

Vézelay

Avallon

Morvan

Soyons

# Vézelay, the eternal hill

and its surrounding area

## **Vézelay, one of France's most beautiful villages**

A major site of Christianity since the Middle Ages due to the cult of Mary Magdalene's relics, Vézelay is also one of the main rallying points for the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela.

In Vézelay, Saint Bernard preached the Second Crusade in 1146. Philippe August and Richard the Lion Heart met here before embarking on the Third Crusade in 1190. In 1217, Franciscans founded the very first French Franciscan monastery where the Chapel of the Cordelle now stands. King St Louis came on several occasions to Vézelay to meditate.

Middle-Ages and modern time mingle in Vézelay. Old houses in terraced rows built on the hillside over magnificent arched cellars where pilgrims could find shelter throughout the centuries, alley ways winding through gardens, rampart walkway and ancient gates... are all part of what makes Vézelay one of France's most beautiful villages.



**La Tourelle Gaillon**  
15th century corbelled out tower in rue St Pierre



**La Porte neuve**  
16th century fortified gate on the northern ramparts



**La Chapelle de la Cordelle**  
Situated on the north side of the hill. First Franciscan hermitage in France

## **The Basilica, masterpiece of Romanesque art**

The Basilica originally a simple Benedictine monastery founded in the 9th century became a major shrine of Christianity in the Middle Ages with Mary Magdalene's relics. The front is somber and humble, and the general design is a Latin cross. Walking round the Basilica gives an idea of the size of the building which 120 m long.

Inside this huge Romanesque vessel the light illuminates the stone constantly and during the Summer solstice the sunlight draws a path of light down the center of the nave. Saved from ruin and oblivion in the 19th century by the architect Viollet-le-Duc, the Basilica of Vézelay has been classified as World Heritage Site since 1979.

Since the 11th century Vézelay has been one of the four major starting points in France of the pilgrim route to Santiago de Compostela.

Since 2005 it is possible to walk from Vézelay to Assisi in Italy, birthplace of saint Francis of Assisi, the founder of the Franciscan order.



**Le narthex**  
A place where pilgrims could prepare themselves at the front of the nave. On the tympanum of the arched door stands the Christ in his glory.



**Chemin de lumière**  
The path of light. On the 21st of June, at noon solar time, the sun shines through the high stained glass windows making a path of light on the floor of the nave.

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**La crypte**  
Located under the altar the crypt contains Mary Magdalene's relics.

### ***Vézelay, a hill where artists meet***

#### **Le Musée Zervos (Zervos Museum)**

The museum situated in the writer Romain Rolland's former house has an impressive modern art collection including paintings from Calder, Giacometti, Kandinsky, Miro, Léger and Picasso.

Open from March 15th to November 15th.

[www.musee-zervos.fr](http://www.musee-zervos.fr)

#### **La Maison de "La Goulotte" (The Goulotte's House)**

Christian and Yonne Zervos' former home is at 3km from Vézelay. It is now the Zervos' Foundation headquarters where exhibitions take place in the summer and where artists can stay and work. Open in the Summer. [www.fondationzervos.com](http://www.fondationzervos.com)

#### **Le Musée de l'Oeuvre - Viollet-le-Duc (Museum of Viollet-le-Duc's works)**

In the two rooms inside the former monks' dormitory an exhibition of medieval sculptures and Viollet le Duc's molding works. Open every day in July and August from 2.00 pm till 6.00 pm and WE from April to September 30th.

#### **La Maison Jules-Roy (Jules Roy's house)**

With its windows facing the Basilica, Jules Roy's former office is preserved as the writer left it when he died in 2000. Beautiful terraced garden with a view.

Open from Wednesday to Sunday from 1st April till 31st October. [www.lyonne.com](http://www.lyonne.com)

### ***Writers, musicians, painters ... have been charmed by Vézelay. Some were just passing by and other decided to live there ...***

Girard Roussillon, Saint Bernard de Clairvaux, Le roi Louis VII, Le roi Philippe Auguste, Richard Cœur de lion, Le roi Louis 9th or Saint Louis, Théodore de Bèze, Maréchal Vauban, Prosper Mérimée, Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, Romain Rolland , Paul Claudel, D.E. Ingelbrecht, Le Corbusier, Yvonne et Christian Zervos, Jules Roy, Max – Pol Fouchet, Georges Bataille, Maurice Druon, Maurice Clavel, Mstislav Rostropovitch...

### ***Vézelay has hosted film shootings such as :***

La grande Vadrouille (1966)

Mon oncle Benjamin (1969)

### ***Vézelay's vineyards and surrounding area, from vines to gastronomy.***

Vines in the Vézelay area date as far back as the Gallo-Roman era, and now include up to a hundred hectares in the neighbouring area of Asquins, Saint-Père, Tharoiseau and Vézelay. In 2017, Vézelay's vineyards obtained the designation "AOC Vézelay" and became the 44th designation "village de Bourgogne".

Several varieties of grapes are produced in the area: Chardonnay, Melon and Pinot Noir. Talking about food and wine, Burgundian specialties can be appreciated in local restaurants: oeufs en meurette, ie poached eggs in red wine sauce, boeuf bourguignon, jambon persillé, ie ham sprinkled with chopped parsley or jambon à la Chablisienne, ie ham cooked with Chablis white wine, gougères, viande de charolais, ie Charolais meat ... and a large variety of cheeses and berry based desserts.



#### **To be seen :**

**By car :** vinyard circuit in the surrounding area of Vézelay

**By foot :** vineyards circuit (12km)

## Genuine villages in Vézelay's surrounding area

### Châtel-Censoir :

Saint-Potentien collegiate church with its crypt and the Nivernais Canal going through the town.

### Asquins :

Saint-Jacques church built between the 12th and the 13th centuries, ranked among the UNESCO World Heritage Sites as part of Santiago de Compostela pathways. You will find inside 18th century woodwork and a 16th reliquary bust.

### Tharoiseau :

"Croix Montjoie" with a cross of and a beautiful view of Vézelay.

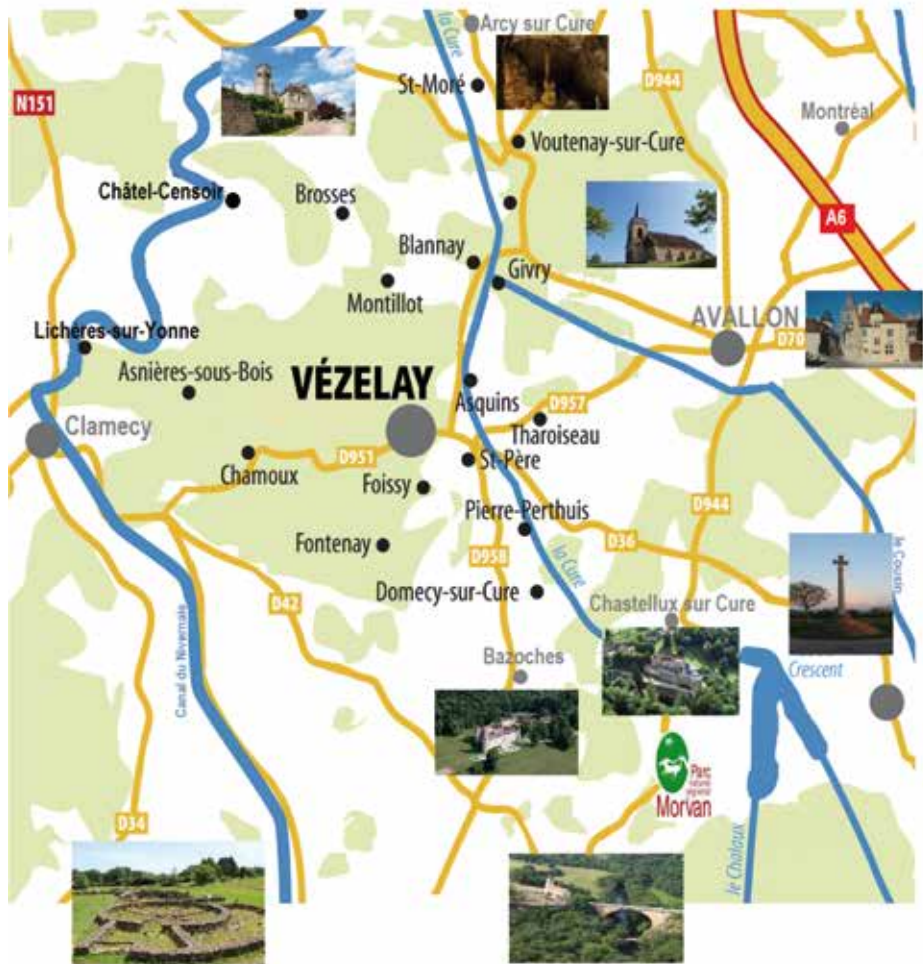
### Saint-Père :

the "Fontaines Salées" archaeological site of an ancient Gallo-Roman spa where water springs were used since the Neolithic age. It has now a fully refurbished museum.

A gothic church "Our Lady" ranked among France's Historical Monuments with a porch above a 13th century tombstone.

### Pierre-Perthuis :

steep cliffs and two overlapping bridges over the river Cure.



## Vézelay's surrounding area, a living territory and community.

Vézelay and its surrounding area are the north-west boarder of the Morvan Nature Regional Park. This protected area is a heaven for cycling, walking, horse riding, rock climbing and water sports. Lots of foot paths are marked throughout the area. The diversity of activities combines with the opportunity to discover the exceptional cultural and architectural heritage.

In the high season many events are organized: concerts in the Basilica and surrounding churches, outdoors theatre, night visits, conferences and theme evenings, village fairs, car boot-sales and markets.



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