

# *Villa des Sapins*

## **The Local Area**

### **Peymeinade**

Peymeinade is a thriving community with a bustling high street complete with several bakers, butchers, delicatessen, poissonerie, tabac and newsagents, chocolaterie, bars, pizzerias, cafes, florists, hairdressers, pharmacies, and a small Casino supermarket. Market day is Monday, near the ancient church, and there are two more large supermarkets (Intermarche and Champion) are at either end of the town, and an Aldi in the middle. Peymeinade also has a public swimming pool, sports hall, football stadium, tennis courts, and a dojo for practising martial arts – just in case you feel energetic!

There is an Auchan hypermarket approximately 15 minutes drive away in the Grasse suburbs. On the way upstairs to the entrance, there is a large Chinese shop offering an appetising variety of fresh, ready-to-go meals.

### **Foret de Peygros:**

Between Auribeau and the villa is the forest of Peygros. In winter the forest rings out to the sound of hunters' dogs and guns; in summer the old oaks and pines provide shade to walkers. The GR51, a well-marked and maintained hiking trail known as the Balcony of the Cote d'Azur, traverses the Peygros forest and is a unique way to discover the area. There are walking and cycling paths directly at the foot of the villa terraces, accessed through the front security gate of the domain.

### **Auribeau sur Siagne:**

Directly east, the very first buildings between the villa and the sea are those of the mediaeval 'village perché' of Auribeau sur Siagne. Situated on a ridge at the entrance to the Gorges de la Siagne, the heart of the old village is very picturesque.

The village has some very pretty little streets between the old buildings, many with climbing plants and flowers. A carefully restored 18th century church sits at the top of the village. From this high point, you have a terrific view of the surrounding country, including the Tanneron mountains, the Peygros forest, the Pre-alps of Grasse, the Pic de Courmettes and the plateau of Valbonne.

## **Grasse**

A medieval town with a world-famous reputation, as for over 200 years the town has been the capital of the perfume industry. There is a tourist train for little ones with tired legs!

One of the highlights is the free tour offered by the three largest perfume factories - Fragonard (boulevard Fragonard), Molinard (boulevard Victor-Hugo) and Galimard (route de Cannes). They each produce perfume essences for use by the world's most famous perfume makers and mix their own fragrances which you can buy, or even make your own perfume!

The international Perfume Museum at Grasse follows the long history of perfumes, soap, make-up and cosmetics from Egyptian times to the present day.

## **Biot**

Biot: Is known for its unique pottery, verre rustique. Since the 1940s, artisan glassmakers here have been creating this bubble-flecked glass in brilliant colours like cobalt and emerald. The Verreries de Biot is the oldest and most famous place. A half-dozen others are within a short distance of the town.

## **Mougins**

Only 8km away, the once-fortified town of Mougins is a thousand years old. Picasso, who could afford to live anywhere, chose a place nearby, Notre-Dame-de-Vie, to spend his last years. The wonderful old town is known for its haute cuisine.

## **Valbonne**

The beautiful old village of Valbonne with a myriad of little streets around its central square full of restaurants is practically the same as it was when it was first built in 1200, except it is now just a few kilometres away from the high technology science park at Sophia Antipolis. There is an old Valbonne museum, antique shops, art galleries and lively Friday market.

## **Vence**

This town was founded in the 9th century, and there is a wealth of cultural heritage preserved within the beautiful old rampart walls, alongside modern shops, cafes and bars. The old quarter is often alive with music and art exhibitions during the summer, and there is always a game of petanque going on in the large central square, under the shade of the sycamore trees..

Fondation Maeght St-Paul-de-Vence: One of Europe's greatest modern art museums. Built in 1964, the avant-garde building displays works by Bonnard, Braque, Soulages, Chagall, Kandinsky, Rodin, Moore, Calder murals, Hepworth sculptures, and the fanciful fountains and colorful mosaics of Miró. A courtyard has Giacometti figures that look like gigantic chessmen.

## **By the sea**

The Riviera coastline is world famous. You can go to Cannes by train or car and pose on the famous red carpet at the Palais des Festivals, jump aboard a boat to St. Tropez or visit Ile Saint-Honorat named after the monk who founded a monastery there in 410AD. Antibes is just up the coast, tucked inside its mediavel walls and hosting the Musee Picasso, and further north is Nice and the Promenade des Anglais, and then Monaco with its Casino. or the other way, there's a wonderful scenic drive past the red rocks of Esterel to the fabulous waterpark at Frejus.

## **Inland water**

Just 20 minutes drive from the villa is the Lac de Cassien, a huge 420h lake in a natural protected area with calm, clear water surrounded by pine forests, and split into two by the road which takes you on to the A8. It has a selection of restaurants, fruit stalls and snack bars dotted along the roadside, picnic tables in the woods, a large inflatable aqua park with an obstacle course, pedalos, kayaks and paddleboards, plus fishing and horseriding. It's really popular with locals. Pack up a picnic and make a day of it!