



FROM JAZZ TO...

HOLIDAYS IN FRANCE... WITH A DIFFERENCE

PART ONE

Tired with touring the châteaux and lying on the Mediterranean beaches every year? Then you need a holiday with a difference!

Jazz workshops or learning to mould soft cheese are just some of the more unusual ways you can spend your annual French break. And don't worry, you won't be missing out on the fun - or the sun. These courses, which are enjoying a boom in popularity, are held in marvellous outdoor settings all over France.

GOATS CHEESE MAKING IN CHARENTE

If you've always hankered after the smell and the taste of France's famous *fromage de chèvre* (goats' cheese), then a stay at *Le Pouvet* might be for you.

Deep in the heart of the Charente département near Confolens, Robin Bettelley and his wife Pat have been making this soft but distinctive cheese since moving to France five years ago to run their own goat farm.

Three-times winners of the British Cheese Awards, the couple

decided to open the doors of their trade to the public two years ago to complement their existing gîte business.

The pair, who hail originally from Gloucestershire, run around six courses a year, usually one-week long, although alternative timescales can be accommodated.

With the help of a herd of prize-winning Anglo-Nubian goats, which give abundant and rich milk, you learn how to make Greek-style yoghurt and handcraft your very own round of goats' cheese. The proud moment at the end of the course is when you are handed your certificate in goats' cheese production.

The cost is 150 euros per person, which includes five days' instruction (two hours each morning) and a light lunch each day. Participants - a maximum of two at any one time - can stay in on-site gîte (b&b) accommodation for a small extra charge. Courses run from April to October.

For further details, telephone or fax Robin Bettelley on: +44 [0] 5 45 31 92 30.

The nearby town of Confolens has since 1958 held a mid-August International Folklore Festival, well worth seeing.

www.festivaldeconfolens.com



GOATS' CHEESE MAKING

By Sharon Black

JAZZ WORKSHOP IN AVEYRON

If your style is more Louis Armstrong however, why not jazz up your annual holiday with a touch of music instruction from one of Britain's foremost jazz musicians?

High on the plains of the rugged Massif Central, in the Aveyron 25 kms from Villefranche de Rouergue, Barry and Suzanne Bawtree host workshops for their summer guests with jazz supremo Patrick Baring.

Your Tutor

Patrick Baring studied piano and improvisation in New York (Juillard Conservatory), formed a Jazz Combo there and returned to UK to become co-music director of the experimental Theatre Club at Oxford University.

He then formed a Jazz Trio, which included drummer Mike Leander (writer and arranger for the Beatles), whilst continuing his piano studies in London with Alan Clare, accompanist to Stéphane Grapelli. He also associated with Benny Goodman, George Shearing and Al Grey. Patrick played jazz at Glyndebourne and continues assisting members of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra with their techniques in Jazz Idiom.

Your Venue

The venue is a spacious and modernised stone farmhouse and outbuildings arranged around the shaded courtyard. Aptly named Les Chataîgniers (chestnuts are the main local crop), it lies in 15 acres of meadows and woods in the hilltop hamlet of Campels. All downstairs reception rooms have original beamed

ceilings, whilst the bedrooms all offer ensuite facilities. Non-playing partners are also welcome as there is a lot to do locally. On-site French lessons, not to mention percussion are some the activities proposed. You can dip in the pool, laze in the sunshine or walk/bike in this lovely region of magnificent beech woods and steep valleys. Visits to a picturesque pilgrims' town, (Conques) Roquefort, home to the blue cheese manufacturing and Cordes, the last stand of the Cathars are all within easy driving distance.

Your Day

Workshops are aimed at the competent (around Grade 5) musician. However, rusty childhood players and jazz beginners are welcome. The emphasis is on fun rather than strict musicianship.

Tuition is provided three hours a day for four days of guests' seven-day stay. In addition, there are visits to various local jazz events - and, of course, plenty of informal jamming sessions, with the local folks too.

PRACTICAL INFO

The cost is approximately £500 for a week, which includes accommodation and all meals - mostly taken on the deck under the stars, as well as two restaurant outings.

Course dates are flexible and tailored to demand (the minimum number of participants is 10). You bring your own instrument(s) although keyboard hire can be arranged.

Contact Barry and Suzanne at Vacances Veritables on: +44 [0] 5 65 81 45 85 for more information or visit www.vacancesveritables.com