



# BRÈVE

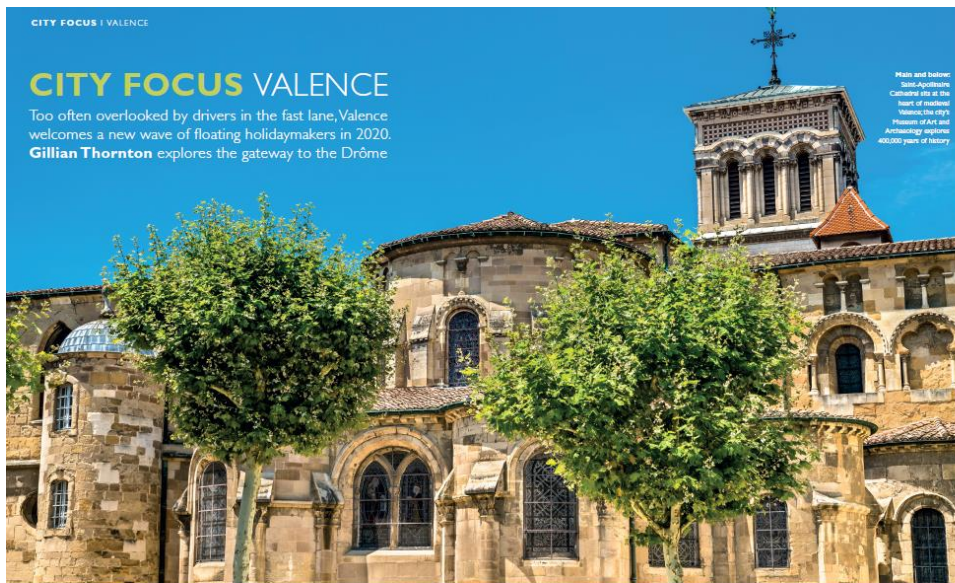
Le 4 mars 2020

## Focus sur Valence dans France Today

Après *The Telegraph* sur les 20 destinations mondiales à visiter en 2020, c'est au tour du magazine *France Today* de février-mars de consacrer un **dossier de 3 pages à Valence**, suite à la visite du Musée de Valence et de la Ville par la journaliste Gillian Thornton.

Bimestriel international tiré à 37 000 exemplaires (source : ABC), [France Today](#) est consacré au tourisme, à la culture et à l'art de vivre français. Il est **vendu dans une trentaine de pays à travers le monde dont la Chine, le Japon, Dubaï, Hong Kong, l'Australie et la Nouvelle-Zélande.**

**La gastronomie, les espaces verts et le patrimoine culturel de la ville sont salués par la journaliste, qui place le Musée de Valence dans le top 5 des expériences à vivre dans la région, aux côtés du Musée international de la chaussure ou de la Cité du chocolat Valrhôna.**



CITY FOCUS | VALENCE

### CITY FOCUS VALENCE

Too often overlooked by drivers in the fast lane, Valence welcomes a new wave of floating holidaymakers in 2020. Gillian Thornton explores the gateway to the Drôme

Main and below: Saint-Apollinaire Cathedral sits at the heart of medieval Valence; the city's Museum of Art and Archaeology celebrates 6000 years of history

**N**estled on the eastern bank of the Rhône, Valence has long boasted the river's largest marina for private craft. Just south of the city, the Port de l'Éperverie is a popular and affordable mooring spot just one hour from the Mediterranean. But in summer 2020, this relaxing small city will host a new audience of floating holidaymakers with the fresh opening of moorings for river cruise operators near the city centre.

Roman Valentia grew steadily thanks to its strategic location at the confluence of the Rhône and Isère but, in recent years, the city's enviable position has often worked against it. Sandwiched between the cultural and gastronomic big hitters that is Lyon and the allure of Provence to the south, Valence is too often bypassed by travellers whizzing past on the A7 Autoroute du Soleil.

However, make a tiny detour and you'll be well rewarded by the prefecture of the Drôme, the leading organic département in France. Within minutes of turning off the motorway, I was parking up behind the Four-star Hôtel de France on Boulevard Général de Gaulle in Valence city centre. Ten years ago, this broad boulevard was infamous

for its heavy traffic but the opening of a second bridge south of Valence provided cars with easy access to the ring road, and now Boulevard Général de Gaulle has been transformed into a pleasant tree-lined avenue. Right at its heart, the Hôtel de France's contemporary rooms, quiet terraces and private car park make a great base for exploring on foot.

Cross the road from the hotel and you are plunged into the medieval quarter, now largely pedestrianised and offering tempting bistrotique and café terraces. Look out for the Maison des Têtes, a sumptuous property with an interior courtyard and some eye-catching sculpted heads that was built as a private mansion at the beginning of the Renaissance.

#### A RICH HISTORY OF ART

At the heart of the medieval town stands the Romanesque Cathedral of Saint-Apollinaire and, next to it, in the former Bishop's Palace, the Museum of Art and Archaeology (well worth an hour or two of anyone's time). On the third floor, a purpose-built gallery flooded with natural light is home to mosaics lifted from a villa near the city. And

look out for the seemingly insignificant piece of bone believed to be the earliest known calendar. Head to the rooftop platform for a sweeping river and city panorama, then work your way down through the art treasures, making sure to stop at the collection of paintings by 18th-century artist Hubert Robert. Appointed Keeper of the King's Pictures by Louis XVI and famous for his scenes of romantic ruins, "Robert des Ruines" was imprisoned in 1793 during the Revolution, but was later part of the founding committee for the Louvre.

Valence has a substantial student population, which makes for a buzzing café lifestyle, so it's the perfect location for Brasserie la Valentinoise, a craft brewery in rue Sabaterie run by local lad Cyril Faure. Choose from six organic house brews plus seasonal specialities, which are also on sale in bars and restaurants around the town.

But don't worry that you've over-indulged when you find yourself in "Place Charles Aznavour, named after the French-Armenian crooner who died in 2018. Behind this shady space, the refurbished Armenian Heritage Centre celebrates the history of the people who fled the genocide of 1915, arriving by boat at Marseille and following the Rhône inland. A tenth of Valencians are of Armenian origin. »

VALENCE | CITY FOCUS

### 5 MUST-DO EXPERIENCES

History buffs, active types and galloping gourmets rejoice – Valence has plenty to keep all of you entertained. Your only problem will be deciding what to do first. To help you out, we've put together our top five very favourite things to do, just to get you started...

**MUSEUM OF ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY**  
Soak up 400,000 years of history and six centuries of art across five floors in the elegant surroundings of the former Episcopal palace. This vast mansion is surrounded by a courtyard and gardens overlooking the Rhône. [www.musee-valence.fr](http://www.musee-valence.fr)

**EXPLORE BY BIKE**  
Five an electric bike from Carbone Zéro beside the city centre train station for a pay-free peddle around town or a ride along the ValRhône cycle track. Head south for long enough and you'll meet the 'Real English' option. [www.carbone-zero.fr](http://www.carbone-zero.fr)

**MICHELIN-STARRED DINING**  
Anne-Sophie Pic's engine includes three-star Maison Pic ([www.annesophiepic.com](http://www.annesophiepic.com)), Chez André, a grocery and gourmet carters. Check out one-star L'Éphémère ([www.maisonchezandre.com](http://www.maisonchezandre.com)) and Riposte French restaurant ([riposte.fr/restaurants.com](http://riposte.fr/restaurants.com)).

**SHOE HEAVEN AT ROMANS**  
Tannery town Romans boasts the divine International Shoe Museum ([www.museeshoos.com](http://www.museeshoos.com)), with its social history of creating the heel, and the Cité de la Chaussure ([www.citedelachaussure.fr](http://www.citedelachaussure.fr)), showcasing shoes and leather produced locally.

**LA CÎTE DU CHOCOLAT VALRHONA**  
Half an hour north of Valence at Tan-It hermitage, this is an interactive sensory journey from the cacao farm to the richness of the finest pastry chefs, with plenty of tastings along the way. [www.citeduchocolat.com](http://www.citeduchocolat.com)



48 | FRANCE TODAY | 4th Mar 2020

4th Mar 2020 | FRANCE TODAY | 49

CONTACT PRESSE : Émilie Gay  
04 75 79 20 19 – [emilie.gay@mairie-valence.fr](mailto:emilie.gay@mairie-valence.fr)