



*requests your participation in*

**“Exclusive Provence: Private Residences, Gardens & Gallo-Roman Discoveries”**

**Sponsored by  
Institute of Classical Architecture & Classical America**

**Arranged by  
Pamela Huntington Darling, Exclusive Cultural Travel Programs**

**Sunday, April 25 to Saturday, May 1, 2010**



*This exclusive tour, designed for enthusiasts of Provence and its celebrated French Art of Living, offers private visits and receptions with their hosts at remarkable 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century chateaux, residences and gardens, most inaccessible to the public, as well as private, expert-guided visits to outstanding Gallo-Roman sites, an inspiration to Classical Architecture, many recently and admirably restored.*

We will travel through beautiful Provence and be welcomed by the proprietors of outstanding private residences and chateaux, several owned by members of the French nobility, some of which were built on Gallo-Roman sites, most inaccessible to the public. These residences feature unique architecture, décor, and noteworthy collections of art. We will visit some of the most impressive private gardens in Europe, cited by the French government as “Jardins Remarquables”.

We will discover with experts the major Gallo-Roman sites of the world and their latest revelations, some listed UNESCO World Cultural Heritage sites, many recently and splendidly restored. Perhaps in no other colony of the Roman Empire did the Roman civilization achieve such astounding results as in Provence, priding major, remarkably preserved monuments of the Roman world. During the last 20 years, these Gallo-Roman sites have been extensively researched by experts.

To date, little or nothing has been published for the layman of the last 20 years of research. However, thanks to the experts who will guide us on our visits, we will gain first-hand knowledge of the latest discoveries and a more accurate understanding of Gallo-Roman civilization, the use of their monuments, their building techniques, and their meaning. Among our significant visits, we will view the unique Roman treasures discovered in 2007 in the Rhone River during archaeological excavations carried out by the French government, now on exhibit in Arles.

We will stay at the Château des Alpilles in Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, a 19<sup>th</sup> century former private residence set in a vast park, and at La Mirande in Avignon, housed in an 18<sup>th</sup> century private mansion next to the Palace of the Popes. Both 4-star luxury hotels offer refined detail and décor, spacious rooms and excellent service.

*Please find the highlights of this exclusive program on the following pages.*

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## Tour Highlights

*We are pleased to present the highlights of this unique cultural travel program, sponsored by the ICA&CA. A detailed itinerary will be sent to confirmed participants. Due to the exceptional character of the private visits and receptions announced in this program, the date and time of a visit or reception are subject to change.*

### **Sunday, April 25: Saint-Rémy-de-Provence**

*Guests will arrive independently to the hotel, Château des Alpilles, in Saint-Rémy-de-Provence. There are TGV trains to Avignon from the Paris Gare de Lyon station or from the Paris Airport CDG Terminal 2 train station. From Avignon, it is a 20-minute drive to the Hotel des Alpilles. VIP taxis can be reserved for your convenience.*

*Several daily flights depart from the U.S. to Marseille arriving the following morning. Saint-Rémy-de-Provence is an hour taxi drive from Marseille. Guests can return to the U.S., on a round-trip ticket, from Marseille or Paris. VIP taxis can be reserved for transfer to the hotel for your convenience.*

*This exclusive program will commence at 4:00 p.m. on Sunday with our welcoming events.*

#### **\* Château des Alpilles, Saint-Rémy-de-Provence**

Françoise Bon and her daughter, Catherine Rollin, will welcome us to their 4-star, luxury chateau-hotel, located in a peaceful setting, one mile from the charming Saint-Rémy village. Château des Alpilles is a splendid 19th century chateau surrounded by a handsome park. A favourite address of connoisseurs, our residence is chosen for its charm, hospitality, and central location while visiting Provence.

The spacious rooms are elegantly appointed, ranging from classical décor in the main house to contemporary in the extended buildings. The restaurant serves delicately prepared regional meals and has a fine wine list. One immediately feels the warmth and graciousness of the proprietors and their experienced, attentive staff, whose desire is to assure that your stay is the ultimate in enjoyment.



*Sophie Bouzat-Wildbolz, a Swiss-American expert guide, who has been conducting historical, architectural, and decorative arts visits throughout the region for over 20 years, from the Gallo-Roman period to present, will guide us throughout our program. Other experts and our hosts will intervene during our visits and receptions as noted in the program.*



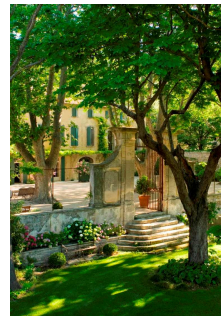
#### **\* Les Baux de Provence**

En route to our welcoming dinner, we will visit Les Baux de Provence to admire the spectacular views and prominent historical sites in this stunning village, including the Château des Baux with its extraordinary view of the Crau and the Camargue, the Chapelle Saint Blaise, the Porte d'Eyguières, the Hôtel de Manville, the Eglise St. Vincent, and the Pavillon de la Reine Jeanne.

#### **\* Private Dinner with the proprietors at their residence, Abbaye de Pierredon, a former monastery**

We are invited by the proprietors for a convivial dinner at their residence, in the hills of Les Baux de Provence, with Bruno and Dominique Lafourcade. The following excerpt is taken from an article written by Jean Rafferty, for the International Herald Tribune on October 26, 2006, entitled, "Rebuilding with style in a year in Provence": "Among the more than 300 projects that the Lafourcades have completed, one of the most outstanding is the Abbaye de Pierredon in the hills near Les Baux de Provence. A 12th-century chapel, all that remained of a monastery, and a bastide, or country house, built in 1602, were joined seamlessly to create a private residence of nearly 27,000 square feet.

Bruno and Alexandre Lafourcade have merited a reputation for their transformations of ancient residences, or modest buildings, into bastides that seem to have existed for hundreds of years. Dominique Lafourcade focuses on the landscaping. Masters of metamorphosis since 1970, the family has completed over 300 transformations for their international clientele. Although many projects are noted for classical interiors, they have a growing trend of clients wanting a contemporary style. The Abbaye was one such project, and Alexandre Lafourcade, who supervised the work, specializes in such decors. The Abbaye's garden spotlights the artistry of Dominique Lafourcade, whose gardens often feature landscaping native to the Mediterranean..." Image: ©Guy Hervais



### **Monday, April 26: Nîmes: The Epicenter of Roman Gaul**

Nîmes is considered "the epicenter of Roman Gaul", once one of the largest cities of the Empire, "the Rome of France", with magnificently preserved monuments.



\* **Jardins de la Fontaine**, or Fountain sanctuary, is one of the finest of all public gardens in France, classically themed, a combination of Versailles-style magnificence and Roman grandeur. The shrine was dedicated to Nemausus, the spirit of the spring, to the mother goddesses of the city, and to Emperor Augustus. Built around 25 B.C., making holy water available year-round, site of elaborate baths, the curative properties of its waters were famous throughout the Roman Empire.

\* **Tour de Magne**, a watchtower overlooking the gardens, perhaps the oldest Gallic building, and the **Temple de Diane**, a Roman nymphaeum, which marked the sanctuary of the Imperial Cult for travellers.

\* **Maison Carrée, the only fully preserved Roman temple still standing in the world**

We will have a special visit of this historical site with the director of the Maison Carrée, the only fully preserved Roman temple still standing in the world, which has just undergone a remarkable restoration, an almost perfectly preserved Hellenistic-style temple. One of the finest existing examples of Roman architecture, it was built under the reign of Augustus and was modeled on the Temple of Apollo in Rome. Thomas Jefferson made reference to the Maison Carrée in his design for the entrance to the Richmond Capitol.



\* **Luncheon at the restaurant Le Carré d'Art**

Just a few steps from the Maison Carrée, housed in an 18th century mansion, the Carré d'Art offers fine, unpretentious yet creative Mediterranean cuisine prepared with fresh regional produce, served by a welcoming staff, appreciated by local French gourmet clientele and well advised visitors alike. The décor marries elegant classicism with modernism looking onto a charming inner courtyard making for a warm and inviting atmosphere.



\* **Amphitheatre, the most well preserved amphitheatre built under the Roman Empire**

Of the 300 amphitheatres built during the Roman Empire, Nîmes', constructed around 90 A.D., is considered the most beautifully preserved. Seating up to 24,000 spectators, it is from the same period as the amphitheatre in Arles, but with slight architectural differences, such as the galleries constructed in the Greek trabeated form, employing vertical supports and horizontal beams instead of arches or vaults, in contrast with the Roman practice of using arches on the ground level of an arena to support the weight of the construction on the upper floor.

\* **Private visit to Domaine de Roquecourbe**

We are invited by the proprietors for an exceptional visit to their historical estate near Nîmes. Purchased in 1999, since restored, the residence sits at the base of a plateau abundant with fauna native to the garrigues of southern France. Archaeological evidence indicates habitation since approximately the 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C., due to a rare natural spring which provided water, as witnessed by the grotto and Roman bath and the protection offered by the plateau. Certain parts of the main house date to the 15th century, but most of the building dates from around 1800, with renovations since then. The style of the main house is reminiscent of an Italian villa. Of particular interest is a Gothic entryway added in about 1850.

We will tour the main house and the gardens, which have been restored by the present owners. There is a series of rising terraces, with an ancient canal fed by the spring. The gardens present a balance of the wild and natural landscape of the area in harmony with the designed "French" gardens which include topiaries, rose beds and clipped hedges.

\* **Guests will enjoy a relaxing dinner of fine regional specialties in the elegant dining room of Chateau d'Alpilles.**

**Tuesday, April 27: Arles: a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site**



\* **Private visit to the Musée de l'Arles et de la Provence Antiques, closed to the public on this day**

We are just in time to view a major exhibit, shaking the archaeological world, "**Caesar, the memory of the Rhone River – 20 years of exploration of the river that runs through Arles**", featuring outstanding Roman treasures discovered in 2007 in the depths of the Rhone River during archaeological excavations. Some 650 antique objects are on display, including an extraordinary find of 20 Roman sculptures and bronzes. Among them is a treasure that has shaken the archaeological world: a realistic marble bust dating from 49 B.C., believed to be the oldest representation of Julius Caesar made during his lifetime.

\* **Bistrot "A Côté"** Located in the heart of the historic centre of Arles, behind the Theatre antique, this charming bistro is an extension of Michelin 2-star chef, Jean-Luc Rabanel's restaurant "L'Atelier". We will enjoy the relaxed, Spanish-style atmosphere with an open kitchen area and savour Rabanel's imaginative cuisine, quality regional dishes of the season, served by a welcoming and attentive staff.



\* **Hôtel de Ville** We will admire the City Hall vestibule, a masterwork of the architect Jules Hardouin-Mansart, chief architect of King Louis XIV. Using the technique of stereotomy (the science of cutting and shaping stones to fit together to construct weight-bearing arches), Hardouin-Mansart designed the entrance hall in 1673, 16 meters across without intermediary pillars, resulting in an exceptional vaulted ceiling.

\* **Crypto-Portique** We will visit this unique Roman site dating from the 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C., located under the Forum.

\* **Arles Antique Theatre** was built around 27-25 B.C. and recently restored by Alain-Charles Perrot, Chief Architect of French Historical Monuments, also responsible for the restoration of the Palais Royal. Roman authorities considered the theatre a means of spreading Roman culture to the colonies and a way of distracting the populace from political activities. Magnificent stage sets were important as was the use of stage machinery.



\* **Arles Amphitheatre**, built between 80 A.D. and 90 A.D., could seat 20,000 spectators. Modeled on the Coliseum in Rome, it has an ingenious system of numerous access corridors to allow spectators to enter and leave efficiently. Like all Roman amphitheatres, Arles' is elliptical in form, but is slightly larger than the one in Nîmes, built later. In the Middle Ages, it was transformed into a fortress, with more than 200 houses. Restoration began in 1825 clearing the houses, and in 1830 the first bullfight took place, still used today for that purpose. Picasso, and other celebrities, often came to the Arena to watch bullfights.

\* **Café du Grand Hôtel Nord-Pinus** We will enjoy refreshments at this historic hotel and Arlesien "institution" with its baroque and "corrida" décor, haunted by the memory of its former guests including Pablo Picasso, Jean Cocteau and a number of famous bullfighters.

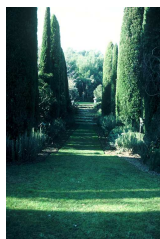
\* **Private Dinner at Mas d'Altaves, residence of Emile Garcin**

We are invited by Emile Garcin for an informal dinner at his residence, Mas d'Altaves. Native of Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, he founded, over 40 years ago, the international real estate agency, Emile Garcin, representing rare, prestigious properties in France and in Europe. Twenty-five years ago, he fell in love with the Mas d'Altaves, formerly a farm and winery built in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and remodeled in the 18<sup>th</sup> and mid 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. He purchased the property and transformed it into a country manor, admirably decorated with fine artwork, including a notable ceramic collection, and landscaped the gardens himself. The manor, its gardens and "potager" exude authenticity, serenity and natural beauty.

### **Wednesday, April 28: Saint-Rémy-de-Provence**

\* **Les Antiques: Ruins of Glanum, Mausoleum, and Triumphal Arch**

After a picturesque drive through the countryside, we will visit with our expert guide Les Antiques and the site of Glanum (named after a local Celtic god), which is famous for two rare Roman monuments from the time of the Roman Emperor Augustus, a 60-foot mausoleum — one of the best preserved of the Roman world, dedicated to members of the emperor's family, and a triumphal arch to mark the entrance to the town. These edifices are not only significantly historic but they are also remarkable.



\* **Private visit of the Gardens of Le Petit Fontanille, property of a distinguished American**

Thanks to the gracious invitation of the proprietor, we will enjoy a private visit to the vast and magnificent terraced-pattern gardens of Le Petit Fontanille, designed by Ryan Gainey, with beautiful cascades, stonework, fountains, a Greek edifice, a pergola, fruit, vegetable, and aromatic gardens, an 18<sup>th</sup> century pavilion redesigned by Jean-Louis Raynaud—a folly, and stunning views, one of the most brilliant landscaping achievements in Provence.

\***Private Visit and Luncheon at Mas de Payan and its gardens with the proprietor**

We are invited by Sophie de Brignac, an expert in dendrology (the study of trees and shrubs), vice-president of the association "*Parcs et Jardins de Provence, Alpes et Cote d'Azur*", for an informal luncheon at her residence followed by a visit to her gardens. Mas de Payan, a 13<sup>th</sup>-century fortified farm, is believed to have been built by the monks of the Abbaye de Montmajour. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the edifice was extended by its owners, the Payan, a French noble family. Abandoned for decades, the property was purchased in 1981 by the present owner, a self-taught gardener and landscaper. As a result of Sophie de Brignac's dedication to restoring her historic home and to creating an impressive park, the property is visited by botanical garden associations from all over the world.





**\* Private Visit to the gardens “Les Confines” at the Lafourcade residence**

We will commence our early evening greeted by Dominique Lafourcade at the Lafourcade residence in Noves, “Les Confines”, near Saint-Rémy, for a private visit of the gardens designed by Dominique, an artist and self-taught landscaper, who has gained recognition for her creations and inspired landscapers and gardeners around the world. Her style is distinctly French with Italian influences.

**\* Private Visit and Dinner with Bruno and Dominique Lafourcade at their residence, “l’Atelier”**

We will be welcomed by Bruno and Dominique Lafourcade for an informal dinner at their residence, “l’Atelier”, a marvelous conversion of an ancient agricultural warehouse into a modern loft. Well known for transforming old properties into aristocratic country houses and châteaux instilled with the spirit of the 18th century, the Lafourcade have witnessed a growing international clientele desiring a more contemporary style, marrying an ancient edifice with a modern interior. One of their admirable transformations is the Abbaye de Pierredon. The objective of the conversion of their new residence is to demonstrate that classicism, a resolutely modern space, and a warm atmosphere can be perfectly harmonious. “Elle Decoration” will dedicate a 10-page article in early April to their new residence.



**Thursday, April 29: Pont-du-Gard, and Avignon**

**\* Pont-du-Gard Aqueduct, the best conserved and the highest Roman built aqueduct-bridge in the world, a UNESCO World Heritage site**

We will visit this exemplary site with our expert guide and the director of the Pont-du-Gard. Symbol of the power of the Roman civilisation, the Pont-du-Gard is the highest Roman built aqueduct-bridge, the best conserved, and one of the greatest civil engineering feats in the world. Its sole objective was to carry the channels and pipes that stretched over 50 kilometres from the springs of the Eure to the water tower in Nîmes. A major construction that took 15 years to build, between 40 and 60 A.D., under the empires of Claude and Nero, a brilliant assembly of very large stones held together without mortar, the aqueduct stands 49 meters high, with its three tiers of receding arches. By special request, guests may climb a staircase to the top level of the aqueduct to enjoy a superb view.

**\* Luncheon at Hostellerie Le Castellas, Michelin 2-star restaurant, one of the best addresses in Provence,**

This may be one of the best meals we will have in Provence, creatively and delectably outstanding, with fine service. Located in the village of Collias, this noteworthy establishment is formed by several 17th century stone houses with an enclosed garden and a small pool resembling a Roman bath. Guests are warmly welcomed and treated to a deliciously light luncheon, specially prepared by the chef Jérôme Nutile, perfectly accomplished modern cuisine based on classic dishes.



**\* Arrival at Hotel La Mirande, a 4-star luxury hotel in Avignon**

In the afternoon, we will arrive in Avignon and check into Hotel La Mirande, a 4-star luxury hotel, considered one of the most outstanding addresses in Provence, privileged with an exceptional location next to the Palace of the Popes, an ideal location in the historical city of Avignon. La Mirande offers luxury comfort in the refined atmosphere of an historic, elegant 16th century mansion with stunning décor, a profusion of refined detail and excellent service. The hotel also offers an elegant dining room with a Michelin star, and a pleasant terrace with a fountain where one can also dine.

**\* Afternoon Visit to Avignon** Guests will enjoy an expert-guided visit to Avignon or discover the town on their own.

**\* Dinner at La Mirande’s Michelin-starred restaurant in the handsome dining room** In the evening, guests are invited to enjoy a specially prepared dinner at La Mirande in the gourmet dining room or can sample the local gastronomy on their own.



**Friday, April 30: Orange, a World Heritage Site, and Châteauneuf-du-Pape**

**\* Private visit to Château de Barbentane, with Marquise de Puget de Barbentane**

We will be greeted by Marquise de Puget de Barbentane and lead on a private visit of the Château, in the same family since its origins. This “Petit Trianon du Soleil” (Little Trianon of the Sun), featuring classically influenced architecture, was built commencing in 1674 by architect Louis-François de la Valfenière, and was completed at the end of the 18th century.

It is to Joseph-Pierre Balthazar de Puget, Marquis de Barbetane, King Louis XV's Ambassador to Florence, that is owed the remarkable architecture and sumptuous décor, adorned with stucco and striking geometrically patterned Carrare marble floors, creating an exceptional setting, including vaulted ceilings, and the rich Louis XV and Louis XVI period furniture, that is still to be admired. Terraces overlook the formal Italian-style gardens, decorated with sculptures, dominating a park of tercentennial sycamore trees. This residence, considered "the most Italian of the chateaux of Provence".

**\* Private visit to Château de Brantes, featuring one of Provence' spectacular, private gardens, with the proprietors, Count and Countess de Brantes, followed by luncheon**

We will be welcomed by Count and Countess de Brantes and enjoy a private visit and a convivial luncheon in the exceptional setting of this splendid chateau and its park, listed by the French government as one of the "Remarkable Gardens of France".

Château de Brantes was built in 1700 by the del Biancos, a Florentine family, whose ancestors settled in 1600 in the Papal city of Avignon. It was enlarged in 1815 by General de Cessac, Minister of Napoleon I, whose wife was a descendant of the del Bianco and was restored in 1956 by the present owners, descendants of the del Biancos.



The garden is centered around three ornamental ponds, designed by Danish landscape architect Mogens Tvede. From early spring until winter, the borders of this Tuscan-style garden are radiant with flowering camellias, peonies, iceberg rosebushes, Indian hawthorn, marsh mallows, dwarf plumbagos, blue and white agapanthus... amongst immaculate lawns.

**The city of Orange is site of an impressive Triumphal Arch and the semi-circular Antique Roman Theatre, both UNESCO World Heritage sites. With our expert guide, we will visit to the following sites:**

\* **The Triumphal Arch** was built in 20 B.C. on the north side of the city to commemorate the victories of the Second Legion in Roman Gaul. This extremely well preserved monument is older than the three famous Triumphal Arches still standing in Rome. The Arch is amazing by its size (72 feet high, 69 feet wide and 26 feet deep) and by its well preserved sculptures of battle scenes and captured armour, and naval symbols referring to the Emperor Augustus' victory over Antony and Cleopatra. Note that the columns and pediment of the west face are especially well proportioned.

\* **The Antique Theatre** was built during the reign of the Emperor Augustus, this is the only Roman theatre in the world that has an almost complete stage wall. It was originally decorated with marble columns and statues, remnants of which remain. As often the case (as in Lyon), the seating area, accommodating 9,000 spectators, was carved out of an existing hill. On either side of the stage are the "basilicae", 2-storey towers from which minor actors made their entrance. Schedule permitting, we will visit with Didier Repellin, Chief Architect of French Historical Monuments.

**\* Farewell dinner at Château La Nerthe with the Director and David Cobbold, wine & gastronomy expert**

To end your tour in Provence, we are invited to the Château La Nerthe, whose architecture is of classical inspiration and whose wines are considered among the best of Châteauneuf-du-Pape. Christian Voeux, Director of the winery, and David Cobbold, a well-known wine and gastronomy historian and expert, will welcome us for our farewell evening, beginning with a visit to the ancient wine cellars, followed by a wine tasting ceremony, and culminating in a gourmet dinner. This is a rare invitation, as the proprietors are exceptionally opening their residence for us, and a wonderful way to conclude our exclusive program!



**Saturday, May 1**

*After breakfast, we shall bid you "Au Revoir" hoping that you will join us again for another exclusive tour in Europe.*

**New Tour Rate: \$6,000 per person based on double occupancy; \$600 single supplement applies, based on an exchange rate of \$1.38/1 Euro, and a minimum of 12 participants** (maximum 15 participants), plus a tax-deductible \$300 donation to ICA&CA.

**Rate includes:** 6 days of private visits; 6 nights of accommodation in 4-star luxury hotels; all breakfasts; 5 luncheons and 5 dinners; costs involved in the program, including transport to and from events during tour, all private visits, expert guides, etc.

**To assure the Tour Price, please reserve with your 1<sup>st</sup> deposit by March 15<sup>th</sup>.**

**For more information and to reserve, please email or call Pamela Huntington Darling at your earliest convenience. Email: [pdarling@eventsofprestige.com](mailto:pdarling@eventsofprestige.com) . Tel.: Paris: 011 33 1 45 67 62 81.**