

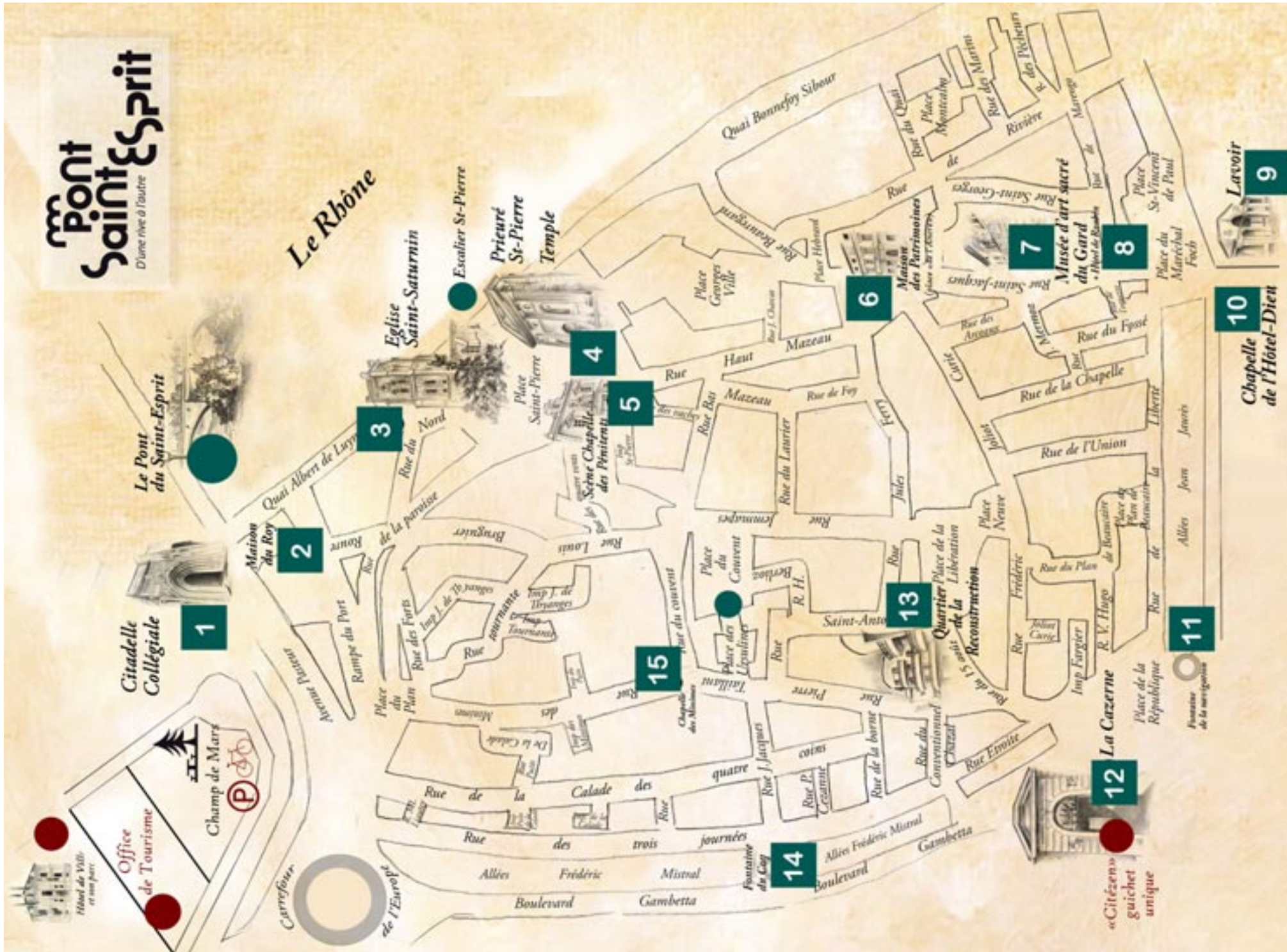


## Tourist Guide



# HISTORY & HERITAGE TOUR





**1** Citadelle Collégiale

**2** Le Pont du Saint-Esprit

**3** Eglise Saint-Saturnin

**4** Prieuré St-Pierre Temple

**5** Chapelle des Pénitents

**6** Maison des Patrimoines

**7** Musée d'art sacré

**8** Hôtel de Beaulieu

**9** Lavoir

**10** Chapelle de l'Hôtel-Dieu

**11** Fontaine de la République

**12** «Citizen» guichet unique

**13** Quartier de la Reconstruction

**14** La Cazerne

**15** Fontaine de la navigation





## 1 COLLÉGIALE - CITADELLE

**XIV<sup>th</sup> century.** In the Middle Ages, this place welcomed poor people. In 1309, a hospital was built and it soon became a church for pilgrims walking to Santiago de Compostela.

In the XVII<sup>th</sup> century, during the wars of religion, a citadel was built to protect the town. Soldiers then took up the site. It lasted until World War II.

In 1948, the Mayor decided to destroy the whole military walls. Some parts still remain along the Rhône river.

■ Registered in French supplementary Historic Monument List in 2013



## 2 MAISON DU ROY

**XIII<sup>th</sup> century.** This house was owned by the brothers of «The work of the Holy Spirit» and its name comes from the presence of a royal court that stood there in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. It was completely restored in early 16<sup>th</sup> century. Inside, there is a 16<sup>th</sup> century mural, probably the oldest painting of the bridge. After the revolution, it returned to the famous Pont-Saint-Esprit's family Bruguiet-Roure. Today, it's a private property unfortunately totally unused.

■ Registered in French supplementary Historic Monument List in 1946



## 3 ÉGLISE SAINT-SATURNIN

**From XV<sup>th</sup> to XIX<sup>th</sup> centuries.** This church was first built in the X<sup>th</sup> century and rebuilt in the XIV<sup>th</sup> and XV<sup>th</sup> centuries. The main entrance was designed by Blaise Lécuyer around 1490 (who also designed a similar portal for the Collégiale). The building was ruined during the wars of religion in the XV<sup>th</sup> century.

It was completely restored in the XIX<sup>th</sup> century. Many paintings were painted by Léon Alègre – see the “âmes du Purgatoire” chapel and the main nave.

■ Registered in French supplementary Historic Monument List in 2012

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## 4 PRIEURÉ SAINT-PIERRE

**From XII<sup>th</sup> et XVII<sup>th</sup> centuries.** In 948, the town then called Saint-Saturnin became the 7<sup>th</sup> site linked with the famous Cluny Abbey. Headed by a “Prieur”, the church was built on the rocks. During the wars of religion, the building was destroyed. From 1779 to 1783, an architect from Avignon rebuilt a church, following a classical style. Then, the place was successively a school, a garage or a fire station ! The roof was restored in 2016, allowing many exhibitions to take place in this magic place.

■ Registered in French main Historic Monument List in 1988



## 5 CHAPELLE DES PÉNITENTS

**XVII<sup>th</sup> century.** This original church was built around 1650. The order of “Pénitents blanc, bleus, noirs” met here. During the French Revolution, revolutionary men used to meet here. In the XIX<sup>th</sup> century, the “Pénitents” order took up the place again. In the 50's, the priest Jurand showed plays performed by an amateur drama company. This place was restored as a theatre at the turn of the XXI<sup>th</sup> century and opened again in 2012.

■ Registered in French supplementary Historic Monument List in 1939 (front) and 2005 (whole building)



## 6 MAISON DES PATRIMOINES

**XVIII<sup>th</sup> century.** The original building was the townhall, rebuilt in 1833-1834 : it's a quite unique example of King Charles X's architectural style in the region. After World War II, it became a music school, a school, a library and a museum with archeological pieces, local archives and it exhibited works by Benn, a Russian painter. In 2015, the whole collections were transferred into the “Musée d'art sacré”. Now the building has become the place where people can come to find advice to restore their housings.

■ Underground : a stunning «glacière» from the XVII<sup>th</sup> century where ice from the «Mont Ventoux» was stored



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## 7 MUSÉE LAÏQUE D'ART SACRÉ

**XII<sup>th</sup> and XIV<sup>th</sup> centuries.** In the Middle Ages, this building belonged to the Piolenc family. They were rich merchants who sold wheat in the Rhône valley. In the XIV<sup>th</sup> century, it welcomed the royal court of justice. The Gard Region bought it in 1988 and it was fully restored to create the "Musée laïque d'art sacré du Gard" in 1995. Come inside to admire its medieval painted ceilings and discover a huge collection of different objects related to all kind of religions.

■ Registered in the French main Historic Monuments List in 1992



## 8 HÔTEL DE ROUBIN

**XVII<sup>th</sup> century.** Located a few meters far from the Musée d'Art Sacré du Gard, this mansion now houses the Gard conservation Museums. The door is dated 1688 and inside, there is a monumental fireplace with moldings. It was the property of the Arlesian Gilles De Roubin, whose father had been consul of Pont-Saint-Esprit. He had it built after his marriage to a girl born in Pont-Saint-Esprit... because he could not bear his step mother's influence on his wife !

■ Registered in the French main Historic Monuments List in 1938



## 9 LAVOIR MUNICIPAL

**XIX<sup>th</sup> century.** The architect Pralong built this wash house in 1832 to obey the health programs of that times and make one of the main entrances in town more visible. Its structure reminds of a Roman temple. You can note a dolphin at the top of the arcades. The stones came from the Drôme region across the Rhône river. This site welcomes many cultural events such as concerts in Summer.

■ Registered in the French supplementary Historic Monument List in 2005, 1st prize of "Rubans du Patrimoine" national award in 2017

## 10 CHAPELLE DE L'HÔTEL DIEU

**XVII<sup>th</sup> century.** It was originally the chapel of the Visitandines' monastery, built in 1639. It was decorated in 1742 by an Italian artist and most of its interior design is due to an architect commissioned in 1766 to restore gold and sculptures damaged by lightning. The sisters of St-Vincent-de-Paul (icons) and the painter Léon Alègre (everyday life scenes) have completed the decoration of this amazing place. The chapel can only be visited for special exceptional occasions.

■ All «Hôtel Dieu» including the chapel was registered in the French supplementary Historic Monument List in 2005,



## 11 FONTAINE DE LA NAVIGATION

**XIX<sup>th</sup> century.** Some said that the wife or daughter (or even paramour !) of the then mayor (Sebastian-Apollon Sibour) could have been the model for this statue inaugurated on September 1st, 1839, at his request (for the city fair, once again). That's why some people call her Diane... The mayor wanted this fountain even more spectacular than the Fontaine du Coq, so he decided to ask a famous sculptor, Paul Colin, to make it out of bronze. The fountain was conceived as a figurehead, in the style of the « Victoire de Samothrace » statue, an ode to navigation and to the town.



## 12 LA CAZERNE

**XVIII<sup>th</sup> century.** This place was first built at the beginning of the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century to house soldiers who used to be welcomed by the inhabitants before it was created. You can see its name "Cazernes du Roy 1719" carved on the main prochway. In 1887, it was named "Pépin" in reference to a General who was born in Pont-Saint-Esprit. Many battalions used to live here, including the 55<sup>th</sup> "régiment d'infanterie – RI" in WWI. This place is now devoted to public services and shops and it has become a lively spot.







### 13 QUARTIER DE LA RECONSTRUCTION

**XX<sup>th</sup> century.** On August, 15<sup>th</sup> 1944, the former medieval narrow streets disappeared after they were bombed by the Allies' s aircrafts. 40 buildings including 254 flats were completely destroyed. From 1946 to 1948, plans to rebuild the neighbourhood were studied both by the Town and the Government and accepted in 1950. Their style is typical of the 50's futurist architectural movement.

■ *With coffees and shops, this block is one of the most lively of the city, just near the historic center.*



### 14 FONTAINE DU COQ

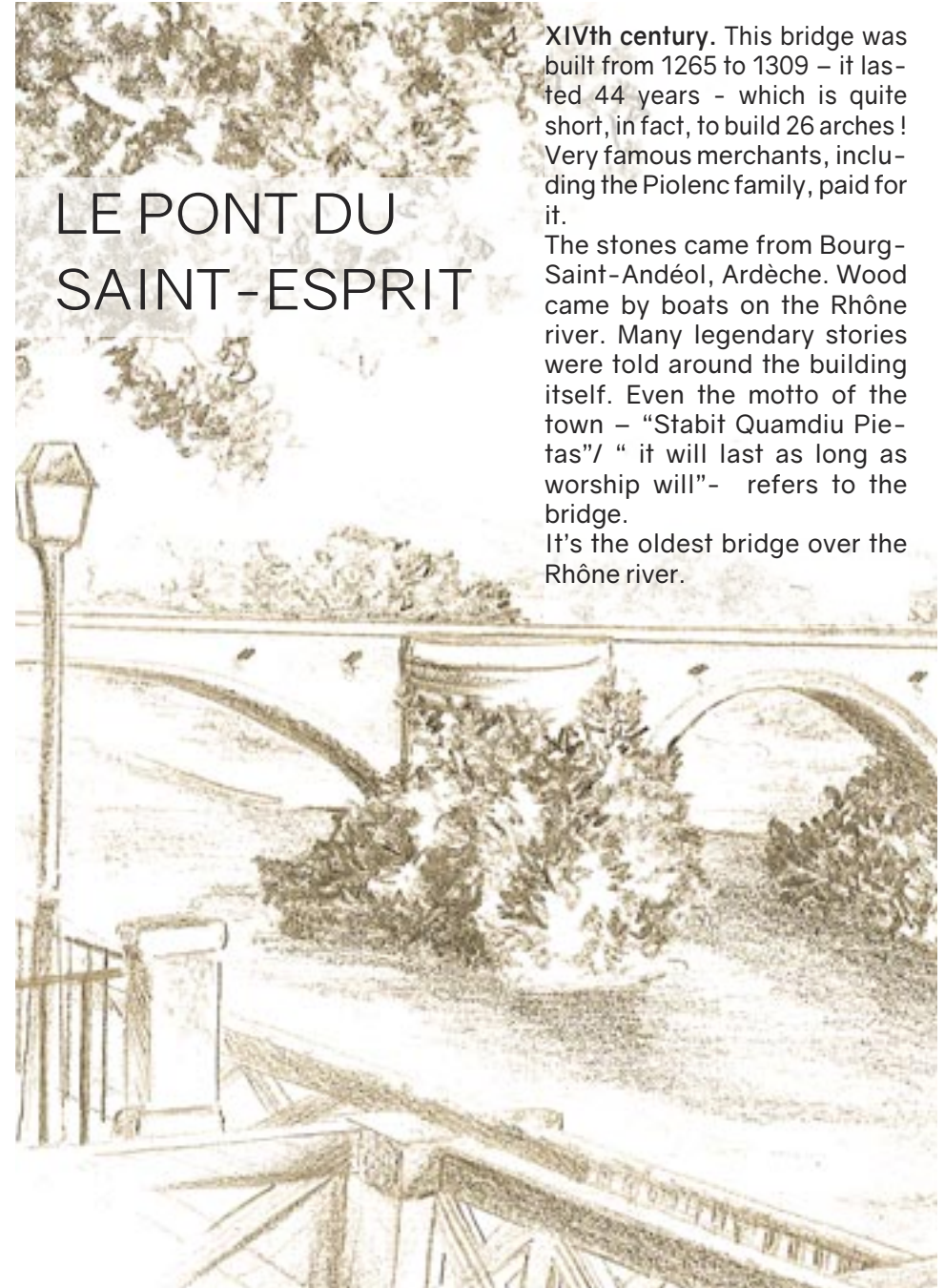
**XIX<sup>th</sup> century.** Located on the « allées Frédéric Mistral », this elegant fountain was ordered by the mayor Sibour to the master-mason Alary along with 80 trees, 4 benches and 20 stone markers for the city fair in September 1838. The day of impoundment, on July 23<sup>rd</sup>, water didn't come out of the gryphons but from the ground as a result of the rupture of the underground pipes ! Everything was repaired for the fair for this "Fountain of plane trees" : the mayor decided to put a Republican cock on the top which gave it its final name ...



### 15 CHAPELLE DES MINIMES

**XVII<sup>th</sup> century.** The convent of Minimes was founded inside the city in 1602. Houses nearby were bought to enlarge it and the church was built in 1608. Returned to worship in 1826, it served then as a chapel of relief. Today private, it can not be visited but you can however admire its amazing portal when walking in rue des Minimes.

■ *The Chapel and its gate were registered in the French main Historic Monuments List in 1950*



## LE PONT DU SAINT-ESPRIT

**XIV<sup>th</sup> century.** This bridge was built from 1265 to 1309 – it lasted 44 years - which is quite short, in fact, to build 26 arches ! Very famous merchants, including the Piolenc family, paid for it.

The stones came from Bourg-Saint-Andéol, Ardèche. Wood came by boats on the Rhône river. Many legendary stories were told around the building itself. Even the motto of the town – "Stabit Quamdiu Pietas"/ " it will last as long as worship will"- refers to the bridge.

It's the oldest bridge over the Rhône river.

# PONT-SAINT-ESPRIT IN A FEW WORDS

**About history.** In the Middle Ages, Pont-Saint-Esprit was called Saint-Saturnin-du-Port and was renamed after the name of the religious order that participated in the construction of the famous bridge over the Rhône river. This majestic bridge has long been the favourite crossing point on the Rhône river and once made the city's fortune through the payment of a way tax. Pont-Saint-Esprit has long been a thriving trading town (salt and cereals), but also a city welcoming pilgrims on the road to Santiago de Compostela and a major military place



## FREE GUIDED TOURS

- Every Thursday morning in summer (July, August and early September), approximately 2h30 circuit
- Several night visits during the summer
- Departure at 9 am from the City Hall
- Alternating guided tours by certified tour guides

**Places included in the tour :** the underground Collegiate Church and the citadel, the tow path and the banks of the Rhône, the medieval bridge, the monumental St-Pierre staircase, the historic center, the Saint-Saturnin church, the large municipal wash house and, highlight of the visit, the Priory of Saint-Pierre with climb to the roof and panoramic view of the city

## MUSÉE LAÏQUE D'ART SACRÉ DU GARD

Different from traditional museums, it brings together objects that we are not used to seeing coexist (a Romanesque virgin, an Egyptian sarcophagus and ... a jacket by Johnny Hallyday!). A bold and original cultural approach to sacred art. And entry is free, as are audio guides.

Guided tours on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Open every day except Monday, at 2 rue Saint-Jacques, from September to June 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. and 2 p.m. - 6 p.m. and in July-August 10 a.m. - 12.30 p.m. and 3 p.m. - 6.30 p.m. **Phone 04 66 39 17 61**

Guide produced by the communication department of Pont-Saint-Esprit

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Texts, photos and graphic production : Stéphane Mar-main except drone cover photo © E.Termini.

Sources : Eric Grieu, archive municipal service and the book "Pont-Saint-Esprit 1850-1950" by Alain Girard (2005). **Printing :** Imprimerie de Provence, Pont-Saint-Esprit.





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