

Environment for Living

SERVING

THE PEOPLE

> Through its provision of local services, the Pays de Brest reaches out not only to its own population of 375 000 but well beyond to the whole of western Brittany with almost one million inhabitants.

The services linked to its urban authority role are very wide-ranging taking in education, health, local administration, culture and leisure, etc.

A SPECIAL FAMILY

ENVIRONMENT

> How many parents have not dreamt of bringing up their children in a region which simultaneously offers peace and quiet, high quality education (school results and performance ratings among the highest in France), top level health facilities and a wide range of sports and cultural venues? In the Pays de Brest, where accommodation and daily living costs are also among the lowest in France, this dream is a reality.



Environment for Living



CULTURE - THE AVANT-GARDE

AND KEEPING FAITH WITH TRADITION

> Life on one of the western promontories of Europe provides a breadth of vision and openness to world changes and universal values. Culture in the Pays de Brest ranges comfortably from traditional roots to avant-garde. Discovering the new and avant-garde is what Le Quartz is all about. This national venue stages top shows and provides a place for artists-in-residence to put on their latest work. Discoveries wait to be made too at the Cabaret Vauban, loved by spectators and performers alike, not to mention Les Jeudis du Port, a series of outdoor music and arts events every Thursday in summer at the commercial harbour, and at Le Fourneau, a venue for new street theatre. More avant-garde highlights feature in the Astropolis festival, dazzling proof of the vitality of the current electronic music scene, and at the new contemporary music centre, the only set-up of its kind in Brittany designed to provide musicians with the best rehearsal and broadcasting facilities. Staying with the avant-garde, contemporary art finds a pied-à-terre in the city with exhibitions at the Passerelle arts centre and the museum. Fountains by Marta Pan feature in rue de Siam and structures by Niels Udo in Parc d'Eole alongside sculptures by Van Thienen and Mark de Suvero.

It is not by chance that the Faculty of Arts, housed in a building of bold design by architect Fuksas in the centre of Brest, includes the Centre for Breton and Celtic research. Outward looking and drawing on many different sources, Breton culture is part of daily life. The Brittany film library and its collection of ethnological documents, unique in France, are by choice based in Brest. Several music schools provide young people with an introduction to traditional music as represented by Kevrenn Saint Marc and celebrated at the annual Printemps des sonneurs, a grand procession of over 400 musicians playing traditional Breton instruments.

In the Pays de Brest, the beauty of the natural environment, mildness of the climate, purity of the sea air, level of personal safety and unique, vibrant cultural identity guarantee a rare quality of life.

WALTER ROEST

IS DIRECTOR
OF THE MARINE GEOSCIENCES DEPARTMENT,
PART OF IFREMER OCEAN RESEARCH CENTRE.

Originally from the Netherlands, he worked in Canada before coming to settle in Brest at the beginning of 2003.

“What attracted me to Brest? I am a marine geophysicist and within this specialised field you can count on the fingers of one hand the institutes around the world of the quality of Ifremer. So, when a job came up, I didn’t hesitate... Living here I just admire the thousand and one forms the clouds can take although what strikes me most of all is the intensity of the light. You can also appreciate the beauty of the landscape and the richness of the historical heritage as for example when standing in the middle of the ruined abbey on the Pointe Saint-Mathieu. It is an easy city to live in and well served by public transport. The proximity of the airport – only 6 miles from where I live – is also very useful. On the leisure side, for my 3 children who love sailing and football, it’s ideal. So we’re regular visitors to the marina and Océanopolis.”

Christophe AGNUS

Freelance journalist

After 17 years in Paris I decided to come back to Brest to give my children the best surroundings in which to grow up – clean air, water-based sports, low crime rate, high standard of schools... For my wife and myself it also provided an opportunity to escape the pollution in Paris and to change our lifestyle. After ten years at L’Express and five years running my own magazine, I wanted a change of pace and that’s what I found in Brest. Even though I continue to work a lot, my office is five minutes from the house and I can see my children as they grow up. In addition, I wanted to launch a magazine about the sea, Nautilus, and Brest seemed to me the ideal place to do so given its maritime and scientific environment. Lastly, the frequency of TGV trains and flights lets me easily make day return trips to Paris even though I can’t wait to see the introduction of the fastest TGV trains on our route...



OFFICE TO OFF-DUTY IN TWO MINUTES

> With sailing or golf after work and skating or horse riding after class...every evening feels like the weekend! Sports and leisure activities demanding the great outdoors are closer here than anywhere else to the office doorstep. Water sports reign supreme all year round. Brest bay’s particular location enables all types of craft to be safely sailed throughout the year. Sailing clubs offer the chance to discover and practise sea skills from beginner to top level whether windsurfing, yachting, kayaking or rowing. Those interested in other sports find opportunities to practise in natural, unspoilt locations with plenty of facilities spread throughout the area. Proof of this lies in the extremely active network of sports associations covering surfing to rock climbing, sand yachting to paragliding and golf to track cycling. Around one hundred sports are practised in the Pays de Brest.

A large number of sports venues exist in Brest including stadiums and gyms as well as specific facilities such as a new skating rink, swimming pools, velodromes, mountain biking trails, golf courses, horse riding centres, climbing walls, flying club, skate parks, go-kart track, shooting ranges, etc. Leisure boating activities are grouped together under the “Station Nautique” label (water sports resort label). 10 water sports centres are situated in the Pays de Brest.



LANDSCAPE AND DISCOVERY

> Round every sand dune, every bay with its hidden flotilla of moored boats and every cliff towering above emerald seas lies a different world waiting to be explored. The coastal paths, a walkers' paradise, tell the story of the coastline's geology, flora and fauna.

At the mercy of strong seas and winds, the inhabited islands of Molène and Ouessant have a gentle side too. Viewed as mysterious by mainlanders, the islands are a focus for imagined utopias.

Beaches unfurl a vast expanse of inviting sand which is perfect – depending on the season – for water sports or for watching numerous species of birds around the Iroise sea. Long inlets of sea known as “abers” conceal quiet waters enclosed by greenery and encourage slow pottering in boats.

Brest bay with its thousand and one sheltered creeks enables novice sailors to weigh anchor in complete safety. Its attractive harbours provide a place to meet a few fishermen unloading shellfish in winter and discreet yachtsmen seeking out beautiful places to moor in summer.

On cliff ledges nesting birds and rare flowers add life and colour to the wild beauty of the landscape. In the Pays de Brest nature and fresh experiences go hand in hand...



THE MARITIME TRADITION

AND A TASTE FOR CELEBRATION

> The sea is a closely felt presence, its call constantly heard. The marine discovery park, Océanopolis, opens up a vast window on the marine environment and its flora and fauna. The major rallies of tall ships from Brest 92 to Brest 2004 reveal something too of what appeals about Breton people – their culture of the sea and their sense of celebration.



AIR QUALITY

> Registering a French air quality index of below 5 on all days throughout the year indicating an absence of atmospheric pollution, the air off the open ocean has beneficial properties.

WATER QUALITY

> Under the terms of a bay-wide contract, the Pays de Brest local authorities have established major wastewater collection and treatment facilities. The aim is to ensure that, by preserving the outstanding natural heritage of Brest bay and its catchment basin, all income-generating activities such as tourism, agriculture, fishing and industry can continue to co-exist alongside recreational and outdoor activities.

A MILD MARITIME CLIMATE

> Lying on the western fringe of Europe, the Pays de Brest enjoys a temperate climate characterised by a limited temperature range. Winters are mild with no prolonged periods of cold, frost or deep snow as the ocean plays a part in regulating temperatures. Nor are summers subject to excessive heat waves. As for rainfall, there is regular precipitation throughout the year although none is significant especially along the coastal fringes which receive scarcely half the rainfall.

CULTURE

Le Quartz Arts and conference centre attracting 200 000 spectators per year

Océanopolis Science and technology centre, leisure facility and showcase for a leading European oceanography site with 450 000 visitors per year

Brest municipal library 512 000 documents, 27 000 readers, 1 460 000 loans per year

In association with Ifremer, the university and the naval department of history, Brest with its municipal libraries is a specialised sea and oceanology resource centre linked to France's national library.

Centre for contemporary music Rehearsal studios and workshops for amplified music, recording studios and stage production (seating for 500 and 1 200)

Breton centre for popular arts Teaching of traditional Breton music and dance

Brittany film library 10 000 films of all formats, collection of regional ethnology documents unique in France

Passerelle Centre for contemporary art with exhibitions, events and artists' workshops aimed at involving the greatest number of participants in the contemporary creative arts scene

Museum of fine arts 300 European paintings from 17th century to present

Naval museum 51 000 visitors per year

Brest art college 235 students and 29 teaching staff

Naval department of history Library which was successor to the first naval academy founded in 1752 holding 20 000 works

Centre for Breton and Celtic research 40 lecturer/research staff of the Université de Bretagne occidentale and the CNRS with a collection of 35 000 works

State approved music school 900 pupils and 40 teachers

National college of music, dance and dramatic arts 1 200 students, 65 teaching staff and 600-seater auditorium

National botanic garden The aim of the 40-hectare garden is to identify, collect and grow rare or endangered species from around the world and in particular from island habitats.

Penfeld exhibition park Halls seating between 1 000 and 12 000

(Sting, Michel Sardou, Jean-Jacques Goldman, Renaud, Francis Cabrel, Johnny Halliday, Placebo, M, etc)

Daoulas Abbey International visitors' centre introducing civilisations and cultures with permanent exhibitions attracting 61 000 visitors per year



FESTIVALS

Les Juedis du Port – Free quayside concerts and shows drawing 235 000 spectators per year

Science and scientific leisure activities month – Highlight of the Brest calendar with scientific culture topping the bill

European festival of short films - Amateur theatre festival - Kann al loar (Landerneau Celtic festival) - Pays d'Iroise Celtic festival

Astropolis (electronic music and arts) - Grande marée (storytelling festival) - Longueur d'ondes (radio and listening festival)

Carnets d'ici et d'ailleurs (travel journal book fair) - Atlantique Jazz festival

MÉDIA

2 quality daily newspapers – Le Télégramme de Brest and Ouest France

12 local radio stations

SPORT

Skating rink, flying club, velodromes and golf courses

Brest municipal water sports centre Fleet of 450 boats accommodating a total of 700 and the biggest water sports centre in France

9 other water sports centres in the Pays de Brest

AWARDS

Les Crocodiles de l'Elorn, leading French windsurfing club, won a gold medal in the Athens Olympics.

The Stade Brestois football club has moved up this season to the second league.

In basketball, Etendard de Brest has signed up for the Pro B championships.

SPORTING EVENTS

Week of speed sailing (sailing and the latest technology) - National sprint trophy - French sailing championships

Le Figaro race - Multihull Grand Prix - International tennis tournament (ATP tour)

Footpaths (km)1 000

Social/educational facilities50

Museums, folk museums23

Libraries50

Cinemas30

Music schools15

Choirs15

Swimming pools9

Golf courses4

Water sports centres10

Horse riding centres16

CONTACTS UTILES

ASSOCIATION
OF PAYS DE BREST
COMMUNITY COUNCILS
+33 (0)2 98 33 51 43

LE QUARTZ
+33 (0)2 98 33 70 70
lequartz@lequartz.com

Océanopolis
+33 (0)2 98 34 40 40
oceanopolis@oceanopolis.com

BREST
LOCAL TOURIST OFFICE
+33 (0)2 98 44 24 96