



To benefit the Village Dans l'intérêt du Village

July 2011

Many changes

President's word

It certainly is the season of change, the mayor has declared that tourism is indispensable to the village economy and has set about making the village more attractive to tourists.

When we came to Marseillan in 1990 there were six restaurants and five bars. Today there are eight restaurants and two cafes at the port alone.

In the village are seven restaurants, three cafes, one pizza take away and restaurant, three sandwich bars and four bars. (The cafes double as drinking places but are not bars in the classic sense.)

Then there are the cosmetic changes - pretty floral displays and huge flowerpots at the port, and a shining new church square.

Two new car parks have been created. One on the lower road to the Plage, behind the brewery and another where a block of toilets and offices stood in the church square.

A seasonal tourist office has opened in the foyer of the theatre. Seven ladies comprise the tourist hostesses, divided between the office at the Plage and the one in the village. All speak English, and some other languages as well.

But there is still no sign of any English in the Hôtel de Ville - nor has their communications improved. We have not received the leaflets that were promised in April, and the Mediatech has not been informed of the tourist office opening in the theatre.

There is a lot to do to get Marseillan's tourist marketing on a sound footing.

Patricia

Some of the changes

The church square is now set with gleaming cobbles and we await the third and final tranche of the work in the autumn.

The church inner doors are now oak to replace the hideous plastic. But they are glazed with smoked glass and so the twilight that so enhanced the stained glass windows has not been restored.

A drive has been announced to make the village handicapped friendly. A special track has been laid at the Plage to facilitate handicapped people accessing the beach and sea.

New security lockers have been installed at the Plage so valuables can be safeguarded.

Camping car restrictions are now in place to prevent access to non-approved sites. A new park for camping cars has been created beside the tourist office at the Plage. This has spaces for 122 cars each of whom can stay for three days.

The Mayor's bridge over the Canal du Midi is now open, but the old one is still in place. Will it be demolished ?

There is still a lot to be done since the new bridge is not finished (just open) and the towpath has to provide for cyclists. Still, it seems that the end-of-the-year finish will be achieved.

The bus station in Marseillan Ville is moving to the parking outside the old Champion. It is not clear if there will be an office or just an open site as now.

Several new games have been added to the Tabarka park. It is now really well equipped and much used.

An improved web site for the village is at www.marseillan.com.

There will be heavy publicity for Marseillan at Vias airport. It now has 180,000 passengers a year and services to seven destinations.

A bus service now runs from Vias airport to Marseillan

French marketing & advertising

Coming from a marketing background it is frustrating to suffer typical French promotion. The main problem is that they like things to be pretty. Thus the message is too often obscured by the design.

A flyer for a tourist site may well be very attractive, but it may not stand out from the others when in a tourist information office... and often the key information such as where the site is located will be almost an afterthought at the foot of the reverse side.

And it may be printed white out of grey!

Looking for a particular shop one may drive slowly along a road, locate the shop and hunt for parking.

Then walk back to the shop to find a small envelope stuck in the window with a message in handwritten biro: *ferme exceptionnelle* (closed).

Why not make it big enough to be read from a distance ?

Somehow the message has become confused. The medium is important, it has to look good. The message has to fit the client not the medium.

Onglous

Lo Cridaire is the monthly magazine produced by the Mayor. In the current issue Marseillan Historique has been featured, and given a full page spread.

This is what was said....

Marseillan is a typical Languedocian coastal village with her ports, her centuries old buildings and her vineyards. The ancient village has retained her unique ambiance as a centre for her fishermen and farmers who are lovingly attached to their holdings.

On the other side of the Etang de Thau glorious beaches line the Mediterranean. These attract floods of summer visitors who appreciate what was the first seaside resort - created in the 1960s.

Marseillan's location, with the Plage separated from the village provides a wide range of interests that attract a variety of visitors and has encouraged many to settle in the village or to buy second homes here.

Mike and Patricia Worsam fell under Marseillan's spell when they were looking for a home in France. They crossed from England and travelled the coast from Bordeaux to Biarritz without finding anything suitable. Then they began their search again in Perpignan

and came along the coast until they reached Marseillan. Then they felt they had arrived.

They have now been here for over 20 years.

Mike was Head of Management at Croydon Business School whilst Patricia worked in the Running Wardrobe of the English National Opera at the Coliseum in the heart of London.

For them retirement meant taking up an interest in the culture and history of their new home.

First they wrote a short history of Marseillan, and then began to take visitors on walking tours around the village.

Some 5 years ago they founded Marseillan Historique which works in English to help welcome English speaking visitors to Marseillan. Their regular tours of the village and port allows them to share their love for, and knowledge of, the village they have adopted.

Associations

PLEINS FEUX SUR.....

MARSEILLAN HISTORIQUE

Cité du littoral languedocien, Marseillan feure bon un art de vivre typiquement méditerranéen. Avec ses ports, ses bâtisses séculaires et ses rangs de vigne plantés sur les rives de l'étang de Thau, son vieux village a conservé l'âme d'un havre de pêcheurs et de viticulteurs attachés à leur terre et à leurs traditions. De l'autre côté de la lagune, la plage de sable fin attire chaque année un flot de touristes venus apprécier les nombreux atouts de la station balnéaire. Cette configuration géographique particulière a su préserver l'authenticité d'une ville fière de son passé.




Et ce sont certainement tous ces atouts qui ont poussé Mike et Patricia Worsam à venir s'installer ici. Venus d'Angleterre, ils ont traversé la Manche, il y a vingt ans. De Bordeaux à Agde, en passant par Biarritz, ils ont fait escale à Marseillan et décidé d'y poser leurs valises définitivement. Il y a « quelques » années, Mike était professeur et responsable des universités de Londres, tandis que Patricia officiait à l'Opéra National Anglais. Pour eux, la retraite rime avec partage, culture et patrimoine... Depuis cinq ans ils ouvrent pour la promotion de Marseillan avec des visites commentées en langue anglaise organisées à la belle saison par leur association « Marseillan Historique ».

Un grand merci à ces Marseillanais de cœur qui sont aujourd'hui de précieux ambassadeurs de notre ville.

ils divulguent l'histoire locale aux anglophones résidents et aux étrangers de passage, en faisant partager leur engagement pour notre culture.

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ils ont pignon sur rue avec leur accueil touristique et peuvent recevoir et renseigner les anglophones qui le désirent. Grâce à eux plus de 2000 touristes ont découvert l'histoire de notre cité. Ils sont également à l'origine d'un « guide de la ville » en langue anglaise très utile pour les étrangers qui ne parlent pas le français.

Leur initiative altruiste ne s'arrête pas là puisque chaque année ils font profiter une association caritative de la commune des dons généreux laissés par les touristes anglophones reconnaissants.

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Marseillanais de cœur et d'engagement

They are highly respected for their welcome to visitors and for their willingness to give assistance and information to them. Their Guide to Marseillan is especially useful to visitors who have little or no French.

Their altruistic initiative does not stop there because each year the commune receives a generous donation that is generated by their activities

A big thank you to these caring Marseillanais who are precious ambassadors for our village.

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