







# Hunt for the Treasures of Loches: A route designed to avoid missing out on anything

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With fifteen centuries of history, the heart of the South Touraine region is home to so many treasures that a well-designed discovery trail was necessary to ensure that none were forgotten! Follow the fleur-de-lys that are painted on the ground and prepare to be dazzled! The journey begins in the Saint-Antoine Gallery, home to two intriguing 17th century masterpiece paintings, 'Philippe de Béthune's Caravaggios'. In the adjoining 'church-museum', you can continue your exploration of the history of art from the 15th to the 19th centuries. A few streets further on, you will stop right in front of the Laurentian Library of Florence... well, almost! The exceptional Renaissance facade of the Chancellery is directly inspired by Michelangelo's Florentine work. This building is now home to the Architecture & heritage interpretation centre. Now for a change of scenery, leap into the 19th century at the Lansyer Museum. Further on, at the Royal Residence, an architectural jewel of the late Middle Ages, you will meet Joan of Arc, Anne of Brittany, Charles VII, and his favourite, Agnes Sorel, whose magnificent alabaster effigy and tomb worthy of a queen are located just a few steps away in the Saint-Ours Collegiate Church. Among this Romanesque splendour, you can also admire the polychrome doorway and the nave that is topped by two pyramids, called 'dubes', as unique as they are enigmatic. Upon reaching the keep, you will be captivated inside the prison cells by frescoes of a fallen prince: Ludovico Sforza, the Duke of Milan, Leonardo da Vinci's first patron but also enemy to the kings of France. What are believed to be his remains were unearthed in Loches in 2019 and are being studied further... The mystery will be solved very soon! Loches is certified as both a 'Town of art & history' and one of the 'Most beautiful detours of France'.

The Treasures of Loches tour: map and booklet (FR & EN) are available free of charge at the Tourist Office.

#### On to the 19th century: Lansyer, a landscape painter with an architect's eye, discover the artist's private world at this House-Museum

Let's return to the Royal City and open the door to the Lansyer Museum. Step into this unique landscape painter's private world. Renowned in his day, Lansyer was Barbizon school educated, student of Courbet and Viollet-le-Duc. Enjoy losing yourself in the seascapes, town views, cliffs, and forests as you pass through the green living room with its central sofa, the tiny architectural studio, and the yellow living room with its dressed table. The works were painted in-situ and bear the mark of Lansyer's sharp eye and architect's touch. Whilst daydreaming on the artillery terrace of the royal gate overlooking the city, or in Lansyer's charming painter's garden, you can almost hear the artist saying «I will do everything both possible and impossible to become a painter».

# Originating in the 17th century: 'Philippe de Béthune's Caravaggios'

Free access to two intriguing, masterpiece paintings. Among its many riches, Loches boasts two remarkable 17th-century works, purchased directly from Caravaggio by Philippe de Béthune, a great patron and art collector: La Cène à Emmaüs and L'Incrédulité de Saint Thomas. Although it is not certain that these works were painted by the master himself, they are certainly the very first works that demonstrated, through their authentic craftsmanship, Caravaggio's revolutionary style in France. The paintings are displayed together with an invaluable triptych altarpiece by Jean Poyer dating from the 15th century. The Saint-Antoine Gallery is open free of charge daily from 10 a.m. to 6:45 p.m.



#### LOCHES, THE ROYAL TOWN: DYNASTIES AND DESTINIES





### Renaissance inspired

At the Chancellery, the exceptional Renaissance facade is directly inspired by the Laurentian Library in Florence, a work by Michelangelo, and is home to the Architecture & heritage interpretation centre. The town hall, commissioned by François I himself, features a grand staircase, one of the first straight staircases built during this period. Another distinctive feature is that this building has served the same purpose for over 500 years.

www.ville-loches.fr

### The Royal Residence The 15th century: three influential women and a king

The setting for their story: the Royal Residence, an architectural jewel of the late Middle Ages. In what was the country residence of the Valois dynasty, we follow in the footsteps of Joan of Arc, Anne of Brittany, King Charles VII, and his favourite, Agnes Sorel. It was here that Joan of Arc met Charles VII to convince him to claim his 'rightful crown' in Reims. The official favourite of the said king, Agnes Sorel remained at his side while he stayed at the residence. Infatuated with this 'Lady of Beauty', who died prematurely in a mysterious fashion, Charles VII built her a tomb worthy of a queen. Her magnificent alabaster effigy can be admired a few metres away in the Saint-Ours Collegiate Church.

Finally, Anne of Brittany, who was queen of France twice, also left her mark at the Royal Residence. She frequently stayed here and had a flamboyant Gothic oratory built. Like Anne, who often observed the fauna and flora, you can take advantage of the terrace that overlooks the town and let your eyes wander from the Indre valley to the immense state-owned forest of Loches.

citeroyaleloches.fr

#### Into the 16th century: Ludovico Sforza and Leonardo da Vinci

Back to the keep: in the cells, the frescoes of Sforza the fallen prince. Ludovico Sforza, an emblematic figure of the Italian Renaissance, Duke of Milan, patron of Leonardo da Vinci but also a rival to the kings of France, died as a prisoner in Loches keep, in 1508. Being a prince and an artist, he was treated with great respect and left remarkable frescoes and inscriptions on the walls of his cell, which are still visible.







### The collegiate Church

Founded in the 16th century by Imbert de Bastarnay as a final resting place for his family, members, it is home to three white alabaster recumbent effigies. This collegiate church also houses an 'Annunciation' by Philippe de Champaigne (17th century), as well as 16th century paintings from the Italian school-from the collection of Cardinal Fesch, the uncle of Napoleon I. A rare relic of Saint John Paul II can also be found here.

### La halle aux cardeux

Striking because of its mansard roof and wooden structure, the Halle des Cardeux housed the wool market until the 19th century. Here, you can discover the art of glass and light, via a beautiful exhibition of 'Gemmail'.





#### The chateau

On its rocky spur, contemplating its own reflection in the calm waters of the Indrois river, the must-see Renaissance chateau of Montrésor seems like it has come straight out of a fairy tale. Restored in the 19th century by the Polish Count Xavier Branicki, the chateau has retained its oldfashioned charm and enchanting atmosphere. Inside, time almost seems to stand still. Entirely decorated with its original 19th century furniture and boasting an astonishing collection of works of art, gold and silverware from the kings of Poland, and antique books, the château plunges us into the private world of the family to which it has belonged since the Second Empire. The small drawing room is home to a painting by Veronese, in which a self-portrait of the master is hidden in a fold of material. The first floor can be reached via a staircase that was exhibited at the 1855 World Fair. Finally, in the grand salon, there is a piano on which Chopin composed a waltz for Princess Branicka. Wherever you look & with every breath you take there is something to admire! The castle's park is ideal for a romantic stroll.

Summer suggestion: the 'Nuits Solaires' lights up Montrésor every evening throughout July and August. chateaudemontresor.com



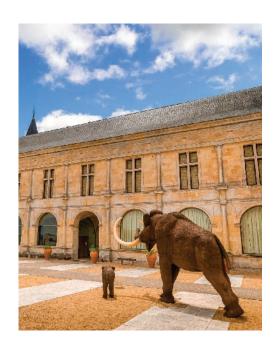
# Chédigny, a dazzling symphony: a village turned garden

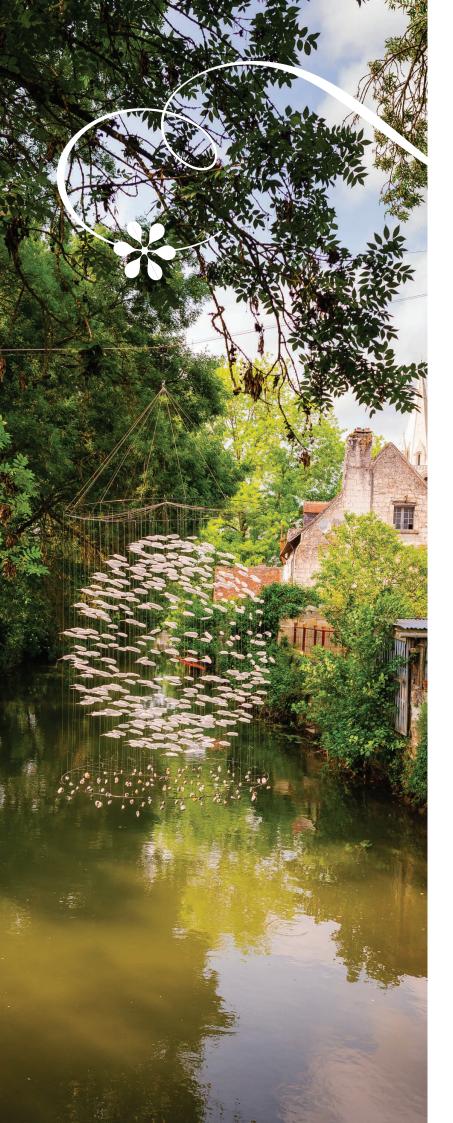
In the first village in France to be awarded 'Remarkable garden' status, the pavements and streets overflow with scents and colours. With over 1,000 roses, 2,000 bulbs, a hundred or so shrubs, thousands of perennials, a parish garden and so much more, all of your senses will be stimulated during a bucolic, botanical world tour that is jet lag and carbon free! Chédigny is a pedestrian-friendly villagegarden, ideal for strolling around, and has been awarded the 'Golden flower', the highest distinction of the 'Towns & villages in bloom' status. Inspired by its charm, many artists and crafts people have settled in Chédigny and will gladly show you their creations. A walk along the river crossing the wetland meadows will round off this beautiful natural experience.

### Le Grand-Pressigny: An embodiment of Prehistory

Standing above the charming, partially medieval village with its tile and slate roofs, the Grand-Pressigny's Prehistory museum keeps a watch out over the Claise valley. Here the visitor can learn about the lives of inhabitants of the South Touraine from 100,000 years ago up until the beginning of the Bronze Age. To complete this journey back in time, take part in a flint-knapping or a fire lighting workshop.

www.prehistoire grand pressigny. fr







### Beaulieu-lès-Loches, the monastic town

The town of Beaulieu-lès-Loches, awarded 'Little city of character®' and 'Town & creative profession' status, has been developed around a Benedictine abbey founded in 1007 by... that man again-Fulk III Nerra, yes, him again! Various testimonies to this medieval city's rich historical past are reflected in its stanework

Like a lighthouse guiding us from Loches, the Romanesque bell tower is one of the highest in France, reaching over sixty-seven metres. Along the streets and the canal, the atmosphere is peaceful with numerous possibilities for walks revealing old tuffeau stone or timber-framed houses, turrets, sculptures, vaults, mullioned windows, craftsmen's workshops, and charming little nooks.

This peaceful town is crossed by the Indre river and is connected to Loches by the Prairies du Roy, a 'Special area of conservation' featuring works of contemporary art. Take a moment to picnic or rest in the shade, in the Viantaises gardens. Here, flowers, vegetables, creativity, and poetry flourish. A large table underneath some trees, swaddled in squares of coloured wool, is an invitation to socialise. Picnic baskets filled with goodies are all that is required for an indulgent time with friends or family! www.expo-beauxlieux.fr





### Walk in the National Forest of Lochess

The rustling of leaves, both in the air and on the ground, will accompany your stroll through this beautiful green kingdom. You will be dazzled by the majesty of the scenery, your senses overwhelmed by chlorophyll, and your mind soothed by the relaxing walk. The wide woodland paths of the National Forest of Loches can be discovered by bike or on foot at your own pace.

www.loches-valdeloire.com

### 'Scooter' along avenues and trails

Ride along vast 18th century avenues and other trails of various difficulty on an all-terrain electric scooter while accompanied by a guide.

The circuits are adapted to your preferences... and to your agility! Along the way, you will come across springs, ponds, fields, undergrowth, hundred-year-old oaks, and historical ruins

Trott'ecow departs from 'la Ferme de la Voisinière', in Sennevières.

trottecow.fr

## Draw and sketch as a family

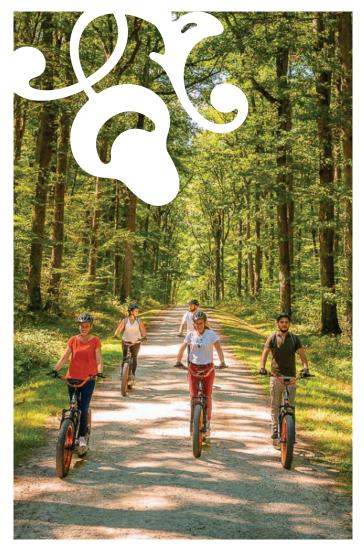
Grab your pencils and sketchpad! At various spots along the walk and guided by the character 'Randocroquer' you will learn, step by step, how to create your own drawings on the themes of water, forest, and heritage. Through careful observation and staying focused, you will genuinely appreciate the treasures of the forest.

An introduction to drawing for all. A little bonus: each kiosk is equipped with a bench.

The 'Sentier Randocroquis®' trail starts at the kiosk at the Pas-aux-ânes lake, in Loches forest. Information and documentation is available at the tourist offices in Loches and Montrésor.



Free activity for all.





# A mysterious monastery at the edge of the forest

The Chartreuse, the Corroirie, and the Chapelle du Liget: a visit among mystical trees and monastic heritage. Emerging from the forest, a 12th century monastic site will captivate you with its sheer size and serenity. The spirit of the Carthusian monks lingers on, and the domain seems to be forever disconnected from this world. Follow the guide...



# Finish at the Saint-Jean-du-Liget Chapel

This small, round, Plantagenetstyle, 12th century chapel is decorated with frescoes dating from the beginning of the 13th century, depicting the great mysteries of the Christian faith. To visit inside, ask for the key from the tourist office in Loches or Montrésor.



### At the Chartreuse du Liget

Passing through the impressive 18th century portal, you will discover many buildings and outbuildings dating from the 1787 reconstruction as well as the remnants of a large cloister and Romanesque church. Visit includes the exterior and the vestiges.

lachartreuseduliget.com



#### Then head to the Château monastère de la Corroirie...

Located 800 m from the Chartreuse, in a characterful natural setting, this feudal fiefdom has preserved its 13th century church, storeroom, barns, two mills, a hemp oven, and a press. It is a well-preserved architectural ensemble that is worth a visit!

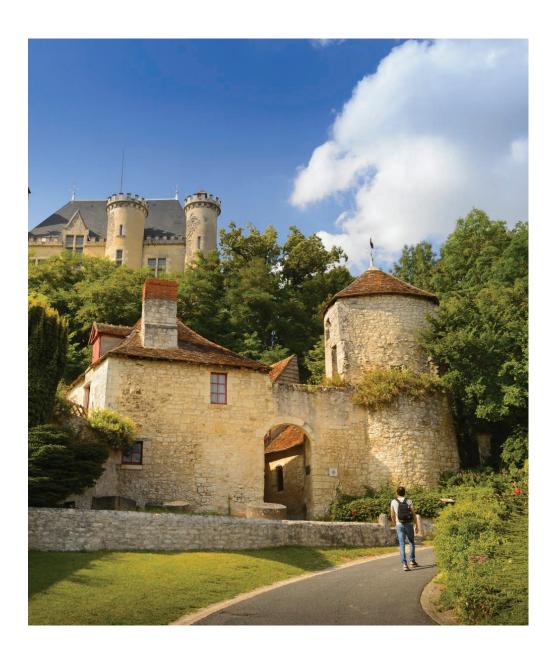












# Follow the 'Greenway' - 42 km

Following the charming meanders of the river Claise, the South Touraine greenway takes the visitor from the train station in La Celle-Saint-Avant to the entrance of the Brenne Regional Natural Park, via the medieval town of Preuilly-sur-Claise. This nature and heritage trail is very accessible with children!

There is barely enough time to warm up before crossing the town of Descartes, birthplace of the famous philosopher, then on to the Grand-Pressigny for a visit of the Prehistory museum. Take a short break to observe the Saint-Marc fountain in Chaumussay, before continuing on to the charming village of Boussay with its thousand-year-old chateau.

Upon arriving in Preuilly-sur-Claise, a pretty medieval town, the bell tower with its glazed tiles from Burgundy will guides you to the heart of the village. The Saint-Pierre Abbatial Church, is a masterpiece of Romanesque art. Narrow streets lined with old houses and protected by the silhouette of the Château du Lion spread out from the abbey.

The route continues to the Creuse Greenway via Bossay-sur-Claise and Tournon-St-Pierre.

# OUR SUGGES-TIONS FOR GOOD RESTAURANTS

THE LAND OF RABELAIS, TOURAINE IS PROUD OF ITS WAY OF LIFE AND PERFECTLY EMBODIES THE SPIRIT OF THE FRENCH MEAL, WHICH IS AN UNESCO INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF HUMANITY.





### **Arbore & Sens, in Loches**

Opened in 2020, this restaurant and its young chef, Clément Dumont, have one goal in mind: to share the wealth of richness of the South Touraine with the customer. Here, the cultivation of simple yet refined produce with no waste is the rule, whether it is roots, flowers, fruits, seeds, vegetables, fish, or meat. In this ode to the senses and to life itself, a tree is enthroned in the dining room, like some kind of beacon, enveloping the tables with its beauty and serenity. The chic and understated decoration enhances an authentic art of dining, always in harmony with the restaurant's philosophy. When the weather is good, you can enjoy the large terrace shaded by a majestic wisteria. Booking in advance is essential!

The Chef received a 'The Fork France 2022' National Award 1 Michelin plate/ 3 'macarons Ecotable'
www.restaurant-arbore-et-sens.fr

### Les Roseaux Pensants, in Cormery

Les Roseaux Pensants' list of regular suppliers provides a clear indication of this 'philosophical' restaurant's decidedly local gastronomic approach. Here you can enjoy gimmick-free, authentic cuisine in either a warmly decorated dining room or under the wisteria and lime trees that shade the terrace: Laurène and Stéphane do their best every day to help their guests to discover new plant based flavours of plants, cooked in all possible ways using innovative culinary techniques. The vegetarian dishes as well as those that include meat from the Touraine region are seasoned with aromatic plants grown in the restaurant's garden.

3 Ecotable Macaroons www.lesroseauxpensants.fr

### Le Clos aux roses, in Chédigny

The young chef Armelle Krause's elegant cuisine is a treat for the taste buds and a feast for the eyes. She manages to add delicate modern twists to classic dishes with great finesse. Enjoy her creations in the simple, bright dining room or on the shaded, secluded terrace in the inner courtyard.

Michelin Bib Gourmand www.leclosauxroses.com

### Le Prosper, in Loches

Under the gaze of the imposing Saint-Antoine Tour, you can enjoy bistro cuisine that skilfully combines Touraine flavours with cosmopolitan influences, reflecting the couple who started the restaurant. Régis mans the stove, while Ella welcomes you with her Slavic accent, and these two met... in Thailand!

### Amore Mio, in Loches

Francesca and her parents Sissi and Saviero, who are all Italian, overwhelm the palate with Italian flavours in their restaurant. They serve all types of cuisine from the other side of the alps: antipasti, pasta, lasagne, pannacotta,

#### La Table du Prieuré, in Le Louroux

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Nestled in what was once a 12th century monastic site, the restaurant, taken over in 2020 by Pierre Drouineau, offers delicious, locavore, seasonal cuisine. Here, an ethical respect for short supply chains excludes most exotic products including vanilla and citrus fruits, except for coffee, which is roasted just a few kilometres away. The chocolate is organic, fair trade, and responsibly produced. No mineral water is served, only water from the stream that has been purified and bottled on-site, which is served flat or sparkling. Finally, the wine list is intentionally limited, as it is reserved for exceptional wines from the Loire Valley. Booking is strongly advised.

1 Michelin plate/ Maître Restaurateur www.latableduprieure.fr



### La Promenade, Maison Dallais restaurant, in Le Petit-Pressigny

This family restaurant, located in the heart of the Southern Touraine countryside, has been a Michelin starred restaurant since 1989. Fabrice Dallais and his son man the kitchen, serving up a cuisine that is both modern and rooted in the South Touraine region. Here, poulette de Racan, géline de Touraine, seasonal game, fruits and vegetables from local producers, butter and cream from Verneuil dairy, exceptional cheeses, such as Sainte-Maure de Touraine, can all be enjoyed in a contemporary setting. Booking in advance is essential!

One star in the MICHELIN Guide www.restaurantdallaislapromenade.com







# A gourmet stroll through Loches market

With no less than 110 vendors and producers, Loches market is a lifelong institution and is one of the most famous in the Loire Valley. Whether you have a sweet tooth, a savoury tooth, or a tooth for everything, you are bound to find something to your liking among the colourful and lively stalls that enliven the historic streets of this pretty town every Wednesday and Saturday morning.

#### Sainte-Maure de Touraine, a famous Protected Designation of Origin goat's cheese

A log shaped, ivory coloured goat's cheese, Sainte-Maure de Touraine has been celebrated as a gastronomic Touraine region treasure for several centuries. Made exclusively from unpasturized goat's milk, the ivory coloured cheese is sprinkled with a fine layer of ash, and a rye straw (engraved with the producer's name) is inserted in the centre. This serves to reinforce the log, of cheese and is also a mark of authenticity and a guarantee of its place of origin. The South Touraine region boasts 80% of the goat farms that produce Sainte-Maure de Touraine.



# The 'Macaron de Cormery', a twelve-hundred-year-old delicacy

Its recipe was invented in the 8th century, in Cormery's abbey. Its appearance has nothing in common with traditional macaroons, as it is round with a hole in its centre. Legend has it that the monk who invented the recipe fell flat on his stomach whilst kneading the dough, leaving the imprint of his belly button. 'Macarons de Cormery' are made from almond powder, icing sugar, granulated sugar, and egg whites, but the ratios are a secret!



### Rillons, the flagship of French charcuterie

Small pieces of lean pork belly, seasoned, pan-fried for colour, and then slowly cooked in pork fat, rillons melt in the mouth and are considered to be the flagship of charcuterie in the Touraine. They can be enjoyed warm or cold as an aperitif (get ready to lick your fingers!) or in salads. Favour those made with Roi Rose de Touraine pork are preferred, as it is a very high quality 'Red Label' meat.











TO RELAX AFTER GLORIOUS DAYS SPENT VISITING THE AREA, THE SOUTH TOURAINE OFFERS A WIDE RANGE OF ACCOMMODATION TO SUIT ALL TASTES.

### Hôtel-spa\*\*\*\* de La Cité Royale, in Loches

The comings and goings at this hotel, an elegant 19th century former courthouse in the centre of Loches, have brought the building back to life! Situated on the crossroads to the Loire Châteaux, this new hotel combines simplicity and sophistication. A stylish bar, a cosy restaurant, a spa and swimming pool with a view of the fortifications, inspiring seminar rooms, and 45 comfortable bedrooms... all with a breath-taking view of the nearby medieval city, to enjoy both by day and at night.

The bar, restaurant, and spa are open to the public. www.hotel-citeroyale.com

### Domaine de la Roche Bellin, in Descartes

Hobbits' houses, Romany caravans, a tree house, traditional yurts, safari lodges... you will find yourself surrounded by nature in all of the accommodations at the Domaine de la Roche Bellin, an idyllic setting where woodland and streams meet meadows and ponds. Your neighbours? Amandine and Canelle the donkeys, Astère de Nesque the Percheron mare, sheep, geese, and gélines de Touraine chickens, all of whom can be observed from your accommodation

www.hebergement-insolite-touraine.com

# Cozy cabins in the grounds of Charnizay château

Whilst snuggled in your comfortable spacious wooden hut, or in your room in the château, enjoy trying to recognise the various chirps and tweets that you hear around you, which only add to the relaxed atmosphere. No fewer than forty-eight species of birds have been recorded in this location, which has been certified as a 'French Protection for the bird society' refuge. After taking a dip in the outdoor swimming pool, you can wander through the 30 hectares of park and forest, tracking or spotting deer, roe deer, foxes, and squirrels, among other species. Although very discreet, your hosts, Marine and Jean-Paul will happily spend time talking to you about their little slice of haven, should you wish to do so..

Four fully equipped cabins, a gîte, four guest rooms, & table d'hôtes. www.chateaudecharnizay.com

### La Little Maison, in Loches

At the foot of Europe's oldest keep, Olivier and his Japanese wife, Chako, owners of this unassuming bed and breakfast are full of different ideas to entertain, relax, and satisfy their guests. On the terrace of the Little Bistro, with a view of the medieval walls of the Royal City, you can take a moment to plan your activities: a rejuvenating afternoon nap in one of the three comfortable rooms? A ride on one of the mini-bikes loaned by La Little Maison? Throughout the year, La Little Maison also organises the 'smallest concerts in France', created by the owner, Olivier, known as 'The Loches Bomber': good humour and a little bit of quirkiness are always on the agenda!

www.lalittlemaison.com





