

A Holistic Equestrian Experience in Provence - France

A horse, Mother Nature, you... in a search for harmony. This is the aim of this innovating week. An equestrian experience where you will ride the beautiful trails of Provence countryside. A human experience where you will learn to awaken your communication skills with your horse.

Day 1: Arrival at Vaugines. At the foot of the Grand Luberon, a preserved mountain, Vaugines is a picturesque village, part of the natural park reserve. Dinner and night spent at the hotel, in the village. Meet your guide Nicole who will present to you your upcoming week in Provence among her horses.

Day 2: Meet the horses. Introduction to the herd and getting acquainted with the horse your guide has chosen for you. This morning is dedicated to primary contact with your horse. Your guide will explain how to groom and tack while respecting the horse's comfort. One by one, you will then proceed to a few preliminary ground exercises, creating a healthy relationship with your horse. You will then untack and feed your new companion, before going back to your hotel to enjoy a fresh well-deserved lunch. In the afternoon, you will put into practice grooming, tacking up and connecting or "getting together" with your companion via the ground exercises, followed by a short ride in the surrounding countryside. Upon returning to the horses' field, you will care for your horse and will participate in feeding the herd. Night and dinner at the hotel.

Day 3: Discover the area. This morning you will ride through olive groves and cherry orchards. You will ride up to the 12th century chapel of "l'Hertmitage" and admire the view overlooking the Durance Valley. Back to the hotel for lunch and a dip in the swimming pool. In the afternoon, you will reunite with your horse to explore the interrelation between ground and mounted work. To finish the day in harmony, you will meet your personal coach Daniel, who will help you to center yourself with a directed relaxation and a meditation with your horse partner. Night and dinner at the hotel.

Day 4: Personal development activities with your horse. Today you will discover how being a better horse person will make you a better human being. As an introduction, you will first meet Daniel in a quiet area and experience different situations without your horse. You will then join the horses: working in the round pen, you will learn how to create a healthy relationship with your horse and thus discover how you can create a fulfilling relationship with others (intimate partner, co-worker, boss or friends). You will discover how you deal with "authority" and how you can improve your way to manage people. Through the communication with your horse, you will learn to give and receive positive feedback. You will experiment with and improve new efficient leadership skills. Lunch today will be prepared by the assistant and enjoyed among the horses. Dinner and night at the hotel.

Day 5: Lauris – Buoux. Today you are leaving for a two-day trail ride, travelling to the very heart of the Luberon Hills. This will be a day of real communion with nature. Far from the tourist track you will explore remote areas, accessible only to hikers and riders. After packing your lunch in your saddle bags off you go: horse, nature, yourself, silence. Climbing up the hills, you will admire the incredible view on the surrounding hills and valleys. After following the crests, you will ride down towards the gorges of Aiguebrun. At the end of the day, you will arrive at a remote inn set at the

bottom of a huge cliff, where you will meet other hikers and climbers, and perhaps take a dip in the swimming pool, filled by the crystal clear waters of the Aiguebrun Stream. Night and dinner at the inn.

Day 6: Buoux – Vaugines. This morning, your horse will share your journey to old Roman trails, the gorges, troglodyte houses and a dry-stone bridge, making your way up towards an authentic goat-farm. This is a perfect place to stop for lunch, water the horses and taste some local produce including organic goat cheese. After this well-deserved rest, your horse will guide you through rocky and steep terrain up on the crest. You will have a magnificent view over the valleys and see the Alps mountain range (on a clear day). Ride down towards Vaugines. You will pass through the village and water the horses at the village fountain before returning to the horses' field. Care for your travel companion at the herd's feeding time and then you stroll back to your hotel for one last meal together, to share pictures and good memories... 'til next time!

Day 7: End of the ride after breakfast. Transfer to airport/train station.

Riding facility: There is not a "classical" riding facility as such, since the horses are kept as close as possible to nature, living outdoor in fields near the Provencal village of Vaugines.