



**Pont
Saint-
Esprit**
D'une rive à l'autre

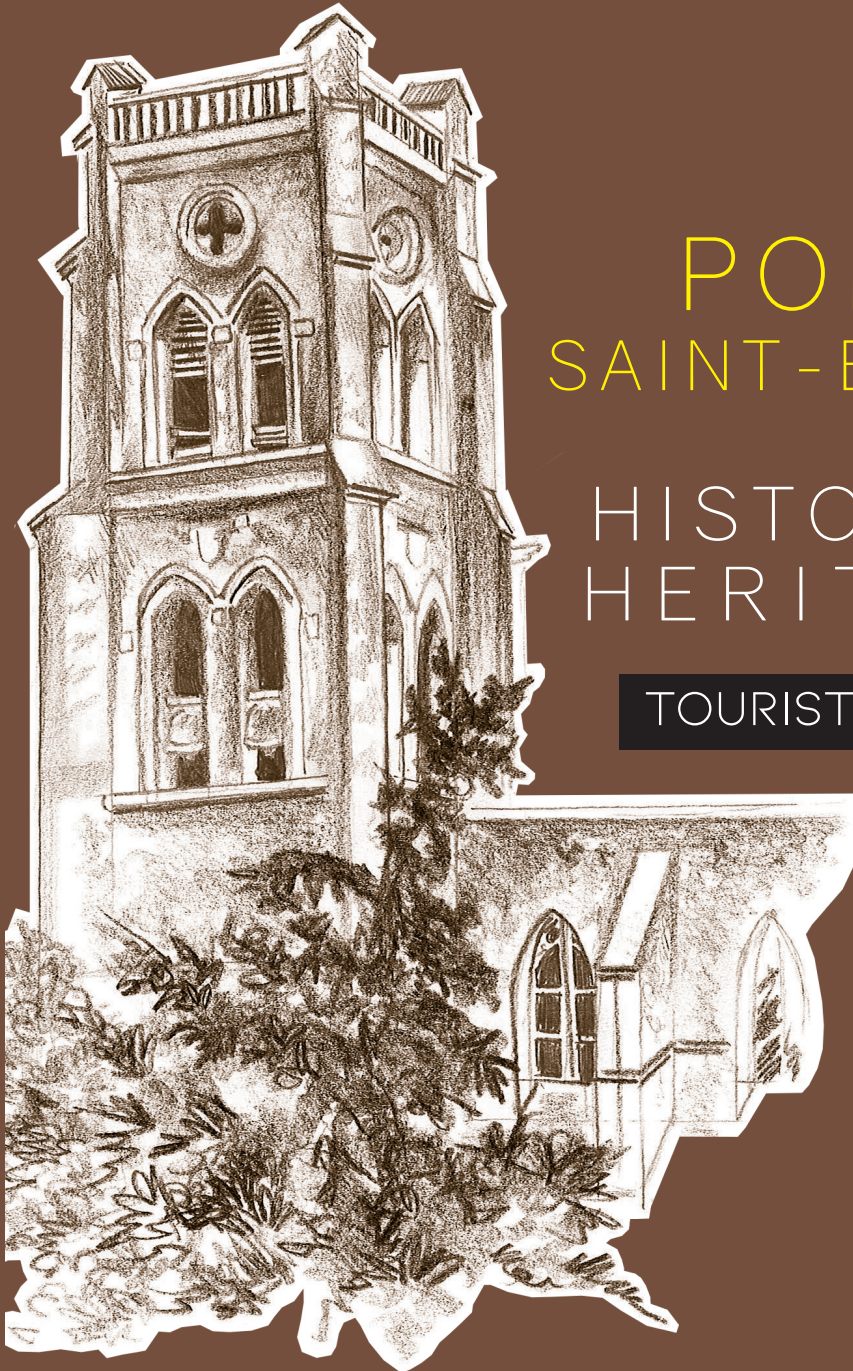
ENGLISH



PONT SAINT-ESPRIT

HISTORY & HERITAGE

TOURIST GUIDE





HISTORY AND HERITAGE TOUR



1

PONT DU SAINT-ESPRIT

XIVth 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.



2

COLLÉGIALE - CITADELLE

XIVth 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 XVIIth 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



3

ÉGLISE SAINT-SATURNIN

From XVth to XIXth centuries. This church was first built in the Xth century and rebuilt in the XIVth and XVth 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 XVth century.

It was completely restored in the XIXth 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



4

PRIEURÉ SAINT-PIERRE

From XIIth et XVIIIth centuries. In 948, the town then called Saint-Saturnin became the 7th 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

2



5



CHAPELLE DES PÉNITENTS

XVIIth 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 XIXth 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 XXIth century and opened

again in 2012.

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

6



ESCALIER SAINT-PIERRE

XIXth century. The staircase was built to give the city a port facade and thus promote river transport. The structure was built in cut stone, consisting of a converging double straight flight leading to a corbelled balcony on brackets. This monumental staircase of 75 m long and 10 m high forms a remarkable promontory dominating the Rhône river and the medieval bridge. It has been under renovation since 2020, thanks

to public aid, private sponsors (Heritage Foundation, Mission Stéphane Bern, AXA group, Crédit Agricole) and public subscription.

■ Registered in the French main Historic Monuments List in 2014

7



LAVOIR MUNICIPAL

XIXth 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

8



CHAPELLE DE L'HÔTEL-DIEU

XVIIth 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 was registered in the French supplementary Historic Monument List in 2005



HISTORY AND HERITAGE TOUR

9



MAISON DES PATRIMOINES

XVIIIth 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 XVIIth century where ice from tMont Ventoux was stored

10



MAISON DES CHEVALIERS

XIIth and XIVth 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 XIVth 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 th French main Historic Monuments List in 1992

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

11



HÔTEL DE ROUBIN

XVIIth 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 th French main Historic Monuments List in 1938



12



QUARTIER NOUVEAU

XXth century. On August, 15th 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 new coffees and shops since a few years, this block is up to become again one of the most lively of the city, just near the historic center.*

TWO FOUNTAINS ON THE PROVENÇAL ALLEYS

13



Fontaine de la navigation.

XIXth 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 for the city fair. 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.

14



XIXth 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 23rd,

water didn't come out of the grhyphons 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



LA CAZERNE

XVIIIth century. This place was first built at the beginning of the XVIIIth 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 55th "régiment d'infanterie

in WWI. The place was named "La Cazerne" in 2019 in reference to the original name. This place is now devoted to public services and shops and it has become a lively spot.

■ *La Cazerne welcomes the municipality single desk "Citézen", The local police office, the cinema "Ciné 102", the public Library, the multipurpose room "Salle des Fêtes", many premises for associations and also many shops like a hair salon, a restaurant, a creamery, a pastry shop or a very nice bookshop.*



MUNICIPALITY SINGLE DESK



La Cazerne. Entrance boulevard Gambetta
Opening : Monday to Thursday from 8:30 AM to 5:30 PM, Friday from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM and Saturday from 8:30 to 12:30 AM

Tel . 04.66.90.34.00.
www.pontsaintesprit.fr



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TOURIST OFFICE

AGGLOMERATION COMMUNITY OF GARD RHODANIEN

La Cazerne. Entrance Bd Gambetta
Opening : Monday 10:00-12:30 and 13:30-17:00, Tuesday to Friday 9:30-12:30 and 13:30-17:00, Saturday 9:30-12:00

Tel . 04.66.39.44.45.
www.provenceoccitane.com



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FREE GUIDED TOURS

- Several Thursday mornings during the summer, approximately 2h30 circuit
- Several night visits during the summer
- Thematic visits like "The strange case of the cursed bread" and other visits by the year (please have a look on our website for the complete program)
- Departure around 9:30 am from the City Hall
- 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

Guide produced by the communication department
City of

Pont-Saint-Esprit

Drawings by

Jessica Villeneuve

Texts and graphic production :

Stéphane Marmain

Sources :

Archive municipal service and the book

"Pont-Saint-Esprit 1850-1950"

by Alain Girard

(2005).

Printing :

VTAC,

Pont-Saint-Esprit.