

## A FEAST OF ORNAMENT THE GARDENS OF THE DORDOGNE

TUESDAY 5 – SUNDAY 10 JUNE 2018 (6 DAYS)

LECTURER: CAROLINE HOLMES

£2480

- Discover the gardens of the Dordogne, many viewed privately
- Opportunity to view spectacular prehistoric cave art
- Private lunches & dinners in many of the gardens we shall visit
- Dine in a Michelin-starred restaurant
- Well-appointed hotel in handsome grounds in charming Tremolat



Le Chartreuse du Colombier

### OVERVIEW

More than any other French region, the Dordogne's fertile landscapes offer an unparalleled and glorious array of gardens. The settings lend themselves to picturesque *parcs*, their properties surrounded by drifts of wonderful flowers, often guarded by clipped and coiffed topiary masterpieces. While many of the gardens are truly historic, there are also some fine examples of contemporary design and planting – in effect, something to suit all tastes?

Le Manoir d'Eyrignac is a master class in the art of topiary whilst the gardens at Château de Hautefort display immaculate examples of the decorative parterres for which France is justly famed. Les Jardins de Cadiot are a riot of flowers and la Chartreuse du Colombier is full of diversity with avenues, deep beds, a potager and a Baroque pavilion. Indeed, it is just one of several gardens where we shall dine privately with the owners. Then there is the excitement of visiting the Latour-Marliac Nursery which supplied Monet with his famous water lilies. Our visit in early June is an invitation to discover landscapes consummately tended, where the sharp lines of French geometric formality will frequently be softened by informal and exuberant flowerbeds inspired by English gardening traditions.

Périgord Noir will be our main area of concentration, its name derived from the dense forests of the black trunked oak. Our horticultural theme will be complemented by more historic encounters as we explore sites which will include the amazing Palaeolithic Age painted caves at Les Eyzies-de-Tayac. From the tenth century the Dordogne was on one of the lucrative pilgrim's route to St James' shrine at Compostela. Income from pilgrims led to the building of many influential churches in the 'Périgord' version of Romanesque and later on, the flamboyant Gothic styles. The many castles we shall see on our travels are potent reminders that English history is intertwined with this region, given it was part of Eleanor of Aquitaine's dowry when she married Henry II. So, it is not just horticultural roots which we shall discover...

We shall stay at the **4\* Hotel Vieux Logis**, ideally located in the small village of Tremolat within easy walking distance of one of the loveliest stretches of the Dordogne river. This restored farmhouse retains the ambiance of a family home, set within formal gardens and it has an outdoor swimming pool and a highly regarded 1\* Michelin-rated restaurant. The village has a pretty square, a handful of restaurants and a handsome Romanesque church.

### ITINERARY OUTLINE

**Day 1:** Tuesday 5 June – We fly from Gatwick to **Bordeaux** arriving in the morning. We drive to **Temple-sur-Lot** to visit the serene **Latour-Marliac Nursery** which thrives today as a *jardin remarquable*. Bory Latour-Marliac supplied water lilies to Monet and myriad customers across North America. After some free time for lunch (not included) we travel northwards to **Tremolat** and our hotel, the **4\* Vieux Logis**. In the evening we have dinner in the hotel's Michelin-starred restaurant – water, wine and coffee are included with all group lunches and dinners.

**Day 2:** Wednesday 6 June – Today we visit three gardens in the east of **Périgord**. Our first is a celebration of superb gardening skills at the immaculately landscaped **Le Manoir d'Eyrignac** at **Salignac-Eyvignes**. Our garden visit will include a private tour of the Manoir with the owner, which is not open to the public. After an early lunch on site (not included) we travel to **Carlux** to visit **Les Jardins de Cadiot**. In contrast to the broad sweep of our first garden's setting, this is a combination of ten small garden rooms surrounded by an oak wood. We end our first full day at the hamlet of **Veyrignac** with a private visit to the gardens of **Château de Veyrignac**. Here we shall find a delightful and elegant modern, formal garden, surrounding the eighteenth century château, overlooking the Dordogne River. We return to our hotel where the evening will be free.

**Day 3:** Thursday 7 June – The Vézère River flows into the Dordogne from the north-east. We shall follow its course upstream to **Thonac** and a private visit to **Château de Losse**. Built in the fifteenth century, the strategic importance of Losse is marked by its deep moat, thick walls and one of the largest castle gates in south-west France. Completed in 1576 by Jean II de Losse, tutor to Henry IV, the interiors are Renaissance in design and furnished with handsome tapestries and a few important pictures. Equally the gardens, classed *jardin remarquable*, are in Italian Renaissance style, created by the current owner who will guide us round the château and host our private lunch in the gardens. In the afternoon we visit the **Font-de-Gaume Cave** at **Les Eyzies-de-Tayac**, a brief diversion from our gardens theme and one of the remarkable Palaeolithic discoveries dotted around this part of Périgord. We venture one hundred and twenty metres into one of the finest Palaeolithic cave sanctuaries in the world to admire a procession of painted representations of reindeer, bison, horses and mammoths dating back some fourteen thousand years. After this astonishing private visit, we return to Tremolat where the evening will be free.

**Day 4:** Friday 8 June – We drive to the north-east of the Vézère Valley to **Terrasson-Lavilledieu** and **Les Jardins de l'Imaginaire**. Inspired by contemporary garden concepts of beauty, symmetry and even poetry, the town of Terrasson commissioned American landscape designer Kathryn Gustafson to create a garden that pays homage to Terrasson and Périgord in a wonderful panoramic location overlooking Terrasson itself. There will be some free time for lunch (not included) after which we travel northwards to **Château de Hautefort**. Originally the stronghold of the Viscounts of Limoges, the first equerry to Louis XIII's wife Queen Anne of Austria, Marquis Jacques-François de Hautefort, bought and extended the château in 1656. In 1929 the new owner, Baron Henry de Bastard, laid out the heraldic and decorative parterre gardens in the French manner. After our visit to some of the château's rooms and the splendid gardens we return to our hotel where the evening will be free.

**Day 5:** Saturday 9 June – On this half day we visit **Les Jardins de Marqueyssac** at **Vézac**. Located at the edge of a rocky outcrop, these modern hanging gardens present an astonishing array of topiary, overlooking the Dordogne from multiple *belvedere*. We pause for lunch (not included) at handsome **Sarlat**, the Medieval capital of Périgord Nord, before returning to the hotel where the afternoon will be free. In the evening we travel the very short distance to **Paunat** and a private visit to **Les Jardins de la Chartreuse du Colombier**. The French owner has created formal pavilions, deep English-style herbaceous beds and French Baroque-style topiary in a garden which continues to develop. He will also host our final dinner in the garden.

**Day 6:** Sunday 10 June – We depart late morning and travel to the hamlet of **Cadouin** to visit the **Abbaye de Cadouin**. Founded in 1115, this simple Romanesque church is noted for its very fine late Gothic cloisters, one of the finest ecclesiastical spaces in Aquitaine. We continue west of Bergerac to **Vélines** and our final private garden visit, **Les Jardins de Sardy**. The French owner maintains his mother's garden - a veritable homage to French, English and Italian traditions. After our final lunch in the garden we continue into central **Bordeaux** where there will be some free time. Early evening, we drive the short distance to Bordeaux airport and our flight to Gatwick.

## PRACTICALITIES

**Price** £2480

**Price without flights** £2370

**Deposit** £300

**Single Supplement** £295 Double for Sole Use, £535 Double/Twin in Grand Standing Room

**Hotel** 5 nights with breakfast at 4\* Hotel Vieux Logis at Tremolat. Upgrade to Junior Suite £425 per room

**Flights** British Airways

Outward: **BA2786** Depart Gatwick (South Terminal) **0635**, arrive Bordeaux **0910**

Return: **BA2789** Depart Bordeaux **2310**, arrive Gatwick (South Terminal) **2345**

**Price includes** Accommodation at Gatwick on 4 June, 2 dinners & 2 lunches with water, wine & coffee, all local transfers, entry fees & gratuities, the services of Caroline Holmes & Tour Manager James Hill

**Not included** Travel to/from Heathrow, 3 dinners & 4 lunches



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