

Notre patrimoine a de l'avenir

Doué-la-Fontaine

Doué, from darkness to light

Circuits of the heritage

Discovery booklet



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régional
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DOUÉ-LA-FONTAINE

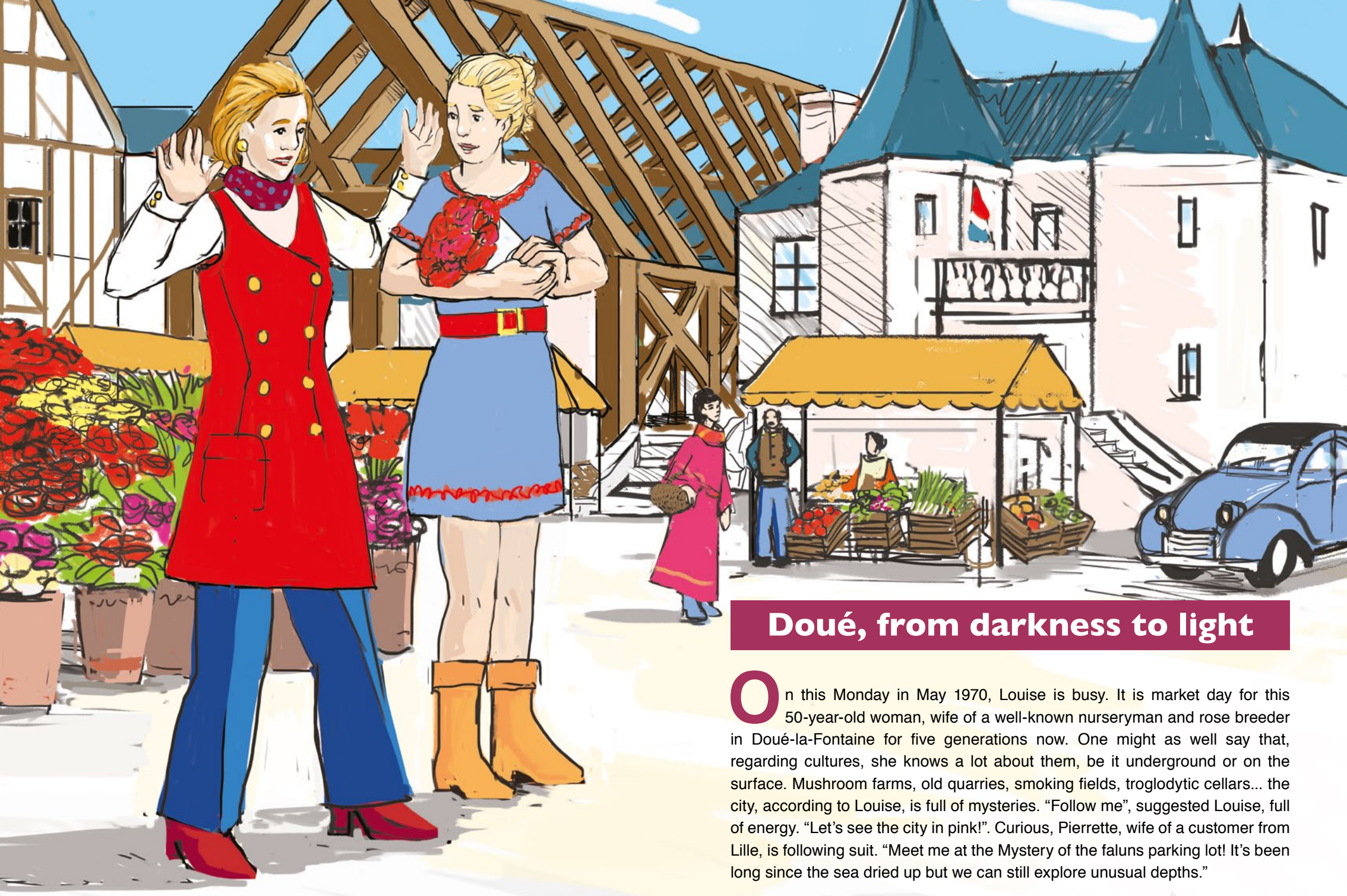
Doué, from darkness to light

Lenght: 4,3 km - About 1h30

Go to the departure station and follow these markers...



Stop at each station number and let yourself be guided!



Doué, from darkness to light

On this Monday in May 1970, Louise is busy. It is market day for this 50-year-old woman, wife of a well-known nurseryman and rose breeder in Doué-la-Fontaine for five generations now. One might as well say that, regarding cultures, she knows a lot about them, be it underground or on the surface. Mushroom farms, old quarries, smoking fields, troglodytic cellars... the city, according to Louise, is full of mysteries. "Follow me", suggested Louise, full of energy. "Let's see the city in pink!". Curious, Pierrette, wife of a customer from Lille, is following suit. "Meet me at the Mystery of the faluns parking lot! It's been long since the sea dried up but we can still explore unusual depths."

The night gardeners

The Mystery of the faluns parking

“Aren't you claustrophobic, Pierrette? Perfect! I'm going to teach you the weird job of a mushroom grower. As a matter of fact, in the 19th century, we realised that our old quarries were suitable for growing mushrooms of Paris: darkness, humidity and constant temperature, everything was set for a successful growth. Here is the director of Blanchaud's establishments, who will surely enlighten us on this issue, if I may say so...

- Hello, ladies! We have been using the 500 halls of this vast quarry since 1960. A real city under the city! It is a little chilly, that's why there are oil boilers and stretched tarpaulins. We cultivate on earthen wheels, which we gradually replace with more functional wooden crates. We make our compost on site, using horse manure. And the picking is done using carbide lamps.”



These troglodytic cavities host mammals that give birth to their babies with heads upside down! A hint: they are cousins of the Asian flying foxes living at the Biopark of Doué-en-Anjou. What do you think these amazing animals are called?

Answer at the end of the booklet



See, smell, imagine...

◆ An underground maze

The various entries to the old quarries hide kilometres of dark galleries. They are filled with a mushroom smell and smoke from the decay of horse manure.

◆ A flame from water and stone

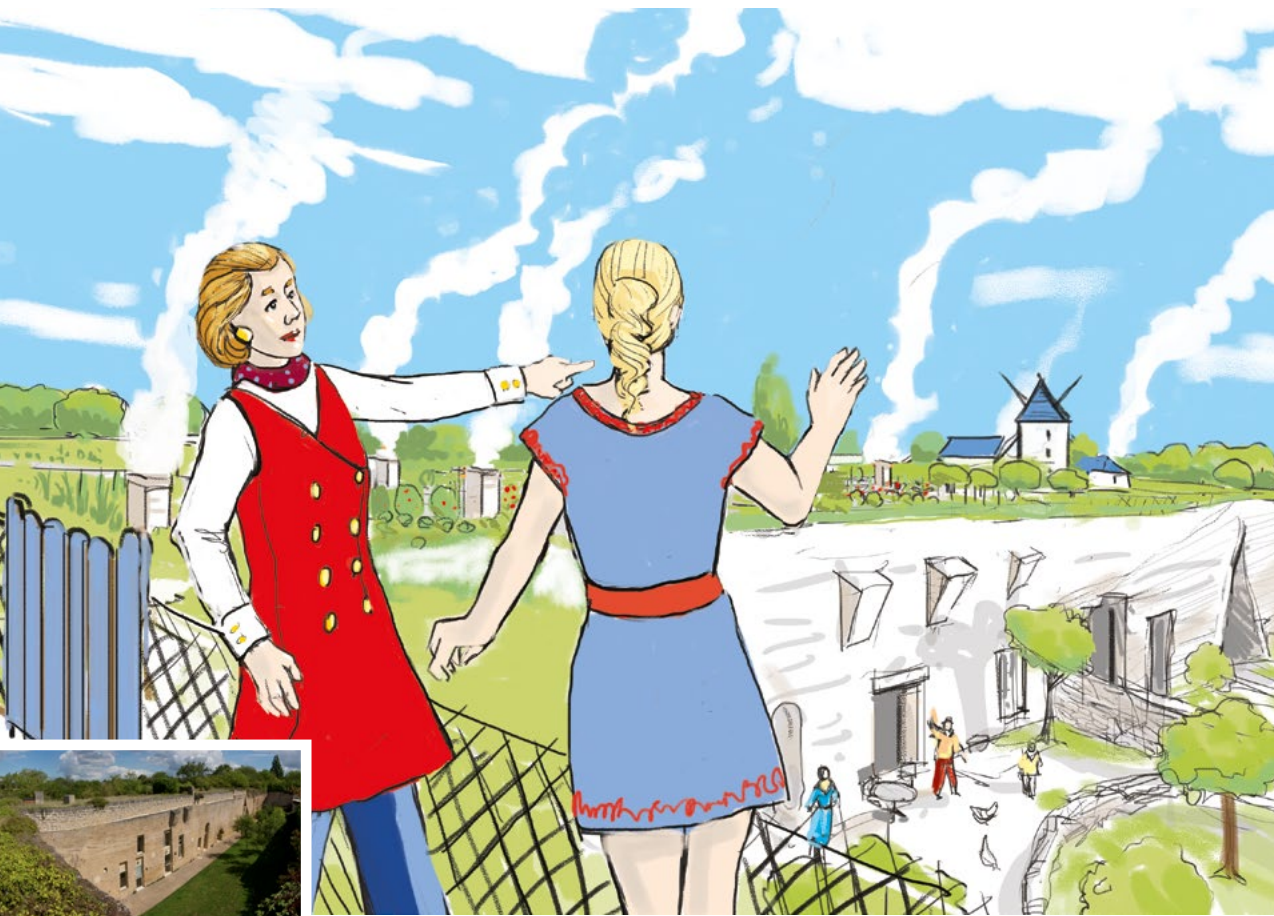
The invention of the carbide lamp (or acetylene) revolutionised the lighting of underground spaces at the end of the 19th century. These lamps have two tanks filled with water and calcium carbide each. The carbide, when mixed with water, releases a flammable gas called acetylene, which, when ignited, generates high quality light.



The smoking fields

Rue des Perrières

“ Closely examine the soil of this street, Pierrette: you can see smoking fields! These chimneys are those of the houses that were built in former quarries. In the 19th century, all the inhabitants of the Rue des Perrières lived in these troglodytic cavities. It was much cheaper than above-ground housing and much more remote. Only three families still live there. Facing south and equipped with a well, the yard gives way to a cellar surrounded by its chimney and its annexes: the henhouse, the pigsty, the press. You need to pass through a gentle slope called *courdoire* to access it. The vegetable garden is on the rooftop terrace, which also prevents rainwater infiltration. That's why in Doué, we go up to the garden! ”



Downy mildew is the most dangerous disease for winegrowers. Roses and vines are both affected. But, since the rosebush is always the first to be affected, winegrowers plant it at the foot of their vine rows as an indicator. In your opinion, is downy mildew an insect or a fungus? Circle the right answer.

Answer at the end of the booklet



A . Insect pest



B. Parasitic fungus

See, smell, imagine...

◆ The *jitte* and the table

Try to identify the many *jittes* visible on the surface. These pipes connected the surface to the wine-press cork a few metres below, in the cellars, near the wineries where the wine-making process was carried out. *Jitte* is a term from the Angevin dialect that derives from the verb *jitter* (to throw). At the time of the harvest, the grapes were directly transported to the press through it. When not used, they were shielded by a door.

◆ The sea of faluns

Ten million years ago, part of western France was covered by the falun sea. Imagine Doué as a large bay like that of Mont-Saint-Michel, in a subtropical climate. Remnants of the tides, large quantities of sediment have accumulated, which are now found in thin juxtaposed layers of varying compositions.

The Rose Days

The arenas

“ This year, in July, it will be the 11th edition of the Rose Days. One could not have dreamed of a more beautiful setting than this site to display our flowers. Just imagine! More than 500 varieties and 100,000 rose buds that are kept for several days thanks to the freshness of the large galleries. Not to mention the outstanding acoustics that are ideal for concerts, shows, high-profile fashion parades... Every year, we welcome well-known and upcoming celebrities: Aznavour, Dalida, Johnny Hallyday, France Gall... What an amazing opportunity! This event, I can feel it, is set to be a very successful one... Thousands of visitors flock there, French or foreign, for our greatest pleasure. It goes without saying that we innovate each year! ”

Over the centuries, people have used these arenas for many purposes. Find the odd one among the ones listed below.

Answer at the end of the booklet



A – Fighting arena



B – Prison



C – Military base



D – Dump



E – Theatre



F – Inn



See, smell, imagine...

◆ On a bed of roses

The Rose Days attract up to 7,000 people each day to the arenas of Doué. In addition to the powerful perfumes from the cellars, imagine the cheering of the public during night shows when comedians, entertainers and singers perform during the arenas on lively galas.

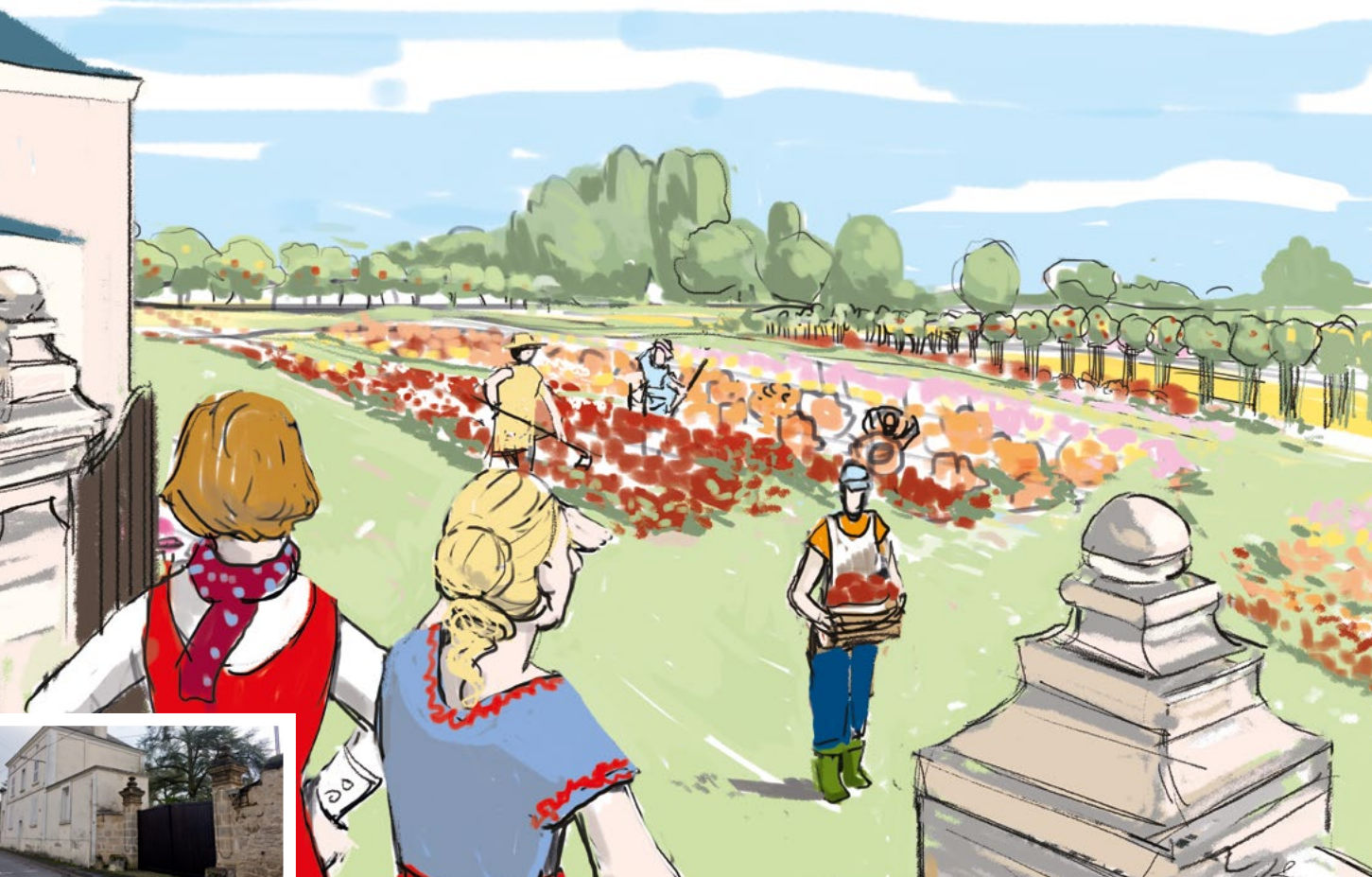
◆ The diableries of Doué

In the 16th century, the arena already had a large audience. “Diableries” were performed. These parodies of the “Passion” were among the important festive moments of the region. François Rabelais quotes them in his books “Oh que vous jouez bien, je dépiste la diablerie de Doué”, “Il n’y a rien de plus laid que le diable de Doué”...

The nurseries of Doué, a well-established history

The rose breeder homes

“ This is our house, typical of the 19th century. It was built around 1840 with stones of falun extracted underneath. Its vast cellars serve as storehouses for roses in winter. My in-laws are related to Edmé Crespin-Châtenay who set up his fruit tree nursery not far from here in 1776. One of his sons, Louis, introduced rose bush cultivation at the beginning of the next century. Its catalogue already had 150 varieties! And all the nurserymen of this era are descendants of his family, either by lineage or by marriage. Today, nearly 300 ha of land is used to grow fruit trees and roses.”



The colour of the roses may be important to the offerer. Among the examples below, can you match the feeling to the right colour of rose?

Answers at the end of the booklet



Elegance Desire Love at first sight Love Friendship Loyalty

See, smell, imagine...

◆ Rosehip, a wild rose

Wild rose bushes are very common. It is called rosehip and has single flowers with five petals. It is nicknamed “ass scratcher” because the hairs in its fruits, rosehips, cause severe itching.

◆ An ancestral tradition

Roses are grown in China and Persi for 5,000 years now and in Greece since the Bronze Age. The roses cultivated is therefore the result of several millennia of transformation, which were initially for empirical purposes. From the late 18th century, hybridization made it possible to multiply varieties. In the 1970s, the annual production of roses in Doué was about 3.5 million plants.

A growing city

The downtown market

“ Here we are at the heart of the city. Look at the elegance of this watchtower, at the corner. In the continuity of the street, you can see the 12th century halls. Their roof is being dismantled. It's at the heart of all debates, according to my husband, who is a city councillor... What do you want? Doué is growing quickly and the town hall must be extended. The good news is that the frame will be reused as a shelter for the Rose Days buffets in the arenas. Nothing is lost, everything is transformed! Let's go to St. Peter's Square. There is excellent poultry there. This will make a perfect menu with fresh mushrooms directly harvested from the basement! ”

The many stores in Doué offer a wide range of products. Among the ones drawn below, which one can't Louise find in 1970?

Answer at the end of the booklet



A



B



C



D



E



F



See, smell, imagine...

◆ Doué, the trader

There were still many shops with old storefronts in 1970, particularly in rue du Commerce, place de Verdun and rue de l'Image: haberdashery, grain store, pharmacy, tobacco shop, shoemaker, delicatessens, fish shop, dry cleaner, armoury-lockwork, hairdressers, bakery, household appliances...

◆ The museum of traditional trades

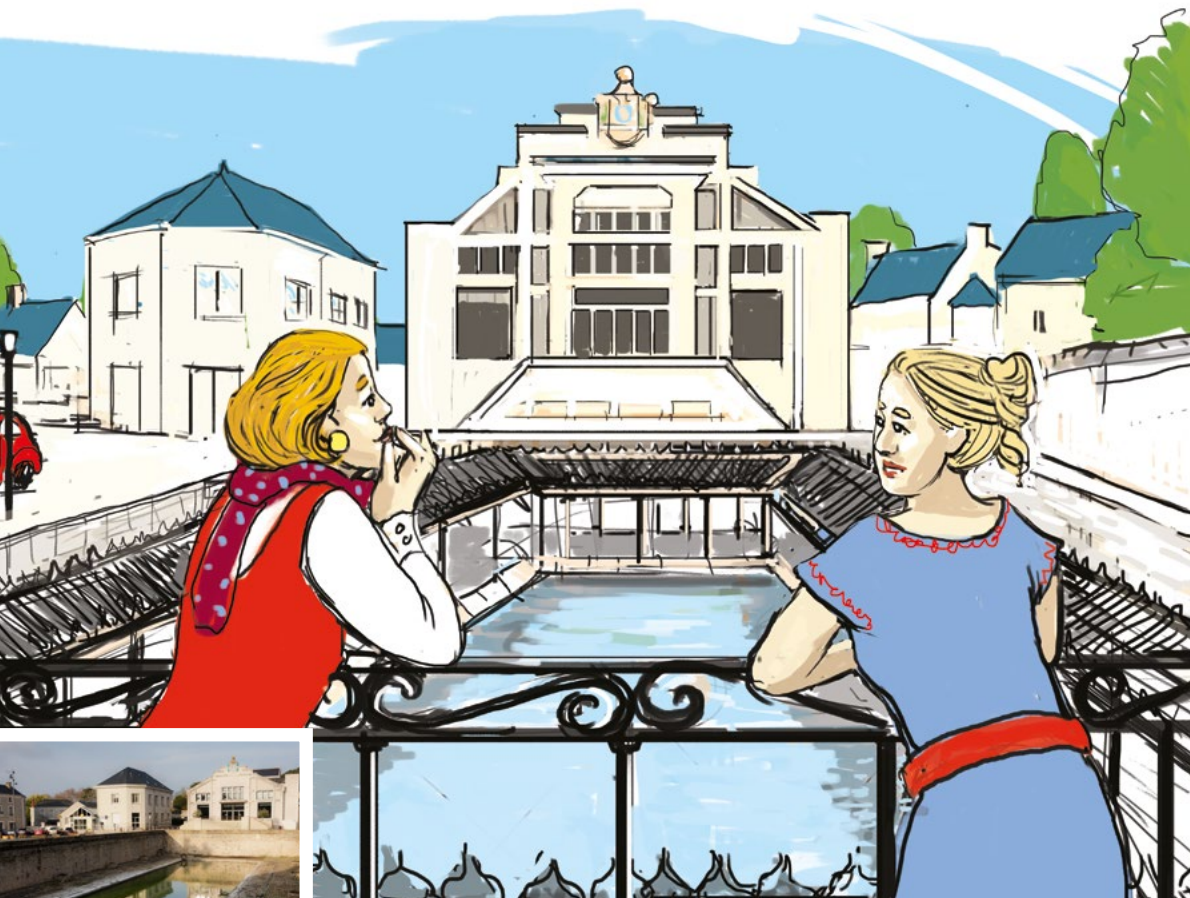
About twenty shops represent a century of local trade (1850-1950) in the stalls of the Château des Basses Minières (18th century), a stone's throw from the Roseraie Foullon. This castle was owned by the Baron of Doué, Joseph François Foullon, to whom we owe many buildings in the city: washhouse, royal nurseries...



Doué, on top of the bill

The great washhouse and the theater

“Great memories in this place! I clearly remember the building of the municipal theatre in the early 1930s. While digging the foundations, the workers made a great discovery, just at the entrance: the remains of a 12-metre circumference building. It was only many years later, while discussing with the Marquis de Geoffre de Chabrignac, general councillor, that I learned that it was a baptistery, where Christians were being baptised. Even if laundresses are becoming increasingly rare at the popular washhouse, this place remains very lively: shows and film shows are very popular.”



Match these films released in 1970 to their various heroes.

Answers at the end of the booklet



B - The Aristocats



A - Love Story



C - Little Big Man



1 - Adelaïde Bonafamilie



2 - Ryan O'Neal



3 - Dustin Hoffman

See, smell, imagine...

◆ Water, omnipresent

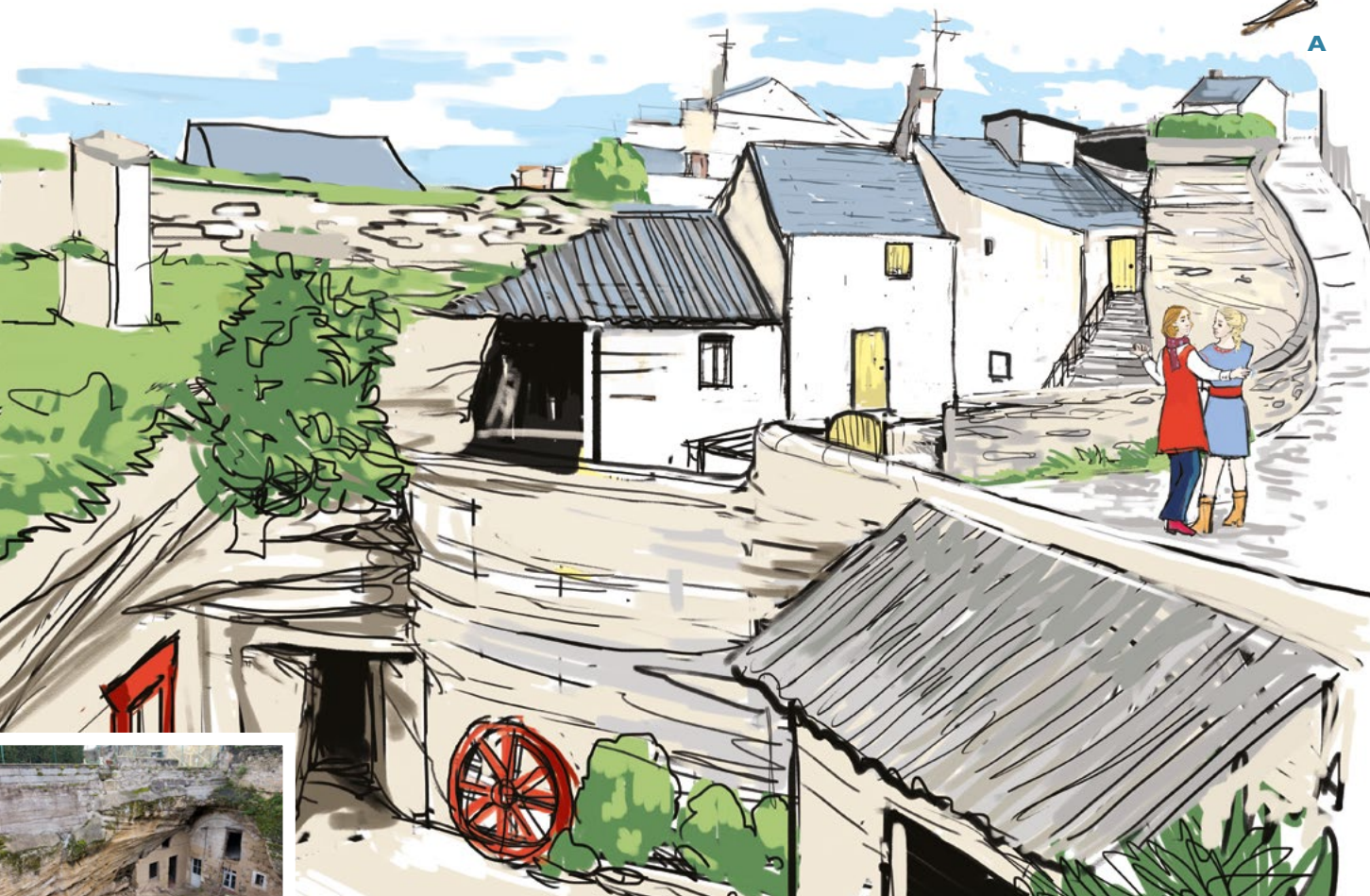
The numerous wells in Doué are a result of the large number of springs, and the proliferation of water-related activities. The famous Douet spring is known to cure fevers and eye pains. It was reportedly used to supply the Baptistery of St. John. This spring and its sacredness would be the origin of the name Doué-la-Fontaine.

◆ A unique washhouse

The famous washhouse built in Doué before the Revolution is exceptional for many reasons. It is the oldest Angevin washhouse and the largest in western France (originally, 44 m by 26 m). A slate roof was constructed in 1909 on a cast-iron structure with the most beautiful look. It can accommodate up to 130 laundresses. Some of them still worked there in 1970 while others only went to rinse their clothes.

Childhood memories... and from beneath Near to the rue des Caves

“Look Pierrette, my maternal grandmother was born here in this cellar. She lived there with my grandfather until they got married. His parents, who were day labourers, had very little to live for. Their underground house had a all-time burning chimney. It's funny! As a child, with friends, we enjoyed clogging the smoking chimneys, which were easily accessible from the gardens overlooking the cellars. Then, we would run away on hearing wrathful voices from afar! Not to mention the prying people listening through the conduit to all the conversations of the vigils... These smokes from below spread rumours that black masses, satanic cults were being held beneath...”



The word “troglodyte” (from the Greek “troglo”, hole, and “dytes”, to inhabit) does not refer only to a cave-man. Among the pictures below, which one cannot be associated with this word?

Answer at the end of the booklet



A



B



C



D

See, smell, imagine...

◆ Six feet under

In the 18th and 19th centuries, half of the population of Doué lived underground. There are more cellars still visible on the Napoleonic cadastre (1815/1816) than there are houses built! Rents are cheap, but living conditions are precarious. The family name Mousseau, which is common locally, is derived from the verb “se musser” (to hide in old French).

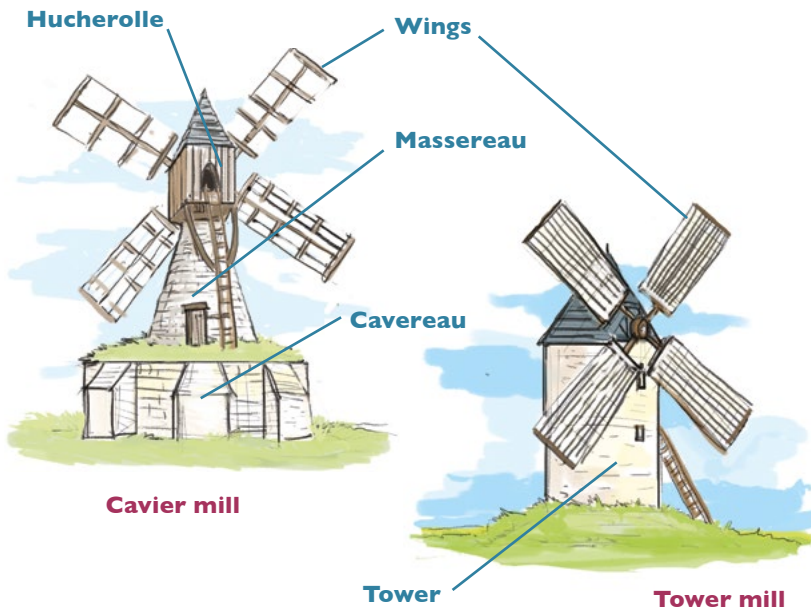
◆ Underground jokes

The chimneys of troglodytic houses with the particularity of emerging from fields and vegetable gardens are the target of many jokes! Some of the jokes included buckets of ice water; firecrackers; a grinning and dug pumpkin, lit by a candle; a ghost shroud-covered ghost; not to mention live animals (owls in particular)... or dead animals, which sometimes were cooked afterwards!

Miller, you are sleeping...

Cartier's mill

“ As a child, in the early 1930s, I sometimes accompanied my baker uncle to buy flour at the Mr Cartier's mill. Mr. Cartier had a wheat rider levelled to raise a tower, much higher and well-equipped: with two wheels and the famous Berton wings, much easier to use than canvas wings. I still see Father Cartier harnessing his mare Bichette, his wife wearing a long skirt and high belt, busy in her kitchen, and the two flour makers filling the bags. He stopped all activity when he passed away in 1936, but it's still strong! ”



Mr Cartier's mill is unique in Anjou. What is its originality? Combine the architectural features of two types of mills characteristic of the region. Closely examine this mill and circle the names of its various components from these two pictures.

Answers at the end of the booklet



See, smell, imagine...

◆ In the oven and in the mill

There were as many as sixty windmills in Doué. From the 16th century, semi-troglodytic cavernous mills developed: the cellar in which the millstone was placed was underground. The many falun stone cones still present are its remains.

◆ The berton wing revolution

Thanks to the invention of engineer Pierre Théophile Berton in 1841, the wings are made up of a combination of movable boards that replace the canvases. The miller can now safely adjust the wing surface from within the mill, in a single operation, without having to climb up to install or remove the canvas.

Games solutions



STATION 1

Bats. They are the only mammals that can fly. Moreover, scientists call them chiropterans: from the Greek “kheir” hand and “pteron” wing. The baby is born in the spring, after its mother’s hibernation. It weighs one third of its weight, as much as a man’s 20 kg baby for a 60 kg mother! It grows quickly and reaches its adult size in a month and then takes off.

STATION 2

B. A parasitic fungus. Mildew develops in the rainy and mild springs. If not protected, damages can be serious and can go as far as complete destroying the crops.

Drawing A represents the insect Phylloxera. At the end of the 19th century, the world of vines was marked by a major event: the Phylloxera crisis. This aphid, imported from the United States, destroyed a very large part of the French vineyard in a few years and accounted for the disappearance of ancestral grape varieties and vineyards.

STATION 3

A – Battle arena. Many people in Doué still believe that the arena of Doué is Gallo-Roman. This is not the case. It is a collection of falun extraction quarries, both above and under grounds, the oldest of which was built in the 15th century. It was in the 16th century that the bleachers were built.

STATION 4

Red – Love / White – Loyalty / Yellow – Friendship / Pink – Elegance / Orange – Desire / Lilac – Love at first sight.

STATION 5

E – The easy opening for tin cans. It was developed in the 1970s thanks to the creation of new types of steel.

STATION 6

A. Love Story – **2.** Ryan O’Neal / **B.** The Aristocats – **I.** Adelaïde Bonnetfamille / **C.** Little Big Man – **3.** Dustin Hoffman.

STATION 7

B. A fruit. “Troglodyte” refers to a bird (the cute Wren), a swearword from Captain Haddock and is also the scientific name of the chimpanzee!

STATION 8

The wings - The tower - The cavereau

This atypical mill is composed in its lower part of the “cavereau” (broad and low part which originally sheltered the millstones). Above, there is a round tower surmounted by a roof supporting the wings. These elements replace the “massereau” (or cone) and the “hucherolle” (small wooden hut rotating on a vertical axis and housing the wing mechanism) of the original “cavier” mill.

Doué-la-Fontaine

It is also :

- ◆ An underground sarcophaguses quarry dating back to the 6th century.
- ◆ A carolingian aula.
- ◆ The remains of a 12th century collegiate church.
- ◆ The stalls and park of an 18th century property.
- ◆ A beautiful municipal rose garden...

To continue the tour, ask for information at the Tourist Office, place des Fontaines or download the application “France-Touristic” and click on the logo of Doué-en-Anjou.

Saumur Val de Loire Tourist Office -

Doué-en-Anjou office :

30, place des Fontaines – Tél. 02 41 59 20 49
www.saurmur-tourisme.com



The Loire-Anjou-Touraine Regional Nature Park

141 historical towns - 205 485 people

Created in 1996, this first Loire Valley park extends from Tours to Angers in the departments of Indre-et-Loire (Centre-Val de Loire Region) and Maine-et-Loire (Pays de la Loire Region).

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Translations : Terre de mots

Illustrations : Nicolas Boisbouvier

Printing : Loire Impression

CIRCUITS OF THE HERITAGE

How does this work?

A theme is discussed following an itinerary marked in a loop. This **discovery booklet** accompanies you from one station to another to help you understand the various landscapes crossed, while narrating through an **emblematic character** a piece of the history of the site...

Let's meet at the first station and follow the indications...

Doué-la-Fontaine Doué, from darkness to light

May 1970. It's market day in Doué-la-Fontaine. Pretty forty-year-old Louise, wife of a well-known nurseryman and rose breeder, invites you to discover her city of roses! Mushroom farms, old quarries, smoking fields and troglodytic cellars... discover with her the extraordinary sights that characterize the city.

Price : 1€



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