

## THE HISTORY OF VÉZAC



4 SAINT-URBAIN CHURCH



5 MANOIR DE SOULVIGNAC

Vézac is situated on the right bank of the River Dordogne. It is a dispersed settlement with some housing in the Pontou valley to the west and others spreading up to the limestone hillsides to the north-west and east.

Man has lived here since **prehistoric times**. There are two negative handprints, attributed to the Gravettian era (-25,000yrs) in a cave known as Grotte du Roc. A **dolmen**, shared with Vitrac, called the devil's stone, is proof of a Neolithic presence. A **late Bronze Age** site has



DRY STONE HUTS

been discovered in the Malartrie cliff, near to La Roque-Gageac.

During the turbulent Middle Ages an 11<sup>th</sup> century defence tower was built at Soulvignac, not far from the Saint-Urbain church. Then in the Hundred Years War (1377-1453), the fortress of **Marqueyssac**, built on a rocky spur, had to confront Castelnau opposite, and its powerful neighbour, Beynac. The conflict between the Kings of France and England left the country in poverty. Conditions improved from the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, when the Manoir de **Rochecourbe** was built. Then the Wars of Religion, at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century brought violence and destruction.

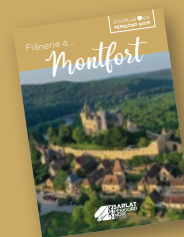
As well as rural development, there was industrial activity with **water mills** in the Pontou valley. In 1882, the **railway station** opened. Passengers and freight trains helped develop Vézac's economy.

Today, the tobacco fields have disappeared, replaced by the development of duck farming. There are still **dry-stone huts** scattered across the landscape. 44 were listed in 1974. Vézac is classified **ZPPAUP** (Protected architectural, urban and landscape heritage zone), **ZNIEFF** (Natural zone of ecological, fauna and flora interest) and **Natura 2000** on the hillsides. There are also protected wetlands.

## NOT TO BE MISSED NEAR VÉZAC

- > Vézac – Boucle des Moulins – 8.9 km topo-fiche n°1 walk taking in the mills. (You can visit Moulins de l'Evêque and du Trel)
- > The Dordogne Valley châteaux by bike 40kms in total (classified very difficult) Vézac to St-Vincent-de-Cosse via Beynac-et-Cazenac
- > Canoe trips on the Dordogne with one of the village's hire companies
- > Visit the Marqueyssac Gardens
- > Les chemins des Meuniers the Millers' Ways in the Treuil and Pontou to Vitrac valleys, for families with Randoland leaflet and Fun walks for young and old, **Balades ludiques pour petits et grands**
- > Enjoy the beaches of Malartrie or Magnanas near La Roque-Gageac

Information and leaflets available at Sarlat, La Roque-Gageac and Beynac Tourist Offices and at [www.sarlat-tourisme.com](http://www.sarlat-tourisme.com)



### PÉRIGORD NOIR FAVOURITES

is a collection of strolls around Sarlat villages (available now; A stroll around Montfort (Vitrac commune)

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### SOURCE MATERIAL :

- > R. BONDONNEAU, F. BROUSSE, M. JACOBSON, "Vézac", Les petits guides Périgord Patrimoines, 2009
- > Marie CHAUSSIVERT, "Les églises médiévales du canton de Sarlat", Bulletin from the Périgord History and Archaeology Society, 2008 n°CXXX, p.478-490

### PHOTO CREDITS :

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DON'T HESITATE TO LEAVE  
YOUR COMMENTS AFTER  
YOUR VISIT TO VÉZAC



Conception réalisation : [comtogether.fr](http://comtogether.fr)

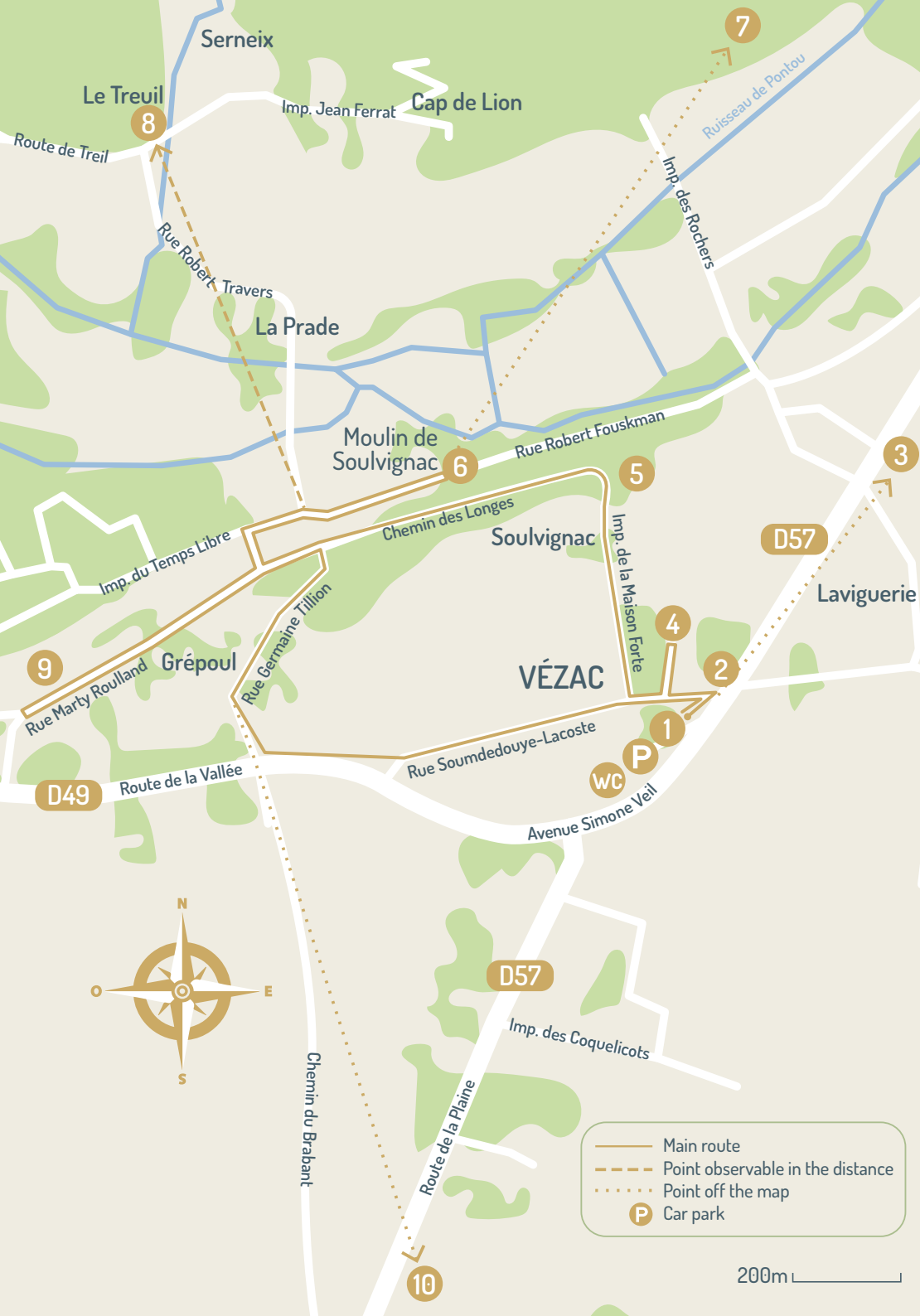
PÉRIGORD NOIR  
FAVOURITES ♥

A stroll around...

Vézac







## WALKING CIRCUIT

DISTANCE: 2.8KM

### 1 PLACE RÉGIS MAGNOL

➤ Turn left at the junction of the D57 and C303 and park at the Marie and school car park at Place Régis Magnol. Leave the car park and stop at Place Jean Moulin.

### 2 WAR MEMORIAL

The **memorial** at the junction commemorates soldiers and Resistance members from Vézac who died in the 1914-1918 and 1939-1945 wars.

➤ From the junction, look north and to the right of the D57 to see the Manoir de Rochecourbe.

### 3 MANOIR DE ROCHECOURBE

The **main building** with a **tower** on the front housing a stone spiral staircase was built at the foot of the hillside at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The windows date from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.



➤ Go along the Rue Soummedouye-Lacoste and turn right on to Allée Abel Laviale. Go to the church.

### 4 SAINT-URBAIN CHURCH

The **Romanesque style** church stands alone in the heart of the valley, built on a cruciform plan. Its architecture has seen many changes over the years. It was listed as a Historic Monument (other than the bell tower) on February 15, 1974. It was recently restored.

The **choir**, with a flat ended apse is barrel vaulted and dates from the 11<sup>th</sup> century, according to Marie Chaussivert. The chancel arch between the nave and the choir is said to be 12<sup>th</sup> century, the south chapel portal (end 15<sup>th</sup> century), the portal in the southern wall of the nave is Renaissance style (16<sup>th</sup> century), and the interior has rich baroque furnishings. The north chapel and the bell tower are 19<sup>th</sup> century.

➤ Go back to rue Soummedouye-Lacoste and walk along until you reach Impasse de la Maison Forte. Walk up it to Manoir de Soulvignac.

### 5 MANOIR DE SOULVIGNAC

The manor has a collection of impressive stone buildings and large wooden barns with spacious courtyards, surrounded by farmland. A millstone marks the entrance. On the north side, the fortified buildings have arrow slits and the tower has a raised door for access to the upper floors (11<sup>th</sup> century). There is an English cross-shaped arrow slit (Hundred Years War) in the private courtyard to the south. The property belonged to the **Solminihac fiefdom** from at least as early as 1105 and was sold by them in 1605.

➤ Go down chemin des Longes behind the manor house. It becomes rue Germaine Tillon and continue on it up to the railway bridge. Cross it and turn right into rue Robert Fouskman and continue up to Moulin de Soulvignac.

### 6 MOULIN CAILLOU OU DE SOULVIGNAC

The mill originally belonged to the Manoir de Soulvignac. Mr Gallon produced **flour** there from 1922-1987, **organic** from the 1960s, for Vitagermine baby products, and two bakers, one in Bordeaux and one in the 16<sup>th</sup> arrondissement, Paris.



➤ If you look to the north you can see Moulin de l'Évêque, and you can reach it via avenue Simone Veil (D57).

### 7 MOULIN DE L'ÉVÊQUE (open to visitors)

Évêque means bishop and the mill is named after the Bishop of Sarlat. The first one arrived at the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, which is an indication of how old the mill might be. It was restored from 1994 onwards by Mr Coustaty, who produces organic flour for bakers, sold on site.



➤ Turn to walk back along Rue Robert Fouskman and stop at the junction with rue Robert Travers, which you can take to go to Moulin du Trel.

### 8 MOULIN DU TREL (open to visitors)

It is thought to date from the 12<sup>th</sup> century and would have belonged to the Lords of Beynac. It was restored by Mr Vidal from 2016 onwards and produces and sells **walnut oil**.



➤ From the junction with rue Robert Travers, continue along rue Robert Fouskman, cross the railway bridge, turn right and walk along rue Marty Roulland to the station.

### 9 GARE DE VÉZAC

From 1882 the railway station was a lively place with the comings and goings of **passengers and goods**. Cattle, fertiliser, cars (Peugeot 403, 404, 504 for Sarlat garages), tyres, wine, fish... all passed through Vézac station. It was used by the forestry company, **Souletis for wood**, first by the father and then by the son up until the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (2011). The passenger station closed in 1978. It is private.



➤ Turn back along rue Robert Fouskman and turn right onto rue Germaine Tillon. The road curves round to the right. Continue up to the hamlet of Grépoul with views of Beynac, then go towards the D49 with a view south of Fayrac, Castelnau, Lacoste and Marqueyssac châteaux.

### 10 CHÂTEAU DE MARQUEYSSAC

The château is a luxury 18<sup>th</sup> century residence with an older stair tower. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Julien de Cervel created **gardens with pruned box**. The site was restored by Kléber Roussillon and has been open to visitors since 1997 with a stunning view over the Dordogne valley.

➤ Turn left onto the D49. Cross the Place du 19 Mars 1962 and go along rue Soummedouye-Lacoste to get back to the car park.

