




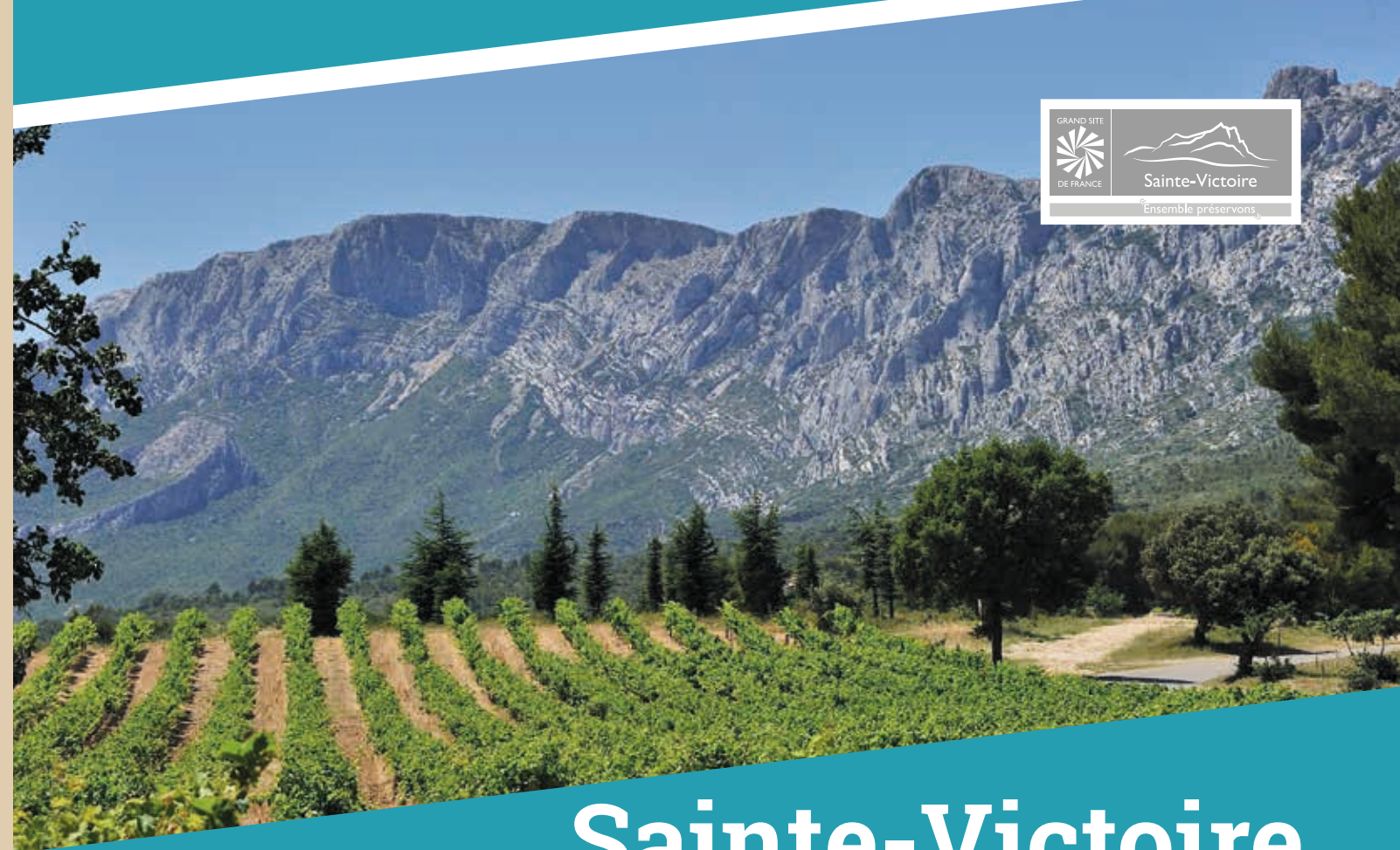




| Information about the mountain | |
|---|---|
| Name of the mountain | Sainte-Victoire |
| Country | France |
| Region | Sud Provence Côte d'Azur |
| Altitude | 1.011m |
| Surface area | 34.500 ha |
| Surface of protected area | 23.300ha |
| Name of local organization in charge of management | Métropole Aix Marseille Provence |
| Number of municipalities | 21: Beaucueil, Aix-en-Provence, Le Tholonnet, Saint Antonin sur Bayon, Puylobier, Rousset, Châteauneuf-le-Rouge, Saint Marc Jaumegarde, Vauvenargues, Saint-Paul-lès-Durance, Peyrolles, Jouques, Venelles, Meyrargues, Trets, Peynier, Fuveau, Meyreuil, Gardanne, Mimet, Gréasque. |
| Institutional recognition | Registered Sites by ministerial order: 15/09/83 and 23/08/13 Natura 2000 (FR9301605) Network: - PSIC: 31/1298 - SIC: 19/07/06 - ZSC: 26/06/14 Natural national reserve: 01/03/94 Awarded Grand Site de France: 17/06/04 and 28/01/11 |
|  | |
| Contact details | |
| Website | www.grandsitesainte victoire.com & www.ampmetropole.fr |
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| Project details | |
| Project web-site & social media | www.emblematic.interreg-med.eu & www.emblematic-med.eu  @EMbleMatIc.MED  @EMbleMatIc_MED  @emblematic_med  EMbleMatIc |



Sainte-Victoire

Cezanne's landscape, land of freedom, poetry, nature, or resourcing, Sainte-Victoire is also the most elegant landmark in Aix-en-Provence's countryside.

This majestic mineral monument stands at the heart of a large natural reserve, nearby the metropole of Aix-Marseille-Provence. Celebrated by all inhabitants of Provence and among them the illustrious painter Paul Cezanne, it has become a cultural symbol of worldwide significance. This real mountain is not only ideal for climbing and hiking activities : its wildness and isolation enhance its very strong spiritual dimension. Sainte-Victoire is nested in the heart of an authentic and alive Provence, with an abundance of typical Mediterranean scenery: rural farm, vineyards, olive trees, pines and evergreen oak forests. Surrounding this mountain is one of the best ways to make the experience of Provence way of life.



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Proud Local People

All over the world, Sainte-Victoire is the famous mountain celebrated by the painter Cezanne. For the inhabitants of Aix-en-Provence and its area, first, it is theirs. It is the place they look at to know how will be the weather, where they go for a walk or a hike, paragliding, climb, paint, hunt, or just to resource. Therefore, it is easy to understand that this mountain symbolically belongs both, to all and each of them. Each person has an intimate link with the Sainte-Victoire, a strong feeling of appropriation. This is certainly one of the reasons why, as long as Sainte-Victoire is loved, people are ready to share it.

Reputation

Sainte-Victoire, elegant wave, rising in the deep blue sky. Its white cliffs, contrasting with the green of pine trees and scrubland growing among in the ochre land of the foothills, provide a mesmerizing tableau for painting enthusiasts. The mountain is a wall to climb, 200 kilometers of marked trails to go, a sky to fly, a trophy to win for all athletes. Alpine and Mediterranean plants mix with it, 130 species of birds nest here, and half of the butterfly species living in France are found there. It is a fantastic playground for the botanists, ornithologists and insects specialists.

Legends and Myths

Ancient myths and legends about Sainte-Victoire have been slowly forgotten. Nowadays, if some mountains have gods, Sainte-Victoire has Men, as a modern legend. It is indeed a fragile reserve of nature, a precious place of conviviality, the symbolic property of more than a million people per year. And this is how the real legend is the story of men and the rock, the moments spent in the countryside, trying to capture the colours, the shadows of a sunset... Who wants to understand the legend of this mountain must remember that it is both small enough to be painted on a canvas and high enough to make people renounce to reach its summit. The legend is written now.

Power of Inspiration

Sainte-Victoire has been painted and photographed thousands of times, springing like an island, offering several profiles. Talented artists as well as anonymous try to fix a light, a shape, an impression. Among the most famous, beside Cezanne, Wassily Kandinsky, Yves Brayer, Bernard Buffet. Literature and cinema also took interest in Sainte-Victoire. Jacqueline de Romilly, member of the Académie Française, wrote “Sur les Chemins de Sainte-Victoire” (2002) where she tells her emotional experience walking on Cézanne’s steps. Sainte-Victoire is also the character of two movies, “Near death experience” (2013) and “Cézanne et moi” (2014).

Picturesque Landscape

Lights shadows, textures, colours and shapes are the subtiles ingredients Sainte-Victoire gorgeous landscape. On the mountain, the illumination of the rising sun and the sunset accentuate the relief in such a point that it sometimes looks like a crumpled newspaper. On the foothills, the cultures of wheat, vine, olive trees – the Mediterranean trilogy –, combined with the velvet of the scrubland, compose a beautiful mosaïc. At the outposts of the mountain, the “Cengle” is a plateau which seems symmetrical horizontally of Sainte-Victoire. This curved slab shapes a belvedere which dominates an agricultural valley. Topped by a limestone bar, it runs down in a gentle ochre clay slope where kermes oaks draw a dark green carpet.

Particular Ecosystem

Sainte-Victoire and Concors are a natural environment consisting of a variety of unique wooded, agricultural and mountainous landscapes, which harbour a precious biodiversity, incorporated into the European Natura 2000 network. On the edge of this mountain climate, cliffs and scrubland, natural grassland or forest constitute natural habitats in which both alpine and mediterranean species live together. If 21 species of plants and 32 of birds are protected, the symbolic character of the natural heritage of Sainte-Victoire is translated by the presence of the eagle Aquila Fasciata. And the geologic reserve of Roques Haute protects one of the biggest deposits of dinosaurs eggs in the world.

Mediterranean Cultural Identity

Sainte-Victoire mountain enjoys a great sunshine and an abundance of local products such as wine, olive and goat cheese, ... In its surrounding typical villages, traditional events are organised all over the year celebrating them. But more than Mediterranean, Sainte-Victoire is more specifically defined by its “Provence” character : the one who only looks at the landscape will find the cliché of Pagnol (the most famous provencal writer of the XX century), mistral (wind), blue sky, petanque (traditional popular game), pastis (aniseed taste alcohol) and the sound of cicadas. Whoever really wants to live Sainte-Victoire will simply immerse himself in the real experience of meeting the inhabitants and producers of its territory.

Sustainability and Anthropogenic Environment

Outstanding panorama, Sainte-Victoire has been preserved of major visual pollutions, infrastructures and urban developments. Here, powerful nature and cultivated fields, tells the story of men dominated by the strength of stone, struggling to tame vegetation and soils, draw the landscape. This beautiful and pure picture also testifies of commitment of the inhabitants in preserving the beauty by authentic practices in a loved land. Visitors are welcome and the best way to share their territory with the natives is to earn it. Forget driving your car, ride your bicycle, take a shuttle and you will enjoy the unexpected !

Historic Places

Sainte-Victoire has been a witness of History. There are traces of palaeontological occupation, Celto-Liguria, a chapel, Roman hydraulic installations and the Roques Hautes geological reserve which protects one of the largest deposits of dinosaur eggs in the world. Around the mountain, villages and fields of peasant miners. Men began mining coal in the sixteenth century, and it was the boom in the mining industry (XIXth century) coupled with agriculture that shaped roads and villages. The landscapes surrounding the mountain were built by men and tell their story. It is the landscape that is historical.