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The village of Ste Énimie in the Gorges du Tarn (Photo by Kuebi free of copyright c/o Wikimedia Commons)

PRIMAVERA 2018:

“SONG OF AUVERGNE”

Bourges – Clermont-Ferrand – Le Puy – Gorges du Tarn – Conques – Cordes - and more!

15 days, from Thursday, May 10, to Thursday, May 24, 2018

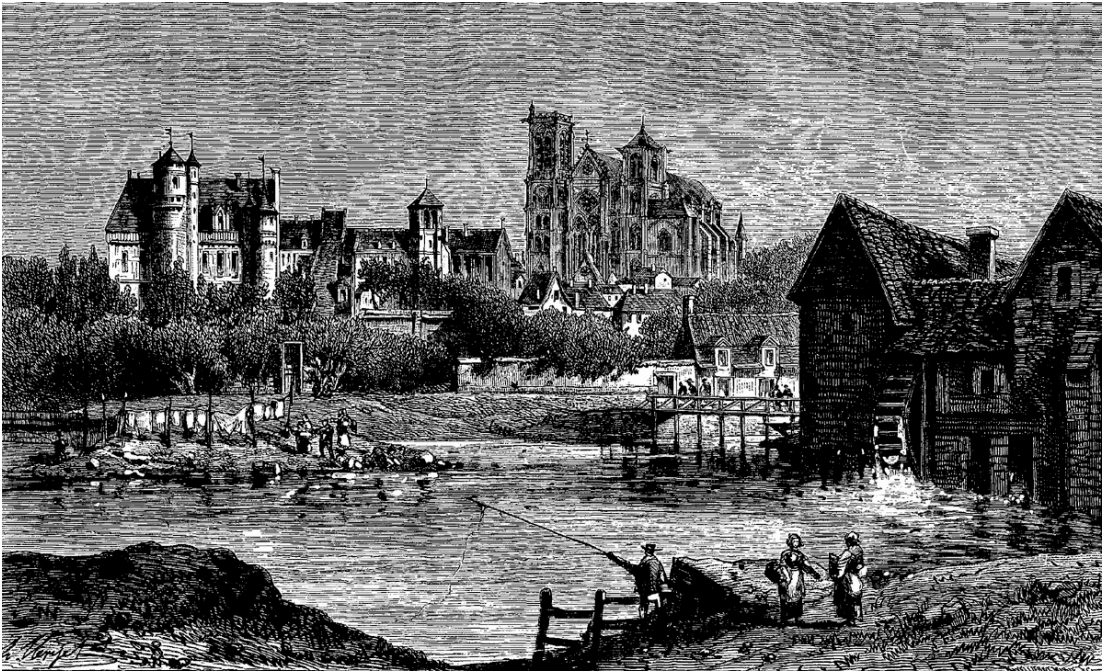
A leisurely coach tour of magnificent south-central France, with the spectacular (but extinct) volcanoes of Auvergne, the magnificent canyon known as the Gorges du Tarn, the picturesque centres of pilgrimage of Le Puy and Conques, and historic cities such as Bourges and Clermont-Ferrand. Orleans - plus excellent food and wines! The tour will be escorted by historian Jacques R. Pauwels, PhD, who will lecture on the history of the area.

Tour price, based on double occupancy: \$3,995 CAD from Toronto, including all airport taxes and related fees
“Land only” (from Paris CDG to Toulouse Airport): \$3,110 - Single room supplement: \$675

PROPOSED ITINERARY:

Day 1 - Thursday, May 10: Evening departure from Toronto to Paris, with Air France. An aperitif (also Champagne!), dinner, and a light breakfast will be served on board.

Day 2 - Friday, May 11: Transfer along a southbound expressway to **Bourges**, the beautiful ancient capital of Berry Province, located in the geographical centre of France. Check into the centrally-located superior tourist-class Hotel Christina (<http://www.le-christina.com/en>). In late afternoon or early evening, leisurely walking tour of the old town, focusing on the wonderful St. Etienne Cathedral followed by a welcome dinner in a restaurant of the old town.



< Bourges and its Cathedral on an ancient lithograph (c/o Wikimedia Commons)

Day 3 – Saturday, May 12: Morning excursion to the 12th -century Prieury of **Notre Dame d’Orsan** and its marvelous medieval garden, restored on the basis of the monks’ manuscripts and illuminations

(<http://www.prieuredorsan.com/index-a.html>).

Return to Bourges, and rest of the day free to

shop or explore the old town on your own. Your options here include visits to the Palace of Jacques Coeur, opulent Gothic residence of a famous 15th-century merchant and politician (<http://www.palais-jacques-coeur.fr/en>) and/or some of the city’s fine museum such as the Berry Museum and the Museum of Decorative Arts (http://www.ville-bourges.fr/en/site/culture---leisure_museums). No group dinner this evening.

Day 4 – Sunday, May 13: This morning we motor south to **Vichy**, one of the most prestigious spas in France, but also residence of the collaborator-regime of Marshal Pétain during WW II. Tour of the parks, fine hotels and villas, etc., and free time for lunch. In the afternoon we continue to the city of **Clermont-Ferrand**, capital of the province of Auvergne, known in France as the “city of tires” since it is the home of one of the country’s most famous corporations, Michelin! Dinner and overnight in the centrally-located Holiday Inn (https://www.ihg.com/holidayinn/hotels/fr/fr/clermont-ferrand/cfcfr/hoteldetail?cm_mmc=GoogleMaps--hi--FREN--cfcfr).

Day 5 - Monday, May 14: Morning walking tour of Clermont-Ferrand, with focus on the historical city centre and its two impressive ancient sanctuaries, the Gothic Cathedral and the Romanesque Basilica of Notre Dame du Port, the latter one of the architectural jewels along the pilgrims’ roads to Compostela within France, collectively classified as a UNESCO World Heritage Site (http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/868/multiple=1&unique_number=1019); other places of interest include Place de la Victoire, with the statue of Pope Urban II, who launched the first crusade here in 1095, the picturesque district surrounding the St. Pierre Market, and the Renaissance-style Amboise Fountain. The afternoon is free to shop and/or explore the city on your own. No group dinner this evening.

Day 6 - Tuesday, May 15: Full-day excursion into the **Regional Park of the Volcanoes of Auvergne**, with as absolute highlight a trip (by train) to the top (at 1,465m) of the **Puy-de-Dome**, where - weather conditions permitting! - we will enjoy a spectacular panoramic view of the surrounding area, including the city of Clermont-Ferrand at your feet and many volcanoes in the distance! (<http://www.auvergne-tourism.com/regional-nature-parks/the-auvergne-volcanoes-park-279-2.html>) Our tour will also include some or all of the following: the spa of **Mont Dore**; the fortified town of **Besse-en-Chandesse**; lakes such as those of **Chambon** and **Pavin**; the Romanesque monastery of **Orcival**; and the cheese-producing centre of **St. Nectaire**. A hearty lunch of regional culinary specialties is also included! Return to our hotel in late afternoon.



Extinct volcanoes as seen from the Puy de Dôme (anonymous photo c/o Wikimedia Commons)

Day 7 - Wednesday, May 16: Today we visit two of France's finest examples of Romanesque art and architecture, the Basilica of St. Julien in **Brioude** and the Abbey Church of St. Robert in the village of **Chaise-Dieu**. Then we continue via the fortress of **Polignac** to **Le Puy-en-Velay**, a beautiful old town dramatically nestled in the huge crater of an extinct volcano. Le Puy was the starting point of one of the four roads used by pilgrims to cross France on their way to Santiago de Compostela. Accommodation in the centrally-located Hotel Ibis Styles (<http://www.ibis.com/gb/hotel-1197-ibis-styles-le-puy-en-velay/index.shtml>), and this evening's dinner will likely feature a famous local specialty: green lentils (*lentilles du Puy*).



Le Puy en Velay, with St. Michael of the Needle, the huge statue of the Virgin Mary, and the Cathedral (photo c/o Wikimedia Commons)

Day 8 - Thursday, May 17: Morning sightseeing in Le Puy, with as highlight our visit to the unusual and extremely interesting Cathedral, perched on top of a hill dominating the town and famous for its Black Madonna as well as spectacular architecture (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Le_Puy_Cathedral). Afterwards we explore the quaint, labyrinthine old town, and it will also be possible to climb to the sanctuary known as St. Michael of the Needle, situated on top of a very steep, 80m-high rock of volcanic origin and related to other famous sanctuaries devoted to the Archangel, such as the Mont-Saint-Michel in Normandy and Michael's Mount in Cornwall (<http://www.sacred-destinations.com/france/le-puy-st-michael-chapel>). In the afternoon we motor south, cross from Auvergne into the region of Gévaudan, and enter the amazing **Gorges du Tarn**, a kind of French version of the Grand Canyon! Dinner and overnight in Hotel Relais du Moulin in the very pretty town of **Ste Énimie** (<http://www.aubergedumoulin48.com/en>).

Day 9 - Friday, May 18: Today is free to relax and enjoy the sights of Ste Énimie and the Gorges du Tarn. A leisurely walk to explore the town and the scenic banks of the Tarn (and take lots of pictures) is de rigueur, but it will likely also be possible to rent a bicycle and/or enjoy a kayak trip on the river. If the weather collaborates, this may also be a perfect day for a picnic! This evening, dinner again in the restaurant of our hotel.

The Gorges du Tarn on an old poster (c/o Wikimedia Commons) >

Day 10 - Saturday, May 19: Leisurely excursion into the **Cévennes**, an isolated and rugged mountain chain punctuated by peaks such as the Mont Aigoual and Mont Lozère and littered with picturesque towns and villages such as **Meyrueis** and **Florac**. Return to Ste Énimie in late afternoon. No group dinner this evening.

Day 11 - Sunday, May 20: Departure from Ste Énimie after breakfast. We enjoy more of the superb scenery of the Gorges du Tarn as we make our westward to the city of **Millau** and into yet another isolated and little-known province of France, Rouergue. Just outside Millau, we stop to admire a marvel of French engineering, but designed in collaboration with the English architect Sir Norman Foster: the Millau Viaduct, the tallest bridge in the world, rising as high as 343 metres (1,125 ft) above its base of the structure. On to **Estaing**, a town boasting a huge chateau as well as a Gothic bridge. Following the rugged valley of the Lot, predictably known in French as the Gorges du Lot, we arrive in the picturesque old town of **Entraygues-sur-Truyère**, situated amidst forest-, vineyard-, and orchard-covered hills at the confluence of the rivers Truyère and Lot. Dinner and overnight in the excellent 3-star hotel La Rivière (<http://www.hotellariviere.com/uk/index.php>).



The spectacular Millau Viaduct (photo by Logopop c/o Wikimedia Commons)

Day 12 - Monday, May 21: After a leisurely breakfast, we head for nearby (25km) **Conques**, arguably the prettiest of all towns and villages along the roads to Santiago de Compostela in France! The major attraction here is the magnificent Romanesque Abbey Church of Ste. Foy, featuring fine sculptures, a cloister, and a sumptuous collection of relics and other treasures, most famously the 10th-century statue-reliquary of the

church's patron, Ste. Foy, herself. After our tour of the town, there will be plenty of time to explore on your own, take pictures, even have lunch. In the afternoon we return to Entraygues, and rest of the day at leisure. No group dinner this evening.



< *Conques and its Romanesque abbey church (photo by J.P. Grandmont c/o Wikimedia Commons)*

Day 13 - Tuesday, May 22: Departure after breakfast. We motor to **Peyrusse-le-Roc**, once an important and prosperous centre of silver and lead mining and a military stronghold, but now a medieval ghost town with ruins of a castle, churches, city walls, and houses of the long-departed residents. On to quaint **Villefranche-de-Rouergue** for a little shopping and time for lunch. In the afternoon, scenic drive through yet another river valley, the Gorges de l'Aveyron, before our arrival in

Cordes-sur-Ciel, one of the best preserved and most beautiful medieval towns in all of France, perched high on a hill overlooking the vineyards of the Languedoc area. Accommodation in the 3-star Hotel La Métairie (<http://www.hotel-la-metairie.com>). No group dinner this evening.

Day 14 - Wednesday, May 23: Morning visit to Cordes-sur-Ciel, with its ancient city walls and gates, medieval and Renaissance houses, churches, covered market, and of course wonderful views of the surrounding countryside! Afterwards there will be ample time for exploring on your own, visiting museums, taking pictures, and shopping. In the afternoon, you may want to stay in Cordes, or you may want to join our sidetrip to nearby **Albi**, cradle of the mysterious medieval heresy whose members were known as Cathars or “Albigensians,” for a visit to the magnificent and fascinating, fortress-like red brick Cathedral. Return to our hotel and “Au Revoir”-dinner in the restaurant of our hotel.



Cordes-sur-Ciel (photo by Krzysztof Golik c/o Wikimedia Commons)

Day 15 - Thursday, May 24: After breakfast, transfer to Toulouse Airport in time for the return flight to Toronto, via Paris CDG Airport, arriving in late afternoon.

**Tour price, based on double occupancy: \$3,995 CAD from Toronto, including all airport taxes and related fees – “Land only” (from Paris CDG to Toulouse Airport): \$3,110
Single room supplement: \$675**

Included in the tour price are:

- Flights from Toronto to Paris and back from Toulouse (via Paris) with Air France, including all airport taxes, security fees, and fuel surcharges.
- Accommodation based on double occupancy in superior tourist-class (3-star) hotels; the single room supplement is \$675;
- Breakfast daily and a total of *eight* 3-course dinners (or full lunches);
- Overland transportation by private coach;
- All visits and sightseeing as outlined in the itinerary, including admission to museums and monuments mentioned.

Not included are:

- All items of a personal nature.
- Beverages with dinners, and meals other than those outlined above.
- A gratuity for the coach driver, \$30 or equivalent in local currency.
- Travel Insurance, available upon request.

"Baïlèro," one of the "Songs of Auvergne" composed by Joseph Canteloube, sung by Frederica von Stade:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KqFXos72IEo>

Le Puy lentils and other food of Auvergne :

<https://www.thegoodlifeFrance.com/regional-dishes-of-auvergne>

and:

<http://gitelink.com/auvergne/auvergne-gastronomy.htm>

Videos about sites featured on this tour:

Bourges Cathedral : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UUGTSzqyoEk>

Auvergne explored by drone : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jLAo9heXWtE&t=6s>

Le Puy-en-Velay : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EOb_caMOWrY

The Gorges du Tarn : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZPrCHxpNil0>

The Millau Viaduct : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ouwv9qutC1M>

Conques : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_1NjHL1p-Rk

Cordes-sur-Ciel : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a3vRYGbhpCQ>

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TERMS AND CONDITIONS

RESERVATIONS AND DEPOSITS:

Reservations should be made as early as possible to ensure the departure of your choice. A deposit of \$750.00 is required at the time of registration. **Your reservation is confirmed upon receipt of your deposit and application form. No reservations will be accepted without a signed application form.**

REFUND OF UNUSED ARRANGEMENTS:

Because the rates of Pauwels Travel Bureau Ltd. are based on group participation, no refund can be made for any tour accommodation or tour service or tour feature not taken. If cancellation occurs while the tour is in progress, no refund can be made for the tour portion not taken. We strongly suggest that to allow for any unexpected contingencies, you purchase the all-inclusive insurance.

CANCELLATION POLICY:

Refund of deposit is made in full if cancellation is received in writing by Pauwels Travel Bureau Ltd. more than 90 days prior of the departure date of the tour less a \$500.00 non-refundable administrative fee per person. For cancellation received in writing 90 days prior or less the following cancellation charges apply:

90 days to 46 days before departure: 25% of tour cost
45 to 31 days before departure: 50% of tour cost
Within 30 days prior to departure: 100% of tour cost

RESPONSIBILITY:

Pauwels Travel Bureau Ltd. reserves the right without notice, to withdraw any part or all of the tour. Factors such as airline schedule changes, hotel overbookings, inclement weather, etc. February necessitate changes in the itinerary as outlined. There may also be other circumstances in which changes become necessary or advisable. Any savings realized by these changes will be passed on to the passengers, any resultant expenses shall be borne by the passenger. Pauwels Travel Bureau Ltd. acts only as an agent in securing hotel, transportation and other travel services and in no event shall be held responsible for the failure by any person or company to render any transportation, lodging or other travel service to be provided on the tour. All hotel, transportation and other travel services are provided to tour members subject to all the terms and conditions under which they are offered to the public generally. The acceptance of the initial service to be provided under the tour shall be considered an acceptance by the tour member of those conditions. Pauwels Travel Bureau Ltd. also reserves the right to decline, to accept or retain any person as a member of the tour, in which case equitable refund will be made at the discretion of the tour operators.

AIR TRANSPORTATION:

Transatlantic economy flight by scheduled IATA carrier(s), based on an economy class group fare. All fares are subject to specific rules and regulations, to changes and to government approval. Deviations from the group flights are possible but subject to higher rates. Pauwels Travel will research any request for date or routing changes at the time they are requested. Should any individual rate be less than the group fare plus airline and administrative fees, the lower rate will be offered to the tour participant. Individual airfares are subject to immediate ticketing and the fare plus taxes must be paid at the time the ticket is issued by the participant requesting the change. Should the group airfare be the lowest available rate, an administrative fee of \$50.00 plus any airline charges will apply.

APPLICATION FORM

Please book _____ seat(s) on the "Song of Auvergne" departing May 10 – 24, 2018.
Enclosed is my/our deposit of _____ (\$750 per person, *plus* insurance premium if taken.)

Please indicate with an X if you intend to travel on Group flights _____ or Land only _____.

Deposit and insurance premium, if taken, are due with registration. You will be invoiced an interim payment of \$1000.00 and the balance due 45 days prior to departure.

WE REQUIRE A COPY OF YOUR PASSPORT (INFORMATION PAGES ONLY) VALID 3 MONTHS AFTER TOUR DATE TO BE SENT WITH YOUR APPLICATION FORM.

Name as on Passport. Indicate the appropriate title before each name (Mr., Mrs., Miss, Dr., Ms.)

NAME(S): _____

If applicable, give your commonly used first name as you would like it to appear on your name tag: (e.g. "Liz" for "Mary Elizabeth") _____

ADDRESS: _____

Postal Code: _____

PHONE: (Residence) _____ (Business) _____ (Fax/Email) _____

If traveling alone, is a single room required: YES _____ NO _____.

If sharing, what is your bed preference: twin _____ double _____.

SPECIAL REQUESTS: (Dietary, special physical needs, frequent flyer number, etc.) Please list here so we can do our best to assist you. Please be advised that due to airline policies, individual seat selection cannot be guaranteed.

Insurance - Please call the office for premiums then record on application form and add amount to deposit.

I/we would like to purchase (please check and record your rate):

Name: _____ Date of Birth _____

Name: _____ Date of Birth _____

All-inclusive Package _____ Non-medical Package _____ Other _____

Decline Insurance _____ (Please sign here if you decline the insurance).

PAYMENT:

☐☐Cheque payable to Pauwels Travel ☐☐Visa ☐☐Mastercard ☐☐American Express

Amount Paid: _____

Card Number: _____ Expiry: _____ Security Code: _____

Signature: _____

***I/we agree to the terms and conditions attached to the program, have indicated our insurance choice, indicated any special requests and included payment**.**

Signature(s) _____ Date: _____

Please forward this completed form, copy of passport and payment to:

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