

Let us tell you about

# PÉZENAS



Tour guide

CAP D'AGDE  
MÉDITERRANÉE



EN

VILLES  
& PAYS  
D'ART &  
D'HISTOIRE







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## SUMMARY



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- Impasse de la Fromagerie Vieille ⑳

# Some **history**



Portrait of Henri II de Montmorency

The very first occupation of the Pézenas area dates back to the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC. A large oppidum, having connections with the Greek city of Agde, was discovered in the north-west of the town. In the Roman era, the Latin author, Pline the Ancient, boasted about the quality of Pézenas wool and the bleaching properties of the Peyne waters. To this day, the location of the ancient city of Piscinae remains unknown.

Between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries, Septimanie, as Languedoc was then called, was plunged into troubled times. Pézenas disappeared from history.

In the 10<sup>th</sup> century, the name Pézenas re-emerged: In 990, Guillaume, viscount of Béziers,

gave the Villa de Pézenas to his daughter, Garsinde. A hundred years later, the scattering of dwellings came closer together around the seigneurial castle within the protection of a city wall. This was the Castrum of Pézenas.

Following the Albi crusades, the town fell to Simon de Montfort. In 1261, bought by King Saint Louis, it was one of the first towns in the South of France to belong to the Crown. The king granted the town its first fair in 1271. This annual fair was soon joined by two others which operated alongside those of the neighbouring town of Montagnac. They brought fortune to the town throughout the Middle Ages. In terms of importance, these "general" fairs differed from the local markets and regional fairs, putting them on a par with the famous Champagne fairs. The drapers of Languedoc would come to meet the merchants of Pisa, Genoa, Mallorca and Catalonia. Jacques Cœur carried

Plan of Pézenas fortifications in the 17<sup>th</sup> century (engraving by Mathieu Mérian)



Bird's eye view of Pézenas in the 17<sup>th</sup> century (engraving by Mathieu Mérian)



these fairs to their zenith. Afterwards, they declined, faced with strong competition from the fairs of Beaucaire.

From the very start of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Pézenas became the political capital of the province of Languedoc, with the Parliament seated in Toulouse. The province governors, all from the Montmorency family, settled here. The Estates General of Languedoc regularly held their sessions in Pézenas. The town became a small provincial capital thanks to the actions of the Montmorency family: new districts developed outside the enclosure and a new city wall was built. The Promenade du Quay was built in 1627 where the moat used to be, linking the medieval town with the new districts. This period of prosperity came to an abrupt end in 1632, when Languedoc rose up against King Louis XIII. During the bat-

tle of Castelnaudary, the governor Henri II of Montmorency was taken prisoner. He was decapitated in Toulouse.

From 1650, Pézenas renewed with its previous splendour. The Languedoc Estates resumed their meetings in the town. Armand de Bourbon, the province's governor, set up court in the former Montmorency property at the entrance to the town: the Grange des Prés. For several years, he protected Molière, who visited Pézenas on many occasions. The death of the Prince de Conti marked the beginning of the town's political decline. Montpellier took over as the capital of Languedoc in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the first railway line planned by the prefect was to bypass Pézenas, putting an end to the town's economic development.

The quay (old photograph)



# CITY TOUR

To visit Pézenas, follow the arrows and written indications.



Long tour itinerary:  
Approximately 2 hours and 30 minutes

• Full tour from panel 1 to panel 38

Short tour itinerary:  
Approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes

• Fast tour from panel 1 to panel 15 (Porte Faugères), then from panel 22 (Cours Jean-Jaurès) to panel 30.



## Nota bene

For visitors who are short of time, there are also about 15

explanatory panels in four languages (French, English, German and Spanish) for an exploration of the town's main noteworthy sites.



Hôtel de Boudoul 2

## MEDIEVAL TOWN

1 At no. 8 Rue François Oustrin, go inside to see the vestibule, the main courtyard and the stairway of l'**Hôtel des Montagut**, the dwelling of the Lacoste barons (16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries).

• At no. 1 Place Gambetta, in keeping with tradition, stands the **Boutique du Barbier Gély**. Barber Gély was a friend of Molière's.

• On the opposite side of Place Gambetta unfolds the monumental façade of the **Maison Consulaire**. This square was known as Marché au Bled and several evocatively-named shopping streets converge here. It owes its current appearance to three building projects carried out in 1509, 1552, and 1769-1771. It is now the Maison des Métiers d'Art.

2 On Rue Canabasserie, the town hall features a mullion window dating from the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, decorated with pilasters. Further along on the right stands the façade of **Hôtel de Boudoul** (17<sup>th</sup> century). Son of a master tailor to Henri II of Montmorency, Henri became Captain and Chatelain of the City and Comté de Pézenas at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

• Across the street, a little sloping square occupies the site of Hôtel de Vayssière, and Hôtel de Juvenel de Carlenças. Go back and turn left into Rue Albert-Paul Alliès.



Maison Consulaire 1

• On the right, at the bottom of Impasse Simon-Ducros, is the 17<sup>th</sup> century door of **Hôtel de Jonquières** and that of **Hôtel de Plantavit de La Pause**.

• At no. 3 Rue Albert-Paul Alliès, on the left is Hôtel de Saint-Germain, which was left to the city by the Vulliod family to become a museum, **Musée de Vulliod-Saint-Germain**. It has the appearance of a late-19<sup>th</sup> century aristocratic dwelling thanks to its furniture, a collection of earthenware from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, and some Aubusson tapestries. Two rooms are devoted to Molière's time in Languedoc, and the chair he sat in when he visited Barber Gély.

3 At no. 2 Rue Bérenger, a 17<sup>th</sup> century house can be seen with a chimney stack and sink visible on the side wall.

4 Rue In Rue Montmorency, on your right, is the **Hôtel de Peyrat**'s entrance flanked with two echauguettes.

• Further along, the tower is one of the rare medieval remains of the 14<sup>th</sup> century enclosure. It protected Porte Saint-Christol. Now turn back.





Hôtel de Ribes 9



Hôtel de Moulceaux 8



Porte braise 15

5 Walk back up Rue Montmorency. On the left is a niche with an earthenware **Pietà** (18<sup>th</sup> century). On the right, the 19<sup>th</sup> century gate to the enclosure of the **feudal castle**, first mentioned in 990. The wall had nine towers. It was demolished in 1632 by order of Cardinal de Richelieu.

6 At the end of the street, turn left onto Rue du Château.

7 Door of **Hôtel de Graves**. Above the door is a pinnacle, an ogee lintel. This family, of military nobility, is one of the city's oldest.

8 Turn left, onto Rue Alfred Sabatier. At no. 12, the ancient **Hôtel de Philippe de Moulceaux**, President of the Court of Aids of Montpellier. Vestibule, stairway and 18<sup>th</sup> century ironwork.

- At the corner on the right is a **Renaissance niche** dating from 1511, with a statue of Saint-Roch.

- In the cul-de-sac opposite is the door to the **Hôtel Daniel de Montguibert**, a Gévaudan tax inspector (17<sup>th</sup> century).

- On the left, **Hôtel d'Astanières**. The most famous member of this family, Jean-Pierre (1693–1759), was a lawyer at the Parliament of Toulouse and an Adviser to the King, as well as exercising municipal roles. He was also an agent of the Prince de Conti.

- Continue down the street towards Place Gambetta. On the right, the ironwork façade (18<sup>th</sup> century) of the **Hôtel de Flottes de Sébasan**, lord of Ribaute.

9 Take Rue Triperie Vieille. On the right at no. 11, look at the openwork stairway of **Hôtel de Ribes** (early 17<sup>th</sup> century).

10 Turn left onto Rue de la Foire. On the right, the so-called **Hôtel dit de Wicque**, a beautiful façade from the early 16<sup>th</sup> century.

11 Turn back.

12 On the right, **Hôtel de Carrion-Nizas**. This Castilian family of gentlemen soldiers settled in Languedoc in the 12<sup>th</sup> century and achieved its greatest fortune in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Courtyard and exquisite stairway dating from the early 16<sup>th</sup> century.

- Walk up Rue de la Foire to no. 17, with a 15<sup>th</sup> century door and a 16<sup>th</sup> century courtyard.

- At no. 16 on the right, "**Les enfants musiciens**" (18<sup>th</sup> century).

- At no. 22, the **house and laboratory of Jean-François Venel** (1723–1775), a doctor and Encyclopaedia contributor.

13 Turn left onto rue Emile-Zola. On the left at no. 7, the **Hôtel de Jacques Cœur** with 15<sup>th</sup> century corbels.

- At the end of the street, the **Jewish quarter** between Porte Faugères on the medieval ramparts, and the ancient **Hôtel Agde de Fondouce** with its **skewed door**.

14 Enter the old Jewish quarter. Stop at the intersection of Rue Juiverie and Rue des Litanies, which were the 2 main streets of this district reserved for the Jewish population. Now turn back.

15 On your right, go through **porte Faugères** (14<sup>th</sup> century), which was reworked in 1597 and is one of the last remains of the medieval enclosure wall. We now enter the town of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

# CITY TOUR

## TOWN OF THE 17<sup>TH</sup> AND 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES

If you have opted for the short tour, go to panel 22, at no. 22 Cours Jean Jaurès.

- Cross Cours Jean Jaurès. This was the site of the **Quay**, a promenade built in 1627 where the moat had been, at the initiative of Henri II of Montmorency, and destroyed at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

- On the right is the imposing structure of **Hôtel Mazel** (1770) which was home to a dynasty of men of law, including the famous François, who purchased the position of criminal lieutenant. At the far end, you can see the **Monument aux Morts** sculpted by Costa.

- Opposite Porte Faugères, take Rue Henri Reboul, formerly Rue des Capucins.

**16** On the left, the façade of Porte de la **Chapelle des Pénitents Noirs** (1609), converted into a theatre in 1804. It fell into disuse in 1947, and reopened in 2012 after restoration work.

- At no. 13, the so-called **Hôtel de Montmorency**, built by Alfonso de Fédérico at the very end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

- Place Mgr Paulinier, **Église Sainte-Ursule** (17<sup>th</sup> century). This former chapel of the Couvent des Ursulines became the parish church in 1803. Altarpiece of the gilt wooden high altar (1688). 13<sup>th</sup> century Black Virgin.



Hôtel de Paulhan de Guers **18**



Theatre, former Chapel of the Pénitents Noirs **16**

- At no. 20 on the right, the door of **Hôtel de Paulhan** (17<sup>th</sup> century). In 1677, it was purchased by the Dames Ursulines congregation before becoming the city hospital in 1792.

- At no. 23, **Hôtel de Juvenel**, with its façade and imposing vestibule dating from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, stands at the site of the former Couvent des Capucins. Pass in front of a monument devoted to Louis Paulhan, an aviation pioneer who was born in Pézenas (1883–1963).

**17** Walk down Boulevard de la Faissine and discover, on your right, the entrance to the park known as Parc Sans Souci.

- Then continue walking down the boulevard to Place Boby Lapointe (car park): remains of the **city wall** dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> century (1597–1604).

**18** You then cross the square (Boby Lapointe was a singer,

composer and word-juggler who was born in Pézenas in 1922 and died in 1972 – see page 12), to the gallery which forms the walkway of the **former Séminaire and Collège des Oratoriens**. It became the Hôtel de Ville (town hall) during the Revolution and was reworked in 1886.

**19** At the far end of the second car park on the right, through a vaulted passageway across Cour Zévort, you come to Rue Massillon.

- On the left, the **Chapelle des Oratoriens** (17<sup>th</sup> century) adjoins the imposing Séminaire gate stamped with the city's coat of arms.

**20** From the Pénitents Noirs to the Oratoriens, this area of transition between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, where religious buildings abound, has been named, quite justifiably, the Contre-Réforme (Counter-Reformation) district.





Mascarón (hôtel de Grave de Maussac) 15  
Hôtel de Grasset 20

Detail of the door of the Hôtel de Vissec de Latude 21

21 On We return to Cours Jean Jaurès, formerly Cours Molière, via Rue Marceau.

- At no. 33, **Hôtel de Vissec de Latude** de Fontès (second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century), which passed in the following century to the Darles de Chamberlain family whose most famous member, Guillaume, after a shining military career, became chief engineer of the city and citadel of Montpellier. Afterwards, it was passed to the Fabre de Latude and L'Epine families. Façade reworked in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and a 17<sup>th</sup> century door and stairway. Cross Cours Jean Jaurès to reach the panel.

## 17<sup>th</sup> century "hôtels particuliers"

An "hôtel particulier" is a luxury house, designed to be inhabited by a single family (as well as their house staff). It is built around an inner courtyard onto which a monumental staircase descends.

Following the construction of the new city wall in the late-16<sup>th</sup> century, private mansions were built in the new enclosure: Hôtel de Montmorency, Hôtel de Paulhan 16, Hôtel d'Alfonse 28, Hôtel Malibran 31.

During the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the medieval residences in the Rue de la Foire were enlarged and adorned with new façades opening onto the promenade of the quay, now the Cours Jean Jaurès. Large staircases decorated with balustrades linked the medieval buildings to the new constructions built on the site of the ramparts.

Several private mansions were also built in the medieval enclosure, such as the Hôtel de Peyrat 4, the Hôtel de Boudoul 2 and the Hôtel de Ribes 9.

22 At no. 22, the door to **Hôtel de Quintin**. Quintin was the King's prosecutor for the Comté de Pézenas. This Hôtel was the residence of Claude Bazin de Besons, who was a Languedoc Intendant from 1654 to 1674. This is where Bobby Lapointe spent his childhood.

- At no. 20, **Hôtel de Grasset**, formerly Hôtel de Monde then the Hôtel de Montagut de Lacoste from the entourage of Henri II de Montmorency. Born in 1794, the Marquis de Grasset was the Legitimist mayor of Pézenas and a deputy for Hérault under the Restoration and the July Monarchy. There is an openwork stairway (17<sup>th</sup> century), and the building was reworked in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

- At no. 18, **Hôtel de Landes de Saint-Palais**. This family originated from the Albi diocese. Its most illustrious member was Abel de Landes (1559-1657, cap-

tain of the guards for Henri II de Montmorency. Façade, stairway and courtyard dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the site of the arrest of Particelli d'Hémery, who was the King's Commissioner for the Languedoc Estates on 22 July 1632. Balconies (late 17<sup>th</sup> century and 18<sup>th</sup> century), and mascarons depicting the seasons and continents.

- At no. 10, **Hôtel Mazuc**, with its 18<sup>th</sup> century façade and balcony, and mascarons. A descendant of this family, Emile (1832-1904) is the author of "Grammaire Languedocienne, dialecte de Pézenas" (1899).

- At the end of Cours Jean Jaurès, we can see Place de la République and the fountain (1884) and, on the left, **Hôtel de Pastré** where the poet Sarrasin died in 1654. He was a free-thinking literary man, and command secretary to Mgr le Prince de Conti.

# CITY TOUR



**23** Rue Condorcet, on the left, a walled-up doorway from the 16<sup>th</sup> century. On the right, a 17<sup>th</sup> century Hôtel.

**24** Turn right onto Rue Kléber and right again into Impasse de la Fromagerie Vieille. **Door with diamond-shaped bossage work** (17<sup>th</sup> century).

- Next, go to the gate of the Collegiate church. On the right, we see the 18<sup>th</sup> century façade (sculpted cornice) of the **Hôtel de Jean-François de Grasset**, who was a Judge and Guardian of royal privileges and the fairs and markets of Pézenas, as well as Captain and Chatelain of the city from 1766 to the Revolution.

- Opposite, the so-called **Hôtel des Commandeurs de Saint-Jean de Jérusalem** (17<sup>th</sup> century), a religious order which succeeded the Order of the Templars after its dissolution by King Philippe le Bel in 1312.

- The **Collégiale Saint-Jean**, with its austere façade, is the work of Jean-Baptiste Franque (1740). Beautiful Tuscan nave. Organ by Jean-François L'Epine, a Pézenas organ builder (1732-1817). **Treasure room and sacred art exhibition.**

- In the left-hand aisle, the Saint-Roch chapel, with a Vien painting, and the Virgin chapel with a statue of the Virgin by Tomasso Orsolino. Adjoining the church, at no. 2 Rue Saint-Jean, stood the Sacristie des Pénitents Blancs.

- Continue on Rue des Chevaliers de Saint-Jean and then turn right onto Rue des Commandeurs.

**25** After passing the house that was the birthplace of **Georges Beaulieu**, a regionalist and novelist (1861-1940), we find ourselves in front of one of the region's oldest hotel establishments: "**Hôtel de la Paix**", built in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century where the old Chapelle des Pénitents Blancs previously stood along with the parish cemetery.

- The square is named "**Marché des Trois-Six**" (three sixes market) because of the trade in alcoholic spirits that went on here during the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Every Saturday, merchants and dealers would meet with distillers to negotiate prices which were then telegraphed to the market places of France and Europe.

**26** At no. 30, stands the façade of the old **Hôtellerie du Tapis Vert**, decorated with sculpted heads. Pope Pius VII stayed here in 1814 on his return from captivity.

**27** Take Rue Jean-Jacques Rousseau, formerly Rue des Selliers.

- At no. 14, **Hôtel de Marimond** with its 18<sup>th</sup>-century coat-of-arms ironwork. This bourgeois family of Spanish origin (Mar y Mundo) emerged in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century and, through its descendants, expanded into the Estate of robes and swords.



Organ of the collegiate church of Saint-Jean **21**

- Next door at no. 12, l'**Hôtellerie des Singes** displays its façade decorated with corbels sculpted into monkeys and dogs.

**28** At the end of Rue Jean-Jacques Rousseau, on the left-hand corner of Rue Conti, we notice a **polychrome Virgin and Child**.

- On the right, at no. 30, **Hôtel de Conti** with its 18<sup>th</sup> century balconies and 17<sup>th</sup> century stairway.

- At no. 32, **Hôtel d'Alfonse** where Molière played in November 1655 before the Prince de Conti and the Gentlemen of the Languedoc Estates. This hôtel has two very interesting 17<sup>th</sup> century galleries between the courtyard and gardens.

- At no. 34-36, **Hostellerie du Griffon d'Or**. A façade with balconies from the 18<sup>th</sup> century and a courtyard with loggia dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

**29** At no. 44, **Hostellerie du Bât d'Argent**, where Molière stayed in the company of d'Assoucy, the kind "Emperor of the burlesque", in the winter of 1655-1656. Courtyard, gallery and a well.

- The house at no. 47 is the birthplace of the aviation pioneer, Louis Paulhan, (1883-1963).



Hôtel Malibran 31  
Hôtellerie du Bât d'Argent 29

**30** Take Rue des Glacières along the second city wall (17<sup>th</sup> century), part of which is still visible on the left.

**31** Cross Rue Victor Hugo and, opposite, climb a few steps up to the little square. At no. 47 Rue Denfert Rochereau stands **Hôtel Malibran**, the prestigious dwelling of a dynasty of merchants who had marital links with the local aristocracy. Beautiful ironwork (18<sup>th</sup> century) and an imposing stairway (17<sup>th</sup> century). Continue on Rue Denfert Rochereau.

**32** At no. 9 Rue des Docteurs Bastard, behind a **bossage-work door** framed by two 17<sup>th</sup>-century oculi, it is thought that the Couvent des Dames de l'Enfance was founded, in 1657.

**33** At the end of the street, opposite at no. 9 Rue Victor Hugo, stands the **Hôtel of the Grave de Maussac family**, a property of the military gentry. It was probably built (in the 18<sup>th</sup> century) by Félix, a galley lieutenant who, being married to a De Maussac, possessed substantial wealth in the region. Ironwork and bay windows decorated with mascarons. In 1806, the Hôtel was sold to Marie-Augustin l'Epine, the youngest son of Jean-François l'Epine, the famous organ builder. It remained in the family until the war of 1914-1918.

**34** **Fontaine Vedel** (18<sup>th</sup> century). In front of the fountain, turn left onto Rue des Commandants Bassas.

**35** At no. 3, an interesting **door with bossage work and diamond-shaped** features at the top, with a split curved pediment (first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century).

- On the left is a porch opening onto an alleyway which led to the real-tennis court where, according to tradition, Molière and his troupe acted out their plays.

**36** At Place du 4 Septembre (formerly Plan du Sauvage), take Rue Cordille.

**37** At the end of Rue Cordille, turn left on Rue Raspail, then right onto Rue Denfert Rochereau towards Rue Anatole France, formerly Rue de Béziers. On the left, on the corner at no. 35, stands **Hôtel Plache**, built at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by the wealthy merchant. Antoine Plache (1743-1808).

**38** Opposite no. 30, we can see the façade and covered passageways of **Hôtel Panier** which, through marriage, became the property of the l'Epine family, owners of the Domaine du Parc, the Montmorencys' game reserve.

- On the left at no. 24, an **openwork panel**.
- At no. 22, a **door** dating from 1662 with a heart-shaped moulding.
- On the right at no. 21, an interesting door (17<sup>th</sup> century) and ironwork (18<sup>th</sup> century).
- At no. 17, a **mullion window** and 17<sup>th</sup>-century door.
- On the left at no. 12, **Hôtel Célier de Malevielle** (1736). He was a King's Advisor for 30 years, and a Tax Collector for the diocese of Agde. In 1699, he was ennobled by Louis XIV for sacrificing three of his officer sons, lost in combat. The Hôtel features balconies and ironwork dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> century and some oculi on the top floor.
- At no. 10, the third-floor windows have full-radius arches.
- The street leads to **Place de la République** (1887) where the tour ends.



# IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF MOLIÈRE

## The peregrinations of Molière in Languedoc



After the Illustre Théâtre suffered failure in 1645, Molière and his troupe left Paris and embarked on a 14-year journey across the French provinces. They travelled to Rouen, Nantes, Poitiers, Bordeaux, Toulouse, Carcassonne, Albi, Béziers, Montpellier, Avignon, Grenoble, Vienna, Lyon, Dijon and, of course, Pézenas.

The presence of Molière and his troupe here was evidenced three times during the Languedoc Estates sessions of 1650, 1653 and finally, 1655–1656. In 1658, Molière returned to Paris for good. He performed for the Court and was under the protection of the royal family. He wrote plays that are now famous, and Pézenas actually features in his work. He died in 1673.

The chair used by Molière when he visited Gély, the barber, was found in Pézenas in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when famous actors and other personalities flocked to see it. Some receipts signed by Molière were also discovered. Historians and scholars created an imaginary itinerary of Molière's Languedoc travels, and the climax of this rediscovery was the erection of the Injalbert monument.

### BOUTIQUE DU BARBIER GÉLY

1, place Gambetta

It was well-known to the inhabitants of Pézenas who hurried here on market days. Molière came here too. An ancient bishop's throne was installed for him near the front door, from where he would sit and watch. Molière recorded what he saw and is thought to have based his play-writing on those observations.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the boutique became a place of pilgrimage for many famous actors who came to pay tribute to Molière. The chair disappeared at the end of the century, to reappear briefly in 1922, at the Comédie Française.

### MUSÉE DE VULLIOD SAINT-GERMAIN

3, rue Albert-Paul Allières

For one and a half centuries, Molière's chair was piously kept by the same family through a succession of moves which took it further and further away, to the regret of Pézenas. Keeping an ancient promise, in 2007 its owners returned it to its town of origin, where it found its place in the Museum for the benefit of the general public. Nowadays, the chair is on display within the two rooms that retrace Molière's story, his peregrinations in Languedoc, his visits to Pézenas, and the places he frequented here.

## Molière in Pézenas

This itinerary takes the visitor on a walk in Molière's footsteps, exploring the countless traces of his presence and reinventing parts of this journey which hovers between legend and reality.

Maison du barbier Gély



The Prince of Conti (17th century engraving)





Monument to Molière (work by Injalbert)



Hôtel d'Alfonse

### LOGIS DU BÂT D'ARGENT

42-44, rue Conti

Molière and d'Assoucy, who had met in Lyon a few months previously, spent part of the winter of 1653-1654 in this inn, before being invited by the Prince de Conti to stay at his castle at Grange des Prés. D'Assoucy described his experience in Pézenas with Molière and the Illustre Théâtre, with the following words: "Under the control of the Estates, they took me with them to Pézenas, where I cannot describe how much favour I received from the entire household. It is said that, after one month, even the best of brothers grows weary of feeding his brother. But these brothers were more generous than any other and did not tire of seeing me at their table throughout the winter. In fact, whatever I did among them, I felt that I was at home. I have never seen such kindness, such frankness, such honesty as I did among those people, who are well worthy of representing in real life the world of princes that they portray every day at the theatre."

### HÔTEL DU PRINCE DE CONTI

30, rue Conti

Armand de Bourbon, Prince of Conti, brother of the Great Condé and the Duchess of Longueville, and cousin of King Louis XIV, settled in Pézenas in 1653 at Château de la Grange des Prés, which he inherited from his mother, Charlotte de Montmorency. He received Molière and his troupe there and became their protector. Three years later, as an ill man concerned for the salvation of his soul, he turned to religion and sent the actors away. The Hôtel was allegedly the setting for a representation performed by the great actor and his troupe during the winter of 1655-1656.

### HÔTEL D'ALFONSE

32, rue Conti

Because of a performance given by Molière at his Hôtel, the Prince de Conti could not receive the deputies at his dwelling. So he received them at his neighbour's mansion, Hôtel d'Alfonse. Unhappy with this arrangement, the Estate representatives recorded the incident in their deliberations register. That same year, the Illustre Théâtre created "The Flying Doctor" at this Hôtel, and resumed "The Blunderer", which had been created in Béziers the previous year. The deputies who had been turned away were probably invited.

### THE MOLIÈRE MONUMENT

Carved from Carrara marble by Antonin Injalbert, a sculptor from Béziers, the monument was funded by a national subscription. It was inaugurated on 8 August 1897 in the presence of the Comédie Française.

The base is embellished with references to the theatre, and carries a bust of Molière that was inspired by Houdon's version. The character of Lucette from "Monsieur de Pourceaugnac" represents the town of Pézenas, paying tribute to the great writer. She is the only character among the works of Molière to speak Occitan and to mention Pézenas several times. The lustful old satyr sitting at the foot of the column is there to remind us of the ancient origins of theatre. Injalbert had intended to use the portraits of Mademoiselle Ludwig and Coquelin Cadet, both members of, and generous donors to, the Comédie Française, to render these two characters. But he changed his mind after an encounter in Pézenas with the colourful character of Doctor Bastard. The actors were immortalised in two masks placed at the back of the monument.

### IN MOLIÈRE'S FOOTSTEPS

Since 2013, the footprints of artists, actors and singers performing at the Pézenas theatre or during various festivals, can be seen on Cours Jean Jaurès.

# "BOBY SUR LA POINTE DES PIERRES"



Boby Lapointe was born in Pézenas on 16 April 1922. He went to Paris in 1951. In

1954, Bourvil sang one of his songs, "Aragon et Castille", in the film "Poisson d'avril" which encouraged Bobby to pursue his writing career. He sought artists to sing his songs, then decided to sing them himself. At the age of 37, he made his debut appearance in 1959 at the Cheval d'Or cabaret, and released his first record in 1960. He played his first cinema role in a François Truffaut film, playing the character "Marcelle". After being a supporting act to Charles Aznavour, he went on tour with Brassens. He participated in numerous television shows. Bobby's wordplay, puns and humour are fully present in his songs, of which "La maman des poissons", "Ta Katie t'a quitté", "La peinture à l'huile" and "Le tube de toilette" are but a few memorable gems that have stood the test of time.

Also a mathematician, Bobby developed the bi-binary method, an alphanumeric system in base 16 which is acknowledged and welcomed by the greatest mathematicians. He died in Pézenas at the beginning of summer in 1972, after a period of illness, and his tombstone is engraved with the words: "Il voulait jouer de l'hélicon" ("he wanted to play the helicon").



The "Misanthrope" and the "Ami Zantrop"

The **museum LA'Musée Bobby Lapointe** at Place Gambetta depicts the life and works of Bobby. Every April, a tribute is paid to him during the "Printival" festival devoted to new "French chanson".

His universe can also be visited through some monuments that were sculpted in his honour by seven artists in 2004: "Les lapid'airs de Bobby". These sculptures are letter-marked on the map at the end of the booklet. The implementation of this project has been made possible thanks to the support of the Centre Local d'Art Contemporain.



Boby en vrac (Boby in Bulk) (Bruno Mendola), place Bobby Lapointe

Don't leave until you've seen...





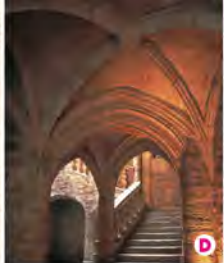
Hôtel de Landes de St-Palais



Hôtel de Lacoste



Maison dite des Templiers



Hôtel de Lacoste



Maison de Jacques Cœur

## SOME VOCABULARY

### A MASCARON

Keystone with a half-relief sculpted human face. They appear in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and illustrate different themes: the four seasons, ancient gods, unusual figures and allegorical representations.

### B BALUSTER

Small column with a thick base supporting a banister rail. Those found in Pézenas are square shaped. Balusters adapt to the steepness of the steps.

### C BOSSAGE

Different types of bossage can be seen in Pézenas: diamond-shaped, mitre-edged, chamfered, or rectangular.

### D RIB VAULT

Vault reinforced with diagonal arches to transfer thrust out to the corners (entrance halls of Hôtel Lacoste and Hôtel de Ribes).

### E CORBEL

Small consoles in the form of inverted cones, jutting out of a wall. They support the drip edges above windows and doors and some are decoratively sculpted. (Maison Jacques Cœur).

### F ECHAUGUETTE

A bartizan, a corbelled turret placed at the top of a wall or building. (Hôtel de Peyrat).

### G STAIRWAY

In the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, two types of medieval stairway were used in Pézenas: the spiral stairway and the openwork stairway. There is a combination of these two types at Hôtel Carrion de Nizas, where an openwork stairway leads to a gallery which provides access to a spiral stairway.

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, although the spiral stairway was still used, new types of stairway began to emerge (closed-stringer stairways and winding stairways). The courtyard stairway also appeared during this era. The 18<sup>th</sup> century brought the half-landing stairway, which received light from the vestibule.

### H MULLION WINDOW

A window divided into two sections by a vertical element, the mullion. In some cases bars or lattice features (horizontal elements) were added. The oldest examples, from the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, were decorated with fine prism-based mouldings and had an overhead drip edge. These windows were still in use in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, but without the mouldings.

### I IRONWORK

Ironwork was hand crafted by the master ironworkers of Pézenas from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century and throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century. A full array of examples can be observed during the tour (door-knockers, imposts, balconies, railings, etc.).

### J MACHICULATION

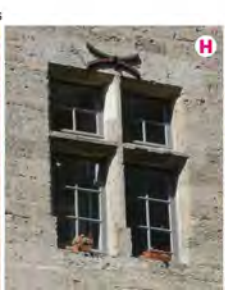
Corbelled structure at the top of a wall or tower, formed of consoles with small arcatures. They made it possible to launch all kinds of projectiles (Tour de Peyrat). In civil architecture, they translated into decorative features and also provided an element of prestige (Hôtel de Carion Nizas).



Hôtel de Peyrat



Hôtel Carrion de Nizas



Hôtel de Flottes de Sébasan



Hôtel de Peyrat



Hôtel de Peyrat





KEY

- 1 Tour number
- Tour itinerary
- ▶ Backtrack / turn around
- ★ Remarkable building
- In the footsteps of Molière
- A Museum Vulliod-St-Germain
- B Museum L'A-Musée Baby Lapointe
- C Gate museum
- D International toy museum
- Les lapid'airs de Bobby



# Discover on a guided tour



- Tours are available throughout the year.  
A guide will take you exploring the history  
and heritage of our towns and villages.
- Mission Patrimoine Pézenas Pays d'art et d'histoire  
Tél. +33(0)4 67 98 52 69
- CONSULT OUR AGENDA: [www.capdagde.com](http://www.capdagde.com)

Do you have any questions?  
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