

Heritage Guide

VAUVERT

 Tourist Office
Cœur de Petite Camargue



The history of Vauvert

First of all there was Posquières, a cultural and religious centre where Jews and Christians lived together amicably. A sanctuary, Notre-Dame-de-Valvert, which was a popular pilgrimage site, sat alongside a synagogue with its own rabbinical school that was famous in the Jewish world.

Vauvert takes its current name from the sanctuary, which in the Middle Ages was situated where the Rue Carnot meets the Rue Saint Gilles and was dedicated to the Virgin Mary. "Valle verdi" became Notre-Dame du "Val-vert" and then later Vauvert, and gradually replaced "Posquières" around the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, at which time the Jews were expelled from France by King Philip IV (Philip the Fair). From the sixteenth to the seventeenth century, the town joined the Reformation. Protestants and Catholics were in conflict, leading to the disappearance of most of the town's most beautiful monuments.



Vauvert town hall

"Au diable Vauvert" (The back of beyond)

In the Middle Ages, the Notre-Dame du Val Vert sanctuary attracted many pilgrims, many of whom had come from very far away. For sins that the Church regarded as particularly serious, some penitents were instructed to complete a pilgrimage in order to be absolved. The distance from Val-Vert made it a hard penitence for those who had to make the journey. We know that in Flanders it was a regularly prescribed punishment.

Twentieth century heritage

Vauvert contains some architectural marvels, from some remnants of classic urban architecture, most often in Pierre du Gard stone (most famously used for the Pont du Gard), to contemporary architecture in the same material. Architects include Armand Pellier, Robert Prohin, Joseph Massota and Henri Floutier, supported by the sculptor Paule Pascal for decorative bas-reliefs, and before her Jean-Charles Lallement, a Nîmes sculptor who had his studio in Le Grau du Roi, and was a great friend to Picasso.

• Robert Gourdon Cultural Centre

Armand Pellier was the architect of this cultural centre, and Robert Prohin was later asked to link the centre, the gymnasium and the home that adjoin the current building.

• Vauvert wine storehouse

Vauvert chose Henri Floutier to design its communal wine store in 1939, with 3 medallions sculpted by Armand Pellier.

• Radélyévitch Stadium

Paule Pascal gave this stadium a colourful concrete wall by carving out large curving forms. The colours used make these silhouetted sports players visible from afar.

• L'Ecole Jean Macé

Blazon on the gable of the school by the sculptor JC Lallement.

• Vauvert town hall

- 2 Aubusson tapestries signed Armand Pellier and Joseph Massota.
- Pediment of the first floor of the town hall by Armand Pellier.



1 Town Hall

This beautiful 1858 construction is situated on the site of the former cemetery.

Proof of the wealth winemaking provided to Vauvert in this period, Third Republic architecture is widespread throughout the area: all of these grand buildings were paid for with the profits of viticulture.

Bedos, an architect, and Bastide, an entrepreneur, worked together to create this monument, with the first stone laid on June 1 1858, and the work finished on April 1 1859.

2 Porte Saint-Louis

This gate dates from the seventeenth century. It was named the "Saint-Louis Gate" to commemorate the visit from the King of France, Louis IX. In 1270, Saint Louis, waiting for the fleet to take him to the Crusades, came to worship in Vauvert.

3 Rue des Juifs

The Jewish quarter was on the south-eastern slope of the hill, from the ramparts to the middle of what is now called the Rue des Juifs (Jew Road). The Jews of Posquières (now known as Vauvert) were particularly spiritual and wrote some Kabbalistic texts. At that time, Provence was covered by a network of Jewish schools and academies (Narbonne, Lunel, Posquières and Marseille).

Around 1165, Abraham ben David, known as Rabad, set up his school, which went on to become famous. Rabad used his wealth to welcome students, some who travelled great distances to study with him. He turned his own house into a dormitory, and the neediest among them were housed for free.

A Kabbalistic work mentions eminent students coming to Posquières from Spain, Germany and Damascus to study at Rabad's school.

4 Place du Jeu de Ballon

This was the former location of bullfights, with villagers installing carts or stages to make arenas. Those families who so wished, after a request to the municipality, could put up their own structure; at that time, the ring was rectangular.

Also visible is the wall of a château, destroyed in 1628 on the orders of the Duc de Rohan during the wars of religion.

5 Le Courrier

Vauvert is a waypoint on the Way of Arles, part of the Camino de Santiago, the GR®653, and boasts a new rest and information point.

The iron silhouette of a pilgrim, as well as benches and an information panel with both historical and practical information have been installed for pilgrims and walkers.

6 Jardin du Castellás

The Castellás hill, called Motte Foussat in medieval times, is a remarkable location. You can look down onto the town of Vauvert from above, and learn more about its various monuments from an information panel. The view stretches towards to sea, and the Cévennes can be seen to the North. On a clear day, you can even see the Pyrenees!

7 Place Gambetta/ Church, clock tower and Fontaine du Griffé

Clock Tower

This architectural ensemble is made up of parts from different eras. At the base is the Panapée gate, which was part of the fortified enclosure of Posquières.

Built in the seventeenth century, the belfry was restored between 1848 and

1849. The old medieval fortifications contained three gates, but only the Panapée gate remains.

The bells rang out to mark various events within the commune.

Notre-Dame church

The current parish church was built in 1687-1689, destroyed in the sixteenth century, and once more took the name Notre-Dame-de-Vauvert.

Built in the neo-classical style, inside the fifteen windows in the nave represent the fifteen mysteries of the rosary.

One window, at the back of the church, shows Louis XI, King of France, kneeling before the statue of Our Lady.

Fontaine du Griffé

This monumental fountain was erected in 1898 when running drinking water was installed in Vauvert.

It was restored in 2009 as part of a heritage plan from the Communauté de communes de Petite Camargue.

8 Grand Temple

The construction of this temple based on plans by Charles Durand began in 1811 and was completed by 1817. The entrance features a portico attached to the semicircular layout, with two columns between two pilasters, then four ionic columns, and finally a triangular pediment.

A discreet bellcote is found to the side, further back. In 1864, a central lantern, and in 1867, a library were added. This building is striking for its pure volumes and authenticity.

9 Arenas

The town of Vauvert has had four different arenas. The Valentin arenas, now lost, the Place du Jeu de Ballon (which some older locals can still remember being used for bull sports), the Arènes Paul Allier and now the Arènes Jean Brunel, opened on May

16, 2004.

In 1986, Jean Brunel, who had just become the President of the festival committee, organised a competition of four "abrivados", which now takes place every year on Ascension Day.

10 Temple de l'Oratoire

In the first half of the nineteenth century there was a powerful religious movement called the Réveil (Revival) that sought to return to the basic fundamentals of the Christian faith, and led to the creation of some of the greatest works of evangelical Protestantism. In Vauvert, after two years of attempts at continued coexistence between liberals and evangelicals, the parishioners of the Église Réformée could not agree and a separation took place in 1867.

The "petit Temple" as locals call it was finished in spring 1869.



Vauvert clock tower

More information

Activities, events

Visit the tourist office website for lots more ideas to make your stay in the Camargue Gardoise extra special!

Whether you are looking for festivals, parties or markets, Coeur de Petite Camargue has a wide range of festive activities of all kinds on offer!

Discover our selection of events and entertainment and set out on a journey of discovery around **Cœur de Petite Camargue**.



Camino de Santiago guide

Discover our guide for pilgrims, helping you to make the most of the section of the Way of Arles that passes through Gard, with eight pages of historical and practical information.

It is **available to download from our website www.coeurdepeticamargue.fr** and the ACIR website, and a **paper version can be contained at the Tourist Office**.

Activity walks

for families

For a fun journey of discovery through town centres and villages, pick up one of our Randoland walking guides.

Randoland trails are available for all villages in the area:

Aimargues, Aubord, Beauvoisin, Le Caillar and Vauvert. These treasure hunt-style walking leaflets are available from the Tourist Office and you can also **download them from our website: www.coeurdepeticamargue.fr**

You will find a parents' guide sheet with a map of the village as well as a sheet with questions for children to answer, split into age ranges: 4-6, 7-9 and 10+.



Thanks

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Photo credits

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COEUR DE PETITE CAMARGUE

Tourist Office



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Opening hours

From April to October

Tuesday to Friday from 9am to 12.30pm
and 2pm to 6pm and Mondays and
Saturdays from 9am to 12.30pm and
until 1pm in July and August.

The rest of the year

Tuesday to Friday from 9am to 12.30pm
and from 1.30pm to 5.30pm and
Mondays and Saturdays from 9am to
12.30pm.