

## **2018 Provence Alumni Bike Trip, May 22-June 3**

Led by Paul Davenport, President Emeritus, Western University

### **22 May Tu Depart North America for overnight flight to Paris**

### **23 May We Train to Avignon\*\*\***

We meet at the train station at Paris CDG Airport at 13h00 (1:00 PM); the time is tentative until we get the train schedule for May 2018. We take the TGV 9828 direct to Avignon, leaving (time tentative) at 13h58, arriving Avignon 17h09. A group dinner that night is courtesy of Alumni Travel.

### **24 May Th Bike Avignon - Pont du Gard\*\*\* - Beaucaire\*, 55 km**

We pick up our bikes in the morning and bike to the Pont du Gard, where we visit the spectacular Roman aqueduct. We then bike to our hotel in the center of Beaucaire on the Rhone River.

### **25 May Fr Bike Beaucaire – Arles\*\*\* 18 km**

We visit the Chateau du Roi René\*\* in Tarascon, with a beautiful façade facing the Rhone river, impressive interiors, and great views of the city and river from the terrace. The short bike trip to Arles gives us a full afternoon in that extraordinary Roman city, where we explore a wide range of remarkable monuments, including the Roman arena, the Saint-Trophime Church, and the Theatre Antique.

### **26 May Sa Bike Arles - Fontveille - Les Baux\*\*\* - St. Remy\*, 30 km**

We bike to Fontveille, and visit the Moulin de Daudet, where the great French writer produced some of his most charming stories. We then bike up to Les Baux de Provence\*\*\* and visit one of the greatest of the Provence hilltop villages. We visit *Les Carrières de Lumières*, a most extraordinary sound and light show, where the works of great artists are projected on the walls of enormous galleries dug in in the rock; this is a favorite of all our guests. We carry on to Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, where we visit the Plateau des Antiques\*\*, including a Mausoleum\*\* and Municipal Arch\*, both built by the Romans during the reign of Augustus.

### **27 May Su Bike St Remy – Meillan-Pagès - L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue\*, 48 km**

In the morning we walk through St Remy in the footsteps of Vincent Van Gogh and see outdoor reproductions of his paintings from the year he spent there, May 16, 1889 to May 16, 1890. We visit the Saint-Paul Hospice where he stayed and was treated for mental illness. On our way to L'Isle, we stop for wine-tasting at a local vineyard, the Domaine Meillan-Pagès, and sample some delicious Provencal wine. We then bike to L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue, a lovely town criss-crossed by canals, sometimes described (with charming exaggeration!) as the "Venice of France." We stay here three nights.

**28 May Mo Bike L'Isle - Fontaine de Vaucluse\*- Menerbes\* - L'Isle, 40 km**

We bike to the Fontaine-de-Vaucluse, with its large underground cave from which the Sorgue River rushes out. Along the river is a tribute to the great Provencal poet, Frederic Mistral, whose statue we will have seen in Arles. We then bike to Ménerbes, a lovely hilltop town made famous in the English-speaking world by Peter Mayle's novel, *A Year in Provence*. We bike back to L'Isle in time for the Marché des Producteurs, held Monday evenings in L'Isle from 5:30 to 7:30 pm. We can have a look at what's on sale in an outdoor market as we go to dinner.

**29 May Tu Bike L'Isle – Gordes\*\*- Dom. De la Bastidonne - L'Isle, 43 km**

We bike to the celebrated hilltop city of Gordes, with its chateau, narrow streets, and spectacular views. We will experience a distinct slice of Provencal life at the weekly market with food, clothes, and varied other items for purchase. On our way back to L'Isle we stop at the Domaine de la Bastidonne to taste the excellent wine of that vineyard.

**30 May We L'Isle-Sur-La-Sorgue – Avignon\*\*\*, 23 km.**

We bike to Avignon in the morning, turn in our bikes, and spend the afternoon exploring this great city, which features the Palace of the Popes, the Cathedrale Notre-Dames-des Doms, and the Saint-Bénézet Bridge, famous as the pont d'Avignon where one danced in the children's song: "sur le pont, d'Avignon on y danse, on y danse." The dancing took place, not **on** the bridge, but on an island underneath.

**31 May Th Train Paris.**

On the morning of May 28, we take the train to Paris Gare de Lyon, with cabs to our hotel. During our three days in Paris (May 31 to June 2), we will visit the Orsay Museum, the Orangerie Museum, the Notre Dame Cathedrale, and the Sacre Coeur church, and take a boat ride on the Seine in the evening. Many other optional tours will be offered. And of courses will want to take time for Shopping and exploring Paris on their own.

**3 June Su Guests return to North America.**

Our visit is now over. Some guests may remain in Paris or move on to other countries in Europe.