

**FONTEVRAUD L'ABBAYE - 49590**  
**(14 kms from Saumur - D147)**

**Some key places to visit in the lovely village of Fontevraud.**



The \* Abbaye Royale \* is clearly the jewel in the crown. Built in the 12<sup>th</sup> century as a monastery/nunnery, the abbey is steeped in history and legend. Napoleon turned it into one of the harshest prisons in France and so it remained for 200 years. Now it is a vibrant cultural centre programming an eclectic range of art forms from music - to film – to the visual arts. It also has some very pretty gardens, one of them dedicated to Alienor d'Aquitaine, wife of Henry II who are both buried at the abbey. Tel +33 (0)2 41 51 71 37 / +33 (0)6 71 13 17 25, Abbaye de Fontevraud



The charming ancient church of St. Michel with its pure gold alter piece that was originally located in the Abbey along with St. Catherine's Allée are places to visit and enjoy.



**Lovoire des Roches** is well worth a short visit, as it is here in times past that the women of the village would have done their laundry. Restored in 2005, this pretty wooden structure is pleasantly situated and there is a seat where the visitor can rest and reflect upon by gone days whilst perhaps enjoying a sandwich that they have purchased from the nearby Boulangerie. Just across the road is a 12<sup>th</sup> century well

The local cemetery is also an interesting place to visit. Here can be seen both ancient and more recent tombstones in the shadow of the abbey. Many heroes are buried here as witnessed by the numerous references to the \* **Légion d'Honneur** \*.

Fontevraud boasts plenty of scenic walks including a huge, majestic forest that skirts the village behind the abbey.

There is also an Antiquarian bookshop, a harp and lute maker, two excellent Boulangeries, and a epicerie, a hair salon Chez Dominique. Another highlight is the \* **Savonnerie Artisanale** \* 'Martin de Candre' a wonderful, unique place filled from top to bottom with soaps and essential oils. These are soaps in their purest form, 100% vegetal with no synthetic additives used.

There are numerous places to eat and drink in Fontevraud including the hotel La Croix Blanche, and the award winning restaurant La Licorne. The latter is a romantic, gastronomic treat of a restaurant owned and run by Fabrice Bretel.



There is even an English style tearoom, **Chez Teresa/A Taste d'Angleterre** [www.chezteresa.com](http://www.chezteresa.com) in close proximity to the abbey where the speciality of the house is Victoria Sandwich, Scones, Cream and Jam. Light lunches are also available, and by reservation, evening meals. Chez Teresa is open every afternoon from Mid-day until 18hrs – or later if you book an evening meal. Chez Teresa also has a Brocante, and a Chambre d'Hotes. In addition, creative writing workshops are available for those wishing to become involved in an exciting project aimed at creating an on-line anthology exploring historical themes'. For more information telephone Teresa or Tony +33 (0)241 51 21 24 or if you prefer, you can simply email [dolan.teresa@googlemail.com](mailto:dolan.teresa@googlemail.com) Closed Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Fontevraud has its own local language school with a difference, 'Parfum de France' ([www.parfumdefrance-fr.com](http://www.parfumdefrance-fr.com) where it is possible to learn a language combined with a cultural subject. There is also a delightful gite on site, where students and

holidaymakers can stay for short or long breaks. Telephone Sylvie Reeves on + 33 (0) 2 41 51 78 74 for more information.