



Cassis

an exceptional
village

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Cassis
OFFICE DE TOURISME

www.ot-cassis.com

A few historical details

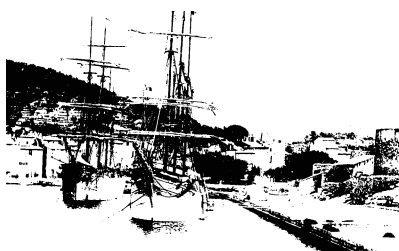
Cassis is mentioned on Roman maps under the name of "Carsicis Portus / Cassitis". The Roman Harbour, though, seemed to disappear in the second half of the 6th century A.D. and it was not until 1214 that mention was again made of the town. The townspeople then lived around the castle. In the Middle Ages, the town belonged to the Baux family. It was an outlying parish of Roquefort in 1443 and was assigned to the Bishops of Marseille in the 15th century.

The Harbour prospered in the 17th century (pop. 3,000) but then went into decline (pop. 2,092 in 1765 and 2,080 in 1851). Nevertheless the town still has a few features dating from the 16th and 17th centuries (doors and windows)..

The chapel dedicated to Our Lady of Hope was built in 1700. St. Michael's Church, built in 1860, replaced a 17th-century place of worship.

In the 19th century, increasing numbers of quarries were opened to supply Cassis stone. Vineyards were extended then tourism developed with the arrival of the railway.

Source: update of the archaeological map, 1996 - Drac - ZPPAUP archaeological inventory.



A deserving heritage

The historic heart of Cassis has its own very special identity and character, best appreciated in its individual districts i.e. the port, the fishermen's district and its maze of alleyways and steps, and the bourgeois district with its superb 16th and 17th-century houses. A walk is a "must" for anybody wishing to see the many interesting buildings and details of the architecture.

PORTS

Can there be anybody who has not seen or heard about Cassis' famous port, its pavement cafes and its convivial atmosphere, whatever the time of day, or night? It's colourful, full of life, and bustling every day when the fishing boats return with their catches.

In the summer, the cafes' customers tend to seek out the cool shade of pergolas or plane trees; in winter, they appreciate a few moments of warmth from the gentle rays of the sun. Its "pointus", its traditional fishing smacks, play a significant part in adding to the charm so often attributed to this town.

Cap Canaille, the hills and the sea form a backdrop for a vast stage set with the harbour acting as the orchestra pit!



The harbour caters for three sectors - leisure yachts for which there are 500 moorings including 30 for visitors, the fishing fleet and the boats that take people for mini-cruises through the inlets. On the pedestrian quaysides are numerous restaurants and small shops open all year. It's very pleasant to go for a stroll here or stop for a break at a pavement café.

There has been a noticeable increase in the number of cruise ships travelling around the Mediterranean..

In Port-Miou, it seems that you will never reach the head of the 1.5 kilometre inlet and the 500 yachts and fishing smacks seem to form a guard of honour. Or is it just a dream?

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HISTORIC TOWN CENTER

A superb historic town center, regularly restored : 22 streets were entirely repaved indeed, in 2012, in beautiful light golden stones. The village strolls along the port and round the Victor Hugo street and shady squares. Narrow streets, alleyways, flights of steps, some beautiful houses and fountains are all part of Cassis' history and it is history that comes to the fore as soon as you begin your stroll.

CASTLE (or Castrum de Carsisis)

It is said to have been built in the Middle Ages and to have belonged to the Baux family in 1381. Its rectilinear outline with square towers marks out a fortified town with an area of 4,850 sq. metres.

It dominates the town, "perched" on a cliff of blue Cretaceous marl, and is a very interesting geological site. It's a private residence (some visits are organized during winter, on booking) providing luxury...

TOWN HALL *Place Baragnon*

This superb 17th-century mansion (built circa 1625) was commissioned by Désiré de Moustiers, former Consul of Marseille. Its courtyard is paved with pebbles, it has a magnificent 17th-century staircase, a great drawing room with a contemporary fireplace and traces of a mediaeval building in the basement, visible under the glass pavers in the reception area.



1. The castle.
2. The Baragnon Fountain.
3. The Town Hall from Place Baragnon.

THE "CASSIS HOUSE" *Place Baragnon*

This 18th-century priest's house now houses the museum of popular arts and traditions (*Musée municipal Méditerranéen des Arts et Traditions Populaires*).

FORMER TOWN HALL *Rue Séverin Icard*

Dating from the 17th century, this has been home to Cassis' associations since October 2003. Note its huge, listed staircase.

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THE MASK HOUSE (MAISON DES MASCARONS) *5, rue Thiers*

Typical of 18th-century mansions, it complies with the Rule of Three (3 storeys, 3 windows). The impost is made of wrought iron.

CHEMIN DES ORATOIRES

There are still nine shrines along this path.

CHURCH *Place Saint-Michel*

This is Cassis' third church. Built between 1859 and 1867, it was dedicated to Our Lady of the Assumption, St. Roch and St. Michael. It was designed in the neo-Romanesque style with three aisles and is built mainly of Cassis stone.

STATUE OF CALENDAL *At the end of Quai des Moulins, near the lighthouse*

Calendal, a small-time anchovy fisherman from Cassis and the subject of a poem of the same name by Frédéric Mistral, has been honoured since the rebuilding of his Cassis stone statue in 2000. It was crafted by Jean-Loup Bouvier, after Cornu's model made in 1930.



FISHERIES TRIBUNAL *Quai Barthélemy*

The town obtained the right to its own tribunal in 1791 after a struggle against control from Marseille. The mesh-fronted niche on the front contains a statue of St. Peter that is carried in procession at the traditional Festival of Fishermen and the Sea at the end of June.

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18th-CENTURY FOUNTAIN *Place de la République*

It stands on the site of an old royal fountain and was the inspiration for Frédéric Mistral's famous statement that, "*Qu'a vist Paris, se noun a vist Cassis, a ren vist*" ("He who has seen Paris but has not seen Cassis, has seen nothing").

VILLA ARIANE *Avenue Emmanuel Agostini*

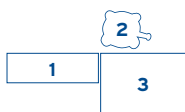
An elegant 19th-century mansion that once belonged to a winegrowing family. Greek-style garden with amphitheatre and lily pond. It houses the Town Council's delightful library, which includes an interesting collection of regional works.

CASSIS STONE

For many years, a quarry was worked in the west end of Cassis, producing hard white freestone that was used to build the Rove Tunnel and some of the quaysides on the Suez Canal. The quarry business shut down but master stonemasons still work the site, making Provencal sinks and decorative objects that can be found at Bazarettes beside the harbour.

Bazarettes
4, rue du Jeune Anarchasis

Atelier Lombardi
06 72 50 83 55
(articles on sale
also in the Tourist Office)



1. The Villa Ariane.
2. A Cassis stone mortar.
3. The fountain on Place de la République.