



Your artist instructor & Provence Art Experience

Painting workshop in southern France - Arles

Sunday (x) to Tuesday (x+9)

Mathieu will be guiding you through your entire Provence Art Experience
«You are our guests, not tourists.»



Make plane reservations to fly on Saturday x-1 and arrive at Marseille Airport on Sunday morning.
Departure will be on Tuesday (x+9) from Marseille Airport (MRS).

Sunday - Arrival in Arles - Welcome to your Provence Art Experience!

Mathieu will pick you up at the Marseille Provence Airport (MRS)
and drive everyone to the guest house.

You will instantly feel at home in a family atmosphere: quiet and very French.

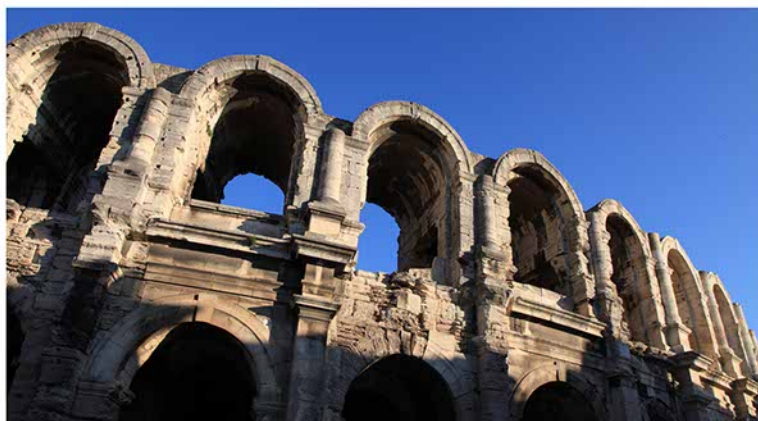
On our arrival we will settle in with a magnifique rosé or white wine
with your artist instructor, Mathieu and our dear chef friend.

You will receive a little surprise welcome gift...

We will settle in, visit the surrounding commodities and take a stroll around Arles.

In the afternoon your artist instructor will give a demo to get everyone in the mood!

Then we will have our first gourmet dinner *by our chef* in the evening!



The two-tiered Roman Amphitheatre (Arènes d'Arles) sits in the town center of Arles. It was used 2000 years ago for chariot races and gladiator battles; today it's for bullfighting, plays and summer concerts.

The site is most often called an Amphitheatre, but we're using the term Roman Arena, to reduce the confusion with the nearby Roman Theatre.

Arles is the largest city in France. It is encircled by an environment of exceptional beauty: the banks of the Rhône river, the arid plains of Crau, the Alpilles and the untamed land of Camargue. And of course the adoptive home of one famous Vincent.





Monday

Saint Rémy & Saint Paul le mausolé, Van Gogh rest house lovely garden

The breakfast will be served at the guest house then we will spend the day at Saint Rémy de Provence. The morning will be dedicated to visiting the town of St Rémy: you'll find all the charm of a typically Provencal way of life. You'll soon be strolling along the boulevards under the shade of century-old plane trees. For lunch we will rest on the quiet terrace of a local restaurant. The afternoon will be devoted to painting in Saint Paul le mausolé: famous Van Gogh's rest house. In the evening we will have a gourmet dinner at the guest house where our chef will be waiting of us starving artists!



A masterpiece of Provencal Romanesque art, the 11th -12th Century cloister backs onto the chapel, in pure Romanesque style, with a façade altered in the 18th Century.



The monastery is best known for the fact that Vincent van Gogh stayed here from May 1889 to May 1890. During this period of his life he painted three of his most notable works: The Irises, Starry Night and the famous Self-portrait.



While wandering through the narrow winding streets you will discover fantastic old fountains, shady squares, picturesque restaurants and elegant boutiques.



Tuesday

Les Baux de Provence, simply beautiful!

The breakfast will be served at the guest house then we will spend the day at les Baux: one of the most picturesque villages in France set atop a rocky outcrop crowned with a medieval ruined castle overlooking the olive tree plains to the south. Your artist instructor will give a demo in the olive tree orchard - Van Gogh is supposed to have painted in this exact location. Then you can find your preferred view and paint quietly under the shades. For lunch: we will have a beautiful pique nique prepared by Mathieu. In the afternoon we will visit the village and discover the amazing «les carrières de lumières»: the light quarries and its breath-taking light and art show! In the evening we will have a dinner at the guest house prepared by our chef.



Set in the heart of the Alpilles regional country park, Les Baux-de-Provence is a listed heritage site that has won titles such as "one of the Most Beautiful Villages in France".

The village can only be visited by foot and you will admire the ancient houses that have been carefully restored, beautiful Renaissance façades and several magnificent "hôtels particuliers" which today serve as art galleries or museums.



The monumental "Carrières de Lumières" host extraordinary multimedia shows which are unique in the world. Like walking in a dream of lights nested in an ancient and mysterious temple.
Starting March 2017, the new show:
Bosh, Brueghel and Arcimboldo:
From the fantastic to the wonderful.



Wednesday

Roussillon, spectacular!

Breakfast at the guest house, lunch at a local restaurant in stunning Roussillon and dinner at the guest house by our chef, and in between: Roussillon!

Situated in the heart of one of the biggest ochre deposits in the world, Roussillon is famous for its magnificent red cliffs and ochre quarries. The plein air painting will be memorable again!



In Roussillon a quirk of nature has set the landscape ablaze with ochre, a natural pigment in the rock ranging from soft gold to burnt orange, russet red and burnt sienna brown.



As you approach Roussillon you notice that the fields have turned reddish orange, as if you are wearing the wrong sunglasses.



You can say that there are 17 shades of ochre daubed across the houses of the village, drawn from the palette of the old ochre quarry next door. But that doesn't do justice to the flamboyant, technicolor glory of Roussillon, the reds, yellows, oranges and pinks that merge one into the other as you wander around the spiralling streets.

We will visit the conservatory of pigments at L'Usine Mathieu. The stages of the washing process, the kiln and the mills were restored to help visitors understand the steps in the treatment of the mineral, from its extraction to its shipment throughout the world.





Thursday

A well deserved rest day in Arles! After 4 days of intense experience you will need a well deserved slow and easy day. Maybe stay in our beautiful guest house and just wander in Arles as you please.

Breakfast & lunch at the guest house and dinner in a local restaurant - so our chef can rest a little bit as well and we get to discover a lovely little place in town!

But what about spring in Provence and its incredible blooming explosion!?

Here is a sample of what we can see cruising the winding and secret roads of Provence...



Summer in Provence is a time when the region's fields are bursting with colour and fragrance, as perfumed lavender and dazzling sunflowers are in full bloom.

We might see a bit of the tail end of the red poppies and catch the vibrant & colourful sunflowers, genets (brooms) and wildflowers. Here is a view near Gordes with «Les dentelles de Montmirail» mountains in the background.



"Lavender is the soul of Provence" Jean Giono.

The lavender blooms from around the last week of June to the beginning of August when it is harvested. It is usually at its peak in early July, but this depends on the rainfall in the year.



Friday

Aix en Provence & the Sainte Victoire mountain, in the footsteps of Paul Cézanne.

Breakfast at the guest house, lunch at a local restaurant in the elegant city of Aix and dinner at the guest house by our chef. We will visit the georgous Hotel Caumont and the collection Planque (paintings by Pablo Picasso, Jean Dubuffet, Edgar Degas, Paul Gauguin, Claude Monet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Vincent van Gogh, Paul Klee, Raoul Dufy, Georges Braque, and Paul Cézanne).

As a city of art and culture Aix possesses a wealth of superbe architecture that has been carefully preserved and restored. We can either paint in the city or drive to the country side depending on your moods!



Aix was the capital of Provence in the 15th century, wealthy merchants and local dignitaries helped turn this city into the Florence of Provence as we know it today.

Protected by the Montagne Sainte Victoire which rises to 1,011m. Aix is surrounded by a countryside full of authentic Provencal houses and traditional French style gardens.



Aix was the inspiration to many of the greatest writers and painters : Guigou, Stendhal, Mistral, Zola and Cézanne (these last 2 had a close and tempestuous friendship!).



Each summer the International Festival of Lyric Arts and Music unites acclaimed prima donnas and maestros in a fabulous selection of singing and music.





Saturday

Arles, Van Gogh favourite! Also the biggest and most colorful street market in all Provence!

Breakfast in the guest house then we will enjoy the morning street market where we will shop for our lunch which we will have in our guest house. In the afternoon we will discover the charms of this incredible city and find the best subjects for your painting session of the day. City of festivals, art and culture: Arles has never stopped attracting artists. Evening dinner by our chef.



Arles's outdoor market is one of the biggest you will see with vendors selling delicious food (mediterranean, greek, spanish, etc), cheese and meats, ceramics, fabric, spices, cookies and sweets, etc. Some vendors give out samples. Make sure you come on an empty stomach!



Van Gogh stayed here in Arles with his friend Gauguin. Picasso, a lover of bull fights, was inspired by them to do two paintings and 57 drawings.



Although there are numerous places to visit in Arles, the main star is the town itself. Open squares with bustling cafés linked by narrow streets lined with attractive houses and shops, many looking old and faded and all the more romantic and paintable as a result.





Sunday

The discreet charm of the hill towns of the Luberon, Fontaine de Vaucluse & Lourmarin

Breakfast in the guest house then we will discover and paint Fontaine de Vaucluse where we will enjoy a beautiful local restaurant for lunch. Evening dinner in a restaurant in Arles. In the afternoon we will cruise the pretty winding roads of Luberon in the middle of the vineyards on our way to Lourmarin.



The village of Fontaine de Vaucluse is squeezed into the sharp end of a narrow valley and takes its name from the beautiful and mysterious spring feeding the river Sorgue. We can visit the Vallis Clausa Museum, a reconstitution of manually operated paper-making mill using ancestral techniques.

For most of the year all you can see is a deep blue pool of water at the bottom of towering cliffs. But during spring or very heavy rainfall it lives up to its name, this is one of the largest springs in the world. These colors are just begging to be painted!



The streets of Lourmarin meander round, past fountains and tightly packed houses, and you get the impression that they are circling around the impressive belfry (Castelas) at the highest point of the village. The belfry is built on the vestiges of the medieval moated castle that once defined Lourmarin.

In the village you will notice the typical Mediterranean architecture in its winding narrow streets, lovely old restored houses, and well shaded public squares where you can immerse yourself in the gentile Provençal ambience and set your easels where you like!.





Monday

The abbaye de Sénanque and the lavender road!

Breakfast in the guest house then we will drive to Luberon to discover a jewel nested in a small valley: the Senanque Abbey. For lunch we will settle and enjoy a lovely and delicious pique nique in the lavender fields where we will set our easels! Evening dinner by our chef in Arles.



Perhaps the most famous lavender shot in Provence is of the field in front of Senanque Abbey near Gordes. It is almost impossible not to get a memorable photo here. The best time to come is early because the light is in the right position in the morning, and it will be less crowded as a lot of people want to get this shot!

The colour, the texture, and the scent of a lavender field encapsulate for many the essence of Provence. Here the lavender blooms from late June to early August when it is harvested. It is usually at its peak in early July, but this depends on the rainfall in the year.





Another option for any day

The wild Camargue and the medieval walled city of Aigues Mortes

Breakfast in the guest house then we will enjoy a lovely and delicious local restaurant in Aigues Mortes for lunch. Evening dinner by our chef. In the afternoon we will discover a little corner of the secret Camargue... The Camargue, a magic word, is a place where man lives alongside horses, bulls, birds, the sky and water. Painting Camargue is what we offer you today!



Louis IX (Saint Louis) built the port here in 1240 so France would have a Mediterranean port for commerce and to launch his crusades in 1248 and 1270.

Aigues-Mortes gradually silted up and the towers were turned into prisons. It was used to hold Protestant prisoners after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685.

Each year, Aigues-Mortes produces 500,000 tons of salt, making it a worldwide benchmark.

In the Camargue, salt can be found widely in the soil, and the nature of the flat and clay soil, dotted with ponds, lends itself well to the extraction of sea salt.



The magic of this region lies in the preservation of its natural spaces. It is a fragile sanctuary for fauna and flora, uncommon in Europe; protected by the Camargue regional park and natural reserve, it forms a unique landscape.

While the flamingos are the Camargue's most emblematic birds, the area is more historically famous for its white horses. The Camargue's horses are a special breed, reputedly one of the oldest breeds of horses in the world, and they have lived in the very particular environment of the Camargues saline wetlands for thousands of years.





Tuesday

Departure and kleenex day!

Breakfast in the guest house. Mathieu will drive you to the Marseille Airport (MRS) and will accompany you to the check-ins and make sure you are on the right plane!

We Hope you had the most memorable souvenir of Provence in your hearts and on your canvas!

A note to our dear artist participants:

Depending on the weather or other unforeseen circumstances we might have to swap some dates and/or adapt this itinerary.

A selection of other locations has been carefully handpicked by your hosts and your artist instructor for a tailored optimal painting experience. We have administrative autorizations to paint in many beautiful places if the rain shows up.

Our goal is to provide you the best experience possible, we will discuss - as a group - any modification to the itinerary.





Depending on their availabilities and your bookings - we work with 2 partner guest houses : one in the old town of Arles and one in an olive grove situated 5 mns from Arles, both are incredible places. We are always looking for the most beautiful places, stay tuned for new guest houses!



This hundred year old house has a beautiful pool with a view on the olive tree orchard.

The perfectly groomed garden by Marylise and Frederic, the owners, is a delight. It is situated near the beautiful Abbey of Montmajour and the secretive and well hidden Castelet dolmenic hypogeum: the «Fairy Cave».



The pool house is spacious and comfortably equipped with the thickest rugs!



The house has been renovated with great care and taste in the most «Provençal» tradition. Hundred years ago it used to be a sheep pen. I guess the sheep didn't have this kind of luxurious accommodations by then!

All the spacious rooms have their own bathroom and toilet.



The house has 4 rooms and is 2500 sq ft (250 m²)

Bed linen, hair driers and towels are provided. You have access to a washing machine.



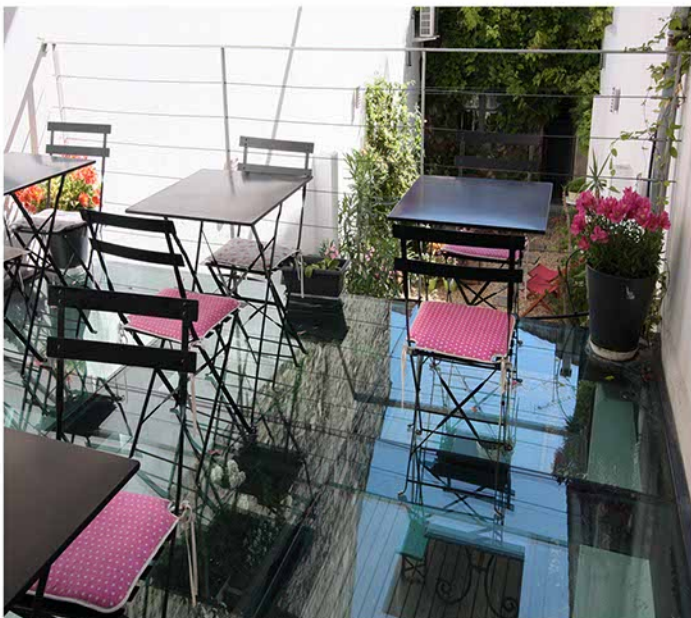


The other guest house in the old town center of Arles



On the rooftop you can enjoy a sun bath, a lunch or a very french apéritif before dinner with one of the best view of the Roman amphitheater, or as the locals call it «Les arènes». The skyline of Arles is all yours from here and I am not even talking about the sunsets :)

The patio - view from the private garden of the house



View of the patio from the 2nd floor



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The rooms : all with AC, a private bathroom with a sink or two, a shower and a toilet.





The spacious kitchen: kingdom of our personal chef!



The living room where we will enjoy our breakfasts and our gourmet dinners. (The table is extendable!)



This 400 years old house is right in the old town center of Arles, still very calm as it is pedestrian only! Here is a view of the street itself. The blue shutters in the foreground on the left side of the street are us! The house has 3 floors and has been entirely renovated.

Your host, guide, driver and interpret: Mathieu Brousses

I was born and raised in Arles, Provence. I studied biology and film making. After 10 years in Paris working for the movie industry and television networks I came back to Provence to enjoy life, my wife and son, rebuild and live in a 200 years old house near Aix en Provence. I know Provence and its people like the back of my hand. With Wendy Higbee Carando I co-founded the Provence Art Experience in 2015. Art is part of my everyday life. I will be doing everything so you have a memorable stay: a unique experience!

For more information, contact me at:
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