



To benefit the Village Dans l'intérêt du Village

July 2011

Many changes

President's word

It certainly is the season of change, the mayor has declared that tourism is indispensable to the village economy and has set about making the village more attractive to tourists.

When we came to Marseillan in 1990 there were six restaurants and five bars. Today there are eight restaurants and two cafes at the port alone.

In the village are seven restaurants, three cafes, one pizza take away and restaurant, three sandwich bars and four bars. (The cafes double as drinking places but are not bars in the classic sense.)

Then there are the cosmetic changes - pretty floral displays and huge flowerpots at the port, and a shining new church square.

Two new car parks have been created. One on the lower road to the Plage, behind the brewery and another where a block of toilets and offices stood in the church square.

A seasonal tourist office has opened in the foyer of the theatre. Seven ladies comprise the tourist hostesses, divided between the office at the Plage and the one in the village. All speak English, and some other languages as well.

But there is still no sign of any English in the Hôtel de Ville - nor has their communications improved. We have not received the leaflets that were promised in April, and the Mediatech has not been informed of the tourist office opening in the theatre.

There is a lot to do to get Marseillan's tourist marketing on a sound footing.

Patricia

Some of the changes

The church square is now set with gleaming cobbles and we await the third and final tranche of the work in the autumn.

The church inner doors are now oak to replace the hideous plastic. But they are glazed with smoked glass and so the twilight that so enhanced the stained glass windows has not been restored.

A drive has been announced to make the village handicapped friendly. A special track has been laid at the Plage to facilitate handicapped people accessing the beach and sea.

New security lockers have been installed at the Plage so valuables can be safeguarded.

Camping car restrictions are now in place to prevent access to non-approved sites. A new park for camping cars has been created beside the tourist office at the Plage. This has spaces for 122 cars each of whom can stay for three days.

The Mayor's bridge over the Canal du Midi is now open, but the old one is still in place. Will it be demolished ?

There is still a lot to be done since the new bridge is not finished (just open) and the towpath has to provide for cyclists. Still, it seems that the end-of-the-year finish will be achieved.

The bus station in Marseillan Ville is moving to the parking outside the old Champion. It is not clear if there will be an office or just an open site as now.

Several new games have been added to the Tabarka park. It is now really well equipped and much used.

An improved web site for the village is at www.marseillan.com.

There will be heavy publicity for Marseillan at Vias airport. It now has 180,000 passengers a year and services to seven destinations.

A bus service now runs from Vias airport to Marseillan

French marketing & advertising

Coming from a marketing background it is frustrating to suffer typical French promotion. The main problem is that they like things to be pretty. Thus the message is too often obscured by the design.

A flyer for a tourist site may well be very attractive, but it may not stand out from the others when in a tourist information office... and often the key information such as where the site is located will be almost an afterthought at the foot of the reverse side.

And it may be printed white out of grey!

Looking for a particular shop one may drive slowly along a road, locate the shop and hunt for parking.

Then walk back to the shop to find a small envelope stuck in the window with a message in handwritten biro: *ferme exceptionnelle* (closed).

Why not make it big enough to be read from a distance ?

Somehow the message has become confused. The medium is important, it has to look good. The message has to fit the client not the medium.

