

News & events

It might be the end of the summer holidays, but there is still plenty to do in France in September. *Emma Rawle* discovers some key festivals, book releases and travel news



JOURNÉES EUROPÉENNES DU PATRIMOINE

19 - 20 SEPTEMBER

City of light

1 The annual Journées Européennes du Patrimoine heritage event takes place this year from **19-20 September**, with the theme of '21st-century heritage' highlighting the evolution of building techniques, materials and design. In Paris's 10th *arrondissement*, the **Médiathèque Françoise Sagan** (pictured above) plays host to a conference during the event, held by one of the architects involved in the design of the building. Now one of the city's largest libraries, the *médiathèque* was formerly the Saint-Lazare prison hospital before undergoing its unique design transformation. www.mediathequeducarresaintlazare.wordpress.com

Pretty Provence

2 Not planning a visit to Paris in September? Further afield, on the banks of the River Èze in the Luberon regional park, the **Château de la Tour d'Aigues** and its exhibitions are free to visit during the event. Considered one of the most beautiful buildings in Provence, the château was built in the 16th century and has a splendid Renaissance arched gateway (pictured top right). The château, its museum and an exhibition of engravings and drawings are free to enter during the event, while the temporary exhibition of 18th- and 19th-century fashion has a fee of €3. www.provenceguide.com

Botanical bliss

3 For those with green fingers, Strasbourg's **Jardin Botanique** (pictured above) at the city's university is home to nearly 6,000 species of plants, including some rare species, and a two-storey tropical greenhouse. The garden is used by students and researchers at the university, but it is also open to the public. The Journées Européennes du Patrimoine see several events take place, when visitors can join guided tours or explore by themselves and meet some of the gardeners. There is also a plant sale if you want to take away your own exotic species. www.jardin-botanique.unistra.fr

TARGET PRACTICE

Visit Le Puy-en-Velay in Auvergne from **16-20 September** and you will find yourself transported back to the height of the Renaissance period at the **Fêtes Renaissance du Roi de l'Oiseau**. As well as the crowning of the 'Roi de l'Oiseau' – the best archer in the town – there are shows, entertainers, parades and residents in costume enacting scenes of daily life in the 16th century. www.roideloiseau.com



Homeward bound

In 1780 the French frigate **L'Hermione** sailed from France to the USA with General Lafayette on board to assist in the American War of Independence. In April 2015 a full-size replica of the ship, built over the course of 18 years in Rochefort in Charente-Maritime, also set sail from France to recreate the journey. The ship returns to Rochefort in August and from **30 August** will be open to the public so you can explore the beautiful vessel that has caught everyone's imaginations this year. www.hermione.com

Seaside screenings

The seaside town of Deauville will be hosting its **41st American Film Festival** from **4-13 September** and welcoming well-known American actors and actresses. Film fans gather to watch hundreds of films in various locations around the town and directors, actors and actresses compete for several prizes awarded by the Grand Jury whose president this year will be French film director and screenwriter **Benoît Jacquot**. A day pass costs €30 and provides access to all screenings that day. www.festival-deauville.com



DREAM HOME

Don't miss out on the **French Property Exhibition** at London's Olympia from **18-20 September**. The exhibition has thousands of properties from across France on display, seminars with experts giving talks on tax, law and property and a 'how-to' forum. Tickets are free and you can register for fast-track entry on the website. www.fpeolympia.com



Make a run for it

With wine instead of water at the drink stations, and oysters replacing energy bars as a mid-race snack, it is clear that the annual **Marathon du Médoc** is no ordinary marathon. Taking place on **12 September** in the Médoc vineyards, this marathon attracts plenty of runners who are given six and a half hours to run – or stagger! – their way around the 26-mile course in the fancy-dress costume of their choosing. www.marathondumedoc.com



A great website for flea market bargain hunters, **Brocabrac** lists all *brocantes*, *vide-greniers* and other second-hand markets across France. Simply search by department or type in your town to narrow down the search and you can be sure never to miss a bargain-hunting opportunity again. www.brocabrac.fr

BARGAIN HUNTERS

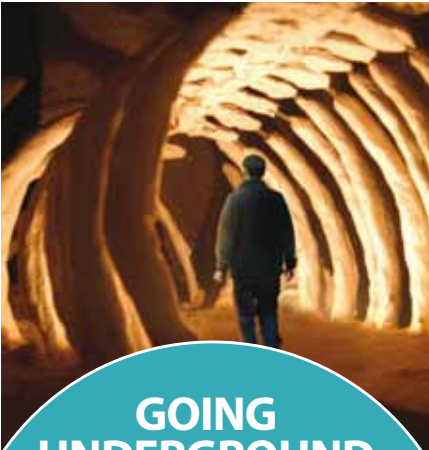
For those of you who like hunting for flea market bargains, France is the place to be



One of the largest flea markets in Europe is held every year in the town of Lille in Nord-Pas-de-Calais on the first weekend in September. Falling this year on **5-6 September**, the **Braderie de Lille** attracts almost two million shoppers who browse the hundreds of stalls across the city. www.braderie-de-lille.fr



If you are searching for a *brocante* in a particular area of France then order yourself **L'Agenda des Brocantes** for your region of interest. The yellow book lists all *brocantes* of the year giving the dates, location and exhibitor information. The guides are available to order online and prices start from €6.45. www.agendadesbrocantes.fr



GOING UNDERGROUND

A visit to the troglodyte caves of Doué-la-Fontaine will be a memorable experience during **Le Mystère des Faluns** exhibition. Running **until the beginning of November**, the exhibition transforms the underground caves into a gallery using projected images, exhibits and sounds. This year there are five new installations dedicated to life under the sea. Entry is €7 for adults. www.les-perrieres.com



Purple haze

The sight and smell of fields of lavender is one of the delights of visiting Provence. If you want to find out more about lavender production in France then pay a visit to the **Musée de la Lavande** in the Luberon regional park in Vaucluse. The museum tells the history of lavender production and houses the largest collection of copper stills from the 16th century until the present day,

perfume bottles and labels also from the 16th century. Entry to the museum costs €6.50 for adults and it is open from 9am until 7pm every day from **May until September**. www.museedelalavande.com



PULLING THE STRINGS

Puppet companies and more than 150,000 spectators descend on the town of Charleville-Mézières in Ardennes for the biennial **Festival Mondial des Théâtres de Marionnettes** World Puppet Festival. Held from **18-27 September**, the festival has grown in popularity since its inception in 1961 and now has to be staged in more than 40 different venues across the town with performers from all over the world. Charleville-Mézières has a strong history of puppetry and is home to the International Puppet Institute renowned for its 'Grand Marionnettiste' clock that presents a medieval legend every hour. www.festival-marionnette.com

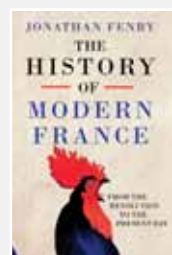


History lesson

From the aftermath of the French Revolution up until the recent terror attacks on the *Charlie Hebdo* offices in Paris, France has experienced a tumultuous two centuries. In his new book *The History of Modern France*, author and journalist Jonathan Fenby examines the events of the past 200 years from Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo to the economic and

social problems facing France today. Detailed but easily accessible, the book offers remarkable insight into the shaping of modern France.

The History of Modern France: From the Revolution to the Present Day, Jonathan Fenby, £25, Simon & Schuster



Big squeeze

As home to the last industrial accordion factory in France, it is fitting that Tulle in Corrèze is also home to the largest accordion festival in France – **Les Nuits de Nacre**, taking place from **17-20 September**. During the event, the accordion can be seen and heard everywhere in Tulle – on the streets, cafés, squares, in theatres and concert halls. Most of the concerts and activities are free and the music ranges from jazz to rock. www.nuitsdenacre.com



DID YOU KNOW?

The estimated number of cannonballs fired by both sides during the Battle of Waterloo on 18 June 1815*

42,000

HOLIDAY TO REMEMBER

Catherine Alliott's latest novel, *Wish You Were Here*, makes a perfect light-hearted holiday read. The story follows Flora, a food and restaurant reviewer whose husband, James, is offered a holiday of a lifetime in a château in the south of France after he saves a little girl suffering from a peanut allergy on the couple's flight home. The girl's mother, the owner of the château, also happens to be an opera singer who James starts to develop a schoolboy crush on. Emotions run high when extended family join in on what was intended to be a close family holiday. Fans of Alliott's warm and witty style will not be disappointed.

We have five copies of *Wish You Were Here* to give away. For a chance to win visit www.completefrance.com/community-forum. The closing date is 28 August 2015.

Wish You Were Here, Catherine Alliott, £7.99, Penguin



Travel news

TIGHTER SECURITY
The UK government has stepped up security in Calais and Dover to try and halt the growing numbers of illegal immigrants attempting to cross the Channel in lorries and tourist vehicles travelling from Calais. Additional Border Force staff and sniffer dogs have been deployed in northern France and high-security fencing will be erected at the lorry terminal in Coquelles near Calais to try to prevent immigrants breaking into the lorries. Drivers are being warned to keep their vehicles locked while in slow-moving or stationary traffic.

PEDESTRIANS ONLY
Paris mayor Anne Hidalgo's continuing campaign to reduce pollution in the French capital has seen the announcement of plans to remove cars from further areas of the city. In May Hidalgo revealed plans to make the right bank of the Seine a pedestrianised zone, similar to the left bank, by autumn 2016, while in June she announced plans to restrict the movement of vehicles in seven of Paris's historic squares including Place de la Bastille and Place du Panthéon, due to be completed in 2020.

TAKEOVER BID
The European Union has given conditional approval for SNCF to take full control of the Eurostar company. The news comes after the British government announced its intention to sell its majority stake in March. In order for the deal to go ahead, SNCF must agree to share ticket offices and maintenance services with competitors, and allow them to use the same train paths at peak hours. www.eurostar.com

STAY CONNECTED
Those who like to stay connected when they travel around France can now do so without having to pay high data roaming charges. Small wireless modems, such as those from Travel WiFi, can be rented for the duration of a trip, allowing for Wi-Fi enabled devices to connect to 3G and 4G internet. The company has teamed up with Bouygues Telecom and the modem costs from €6 a day depending on the length of the rental period. www.travel-wifi.com

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