 8 CHÂTEAU DE BOURDEILLES

ACCOMMODATION :

- 9 Camping and leisure base at Lac de Rouffiac
- 10 Camping and apartments at Lac de Saint-Estèphe
- 11 Auberge de Cadouin

RESTAURANTS :

- A Le Bistrot à La Jemaye
- B Le Moulin du Grand Étang
- C Le Café Lascaux in Montignac-Lascaux

SEMITOUR IN FIGURES

8 cultural SITES

3 ACCOMMODATION AND LEISURE SITES

1 TRAVEL AGENCY
ATOUT FRANCE LICENCE

3 RESTAURANTS

21 000 YEARS OF HUMAN HISTORY

3 UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITES

4 HISTORIC MONUMENT CLASSIFICATIONS

1 GEOLOGICAL SITE

4 MAJOR PREHISTORIC SITES

2 CHÂTEAUX (MEDIÉVAL AND RENAISSANCE)

KEY FIGURES

OVER 700 000 VISITORS WELCOMED IN 2025

80% FRENCH VISITORS and 20% international visitors

TOP 10 COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN - INTERNATIONAL VISITORS:

1. France
2. Germany
3. USA
4. Spain
5. United Kingdom
6. Belgium
7. Italy
8. Austria
9. Switzerland
10. Romania

HOW TO GET HERE

BY CAR

PARIS / TOULOUSE : A20 MOTORWAY
LYON / BORDEAUX : A89 MOTORWAY

4h PARIS 4h LYON 3h TOULOUSE 1h15 BORDEAUX

BY PLANE

BERGERAC DORDOGNE-PÉRIGORD AIRPORT
BORDEAUX AIRPORT
TOULOUSE AIRPORT
BRIVE-VALLÉE DE LA DORDOGNE AIRPORT

BY TRAIN

PÉRIGUEUX STATION
BRIVE-LA-GAILLARDE STATION
PÉRIGUEUX TO PARIS: 4 HOURS BY TGV VIA BORDEAUX

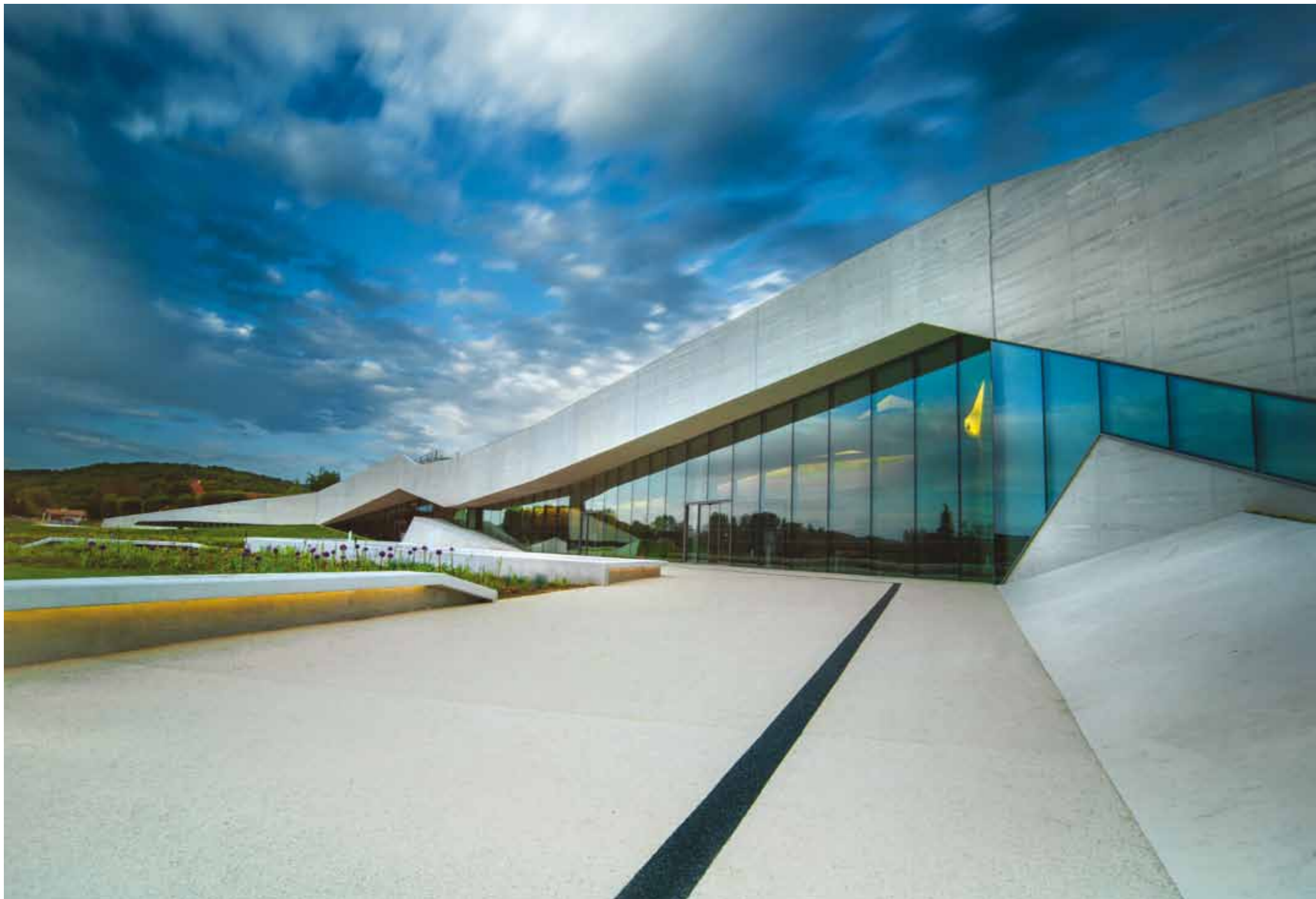
HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2025

A cultural programme that is renewed and enriched each year, attracting new audiences.

Among the key highlights of 2025, we shall particularly remember...

- The award of the management of the Cadouin youth hostel, where significant renovation work was undertaken to create a warm and welcoming space
- New distinctions in the Michelin Guide for our sites: the prehistoric shelters of Laugerie-Basse*, the chapel at Château de Biron*, and Château de Bourdeilles, which received its second star.
- The presentation of the Prix Houen to the Norwegian firm Snøhetta, attended by Madame Lubna Jaffery, Norwegian Minister of Culture and Equality, and Kjetil Trædal Thorsen, the project's lead architect, and concluded by an exceptional artistic performance entitled «Hidden», performed by prima ballerina Yolanda Correa inside the cave.
- The «Les Aliénés» exhibition by the Mobilier national in collaboration with Château de Biron - a research project that commissions artists to work with antique furniture considered outdated and without heritage value. This exhibition will remain on display until 2028.



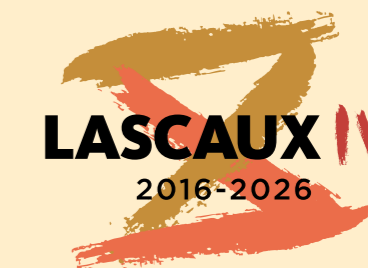


LOOKING AHEAD TO 2026

The Semitour teams work every day, and several exciting projects will come to fruition during 2026.

- Our offering is expanding with brand-new visitor routes at Château de Biron, Château de Bourdeilles, Cadouin Cloister and Parc du Thot, thanks to the Wivisites app!

- The 250th anniversary of American independence celebrated by Château de Biron in honour of the last Duke – a total immersion in the 18th century, presenting the history of French America in an engaging and educational way, bringing this incredible story back to life!



- **Lascaux IV celebrates its 10th anniversary – a decade of success celebrated throughout the year with a superb anniversary programme of highlights, including new visits and unique events. A special occasion to pay tribute to the achievement of this immense collective project that has made Lascaux an unmissable site in the region – a place of sharing and transmission.**

See the full programme on page 15

**THE CULTURAL SITES
OF THE VÈZÈRE VALLEY
THE ETERNAL VALLEY**





LASCAUX IV

Inaugurated in Montignac on 10 December and opened to the public on 15 December 2016, the International Centre for Cave Art enables visitors, for the first time since the closure of the original cave, to discover Lascaux in its entirety.

In addition to the complete replica of the cave – allowing visitors to discover the riches of prehistory whilst ensuring the preservation of the original cave – Lascaux IV invites you to extend your experience through its various scenographic spaces.



THE SANCTUARISATION

The sanctuarisation of the Lascaux hillside was recommended by the Scientific Advisory Council overseeing the site, in order to guarantee the conditions necessary for the long-term safeguarding of the cave. This approach informed the general principle governing the siting of the project, which was developed at the foot of the hill – a decision intended to protect the integrity of the site whilst making this priceless heritage accessible to the public.

ARCHITECTURE

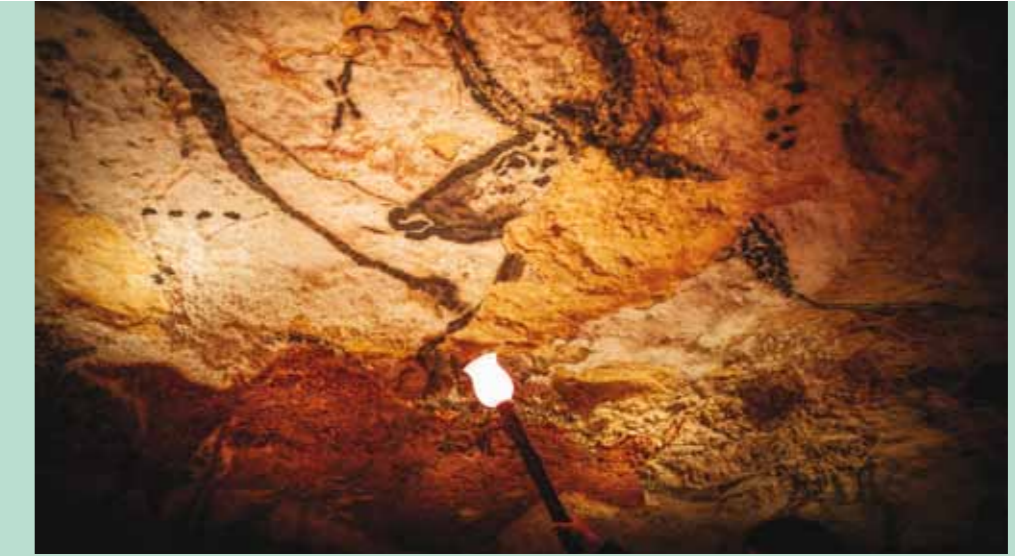
The landscape building, designed by the Norwegian firm Snøhetta, is distinguished by its harmonious integration into the surrounding landscape. Selected from over 80 international architects in October 2012, Snøhetta created a structure that evokes an incision in the ground, respecting the natural environment whilst offering a striking visual experience.

THE SCENOGRAPHY

The scenography of Lascaux IV was entrusted to the agency Casson Mann, specialists in museum design. Founded in 1984, this agency places the visitor's experience at the heart of its work, adapting spaces and narratives to foster total immersion in prehistory. Thanks to interactive technologies and multimedia installations, each visitor can engage with the works and deepen their understanding of prehistoric representations.

LASCAUX – THE CAVE

Reproduced with unrivalled precision, the cave allows visitors to admire paintings and engravings dating back over 20,000 years. Every detail has been carefully reproduced to offer an authentic and educational experience. Lascaux IV offers a variety of activities for all ages: guided tours led by passionate mediators, themed visits designed for adults and children alike, and temporary exhibitions.



THE CAVE OF SECRETS



“Science and technology, working hand in hand like good fairies leaning over the cradle of Lascaux, have achieved a remarkable feat: ‘Lascaux IV’, the latest in a series of facsimiles created to protect the original cave, gives everyone the impression of entering the ‘Sistine Chapel of prehistory’, of admiring its 2,500 animal figures rendered with a precision that astonished the world upon its discovery in 1940. Since then, prehistorians have mapped, inventoried and analysed every last detail... But even they have been unable to solve the unfathomable original mystery: what did Lascaux mean to those who decorated it? Why these particular animals? Does their arrangement hold a significance? The quality of the works, their sheer number, and their extraordinary state of preservation... Everything conspires to make Lascaux the most fascinating decorated cave of all, inspiring a multitude of theories and interpretations from the most far-fetched to the best substantiated since its discovery.”

One scene in particular intrigues – one of the most troubling in all of prehistory: a man lies facing a bison, with a bird and a rhinoceros nearby. Known as the ‘Scene of the Well’ (located in a kind of vertical tunnel), it is considered by many specialists to be one of the only narrative scenes in prehistoric art. Its elements seem to tell a story. But what? Is the mysterious man an injured hunter (as the Abbé Breuil, the first prehistorian to enter Lascaux, believed), a shaman in a trance, a sorcerer? Does the ‘Scene of the Well’ recount a shamanic rite, a dream, a hunting scene – or nothing at all, since it may ultimately be nothing more than a simple juxtaposition of images? For nearly 90 years, the greatest prehistorians have debated the question. They are not alone. When you visit Lascaux IV, you too will have your theory. Care to wager?

Source : Michelin Guide





A TAILOR-MADE DISCOVERY

Lascaux is universal and can be explored in a thousand ways...

- **Guided tour:** A guided visit of the cave replica followed by free-discovery time in the scenographic spaces (audioguide freely available for the second part).
- **Audioguided tour:** An audioguided visit of the cave replica and the scenographic spaces.
- **Prestige Tour:** During this in-depth 2-hour visit, your mediator will accompany you not only through the cave replica but also into the Lascaux Workshop (you may arrive early to explore the other scenographic spaces beforehand).
- **Storytelling visit for children:** Whilst intrepid young explorers set off to discover the Lascaux cave, the accompanying adults enjoy their own guided tour just behind the children's group. A wonderful way to experience a visit tailored to all ages, with no compromise! (For children aged 5 to 10: a guided visit of approximately one hour, followed by independent discovery of the other spaces.)
- **Prestige Art Pariétal & Gastronomy Evenings:** The Prestige visit concludes with a gastronomic dinner by a Michelin-starred chef, at the heart of one of Lascaux IV's spaces, for an even more immersive experience.

NOT TO BE MISSED IN 2026

To celebrate its tenth anniversary, Lascaux IV invites you throughout the year – the site will be transformed to unveil a season brimming with surprises and events...

- **The official release of the latest immersive film «One Single Humanity»** – conceived as a tribute to human creativity and to mankind's capacity to cooperate and build together.
- **A collective exhibition centred on Lascaux,** bringing together various artists across a range of disciplines.
- **The new detective visit «The Secrets of the Sagaie Point»:** a renewed trail-based route offering an immersive investigation that invites visitors to explore prehistory, technical gestures, objects and the scientific world associated with Lascaux.
- **The new visit «Lascaux: Chronicle of a Discovery in Wartime»:** a paired exploration with Lascaux II, retracing the major archaeological discoveries associated with Lascaux, set within the historical context of the 20th century – particularly the Second World War.
- **A storytelling visit: «Music in Prehistory»** – designed for children, exploring prehistoric music, with the creation of an instrument inspired by those used at the time.
- **Special paired visits between Lascaux II and Lascaux IV** for an exceptional route retracing the discovery of Lascaux and its key moments, with highlights of elements connected to the history of the sites.
- **Facsimile visits as part of the European Heritage Days, on the national theme «Heritage at Risk»:** special paired visits and animations centred on heritage, conservation and the Lascaux facsimiles.
- **A photographic exhibition on the building's construction:** an initiative retracing the architectural history and behind-the-scenes story of the construction of Lascaux IV.
- **«Art Pariétal & Gastronomy» evening à six mains** – an exceptional evening combining privileged exploration of the cave with a gastronomic experience crafted by 3 Michelin-starred chefs.
- **The Lascaux IV book,** written by Frédéric Migayrou – historian and architectural theorist, former Deputy Director of the Centre Pompidou and Director of the Architecture and Design Department. It pays tribute to the architecture of Lascaux IV through a sensitive and analytical reading of the site.



LASCAUX II

Lascaux II opened to the public in 1983. The world's first facsimile, reproducing 85% of the paintings, its creation by Monique Peytral represented a remarkable technical and artistic achievement at the time. In nearly 40 years, the cave has welcomed over 10 million visitors, contributing to its international renown.

Today, the site offers an authentic and enriching experience to its visitors. Nestled in the heart of the Lascaux woodland, one hundred and fifty metres from the original entrance, the cave of Lascaux II reveals itself with great intimacy, guided by a flickering light.





Various formats for a unique moment



Lascaux II offers several visits suited to all audiences:

- **The classic visit:** A one-hour guided discovery of the cave, illuminated by a flickering light.
- **The 'Aux Origines' (Back to the Origins) visit:** An immersion of at least 1h30, including a walk towards the original cave and lighting that reproduces that of a grease lamp, for an atmosphere faithful to that of our ancestors 21,000 years ago.
- **The 'Théories' (Theories) visit:** An in-depth exploration of at least 1h30, examining the various theories on the meaning of cave art and attempting to answer the question of 'Why?'

The cave also welcomes groups and offers visits specially designed for schools:

- **For younger pupils:** An educational kit allowing children to discover objects from prehistory in a fun and interactive way. For older pupils, an interactive prehistory quiz is also available.
- **For teenagers:** The option to organise a drawing workshop in the Hall of the Bulls (with an additional charge).

Themed visits paired with lascaux iv

- **Launch of the new visit «Lascaux: Chronicle of a Discovery in Wartime»** to coincide with Armistice Day: a historical exploration retracing the major archaeological discoveries of the 20th century associated with Lascaux, immersing the visitor in the context of its revelation during the Second World War.

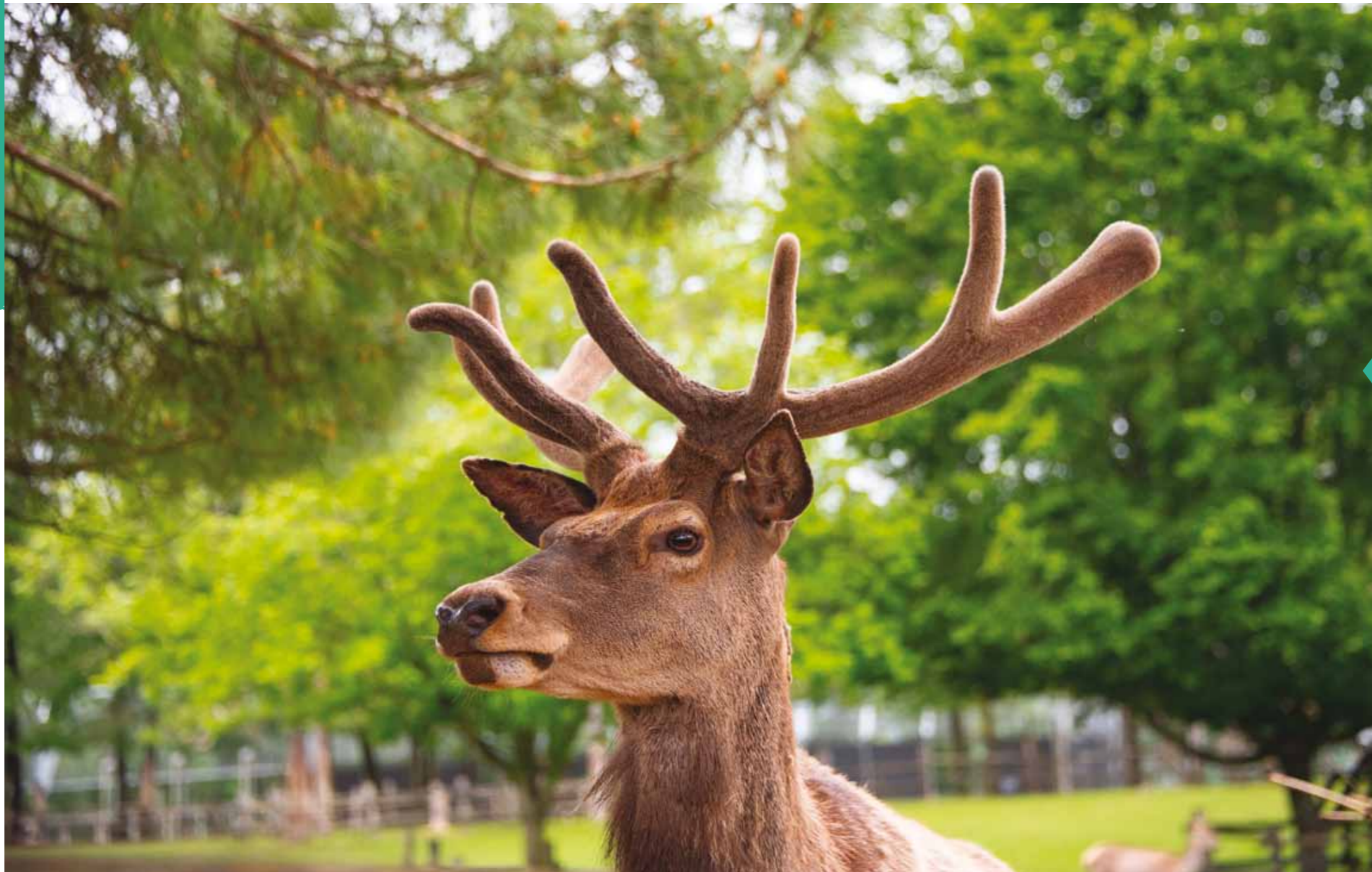
The experience is enriched by a visit to the Facsimile Workshop, to better understand the techniques of reproduction and the challenges posed by this fragile heritage.

- **The Heritage Days will also be an opportunity to discover Lascaux II, Lascaux IV and the Facsimile Workshop, on the theme of 'Heritage at Risk':** an exceptional route drawing on conservation and reproduction techniques.

PARC DU THOT

Located in the heart of the Vézère Valley, just a few kilometres from Lascaux IV, the Parc du Thot is a unique venue offering an immersive and educational experience centred on Prehistory. This site brings together nature, culture and learning to explore the daily life and environment of our ancestors.

Open to the public since 1972, the site combines a park dedicated to European wildlife with a scenographic space, enabling a deeper understanding of the relationship between humans and animals from Prehistory to the present day.



THE AUROCHS - IN THE FLESH (OR ALMOST)

« Ah, an aurochs! If you have recognised this giant of the prairies, bravo! You are among the (very) few who can identify the ancestor of our modern cattle. Like a visitor returned from a very (very) distant past, this impressive beast weighing almost a tonne, endowed with imposing horns, stands before you - in the flesh - at the Parc du Thot. Once wild and then domesticated, this giant roamed Europe freely before disappearing in the 17th century, a victim of hunting and deforestation. What you are admiring in this remarkable animal park is therefore an extinct species. Its particular distinction: to present animals that lived in the time of prehistoric man - the very creatures you have doubtless admired on the walls of caves, since our ancestors depicted them with an extraordinary attention to detail. Here are their descendants 'in the flesh', in the enclosures of the Thot: deer, bison, Przewalski's horses, wolves and... aurochs!»



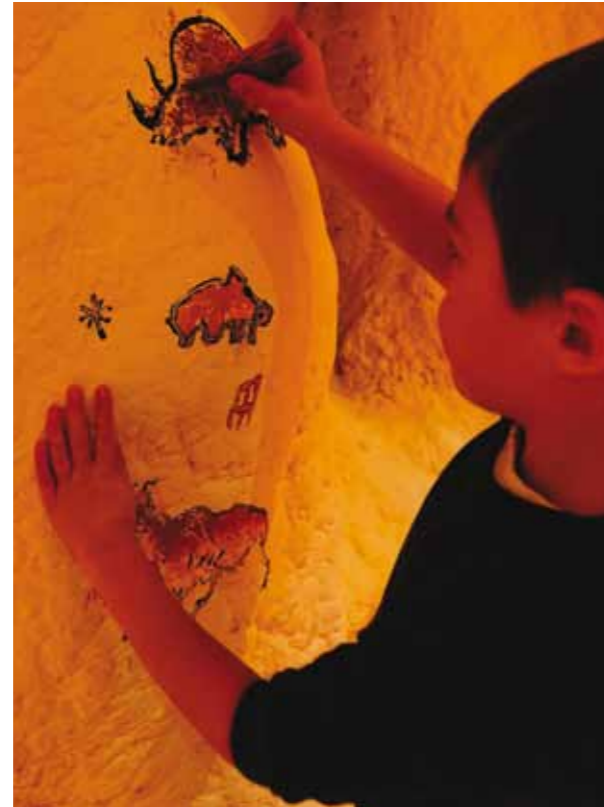
But how can these long-vanished creatures be brought back to life? It is the fruit of a zoological adventure dating back to the 1920s and 1930s, not without its share of controversy. By crossing various breeds of cattle, biologists 'recreated' the prehistoric bovine - or at least a species close enough to create the illusion. And yet, how can we be certain that these neo-aurochs truly resemble their ancestors, when researchers must rely on cave paintings or reconstructions based on excavated skulls? The debate continues. The 'neo-aurochs', for their part, continue to thrive, reintroduced into protected natural spaces - notably in the Netherlands - where they roam freely in a semblance of a prehistoric ecosystem. At the Parc du Thot, the team stresses that these 'reconstructed aurochs' have value not only for their aesthetic and scientific interest, but also as a means of raising awareness about biodiversity and conservation. Food for thought as you contemplate the panorama over the Vézère Valley - one of the Thot's other great attractions.

Source: Michelin Guide

What to discover

Via a 3D film, embark on a journey through the evolution of our climate from the appearance of the first humans to the era of Lascaux. Rediscover this famous cave with unique lighting on the engravings of the Nave. Through scenes of daily life and educational videos, rediscover the gestures and know-how of Cro-Magnon man. Then put your knowledge to the test with the quiz 'Questions pour un glaçon' (Questions on Ice).

Want to encounter a woolly mammoth? Attend the 'Temporal Mirror' – an augmented reality animation – and meet the great mammals of the last Ice Age. Fancy getting your hands dirty? Take part in the discovery workshops available for children aged 5 to 7, and create your own stone pendant, grease lamp or leather bracelet – ideal for sharing fun moments as a family and living the Stone Age!



Vip animation: keeper for a day

Step into the shoes of an animal keeper and enjoy a unique moment alongside the animals – particularly the wolves. On the programme: a behind-the-scenes tour, feeding time and observation of the animals in the company of a keeper who will answer all your questions.



Discovery workshops :

- **Cave Art:** Have you ever painted in a cave? A unique experience proposed to discover and use the materials and tools of prehistory: ochre, stamps, brushes and flint.
- **The Cave Art workshop** is also available in a version open to 3-5 year-olds: 'La Grotte des Micromignons' – to experience prehistory from the very youngest age!
- **Jewellery-Making:** Our ancestors loved making all sorts of objects, including jewellery in various materials. Have the experience of fashioning your own pendant and let your imagination guide you in creating a unique piece to wear!
- **Archaeological Dig:** How do we come to know and understand the life of our ancestors? What tools did they have, and how did they make them? What did they eat? In what environment did they live? Archaeology is there to help us. Discover this profession by digging up a prehistoric dwelling from the time of Lascaux yourself.
- **Flint-Knapping:** When we speak of prehistory, we think of flint. But who truly knows all the possible tools that can be made from flint? Try your hand at retouching a flint flake yourself.
- **Grease Lamp:** A lamp is handy for painting in a cave – but before you can use it, you must make it. To do so, you will shape a piece of limestone using the tools of our ancestors. To take home and use!
- **Leather Work:** Put yourself in the skin of a Cro-Magnon and fashion your own small leather accessory using bone tools, experimenting with the working of this material so essential to the people of the Ice Age.



PREHISTORIC SHELTERS OF LAUGERIE-BASSE

It was in 1863 that the palaeontologist Édouard Lartet and his friend Henry Christy, visiting Les Eyzies, discovered the shelters of Laugerie-Basse. Deeply impressed by the richness of their prehistoric remains, their visit was to lead to many discoveries...



Among the most celebrated finds: an engraved bone disc, a harpoon and a headless female statuette known as the 'Venus impudique' ('Immodest Venus'), discovered by the Marquis de Vibraye, and a plaque known as the 'Woman with a Reindeer'.

Located 25 km from the Lascaux cave, in the limestone cliff that towers over the Vézère, the prehistoric shelters of Laugerie-Basse bear witness to human occupation from the Magdalenian period (15,000 years BP) through to the Bronze Age (2,200 years BP).

They were one of the first prehistoric sites to be excavated in France.

This major prehistoric site, inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List, is a genuine reference point for historians, given the quantity, quality and diversity of the 600 works of art discovered there during excavations in the early 20th century.

The site comprises two shelters: the 'classic' shelter, which has been fully excavated, and the 'Abri des Marseilles', part of which has not yet been exploited as it lies beneath a collapse of limestone blocks. The stratigraphic cross-section bears witness to many periods of human occupation across the ages.

THE TREASURE OF THE MAGDALENIANS



They had fine taste, those Magdalenians. Who were they? The Magdalenians – the first Homo sapiens to settle here, 15,000 years ago. In the hollow of the imposing cliff face, the natural shelter had everything a five-star prehistoric dwelling could offer: spacious living (300 metres long, enough room for animal-skin tents), generous ceiling height (4 to 5 metres), a sheltered terrace (a stone overhang in bad weather), close to all amenities (the Vézère below for fetching water, reindeer in the valley and salmon in the river for the larder). Our Magdalenians found it so comfortable that they lived there for... five thousand years! These hunter-gatherers were also tireless workers. Between forays out for dinner, they were hard at it – carving, sculpting, adorning every object and tool they needed: arrows, points, needles and harpoons, of course, but also ornaments made from pierced animal teeth and even statuettes, including a precious Venus, the first of its kind found in France...

And then, disaster: part of the cliff face collapsed, blocking certain access points but at the same time preserving the traces left by our ancestors. A stroke of luck for the first prehistory enthusiasts who arrived in the valley in 1863. Archaeology was still in its infancy, and Laugerie-Basse was one of the first sites to be excavated. Some went about it carefully; others... used dynamite! Yet all made discovery after discovery. A prehistoric treasure, whose precious pieces now grace the display cases of great museums – the Musée de la Préhistoire in Les Eyzies, the Musée de l'Homme in Paris, the Musée d'Archéologie Nationale in Saint-Germain-en-Laye... The original shelter, for its part, has been preserved and arranged for visits, during which our ancestors seem to greet us from the depths of time.»
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Source: Michelin Guide





GROTTE DU GRAND ROC

Discovered in 1924 at the same location as the Laugerie-Basse shelters in Les Eyzies, the Grotte du Grand Roc opened to the public in 1927. This internationally renowned natural cavity is the only cave with concretions to be classified as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Nestled in the cliff face, at a height of 40 metres, overlooking the river and offering a magnificent panorama over the village of Les Eyzies and the Vézère Valley, it is a veritable mineral forest composed of an incredible variety and density of crystallisations: stalactites – sometimes fine, sometimes imposing and translucent – hanging from the ceiling to meet the stalagmites rising from the floor, creating columns, fistulous forms, gours, triangles and a great quantity of eccentric shapes that defy the laws of gravity...

«It is a true bestiary that the cave contains, a beauty of nature – you simply have to take your time and let yourself be carried along by the momentum of the visit, and you will see. For example, right there you can see a crocodile facing us, the guide illustrates. You can see the eyes, the half-open jaw, and it looks as if it is heading towards us!»

THE ADVENTURER OF PÉRIGORD

You will not see his (imposing) tomb, hidden in a fold of the valley, at the end of a path closed to the public, very close to the cave to which this Périgordian adventurer devoted a good part of his life. He is Jean Maury, archaeologist and speleologist born in 1874, whom you might have encountered had you lived in Les Eyzies in the 1920s. Our man was taking part in excavations at the prehistoric shelter of Laugerie-Basse, at the foot of the immense cliff face that rises up over the banks of the Vézère. Below, prehistory. Above, mystery... At least, until Jean Maury raised his eyes and spotted a trickle of water, in the middle of the rock face, thirty metres higher up.

He was not a geologist, but our man knew full well that he was at the heart of a karstic massif veined with fissures, where water has been seeping for millions of years, relentlessly carving through the limestone. What lay behind this spring? It takes considerable courage to climb up there (the view is magnificent, but even so). And incredible tenacity, to dig – for two years, centimetre by centimetre – a tunnel through the thick rock face. This tunnel reached 40 metres in length when, on 29 April 1924, it finally yielded. Jean Maury crawled through the narrow passage.

Were there frescoes at the far end? In the frail light of his candle, a different kind of dazzlement awaited him: an immense mineral forest 45 million years in the making, where crystallisations of every kind flourished – some in the shape of pyramids or crosses (extremely rare), others pure as crystal. Jean Maury had just discovered a natural treasure, one of the most beautiful underground ensembles in the valley. He subsequently patiently opened it up for visitors. In 1927, the first tourists arrived. In 1979, the cave was listed by UNESCO. Jean Maury never knew. He died in 1948, so attached to the place that he rests for eternity very close to his beloved cliff face.

La source : Guide Michelin



A prehistoric and mineral stopover

Grotte du Grand Roc

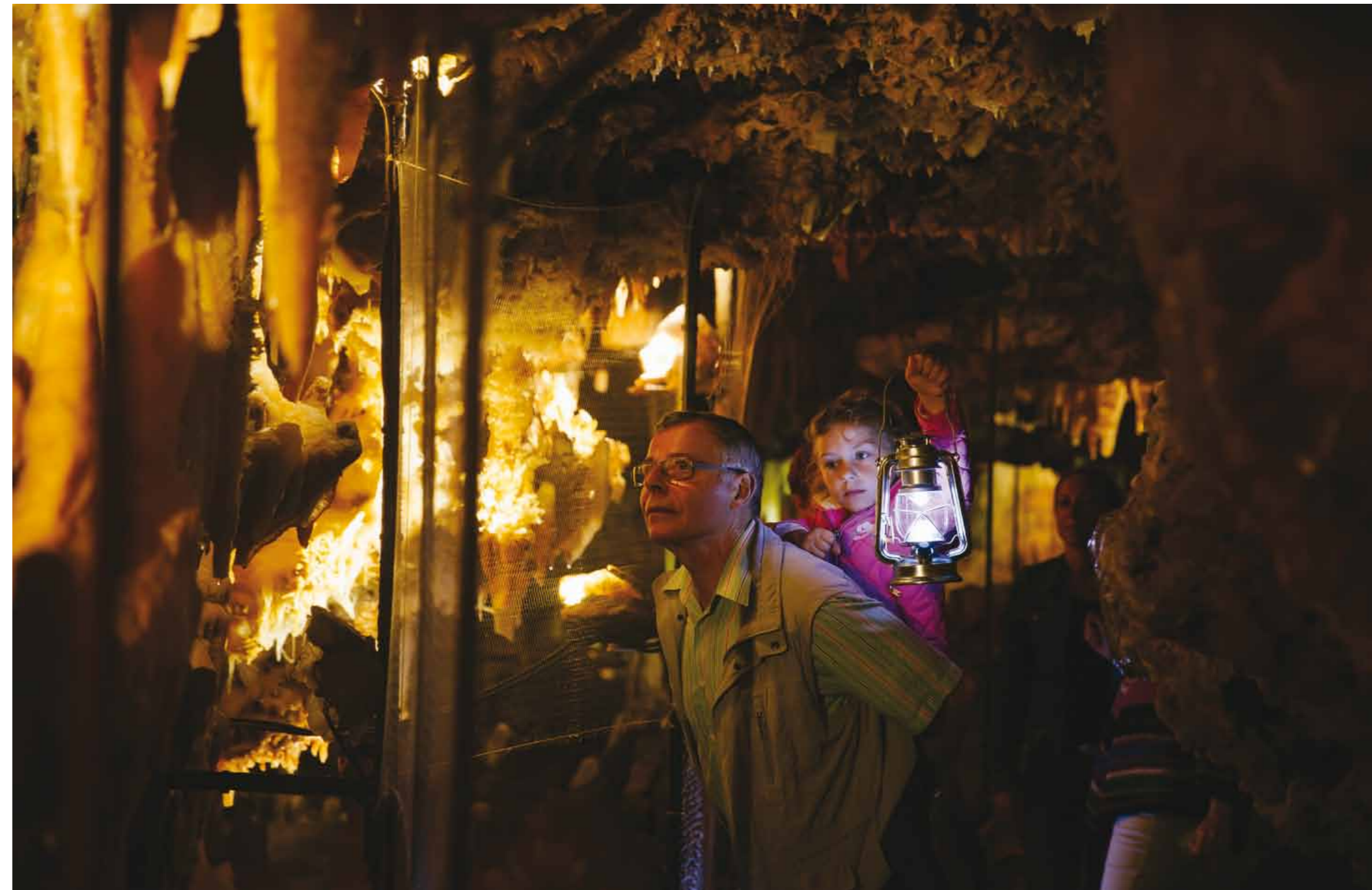
Storm Lantern Visit

Available during the school holidays, this visit offers an authentic experience
- plunged into darkness and conditions close to those of the cave's discovery
- using storm lanterns.

Prehistoric Shelters of Laugerie-Basse

Cro-Magnon Workshop

Designed for children, this workshop allows them to discover the various domestic activities and daily life of Cro-Magnon man, including building a life-sized shelter and discovering hunting tools such as the sagaie spear-thrower and the propulseur (spear-thrower).



THE MEDIEVAL HERITAGE OF PÉRIGORD



CHÂTEAU DE BIRON

Perched on a hillock dominating the landscape, the Château de Biron stands proudly on the borders of Périgord, Quercy and the Agenais.

It is the largest castle complex in Nouvelle-Aquitaine – an ensemble of 14 buildings crowned by one hectare of roofing! It is also the seat of one of the four baronies of Périgord. The history of this château is intrinsically linked to that of the Gontaut-Biron family, who owned it for eight centuries, from the 11th to the 20th century.

In 1978, the Dordogne Department acquired the château, saving it from ruin and ensuring its preservation and opening to the public.



Part medieval fortress, part Renaissance château and part classical château, every era has left its mark through the upheavals of the Middle Ages, the peasant revolts and the Revolution... creating a true architectural palimpsest: the 12th-century keep, the last vestige of the original medieval fortress; the double-storey seigneurial chapel from the 16th century – a jewel of the Renaissance and a veritable theatre of exceptional sculpture; the Renaissance apartments, combining comfort and refinement; the imposing vaulted kitchens; the hall of the States, a symbol of seigneurial power; and finally, the seigneurial residence and the 18th-century drawing rooms.

Today recognised as a major site in Aquitaine, classified as a Historic Monument, the Château de Biron takes visitors on a journey through the history of France and eight centuries of the evolution of castle architecture. Its strategic position offers magnificent panoramas over Périgord and the surrounding regions, from the deep forests of Périgord Noir to the Pyrenees...



LITTLE THUMB AND THE GIANT OF STONE



Once upon a time, in the heart of a deep forest in Périgord, lay the ruins of a gigantic château, ransacked by the English, starved by poor harvests, devastated by epidemics. No luck at all for Pons de Gontaut-Biron, born at precisely this time and in precisely this place. Badly nourished, Pons grew so little and so poorly that he earned a nickname: 'Little Thumb'.

Small in stature but full of big ideas: emancipated very early by his poor parents, our diminutive hero set off through the woods to seek his fortune with the king – an adventure that many believe inspired Charles Perrault and his fairy tale 'Tom Thumb'.

Instead of pebbles, the real Little Thumb would accumulate honours and titles (he made a fine marriage too). Fortune made, he returned to tend to his beloved Château de Biron, which had become once more, thanks to him, one of the most majestic in Périgord.

At the twilight of his life, in 1524, our little fellow was buried in the castle chapel he had built – a gem of Flamboyant Gothic inspired by his travels in Italy, containing two Renaissance statues of exceptional beauty: a Pietà and an Entombment. Did Little Thumb rest happily for eternity? Not quite. In 1908, the last Marquis, short of funds, sold both family jewels to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. How to get them back? Good fortune (and the advances of science) made it possible to have replicas made in... 2024! Created using the latest technologies and the expertise of the Ateliers des Fac-Similés du Périgord (those who also reproduced Lascaux), the astonishingly convincing replicas once again adorn Little Thumb's chapel. His château, for its part, is managed by the Dordogne Department, open to visitors and to film shoots. As you walk through the enfilade of rooms, keep an eye on the battlements: it is said that Charles de Biron, one of Pons's descendants, sometimes wanders there carrying his head in his hands, since his decapitation in 1602. But that is another story.



Source: Michelin Guide

The middle ages – a true art form



Free Visit – ‘Treasure Hunt’

Armed with an educational booklet (‘Les Incollables’), young explorers set out to discover the secrets of the château. They navigate using a map and must identify the different architectural styles of Biron using a chronological timeline.

highlights coming in 2026

Discovery Workshops

- **Table Arts:** Children will learn the customs, recipes and banquet menus, and will be asked to lay the table as it would have been done in the time of the Fabliaux in the Middle Ages!
- **Medieval Dance, Take the Floor!:** Pupils will take to the floor to discover three medieval dances. They will also need to identify the musical instruments and follow the dance steps.
- **Coin Striking:** A workshop dedicated to discovering the history of money and the technique of coin striking, where children can make their own piece!
- **Heraldry:** An opportunity to learn the art of heraldry by creating one’s own coat of arms, following the rules of blazoning.

- **‘Les Aliénés’ Exhibition by the Mobilier national**
Launched in 2019 by the Mobilier national, this experimental research programme seeks to broaden thinking on the links between decoration and artwork, giving free rein to the artistic sensibility of commissioned artists working with antique furniture deemed outdated and devoid of heritage value.



- **‘Février Gourmand’ (Gourmet February) in Périgord – Exhibition**
‘À Table au Moyen Âge’ (At Table in the Middle Ages) from the Tour Jean-sans-Peur in Paris. This exhibition invites visitors to the tables of the powerful and the humble alike. At banquets, conviviality reigns: following rules of good manners, trencher, cup and bread are shared, so that guests become ‘co-pains’ (companions). The richness of wine vessels, the profusion of dishes and the staging of the entremets all serve to glorify the lord of the manor. Yet gluttony is also the first of the deadly sins, as attested by many illuminations.
- **International Bonsai Exhibition:** On 16 and 17 May, with a concert by the Harmonie de Montreuil-sur-Mer orchestra – artists from all horizons, united by their love of music.
- **Cyrano de Bergerac Theatre Performance:**
Performed by the Compagnie du Roi de cœur in collaboration with the Maison du Grand Site, on the first weekend of June.



Historium Exhibition – 250th Anniversary of American Independence

The giant of Périgord moors on the shores of the New World! Marking the 250th anniversary of American independence, Château de Biron pays tribute to the intertwined history of France and America and to the memory of the last Duke of Biron – a key figure in the struggles of the 18th century.

In the château’s grounds, a vast military encampment will transport visitors to the era of Franco-American alliances, featuring command tents, workshop awnings, scale models and educational panels presenting the daily life of soldiers, the organisation of the King’s army and the origins of American independence. Throughout the trail, costumed re-enactors will bring to life the era of ‘coureurs des bois’, explorers and Native Americans, through animations, weapons demonstrations, interactive workshops and outdoor games.

A pedagogical exhibition retracing the great episodes of ‘French America’, from the colonial wars to independence, highlighting the role of cultural, scientific and artistic exchanges between the two continents during the Age of Enlightenment.



CADOUIN CLOISTER



Located in the forest of La Bessède, between Sarlat and Bergerac, the Cadouin Cloister stands as a testament to Flamboyant Gothic art. This architectural masterpiece, classified as a Historic Monument and inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List under the Routes of Santiago de Compostela, invites visitors to journey through nearly ten centuries of history.

Founded in 1115 by Géraud de Salles, the abbey of Cadouin joined the Cistercian order in 1119, becoming its eleventh affiliated abbey – an order renowned for its strict adherence to the Rule of Saint Benedict. This affiliation marked the beginning of an era of monastic life characterised by poverty, austerity and silence. The history of the site is rich and eventful. Whilst monastic life came to an end in 1790 during the French Revolution, the cloister retains traces of its glorious past.

From the Romanesque period there survive the abbey church, the sacristy and the base of the walls of the conventual buildings. However, it is the reconstruction of the cloister at the end of the 15th century that gives Cadouin its present splendour.

Its galleries – three in the Gothic style and one in the Renaissance style – open onto an inner garden through open tracery bays. Every corner of the cloister offers a dazzling spectacle: finely sculpted columns, elegantly interlacing vaults, delicate arabesques, carved doorways, pillars, keystones, sculpted capitals and an abbot's stone throne.

The richness of the ornamentation and the splendour of the décor make this place universal, timeless and peaceful. The interplay of light and shadow created by the sun drawing arabesques across the floor of the galleries adds an almost magical dimension to the experience!

FINE LINEN



« Welcome to the edge of the forest of Bessède: pale stone and terracotta rooftiles, the pretty village of Cadouin houses a Cistercian abbey (1154) listed by UNESCO, whose 15th-century cloister is a jewel of Flamboyant Gothic. But if the complex has kept religious chronicles buzzing for eight centuries, it is less for its beauty than for the presence of Périgord's most celebrated relic: a holy shroud, no less! This sacred cloth, supposedly having enveloped the head of Christ, was allegedly retrieved by a bishop from Le Puy-en-Velay in 1098, during the First Crusade. The relic protected the bishop so well that he was cut down by an epidemic, landing in the hands of a humble Périgordian curé charged with returning it to the deceased's cathedral.

But on his return, the canons of Le Puy, believing neither the curé nor his sacred cloth, shut the door in his face. Taken refuge in his modest church of Brunet, our curé was soon driven out by a fire. Rather than calling into question the power of his relic (two disasters, all the same!), he hurried to entrust it to the abbey of Cadouin.

And so the village was proclaimed a major place of pilgrimage – a fervour that experienced some lows (after the Revolution) and many highs (at the end of the 19th century, the relic attracted thousands of the faithful each year).

Nevertheless, certain doubts began to creep in. Might there not be, here and there – look carefully – oriental characters on this cloth? In 1934, science confirmed: the fine linen could not have wrapped the head of Christ in his tomb, since it was woven in Egypt at the end of the 11th century and is indeed adorned with calligraphic elements in praise of a caliph. The bishop of Périgueux immediately suppressed the pilgrimage. Since 2012, a facsimile of the supposed relic has been on display in a small museum within the Abbey.

The original? Sent to Périgueux for restoration in 2005, it is still there. A matter to follow.»

Source: Michelin Guide

an enchanted interlude

The Nocturnes:

Escape games and candlelit musical evenings – unforgettable summer nights at Cadouin!

Moulding, Paper-Rolling and Illumination Workshops:

Come and express your creativity in the cloister and give free rein to your imagination by discovering the artisanal techniques of the past. Take advantage of the school holiday periods to create your own varied and original artistic works!

The Lost Treasure of Pierre V de Gain:

Come and solve enigmas in the cloister to uncover the mystery of the abbey's treasure (summer and school holidays, by reservation).

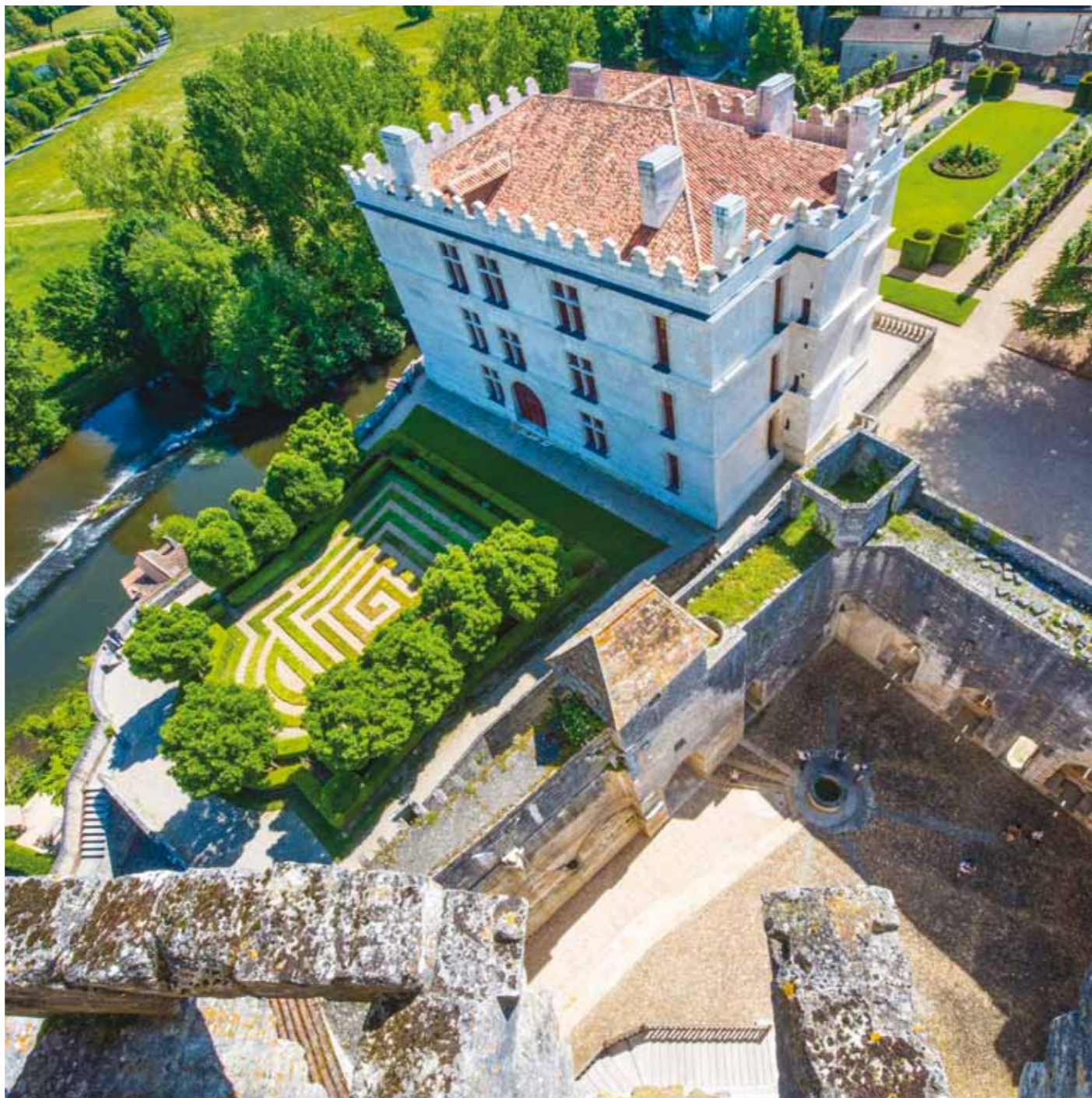


CHÂTEAU DE BOURDEILLES

Perched on a hill overlooking the Dronne, in the heart of Périgord Vert, the Château de Bourdeilles tells over eight centuries of history. Classified as a Historic Monument, this emblematic site is distinguished by the harmonious cohabitation of two remarkable buildings: a 13th-century medieval fortress and a 16th-century Renaissance residence.

The medieval fortress

Built at the end of the 13th century, the medieval fortress of Bourdeilles bears witness to the political and military upheavals of the era. At a time when conflicts between France and England raged, the château was alternately under English and French dominion before being reconquered by the army of Bertrand Du Guesclin. The impressive military architecture reflects its defensive role: a high curtain wall adorned with machicolations, arrow loops and crossbow slits, as well as a defensive gatehouse. Dominating the whole, an octagonal keep of 35 metres offers a breathtaking panoramic view from its terrace. This keep, with its four vaulted levels, is a striking example of medieval ingenuity.



The renaissance residence

In the 16th century, as peace took hold, Jacquette de Montbron, Baroness of Bourdeilles and confidante of Catherine de Medici, undertook the construction of a Renaissance residence adjacent to the medieval fortress. Inspired by Italian palaces, this luminous and elegant building embodies the refinement of the Second Renaissance. Its generous windows and transverse corridors testify to great architectural modernity. This residence today houses an exceptional collection of furniture dating from the 14th to the 19th century. Assembled by a passionate couple of patrons in the 1960s and 1970s, this collection is one of the richest in Aquitaine, offering visitors a true journey through time.

The first written mention of the château dates to 1183, when monks sought refuge there with the relics of Saint Sicaire. Since then, the château has witnessed the great epic moments of history.

It was also one of the four baronies of Périgord, alongside Biron, Beynac and Mareuil. Over the centuries, Bourdeilles has preserved its dual military and residential character thanks to visionary owners such as Jacquette de Montbron – an erudite woman considered one of the first female Western architects, who left an enduring mark on the château's history.

A PALACE OF ONE'S OWN

One hundred and twenty-five steps. How many times did Jacquette de Montbron climb the keep of Bourdeilles to survey, from below, the progress of her own château's construction – the château she is said to have designed alone? Specialists are unanimous: at the Renaissance, such an initiative was extremely rare. They also tell us that in this period, widowhood could contribute to a certain emancipation: in such privileged circles, many widows continued buildings begun during their husbands' lifetimes. But Jacquette, for her part, would conceptualise the plans herself. One needs considerable self-assurance to do that. Her story tells us she had no shortage of it: born into the Charentais nobility, Jacquette was 16 when she married André de Bourdeilles, heir to one of the four baronies of Périgord and owner of the medieval fortress of Bourdeilles. Being born and moving in such circles gave access to royal courts: Jacquette became a lady-in-waiting to Louise de Lorraine (wife of Henri III), then to the queen-mother Catherine de Medici, of whom she became one of the favourites.

André died in 1582, leaving her alone with six children. Jacquette returned to Bourdeilles with, in her baggage, 4,000 écus bequeathed by the queen-mother – the equivalent of half a million euros (all the same). Too massive, heavy and dark, the fortress of Bourdeilles? Right opposite, Jacquette drew up the pleasure château of her dreams.

Farewell to machicolations, arrow loops and crossbow slits. She adorned the façade like the Italian palaces that inspired her, had large windows pierced to let in the light, had the salons painted by fashionable artists... She is said to have executed certain façade sculptures herself! A woman of formidable character, you might think as you visit her domain? At the time, people said 'divine galante', as her brother-in-law, the writer Brantôme, described her – and upon whom he drew for some of his novels. A heroine, then.



Source: Michelin Guide

A journey through the age of châteaux

'Who Killed the Marquis?!' Trail Game: Children investigate as a team throughout the château to uncover all its secrets. A fun and original way to visit Château de Bourdeilles.

'In Search of the Griffin's Egg' Visit: The griffin of Bourdeilles has lost its egg. Can you find it? This visit, animated around the legend of the griffin of Bourdeilles, plunges children into the world of fantastical creatures (griffin, dragon, chimera, sphinx...), which they can discover on the château's furniture.

Mysterious Enquiry at the Heart of the Château: In this immersive game, be the privileged actors of a mysterious investigation. Your mission: discover who stole a precious painting. Through a series of games and enigmas scattered throughout the château, you will need to demonstrate logic, observation and teamwork to solve the mystery. Every clue brings you a little closer to the truth! Recommended age: 7 to 12 years.

Discovery workshops

- **Heraldry Workshop – the Science of Coats of Arms:** A workshop on the use of heraldry, vocabulary and codes to follow when choosing one's armorial bearings, before creating one's own coat of arms.
- **Calligraphy:** An opportunity to explore the invention of writing, its origins and the oldest support materials. Followed by a learning period in the techniques and style of medieval writing, before creating an illuminated version of one's name on a beautiful card.
- **Coin Striking:** Suitable for all ages, this workshop allows participants to strike a medieval coin replica onto a tin token.

The 2026 calendar

- **'Février Gourmand' (Gourmet February) – On the Silk and Spice Route, 8 February, with the Compagnons d'Azur:** Through historical re-enactments, follow in the footsteps of Eastern caravans and relive the great exchanges of Antiquity and the Middle Ages – craftsmanship, stories and traditions that shaped medieval cuisine.
- **Gastronomy in the 12th Century – 15 February:** The association Historia Aquitonarum invites you on a gastronomic journey through the Middle Ages. Through their animations, discover the customs and flavours of medieval gastronomy, with a lively presentation of 12th-century cuisine and the discovery of a typical meal of the era. An activity to understand, smell and taste medieval daily culinary life, as if you were there.
- **Visit of the Fête des Fous (Festival of Fools) – 22 February:** Discover the Fête des Fous – that mythical period when everyone dresses up to dance, sing and celebrate. This historical carnival is the perfect opportunity to upend codes and the established order for a day, discovering the château behind masks, make-up or by embodying real or mythical characters.



- **Le Printemps des Poètes (Spring of Poets):** The château will participate in this national event by offering animations and a calligraphy workshop on 15 March, followed by a conference on troubadours on 29 March, all set to medieval music.
- **Châteaux en Fête (Châteaux in Celebration):** Medieval animations, nocturnal visits, conferences, fencing demonstrations and escape games from 4 April to 3 May.



- **5th Edition of the Médiévales – 25 & 26 July:** Prepare to travel back in time for two extraordinary days! Artisans' market, demonstrations and workshops, encampments and battles, medieval companies, board games, artistic fencing, dance, theatre – all set to medieval and Renaissance music.
- **4th Edition of the Théâtrales – Saturday 15 August:** Stories, comedies, performances, theatrical château visits, musical animations, games and much more!
- **New Edition of the Festival Paratge d'Òc et d'Ailleurs – 23 May:** A true celebration of Occitan culture and beyond, through performances and dances. Visitors will enjoy performances by troubadours, singing in the langue d'oc and much more to enrich the cultural experience.
- **Re-enactment of the Siege of the Château:** The Château de Bourdeilles is in the hands of the Black Prince and the English, but the King of France has no intention of standing aside! The gate of the medieval castle is closed, but the destiny of Bourdeilles is about to change...
- **Special Halloween Nocturnal Visit – 31 October:** Come and experience a night of terror! Discover the château by moonlight and enjoy spine-chilling animations.



OUR COMMITMENTS



Following the accreditation of Lascaux IV with the jury's commendation in 2022 and 2023, Semitour Périgord – ever mindful of the ecological footprint of its flagship site and wishing more than ever to align itself with the initiatives launched by the Nouvelle-Aquitaine Region, the Dordogne Departmental Council and the local community authorities of Terrasson en Périgord Noir and Vallée de l'Homme – continues to work to strengthen its commitments in favour of a sustainable development policy in accordance with the evolving AFNOR criteria.

Since its opening, Lascaux IV has established itself as a model of universal accessibility. Awarded the 'Tourisme et Handicap' (Tourism and Disability) label in 2019, our flagship site has been able to meet the needs of all four major categories of disability (motor, cognitive, visual and auditory) through adapted facilities and cultural mediation.



Motor Disability

- The site is 100% accessible to people with reduced mobility and to wheelchair users.
- Wheelchairs are available on free loan to visitors.
- In every space, touchscreens and furniture have been designed to be accessible to all, at children's height and for wheelchair users.



Cognitive Disability

Every mediator is committed to accompanying these visitors with the greatest care, within a group and at any age.



Auditory Disability

- Headsets are equipped with ARC technology and allow people with a latest-generation hearing aid to simply place the headset on their shoulders. The chip then transmits the sound directly to the hearing aid.
- From the start of the visit through to the end of the cave, a tablet allows visitors to follow the tour via commentary designed by our mediators in French Sign Language. This visit is also available in text format on the same tablet in French, English and Spanish. The visitor chooses their preferred mode on the application at the start of their visit.
- Throughout the rest of the route, the visit companion offers a 'subtitling' option in the visitor's chosen language for all audio and video content.



Visual Disability

- The cave visit is entirely designed to enable a descriptive and immersive discovery for all.
- Thermoformed booklets are available.
- An option activates adapted content on the visit companion: colour scheme, graphic charter and font size.



Ecotourism in vézère

The 'Écotourisme en Vézère' eco-charter is the result of a collaboration between two inter-municipal authorities and their respective tourist offices: the Lascaux Dordogne-Vallée Vézère Tourist Office, the Vézère Périgord Noir Tourist Office and the Grand Site Operation for the Vézère Valley. Drawn up in 2018-2019, this initiative aims to engage local tourism stakeholders in a sustainable approach. Objectives: to formalise commitment, create an eco-responsible network, structure the offering and promote the pillars of sustainable development. It is therefore with great enthusiasm that Lascaux IV became a signatory to the 'Écotourisme en Vézère' eco-charter – an initiative aimed at contributing to a more responsible and respectful form of tourism in the Vézère Valley, listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and Grand Site de France!



Cycling welcome (Accueil vélo)

Soft mobility options such as cycling are increasingly popular, driving the expansion of national and local cycle routes. As one of France's leading cycling tourism destinations, in 2024 Semitour Périgord applied for the 'Accueil Vélo' (Cycling Welcome) label for its Vézère Valley sites (Lascaux IV, Lascaux II, Parc du Thot and Grotte du Grand Roc). This approach forms part of the broader initiative launched by the Dordogne Department and local authorities. The Accueil Vélo brand is a national quality mark guaranteeing a welcome, services and facilities specifically tailored to the needs of cycling tourists using cycle routes and cycle paths. It is the promise of a quality welcome for cycling clientele throughout France. Becoming an Accueil Vélo site means affirming our intention to meet the expectations of an ever-growing audience who enjoy active holidays and soft mobility.

INDIVIDUAL TARIFFS 2026

	ADULTS FROM 13 YEARS	ADULTS REDUCED RATE*	DISABILITY (13+)	CHILD 5-12 YEARS FREE < 5 YEARS	WORKSHOPS & OTHER SERVICES
LASCAUX IV	€23	€22	€16 (€11 for under 13s)	FULL RATE €15 REDUCED RATE €14* Storytelling visit €16	Prestige €35 Art Pariétal Evening €180 Cro-Magnon €75 Storytelling visit + Thot €18.30
PARC DU THOT	€11,50	€10,50		FULL RATE €7.20 REDUCED RATE €6.80	Workshop: €3 Keeper for a day: €80 (13+) / €52 (7-12 yrs) Family pass (2 adults + 2 children): €210
COMBINED TICKETS LASCAUX IV + THOT	€26,50			€17,50	
LASCAUX II	€16			€10,50	
LASCAUX II + THOT	€21			€13,20	
LASCAUX II + LASCAUX IV	€29			€19	
GROTTE DU GRAND ROC	€9,50			€6,30	
ABRIS DE LAUGERIE BASSE	€7,50 (self-guided) €8,50 (guided visit)			€5	Workshop: €3
COMBINED TICKETS GRAND ROC & LAUGERIE	€15,3			€10	
PASS 4 SITES «AU FIL DE LA VÈZÈRE» LASCAUX IV - THOT - GRAND ROC - LAUGERIE-BASSE	€40,50			€26,50	
CHÂTEAU DE BIRON	€10,10			€6,70	Workshop: €3
CLOITRE DE CADOUIN	€7,50 (self-guided) €8,50 (guided visit)			€5	Workshop: €3 Treasure hunt: €10.90 (13+) €8 (up to 12 yrs)
COMBINED TICKETS BIRON + CADOUIN	€14 + €1 (if guided visit)			€8.60 + €1 (if guided visit)	
CHÂTEAU DE BOURDEILLES	€10,10			€6,70	Workshop: €3 Coin striking: €3

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

OPEN FROM FEBRUARY TO DECEMBER

Online ticketing at ticketsdordogne.com

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PRESS AREAS

Find our dedicated press areas and photo libraries on each site's website:

- <https://lascaux.fr/fr/espace-presse/>
- <https://lascaux2.fr/fr/espace-presse/>
- <https://grotte-grand-roc.fr/fr/espace-presse/>
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- <https://chateau-bourdeilles.fr/fr/espace-presse/>

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