

La Sarthe

Créateur de rêves

Between Normandy and the Chateaux of the Loire, Paris and the Atlantic coast, Sarthe, **the gateway to western France**, boasts a rich **natural heritage**, which offers river cruises, fishing and water-based activities along 4000 km of rivers and waterways. For nature lovers, Sarthe is a vast **green lung** with its dense and preserved national forests.

The department also offers numerous **sites for outdoor leisure activities!**

The department's **cultural heritage** is equally rich: the Cité Plantagenêt, its Roman walls and Saint Julien cathedral, the Lands of Art and History of the Perche sarthois and the Loire Valley, numerous chateaux, museums and abbeys awaiting discovery, sites whose authenticity lies deep in their history, traditions and savoir-faire. Lovers of good food and drink will appreciate the rich terroir and gastronomy to be found in Sarthe.

All year round, numerous **cultural** and **motor sports events** take place. Major events such as the Night of Dreams (illumination of the historical old quarter of Le Mans) or the 24 Hours of Le Mans set the tempo of the seasons.

1: Vast natural spaces for all outdoor activities.....	Page 2 to 5
2: Sarthe heritage: living places and original events.....	Page 6 to 9
3: Sarthe, land of savoir-faire.....	Pages 10 and 11
4: Practical Sarthe.....	Page 12

Sarthe Développement

31 rue Edgar Brandt
ZA Monthéard
F - 72 000 Le Mans

Press contacts:

Elodie VÉRON
elodie.veron@cdt72.fr - Tel. +33 (0)2 43 40 22 66

and

Fliss Hoad PR

T: 01491 652568 / 07775 621780
fliss@flishoadpr.co.uk



Sarthe Développement
www.tourisme-en-sarthe.com

1: VAST NATURAL SPACES FOR ALL OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

In the spotlight: When nature begins to bloom, events start to blossom

Since its creation in 1994, the Garden Festival held each 1st weekend in June in Le Lude, showcases the art of good living in the garden and home.

An exhibition/sale brings together nursery gardeners and horticulturalists, plant growers and selected collectors.

Saturday afternoon, the highlight of the weekend, sees the official announcement



Un week-end des jardiniers au Lude ©B. Larvol

of the winner of the P.J. Redouté Award, sponsored by the Jardiland Institute, for the best gardening book of the year, in the presence of authors and publishers. The prize-giving is followed by a book signing.

www.lelude.com

Between Courtyards & Gardens, an event held every 1st weekend in October for garden enthusiasts

Over the course of a weekend, "secret" gardens and the courtyards of some town mansions open up to the public. These rarely seen places, located at the heart of Le Mans' old quarter, the Cité Plantagenêt, are showcased by decorators and other plant lovers.

www.entrecoursetjardins.com

Amble around our magnificent gardens

The mosaic garden, **a natural approach to the art of gardening**

Offering an exceptional view over the medieval village of Asnières-sur-Vègre, the new country-style "Mosaic Garden" stretches over 2.5 hectares. The unusual vegetable garden based around the association of plants, is a reflection of the techniques to preserve the environment used throughout the garden: mulching, compost heaps or surface composting, organic manure, insecticidal plants, the preservation of beneficial fauna, the harvesting of rainwater, etc. Wild species take their place alongside perennial beds and collections of old roses.

www.lejardinmosaique.com

The gardens of Petit-Bordeaux... **a walk turns into a voyage of discovery!**

From spring though to autumn, the foliage puts on a wonderful display, unfurling its array of greenery and flamboyant colours. A collection of 4 200 species

and varieties of trees, bushes, old roses, perennials and grasses. Winner of the 2002 Bonpland prize awarded by the French National Horticultural Society, 2007 Outstanding Garden, winner of the 2007 Top Parks award.

www.jardindupetitbordeaux.fr

New! The Garden of Fontaine Blineau

This English-inspired garden was created in the field and courtyard of the former Fontaine Blineau farm. On an area of wetland, Véronique and Joël, both passionate about gardening, created their garden with several areas for visitors to discover: "Gather thistles, expect prickles", "The Curate's Garden", "The sound of water"... **Plants and poetry** are entwined at each step, in complete harmony with the environment.

This garden won the 3rd prize in the 2009 Bonpland awards.

www.jardindelafontaineblinseau.fr

1: VAST NATURAL SPACES FOR ALL OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Inland sailors cruising along the Sarthe

A network of 4000 km of rivers and streams flow into the Sarthe shaping the contours of the landscape. Water sports enthusiasts, seasoned river tourists and sailors, swimmers...everyone can choose their own way to enjoy the water. The Sarthe river gently passes through bucolic landscapes with a flower-bedecked lock here, a church tower, a manor or a chateau there: the perfect backdrop as you cruise aboard a «no-licence» boat along the 82 km of navigable waterways!

Capitain a boat on the Sarthe

A gentle river adventure awaits would-be sailors at the helm of a comfortable, fully-equipped boat for a cruise at your own pace for a day or longer.

Anjou Navigation hires out boats which do not require a licence especially designed for river sailing with a choice of around twenty models. The boats can accommodate between 2 and 12 people and are especially equipped for passengers to live on board in complete safety.

As soon as you arrive, the team welcomes you with a personalised demonstration of your boat with an explanation of how it works, sailing techniques, how

to pass through locks and how to berth in the villages. Leaving Sablé-sur-Sarthe and sailing up the Sarthe to Le Mans, make Solesmes Abbey your first port of call and find yourselves lulled by the Gregorian chants of the monks.

Lock operators will help you pass through the various locks and children can even get involved.

Weekly rate for 2/4 people: from €745

www.anjou-navigation.fr

New! Nautical campsite: pitch your tent from village to village along the Sarthe

A boat-campsite. This smaller motor boat enables you to travel along the river and pitch your tent in the villages along its banks.

This idea came from the large number of campsites which offer a range of facilities such as wash blocks, games areas, barbecues and often a swimming pool.

Information and prices: www.anjou-navigation.fr

- bring your tent

- the boat is filled with fuel at departure

- allow €350 for a week with this Skellig model.



Tourisme fluvial sur la Sarthe ©Anjou Navigation

24 Hours to become champion of a legendary race track

The 24 hours cycling race is open to all keen cyclists or sports people looking for a challenge. The agency CGO is organising a team endurance cycling event called the 24 Hours Cycling Race. Competitive or amateur cyclists, teams of friends, colleagues or families, come and take part in this unique event and experience 24 unforgettable hours

in the arena which has seen some of the biggest names in motor sports do battle: the Le Mans Bugatti circuit. 2010 saw more than 2 000 competitors and supporters, 358 teams from 70 French departments and 10 countries descend on the mythical circuit.

www.24heuresvelo.fr



24 Heures vélo ©CGO

1: VAST NATURAL SPACES FOR ALL OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Children love it when their parents can play too!

Papéa Parc, the biggest amusement park in the Pays de la Loire

For 3 years, Papéa Parc has been undergoing a transformation. 2010 saw the arrival of the "Papéa Flume" to add to the already large number of popular rides such as Splash, the Roller Coaster and the Mine Train.

In 2011, Papéa Parc will be rolling out the red carpet to mark its 40th anniversary.

www.papeaparc.fr



Splash-Papéa Parc ©CDT 72

Arche de la Nature, Le Mans' green lung

The park offers visitors a natural area which is representative of Sarthe's typical landscapes. Visitors make their way along trails to discover the river, the forest, the fields and hedgerows and can also visit the Water Museum and the Farm on the Prairie. A total of 450 hectares of nature open to the public all year round. 3 areas: the forest, the fields and hedgerows and water. The park welcomes almost 500 000 visitors a year and remains the most visited site in the department.

Le Zoo de La Flèche, among the 5 biggest zoos in France

La Flèche Zoo has more than 1 200 animals, 120 species from all 5 continents, set in lush vegetation. It is renowned for its fabulous sea-lion, bird of prey and parrot shows and magnificent presentations of the animals in a natural setting. The polar bears seen underwater, the red pandas, the elephants' African plain and the pack of arctic wolves are unique in Europe. Innovative concepts such as the Argentine pampas, the Australian bush, the taiga of the white tigers or the mini Madagascan farm.

www.zoo-la-fleche.com

Pescheray zoo, situated in a 70 hectare forest area, with more than 600 animals in partial freedom, and Spaycifi c'Zoo are two other animal parks in Sarthe. **Spaycifi c'Zoo** has a wide diversity of bird species with notably the 2 500 m² African aviary, the biggest in France and the Exotarium containing rare and amazing species such as the flying opossum, armadillo, giant snail, soft shelled turtle, blue frog, etc.

www.pescheray.com - www.zoospay.com

From creepers to monkey bridges, live like Tarzan for a day

New! 35 activities mainly comprising zip wires are spread across 3 different courses: 1 Kid's course for children from the age of 5, 1 Discovery course 2 to 5 metres above ground accessible to people over 1.2 metre (4'), 1 Sensation course 3 to 8 metres above ground also for people over 1.2 m (4').

www.aventuresdanslesarbres.com

In the trees at The Aventures du Gasseau Park

In the magnificent setting of the Alpes Mancelles, visitors can discover the 70 activities of the high level acrobatic park, open every day. Available: 5 courses of increasing difficulty. The Gasseau estate also has an **edible plant garden**. Heady aromas, dazzling colours, a pure marvel where giant sun flowers stand alongside extremely rare mints and amazing vine crops. www.parc-aventures-du-gasseau.com

1: VAST NATURAL SPACES FOR ALL OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

In the spotlight: Night under the stars on an elegant campsite and its chateau

A chateau at the heart of 20 hectares of fields and woods comes complete with a luxury campsite. The spacious plots marked out in the wood around the chateau offer wonderful views over the property. The Chanteloup campsite also has 5 quality, well-appointed gites. The site also stands out for its traditional or rustic furniture.

www.chateau-de-chanteloup.com



©Le Château de Chanteloup

Live like an Indian in a tipi or hide among the trees in Les Tropes!

In a tipi at the Bonheur de vivre

On the **biggest Amerindian campsite in Europe**, guests live in keeping with the main principles of Amerindian life and in harmony with the environment. Steam bath, archery, tomahawk, dancing, entertainment evenings and legends, canoeing/mountain biking, sleeping in an authentic tipi or a chuckwagon!

www.lebonheurdevivre.net

In a yurt at the Grande Savane

In the Alpes Mancelles, the owners of the Grande Savane have installed **genuine Mongolian yurts**. The 3 yurts can accommodate 4 to 6 people each. **Traditional accommodation of the nomads of the Mongolian** steppes, they were lived in

by Mongolians. The interiors are decorated in the orange tones typical of yurts.

The furniture is also authentic and adds to the overall ambience. Open from April to the end of October.

<http://lagrandesavane.free.fr>

Les Tropes: 7 gites with an original design surrounded by "green walls"

These 7 originally-designed houses are situated at the edge of the forest of Bercé. They are surrounded by green walls around a large swimming pool and a forest keeper's cottage.

www.gites-les-tropes.com



Les Tropes ©CDT Sarthe

2: SARTHE HERITAGE: LIVING PLACES AND ORIGINAL EVENTS

In Sarthe our religious buildings and historical sites such as Solesmes abbey and the Cité Plantagenêt in Le Mans, an Art and History Town, win the admiration and reverence of visitors due to the beauty of their architecture and their history. The towns and villages offer a rich historical and architectural heritage while the many museums provide the keys to understanding the history of the Maine region. The exceptionally rich heritage of the Perche sarthois and the Loire Valley has brought them the **high distinction** of being listed as Lands of Art and History.



La Cité Plantagenêt ©Gilles Moussé/Ville du Mans



Abbaye de l'Epau ©B. Larvol/CG72

The emotion of a summer night in a cinematic setting

Since 2005, a spectacular performance (staged by Skertzo) has taken place during the summer every evening from nightfall. The **Night of Dreams (Nuit des Chimères)** is a high quality show projected onto the town's monuments, such as the banquet of the Plantagenêts on the front of the Conservatoire. **New!** For the 1st time in 2011, the period of the Night of Dreams will be extended: from the end of June to the beginning of September and from mid-May to October for groups.



Le Banquet ©Gilles Moussé - Création Skertzo pour la Ville du Mans

Le Mans, a candidate UNESCO world heritage town

Built on a rocky spur, the historical town of Le Mans is called the **Cité Plantagenêt**. The history of the Plantagenêts began in Le Mans in 1128 with the marriage of Geoffrey V the Handsome and Matilda of England. Henry II Plantagenêt, their son, was proclaimed King of England. Superbly preserved, the 20 hectares of the Cité Plantagenêt shelter **half-timbered houses, Renaissance mansions, narrow cobbled streets all surrounded by one of the best preserved Roman walls in Europe...**

As well as Saint Julien cathedral, **one of the largest buildings in France**. The heavenly concert of 47 musician angels, painted on the vaults of the chapel of the Virgin and the 900-year-old stained-glass window depicting the Ascension, the oldest stained-glass window in the world in its original building, are the cathedral's two treasures.

From "Cyrano de Bergerac" to "Le Bossu" (On Guard) and "Les Blessures Assassines" (Murderous Maids), Le Mans, **an occasional setting** for the cinema, boasts a fine filmography. www.lemanstourisme.com

2: SARTHE HERITAGE: LIVING PLACES AND ORIGINAL EVENTS

Celebrate spring in the gardens of the chateau

Le Lude, the most northerly of the Chateaux of the Loire, is one of the finest examples of early French Renaissance architecture! The terraced gardens, the old kitchen garden, the historical lounges and animated kitchens enable visitors to experience real **chateau life** in Le Lude.

Festivals held at the Château du Lude are the perfect occasion to discover the site brought to life. In 2011, the **18th Garden Festival** will take place on Saturday 4th and Sunday 5th

June presenting plants and garden tools, with workshops, conferences and exhibition/sales.

The 12th P.J. Redouté Award, sponsored by the Jardiland Institute, will be presented on Saturday 4th June. **Kitchen garden and gourmet days**, on 16th and 17th July and 14th and 15th August 2011, provide an opportunity to take part in gourmet activities in the former kitchens and the vegetable garden.

www.lerule.com



©Guy Durand



Cuisine au château ©CDT Sarthe

2: SARTHE HERITAGE: LIVING PLACES AND ORIGINAL EVENTS

Seeking out the secrets...of a Petite Cité de Caractère

The Petites Cités de Caractère are a collection of 10 picturesque villages with a rich historical, natural, architectural and human heritage. The Petites Cités de Caractère enable tourists to discover their fascinating treasures: castles and ramparts, ancient and medieval sites, earthenware factories, chapels, priories...

Asnières-sur-Vègre is the perfect example of a picturesque medieval village, built along the meanders of the Vègre, with a collection of exceptional, partially restored murals which reveal to visitors the Christian thinking of the time.

<http://asso.proxiland.fr/petitescitesdecaractere72>



Asnières-sur-Vègre ©CDT Sarthe

From your window, savour the chants of the monks

Founded in 1010, Saint-Pierre-de-Solesmes abbey majestically overlooks the banks of the Sarthe from where it displays its architectural magnificence. The abbey's monks are renowned for their works and their research on **Gregorian chants**. Visitors flock here to attend a service sung in Gregorian in the chapel, an unforgettable experience which arouses deep spiritual and musical emotions.

In its floral setting opposite the entrance to Saint-Pierre abbey, the former staging post has made way for a high quality inn, **the Grand Hôtel de Solesmes**.

Solesmes abbey - www.abbayedesolesmes.fr

Grand Hôtel de Solesmes
<http://grandhotelsolesmes.com>



Abbaye de Solesmes ©B. Larvol / CG72



Grand Hôtel de Solesmes ©B. Larvol / CG72

2: SARTHE HERITAGE: LIVING PLACES AND ORIGINAL EVENTS

When I grow up, I want to be a racing driver

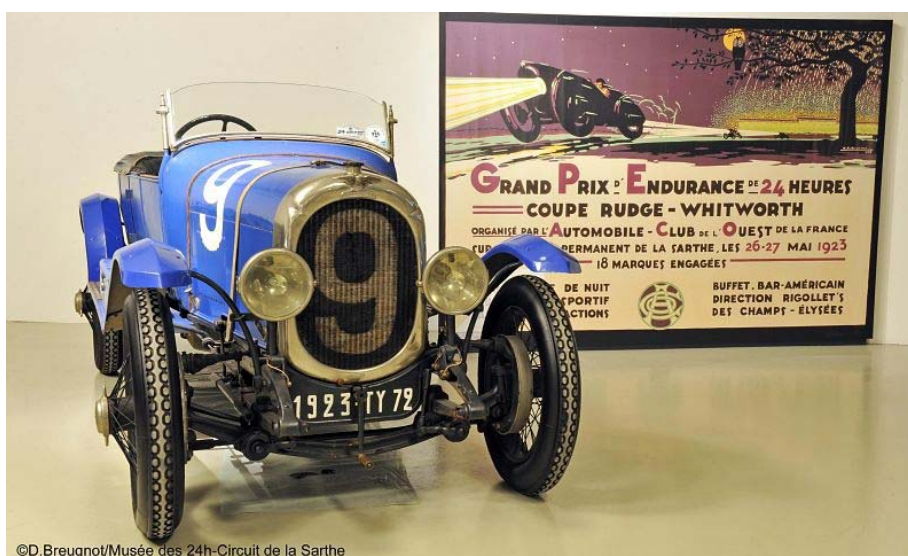
The 24 Hours of Le Mans Museum - La Sarthe Circuit, **Sarthe's leading museum**

The 24 Hours of Le Mans Museum invites visitors to discover more than a century of history with a well-designed, attractive and dynamic exhibition which was completely revised in 2009 and which focuses on the history of the Le Man 24-hour race and on how racing cars have evolved. Situated at the gates of the famous 24-hour race track and stretching over 4000 m², the museum displays more

than 100 superb cars, collector items and dozens of archive films and photographs.

A gallery of heroes is entirely devoted to the people who have helped to write the history of this legendary race.

www.centre-culturel-de-la-sarthe.com



©D.Breugnot/Musée des 24h-Circuit de la Sarthe

Musée des 24 H - Circuit de la Sarthe

3: SARTHE, LAND OF SAVOIR-FAIRE

The Magic of water, earth and fire

Earthenware production has been present in Malicorne since 1747, when the first furnace was built, thanks to the rich clay soil, an abundance of wood and the presence of a port. Firstly produced for domestic use, more elaborate shapes and decorations inspired mainly by Rouen and Nevers began to appear. The piercing technique, a speciality of the local craftsmen, has turned the village into one of the main earthenware centres in France.

Today the village is home to the Faïencerie Bourg Joly Malicorne, founded in 1747, and the Faïenceries d'Art de Malicorne, created in 1925, with a workshop

open to the public which blends traditional techniques with modern creations with designer-style shapes and decorations.

Le musée Malicorne Espace Faïence
www.espacefaience.fr

Les Faïenceries d'Art Bourg-Joly-Malicorne
www.bourg-joly-malicorne.com

Les Faïenceries d'Art de Malicorne
www.faiencerie-malicorne.com

*« Three times a century, the best wine in the world »**

The Loire Valley was awarded in Paris the famous «Vineyards and Discoveries» label. The quality of its wines (3 AOC: Coteaux du Vendômois, Coteaux du Loir and Jasnières), its approach to conservation and the enhancement of the architectural, landscape and natural heritage and its efficient marketing undoubtedly contributed to the region winning this recognition.

In the Loire Valley, the south-facing vineyards give the best of their grape varieties.

Coteaux-du-Loir and Jasnières offer superb talents with its palette ranging from white to red and including the "gris" and rosé. Produced from Pineau d'Aunis grapes, the reds are light but show character with spicy tones. Made from chenin blanc grapes

(or Pineau de la Loire), the whites develop an exceptional aroma as soon as they are harvested and often become great vins de garde.

This winegrowing tradition in the Maine has left charming little 19th century vineyard houses on the slopes and has carved superb cellars out of the tuffeau.

The renown of the Jasnières has seen it being used in countless recipes, such as the "Sarthisse marmite" casserole.

* as the famous food writer Curnonsky said of Jasnières.



©CDT Sarthe



Faïences de Malicorne©CDT Sarthe

3: SARTHE, LAND OF SAVOIR-FAIRE

In the Spotlight: Sensory pleasures with our local cuisine

Created by a culinary association bringing together 19 Sarthe restaurants, the recipe for the "Sarthe marmite" pays homage to one of the region's leading products - the Loué free-range chicken.

Prepared with Loué chicken, rabbit, ham and vegetables (mushrooms, cabbage, carrots) and white Jasnières wine.

It is featured on the menu of this brotherhood of Sarthe restaurateurs.



©Jean-Eric Rubio

Apprentices at the Chateau: French or Italian cuisine on the menu

French cookery classes at the **Château de Vaalogé** with the chef Jean-Marie Barbotin or with Marisa Radini or Italian cookery classes with Marisa Radini.

During the 4-hour French cookery class participants create a typical menu comprising a starter, main course, cheese and dessert. On the programme, foie gras and products from the Pays de la Loire. Dates of the classes on request. From 1 to 6 people: €100/pers + price of a double room at €195 or a junior suite at €220 per night.

The cookery class with Marisa Radini teaches the art of Italian cuisine with, on the menu, risotto and pasta. The 4-hour classes take place on Saturday evenings or Sunday mornings.

From 1 to 6 people: €100/pers + price of a double room at €195 or a suite at €220/night.

www.vauloge.com

In the beautiful bed and breakfast establishments such as the **Château de Vaalogé**, the **Villa des Arts** or the **Manoir des Claies**, you are guaranteed a warm welcome by the owners.

The cuisine in some of our best restaurants is both local and imaginative. The Sarthe also boasts several **Sarthe master restaurateurs**, offering guaranteed gastronomic and quality food!

www.restaurateursdefrance.com

Other restaurants, such as the **Auberge des Matfeux** near Le Mans or the **Auberge des Acacias** offer creativity with original cuisine based on fresh, seasonal produce. At the Auberge des Acacias, the chef uses produce fresh from the auberge's own kitchen garden and herb garden. Wild plants and farm produce also have their part to play. An opportunity to taste some original flavours!

www.auberge-des-acacias.fr

www.aubergedesmatfeux.fr



©Château de Vaalogé

4: PRACTICAL SARTHE

<p>By car : A 28, A 11 et A 81 (motorway)</p> <p><u>Le Mans is:</u> 200 km from Paris (2 hours) 150 km from Rennes (1h 30) 180 km from Nantes (1h 45) 85 km from Laval (55 mn) 53 km from Alençon (40 mn) 85 km from Tours (45 mn) 211 km from Rouen (2h) 165 km from Caen (1h 40)</p>	<p>By train (TGV) :</p> <p><u>Le Mans is:</u> 54 minuts from Paris 1h 45 from Roissy C. de Gaulle 2 hours from Orly 40 minuts from Laval 1h 15 from Rennes and Nantes 2h 30 from Lille 3h 30 from Lyon 4 hours from Strasbourg 4h 30 from London</p>	<p>Tram in Le Mans :</p> <p>29 tram stations</p> <p>15.1 km from north to south</p> <p>A railway, bus and tram station</p>
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Sarthe Développement
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 ZA Monthéard
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Press contacts:
 Elodie VÉRON
elodie.veron@cdt72.fr - Tel. +33 (0)2 43 40 22 66

and
Fliiss Hoad PR
T: 01491 652568 / 07775 621780
fliiss@fliishoadpr.co.uk

