



*Magnifique villa en front de mer à louer sur l'île de Ré - Luxurious Beachfront villa for Rent on Ile de Ré, France*

## February 2016 NEWSLETTER

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### **BOOK NOW FOR 2016!**

Now is the time to plan for 2016 if you want to travel in high season or if you have special needs. Book now and you'll get a better service. Advance planning is best for rentals in July and August, typically the most popular months. And, I am noticing that even late June is starting to book up as well. This is particularly important if you are hoping to book two or more consecutive weeks and if you are looking for a large house (one sleeping 12 or more). I get enquiries as early as September the year before! The French know that early planning is helpful especially now that Ile de Ré has become such an exclusive place.

### **PRODUCTS OF THE TERROIR**

#### **Wines**

The Cistercian monks who came to Ile de Ré in the 12<sup>th</sup> century quickly realized that the island's different types of soil, the influence of the Gulf Stream and plentiful sunshine (over 2,600 hours a year) combined to create the ideal conditions for growing vines. At present the vines occupy 650 hectares (1,606 acres) of land mostly in the southern part of the island and produce approximately 2 million bottles a year. Half is planted with white grape varieties such as Chardonnay, Sauvignon, Colombard and Ungni Blanc, while the other half is given over to black grape varieties such as merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Négrette. All the island's grape growers belong to the UNIRE cooperative. Much has been done to improve the quality of the wines produced, including red, white and Rosé "Soif d'évasion" and Rosé des Dunes (drunk with fish and grills). The signature product is white and rosé Pineau Ilrhéa (from Rhéa, the old name for Ré). Mellow, gold and white tea in colour with vanilla aromas "40° Sud" cognac is very good served chilled as an aperitif. After dinner, a lightly warmed caramel-coloured "Gouverneur VSOP" is ideal while the 3-star "Gouverneur" can be used in cocktails or to flmabé shrimps, lobster, bananas and crêpes. Ile de Ré XO" and "Ile de Ré Fine Island" have been specifically developed for the **Maison Camus cognac firm**.

## **Potatoes**

Ile de Ré produces an early potato the qualities of which were officially recognised in 1998 when it became the first potato to receive a French PDO (Protected Designation of origin, European Union quality scheme) label. The island's mild climate, generous amounts of sunshine, unique growing conditions and natural environment are responsible for the very special flavour of this potato. To produce their 2,500 tonnes of precious tubers, 35 farmers cultivate 150 hectares (371 acres) by rotation within the 900-hectare (2,224 acres) PDO area. At one time it was the only cash crop. Its inimitable taste is regularly checked by an official tasting panel and monitored by the French PDO organisation, the Institut National des Appellations d'Origine et de la Qualité. To maintain their early-crop status they must be harvested and sold before 31 July inclusive of the year of harvest. There are two early-producing varieties, the first being the light yellow-fleshed Alcmaria that reaches the markets from mid-April. It has an almost melt-in-the-mouth texture and is wonderful when steamed. It is followed by the Charlotte variety, available from mid-May to late June. Its firm yellow flesh means it can be cooked in a variety of ways. The new potatoes should be kept in the dark and used at the most nine days after being picked and packed.

## **LA ROCHELLE, WHAT A LOVELY STOPOVER!**

For 1,000 years La Rochelle, "the rebel city" has had a unique history: democratic ahead of time (its first mayor was elected in 1199); protestant while the rest of France was catholic; protected by kings while the country was submitted to considerable taxes... History shows La Rochelle's uniqueness through the centuries.

### **10<sup>th</sup> century**

A fisherman's village emerged from a small rock after which la Rochelle is named.

### **Privileges and liberties**

In 1130 a Charter of commune granted by Guillaume X, Duke of Aquitaine, enabled La Rochelle to free itself from feudal protection and benefit from wide ranging liberties. The Charter was confirmed by Aliénor d'Aquitaine in 1199.

### **An important commercial harbour**

Salt and wine trade made la Rochelle an important port on the Atlantic coast. From the 13<sup>th</sup> century close commercial links developed with England, Flanders and the Baltic countries.

### **La Rochelle, a protestant city**

The new independent town naturally adopted the Reformation's ideas. From 1540, La Rochelle became the stronghold of Protestantism, the "Geneva of the Atlantic."

### **The Great Siege of 1627-1628**

Being a threat to the policy of unification conducted by Richelieu, La Rochelle was besieged by Royal troops. Driven to starvation the town was forced to capitulate after 13 months of siege and lost its privileges, fortifications and political organisation.

## **The New World**

Thanks to maritime trade, La Rochelle regained prosperity. In 1630 regular links developed with New England (Canada) and the West Indies. Trade flourished opening up new horizons. Intellectual and artistic influence gained strength in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

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## **From the First Empire to the Second World War**

During the Empire wars La Rochelle lost its prominence. The town recovered with the creation of La Pallice harbour in 1890 that the Germans used as a submarine base during WWII. In 1945, La Rochelle was the last Prefecture to be freed.

## **La Rochelle today**

Great developments have emerged over the last years: extension of the commercial port, improvement in roads and rail networks (with the TGV), increased congress facilities, a multidisciplinary university, the Michel Crépeau médiathèque. La Rochelle's population has increased up to 80,000 inhabitants in town.

## **The sea above all**

Trade, cruises, yachting, fishing, La Rochelle is the inevitable place to go on the Atlantic coast. Its four ports make it one of the most important French harbour towns in terms of economy and tourism.

## **Architectural heritage**

With its arcade streets, half-timbered medieval houses covered with slates, fine Renaissance homes and 18th century residences, sober and noble town mansions from ship-owners, La Rochelle can boast a prestigious patrimony that has been preserved and highlighted through the years.

## **Great events**

Many events unique in France with national or international standing take place here in La Rochelle: the Sunny Side of the Doc (documentary film festival), the International Film Festival, the Francofolies (music festival), the Fiction TV Festival, the Grand Pavois, the "JAZZ entre les 2 Tours" jazz festival, the Adventure Documentary Film Festival, the Autumn Rallye, the Marathon ...

## **Nature and ecology**

Whether oceanic or Mediterranean, well ordered or simply informal, La Rochelle's 350 ha of parks and gardens invite one for a stroll or a rest.

## **Atmosphere**

The successful union of boutiques and historic centre, the market's colours, the old port and its terraces, good tables and a rich, eclectic night life: that's what make La Rochelle's atmosphere unique.

## **A business destination**

La Rochelle is an ideal setting for combining business and leisure. Conferences, seminars, conventions and meetings benefit from good amenities and quality sites.

Make sure you visit **La Rochelle's official website**.

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## **LA ROCHELLE'S UNIQUE ART DE VIVRE ALSO APPLIES TO TRANSPORT**

Only one number: Information/reservation: 0810 17 18 17 and **web address**.

### **The Yellow Bikes**

La Rochelle is particularly fond of bikes. In 1976 the town created the now famous yellow bikes... Use them to discover the town in a different way.

### **All year round, Place de Verdun**

Monday through Saturday 9:15am to 12.15pm and 1:50pm to 6pm

Closed Sundays and bank holidays except from 13 April to 31 August (same timetable)

May, June and September, Quai Valin

Monday through Sunday 9:00am to 12:30pm and 1:30pm to 7pm

### **The Electric "Passeur" (the smuggler)**

A clean mode of transport using electro-solar energy, with better access for the disabled, bikes and push-chairs... connecting the old Port to the Ville-en-Bois district.

### **Taxi Yelo**

The town's transport service 24/24 and 7/7

A maximum of 4 people share the price. Registered card (20€) valid one year, free for "transport public" subscribers showing a valid annual or monthly ticket. (from 6 to 10€).

### **Electric Vehicles**

Available 7/7 and 24/24 in a growing number of stations in La Rochelle and 18 other towns around.

## **OUR PROPERTIES**

### **In Paris**

#### **The Apartment**

#### **The studio**

### **At Le Cannet, Cannes**

#### **The Villa**

**On Ile de Ré,**

**The Villa**

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