

October 2006

## Welcome to Lot and Quercy Life!

October has stolen in with her spectacular mists and temperate breezes bringing in her wake a flurry of seasonal activity. It's the time of the vendanges and in the Quercy that doesn't just mean the grapes but the walnuts too. All day long you can see the tall, blue harvesters sailing over the vineyards like land-loving catamarans. At night you can still hear the distinctive drone and spot the vineyards by the lights as an indefatigable workforce press on well after dark. By nine o'clock the buzz gradually ceases and lines of lights appear bumping down the tracks. It's dinnertime and not even the lure of a bumper harvest safely gathered will come between a Frenchman and a good dinner. The narrow lanes are crowded with tractors now too; there are squashed grapes on every hairpin bend and the odd ancient beast, spewing disconnected fragments of rusty metal abandoned in disgust by the side of the road.



Down in the valleys the walnuts are just beginning to ripen and fall. The wild roadside trees have already yielded their crop, nuts litter the verges and crunch under the wheels of passing cars. Only for a day or so though, they quickly disappear into the carrier bags of passing peasants and the pockets of school children waiting for the bus. I discovered that I can pull up beneath one of these bountiful trees, throw both children out of the car armed with baskets and after a mere four minutes of frenetic activity pull away again with six kilos of walnuts. It's great fun.



The earthier flavours have hit the markets too. Walnuts and prunes adorn almost every small stall, vast glowing pumpkins – sold by the slice – and patissons with scalloped edges. Huge cauliflowers are everywhere, their enormous creamy heads side by side with their green cousins, the broccoli. At the very edges of the market, impromptu stalls have appeared. A couple of boxes of cepes, balanced precariously on an upturned wine barrel, shield an elderly individual in a pinny and zip-up slippers. She's doing surprisingly brisk business with the local matrons too. Beneath the larger stalls lie sacks and sacks of drying beans, sold by the kilo and still in their protective pods. The haricots verts have gone and in their place these fat, white

haricots blancs provide the substance for the classic casseroles of the region. The revered Tarbais, finest of all, is the one to have for your celebratory cassoulet. For everyday you could try the shorter, plumper varieties. The Cadurciennes buy them in vast quantities whilst they're still cheap and plentiful. After all a couple of sacks in the cellar will see them through till the salads of spring. I decided it was time I followed suit and, greatly daring, bought a ten-kilo sack last week. Of course the obvious drawback to buying your winter supply in this manner is transport. I staggered bow-legged through the market and collapsed into the car too exhausted even to stop for my usual restorative coffee.

It was worth it. Late one blustery night, as the harvesters were leaving the fields and the wind was beginning to whip down the Lot valley, I triumphantly brought a mouth-watering casserolette of Limousin beef, Cahors wine and fresh beans out of the oven. As the kitchen filled with its fragrant steam, we were initiated into the legendary, beguiling pleasures of the soft, creamy haricot and realised just why the ladies of Cahors rush to buy their beans when they do.

It's the Quercy on a plate.

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Email: [editor@frenchentree-lotandquercy.com](mailto:editor@frenchentree-lotandquercy.com)

Telephone: 00 33 (0) 565 31 39 57

## What's New on FrenchEntrée-LotandQuercy.com?



### Featured Properties for Sale - Up to €150k

We have a collection of properties that are ready to move into and would make perfect holiday homes. The real bargains are to be found in village houses which are now among the cheapest in France. With prices starting at only €60k, a place in the sun could be within your reach

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### French Carte Vitale to be Upgraded

The French *carte vitale* is about to undergo an upgrade, and from November 2006 residents of France registered with the social security system will receive a new version of this medical identity card. It will contain vital medical information as well as a photo of the bearer. [more...](#)



### FREE - French Emergency Numbers Card

Our new, postcard-sized list of French emergency phone numbers is available free of charge to FrenchEntrée-LotandQuercy viewers. Ideal to keep by your home telephone or in your car [more...](#)



### Quercy Beef and Bean Casserole

Every region of France has its own classic stew or casserole. The most famous, and certainly the most abused beef stew must be Boeuf Bourguignon, closely followed now by the increasingly popular Provencal Daube.. [more...](#)



### Holiday Accommodation - Including on-line Availability Chart

It might seem a little early to be thinking about next year's holiday, but if you're looking for dates in high season to match those school holidays don't leave it too late! Some of our advertisers are already receiving bookings for next summer. [more...](#)



### Growing Giant Pumpkins in the Quercy

In the first of two articles, Sarah Weston describes the preparations for an Anglo-French giant pumpkin growing competition. What starts as a vague idea over a bowl of pumpkin soup, ends with a fete for over 100 people - and that's just the preparation. The competition itself is featured in the second article [more...](#)



### Pumpkin, Tomato and Red Pepper Soup

This recipe makes excellent use of that most under utilised of all vegetables in England, the good old pumpkin. Every year they're grown in their thousands and used as Halloween lanterns, their delicious tender flesh discarded. It's a criminal waste... [more...](#)



### Lot and Quercy Business Directory

Every day, hundreds of people view our pages searching for houses, holidays, local tradesmen and other service providers. If you have a Lot and Quercy related product or service you can add a basic listing to our Business Directory completely FREE. If you're looking for something, we already have more than 200 local businesses listed.. [more...](#)



### Preparing Your Pool for Winter

Preparing your pool for the winter is an essential task that will keep the pool and equipment in good condition ready for quickly re-opening the pool in the spring. Here is a guide to the procedure that should be followed... [more...](#)



### Dog of the Month - Introducing Sparky

Meet little Sparky a very small terrier/Yorkie cross found lost and wondering after a Summer fair. All attempts to find out where he comes from have proved fruitless so we are now looking for a new home for him...[more...](#)



### Reiki Treatment and Training in South West France

Reiki France is a Complementary Health Practice based in the Lot and Quercy region and rapidly becoming the premiere site in South West France for Reiki training and treatment. Reiki is a completely safe, natural, holistic treatment, simple, non-invasive and extremely powerful. [more...](#)



### Featured Properties for Sale - Gîte Complexes

We have a good selection of successful Gîte businesses for sale in the Lot and Quercy region. One of these delightful properties could be just the opportunity you've been looking for... [more...](#)



### Rey Immobilier - Property Sales in the Quercy

So, you've decided you want to buy – a permanent residence, a holiday home, a DIY project, somewhere you can relax with your friends and family, the dream house you've always wanted. You need look no further than Rey Immobilier to get you started. [more...](#)



### What's New on the Discussion Forum?

Our Forum now has over 700 articles and more than 100 active users. Our FREE classified ads section is proving popular as a way of selling of those unwanted items that may be of use to other English speaking people in the region. Why not register and post a message?... [more...](#)



### Properties For Sale

Looking for a dream home in the Lot and Quercy? Start your search here for properties in the Lot, Lot et Garonne and Tarn et Garonne regions of France. Across this region the database contains over 250 properties and land for sale. With land prices starting at 15,000 euros and properties from 45,000, a place in the sun could be cheaper than you'd think. [more...](#)

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