

# **THE COLOURS OF SPRING ON THE FRENCH RIVIERA**

8 days / 7 nights – March 2019



## **Day 1 : Thursday - Arrival**

Arrival at the end of the day in Avignon or its surroundings.

Installation in your accommodation and Dinner. Accommodation of your choice: 3 star or 4 star hotel.

## **Day 2 : Friday – THORONET Abbey**

Breakfast at your hotel and departure for Thoronet.

Guided tour of the Abbey. Thoronet Abbey is the most visited site in the Var. Together with two other Cistercian abbeys of Provence, Sénanque and Silvacane, it forms this trilogy which has been given the beautiful name of "our three little Provençal sisters".

It was in 1146, that monks who came from Tourtour to find water, discovered this site. Saint Benedict's rule required them to live in a state of humility, poverty and balance between work and prayer. The Cistercians sought silence, to work with their hands, and to cultivate vines and olive trees.

Lunch.

Continue towards your hotel.

Installation in your accommodation and Dinner.

## Day3 : Saturday – Saint-Tropez and Cogolin



Breakfast and departure for **St Tropez**.

A Free visit of **the museum of the gendarmerie and the Cinema**.

You are invited to discover the history of this building which, before being an emblematic place, following the shooting of the gendarmes' films, welcomed the Saint-Tropez brigade from 1879 to 2003. The visit continues with an explanation of the representation of the gendarme in the films, and an introduction to the history of cinema in Saint-Tropez.

Free time and Free lunch.

In the afternoon, drive to **Cogolin. Guided tour of a heather root pipe factory**.

Since 1802, from father to son, the Courrieu family have been making their smoking pipes from the best heather that the master pipemaker himself would select from the heart of the Maures massif and the Gulf of Saint-Tropez.

Return to your hotel. Dinner and accommodation.

## **Day 4 : Sunday : Bormes les Mimosas and the flowery corso of Lavandou**



Breakfast and drive to Bormes les Mimosas.

It is one of the most beautiful villages on the coast and one of the largest. With more than 9,700 hectares between the old village and Cap Bréançon. It should also be noted that thanks to a microclimate, there are nearly 700 different flower species (including many tropical and subtropical species), as well as mimosas!

Visit and free lunch.

In the early afternoon, drive to Lavandou.

You will attend the flower corso, in the gallery.

The flowery Corso, the Sun and Flower Festival, is one of the most awaited events in the yearly calendar, where a flood of colours and music will flood the waterfront. With its 10,000 spectators and the active participation of all the inhabitants of Le Lavandou, pass the afternoon before a scene of the flower parade. With more than twenty floats decorated with thousands of natural flowers, and dancers adorned with their most beautiful costumes, they enter a colourful dance alongside cheerleaders, musicians, brass bands and troubadours. The famous “flower battle” closes this sun and flower festival, and allows you to bring back a small souvenir of this fabulous day.

Return to your hotel for dinner and accommodation.



## **Day 5 : Monday – Between flavours and scents**



Breakfast and departure for a gourmet walk in Roquebrune-sur-Argens.

Guided tour of the medieval village, the Heritage House and the Chocolate and Cocoa House, followed by a tasting at a local chocolate shop. The visit continues with the discovery of the Maison du Terroir, a place where local agriculture is honoured.

Tasting and aperitif at the end of the visit in a friendly atmosphere.

Breakfast in a restaurant on the shores of Lac de l'Aréna.

Visit of Vacherot, a tropical orchid greenhouse. Raphaëlle Vacherot welcomes you to her greenhouse. You will listen to explanations on plant reproductive techniques, fertilization and culture.

Visit of Le Clos Saint-Martin olive grove. Come and discover the secrets of olive oil production through a guided tour of the estate and its mill. Complete your visit to the shop for a tasting of Provencal products.

Return to your hotel for dinner.

## **Day 6 : Tuesday : CANNES – Lerins Islands – St Marguerite Island**



Breakfast and departure for Cannes.

Panoramic bus tour of the Croisette then a walking tour of the old town: Suquet hill, alleys, rampart gates, churches, history of the iron mask.

Lunch in a restaurant in Cannes.

Boat trip to **Sainte-Marguerite Island**, visit to **the Royal Fort** and **the Musée de la Mer**.

Classified as a historical monument, Fort Royal is an example of a Vauban fortification. After taking advantage of the outside scenery, the visit will continue in the former state prisons to explore royal justice under Louis XIV through the history of the Iron Mask - a mysterious prisoner, imprisoned for eleven years in the fort. You will also visit the Huguenot memorial and the mural paintings created by Jean Le Gac on the theme of the prisoner painter. Possibility to freely discover the sea museum and its Roman remains at the end of the visit.

Return to your hotel for dinner.

## **Day 7 : Wednesday : escapade to the land of the mimosa**

Breakfast. Departure to Tanneron. Guided tour of a mimosa greenhouse.

The Vial family, beekeepers from father to son, await you for a warm visit: explanation of the work of the mimosa and eucalyptus plants (establishment in the region), visit of the greenhouse and workshop (work of farmers) without forgetting a small passage through the greenhouse where you will see the citrus fruits, eucalyptus and mimosa plants. During the visit, you can try tasting mimosa syrup and various honeys offered to you in the shop.

Lunch in a restaurant in the village of Tanneron.

Guided tour of the medieval village of Callian. Perched at an altitude of 325 m. It owes its charm to its streets arranged in a spiral around the feudal castle. The different periods of

history have left a legacy of a church with a quadrangular bell tower decorated with glazed tiles, chapels, a castle and alleys typical of a medieval village.

Return to your hotel.

## **Day 8 : Departure**

Breakfast. End of our services.

### **ALTERNATIVE SUGGESTIONS:**

#### **Days :**

A guided tour of Fréjus: an important port of the Roman Empire, episcopal seat since the end of Antiquity, a prosperous modern city, the city of Fréjus offers a chance to discover 2,000 years of history.

Lunch.

Visit the exotic gardens in the heart of the city. Three exotic gardens open their doors to you: Villa Caryota and its 250 palm trees, the Magdeleine estate and its 1,200 species of oily plants not to mention the magnolias, palms and cedars of Villa Marie. A very privileged visit.

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Guided visit of the medieval village of Tourrettes, a real open-air museum. In the heart of the village, in a unique setting. Facades, doors or shutters have been abandoned to the hands of more than 80 artists creating an unusual gallery through their talent. We invite you to discover the village, its church, its Penitents' chapel, its castle square and its art workshops.

Lunch in a restaurant in Fayence.

Visit of the Fayence Ecomuseum. Two flour mills (13th and 19th centuries) and an oil mill, the museum invites you to discover life in Provence through a permanent exhibition of tools and emblematic objects.

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Oenological stop at the Escaravatiers Estate.

The Domaine des Escaravatiers invites you to visit its cellar and barrel cellar. From vinification to bottling, visitors will discover the secrets of Provence's wines and rosé wines. Of the 12 different vintages, you will choose 3 wines to taste, to accompany our selection of Provençal aperitifs.

Lunch in a restaurant by the lake.

Discovery of a traditional chocolate factory. After a welcome with a chocolate drink, the "Chocolaterie du Rocher" invites you to discover, through several of its specialities, including the famous "Rocher de Roquebrune Rock", the work of chocolate, the characteristics of a traditional chocolate compared to an industrial-made chocolate. Depending on the time of year (Easter, Christmas.), different recipes will be discussed.

### **Half Days :**

Discover the Perfumer's know-how: the history of perfume, raw materials and the different extraction methods. An unforgettable sensory experience centered on the fabrication of your own eau de toilette (100 ml), in aromatic notes, citrus fruits and orange blossom, according to the teacher's advice and by combining the different essences available to you.

A fun and captivating experience in the world of perfumery. A personalized welcome is provided and includes a guided tour of the establishment.