

# Burgundy



With the vineyards and plains of Champagne to the north and the Rhône Valley, gateway to the Midi-Pyrénées, to the south, Burgundy (Bourgogne in French) can make a strong case for being the real heartland of France. Amid some of the country's most gorgeous countryside, two great French passions, wine and food, come together here in a particularly enticing and hearty form.

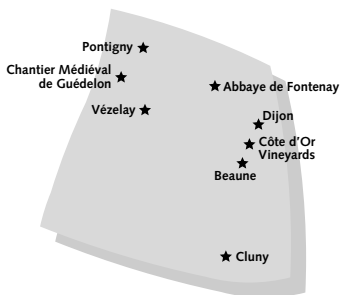
Burgundy's towns and its dashing handsome capital, Dijon, are heirs to a glorious architectural heritage that goes back to the Renaissance, the Middle Ages and beyond, into the mists of Gallo-Roman and Celtic antiquity. Many civil and religious buildings, including Beaune's stunning Hôtel-Dieu, are topped with colourful tile roofs. Dijon, Beaune, Châtillon-sur-Seine and other towns have truly outstanding museums ([www.musees-bourgogne.org](http://www.musees-bourgogne.org), in French).

Burgundy is a paradise for lovers of the great outdoors. You can hike and cycle through the highly civilised vineyards of the Côte d'Or, on a network of cycling trails (such as the Voie Verte in Saône-et-Loire) that are also great for in-line skating, and in the wild reaches of the Parc Naturel Régional du Morvan (Morvan Regional Park); glide along the waterways of the Yonne in a canal boat; or float above the vineyards in a hot-air balloon.

The majority of Burgundy's most interesting historical sights are found in three *départements*: Côte-d'Or (capital: Dijon) in the northeast; Yonne (capital: Auxerre) in the northwest, almost at the gates of Paris; and Saône-et-Loire (capital: Mâcon) in the south. Most of the lightly populated Parc Naturel Régional du Morvan is in the region's fourth *département*, Nièvre.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Marvel at the glories of the late Middle Ages at **Dijon's Musée des Beaux-Arts** (p461) and **Beaune's Hôtel-Dieu** (p468)
- Sample Burgundy's most renowned vintages in **Beaune** (p468) and along the vine-carpeted slopes of the **Côte d'Or** (p465)
- Explore the hilltop village of **Vézelay** (p485) and stroll into the surrounding countryside
- Conjure up monastic life in the Middle Ages at the abbeys of **Cluny** (p492), **Fontenay** (p472), **Pontigny** (p480) and **Vézelay** (p485)
- Watch a 13th century-style château being built with 13th-century technology at the **Chantier Médiéval de Guédelon** (p479)



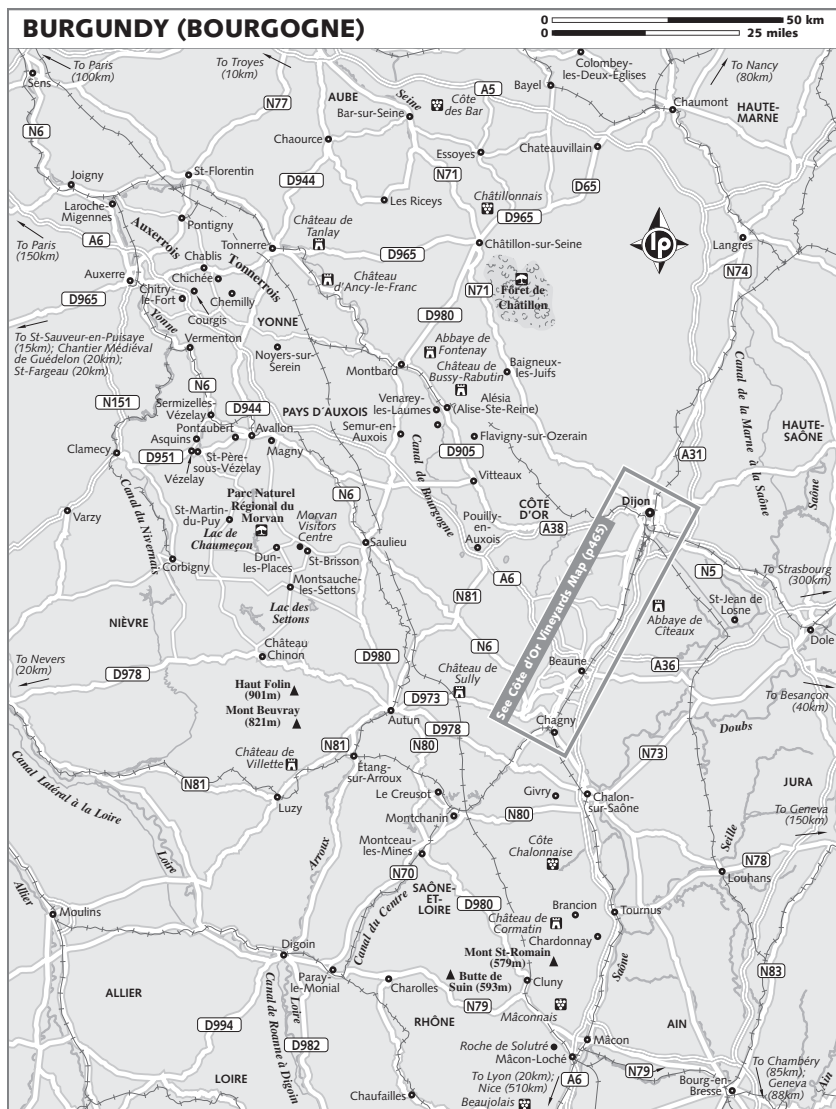
POPULATION: 1.6 MILLION

AREA: 31,582 SQ KM

## History

At its height during the 14th and 15th centuries, the duchy of Burgundy was one of the richest and most powerful states in Europe, a vast swathe of territory stretching from modern-day Burgundy to Alsace and from there northwest to Lorraine, Luxembourg, Flanders and Holland. This was a time of bitter

rivalry between Burgundy and France – indeed, it was the Burgundians who sold Jeanne d'Arc (Joan of Arc) to the English – and for a while it seemed quite possible that the kingdom of France would be taken over by Burgundy. In the end, though, it worked out the other way around, and in 1477 Burgundy became French.



## ON THE GROUND, UPON THE WATER & IN THE AIR

Tasting fine wines often involves hanging out in dimly lit cellars – but Burgundy is also a paradise for lovers of the great outdoors.

The **Comité Régional de Tourisme de Bourgogne** (Burgundy Regional Tourist Board; [www.burgundy-tourism.com](http://www.burgundy-tourism.com)) publishes excellent brochures on Burgundy's outdoors options, including *Burgundy by Bike* and *Boating Holidays in Burgundy*, available at tourist offices.

### Hiking & Cycling

Burgundy has thousands of kilometres of walking and cycling trails, including sections of the GR2, GR7 and GR76. A variety of local trails take you through some of the most ravishingly beautiful wine-growing areas in France, among them the world-renowned Côte d'Or (p466 and p470), the vineyards of Chablis (p478) and the Mâconnais (p494).

Footpaths through the countryside are especially numerous in the Parc Naturel Régional du Morvan, departing from places such as the Morvan Visitors Centre (p488), but you can also set out from the Abbaye de Fontenay (p472), Autun (p489), Avallon (p482), Cluny (p494), Noyers-sur-Serein (p481) and Vézelay (p486).

You can cycle on or very near the *chemin de halage* (towpath) of the **Canal de Bourgogne** all the way from Dijon to Migennes (225km). The section from Montbard to Tonnerre (65km) passes by Château d'Ancy-le-Franc; between Montbard and Pouilly-en-Auxois (58km), spurs go to the Abbaye de Fontenay and Semur-en-Auxois.

For details on Burgundy's planned 800km of *véloroutes* (bike paths) and *voies vertes* (green routes), including downloadable maps and guides, see [www.burgundy-by-bike.com](http://www.burgundy-by-bike.com).

### Canal & River Boating

Few modes of transport are as serene and relaxing as floating along in a houseboat (p970) on some of Burgundy's 1200km of placid waterways, which include the Rivers Yonne, Saône and Seille and a network of canals, including the 242km Canal de Bourgogne, the Canal du Centre, the Canal du Nivernais and the Canal Latéral à la Loire.

Reliable rental companies offering boats from late March to 11 November (canals close for repairs in winter, but rivers don't):

- **Bateaux de Bourgogne** (☎ 03 86 72 92 10; [www.tourisme-yonne.com](http://www.tourisme-yonne.com), click 'I discover', then 'themes', then 'pleasure boating'; 1-2 quai de la République, 89000 Auxerre; 🕒 8.30am-noon & 2-6.30pm Mon-Thu, till 5.30pm Fri, also open 9.30am-12.30pm & 2-6pm Sat Apr-Oct) A reservations centre for four large companies offering 15 points of departure. Based upstairs from Auxerre's tourist office.
- **France Afloat** (Burgundy Cruisers; ☎ 03 86 81 67 87, ☎ in UK 08700 110 538; [www.franceafloat.com](http://www.franceafloat.com); 1 quai du Port, 89270 Vermenton) Based 23km southeast of Auxerre.
- **Locaboat Holidays** (☎ 03 86 91 72 72; [www.locaboat.com](http://www.locaboat.com); Port au Bois, BP 150, 89303 Joigny CEDEX) Rents out boats at locations around France, including Joigny (27km northwest of Auxerre).

### Hot-Air Ballooning

From about April to October you can take a stunning *montgolfière* (hot-air balloon) ride over Burgundy for around €220 per adult. Note that flights are contingent on good weather, though one company reports that only 7% of its scheduled flights end up being cancelled. Veteran outfits include the following:

- **Air Adventures** (☎ 03 80 90 74 23; [www.airadventures.fr](http://www.airadventures.fr)) Based just outside Pouilly-en-Auxois, 50km west of Dijon.
- **Air Escargot** (☎ 03 85 87 12 30; [www.air-escargot.com](http://www.air-escargot.com)) Based 16km south of Beaune in Remigny. Bookings can be made through the Beaune and Dijon tourist offices.

During the Middle Ages, two Burgundy-based monastic orders exerted significant influence across much of Christendom. The ascetic Cistercians were headquartered at Cîteaux (see the boxed text, p464), while their bitter rivals, the powerful and worldly Benedictines, were based at Cluny (p492).

## Getting There & Around

By car or rail (including the TGV Sud-Est), Burgundy makes an easy stopover on the way from the English Channel or Paris to the Alps, Lyon, Provence or the Côte d'Azur. From Dijon, autoroutes stretch northeast to Alsace (A36), north to Lorraine (A31), north and then west to Champagne (A31, A5 and A26) and south to the Rhône Valley (A6). There's no quick way to go west to the Loire Valley.

All the cities and towns and some of the villages mentioned in this chapter are served by trains and public buses, though patience and planning are a must as services in many areas are infrequent (especially on Sunday and during school holidays) or have to be booked the day before. For details on touring the Côte d'Or wine villages by public transport, see p471 and p464. Details on train and bus options around Burgundy are available from **Mobigo** (☎ 08 00 10 20 04; www.mobigo-bourgogne.com, in French).

Tourist offices can supply brochures and maps with details on dedicated bike paths and cycling circuits.

## CÔTE-D'OR

The Côte-d'Or *département* is named after one of the world's foremost wine-growing regions, which stretches from Dijon – bursting with cultural riches – south to the wine town of Beaune and beyond. In the far northwest, on the border with Champagne, Châtillon-sur-Seine displays spectacular Celtic treasures, while in the west you can explore the walled, hilltop town of Semur-en-Auxois.

### DIJON

pop 237,000

Dijon is one of France's most appealing provincial cities. Filled with elegant medieval and Renaissance buildings, the lively centre is wonderful for strolling, especially if you like to leaven your cultural enrichment with excellent food, fine wine and shopping.

Dijon wears its long and glorious history with grace, and with a self-confidence that's never smug or off-putting because it's so obviously and richly deserved. The city's 25,000 students get much of the credit for keeping the nightlife scene snappy, though people of all ages participate in the city's thriving cultural life.

## History

Dijon served as the capital of the duchy of Burgundy from the 11th to 15th centuries, enjoying a golden age during the 14th and 15th centuries under Philippe-le-Hardi (Philip the Bold), Jean-sans-Peur (John the Fearless) and Philippe-le-Bon (Philip the Good). During their reigns, some of the finest painters, sculptors and architects from around the Burgundian lands were brought to Dijon, turning the city into one of the great centres of European art.

## Orientation

Dijon's main thoroughfare, known for much of its length as rue de la Liberté, stretches from the train station eastwards past the tourist office annexe and the Palais des Ducs to Église St-Michel. The main shopping precinct is around rue de la Liberté and perpendicular rue du Bourg. The focal point of the old town is place François Rude. The main university campus is 2km east of the centre.

## Information

**Centre Hospitalier Universitaire** (☎ 03 80 29 30 31; 3 rue du Faubourg Raines; ☎ 24hr) Huge hospital complex with a 24-hour *urgences* (emergency room/casualty ward).

**Cyberbisey** (☎ 03 80 30 95 41; 53 rue Berbisey; per hr €3; ☎ 10am-8pm Mon-Fri, noon-8pm Sat) Internet access.

**Cyberspace 21** (☎ 03 80 30 57 43; 46 rue Monge; per hr €4; ☎ 11am-midnight Mon-Sat, 2pm-midnight Sun & holidays) Internet access.

**Institut Géographique National (IGN)** (☎ 03 80 49 98 58; 2 rue Michelet; ☎ 9am or 10am-noon & 1-6pm Mon-Sat) Has an unsurpassed selection of driving, walking, cycling and other maps published by the IGN.

**Laundrettes** 41 rue Auguste Comte (☎ 6am-9pm); 28 rue Berbisey (☎ 6am-9pm); 55 rue Berbisey (☎ 7am-8.30pm); 8 place de la Banque (☎ 7am-8.30pm)

**Main Post Office** (place Grangier) Exchanges foreign currency, including US\$100 bills.

**Multi-Rezo UnderCity** (☎ 03 80 42 13 89; 55 rue Guillaume Tell; per 15min/1hr €1/4; ☎ 9am-2am Mon-Fri, 11am-2am Sat, 2pm-midnight Sun) Prepaid internet access.

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**Police Station** (☎ 03 80 44 55 00; 2 place Suquet; ☹ 24hr) Access is around the side on rue du Petit Cîteaux from 6.30pm to 8am Monday to Saturday and all day on Sunday and holidays.

**SOS Médecins** (☎ 03 80 59 80 80) Has doctors on call 24-hours.

**Tourist Office** (☎ 08 92 70 05 58; www.dijon-tourism.com; 11 rue des Forges; ☹ 9am-7pm Mon-Sat, 9am-12.30pm & 2.30-5pm Sun & holidays May-Oct, 10am-noon & 2-6pm Mon-Sat, 2.30-5.30pm Sun & holidays Nov-Apr). *The Owl's Trail* (€2.50), available in 11 languages, details a self-guided city-centre walking tour whose route is marked on the pavement with bronze triangles. The one- to three-day Dijon Côte de Nuits Pass may save you some cash.

**Tourist Office Annexe** (place Darcy; ☹ 9am-12.30pm & 2.30-6pm Mon-Sat, 2-6pm Sun & holidays May-Oct, 10am-12.30pm & 2.30-6pm Mon-Sat Nov-Apr) Like the main office, an excellent source of information on Dijon and Burgundy.

## Sights

### MEDIEVAL & RENAISSANCE ARCHITECTURE

Once home to the region's powerful dukes, the **Palais des Ducs et des États de Bourgogne** (Palace of the Dukes and States of Burgundy) is right in the heart of old Dijon. Given a neoclassical facade in the 17th and 18th centuries while serving as the seat of the States-General (Parliament) of Burgundy, it overlooks **place de la Libération**, a semicircular public square designed by Jules Hardouin-Mansart (one of the architects of Versailles) in 1686.

The western wing is occupied by Dijon's **Hôtel de Ville** (City Hall). Inside the arch that's across the street from 92 rue de la Liberté is **Escalier Gabriel** (1730s), a monumental marble stairway with gilded railings that's named after its architect.

The eastern wing houses the outstanding **Musée des Beaux-Arts** (opposite), whose entrance is next to the **Tour de Bar**, a squat 14th-century tower that once served as a prison.

Just off the **Cour d'Honneur** (the courtyard inside the wrought-iron grille), the 46m-high, mid-15th-century **Tour Philippe le Bon** (Tower of Philip the Good; ☎ 03 80 74 52 71; adult/student & over 65yr/under 12yr €2.30/1.20/free; ☹ accompanied climbs every 45min 9am-noon & 1.45-5.30pm Easter-late Nov, 9-11am & 1.30-3.30pm Wed afternoon, Sat & Sun late Nov-Easter) affords fantastic views over the city. On a clear day you can see all the way to Mont Blanc.

Many of Dijon's finest **hôtels particuliers** (aristocratic town houses) are north of the Palais des Ducs and around rue Verrerie, rue Vannerie and rue des Forges,

whose names reflect the industries that once thrived along them (glassmaking, basketweaving and metalsmithery, respectively). The early-17th-century **Maison des Cariatides** (28 rue Chaudronnerie), its facade a riot of stone caryatids, vines and horns, is particularly fine. A bit west you'll find the 13th-century **Hôtel Aubriot** (40 rue des Forges), all garlands, lions and inscrutable visages; the Renaissance-style **Maison Maillard** (38 rue des Forges); and the truly splendid **Hôtel Chambellan** (34 rue des Forges), from whose courtyard a spiral stone staircase leads up to some remarkable stone vaulting and a great view of the building's 17th-century architecture.

Behind Église Notre Dame, the 17th-century **Hôtel de Vogüé** (8 rue de la Chouette) is renowned for the ornate carvings around its exquisitely proportioned Renaissance courtyard – it's definitely worth walking through the pink stone archway for a peek. Figures of an owl and a cat are perched high atop the roof of the 15th-century **Maison Millière** (10 rue de la Chouette).

## CHURCHES

All of Dijon's major churches are open from 8am to 7pm.

A block north of the Palais des Ducs stands **Église Notre Dame**, built between 1220 and 1240. The facade's three tiers are decorated with leering gargoyles separated by two rows of pencil-thin columns; high on top is the 14th-century **Horloge à Jacquemart** (Jacquemart Clock), transported from Flanders in 1382 by Philip the Bold, who claimed it as a trophy of war. It chimes every quarter-hour. The interior has a vast transept crossing and 13th-century stained glass.

Around the north side of the church, rue de la Chouette is named after the small stone **chouette** (owl) carved into the exterior corner of the chapel diagonally across from No 24. Said to grant happiness and wisdom to those who stroke it, it has been worn smooth by generations of fortune-seekers. All sorts of superstitions surround the owl – some insist that walking by the dragon in the lower left corner of the grille of the adjacent window will annul your wish, while others insist that approaching the dragon will actually help make your wish come true. Loiter for a while and locals may approach with sage (and perhaps contradictory) advice.

**Église St-Michel** (place St-Michel) began life as a Gothic church but subsequently underwent

a facade-lift operation in which it was given a richly ornamented Renaissance west front considered among the most beautiful in France, perhaps because it looks like it should be in Italy. The two 17th-century towers are topped with cupolas and, higher still, glittering gold spheres.

Situated above the tomb of St Benignus (who is believed to have brought Christianity to Burgundy in the 2nd century), Dijon's Burgundian Gothic-style **Cathédrale St-Bénigne** (place St-Philibert; ☎ 9am-6.30pm Sat, till 7pm Wed & Fri, to 7.30pm Mon, Tue & Thu, to 9pm Sun) was built around 1300 as an abbey church. Some of Burgundy's great figures are buried inside. The **crypt** (admission €2; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon, 9am-6pm Tue-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat, 1-6pm Sun) is all that's left of an 11th-century Romanesque basilica.

## MUSEUMS

All of Dijon's municipal museums are free except, occasionally, for special exhibitions.

Housed in the eastern wing of the Palais des Ducs, the **Musée des Beaux-Arts** (☎ 03 80 74 52 09; audioguide €3.90; ☎ 9.30am-6pm Wed-Mon May-Oct, 10am-5pm Wed-Mon Nov-Apr) is one of the most outstanding museums in France. From 2009 to 2017 it is supposed to undergo a section-by-section renovation intended to double exhibition space.

The wood-panelled **Salle des Gardes** (Guards' Room), once warmed by a gargantuan fireplace that's as Gothic as Gothic can be, houses three impossibly intricate, gilded Gothic retables from the 1300s, and the late-medieval sepulchres of two Valois dukes. Other highlights include a fine collection of **primitives** that give you a good sense of how artistic and aesthetic sensibilities varied between Italy, Switzerland and the Rhineland in the 13th and 14th centuries; the painting **Galerie d'Objets d'Art** (mid-17th century) by Cornelis de Baellieur, which shows a room rendered with such precision that you can actually enjoy the minuscule artwork hanging on its walls (photography made this sort of painterly tour de force obsolete; hung at eye level in room 1.19); and quite a few **Rude sculptures** – nude though never lewd, they're by the Dijon-born artist François Rude (1784–1855), so don't be a prude or become unglued, dude! The modern and contemporary art section, with works by Manet and Monet, is closed from 11.30am to 1.45pm. In the courtyard, the **ducal kitchens** (1433) often host exhibitions of works by local artists.

The **Musée Archéologique** (☎ 03 80 30 88 54; 5 rue du Docteur Maret; ☎ 9am-12.30pm & 1.30-6pm Wed-Sun, plus Mon mid-May–Sep) displays some truly surprising Celtic, Roman and Merovingian artefacts, including a particularly fine 1st-century AD bronze of the Celtic goddess Sequana standing on a dual-prowed boat. Upstairs, the early Gothic hall (12th and 13th centuries), with its ogival arches held aloft by two rows of columns, once served as the dormitory of a Benedictine abbey.

The **Musée de la Vie Bourguignonne** (☎ 03 80 48 80 90; 17 rue Ste-Anne; ☎ 9am-noon & 2-6pm Wed-Mon), in a 17th-century Cistercian convent, explores village and town life in Burgundy in centuries past with evocative tableaux illustrating dress, headgear, cooking and traditional crafts. A detailed, case-by-case guide in English and German is available at the ticket desk. Down the alley to the right as you exit the cloister, the **Musée d'Art Sacré** (☎ 03 80 48 80 90; 15 rue Ste-Anne; ☎ same hr) displays gleaming Catholic ritual objects from the 12th to 19th centuries inside the convent's green copper-domed chapel (1709).

## PARKS

Dijon has plenty of green spaces that are perfect for picnics, including **Jardin Darcy**, next to the tourist office annexe; and **Jardin de l'Arquebuse**, the botanic gardens, whose stream, pond and formal gardens are south across the tracks from the train station.

## Tours

The tourist office offers a two-hour **MP3 tour** (€6, incl a PDA with images €12) of the city centre and runs various English-language **walking tours** (adult/student/under 18yr/couple €6/3/1/9; ☎ 3pm daily, additional tours 5pm May-Oct, 11am daily & 10pm Mon-Sat Jul & Aug) with departures from the main tourist office.

Taking a tour (in French with a printed text in English) is the only way to see the famous **Puits de Moïse** (Well of Moses; 1395–1405), a grouping of six Old Testament figures by Claus Sluter that's 1.2km west of the train station on the grounds of a psychiatric hospital.

**Segway tour** (adult/12-16yr €15/7; ☎ 3pm & 4.30pm daily Jul & Aug, 3pm & 4.30pm Sat, Sun & holidays Apr & May, Fri-Sun & holidays Jun, Sep & Oct) Run by the tourist office, this 1½-hour tour zips around the city centre.

**Wine & Voyages** (☎ 03 80 61 15 15; www.wineandvoyages.com; 2/3hr tours €55/65; ☎ Mon-Sat Mar–mid-Dec) Runs minibus tours in English of the Côte de Nuits vineyards. Reserve by phone or internet or via the tourist office.



## Sleeping

Accommodation can be booked via the tourist office website ([www.dijon-tourism.com](http://www.dijon-tourism.com)) or on [www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com).

**Ethic Étapes Dijon** (CRISD; ☎ 03 80 72 95 20; [www.auberge-cri-dijon.com](http://www.auberge-cri-dijon.com); 1 bd Champollion; dm/s/d incl breakfast €19.50/36.50/49, €1.50 less per person after 1st night; ☑) This institutional (though friendly) 216-bed hostel, 2.5km northeast of the centre, was completely renovated in 2006. Most beds are in modern, airy rooms for two. By bus, take Liane 4 to the Epirey CRI stop.

**Hôtel Chambellan** (☎ 03 80 67 12 67; [www.hotel-chambellan.com](http://www.hotel-chambellan.com); 92 rue Vannerie; s/d from €43/48, with washbasin only €29/32) Built in 1730, this two-star place has a vaguely medieval feel. Most of the rooms, decorated in cheerful tones of red, orange, pink and white, have views of a quiet courtyard.

**Hôtel Le Jacquemart** (☎ 03 80 60 09 60; [www.hotel-lejacquemart.fr](http://www.hotel-lejacquemart.fr); 32 rue Verrerie; d €52-62, s/d with washbasin only €29/32; ☑) Right in the heart of old Dijon, this two-star hotel has 31 tidy, comfortable rooms; the pricier ones are quite spacious and some come with marble fireplaces. The window boxes make the 18th-century building especially pretty in summer.

**Hôtel Chateaubriand** (☎ 03 80 41 42 18; [www.hotelchateaubriand.fr](http://www.hotelchateaubriand.fr), in French; 3 av Maréchal Foch; d €40.60-45.60, with washbasin only €35.60) An old-fashioned cheapie like the ones your parents stayed in when they backpacked around Europe. This 23-room place has the air of a well-worn dive but, thanks to the Victorian breakfast room, far more character than the sterile chain hotels down the block. Alas, not as romantic as the writer and nowhere near as self-indulgent as the legendarily thick steak named after him.

**Hôtel du Palais** (☎ 03 80 67 16 26; [www.hoteldu-palais-dijon.com](http://www.hoteldu-palais-dijon.com); 23 rue du Palais; d €44-68, q €83) A great little two-star place in a 17th-century *hôtel particulier*. The 13 rooms are spacious and welcoming and the public spaces exude old-fashioned charm. The breakfast room has an 18th-century painted coffered ceiling.

**Hôtel Le Sauvage** (Hostellerie du Sauvage; ☎ 03 80 41 31 21; [www.hotellesauvage.com](http://www.hotellesauvage.com); 64 rue Monge; d €48-58, tr €58-80) In a 15th-century *relais de poste* (relay post house) set around a cobbled, vine-shaded courtyard, this good-value two-star hotel is just off lively rue Monge. The 22 rooms are sparse and practical.

**Hôtel Sofitel La Cloche** (☎ 03 80 30 12 32; [www.hotel-lacloche.com](http://www.hotel-lacloche.com); 14 place Darcy; d €190-220, €20 less in Jul & Aug, ste €300-500; ☑) This venerable four-star

hostelry, built in 1884, boasts a huge lobby chandelier, an immaculate back garden, a sauna and a small fitness room. The 68 rooms are hushed and very comfortable, some mixing shiny brass with burgundy carpets, others sleek wood furnishings with grey carpeting.

## Eating

Loads of restaurants can be found on buzzy rue Berbisey, around place Émile Zola and around the perimeter of the covered market (eg along rue Bannelier and rue Quentin). Rue Amiral Roussin is lined with intimate eateries. In the warm months, outdoor cafés sprout at semicircular place de la Libération.

## RESTAURANTS

**Le Petit Roi de la Lune** (☎ 03 80 49 89 93; 28 rue Amiral Roussin; lunch menu €13.80; ☒ closed Sun & lunch Mon) 'The Little King of the Moon' serves French cuisine that – explains the chef – has been *revisitée, réarrangée et décalée* (revisited, rearranged and shifted), resulting in dishes such as the hugely popular *Camembert frit avec gelée de mûre* (Camembert wrapped in breadcrumbs, fried, baked and then served with blackberry jelly; €9.80) and the heretical *aiguillettes de canard au Coca Cola* (strips of duck filet in a Coca-Cola sauce; €14.90).

**La Mère Folle** (☎ 03 80 50 19 76; 102 rue Berbisey; lunch menu €10, other menus €15-23; ☒ closed Tue, lunch Sat & lunch Wed) A 23-seat Burgundian restaurant with specialities such as *magret de canard au miel, thym et mirabelles* (fillet of duck with honey, thyme and cherry plums; €13). Crammed with character, from the baroque putti and gilded wall mirrors to the pineapple-shaped table lamps and retro chandelier.

## AS FRENCH AS THEY COME

**Café Chez Nous** (☎ 03 80 50 12 98; impasse Quentin; ☒ lunch noon-2pm, bar 10am-2am, closed Mon till 2pm & Sun) A quintessentially French *bar du coin* (neighbourhood bar), often crowded, down a tiny alleyway from the covered market. Serves lunches (details are on the chalkboard) generally made with organic ingredients – the *plat du jour* (meat or fish) costs €8, salads are about €7 and wine by the glass is a bargain at €1.20 to €2.40. On Monday evenings a customer who's in the mood sometimes cooks dinner (€3 to €4) for everyone – sign up on the chalkboard.

**La Petite Marche** (☎ 03 80 30 15 10; 27-29 rue Musette; menus €10.50-14; ☎ lunch Mon-Sat) An organic restaurant with seven types of salad and quite a few vegetarian options (as well as meat and fish) – a good choice if you're tired of heavy Burgundian classics. Upstairs from an organic food shop.

**Osteria Enoteca Italiana** (☎ 03 80 50 07 36; 32 rue Amiral Roussin; lunch/dinner menu €15/39; ☎ closed Mon & dinner Sun) An intimate *ristorante* that's proud of its authentic, traditional Italian pasta (including vegetarian fettucine), meat and fish dishes, some made with white Italian truffles (in season), and its scrumptious home-made desserts (think tiramisù). The decor hints at Venice, the chef's hometown.

**La Dame d'Aquitaine** (☎ 03 80 30 45 65; 23 place Bossuet; lunch menu €22, other menus €29-45; ☎ closed Sun & lunch Mon) Excellent Burgundian and south-western French cuisine served – to the accompaniment of Western classical music – under the sumptuously lit bays of a 13th-century cellar. Options include *coq au vin rouge* and *magret de canard aux baies de cassis* (duck's breast with blackcurrant sauce). The Middle Ages at their most civilised.

## SELF-CATERING

For picnic treats:

**Covered Market** (Halles du Marché; rue Quentin;

☎ 7am-1pm, Tue & Thu-Sat) A huge market on Fridays and Saturdays, with a smaller version on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

**Fromagerie** (28 rue Musette; ☎ 6am or 7am-12.30pm or 1pm & 2.30-7pm, no midday closure Fri & Sat, closed Mon morning & Sun) A friendly, top-quality cheese shop.

**Marché Plus supermarket** (2 rue Bannelier; ☎ 7am-9pm Mon-Sat, 9am-1pm Sun)

**Monoprix supermarket** (11-13 rue Piron; ☎ 9am-8.45pm Mon-Sat)

## Drinking

There are quite a number of bars along rue Berbisey.

**Le Cappuccino** (☎ 03 80 41 06 35; 132 rue Berbisey; ☎ 5pm-2am Mon-Sat) Coffee isn't even served at this convivial and often packed bar (the name is left over from an earlier Starbucksian incarnation), but wine by the glass and a varied selection of 80 beers are, including Mandubienne, the only beer brewed in Dijon. Occasionally hosts live music.

**O Kil** (☎ 03 80 30 02 48; www.lekil.com, in French; 1 rue Auguste Perdrix; ☎ 5pm-2am Tue-Sat) Under stone cellar vaulting, this cosy pub hosts live

music once a month. Fans of English and other languages gather here to converse at the 'Café Polyglotte', which begins at 7.30pm each Tuesday.

**Café de l'Univers** (☎ 03 80 30 98 29; 47 rue Berbisey; ☎ 5pm-2am) This ground-floor bar, the walls covered with mirrors and beer ads, has its menu on a chalkboard. In the cellar there's live music from 9pm to 1am on Friday and Saturday. Popular with students but ages are varied.

## Entertainment

For the latest on Dijon's cultural scene, pick up the monthly *Spectacles* (www.spectacles-publications.com, in French), available free from the tourist office. Events tickets are sold at the **Fnac billetterie** (☎ 08 92 68 36 22; www.fnac.spectacles.com, in French; 24 rue du Bourg; ☎ 1-7pm Mon, 10am-7pm Tue-Sat).

A number of nightclubs can be found near the northwest corner of place de la République (eg rue Marceau). Places listed under Drinking (left) host live music.

**Le Cercle Humerie Jamaïque** (☎ 03 80 73 52 19; www.lecerclejamaïque.com, in French; 14 place de la République; admission free; ☎ 3pm-5am Tue-Sat) Decked out like a bordello, with bold-red walls and gilded mirrors, this nightclub has live music (Cuban, flamenco, jazz, rock and roll) nightly from 11pm to 3am. Rum-based cocktails are the speciality. Le Night Club (admission free; open 11pm to 5am Thursday to Saturday), the downstairs disco, has a blue galactic ceiling and music that's as mixed as the clients' ages (mostly 20 to 40).

Nondubbed films flicker nightly:

**Cinéma Eldorado** (☎ 03 80 66 51 89, recorded information 08 92 68 01 74; www.cinema-eldorado.fr, in French; 21 rue Alfred de Musset) A three-screen art cinema.

**Cinéma Devosge** (☎ 03 80 30 74 79, recorded information 08 92 68 73 33; http://cinealpes.allocine.net, in French; 6 rue Devosge) Five screens.

## Shopping

**Moutarde Maille** (☎ 03 80 30 41 02; 32 rue de la Liberté; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Sat) The factory boutique of the company that makes Grey Poupon. When you walk in, tangy odours assault the nostrils, as they well should in a place with 36 different kinds of mustard, including three on tap that you can sample (from €76 per kilogram).

Shops near the covered market sell samplers with up to 10 different kinds of Edmond Fallot mustard in tiny jars (€9.50).

## Getting There & Away

### AIR

At the time of research, no scheduled international flights used **Dijon-Bourgogne Airport** (☎ 03 80 67 67 67; www.dijon.aeroport.fr), 5km southeast of the city centre, but budget airlines may resume flights during the life of this guide.

### BUS

A single train station **information and ticket counter** (☎ 5.45am-9pm Sun-Thu, to 9.30pm Fri, to 8pm Sat) deals with TER trains, Divia local buses and the *départementale* bus company, **Transco** (☎ 08 00 10 20 04). Bus stops are in front of the train station; schedules appear in the free *Guide Horaire* booklet (available at the information and ticket counter); tickets are sold on board.

Transco bus 60 (18 to 21 daily Monday to Friday, 10 Saturday, two Sunday) links Dijon with the northern Côte de Nuits wine villages of Marsannay-la-Côte, Couchey, Fixin and Gevrey-Chambertin (30 minutes). Dijon's local Divia Ligne 15 (right) goes to Marsannay-la-Côte.

Information on bus services to/from Dijon appears under Avallon, Beaune, Châtillon-sur-Seine and Semur-en-Auxois in this chapter.

International bus travel is handled by **Eurolines** (☎ 03 80 68 20 44; 53 rue Guillaume Tell; ☎ Mon-Fri & Sat morning).

### CAR

Avis, Hertz, National-Citer and Europcar have bureaux in the train-station complex. **ADA** (☎ 03 80 51 90 90; 109 av Jean Jaurès) is 2km south of the train station (take the Liane 4 bus line to Bourroches Jaurès).

### TRAIN

The newly refurbished **train station** (rue du Dr Remy) is linked with Paris' Gare de Lyon (€43.40 to €54.10 by TGV, 1¼ hours, 10 to 14 daily, most frequent in the early morning and evening), Lyon-Part Dieu (€25.10, two hours, 11 to 19 daily), Nice (€79.10 to €91.30 by TGV, 6¼ hours, two direct daily) and Strasbourg (€38.90, 3½ hours, three or four nondirect daily).

For details on travelling by rail to destinations within Burgundy, see the city and town listings in this chapter.

In the city centre, tickets can be purchased at the **SNCF Boutique** (55 rue du Bourg; ☎ 12.30-7pm Mon, 10am-7pm Tue-Sat).

## Getting Around

### BICYCLE

The main tourist office rents mountain bikes year-round for €12/18 per half-/full day, €50 for three days. Helmets are free.

**Velodi** (☎ 08 00 20 03 05; www.velodi.net, in French), with 400 heavy city bikes available at 33 sites around town, is Dijon's version of Paris' Vélib' automatic rental system (see p201).

### BUS

Details on Dijon's bus network, operated by Divia, are available at **L'Espace Bus** (☎ 08 00 10 20 04; www.divia.fr, in French; place Grangier; ☎ 7.30am-6.45pm Mon-Fri, 8.30am-6.30pm Sat). Single tickets, sold by drivers, cost €0.95 and are valid for any number of trips made within a single hour; a Forfait Journée ticket (€3.20), good for unlimited trips all day long, is available from the tourist office or L'Espace Bus. A seven-day pass costs just €9.20.

## ABBAYE DE CÎTEAUX

In contrast to the showy Benedictines of Cluny (p492), the medieval Cistercian order was known for its austerity, discipline and humility – and for the productive manual labour of its monks. Named after **Cîteaux Abbey** (Cistercium in Latin; ☎ 03 80 61 32 58; www.citeaux-abbaye.com, in French), south of Dijon, where it was founded in 1098, the order enjoyed phenomenal growth in the 12th century under St Bernard (1090–1153), and some 600 Cistercian abbeys soon stretched from Scandinavia to the Near East.

Cîteaux was pretty much destroyed during the Revolution and the monks didn't return until 1898 but today it is home to about 35 modern-day monks. You can visit the monastery on a two-hour **guided tour** (adult/student & monk €7.50/4; ☎ tours begin 10.30am, 11.30am & several times 2-4.45pm or 5pm Wed-Sat & Sun afternoon May–early October, plus Tue Jul & Aug) described as 'more spiritual than architectural' (in French with printed English commentary; includes an audiovisual presentation on monastic life). Phone ahead or email for reservations. Visitors are invited to attend daily prayers and Sunday Mass (10.30am). The boutique sells edibles made at monasteries around France.

Dijon has two kinds of bus lines: 'Liane' lines, which are numbered from 1 to 7 and run every 10 minutes or less from about 5.30am (on Sunday from 9am) to midnight or 12.30am; and less frequent 'Ligne' lines, which are numbered from 10 to 46. Bus lines are known by their number and end-of-the-line station.

The free Diviaciti minibus shuttle does a city-centre circuit every six minutes from 7am to 8pm Monday to Saturday. Liane 1, 3, 5 and 6 run along rue de la Liberté.

### CAR & MOTORCYCLE

All city-centre parking is metered. Free spots are available (clockwise from the train station): northwest of rue Devosge, northeast of bd Thiers, southeast of bd Carnot, south of rue du Transvaal and on the other side of the train tracks from the city centre. There's a big free car park at place Suquet, just south of the police station.

### TAXI

A taxi is just a phone call away on ☎ 03 80 41 41 12 (24 hours a day).

## CÔTE D'OR VINEYARDS

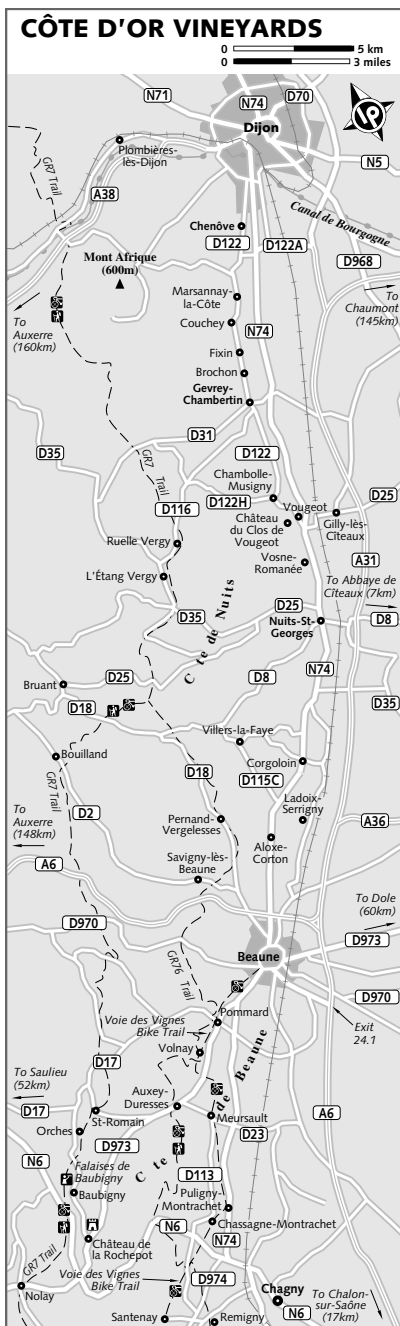
Burgundy's most renowned vintages come from the vine-covered Côte d'Or (Golden Hillside), the narrow, eastern slopes of a range of hills made of limestone, flint and clay that runs south from Dijon for about 60km. The northern section, the **Côte de Nuits**, stretches from Marsannay-la-Côte south to Corgoloin and produces reds known for their robust, full-bodied character. The southern section, the **Côte de Beaune**, lies between Ladoix-Serrigny and Santenay and produces great reds and great whites.

Tourist offices en route can provide local brochures; *The Burgundy Wine Road*, an excellent free booklet published by the Burgundy Tourist Board ([www.bourgogne-tourisme.com](http://www.bourgogne-tourisme.com)); and a useful map, *Roadmap to the Wines of Burgundy* (€0.50).

### Activities

#### WINE TASTING

The villages of the Côte d'Or offer innumerable places to sample and purchase world-class wines – a short walk from where they were made! Look for signs reading *dégustation* (tasting), *domaine* (wine-making



### FROM BURGUNDY TO THE MOON

In 1971 the astronauts of NASA's Apollo 15 moon mission named one of the lunar craters they found 'St George', in honour of the bottle of Nuits-St-Georges consumed on the way to the moon in Jules Verne's sci-fi epic, *From the Earth to the Moon* (1865):

'And lastly, to crown the repast, Ardan had brought out a fine bottle of Nuits, which was found "by chance" in the provision-box. The three friends drank to the union of the earth and her satellite.'

estate), *château*, *cave* (wine cellar), *caveau* (a small cellar), *vente* (sales) or just plain *vins* (wines). Another key term is *gratuit* (free), though visitors are expected to be serious about making a purchase.

### ROUTE DES GRANDS CRUS

Burgundy's most famous wine route, the Route des Grands Crus ([www.road-of-the-fine-burgundy-wines.com](http://www.road-of-the-fine-burgundy-wines.com)) and its often-narrow variants wend their way between the region's stone-built villages, each with its ancient steeple-topped church, some with the turrets of a *château* peeping above the trees of a private park. Neatly tended vines cascade down the slopes between hamlets with impossibly beautiful names – Chambertin, Chambolle, Chassagne, Montrachet (the two *ts* are silent) – whose soft, subliminal syllables cause oenophiles to daydream and salivate. The Côte's lower slopes offer luscious seas of wine fields, but don't neglect the upper slopes, where the vines give way to forests and cliffs and the views are breathtaking. Signposted in brown, the Route des Grands Crus generally follows the tertiary roads west of the N74.

If you're coming from Dijon, the Côte de Nuits begins in earnest just south of **Marsannay-la-Côte**. Most of the area's *grand cru* vineyards are between **Gevrey-Chambertin** and **Vosne-Romanée**, famed for its Romanée Conti wines, among Burgundy's most prestigious – and priciest. **Vogueot** is known for its imposing *château*. **Nuits-St-Georges** (see the boxed text, above) is a proper town with several hotels, restaurants and food shops.

On the Côte de Beaune, **Aloxe-Corton's** *Château Corton-André*, just off the hamlet's one-lane main street, is easy to spot thanks

to its impossibly steep coloured-tile roof. **Pernand-Vergelesses** (see Eating, opposite) is nestled in a little valley that's completely hidden from the N74.

South of Beaune, the **Château de Pommard** ([www.chateau-de-pommard.tm.fr](http://www.chateau-de-pommard.tm.fr)), surrounded by a stone wall, is on the D973 on the northeast edge of town. **Volnay** is notable for its hillside church. A bit off the main track, **St-Romain** is a bucolic village situated right where vineyardland meets pastureland, forests and cliffs. Hiking trails from here include the spectacular **Sentier des Roches**, a circuit that follows part of the GR7 and the D171 along the top of the **Falaises de Baubigny** (Baubigny cliffs), 300m above the Saône. This trail takes you via the hillside hamlet of **Orches** to the 15th-century **Château de La Rochepot** (☎ 03 80 21 71 37; [www.larocheapot.com](http://www.larocheapot.com); adult/6-14yr €7.50/4; 📞 closed Tue, tours 10am-6pm Jul & Aug, 10am-5.30pm Jun & Sep, 10-11.45am & 2-5.30pm Apr & May, 10-11.45am & 2-4.30pm Oct), whose conical towers rise from thick woods above the ancient village of Rochepot. Tours are in French but most guides speak English and an English text is provided.

### WALKING

The GR7 and its variant, the GR76, run along the Côte d'Or from a bit west of Dijon to the hills west of Beaune, from where they continue southwards. The Beaune tourist office sells an excellent guide, *Walks in the Beaune Countryside* (€3), which details 30 marked routes.

### CYCLING

To get from Dijon to Beaune by bike, follow the quiet (but almost vergeless/shoulderless) D122, which gradually becomes pretty south of Couchey, to Nuits-St-Georges. From there, take either the challenging D8 and the D115C, or the flatter D20, just east of the N74, which offers fine views of the wine slopes. The ride takes three or four hours and covers about 50km. To avoid cycling both ways (or through Dijon's ugly and heavily trafficked urban sprawl, which stretches as far south as Marsannay-la-Côte), you can take your bike along on most Dijon-Beaune trains – look for the bicycle symbol on train schedules.

The 20km **Voie des Vignes** (Vineyard Way), a bike route marked by rectangular green-on-white signs, goes from Beaune's Parc de la Bouzaize via Pommard, Volnay, Meursault, Puligny-Montrachet and Chassagne-

Montrachet to Santenay, where you can pick up the **Voie Verte** (see p494) to Cluny. The Beaune tourist office sells a detailed map, *The Beaune-Santenay Cycle Track* (€2).

## Sleeping

Along the Route des Grands Crus, signs reading *chambres* announce the presence of a B&B. Tourist offices have lists of the area's plentiful accommodation options.

Gilly-lès-Cîteaux may be on the flat (ie eastern) side of the N74 but it's home to one of the Côte d'Or's most luxurious hotels, the four-star **Château de Gilly** (☎ 03 80 62 89 98; www.chateau-gilly.com; d €160-312, 10% more on Fri & Sat, ste €422-723; 📺 📶), which occupies the 14th- and 17th-century residence of the abbots of Cîteaux. The 48 spacious rooms are luxuriously appointed and all have lovely views. Bicycle use is free.

Nearby **La Closerie de Gilly** (☎ 03 80 62 87 74; www.closerie-gilly.com; d €75-85, per week €300-400; 📺 📶) is a homey, five-room B&B inside a delightful 18th-century *maison bourgeoise* with a huge, flowery garden. Has bicycles for rent and offers wine-tasting with commentary.

In Ladoix-Serrigny, 10 unsurprising two-star rooms are available at **Les Terrasses de Corton** (☎ 03 80 26 42 37; www.terrasses-de-corton.com; d/q from €55/79), on the N74 near the southern edge of town.

## Eating

Lots of excellent restaurants are tucked away in the villages of the Côte d'Or.

**Les Terrasses de Corton** (☎ 03 80 26 42 37; menus €17.50-40; 🕒 noon-1.45pm & 7.30-9pm, closed Wed & lunch Thu, also closed dinner Sun late Oct-early Mar) In Ladoix-Serrigny, on the N74 near the southern edge of town, this place looks a bit like a motel

but in fact serves good-value French and Burgundian cuisine, including home-style bœuf bourguignon (€13.50).

**La Cabotte** (☎ 03 80 61 20 77; 24 Grand' Rue, Nuits-St-Georges; menus €27-49; 🕒 closed lunch Sat, Mon & Sun) In Nuits-St-Georges, this 22-seat restaurant serves up refined, 'inventive' versions of French dishes. No artifice or posing here, just excellent, if sometimes surprising, food. To get there walk half a block south from Beffroi de Nuits, the town's 17th-century chiming clock tower.

**Le Chambolle** (☎ 03 80 62 86 26; 28 rue Basse, Chambolle-Musigny; menus €26-42; 🕒 12.15-1.30pm or 2pm & 7.15-8.30pm Fri-Tue) In Chambolle-Musigny on the D122, a bit east of Vougeot, traditional Burgundian cuisine made with the freshest ingredients is the order of the day at this rustic restaurant.

**ourpick Le Charlemagne** (☎ 03 80 21 51 45; www.jecharlemagne.fr, in French; Pernand-Vergelesses; lunch menus Mon-Fri €27-33, other menus €43-82; 🕒 12.15-1.30pm & 7.15-9.30pm, closed Tue & lunch Wed, also closed dinner Wed Sep-May) With vineyard views as mouth-watering as the imaginatively prepared *escargots de Bourgogne*, the serene, Japanese-inspired dining room is the perfect spot to experience delicious dishes melding venerable French traditions with techniques and products from Japan – surprises involving *gari* (pickled ginger root), *nori* (dried seaweed) and *yazu* (a tiny Japanese lemon) await. Several tables are almost inside the ultramodern kitchen. Situated on the D18 at the town's southern entrance.

## Getting Around

For information on visiting the Côte d'Or by train and bus from Beaune and Dijon, see p471 and p464.

### REPENT, O SINNERS, BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!

On the left side of the *Polyptych of the Last Judgement* (1443) by the Flemish painter Roger van der Weyden, on display in Beaune's Hôtel-Dieu (p468), naked dead people climb out of their graves and are welcomed into Heaven (a golden cathedral) by a winged angel, while on the right the terror-stricken damned are dragged shrieking into the fiery depths of Hell, their faces frozen in agony.

The message to the illiterate medieval masses was clear: Judgement Day means payback time, with the trumpets a-blarin', the scales a-swingin' and your fate for all Eternity lying in the balance. God is loving and beneficent but that angel – the one holding the scales – isn't going to cut anyone any slack, so if you think that supplications, implorations and entreaties will help at this late stage – well, you are sadly mistaken! Repent, repent, O Sinners, for if you do not this is what awaits you! Rated PG13 – parental discretion advised, depicts nudity and harsh divine justice.

## BEAUNE

pop 21,300

Beaune (pronounced similarly to 'bone'), 44km south of Dijon, is the unofficial capital of the Côte d'Or. This thriving town's *raison d'être* and the source of its *joie de vivre* is wine – making it, tasting it, selling it, but most of all, drinking it. Consequently Beaune is one of the best places in all of France for wine tasting.

The jewel of Beaune's old city is the magnificent Hôtel-Dieu, France's most splendid medieval charity hospital.

### Orientation

The amoeba-shaped old city, enclosed by ramparts and a stream, is encircled by a one-way boulevard with seven names. The tourist office and the old town's commercial centre are about 1km west of the train station.

### Information

**Athenaeum de la Vigne et du Vin** (☎ 03 80 25 08 30; www.athenaeumfr.com; 7 rue de l'Hôtel-Dieu; ☎ 10am–7pm, till 7.30pm Jul & Aug) Stocks thousands of titles on oenology (the art and science of wine making), including quite a few in English, as well as recipe books and wine-related gifts.

**Laundrettes** 19 rue du Faubourg St-Jean (☎ 6am–9pm); 63 rue de Lorraine (☎ 7am–9pm)

**Le Clos Carnot** (☎ 03 80 22 73 43; 34 place Carnot; per hr €3; ☎ 8am–midnight) A café-brasserie with two internet computers.

**Post Office** (7 bd St-Jacques) Does currency exchange.

**Tourist Office** (☎ 03 80 26 21 30; www.beaune-burgundy.com; 6 bd Perpreuil; ☎ 9am–7pm Mon–Sat, 9am–6pm Sun Easter–mid-Nov, 9am–12.30pm & 1.30–6pm Mon–Sat, 10am–12.30pm & 1.30–5pm Sun mid-Nov–Easter) Has an internet computer (€1.50 per 15 minutes) and sells Pass Beaune ticket combos that save 5% to 15%.

### Sights

Founded in 1443 and used as a hospital until 1971, the celebrated Gothic **Hôtel-Dieu des Hospices de Beaune** (☎ 03 80 24 45 00; rue de l'Hôtel-Dieu; adult/student/under 18yr €6/4.80/2.80; ☎ tickets sold 9am–6.30pm Easter–mid-Nov, 9am–11.30am & 2–5.30pm mid-Nov–Easter, interior closes 1hr later), open 365 days a year, is topped by ornate turrets and pitched rooftops covered in multicoloured tiles. Interior highlights include the barrel-vaulted **Grande Salle** (look for the dragons up on the roof beams); an 18th-century **pharmacy** lined with flasks once filled with volatile oils, unguents, elixirs and powders such as *beurre*

*d'antimoine* (antimony butter) and *poudre de cloportes* (woodlouse powder); the huge **kitchens**, with their open hearths and industrious nuns; and the brilliant **Polyptych of the Last Judgement** (see the boxed text, p467).

Notable for its extra-large porch, **Basilique Collégiale Notre Dame** (place Général Lederc; ☎ 8.30am–7pm, till 6pm in winter), built in the Romanesque and Gothic styles from the 11th to 15th centuries, was once affiliated with the monastery of Cluny. Medieval tapestries are displayed inside from Easter till the third weekend in November.

Beaune's thick stone **ramparts**, which shelter wine cellars and are surrounded by overgrown gardens, are ringed by a pathway that makes for a lovely stroll.

### Activities

#### WINE TASTING

Underneath Beaune's buildings, streets and ramparts, millions of dusty bottles of wine are being aged to perfection in cool, dark, cobweb-lined cellars. At a number of places you can sample and compare fine local wines.

**Cellier de la Vieille Grange** (☎ 03 80 22 40 06; 27 bd Georges Clemenceau; ☎ 9am–noon & 2–7pm Tue–Sat, by appointment Sun & Mon) This is where locals come to buy Burgundy wines *en vrac* (in bulk) for as little as €1.25 per litre (from €3.40 per litre for AOC). Tasting is done direct from 114L and 228L barrels using a pipette. Bring your own jerrycan or buy a *cubitainer* (5/20L for €2.75/7.60) or something memorably – and horribly – called a *Vinibag*.

**Lycée Viticole** (☎ 03 80 26 35 81; www.lavitibeauve.com, in French; 16 av Charles Jaffelin; ☎ 8am–noon & 2–5.30pm Mon–Thu, to 5pm Fri, 8am–noon Sat, closed 2 weeks mid-Aug) One of about 20 French secondary schools – at least one in each wine-growing region – that train young people in every aspect of wine growing, from tending the vines to fermentation, bottling and ageing. You can visit the cellars and taste the prize-winning wines made by the students, something they're officially not allowed to do till they're 18. (Decades ago wine used to be served with lunch in the school cafeteria!)

**Marché aux Vins** (☎ 03 80 25 08 20; www.marceauxvins.com, in French; 2 rue Nicolas Rolin; admission €10; ☎ 9.30–11.30am & 2–5.30pm, no midday closure mid-Jun–Aug) Using a *tastevin* (flat silvery cup whose shiny surfaces help you admire the wine's colour) you can sample an impressive 15 wines (including three whites) in the candle-lit former Eglise des Cordeliers and its cellars. Wandering among the vintages takes about an hour. The finest wines are at the end – look for the *premiers crus* and the *grand cru*.





**WANT TO KNOW MORE?**

Two of the most authoritative tomes on Burgundy wines, *Burgundy* by Anthony Hanson and *Côte d'Or: A Celebration of the Great Wines of Burgundy* by Clive Coates, were written by Brits, inspiring among French wine connoisseurs a mixture of awe (because of their erudition) and chagrin (because they have yet to be translated into French). A less weighty reference guide is Sylvain Pitiot and Jean-Charles Servant's *The Wines of Burgundy* (€14.25, 11th edition), while *Everything There Is To Know About Burgundy Wines* (€12.50 at Beaune's tourist office) is a concise, easy-to-use introduction to Burgundy's 100 appellations. Lots of works on fermented grapes and their myriad nuances are available at Beaune's Athenaeum de la Vigne et du Vin (p468).

The **École des Vins de Bourgogne** (☎ 03 80 26 35 10; www.ecoledesvins-bourgogne.com; 6 rue du 16e Chasseurs, Beaune) offers a variety of courses (eg a 2½-hour fundamentals class for €40; 15% discount for students) – some conducted as far afield as Singapore – to refine your vinicultural vocabulary as well as your palate.

Another Beaune-based outfit, **Sensations Vin** (☎ 03 80 22 17 57; www.sensation-vin.com; 1 rue d'Enfer, Beaune; 🕒 10am-7pm), offers introductory tasting sessions (half-/full-/two hours €8/18/33; no appointment needed) as well as tailor-made courses.

A useful website is www.bourgogne-wines.com.

**Patriarche Père et Fils** (☎ 03 80 24 53 78; www.patriarche.com; 5 rue du Collège; audioguide tour €10; 🕒 9.30-11.30am & 2-5.30pm) The largest cellars in Burgundy, lined with three million to five million bottles of wine. The oldest is a Beaune Villages AOC from 1904, a steal at €839 (unless it turns out to be vinegar, in which case you'll end up with a pretty pricey salad). Visitors get to sample and compare 13 wines – and take the *tastevin* home.

**HIKING & CYCLING**

A number of walking circuits begin at **Parc de la Bouzaize**, just northwest of the Lycée Viticole (see p466).

**Bourgogne Randonnées** (☎ 03 80 22 06 03; www.bourgogne-randonnees.com; 7 av du 8 Septembre; 🕒 9am-noon & 1.30-7pm Mon-Sat, 10am-noon & 2-7pm Sun Apr-Oct) Arranges tailor-made self-guided bike tours, including lodging and meals. Bike rental costs €17/90 per day/week; maps are provided.

**Tours**

The tourist office handles reservations for **minibus tours** (per person €34-43) of the vineyards run by **Safari Tours** (www.burgundy-tourism-safaritours.com) and **Vinea Tours** (www.vineatours.com), and for **hot-air-balloon rides** (p456).

Maison Fallot, Burgundy's last family-run mustard company, offers tours of its facilities at **La Moutarderie** (Mustard Mill; www.fallot.com; 31 rue du Faubourg Bretonnière; adult/under 10yr €10/8; 🕒 tours 10am & 11.30am Mon-Sat, also in the afternoon in summer), which include a museum about mustard. Reservations are handled by the tourist office.

**Festivals & Events**

**Trois Glorieuses Festival** (Third Sunday in November)

The grandest of the Côte d'Or's many wine festivals. As part of this three-day extravaganza, the Hospices de Beaune auctions off the wines from its endowment, 61 hectares of prime vineyards bequeathed by benefactors; proceeds go to medical facilities and research. The event, which has been running since 1859, ends with a lavish candle-lit dinner inside the Hôtel-Dieu.

**Sleeping BUDGET**

**Camping ground** (☎ 03 80 22 03 91; campinglescent vignes@mairie-beaune.fr; 10 rue Auguste Dubois; per adult/tent €3.60/4.35; 🕒 mid-Mar-Oct) A flowery, four-star camping 700m north of the centre.

**Hôtel Foch** (☎ 03 80 24 05 65, fax 03 80 24 75 59; 24 bd Foch; s/d €33/38, with washbasin only from €28) A cheapie, run by a friendly older lady, whose 10 rooms are basic but clean. What you save on accommodation you can spend on wine!

**Hôtel Rousseau** (☎ 03 80 22 13 59; 11 place Madeleine; d €55, s/d with washbasin only from €30/38, hall shower €3) An endearingly old-fashioned, 12-room hotel run since 1959 by a friendly woman who's been *d'un certain âge* for quite some time. Reception occasionally shuts for a while without warning so she can go shopping. Prices include breakfast.

**MIDRANGE**

**Hôtel de France** (☎ 03 80 24 10 34; www.hoteldefrance-beaune.com; 35 av du 8 Septembre; s/d/tr/q €56/65/75/85; 🕒 📺) An unsurprising but comfortable,

sound-proofed two-star place with 21 decent rooms. Ideal if you're arriving by train.

**Hôtel de la Cloche** (☎ 03 80 24 66 33; www.hotel-cloche-beaune.com; 40-42 rue du Faubourg Madeleine; d €57-98; 🚗) The 32 rooms at this veteran three-star establishment mix classic decor with contemporary comfort.

**Abbaye de Maizières** (☎ 03 80 24 74 64; www.beaune-abbaye-maizieres.com; 19 rue Maizières; d €77-107, ste €133-149; 🚗) An idiosyncratic hotel inside a 12th-century abbey whose 13 tastefully converted rooms, with modern bathrooms, make creative use of the old brickwork and ancient wooden beams.

**Hôtel des Remparts** (☎ 03 80 24 94 94; www.hotel-remparts-beaune.com; 48 rue Thiers; d €92-108, low season €79-95, ste €116-150; 🚗 🚗 🚗) Set around two delightful courtyards, this three-star place – in a 17th-century town house – has 22 rooms with red tile floors, antique furniture and luxurious bathrooms. An excellent bet.

## TOP END

**Hôtel de la Poste** (☎ 03 80 22 08 11; www.hoteldelaposte.beaune.com; 1 bd Georges Clemenceau; d €130-220; 🚗 🚗) A four-star establishment on a site that's been home to a hostelry since 1660. Has an old-time wooden lift and 36 spacious, soothing rooms – no bling here, just understated elegance. Good wheelchair access.

## Eating

Local restaurants are renowned for helping diners select just the right wine to go with each dish. You'll find quite a few cafés and restaurants around place Carnot, place Félix Ziem and place Madeleine.

**Caves Madeleine** (☎ 03 80 22 93 30; 8 rue du Faubourg Madeleine; menus €12-22; 🚗 closed Thu, Sun & lunch Fri) A convivial Burgundian restaurant, much appreciated by locals who prize good value, with regional classics such as *bœuf bourguignon*, *cassolette d'escargots* and *jambon persillé* (jellied moulded ham). Most guests sit at long communal tables.

**Le Bistrot Bourguignon** (☎ 03 80 22 23 24; www.restaurant-lebistrotbourguignon.com; 8 rue Monge; lunch menu €12.90; 🚗 Tue-Sat) A cosy bistro-style restaurant and wine bar that serves good-value cuisine billed as *régionale et originale* and 17 Burgundy wines by the glass (€2.60 to €7). Hosts live jazz at least once a month.

**Le P'tit Paradis** (☎ 03 80 24 91 00; 25 rue Paradis; lunch menu €18, other menus €27-35; 🚗 Tue-Sat) An intimate restaurant on a narrow medieval street – an

excellent place for *cuisine élaborée* (creatively transformed versions of traditional dishes) made with fresh local products. Has a terrace in summer.

**Ma Cuisine** (☎ 03 80 22 30 22; passage Ste-Hélène; menu €22; 🚗 12.15-1.30pm & 7.30-9pm Mon, Tue, Thu & Fri, closed Aug) A low-key, 13-table place hidden down an alley. The traditional French and Burgundian dishes, all excellent, include *pigeon de Bresse entier rôti au jus* (whole Bresse pigeon roasted in its juices; €32). The award-winning wine list includes 850 vintages listed by colour, region and ascending price (€18 to €830).

## SELF-CATERING

The covered market hall at place de la Halle hosts a **food market** (🚗 until 12.30pm Sat) and a much smaller **marché gourmand** (gourmet market; 🚗 Wed morning).

**Alain Hess Fromager** (7 place Carnot; 🚗 9am-12.15pm & 2.30-7.15pm Mon-Sat, plus 10am-1pm Sun Easter-Dec) Fine cheeses.

**Casino supermarket** (28 rue du Faubourg Madeleine; 🚗 8.30am-7.30pm Mon-Sat, 9am-noon Sun) Through an archway on rue du Faubourg Madeleine.

## Getting There & Away

### BUS

Bus 44, run by **Transco** (☎ 08 00 10 20 04), links Beaune with Dijon (€6.30, one hour, seven daily Monday to Friday, six Saturday, two Sunday and holidays), stopping at Côte d'Or wine-growing villages such as Vougeot, Nuits-St-Georges and Aloxe-Corton. Some line 44 buses also serve villages south of Beaune, including Pommard, Volnay, Meursault and La Rochepot. Services are somewhat reduced in July and August.

In Beaune, buses stop along the boulevards around the old city. Timetables can be consulted at the tourist office.

### CAR

Cars, scooters (50cc per day €26, 125cc per day €58) and mountain bikes (€13 per day) can be rented from **ADA** (☎ 03 80 22 72 90; 26 av du 8 Septembre).

### TRAIN

Beaune has frequent rail connections to Dijon (€6.50, 25 minutes, 25 to 40 daily) via the Côte d'Or village of Nuits-St-Georges (€3, 10 minutes). The last train from Beaune to Dijon departs a bit after 11pm.

Other destinations include Paris' Gare de Lyon (€50.50 to €62.40, two direct TGVs daily), Lyon–Part Dieu (€21.60, 1¼ hours, 11 to 17 daily) and Mâcon (€12.90, 50 minutes, 11 to 18 daily).

## Getting Around

Parking is free outside the town walls.

If your legs feel wobbly from walking or wine, you can take a **taxi** (☎ 06 09 42 36 80, 06 09 43 12 08).

Near the train station, **Bourgogne Randonnées** (p470) and **ADA** (p471) rent bicycles.

## PAYS D'AUXOIS

The area northwest of Dijon along and around the Canal de Bourgogne is verdant and rural, with broad fields, wooded hills and escarpments dotted with fortified hilltop towns, including Semur-en-Auxois.

### Semur-en-Auxois

pop 4450

Surrounded by a hairpin curve in the River Armançon, this beguiling town is guarded by four massive, 13th- and 14th-century pink-granite bastions. Fear not, the 44m-high **Tour de la Orle d'Or** is not likely to collapse any time soon – those menacing cracks have been there since 1589!

Next to two concentric medieval gates, **Porte Sauvigne** (1417) and fortified **Porte Guillier** (13th century), the **tourist office** (☎ 03 80 97 05 96; www.ville-semur-en-auxois.fr, in French; 2 place Gaveau; ☎ 9am–1pm & 2–7pm Mon–Sat, 10am–12.30pm & 3–6pm Sun & holidays Jul & Aug, 9am–noon & 2–5pm or 6pm Mon–Sat Sep–Jun, closed Mon Oct–Apr) has a free walking-tour brochure in English and an SNCF train ticket machine.

**Carpe Diem** (right) offers free internet and wi-fi access with a drink or meal.

Most of the **old city**, easily explorable on foot, was built when Semur was an important religious centre boasting no less than six monasteries. Pedestrianised **rue Buffon**, through the gates from the tourist office, is lined with 17th-century houses; the **confectionary shop** (14 rue Buffon; ☎ Tue–Sun) produces **Semurettes**, delicious dark-chocolate candies invented here a century ago. The **Promenade du Rempart** affords panoramic views from atop the western part of Semur's medieval battlements.

Inside the twin-towered, Gothic **Collégiale Notre Dame** (☎ 9am–noon & 2–6.30pm, till 5pm or 6pm Nov–Easter), a collegiate church restored in the mid-19th century, are a stained-glass window

(1927) and a plaque commemorating American soldiers who fell in France in WWI.

The **Musée Municipal** (☎ 03 80 97 24 25; rue Jean-Jacques Collenot; admission free; ☎ 2–5pm Mon & Wed–Fri Oct–Mar, 2–6pm Wed–Mon & holidays Apr–Sep) is fun because its eclectic exhibits – from fossils and stuffed fauna to archeology, sculptures and oil paintings – are still arranged just as they were back in the 19th century.

## SLEEPING & EATING

**Hôtel des Cymaises** (☎ 03 80 97 21 44; www.hotelcymaises.com; 7 rue du Renaudot; d/q €64/93) Set around a quiet courtyard in an 18th-century *maison bourgeoise*, this two-star hotel has 18 comfortable, modern rooms, four apartments and a bright verandah for breakfast. It's just 100m from the tourist office – to get there go through the ancient gates and turn right.

**Hôtel de la Côte d'Or** (☎ 03 80 97 24 54; www.auxois.fr; 1 rue de la Liberté; d €95; ☎ ☎ ☎) Across from the tourist office, this three-star place – totally renovated in 2008 – has 18 rooms whose contemporary furnishings blend nicely with the old beams and (in some rooms) stone fireplaces.

**Carpe Diem** (☎ 03 80 97 00 35; 4 rue du Vieux Marché; menus €11.50–21; ☎ 10.30am–2am Tue–Sun Jun–Sep, 10.30am–10pm Tue & Wed, till 2am Thu–Sat, 10.30am–4.30pm Sun Oct–May) This friendly neighbourhood bar serves bistro-style meals and wine by the glass (€2 to €2.50). Often hosts live music (jazz, blues) on Friday or Saturday from 6.30pm to 7.30pm and after 9.30pm.

There's a **Petit Casino grocery** (32 place Notre Dame; ☎ 8am–1pm & 3–8pm, closed Sun afternoon & Mon) near the church.

## GETTING THERE & AWAY

**Transco** (☎ 08 00 10 20 04) bus 49 (two or three daily) goes to Dijon (€10.80, 1¼ hours) and Avallon (40 minutes), while bus 70 goes to Montbard (on the Paris–Dijon rail line; 20 to 60 minutes, seven to nine daily Monday to Saturday, three Sunday).

### Abbaye de Fontenay

Founded in 1118 and restored to its stone-built medieval glory a century ago, **Abbaye de Fontenay** (Fontenay Abbey; ☎ 03 80 92 15 00; www.abbayedefontenay.com; adult/student under 26yr €8.90/4.20; ☎ 10am–6pm Apr–11 Nov, 10am–noon & 2–5pm 12 Nov–Mar) offers a fascinating glimpse of the austere, serene surroundings in which Cistercian monks lived lives of contemplation, prayer and manual

## ESCARGOTS

One of France's trademark culinary habits, the consumption of gastropod molluscs – preferably with butter, garlic, parsley and fresh bread – is inextricably linked in the public mind with Burgundy because *Helix pomatia*, though endemic in much of Europe, is best known as *escargot de Bourgogne* (the Burgundy snail). Once a regular – and unwelcome – visitor to the fine-wine vines of Burgundy and a staple on Catholic plates during Lent, the humble hermaphroditic crawler has been decimated by overharvesting and the use of agricultural chemicals, and is now a protected species. As a result, the vast majority of the critters impaled on French snail forks (the ones with two tongues) are now imported from Turkey, Greece and Eastern Europe.

For lots more information – and perhaps a new career – see the article 'Start Your Own Snail Farm', issued by the **United States Department of Agriculture** ([www.totse.com/en/technology/science\\_technology/snails.html](http://www.totse.com/en/technology/science_technology/snails.html)).

labour. Set in a bucolic wooded valley along a stream called Ru de Fontenay, the abbey – a Unesco World Heritage Site – includes an exquisitely unadorned Romanesque church, a barrel-vaulted monks' dormitory, landscaped gardens and the 'first metallurgical factory in Europe'. Guided **tours** (🚗 departures hourly 10am–5pm except 1pm Apr–11 Nov) are in French (printed information is available in six languages).

From the parking lot, the **GR213 trail** forms part of two verdant walking circuits, one to Montbard (13km return), the other (11.5km) through Touillon and Le Petit Jailly. Maps are available at the ticket counter.

The abbey is 25km north of Semur-en-Auxois. A **taxi** (☎ 03 80 92 31 49, 03 80 92 04 79) from the Montbard train station – served from Dijon (€11, 40 minutes) and Paris' Gare de Lyon (one hour by TGV) – costs €11 (€15 on Sunday and holidays).

## CHÂTILLON-SUR-SEINE

pop 6300

Châtillon's main claim to fame is the **Trésor de Vix**, a treasure trove of Celtic, Etruscan and Greek objects from the 6th century BC on display at the **Musée du Pays Châtillonnais** (☎ 03 80 91 24 67; rue de la Libération; adult/student under 26yr €4.50/2.50 🚗 10am–6pm Jul & Aug, 9.30am–noon & 2–5pm Wed–Mon Sep–Jun). The outstanding collection includes a jaw-droppingly massive bronze Greek *krater* – 1.64m high and weighing 208kg! – that could hold 1100L of wine. In mid-2009 the museum will move to **Abbaye Notre Dame**, founded in 1132, situated a few hundred metres north of place Marmont. Signs are in French, English and German.

Châtillon's **tourist office** (☎ 03 80 91 13 19; [www.pays-chatillonnais.fr](http://www.pays-chatillonnais.fr); place Marmont; 🚗 9am–noon & 2–6pm Mon–Sat year-round, plus 10am–noon Sun & holidays May–Sep)

is at the fountain roundabout though there are plans to move it to larger quarters. Internet access is available at **Au Stand** (☎ 03 80 91 22 53; 41 rue Maréchal de Lattre; per hr €4; 🚗 8am–9pm Tue–Sat, 8am–1pm Sun).

The town's commercial centre, rebuilt after the war, is bordered by two branches of the Seine, here hardly more than a stream. A short walk east is the idyllic **Source de la Douix** (pronounced *dwee*; 🚗 24hr), a 600L-a-second artesian spring that flows from the bottom of a 30m cliff. Perfect for a picnic, it is one of the oldest Celtic religious sites in Europe. Nearby you can climb up to the round, crenellated **Tour de Giséy** (1500s), which affords fine views; access is via the cemetery. Also overlooking the town, next to the cemetery, is the pre-Romanesque **Église St-Vorles**, built in the 10th century and partly rebuilt in the 13th century.

Among the wines produced in the **Châtillonnais vineyards**, north of town, is Burgundy's own bubbly, *Crémant de Bourgogne* ([www.cremantdebourgogne.fr](http://www.cremantdebourgogne.fr), in French). Vineyards can be visited by following the new **Route du Crémant**, marked by white-on-brown signs. The Champagne region's **Côte des Bar vineyards** (p369) are just a few kilometres further north.

The three-star **Hôtel de la Côte d'Or** (☎ 03 80 91 13 29; [cotedor.chatillon@dub-internet.fr](mailto:cotedor.chatillon@dub-internet.fr); 2 rue Charles Ronot; d €60–70), a block off the main street, is a pleasant Logis de France place whose 10 rooms come with antique furnishings and surprising carpets. The rustic **restaurant** (*menus* €18 to €40) serves traditional French and regional cuisine, including Charolais beef and Bresse chicken.

Châtillon is an easy stopover if you're travelling between Burgundy and Champagne. Bus 50, run by **Transco** (☎ 08 00 10 20 04), goes to Dijon (€14.40, 1¼ hours, two or three daily).

SNCF buses go to the main-line train station in Montbard (40 minutes, three to five daily Monday to Friday, two daily weekends).

## YONNE

The Yonne *département* ([www.tourisme-yonne.com](http://www.tourisme-yonne.com)), roughly midway between Dijon and Paris, has long been Burgundy's northern gateway. For visitors, attractions include the verdant countryside, the magical hilltop village of Vézelay, the white-wine powerhouse of Chablis and canal-boat cruising from ancient river ports such as Auxerre.

### Getting Around

Bus services in the Yonne are cheap but extremely limited. Most lines operated by **Les Rapides de Bourgogne** (☎ in Auxerre 03 86 94 95 00, in Avallon 03 86 34 00 00; [www.rapidesdebourgogne.com](http://www.rapidesdebourgogne.com), in French; office at 39 rue de Paris, Avallon; ☎ 9.30-11.15am Mon-Sat, often open other times) run only once or twice a day on school days, with two more daily services available on demand – that is, you must make a reservation the day before, prior to 5pm, by internet or phone

(☎ 08 00 30 33 09). Line 1 links Auxerre with Pontigny, Line 4 goes from Auxerre to Chablis and Tonnerre, and Line 5 links Avallon's Café de l'Europe taxi stand with Noyers-sur-Serein and Tonnerre. Tourist offices have timetables.

### AUXERRE

pop 37,100

The alluring riverside town of Auxerre (pronounced oh-sair) has been a port since Roman times. Wandering through the maze of cobbled streets in the old city, you come upon Roman remains, Gothic churches and timber-framed medieval houses – and have views across a jumble of belfries, spires and steep tiled rooftops leading down to the boats bobbing on the River Yonne.

Auxerre makes a good base for exploring northern Burgundy, including Chablis (p478), and the city's port is an excellent place to rent a canal boat (see the boxed text, p456).

### Orientation

The old city clammers up the hillside on the west (left) bank of the River Yonne, while

### CAPTIVATED BY THE CELTS

**Jean-Louis Coudrot**, an archeologist and protohistorian who has been director of the **Musée du Pays Châtillonnais** (p473) since 1995, is fascinated by all things Celtic. Not surprisingly, given that his museum's pride and joy is the breathtaking **Trésor de Vix** (Vix Treasure), discovered in 1953 in the tomb of the **Dame de Vix**, a Celtic princess who controlled the trade in Cornish tin in the 6th century BC – OTEC (the Organisation of Tin-Exporting Celts), if you will. Mined in Cornwall, it was brought by boat up the Seine as far as Vix and then carried overland to the Saône and the Rhône, whence river vessels conveyed it south to Marseilles and its most eager consumers, the Greeks, who alloyed it with copper to make bronze.

Coudrot has been fascinated by archeology since the age of 10. 'My father sentenced me to do some work in the garden of our house and I found a polished stone axe. I immediately started researching what it was and got in touch with a local archeologist, with whom I started working on excavations, on weekends, starting at age 13.' The excavation site, near Troyes, had belonged to the Celts, known as the Celtoi to the Greeks and the Galli to the Romans.

'For me it was miraculous! We found torques, belts made of interlocking rings and fibulas (clothing clasps), all in bronze.' Bronze, of course, cannot be made without tin, which is why trade with the Dame de Vix was so important to the Greeks – and why, eager to maintain their supply of the strategic metal, 'they sent the Dame de Vix all manner of gifts, including ornate *kraters*, Greek ceramics and also, certainly, amphorae of wine, which was not grown in this region at that time'.

The trade created 'a commercial network, just like today. Globalisation had already begun', Coudrot says. 'For the past 2500 years we've had the same axis of transportation and trade between northwest Europe and the southeast. Basically, the Dame de Vix controlled a Greco-Celtic version of the Calais-Provence autoroute and the TGV from London to Marseilles.'

## THE CELTS IN BURGUNDY *Daniel Robinson*

**Bibracte** The Celts take centre stage at the Museum of Celtic Civilisation, which is in the Parc Naturel Régional du Morvan at Bibracte, the site of Vercingétorix' selection as chief of the Gaulish coalition in 52 BC.

**The goddess Sequana** The 1st-century AD bronze statue of the Celtic goddess Sequana, standing on a boat, is one of the highlights of a visit to Dijon's Musée Archéologique.

**Trésor de Vix** A truly stunning collection of Celtic, Greek and Etruscan objects, found in the tomb of the Dame de Vix, a Celtic princess who lived 2500 years ago, is the centrepiece of the Musée du Pays Châtillonnais in Châtillon-sur-Seine.

What's your recommendation?  
www.lonelyplanet.com/france

the train station is 700m east of the river. The commercial centre stretches from the cathedral to the post office, with shops lining rue de Paris and, further south, rue du Temple. The liveliest areas are around pedestrianised rue de l'Horloge and place Charles Suruge.

### Information

The tourist office will change small amounts of money on Sunday and holidays.

**Laundrette** (138 rue de Paris; ☎ 6.30am-10pm)

**Post Office** (place Charles Suruge) Changes currency.

**Speed Informatique 89** (32 rue du Pont; per 10min/1hr €1/5; ☎ 2-9pm Mon-Sat) Internet access.

**Tourist Office** (☎ 03 86 52 06 19; www.ot-auxerre.fr; 1-2 quai de la République; ☎ 9am-1pm & 2-7pm Mon-Sat, 9.30am-1pm & 3-6.30pm Sun & holidays mid-Jun-mid-Sep, 9.30am-12.30pm & 2-6pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-12.30pm & 2-6.30pm Sat, 10am-1pm Sun mid-Sep-mid-Jun) Runs English tours of the city from July to mid-September. The brochure *In the Steps of Cadet Roussel* takes you on a self-guided architectural walking tour.

**Tourist Office Annexe** (7 place de l'Hôtel de Ville; ☎ 10am-noon or 12.30pm & 1.30-6pm Tue-Sat, till 7pm mid-Jun-mid-Sep) Next to Tour de l'Horloge.

### Sights & Activities

Wonderful views of the city, perched on the hillside, can be had from **Pont Paul Bert** (1857) and the arched footbridge opposite the main tourist office.

From Easter to September from Wednesday to Sunday and on holidays, the main tourist office rents **electric boats** (one hour/two hours/half-day/full day costs €20/32/48/85). It takes at least 1½ hours to get to one or more of the locks on the Canal du Nivernais.

Cycling options include the **towpath** along the Canal du Nivernais to Clamecy (about 60km). Bicycles can be rented at the tourist office.

### ABBAYE ST-GERMAIN

The ancient **Abbaye St-Germain** (St-Germain Abbey; ☎ 03 86 18 05 50; place St-Germain; adult/student under 26yr Oct-May €4.50/free, Jun-Sep €6.30/free; ☎ 10am-12.30pm & 2-6.30pm Wed-Mon Jun-Sep, 10am-noon & 2-6pm Wed-Mon Oct-May) began as a basilica above the tomb of St Germain, the 5th-century bishop who made Auxerre an important Christian centre. Over the centuries, as the site's importance grew, so did the abbey, and by the Middle Ages it was attracting pilgrims from all over Europe.

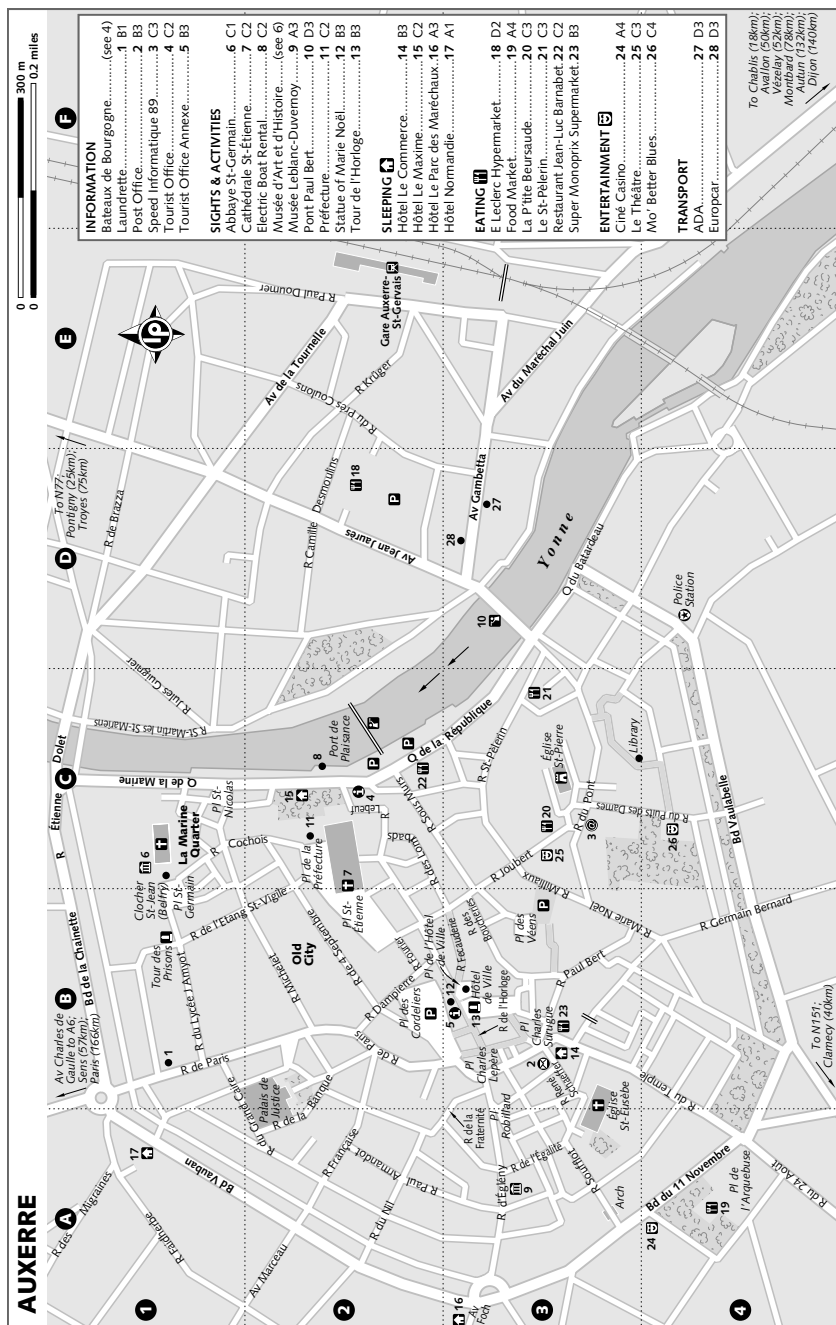
The **crypt**, visitable only on a tour (in French with printed information in English; departures on the hour until 5pm in winter, on the half-hour till 5.30pm in summer), contains some of Europe's finest examples of Carolingian architecture. Supported by 1000-year-old oak beams, the walls and vaulted ceiling are decorated with 9th-century frescoes; the far end houses the tomb of St Germain himself. Excavations under the nave have uncovered sarcophagi – left in situ – from as early as the 6th century.

Housed around the abbey's cloister, the **Musée d'Art et d'Histoire** displays prehistoric artefacts, Gallo-Roman sculpture and pottery discovered in and around Auxerre. The medieval section includes a mock-up of a scriptorium (where monks copied over manuscripts); nearby rooms have medals and coinage.

The same ticket gets you into the **Musée Leblanc-Duvernoy** (☎ 03 86 52 44 63; 9bis rue d'Églény; separate admission €2.20; ☎ 2-6pm Wed-Mon), which has a pretty good collection of *faïence* (pottery) and 18th-century Beauvais tapestries.

### CATHÉDRALE ST-ÉTIENNE

The vast Gothic **Cathédrale St-Étienne** (place St-Étienne; ☎ 7.30am-6pm Easter-Oct, 7.30am-5pm Nov-Easter) and its stately 68m-high bell tower dominate Auxerre's skyline. The choir, ambulatory and some of the vivid **stained-glass windows** (eg in



the axial chapel and the ambulatory) date from the 1200s. The Gothic western front was badly damaged by the hammer-happy Huguenots, who decapitated most of the statues during the Wars of Religion.

The 11th-century Romanesque **crypt** (adult/under 12yr €3/free; ☎ 9am–6pm Mon–Sat, 2–6pm Sun Easter–Oct, 10am–5pm Mon–Sat Nov–Easter) is ornamented with remarkable frescoes, including a scene of **Christ à Cheval** (Christ on Horseback; late 11th century) unlike any other known in Western art. Upstairs, the **treasury** (adult/under 12yr €1.90/free; ☎ same as crypt) has an Entombment painting by Luca Penni (16th century), illuminated manuscripts, Limoges enamels and the usual chalices. Tickets are sold in the gift shop off the choir.

From June to September at 9.30pm or 10pm, a 70-minute **sound-and-light show** (€5) is held nightly inside the cathedral. In July and August **organ concerts** (€5) take place every Sunday at 5pm.

## TOUR DE L'HORLOGE

In the heart of Auxerre's partly medieval commercial precinct, the spire-topped **Tour de l'Horloge** (Clock Tower; btwn place de l'Hôtel de Ville & rue de l'Horloge) was built in 1483 as part of the city's fortifications. On the 17th-century clock faces (there's one on each side), the sun-hand indicates the time of day; the moon-hand shows what day of the lunar month it is, making a complete rotation every 29½ days. A full-colour **statue of Marie Noël** (15 place de l'Hôtel de Ville), Auxerre's best-known poet, stands nearby.

## Sleeping

**Hôtel Le Commerce** (☎ 03 86 52 03 16; hotelducommerceauxerre@wanadoo.fr; 5 rue René Schaeffer; s/d €45/49; ☎ reception 5.30–9pm Mon, 7.30am–3pm & 5.30–9pm Tue–Sat, closed Sun) A welcoming two-star place smack in the centre of town. The 16 rooms, in deep pastels and the colours of the sea, have either shower pods or bath-tubs. The old building's cheerful, creative decor was inspired by distant sunny lands.

**Hôtel Normandie** (☎ 03 86 52 57 80; www.hotelnormandie.fr; 41 bd Vauban; d €67–95; ☎ closed Christmas–early Jan; ☎ ☎ ☎) In a 19th-century building on tree-lined bd Vauban, this two-star hotel has ivy-covered frontage and 47 rooms with views that make it feel like a country inn. Amenities include a billiard table, a workout room and a sauna (€6 per person).

**Hôtel Le Maxime** (☎ 03 86 52 14 19; www.lemaxime.com; 2 quai de la Marine; d €87–113, Oct–Feb €5–10 less, ste for 2/4 people €140/200; ☎ ☎ ☎) In a wonderful spot overlooking the River Yonne, this three-star place offers 26 spacious rooms – some with river views, others with views of the old city – and first-class service.

**Hôtel Le Parc des Maréchaux** (☎ 03 86 51 43 77; www.hotel-parcmarechaux.com; 6 av Foch; d €92–123, in winter €5 less; ☎ ☎ ☎) Once a mansion of château-like proportions, this three-star place has 25 rooms decorated with impeccable taste, all named after French marshals. The two best rooms – great for a romantic getaway – have balconies overlooking the private park.

## Eating

**Restaurant Jean-Luc Barnabet** (☎ 03 86 51 68 88; 14 quai de la République; weekday only menus €21–29, other menus €46–73, children's menu €17.50; ☎ closed dinner Sun & Mon & lunch Tue) A truly refined place to dine. The chef's innovative versions of traditional French fish and meat dishes have earned many accolades, including a Michelin star.

**La P'tite Beursaude** (☎ 03 86 51 10 21; 55 rue Joubert; menus €18–27; ☎ Thu–Mon) An intimate, rustic place with half a dozen fish and meat dishes prepared according to the traditions of Burgundy and France. Specialities include *entrecôte poêlée à la crème d'Époisses* (fried rib steak with Époisses cheese). The waitresses wear traditional Morvan dress.

**Le St-Pèlerin** (☎ 03 86 52 77 05; 56 rue St-Pèlerin; menus €21–28; ☎ Tue–Sat) Diners come back satiated from this rustic restaurant, where French and Burgundian dishes are prepared over a wood fire. Specialities include escargots, *œufs meurette* (eggs poached in Burgundy wine sauce) and *jambon à la Chablisienne* (ham in Chablisienne sauce).

## SELF-CATERING

Places for picnic supplies:

**E Lederer hypermarket** (14 av Jean Jaurès; ☎ 9am–8pm Mon–Thu & Sat, till 8.30pm Fri)

**Food market** (place de l'Arquebuse; ☎ 7am–1pm Tue & Fri, small market also Sat morning)

**Super Monoprix supermarket** (place Charles Surugue; ☎ 8.30am–8pm Mon–Sat)

## Entertainment

**Mo' Better Blues** (☎ 03 86 51 36 64; www.addim89.org, www.citedesmusiques.org, both in French; 36–38 rue du Puits des Dames; admission free; ☎ 9pm–1am Wed & Thu,



7pm-2am Fri, 9pm-2am Sat) A dynamic jazz bar with live concerts. Also has jam sessions at 9.30pm on Thursday and salsa courses from 7pm to 9pm on Wednesday.

**Ciné Casino** (☎ 03 86 52 36 80, 08 92 68 81 08; www.cinefil.com, in French; 1 bd du 11 Novembre) generally screens a nondubbed film or two.

**Le Théâtre** (☎ 03 86 72 24 24; www.auxerre-le-theatre.com, in French; 54 rue Joubert; ☎ Sep-Jun), housed in a sleek art-deco building, puts on music and dance performances and hosts **top jazz talent** (www.jazzclubdouxerre.com, in French; ☎ 2 or 3 times a month Oct-May).

## Getting There & Away

### CAR

Car-rental companies:

**ADA** (☎ 03 86 46 01 02; 6bis av Gambetta)

**Eurocar** (☎ 03 86 46 99 08; 9 av Gambetta)

### TRAIN

Trains run from **Gare Auxerre-St-Gervais** (rue Paul Doumer) to the main-line Laroche-Migennes station (€3.60, 15 minutes, 15 daily), where you may have to change for Dijon (€23.30, two hours, five to seven daily) and Paris' Gare de Lyon or Gare de Bercy (€23, 1½ to 2½ hours, 11 to 14 daily). Trains also go to Avallon (€8.80, 1¼ hours, four or five daily), Autun (€19.50, 70 minutes, two or three daily) and Sermizelles-Vézelay (€7, 50 minutes, four or five daily).

## Getting Around

Free cycling is available along the river on quai de la Marine and quai de la République, and on the boulevards that circle the old city: bd de la Chainette, bd Vauban, bd du 11 Novembre and bd Vaulabelle.

Phone for a **taxi** (☎ 03 86 94 02 02, 03 86 52 30 51).

The main tourist office rents out bicycles (three/seven hours costs €10/18).

## AROUND AUXERRE

Between the River Yonne and the Canal de Bourgogne lie the Auxerrois and the Tonnerrois, rural areas covered with forests, fields, pastures and vineyards. The quiet back roads (eg the D124) and many of the walking trails make for excellent cycling.

### La Puisaye

The countryside west of Auxerre, known as **La Puisaye**, is a lightly populated landscape of

woods, winding creeks and dark hills. The area is best known as the birthplace of Colette (1873–1954), author of *La Maison de Claudine* and *Gigi* (and 50 other novels), who lived till age 18 in the tiny town of St-Sauveur-en-Puisaye, 40km southwest of Auxerre, and of particular interest because much of her work explores her rural Burgundian childhood.

The **Musée Colette** (☎ 03 86 45 61 95; adult/10-25yr €5/2; ☎ 10am-6pm Wed-Mon Apr-Oct, 2-6pm Sat & Sun, public holidays & school holidays Nov-Mar), in the château of St-Sauveur-en-Puisaye, features letters, manuscripts, two furnished rooms from her apartment in Paris' Palais Royal and photos featuring her iconic hairdo. An explanatory sheet in (charmingly mangled) English is available.

### Chablis

pop 2600

The well-to-do but sleepy town of Chablis, 19km east of Auxerre, has made its fortune growing, ageing and marketing the dry white wines that have carried its name to the four corners of the earth.

Chablis is made exclusively from chardonnay grapes and is divided into four Appellations d'Origine Contrôlées (AOC): Petit Chablis, Chablis, Chablis Premier Cru and, most prestigious of all, Chablis Grand Cru. The seven *grands crus*, lovingly grown on just 1 sq km of land on the hillsides north-east of town, are Blanchot, Bougros, Les Clos, Grenouilles, Preuses, Valmur and Vaudésir.

### ORIENTATION & INFORMATION

Chablis' main street is known as rue Auxerroise (west of the main square, place Charles de Gaulle) and rue du Maréchal de Lattre de Tassigny (east of place Charles de Gaulle). Most of Chablis' shops are closed on Monday and noon to 3pm on other days.

**Tourist Office** (☎ 03 86 42 80 80; www.chablis.net; 1 rue du Maréchal de Lattre de Tassigny; ☎ 10am-12.30pm & 1.30-6pm, till 7pm Jun-Aug, closed Sun Nov-Mar) Just east of place Charles de Gaulle. Can supply you with a free English walking-tour booklet and maps of Chablis' vineyards.

### SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

The 12th- and 13th-century Gothic **Église St-Martin** (☎ Jul & Aug), first founded in the 9th century by monks fleeing the Norman attacks on Tours, is two short blocks northwest of place Charles de Gaulle. Southeast along rue Porte Noël are the twin bastions of **Porte**

## THEY DON'T BUILD 'EM LIKE THEY USED TO

In the year 1228 (better known to most of us as 1997), an imaginary nobleman of modest rank but great ambition began constructing a fortified château. A team of skilled artisans, using the latest 13th-century technologies, has been hard at work ever since and is right on schedule to finish the project, as planned, in 25 years. Stone is quarried on-site using iron hand tools forged by a team of blacksmiths, who also produce vital items such as door hinges. Clay for tiles – fired for three days using locally cut wood – is quarried nearby, and the mortar, made on-site with lime, is transported in freshly woven wicker baskets. An impressive château fort is now rising in the woods where there was none before.

Welcome to the fantastic **Chantier Médiéval de Guédelon** (☎ 03 86 45 66 66; www.guedelon.fr; adult/5-17yr €9/7; 🕒 10am-7pm daily Jul & Aug, 10am-5.30pm or 6pm Thu-Tue mid-Mar–Jun & Sep–2 Nov, to 7pm Sun & holidays Apr-Jun, closed 3 Nov–mid-Mar), 45km southwest of Auxerre and 7km southwest of St-Sauveur-en-Puisaye, run by craftspeople who are passionate about what they're creating, something you can sense when you talk with them (some speak English). Archeologists, too, are enthusiastic – the period processes, which often require years of trial and error before they're perfected, provide invaluable insights for their research.

Excellent English material on Guédelon is available. A very worthwhile guided tour, sometimes in English, costs €2 per person. Your visit is not likely to be 'nasty, brutish and short' but rather engaging, friendly and leisurely, though it may be messy unless you wear closed shoes, as the site, ever true to life, is often a sea of muck. Kids-oriented activities include stone carving (using especially soft stone). After a visit you'll never look at a medieval cathedral or château in quite the same way again.

**Noël** (1778), which hosts art exhibitions from June to August. Nearby, the enigmatic 16th-century building known as the **synagogue** (☎ 03 86 18 96 08; 10-14 rue des Juifs) was recently restored. The 12th-century cellar of **Petit Pontigny** (rue de Chichée) was once used by Pontigny's Cistercian monks to ferment wine.

Vineyard walks from Chablis include the **Sentier des Grands Crus** (8km) and the **Sentier des Clos** (13km to 24km, depending on your route). The tourist office sells French-language topoguides (€3).

Cycling is a great way to tour the Chablis countryside. One flat, verdant option is the 45km **Chemin de Serein** (www.chemin-serein.com), which follows the old Tacot rail line southeast to Noyers-sur-Serein (p481) and L'Isle-sur-Serein. The tourist office helpfully hires **bikes** (per two hours/half-day/full day €4/7.50/12) from Easter to October.

Nearby villages worth exploring include **Courgis**, which offers great views; **Chichée** and **Chemilly**, both on the River Serein; and **Chitry-le-Fort**, famous for its fortified church.

Wine can be tasted and purchased at dozens of places (eg along rue des Moulins) – the tourist office has a comprehensive list. A variety of vintages, including five of Chablis' seven **grands crus**, can be sampled at **La Chablisienne** (☎ 03 86 42 89 98; 8 bd Pasteur; 🕒 9am-12.30pm & 2-

7pm, to 6pm Jan-Mar, no midday closure Jul & Aug), a large cooperative cellar founded in 1923. It's situated 700m south of place Charles de Gaulle – follow rue Auxerroise and then av de la République (D62).

## SLEEPING

**Hôtel Le Bergerand's** (☎ 03 86 18 96 08; www.chablis-france.fr; 4 rue des Moulins; d incl breakfast €78-128; 🍷 📺 🚰) A rustic two-star hotel whose 22 B&B-style rooms, with antique wood furniture and cheerful spring colours, occupy a one-time coaching inn. The French-born *patronne*, who lived in Los Angeles for 35 years, likes stirring local affairs up a bit.

**Hôtel du Vieux Moulin** (☎ 03 86 42 47 30; www.larochehotel.fr; 18 rue des Moulins; d €125-175, low season €100-135, ste €190-270; 🍷 📺 🚰) In a one-time mill, the five rooms and two suites – understated and very contemporary – afford luscious views of a branch of the Serein. The breakfast room, as homey as a living room, has *grand cru* views.

## EATING

**Le Bistrot des Grands Crus** (☎ 03 86 42 19 41; 8-10 rue Jules Rathier; main with wine €9.50, menu €20; 🕒 closed mid-Jan–mid-Feb) A block southeast of Porte Noël, this sleek place serves *cuisine du terroir* (cooking that's deeply connected to the

land) made with the freshest local ingredients, including Chablis.

**Restaurant de la Poste** (☎ 03 86 42 11 94; 24 rue Auxerroise; weekday lunch menu €11, other menus €15-28.50) Unpretentious and popular with locals, this place serves pasta as well as French fish and meat dishes.

**Le Wine Bar** (☎ 03 86 42 47 30; 18 rue des Moulins; mains €15-25; ☎ lunch Tue-Sat, dinner Fri & Sat, also open dinner Tue-Thu Jun-Sep) Attached to the Hôtel du Vieux Moulin, this establishment serves traditional Burgundian dishes as well as fusion cuisine.

Chablis has an **outdoor food market** (place Charles de Gaulle; ☎ until 1pm Sun). Except for the **Petit Casino grocery** (rue du Maréchal Leclerc; ☎ 7.30am-1pm & 3-7.30pm Mon-Sat), 50m down the hill from place Charles de Gaulle, all the food shops along rue Auxerroise are closed on Sunday afternoon and Monday.

## Pontigny

pop 800

Rising from the flat fields 25km north of Auxerre, Pontigny's **Abbatiale** (abbey church; ☎ 03 86 47 54 99; www.abbayedepontigny.eu, in French; admission free; ☎ 9am or 10am-5pm in winter, till 7pm in summer), founded in 1114, is one of the last surviving examples of Cistercian architecture in Burgundy. The simplicity and purity of its construction reflect the austerity of the Cistercian order (see p464). On summer days sunshine filtering through the high windows creates an amazing sense of peace and tranquillity. *Discovering Pontigny* (€2.50), on sale in the little gift shop, points out fascinating architectural details.

The Gothic sanctuary, 108m long and lined with 23 chapels, was built in the mid-12th century; the wooden choir screen, stalls and organ loft were added in the 17th and 18th centuries. Monks from here were the first to perfect the production of Chablis wine.

The **tourist office** (☎ 03 86 47 47 03; http://pontigny-tourisme.free.fr; 22 rue Paul Desjardins; ☎ 10am-12.30pm & 2-6pm Apr-Oct, 10am-12.30pm & 2-4.30pm Nov-Mar, closed Sun & sometimes Mon), across the road from the Abbatiale (next to the post office), has information on accommodation (including B&Bs) and sells hiking maps and topoguides of the area.

There are a couple of restaurants on the N77, north across the stream from the tourist office. Edibles are available at the **Panier Sympa grocery** (43 rue Paul Desjardins; ☎ 7am-1pm & 3-8pm Mon-Sat, 8am-1pm & 4-8pm Sun).

## THE ENGLISH CONNECTION

Three archbishops of Canterbury played a role in the history of Pontigny's abbey: Thomas Becket spent the first three years of his exile here (1164-66); Stephen Langton, a refugee from political turmoil in England, lived here for six years (from 1207 to 1213); and Edmund Rich, who fell ill and died at Soissy in 1240 while on his way to the Vatican, was brought here for burial.

## Tonnerre

pop 6000

The less-than-prosperous town of Tonnerre, on the Canal de Bourgogne, is best known for the **Hôtel-Dieu** (Vieil Hôpital; rue de l'Hôpital; adult/student €4.50/3.50; ☎ 9.30am-noon & 1.30-6pm Mon-Sat, 10am-12.30pm & 2-6pm Sun & holidays Apr-Sep, 9am-noon & 2-6pm except Wed, Sun & holidays Oct-Mar), a charity hospital founded in 1293 by Marguerite de Bourgogne, sister-in-law of St Louis. At the eastern end of the barrel-vaulted patients' hall, near the chapel and Marguerite's tomb, is an extraordinary 15th-century *Entombment of Christ*, carved from a single block of stone.

The **tourist office** (☎ 03 86 55 1448; www.tonnerre.fr, in French; rue de l'Hôpital; ☎ same as Hôtel-Dieu), at the entrance to the Hôtel-Dieu, has a walking-tour brochure, *Tonnerre and Its Heritage*, and rents bicycles (half-day/full day for €10/18).

About 400m west of the tourist office, some 200L of water per second gush from **Fosse Dionne**, a natural spring that was sacred to the Celts and whose weird, almost nuclear blue-green tint hints at its great depth. Legend has it that a serpent lurks at the bottom. The pool is surrounded by a mid-18th-century washing house, a semicircle of ancient houses and forested slopes. To get there, follow the signs on rue François Mitterrand (across the street from the Hôtel-Dieu) past the **covered market** (☎ Sat morning), built in 1903.

A steep staircase heads up the slope from Fosse Dionne to the hilltop **Église St-Pierre**.

About the only reason to overnight in Tonnerre is **La Ferme de Fosse Dionne** (☎ 03 86 54 82 62; www.fermefossedionne.com; 11 rue de la Fosse Dionne; d with breakfast €65). In a late-18th-century farmhouse overlooking Fosse Dionne, this delightful hostelry has six lovingly kept rooms of varying shapes and colours. Downstairs, the friendly owner runs a café and antique shop that stocks hard-to-find edibles from

northern Burgundy, including Tonnerre's almost unknown wines. Ask nicely and he might provide some hiking tips, or even play one of his old gramophones.

By rail, Tonnerre – 16km northeast of Chablis – is linked to Dijon (€16.80, one hour, eight to 10 daily) and, via Laroche-Migennes, to Auxerre (€9.70, one hour, eight daily).

### Château de Tanlay

The French Renaissance-style **Château de Tanlay** (☎ 03 86 75 70 61; adult/child €8/3.50; 🚗 tours 10am, 11.30am, 2.15pm, 3.15pm, 4.15pm & 5.15pm Wed-Mon & holiday Tue Apr–mid-Nov), an elegant product of the 17th century, is surrounded by a wide moat and elaborately carved outbuildings. Interior highlights include the **Grande Galerie**, whose walls and ceiling are completely covered with trompe l'œil. The château is 10km east of Tonnerre in the village of Tanlay.

### Château d'Ancy-le-Franc

The Italian Renaissance makes a cameo appearance at **Château d'Ancy-le-Franc** (☎ 03 86 75 14 63; www.chateau-ancy.com; adult/student/6-15yr €8/7/5; 🚗 tours 10.30am, 11.30am, 2pm, 3pm & 4pm Tue-Sun & holiday Mon late Mar or Apr–mid-Nov, also 5pm Apr-Sep), built in the 1540s by the celebrated Italian architect Serlio. The richly painted interior is mainly the work of Italian artists brought to Fontainebleau by François I.

Overlooking huge stables, a large park and the Canal de Bourgogne, the château is 19km southeast of Tonnerre.

### Noyers-sur-Serein

pop 880

The medieval village of Noyers (pronounced nwa-yair), 30km southeast of Auxerre, is surrounded by rolling pastureland, wooded hills and a hairpin curve in the River Serein. Stone ramparts and fortified battlements enclose much of the village, and between the two imposing stone gateways, cobbled streets lead past 15th- and 16th-century gabled houses, wood and stone archways and a number of art galleries. Many of the streets still bear their medieval names – look out for place du Grenier à Sel (Salt Store Square) and place du Marché au Blé (Flour Market Square). Noyers lives by its own rules so don't be surprised if places are closed when they're supposed to be open and vice versa.

Lines carved into the facade of the 18th-century **mairie** (town hall), next to the library,

mark the level of historic floods. Diagonally across the street is the **tourist office** (☎ 03 86 82 66 06; www.noyers-sur-serein.com; 22 place de l'Hôtel de Ville; 🕒 10am-1pm & 2-6pm Mon-Sat Oct-May, daily Jun-Sep).

**Musée de Noyers** (☎ 03 86 82 89 09; 25 rue de l'Église; adult/senior/student €4/3/2; 🕒 11am-6.30pm Wed-Mon Jun-Sep, 2.30-6.30pm Sat, Sun & school holidays Oct-Dec & Feb-May), near the 15th-century church, is proud of its colourful collection of naive art, figurines and boxes.

Noyers is a superb base for walking. Just outside the clock-topped southern gate, Chemin des Fossés leads eastwards to the River Serein and a **streamside walk** around the village's 13th-century **fortifications**, 19 of whose original 23 towers are extant. The 9km **Balade du Château**, trail-marked in red, follows the Serein's right bank past the utterly ruined château just north of Noyers. For details on the walkable and cyclable **Chemin de Serein**, see p479.

**La Vieille Tour** (☎ 03 86 82 87 69; fax 03 86 82 66 04; place du Grenier à Sel; d incl breakfast €55-70, with washbasin only €45; 🕒 Apr-Sep), in a rambling 17th-century house, has five simply furnished *chambres d'hôte*, loads of local colour and a lovely back garden. It is run by a Dutch art historian who promises a warm welcome but adds, 'I cannot guarantee I have no spiderwebs'. Bicycle parking available.

One or the other of Noyers' two **grocery shops**, situated on either side of an ATM and the *mairie*, is open daily till 7pm or 8pm except from 12.30pm or 1pm to 3pm weekdays, Sunday afternoon and every other Sunday morning.

#### A KNIGHT IN SHINING PETTICOATS

Speculation about the cross-dressing habits of the French secret agent Charles Geneviève d'Eon de Beaumont (1728–1810), born in Tonnerre, has been rife for centuries, especially in sex-obsessed England, where he spent part of his life wearing the latest women's fashions and spying for Louis XV. The locals, at least, have no doubt about the brave chevalier's suitability as a role model for today's youth – they've named the local high school after him – though a local tourist brochure, hedging its bets, refers to him as a *chevalier(e) tonnerrois(e)* (male/female knight from Tonnerre).

## AVALLON

pop 8200

The once-strategic walled town of Avallon, on a picturesque hilltop overlooking the green terraced slopes of two River Cousin tributaries, was in centuries past a stop on the coach road from Paris to Lyon. At its most animated during the Saturday morning market, the city makes a good base for exploring Vézelay, the Vallée du Cousin (River Cousin Valley) and the rolling countryside of the Parc Naturel Régional du Morvan.

A promotional brochure cheerfully and succinctly sums up the city's history: 'Avallon was often burned, pillaged, and its inhabitants slaughtered or decimated by outbreaks of the plague. The Tourism Office wishes you a pleasant stay.'

### Orientation

The old city, built on a triangular granite hilltop with ravines to the east and west, is about 1km southwest of the train station. The main commercial thoroughfares are the old city's Grande Rue Aristide Briand and, outside the walls, rue de Paris and rue de Lyon.

### Information

**Internet access** (per 30min €2) In the tourist office.

**Post Office** (9 place des Odebert)

**Tourist Office** (☎ 03 86 34 14 19; www.avallonnais-tourisme.com; 6 rue Bocquillot; ☎ 9.30am-1pm & 2.30-6.30pm daily mid-Jun-mid-Sep, 9.30am-12.30pm & 2-6pm Mon-Sat rest of year, open Sun morning school holidays) In a 15th-century house.

### Sights

**Tour de l'Horloge**, a solid, 15th-century clock tower, spans Grande Rue Aristide Briand. The nearby **Musée de l'Avallonnais** (☎ 03 86 34 03 19; place de la Collégiale; admission free; ☎ 2-6pm Wed-Mon Jul-Sep & school holidays, also open Sat, Sun & bank holidays Oct-Jun), founded in 1862, displays religious art, fossils and expressionist sketches by Georges Rouault (1871-1958).

Eight centuries ago, the early-12th-century **Collégiale St-Lazare** (rue Bocquillot; ☎ until 6pm in summer, may close earlier in winter) drew huge numbers of pilgrims thanks to a piece of the skull of St Lazarus, believed to provide protection from leprosy. The church once had three **portals** but one was crushed when the northern belfry came a-tumblin' down in 1633; the two remaining portals are grandly decorated in the Burgundian Romanesque style, though

much of the carving has been damaged. Summertime art exhibitions are held next door in **Église St-Pierre** and across the street in the 18th-century **Grenier à Sel** (Salt Store).

South of the church is one of the city's ancient gateways, the **Petite Porte**, from where a pathway descends, affording fine views over the Vallée du Cousin. Walking around the walls, with their 15th- to 18th-century towers, ramparts and bastions, is a good way to get a sense of the local geography.

About 100 costumes from the 18th century to 1970, changed each year, are on display at the **Musée du Costume** (☎ 03 86 34 19 95; 6 rue Belgrand; adult/student €4/2.50; ☎ 10.30am-12.30pm & 1.30-5.30pm mid-Apr-1 Nov), housed in a 17th-century hunting manor. It is run by a friendly older woman who describes herself as a monarchist – though her grandfather was a socialist and her daughter is a '68er. Napoléon, she says, was something of a *parvenu* (upstart).

### Activities

For a bucolic walk or bike ride in the **Vallée du Cousin**, take the shaded, one-lane D427, which follows the gentle rapids of the River Cousin through dense forests and lush meadows. From Avallon's **Hôtel du Rocher**, you can head either west towards Pontaubert (under the viaduct; 3km) and Vézelay, or east towards Magny.

The tourist office sells hiking maps (eg IGN 2722 ET) and has information in French on the Parc Naturel Régional du Morvan.

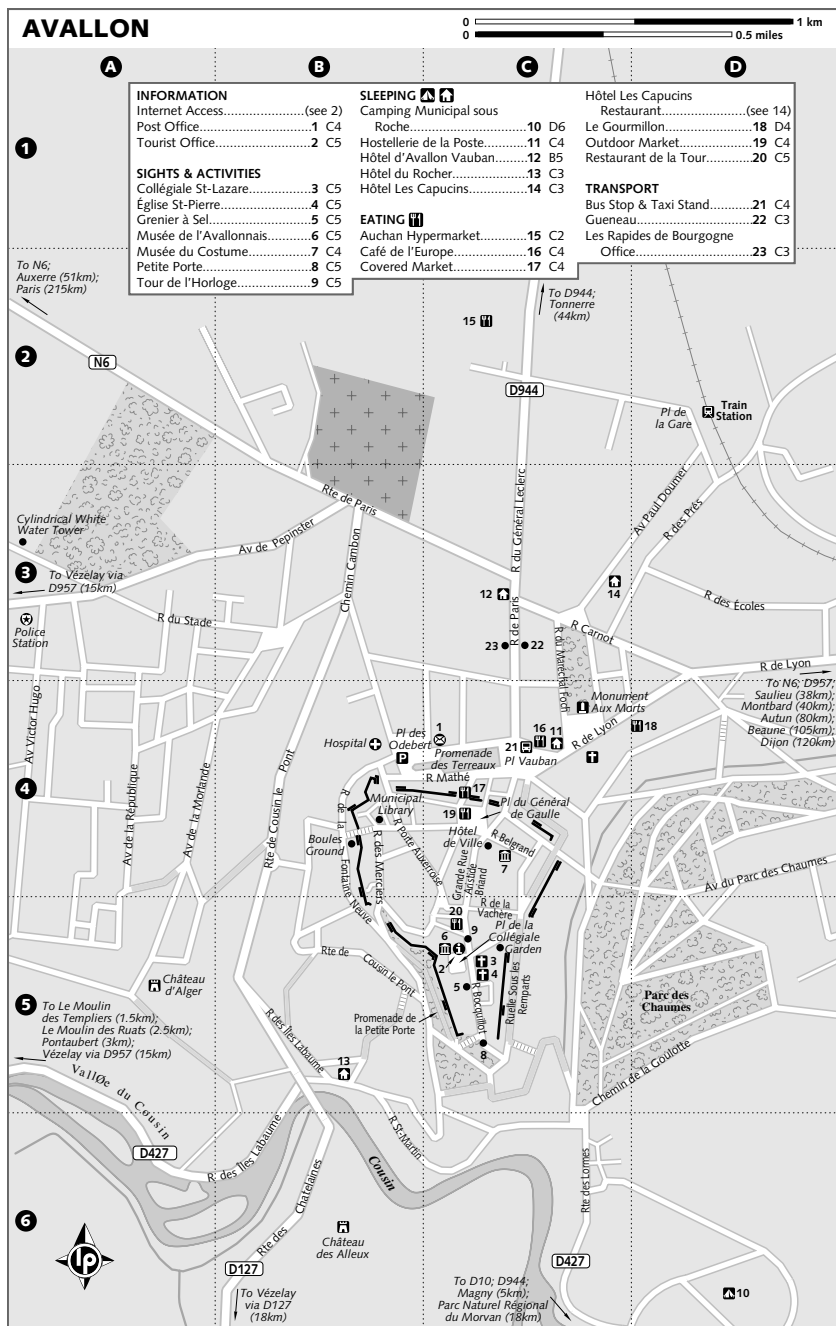
### Sleeping

Avallon and its riverside surrounds have some excellent accommodation options.

#### AVALLON

**Hôtel Les Capucins** (☎ 03 86 34 06 52; www.avallonnais-capucins.com; 6 av Paul Doumer; d €55, 7-person ste €110; ☎ ☎) This two-star, Logis de France place, decorated with all manner of *papillons* (butterflies), has 18 comfortable rooms. The newer ones are on the practical side.

**Hôtel d'Avallon Vauban** (☎ 03 86 34 36 99; www.avallonvaubanhotel.com; 53 rue de Paris; s/d €54/60, studio apt €75-90; ☎ ☎) The trompe l'œil trees make the facade look a bit like a camouflaged battleship, but there really are trees – lots of them – in the parklike private garden. The 26 two-star rooms and four ski chalet-like studio apartments are tidy and spacious, though functional as far as furnishings go. Bicycle parking available.



**Hostellerie de la Poste** (☎ 03 86 34 16 16; www.hostellerieidelaposte.com; 13 place Vauban; d/ste/q €128/185/199; ☹ Mar-Dec; ☹ ☹ ☹ ☹) Set around a quiet cobbled courtyard where horse-drawn carriages once clattered, this has been Avallon's top hostelry for 300 years. The 30 four-star rooms are lavishly furnished and quite romantic. On his way back from Elba, Napoléon I gave a rousing speech from the balcony of room 12, in which you, like the diminutive emperor, can stay – so long as you'll be sleeping alone (his bed is quite small).

## VALLÉE DU COUSIN

**Camping Municipal sous Roche** (☎ 03 86 34 10 39; campingsousroche@ville-avallon.fr; per adult/tent/car €3.40/2/2; ☹ Apr–mid-Oct) A woody, well-maintained site 2km southeast of the old city on the forested banks of the Cousin.

**Hôtel du Rocher** (☎ 03 86 34 19 03; 11 rue des Îles Labaune; d with washbasin/shower €20/27, hall shower €1; ☹ reception closed after 8pm & Mon) The best budget deal in town, with 14 old-fashioned, wood-paneled rooms. Extremely rustic.

**Le Moulin des Templiers** (☎ 03 86 34 10 80; www.hotel-moulin-des-templiers.com; 10 rte de Cousin, Pontaubert; d €53-62, with shower €42; ☹ closed Jan) This converted mill's 15 two-star bedrooms, with country furnishings, are a bit small but there's a delightful terrace next to the rushing river – ideal place for an aperitif. In a shady spot on the D427 about 3.5km west of the Hôtel du Rocher.

**Le Moulin des Ruats** (☎ 03 86 34 97 00; www.moulin-des-ruats.com; D427; d €82-152; ☹ closed 11 Nov–mid-Feb) This former flour mill, 2.5km west of Hôtel du Rocher, is in a gorgeous wooded location right on the river. The 25 three-star rooms have antique-style furnishings and some come with little balconies. Very romantic, with a ravishing waterside terrace.

## Eating & Drinking

**Café de l'Europe** (☎ 03 86 34 04 45; 7 place Vauban; menus €10.50-12.50; ☹ 7am-1am) This unpretentious café-bar-brasserie, hugely popular with locals despite (or perhaps because of) the thickets of plastic flowers, has pinball and billiard tables, handles off-track betting and serves cheap meals, including salads (€4.50 to €8.50) and grilled meats, at all hours.

**Restaurant de la Tour** (☎ 03 86 34 24 84; 84 Grande Rue Aristide Briand; lunch menu €12; ☹ Tue-Sat, daily late Jul & Aug) A reasonably priced eatery with a tempting selection of *plats du jour* (€7.50 to

€10.50), pizzas, pastas and six wines served by the glass.

**Le Gourmillon** (☎ 03 86 31 62 01; 8 rue de Lyon; lunch menu €12, other menus €18-32; ☹ closed dinner Sun) Relaxed but stylish, this cheerfully colourful place serves up French and Burgundian dishes, including fish (the chef's favourite). The crème brûlée is delicious.

**Hôtel Les Capucins** (☎ 03 86 34 06 52; 6 av Paul Doumer; menus €14-44; ☹ lunch & dinner) Contemporary canvases by local artists adorn the walls of the elegant restaurant, whose gastronomy is resolutely French and Burgundian. An excellent place to try *sauce Morvandelle* (made with shallots, mustard and white wine), for instance with Charolais beef.

## SELF-CATERING

Places to purchase edibles:

**Auchan hypermarket** (rue du Général Leclerc;

☹ 8.30am-9pm Mon-Sat)

**Covered market** (place des Odebert ☹ until 1pm Sat) Avallon's huge weekly market spills into adjacent place des Odebert.

**Outdoor market** (place du Général de Gaulle; ☹ Thu morning)

## Getting There & Away

### BUS

Bus 49, run by **Transco** (☎ 08 00 10 20 04), goes from the train station to Dijon (€17.10, two hours, two or three daily).

### TRAIN

Four or five direct trains a day serve Sermizelles-Vézelay (€2.90, 15 minutes) and Auxerre (€8.80, 1¼ hours). Three trains or SNCF buses a day (two on Sunday and holidays) go to Autun (€12.80, two hours). For Paris' Gare de Lyon or Gare de Bercy (€26.80, three to four hours, two direct daily to Gare de Bercy) you may have to change at Laroche-Migennes; for Dijon (€17.90, two to 2½ hours, two or more daily) it's usually fastest to change at Montbard, linked to Avallon by SNCF bus.

## Getting Around

All parking in Avallon is free but in places marked with blue lines you're supposed to put a timer *disque* (disk; sold for a nominal sum at tobacconists) in the window to ensure compliance with the 1½-hour time limit.

**Gueneau** (☎ 03 86 34 28 11; 26 rue de Paris; half day/full day/2 days €8/16/28; ☺ 8am-noon & 2-6pm or 6.30pm Tue-Sat) rents out hybrid and mountain bikes but does not have helmets.

## VÉZELAY

pop 490

Despite the hordes of tourists who descend on Vézelay in summer, this tiny hilltop village – part of the Parc Naturel Régional du Morvan (p487) and a Unesco World Heritage Site – is one of France's architectural gems. Perched on a rocky spur crowned by a medieval basilica and surrounded by a sublime patchwork of vineyards, sunflower fields and sheep, Vézelay seems to have been lifted from another age.

One of the main pilgrimage routes to Santiago de Compostela in Spain starts here (www.amis-saint-jacques-de-compostelle.asso.fr, in French).

## History

Thanks to the relics of St Mary Magdalene, Vézelay's Benedictine monastery became an important pilgrimage site in the 11th and 12th centuries. St Bernard, leader of

the Cistercian order (see boxed text, p464), preached the Second Crusade here in 1146. King Philip Augustus of France and King Richard the Lion-Heart of England met up here in 1190 before setting out on the Third Crusade.

Vézelay's vineyards, founded in Gallo-Roman times, were wiped out in the late 1800s by phylloxera and were only re-established in 1973.

## Information

**Internet** (per 10min €2) At the tourist office.

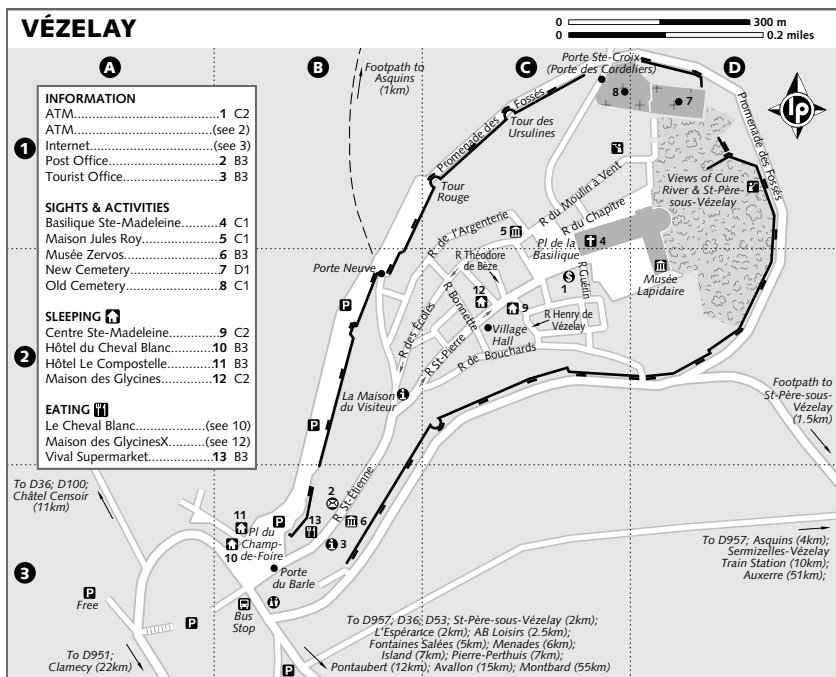
**Post Office** (17 rue St-Étienne) Has an ATM.

**Tourist Office** (☎ 03 86 33 23 69; www.vezelay-tourisme.com; 12 rue St-Étienne; ☺ 10am-1pm & 2-6pm, closed Thu Oct-May & Sun Nov-Easter) Sells IGN hiking maps and cards (€0.80) with details on four walking circuits (1½ to three hours; trail markings in yellow), each of which heads out of Vézelay in a different direction.

## Sights

### BASILIQUE STE-MADELEINE

Founded in the 880s, **Basilique Ste-Madeleine** (☺ all day) has had a turbulent history. Rebuilt





between the 11th and 13th centuries, it was trashed by the Huguenots in 1569, desecrated during the Revolution and, to top off the human ravages, repeatedly struck by lightning. By the mid-1800s it was on the point of collapse. In 1840 the architect Viollet-le-Duc undertook the daunting task of rescuing the structure. His work, which included reconstructing the western facade and its doorways, helped Vézelay – previously a ghost town – spring back to life.

On the 12th-century **tympandum**, visible from the narthex (enclosed porch), Romanesque carvings show Jesus seated on a throne, radiating his holy spirit to the Apostles. The **nave**, rebuilt following the great fire of 1120, has round arches and tiny windows, typical features of the Romanesque style; the transept and choir (1185) have ogival arches and larger windows, hallmarks of Gothic architecture. Under the transept is a mid-12th-century **crypt** with a reliquary containing what is believed to be one of Mary Magdalene's bones.

Prayers, sometimes held in the cloister chapel, are sung in haunting four-voice harmony by the monks and nuns of the *Fraternité Monastique de Jérusalem*. Visitors are welcome to observe prayers or Mass on Monday at 6.30pm (Mass); Tuesday to Friday at 7am, 12.30pm, 6pm and 6.30pm (Mass); Saturday at 8am, 12.30pm (Mass), 5.30pm or 6pm, and 6.30pm or 7pm (Mass) and Sunday at 8am, 11am (Mass) and 6pm. Most prayer services (in French) are about 30 minutes long; Mass lasts 1½ hours. Concerts of sacred music are sometimes held in the nave from May to September; the tourist office and its website have details.

Paintings, sculptures and mobiles by Calder, Giacometti, Kandinsky, Léger, Miró and Picasso star at the **Musée Zervos** (☎ 03 86 32 39 26; rue St-Étienne; www.musee-zervos.com; adult/under 18yr €3/free ☎ 2-6pm Wed-Mon mid-Mar-mid-Nov, daily Jul & Aug), in the home of the Nobel Prize-winning pacifist writer Romain Rolland (1866–1944).

At **Maison Jules Roy** (☎ 03 86 33 35 10; admission free; ☎ 2-6pm Wed-Sun Easter-Oct, till 5pm Mon), at the upper end of rue des Écoles, you can walk around the gardens and see the Algerian-born writer's study.

About half a dozen **art galleries** and several shops selling wine and local crafts and edibles can be found along rue St-Pierre and rue St-Étienne.

## Activities

### WALKING

Squirrels frolic in the **park** behind the basilica, which affords wonderful views of the Vallée de Cure and nearby villages, including St-Père-sous-Vézelay. A dirt road leads north to the **old and new cemeteries**. **Promenade des Fossés** circumnavigates Vézelay's medieval ramparts. A footpath with fine views of the basilica links Porte Neuve, on the northern side of the ramparts, with the village of **Asquins** (pronounced ah-kah) and the River Cure. The GR13 trail passes by Vézelay.

### CYCLING & CANOEING

Mountain bikes are rented out (year-round; €25 per day) and outdoor activities – kayak trips (8/18km from €15/27), rafting (€42), cave exploration (half-day €37) and horse riding – arranged by **AB Loisirs** (☎ 03 86 33 38 38; www.abloisirs.com, in French; rte du Camping, St-Père-sous-Vézelay; ☎ 9.30am-6pm daily Jul & Aug, weekends in spring & most days rest of year except mid-Dec-mid-Jan), whose base is a few kilometres southeast of Vézelay (400m southeast of the D957 along the D36). It's best to phone ahead. Bikes can be brought to your hotel.

### Sleeping

There are several hotels around place du Champ-de-Foire.

**Centre Ste-Madeleine** (☎ 03 86 33 22 14; fax 03 86 33 22 14; rue St-Pierre; dm/s/d €8/15/21; ☎ reception closed noon-1.30pm; ☎) This very basic 38-bed hostel, set around an ancient stone courtyard, is run by three with-it Franciscan nuns who are as unpretentious as the facilities. The dormitories look a bit like a medieval charity hospital that no one endowed. Someone with a few million euros could turn this old place into a luxury hotel.

**Hôtel du Cheval Blanc** (☎ 03 86 33 22 12; fax 03 86 33 34 29; place du Champ-de-Foire; s/d/tr €38/42/46; ☎ reception closed 3.30-6pm daily except Jul & Aug, also closed evening Wed & Thu, hotel closed mid-Jan-mid-Feb) Above the restaurant are six neat, no-frills rooms. If you'll be arriving when reception is closed, call ☎ 06 60 72 89 77.

**Hôtel Le Compostelle** (☎ 03 86 33 28 63; www.lecompostellevezelay.com; 1 place du Champ-de-Foire; d €49-61, tr/q €74/84; ☎ closed early Jan-mid-Feb; ☎ ☎) The 18 spotless, practical, two-star rooms afford romantic views of either the valley or the village.

**Maison des Glycines** (☎ 03 86 32 35 30; www.glycines-vezelay.com; rue St-Pierre; s €35, d €65-82; ☎ closed 11 Nov-week before Easter) A bourgeois town house built in 1763 – enveloped by ancient wisterias –

has been turned into a three-star hotel that's positively overflowing with old-fashioned character. The hexagonal floor tiles, doors and wooden beams haven't changed in several generations. The 11 rooms are all named after famous artists – 'Paul Claudet' is the one to get. No TV or telephones.

## Eating

Eateries can be found along rue St-Pierre and rue St-Étienne and around place du Champ-de-Foire.

**Maison des Glycines** (☎ 03 86 32 35 30; rue St-Pierre; menus €18-23; ☎ 12.30-4pm Fri-Wed, closed 11 Nov–week before Easter) Serves *gastronomique* cuisine, made with fresh regional products, and wine by the glass (€5 to €8) in a mid-18th-century dining room. Functions as a *salon de thé* (tearoom) from 3.30pm to 7pm.

**Le Cheval Blanc** (☎ 03 86 33 22 12; place du Champ-de-Foire; lunch menus €20-26, other menus €25-34; ☎ closed dinner Wed & Thu except on holidays, Jul & Aug) Serves French cuisine, made with fresh seasonal products, mixing traditional recipes with *nouvelle* ideas. Rustic but classic.

**Vival supermarket** (☎ 9am-8pm mid-May–mid-Sep, 9am-12.30pm & 3.30-7.30pm Mon-Sat, 9.30am-1pm Sun mid-Sep–mid-May, closed afternoon Mon & afternoon Wed Nov-Jan) For groceries; near the bottom of rue St-Étienne.

## Getting There & Away

Vézelay is 15km from Avallon (19km if you take the gorgeous D427 via Pontaubert). There's a free car park 250m from place du Champ-de-Foire (towards Clamecy).

Four or five trains a day link the Sermizelles-Vézelay train station, about 10km north of Vézelay, with Avallon (€2.90, 15 minutes) and Auxerre (€7, 50 minutes). **Allô Taxi** (☎ 03 86 32 31 88) and **Taxi TLS** (☎ 03 86 33 19 06) can get you from Sermizelles-Vézelay to Vézelay for about €17 (€23 after 7pm and on Sunday).

If all goes as planned, it should be possible to make an all-day trip to Vézelay from Avallon and Montbard (on the Paris–Dijon rail line) by SNCF bus (daily in July and August, weekends in May, June, September and October).

## AROUND VÉZELAY

Southeast of Vézelay at the base of the hill, **St-Père-sous-Vézelay** has a Flamboyant Gothic church but is best known for **L'Espérance** (☎ 03 86 33 39 10; www.marc-meneau.com; r €150-470;

menus €65-210; ☎ restaurant closed Tue, lunch Mon & lunch Wed, also closed mid-Jan–early Mar), a legendary French restaurant (and 30-room hotel) with two Michelin stars.

Three kilometres south along the D958 are the **Fontaines Salées** (☎ 03 86 33 26 62; adult/6-12yr €4/1.60; ☎ Apr–11 Nov), saltwater hot springs where excavations have uncovered a Celtic sanctuary (2nd century BC) and Roman baths (1st century AD). About 2km south is the village of **Pierre-Perthuis** (literally 'pierced stone'), named after a natural stone arch; nearby, a graceful stone bridge (1770) spans the River Cure underneath a modern highway bridge.

## PARC NATUREL RÉGIONAL DU MORVAN

The 2990-sq-km Morvan Regional Park, bounded more or less by Vézelay, Avallon, Saulieu and Autun and situated mainly in the Nièvre *département*, encompasses 700 sq km of dense woodland, 13 sq km of lakes and vast expanses of rolling farmland broken by hedgerows, stone walls and stands of beech, hornbeam and oak. The sharp-eyed can observe some of France's largest and most majestic birds of prey perched on trees as they scan for field rodents – or wait lazily for road kill.

The majority of the thinly populated area's 73,000 residents earn their living from farming, ranching, logging and – it's a tough job but someone has to do it – growing Christmas trees. The time when the impoverished Morvan (a Celtic name meaning 'Black Mountain') supplied wet nurses to rich Parisians passed long ago.

## Activities

The Morvan offers an abundance of options to fans of outdoor activities. On dry land you can choose from rambling (the park has over 2500km of marked trails; see Morvan Visitors Centre, p488), mountain biking, horse riding, rock climbing, orienteering and fishing, while waterborne activities such as rafting, canoeing and kayaking are possible on several lakes and the Rivers Chaux, Cousin, Cure and Yonne.

In addition to **AB Loisirs** (opposite), the following outfits rent out mountain bikes and

### MAQUIS BERNARD RÉSISTANCE CEMETERY

Seven RAF men – the crew of a bomber shot down near here in 1944 – and 21 *résistants* are buried in the neatly tended **Maquis Bernard Résistance Cemetery** ([www.ouroux-en-morvan.com](http://www.ouroux-en-morvan.com) – select English, 'Map of Site', then 'The Maquis Bernard'), surrounded by the dense forests in which British paratroops operated with Free French forces. The nearby **drop zone** is marked with signs.

The cemetery is about 8km southwest of Montsauche-les-Settons (along the D977) and 5.6km east of Oroux-en-Morvan (along the D12), near the tiny hamlet of Savelot. From the D977, go 2.8km along the narrow dirt road to Savelot.

can also arrange water sports such as canoeing and rafting:

**Activital** ([www.activital.net](http://www.activital.net), in French) Lac de Chaumeçon (☎ 03 86 22 61 35) Based in St-Martin-du-Puy; Lac des Settons (☎ 03 86 84 51 98) Based in Montsauche-les-Settons.

**Okheanos** (☎ 03 86 84 60 61; [www.okheanos.com](http://www.okheanos.com), in French) Based in Dun-les-Places.

### MORVAN VISITORS CENTRE

Surrounded by hills, forests and lakes, the Morvan Regional Park's visitors centre, known as Espace St-Brisson, is 14km west of Saulieu in St-Brisson. To get there by car, follow the signs to the 'Maison du Parc'.

All sorts of information, including hiking and cycling maps and guides, is available at the helpful **tourist office** (☎ 03 86 78 79 57; [www.parc dumorvan.org](http://www.parc dumorvan.org), in French; ☎ 9.30am or 10am-12.30pm & 2-5.30pm Mon-Sat, 10am-1pm & 3-5.30pm Sun Easter-mid-Nov, 9.30am-12.30pm & 2-5pm Mon-Fri mid-Nov-Easter). Guided walks of the park (€4 to €10), some at night (eg to observe owls), set out from April to October, and there are activities for children in July and August. The website has details (in French) on local festivals, cultural events, outdoor activities and lodging. Other useful (though not necessarily up-to-date) websites include [www.morvan-tourisme.org](http://www.morvan-tourisme.org) and [www.patrimoine dumorvan.org](http://www.patrimoine dumorvan.org), both in French.

The **Écomusée du Morvan** (☎ 03 86 78 79 10), which explores traditional Morvan life and customs, has six sites around the park, including one at Espace St-Brisson, **Maison**

**des Hommes et des Paysages** (adult/student €3/1.50; ☎ 10am-1pm & 2-6pm May-Sep, to 5pm Apr & Oct-mid-Nov, closed Tue except Jul & Aug), whose theme is the interplay between humans and landscapes. Everything is in French.

The Morvan was a major stronghold for the Resistance during WWII; the **Musée de la Résistance en Morvan** (☎ 03 86 78 79 10/06; adult/student €4/2.50, incl Écomusée €6/3.50; ☎ same as Maison des Hommes) chronicles key events and characters. An English audioguide costs €1.

The **Verger Conservatoire** (Conservation Orchard) preserves some 200 varieties of legacy fruit trees that are no longer commercially grown; the **Herbularium** features 170 species of Morvan plants.

**Trails** that can be picked up in St-Brisson include three 5km circuits (Coteaux de St-Brisson, Autour de la Maison du Parc and Autour du Vignan), a 12km circuit to Dolmen Chevesse and a 20km circuit to the village of Gouloux.

### BIBRACTE

The Celtic town on **Mont Beuvray** where Vercingétorix was proclaimed chief of the Gaulish coalition in 52 BC – shortly before his defeat by Julius Caesar at Alésia – is now the site of archeological excavations and the **Museum of Celtic Civilisation** (☎ 03 85 86 52 35; [www.bibracte.fr](http://www.bibracte.fr); St-Léger-sous-Beuvray; adult/concession/under 11yr €5.75/4.25/free; ☎ 10am-6pm mid-Mar-mid-Nov, till 7pm Jul & Aug). It is 25km west of Autun.

## SAÔNE-ET-LOIRE

In the southern Saône-et-Loire *département* ([www.bourgogne-du-sud.com](http://www.bourgogne-du-sud.com)), midway between Dijon and Lyon, highlights include the Gallo-Roman ruins in Autun, Cluny's glorious Romanesque heritage, the fascinating industrial history of Le Creusot and, around Mâcon, vineyards galore. Several rivers and the Canal du Centre meander among its forests and pastureland.

### AUTUN

pop 15,100

Autun, 85km southwest of Dijon, is now a quiet subprefecture, but almost two millennia ago – known as Augustodunum – it was one of the most important cities in Roman Gaul, boasting 6km of ramparts, four monumental gates, two theatres, an amphitheatre

and a system of aqueducts. Beginning in AD 269, the city was repeatedly sacked by barbarian tribes and its fortunes declined, but things improved considerably in the Middle Ages, making it possible to construct an impressive cathedral.

If you have a car, Autun is an excellent base for exploring the southern parts of the Parc Naturel Régional du Morvan (p487).

## Orientation

The train station is linked to the common-turned-car park, Champ de Mars, by the town's main thoroughfare, av Charles de Gaulle. The hilly area around Cathédrale St-Lazare, reached via narrow cobblestone streets, is known as the old city. The main shopping area is just south of Champ de Mars around rue St-Saulge and rue des Cordeliers.

## Information

**Elge Interactive** (☎ 03 85 86 13 07; 6 Grande Rue Chauchien; per hr €4.50; ☹ generally 9am-noon & 2-6.30pm Mon-Fri, sometimes Sat Jun–mid-Sep) Internet and wi-fi access.

**Laundrette** (1 rue Guérin; ☹ 7am-9pm)

**Post Office** (8 rue Pernette)

**Tourist Office** (☎ 03 85 86 80 38; www.autun-tourisme.com; 13 rue du Général Demetz; ☹ 9.30am-12.30pm & 2-6pm year-round except Mon morning & Sun Oct–mid-May, longer hr daily mid-May–Sep) Sells a self-guided walking-tour brochure (€2) and local IGN hiking map 2825E (€7.70); also has free pamphlets in French on the Parc Naturel Régional du Morvan.

## Sights & Activities

### GALLO-ROMAN SITES

Built during the reign of Constantine, **Porte d'Arroux** was once one of Augustodunum's four gates. Constructed wholly without mortar, it supports four semicircular arches of the sort that put the 'Roman' in Romanesque: two for vehicles and two for pedestrians. **Porte St-André** is similar in general design and here, too, it's not difficult to imagine a Roman chariot clattering through, a helmeted legionnaire at the reins.

You can also let your imagination run wild at the **Théâtre Romain** (Roman Theatre; ☹ 24hr), designed to hold 16,000 people – try picturing the place filled with cheering (or jeering), toga-clad spectators. From the top look southwest and you'll see the **Pierre de Couhard** (Rock of Couhard), the 27m-high remains of a Gallo-Roman pyramid that was probably a tomb.

Long associated (wrongly) with the Roman god Janus, the 24m-high **Temple de Janus** (www.temple-de-janus.net, in French for a 3-D visit) – in the middle of farmland 800m north of the train station – is thought to have been a site for Celtic worship. Only two of its massive walls are still standing.

### OLD CITY

Many of Autun's buildings date from the 17th and 18th centuries.

Napoléon Bonaparte and his brothers Joseph and Lucien studied in Autun as teenagers. Their old Jesuit college, now a high school known as **Lycée Joseph Bonaparte**, on the west side of Champ de Mars, has a wrought-iron gate (1772) decorated with the municipal coat of arms. Next door is classical **Église Notre Dame** (1757).

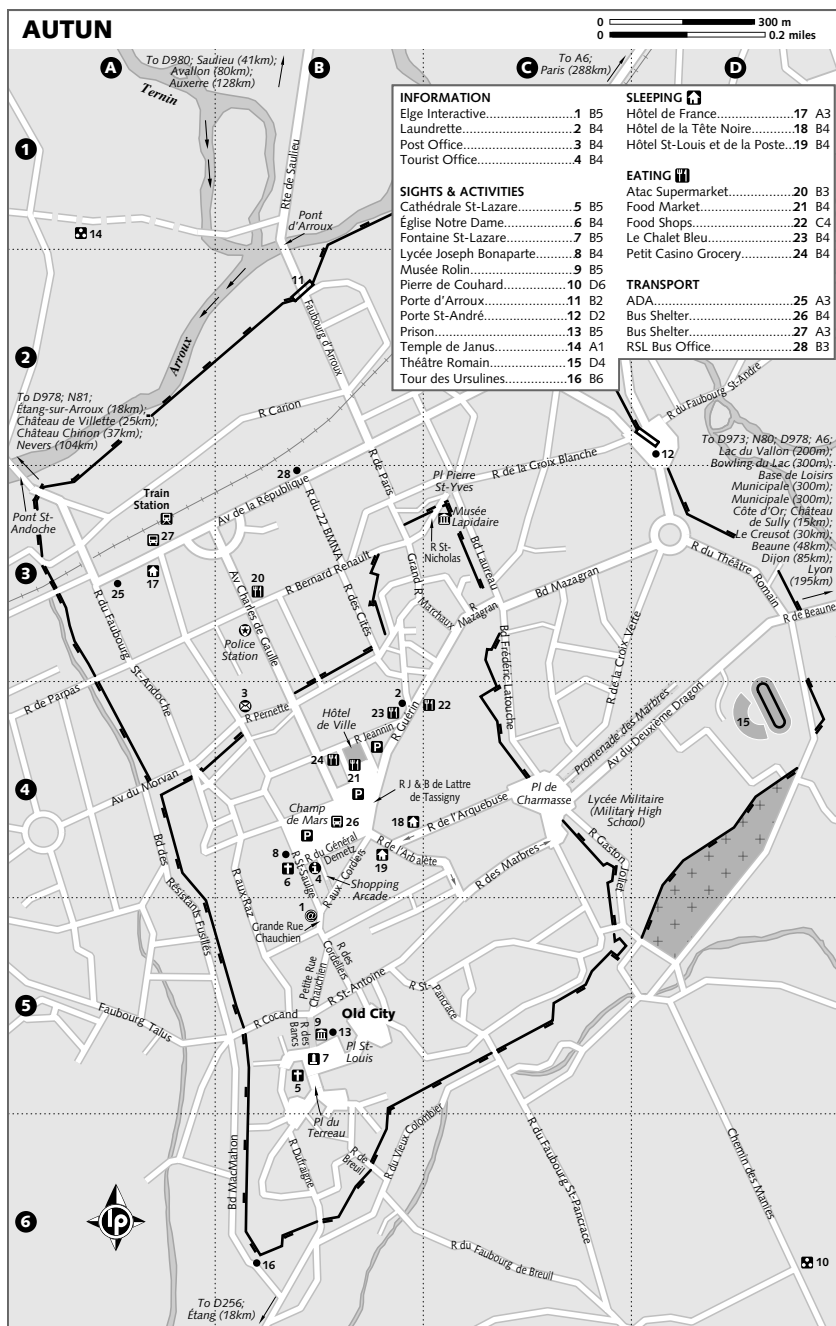
The Gothic **Cathédrale St-Lazare** (place du Terreau; ☹ 8am-7pm Sep-Jun, plus 9-11pm Jul & Aug) was built in the 12th century to house the sacred relics of St Lazarus. Later additions include the 15th- to 16th-century bell tower over the transept and the 19th-century towers over the entrance. Over the main doorway, the Romanesque **tympandum** showing the Last Judgement was carved in the 1130s by Gislebertus, whose name is written below Jesus' right foot. Across the bottom, the saved are on the left while the damned – including a woman whose breasts are being bitten by snakes (symbolising lust) – are on the right. The Renaissance-style fountain next to the cathedral, **Fontaine St-Lazare**, dates from the 16th century.

The **Musée Rolin** (☎ 03 85 52 09 76; 5 rue des Bancs; adult/student €3.40/free; ☹ 9.30am-noon & 1.30-6pm Wed-Mon Apr-Sep, 10am-noon & 2pm or 2.30-5pm Wed-Mon Oct-Mar) has a worthwhile collection of Gallo-Roman artefacts; 12th-century Romanesque art, including the *Temptation of Eve* by Gislebertus; and 15th-century paintings such as the *Autun Virgin* by the Maître de Moulins. A recently built hall features 20th- and 21st-century art.

The adjacent **prison** (2bis place St-Louis; admission €1; ☹ 2-6pm Wed-Sun approximately Jul-Sep), a forbidding circular structure built in 1854, was used to house baddies until 1955.

### WALKING & CYCLING

For a **stroll** along the city walls (part-Roman but mostly medieval), walk from av du Morvan south to the 12th-century **Tour des Ursulines** and follow the walls to the northeast.



The Chemin des Manies leads out to the Pierre de Couhard, where you can pick up the **Circuit des Gorges**, three marked forest trails ranging from 4.7km to 11.5km. The map to take along is IGN 2925 O (€7.70).

## Sleeping

### AUTUN

**Hôtel de France** (☎ 03 85 52 14 00; www.hotel-de-france-autun.fr; 18 av de la République; d €41, with wash-basin only €26; 🚻 reception closed after 3pm Sun, closed 1st 3 weeks in Feb) A one-star, family-run hostelry with 26 basic, clean rooms.

**Hôtel St-Louis et de la Poste** (☎ 03 85 52 01 01, 08 20 87 68 76; www.hotelsaintlouis.net; 6 rue de l'Arbalète; d €69-89, Napoleonic ste €250; 🚻 reception open 9am-noon & 5-8pm; 🍷) In a grand 17th-century building that hosted Napoléon no less than four times, this two-star, 39-room establishment has a lavish 1920s lobby. Stay two nights and the breakfast and buffet dinner are free.

**Hôtel de la Tête Noire** (☎ 03 85 86 59 99; www.hotel.tetenoire.fr; 3 rue de l'Arquebuse; d/tr €72/85; 🚻 closed approximately 20 Dec-late Jan; 🍷) A two-star, Logis de France place with 31 easy-to-like rooms, some quite large, accessible by lift. Has a good restaurant.

### WEST OF AUTUN

**our pick** **Château de Villette** (☎ 03 86 30 09 13; www.stork-chateau.com; d €135-225, ste €265-365; whole château per week €8750-12,000; 🍷) Set in a 5-sq-km private estate, this delightful 16th- and 18th-century château lets you sample the luxurious life of Burgundy's landed aristocracy. After waking up in a ravishingly furnished period room, you can ramble, cycle or hunt escargots (from mid-July to mid-August) in the rolling, partly forested countryside before sitting down to a superb, multicourse French meal (available two nights a week). Worthy of a honeymoon! Situated 20km southwest of Autun – take the N81, then the D192 for 3km to Poil, then the C1 for 2km.

## Eating

There are a number of restaurants located along the north side of Champ de Mars and several more up towards the cathedral, along Grande Rue Chauchien and Petite Rue Chauchien and around place du Terreau.

**Le Chalet Bleu** (☎ 03 85 86 27 30; 3 rue Jeannin; www.lechaletbleu.com; menus €18-58; 🚻 closed Tue, dinner Sun & dinner Mon) Serves creative French

gastronomic cuisine in a light, leafy dining room. Specialities include *meurette d'œufs pochés et escargots* (poached eggs with red-wine sauce and escargots), coq au vin and thick Charolais steaks.

Stock up for a picnic at the following:

**Atac supermarket** (opposite 35 av Charles de Gaulle; 🕒 8.30am-7pm Mon-Sat)

**Food market** (under & outside the Hôtel de Ville; 🕒 until noon or 12.30pm Wed & Fri)

**Food shops** There are several on rue Guérin, northeast of Champ de Mars.

**Petit Casino grocery** (6 av Charles de Gaulle; 🕒 7.30am-12.30pm & 3-8pm Tue-Sat, 8.30am-12.30pm & 4-7pm Sun)

## Entertainment

Autun is pretty sleepy but its nightlife scene has one unpretentious bright spot: **Bowling du Lac** (☎ 03 85 52 06 06; www.bowling-autun.com; rte de Chalonsur-Saône; 🕒 11am-2am Tue-Thu, 11am-4am Fri, 3pm-4am Sat, 3pm-2am Sun), a few hundred metres east of the old city next to the McDonald's. Hugely popular with locals of all ages, it has eight bowling lanes, billiard tables, a bar and a restaurant and hosts live music about once a month.

## Getting There & Away

From the bus shelters next to the train station and at Champ de Mars, buses go to Le Creusot (Line 3; €5.17, one hour, three daily Monday to Friday, two Saturday except school holidays) and the Le Creusot TGV station (Line 90; €6, 45 minutes, five daily Monday to Friday, two daily weekends); timetables are posted. The **RSL bus office** (☎ 03 85 86 92 55; www.r-s-l.fr, in French; 13 av de la République; 🕒 8.15am-noon & 2-6pm Mon-Thu, to 5pm Fri) has details.

You can rent cars from **ADA** (☎ 03 85 86 37 36; 8 av de la République).

Autun's **train station** (av de la République) is on a slow tertiary line that requires a change of train (or bus) to get almost anywhere except Auxerre (€19.50, 70 minutes, two or three daily) and Avallon (€12.80, two hours, two or three daily).

## CHÂTEAU DE SULLY

This Renaissance-style **château** (☎ 03 85 82 09 86; www.chateaudesully.com, in French; adult/under 18yr €7.30/5.90, gardens only €3.50/2.80; 🕒 Apr-11 Nov), on the outskirts of the village of Sully (15km northeast of Autun along the D973), has a beautifully furnished interior and a lovely English-style garden. It was the birthplace of Marshall MacMahon, duke of Magenta

and president of France from 1873 to 1879, whose ancestors fled Ireland several centuries ago and whose descendents still occupy the property. Tours of the interior begin hourly on the half-hour from 10.30am to 4.30pm except at 12.30pm (also at 5.30pm July and August).

## LE CREUSOT

pop 23,600

Let's be frank: Le Creusot – 30km southeast of Autun along the gorgeous N80 – is an ugly industrial town, but the story of how it got that way is fascinating (at least if you like industrial history). After all, this is where the power hammer was invented in 1841 – the towering gadget (which looks like a Jules Verne spaceship) at the southern entrance to town was the mightiest (and loudest) steam hammer in the world when it was built in 1876. (For the record, it's 21m high, weighs 545 tonnes and could apply 500 tonnes of force.)

Thanks to nearby coal deposits and cheap transport via the **Canal du Centre** (1793), which links the Saône with the Loire and thus the Mediterranean with the Atlantic, Le Creusot became a major steel-making centre during the 19th century. The story of the smoke-belching Schneider steelworks, which at one time employed 15,000 workers, is told at **Château de la Verrerie** (☎ 03 85 73 92 00; adult/11-18yr/family €6/3.80/15.25), a late 18th-century glass-works turned into a private mansion by the paternalistic Schneiders, undisputed masters of their company town.

The château houses two museums that may soon be merged. The **Musée de l'Homme et de l'Industrie** (☎ 10am-noon & 2-6pm Mon-Fri, 2-6pm Sat & Sun, till 7pm May-Sep) has exhibits on the Schneider dynasty and some marvellous 1:14-scale steam locomotives. Across the courtyard, the **Académie François Bourdon** (www.afbourdon.com, in French; ☎ 11am-1pm & 2-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 2-6pm Sat, Sun & holidays Jul & Aug, 11am-12.30pm & 3-6pm Mon & Wed-Fri, 3-6pm Sat, Sun & holidays Feb-Jun, Sep & Oct, 3-6pm Wed-Mon Feb-Easter & Nov, closed Dec & Jan) has models of flagship Schneider products, including railway locomotives, bridges, naval vessels and nuclear powerplants. The 18-hectare forested **park** behind the château is always open.

The **tourist office** (☎ 03 85 55 02 46; www.le-creusot.fr, www.creusot.net, in French; ☎ 10am-noon or 12.30pm & 2-5.30pm or 6pm Mon-Fri, 2-6pm Sat, also open afternoons

Sun & holidays approximately May–mid-Sep) is inside the château's gatehouse. A two-hour MP3 walking guide to the town costs €3.

Le Creusot's train station, a 10-minute walk northeast of the château, and place Schneider (next to the château) are linked to Autun (p491) and, by the Navette TGV run by **CTC** (☎ 03 85 73 01 10; www.bus-ctc.fr, in French), to Le Creusot TGV station (€2.50, 20 minutes, four or five daily Monday to Saturday).

## CLUNY

pop 4400

The remains of Cluny's great abbey – Christendom's largest church until the construction of St Peter's Basilica in the Vatican – are fragmentary and scattered, barely discernible among the houses and green spaces of the modern-day town. But with a bit of imagination, it's possible to picture how things looked in the 12th century, when Cluny's Benedictine abbey, renowned for its wealth and power and answerable only to the Pope, held sway over 1100 priories and monasteries stretching from Poland to Portugal.

## Orientation & Information

Cluny's main street is known (from southeast to northwest) as place du Commerce, rue Filaterie, rue Lamartine and rue Mercière.

**Cyber Espace** (☎ 03 85 59 25 36; Portes d'Honneur; per hr €3; ☎ 10am-noon & 2-7pm Tue, Wed, Fri & Sat, 2-7pm Thu) Public internet access.

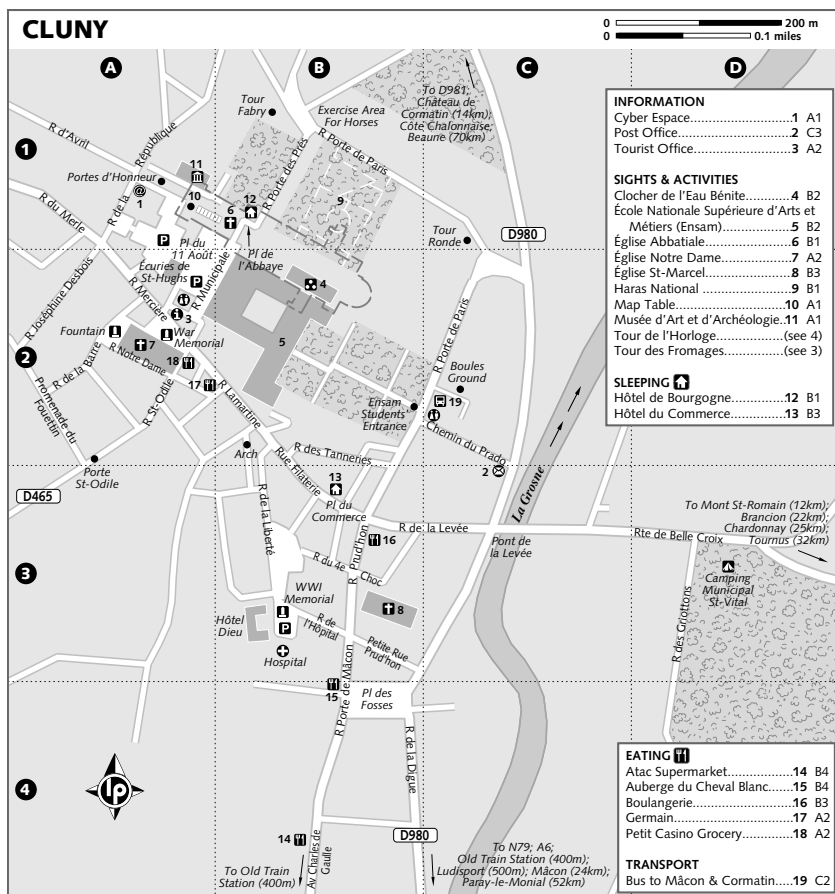
**Post Office** (chemin du Prado) Changes foreign currency.

**Tourist Office** (☎ 03 85 59 05 34; www.cluny-tourisme.com; 6 rue Mercière; ☎ 10am-12.30pm & 2.30-6.45pm Apr-Sep, no midday closure Jul & Aug, closed Sun Apr & Sep, 10am-12.30pm & 2.30-6pm Tue-Sat Oct-Mar) Has excellent English-language brochures.

## Sights

Cluny's vast **Église Abbatiale** (Abbey Church; ☎ 03 85 59 12 79; adult/18-25yr/under 18yr €6.50/4.50/free), built between 1088 and 1130, once stretched from the rectangular **map table** in front of the **Musée d'Art et d'Archéologie** (☎ tickets sold 9.30am-6.10pm May-Aug, 9.30-11.40am & 1.30-4.40pm Sep-Apr) all the way to the trees near the octagonal **Clocher de l'Eau Bénite** (Tower of the Holy Water) and its neighbour, the square **Tour de l'Horloge** – a distance of 187m!

A visit to the abbey begins at the Musée d'Art et d'Archéologie, where tickets are sold and an English brochure is available. Displays include a model of the Cluny



complex and some superb Romanesque carvings. It continues on the grounds of the **École Nationale Supérieure d'Arts et Métiers** (Ensam; place du 11 Août), an institute for training mechanical and industrial engineers that's centred on an 18th-century cloister. The visit includes a 10-minute computer-generated 'virtual tour' of the abbey as it looked in the Middle Ages. You can wander around the grounds at mid-day and for an hour after the museum closes. Free guided tours in English are held in July and August.

The best place to appreciate the abbey's vastness is from the top of the **Tour des Fromages** (adult/student €1.25/0.80; ☎ same as tourist office), once used to ripen cheeses. Access to the tower's 120 steps is through the tourist office.

Cluny has two other churches: **Église St-Marcel** (rue Prud'hon; ☎ closed to public), topped by an octagonal, three-storey belfry; and 13th-century **Église Notre Dame** (☎ generally 9am-7pm), across from the tourist office.

The **Haras National** (National Stud Farm; 2 rue Porte des Prés), founded by Napoléon in 1806, houses some of France's finest thoroughbreds, ponies and draught horses. It can be visited on a **guided tour** (☎ 06 22 94 52 69; adult/12-17yr/4-11yr €5/3/2; ☎ 2pm, 3.30pm & 5pm Tue-Sun early Apr-Sep, 2pm Tue-Fri mid-Mar-early Apr & Wed, Fri & Sat Oct).

## Sleeping

**Hôtel du Commerce** (☎ 03 85 59 03 09; [www.hotelducommerce-cluny.com](http://www.hotelducommerce-cluny.com), in French; 8 place du Commerce; d €42, with washbasin only €26; ☎ reception closed noon-4.30pm)



A family-run, one-star hotel with cheerful peach-coloured hallways and 17 tidy rooms that offer clean, basic accommodation. Very central.

**Hôtel de Bourgogne** (☎ 03 85 59 00 58; www.hotel-cluny.com; place de l'Abbaye; d €85-125, q €150; ☞ Feb-Nov; ♿) This three-star hotel, Cluny's most comfortable, is right next to the remains of the abbey. Built in 1817, it has a flowery, living room-like lounge area, as well as 13 charming, antique-furnished rooms and three spacious apartments.

## Eating

There are cafés and restaurants around place du Commerce and along rue Lamartine. The Hôtel de Bourgogne has a fine restaurant (closed Tuesday and Wednesday).

**Germain** (Au Péché Mignon; ☎ 03 85 59 11 21; www.chocolaterie-germain.fr; 25 rue Lamartine; ☞ 7am-8pm) A mouth-watering *pâtisserie-chocolaterie* whose adjacent *salon de thé* (lunch menu €11.50) serves breakfast and light lunches (eg quiche and salad).

**Auberge du Cheval Blanc** (☎ 03 85 59 01 13; 1 rue Porte de Mâcon; menus €17-39.50; ☞ closed dinner Fri & Sat, also closed Dec-mid-Mar) Reputed for its traditional Burgundian cuisine, including escargots, coq au vin and bœuf bourguignon.

Most of Cluny's food shops are along place du Commerce, rue Lamartine and rue Mercière; all – except one **boulangerie** (36 rue Prud'hon) – are closed on Monday. For picnic supplies:

**Atac supermarket** (av Charles de Gaulle; ☞ 8.45am-7.15pm Mon-Sat, 9am-noon Sun)

**Petit Casino grocery** (29 rue Lamartine; ☞ 8am-12.30pm & 3-7.30pm Tue-Sat, 8.30am-noon Sun, sometimes Sun afternoon Jul & Aug)

## Getting There & Around

The bus stop on rue Porte de Paris is served by **Buscéphale** (☎ 03 85 39 93 40; www.cg71.fr, in French) Line 7 (six or seven daily), which goes to Mâcon (45 minutes), the Mâcon-Loché TGV station (30 minutes) and Cormatin (20 minutes). Schedules are posted at the bus stop and available at the tourist office.

**Ludisport** (☎ 06 62 36 09 58; www.ludisport.com; at old train station; per half-/full day €10/18; ☞ 9am-noon & 2-5pm Jul & Aug, 10am-noon & 2-4pm Feb-Jun & Sep-Nov), about 1km south of the centre, rents out bicycles.

## NORTH OF CLUNY

An old railway line and parts of a former canal towpath have been turned into the **Voie Verte** (Green Road), a series of paved paths

around the Saône-et-Loire *département* that have been designed for walking, cycling and in-line skating. From Cluny, the Voie Verte heads north – via vineyards and valleys – to Givry (42km) and Santenay, where you can pick up the **Voie des Vignes** (p466) to Beaune, and south to Charnay-les-Mâcon (just west of Mâcon; 19km). Tourist offices can supply you with a free cycling map, *Voies Vertes et Cyclotourisme – Bourgogne du Sud*. Towns with bike rental include Cluny.

One stop on the Voie Verte is Cormatin, 14km north of Cluny, where you'll find the Renaissance-style **Château de Cormatin** (☎ 03 85 50 16 55; adult/student under 25yr/under 17yr €9/5.50/4; ☞ tours begin 10am-noon & 2-5.30pm Apr, May & Oct-12 Nov, to 6.30pm mid-Jun-mid-Sep, no midday closure mid-Jul-mid-Aug, gardens open till sundown), renowned for its opulent 17th-century, Louis XIII-style interiors and formal gardens. For buses from Cluny see left.

**Tournus** (www.tournugeois.fr), on the Saône 33km northeast of Cluny, is known for its 10th- to 12th-century Romanesque abbey church, **Abbatiale St-Philibert** (☞ 8.30am-6pm Oct-Apr, to 7pm May-Sep), whose superb and extremely rare 12th-century **mosaic** of the calendar and the zodiac was discovered by chance in 2002.

The scenic roads that link Cluny with Tournus, including the D14, D15, D82 and D56, pass through lots of tiny villages, many with charming churches. The medieval village of **Brancon** (www.brancon.fr, in French) sits at the base of its château, while **Chardonnay** is – as one would expect – surrounded by vineyards. There's a panoramic view from 579m **Mont St-Romain**.

The **Côte Chalonnaise** wine-growing area runs from St-Gengoux-le-National north to **Chagny** and is just south of the Côte de Beaune (p465).

## MÂCON

pop 34,100

The town of Mâcon, 70km north of Lyon on the right (west) bank of the Saône, is a good base for exploring the **Mâconnais**, Burgundy's southernmost wine-growing area, which produces mainly dry whites.

The **tourist office** (☎ 03 85 21 07 07; www.macon-tourism.com; 1 place St-Pierre; ☞ 9.30am-12.30pm & 2-6.30pm Mon-Sat mid-Jun-Sep, 10am-noon or 12.30pm & 2-6pm Mon-Sat Oct-mid-Jun, closed Mon Nov-Apr), across the street from the 18th-century **town hall**, and its riverfront **annexe** (esplanade Lamartine; ☞ 10am-

1.30pm & 3-7pm daily Jul-Sep) have information on visiting the vineyards of the Mâconnais (including hiking maps) and, a wee bit further south, the **Beaujolais** (p517).

Mâcon's main commercial streets are rue Carnot and rue Dombey, a block west of the river, and perpendicular rue Sigorgne. The all-wood **Maison de Bois**, facing 95 rue Dombey and built around 1500, is decorated with carved wooden figures, some of them very cheeky indeed.

The **Musée Lamartine** (☎ 03 85 38 96 19; 41 rue Sigorgne; adult/student €2.50/free; ☞ 10am-noon & 2-6pm Tue-Sat, 2-6pm Sun) explores the life and times of the Mâcon-born Romantic poet and left-wing politician Alphonse de Lamartine (1790–1869).

The **Musée des Ursulines** (☎ 03 85 39 90 38; adult/student €2.50/free, incl entry to Musée Lamartine €3.40/free; ☞ 10am-noon & 2-6pm Tue-Sat, 2-6pm Sun), housed in a 17th-century Ursuline convent, features Gallo-Roman archeology, 16th- to 20th-century paintings and displays about 19th-century Mâconnais life.

About 10km west of town in the wine country, the **Musée de Préhistoire de Solutré** (☎ 03 85 35 85 24; adult/student/under 18yr €3.50/2/free ☞ 10am-6pm Apr-Sep, 10am-noon & 2-5pm Jan-Mar, Oct & Nov) displays finds from one of Europe's richest prehistoric sites, occupied from 35,000 to 10,000 BC. A lovely 20-minute walk will get

you to the top of the rocky outcrop known as the **Roche de Solutré**, from where Mont Blanc can sometimes be seen, especially at sunset.

The fin de siècle grandeur of the two-star **Hôtel d'Europe et d'Angleterre** (☎ 03 85 38 27 94; www.hotel-europeangleterre-macon.com; 92-109 quai Jean Jaurès; d €50-70; ☞ reception closed noon-2pm, till 4pm Sun Dec-Mar), facing the river five short blocks north of Pont St-Laurent, has faded somewhat since Queen Victoria is said to have stayed here, but some of the old-time atmosphere remains, eg in the breakfast room (c 1900). The first giraffe ever to set foot on French soil – a gift of Muhammad Ali, Viceroy of Egypt – stayed here for two days in 1826 while on its way from Marseille to Paris. Many of the 29 spacious rooms have marble fireplaces and river views.

**L'Ethym' Sel** (☎ 03 85 39 48 84; 10 rue Gambetta; menus €14.50-32; ☞ closed Wed & dinner Tue Sep-Jun, Sun & Mon Jul & Aug), two blocks south of the tourist office, is a modern bistro whose French and Burgundian specialities include locally raised Charolais steak (€15).

For buses from Cluny see opposite. The Mâcon-Ville train station is on the main line (11 to 18 daily) linking Dijon (€17.60, 1¼ hours), Beaune (€12.90, 50 minutes) and Lyon-Part Dieu (€11.30, 50 minutes). The Mâcon-Loché TGV station is 5km southwest of town.

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