CIVIS SCHOOL

Modernisms in Transit: Dialogues and Crossings

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Aix-Marseille Université

See & Do

Aix-en-Provence and Marseille
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Situated in the heart of the city, Cours Mirabeau is dotted with fountains and edged with classical town-houses.

In 1651, Archbishop Mazarin laid out its course which divides the old town into two sections.

Honore-Gabriel de Riqueti, Count of Mirabeau was the scion of wealthy merchants from Marseilles. In the early stages of the French Revolution, he advocated a constitutional monarchy. Despite his moderate political stand he was immensely popular among the little people. He had just been elected president of the National Assembly when he died, at age 42, in April 1791.
A statue of Roi René, who ruled over Provence during the 15th century, was sculpted in white marble by David d’Angers in 1822. It now stands at the upper end of Cours Mirabeau, in a little square known as Place Forbin. The King is holding muscat grapes, which he introduced to the region in the 15th century.

“I want to belong to a nation of Small Producers, with some local, but no national feeling at all. Without boundaries, or armed forces, or customs, or government. That would never want me to kill anyone out of a group feeling. Something like being a Provençal.”

Ford Madox Ford, *The Great Trade Route*, 1937

**Aïoli** is a Provençal sauce made from garlic, olive oil, lemon juice, egg yolks and seasoning. Its “grand” version includes various boiled vegetables, boiled fish (normally soaked salted cod) and boiled eggs. Aïoli is the centerpiece of a summer’s meal made from fresh market produce.

Another popular dish is **tapenade**, which with its salty ingredients is a perfect companion to a chilled glass of rosé. The French word for Tapenade comes from the Provençal name for caper buds, tapeno. The main ingredients in tapenade are niçoise olives, capers, anchovies, garlic and extra virgin olive oil.

**Calissons d’Aix**: one of the main specialities of Aix is this oval shaped sweet made from ground almonds mixed with ground preserved fruits. It has its own appellation. These sweets have been produced for about four hundred years and there are a number of reputable producers.

**Daube de taureau and gardienne de taureau**: two types of ‘bull stew’ made with the meat of the *taureau de Camargue*, the little black bulls that run almost wild and have their very own Appellation. Match with a robust red.
L’Hôtel de Caumont, with its harmonious proportions and its classical front, is a perfect example of 18th century French architecture. Its elegant gate, façade and staircase were registered on the inventory of historical monuments in 1925. Today, it hosts major art exhibitions.

Musée Granet & Collection Planque

Musée Granet hosts about 600 artworks -- paintings from the 17th century French school, works by Giacometti, Picasso, Léger, Klee, de Staël, Tal Coat, and Van de Velde, as well as works from the Flemish, Italian and Dutch schools.

The Jean and Suzanne Planque Foundation holds a collection of 300 paintings, drawings and sculptures from the Impressionist and Post-Impressionist periods -- Renoir, Monet, Van Gogh, Degas, Redon, Bonnard, Rouault, Picasso, Braque, Dufy, Laurens, Léger, Klee, Bissière, de Staël and Dubuffet.
To visit Bibémus Quarry and the Atelier, buy a ticket from the tourist office. Bus N°6 runs between the city center and the Bibémus Quarry.

Cézanne’s quiet, brightly-lit studio still retains the objects which were dear to the painter, the models for his final still-life paintings, his furniture and equipment he worked with, a thousand tiny details which connect to the works of art created within these walls and today exhibited around the world.

Cézanne, La Montagne Sainte-Victoire from Bibémus, 1897

Montagne Sainte Victoire

Elevation: 3104 feet (946 meters). A huge iron cross—la croix de Provence—was erected on this spot in the early 1870s.

Steeped in centuries of history and folklore, both classical and Christian, the mountain—or, more accurately, mountain range—only gradually emerged as a major theme in Cézanne’s work. In the 1870s, he included it in a landscape called The Railway Cutting, 1870 (Neue Pinakothek, Munich) and a few years later it appeared behind the
monumental figures of his *Bathers at Rest*, 1876-77 (The Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia), which was included in the Third Impressionist Exhibition of 1877. But it wasn’t until the beginning of the next decade, well after his adoption of Impressionism, that he began consistently featuring the mountain in his landscapes.

Writing in 1885, Paul Gauguin was probably thinking of Mont Sainte-Victoire when he imagined Cézanne spending “entire days in the mountains reading Virgil and looking at the sky.” “Therefore,” Gauguin continued, “his horizons are high, his blues very intense, and the red in his work has an astounding vibrancy.” Cézanne’s legend was beginning to emerge and a mountain ran through it.

“At the foot of the Sainte Victoire, the Château de Vauvenargues was bought in 1958 by Picasso who lived and worked there with his second wife Jacqueline Roque for about two years. The couple then moved to the Côte d’Azur, where Picasso died in 1973. He and Jacqueline were buried in Vauvenargues.

**Wines of Aix-en-Provence**

Coteaux d’Aix en Provence
The second largest appellation in Provence by volume, it covers the zone from the Durance River to the Mont Sainte Victoire, mostly in the Bouches du Rhône department, with Rians and Artigues in the department of the Var. It produces mainly rosés and reds with a limited amount of dry white. Traditional reds blend together Grenache, Cinsault, Mourvèdre and the local Counoise.

However, Syrah and Cabernet Sauvignon combinations have become increasingly popular. The whites, the best from the northern parts, combine Grenache Blanc with Clairette, Rolle and Bourboulenc, or Ugni Blanc, Sémillon and Sauvignon. This appellation also includes the whites from the Baux region.

**Main grape varieties**

**Reds**
There are a host of blended wines which when young are supple and fruity; most are best drunk within three years. However, more interesting robust and structured reds
are worth seeking out and are mostly oak aged. The best can last well for ten years and more. In the Coteaux d’Aix en Provence appellation, with a large diversity of climates, wines vary from hot, spicy rich southern French reds to lighter styles.

**Whites**
White wine production is limited. Usually dry from a blend of grapes, the best are found where the climate is slightly cooler in the higher altitude zones. Some Coteaux d’Aix en Provence whites can be quite delicate, aromatic and elegant.

**Rosés**
Rosé wine is the ambassador of Provence and amounts to around 2/3rds of the production. Mostly fresh, dry rosés produced mainly from blends and to be drunk young, there are a few more serious examples from Palette in this micro-region and Bandol, a little further afield. The region is now experimenting with the idea of a sparkling Provencal rosé, which actually works remarkably well, and would be an excellent accompaniment for fish and shellfish dishes.

(Lizz Berry, Master of Wine)

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**Marseille**

Marseille is 30 minutes by bus from Aix. Buses (line 50) run every five minutes during peak traffic hours.

**MUCEM**

The Museum of Civilisations from Europe and the Mediterranean was designed by architect Rudy Ricciotti. It is the first national museum dedicated to the great civilizations of the Mediterranean for the 21rst century. The museum is situated at the port entrance, on the J4 port pier and in the Fort Saint-Jean; two highly symbolic places for the current development of the city and its long-standing presence.
VIEILLE CHARITÉ

In accordance with the royal policy of “the great confinement of the poor”, in 1640 the City Council decided to “confine Marseille’s native poor to a clean and specific place.” In 1670, a charity within the Magistrate Council commissioned Pierre Puget, the Marseille-born king’s architect, to build a General Hospital to accommodate beggars and the poor. The first stone was laid in 1671 of what would be one of Pierre Puget’s most beautiful architectural designs.

The hospital was completed in 1749 with four wings of buildings enclosed on the outside and opened by a 3 floor corridor on an internal rectangular courtyard to access the vast communal work and residential spaces separating men and women. The chapel built in the center of the courtyard between 1679 and 1707 is a stunning architectural piece with an ovoid dome, the epitome of Italian baroque. The current façade wasn’t built until 1863 and echoes the Charité’s mission.

After the Revolution, the Charité became a hospice for the elderly and children until the end of the 19th century. In 1905, the building was occupied by the army and was then used to shelter the most destitute. Abandoned after the Second World War and destined to be demolished, the architect Le Corbusier persevered until it was listed as a Monument Historique in 1951. The renovated Vieille Charité has been a science and culture center since 1986. It houses the Musée d’Archéologie Méditerranéenne, the Musée des Arts Africains, Océaniens, Amérindiens (M.A.A.O.A), the Centre International de la Poésie de Marseille (C.I.P.M), Le Miroir movie theater and temporary exhibition halls.

VIEUX PORT

Marseille’s history has been performed on the Old Port for 26 centuries. During Antiquity and the Middles Ages, the Greek (Massalia), Roman (Massilia) and Medieval (Masiho) city expanded on the northern bank and to the south in the 17th century. Entry to the port was henceforth guarded by two forts, Fort Saint-Nicolas and Fort Saint-Jean.

The Old Port was renovated in 2013 (easier access to the port, less traffic, the Ombrière created by Norman Foster).

To this day, the Old Port is the beating heart of Marseille.

NOTRE-DAME-DE-LA-GARDE
Marseille’s iconic figure, Notre-Dame de la Garde or “La Bonne Mère” watches over sailors, fishermen and the entire city.

Map of Aix-en-Provence
Map of Marseille