



Chateau de Montautre

– a place to nourish the bodies and souls –



Our Philosophy

The year 2000, a new Millennium, how exciting to be part of this new century, but what does it all mean? Of course, everyone experiences their own evolution, but as a whole, we can say we are living in a technotronic era, with an emphasis on communication, using computers, electronics and satellites. This new knowledge applied appropriately to daily life will eventually make things a lot easier and more accessible but it still is a revolutionary process and there are negative aspects also. We are all working hard, today both partners of same household work, babies are in centers, kids are at schools and life seems to be passing by even quicker. Being part of this intellectual evolution is exciting because it is a mental stimulant, we are learning and growing, but there is a price to pay. People are becoming "Workaholics" and life is becoming more expensive. People are also living beyond their own means due to the pressure of buying materialistic things that others have and they do not. These materialistic things are today also more accessible through the internet or better marketing. Today "faster/better" are key words and people's lives are only getting busier filled with work and stress. We need to learn to slow down.

There was a time when mankind lived everywhere and anywhere because there was enough work related to the land. Times have changed and that country boy or girl has moved away to the city, where the action is. This does not mean that the pureness and wholesomeness of the land is not important, or that we do not crave for it, it is just not priority.

I believe that this techno era has created new jobs, new ideas and new improvements in our lifestyles, but because we have a more stressful, intense and busy daily life, we will therefore need more accessible ways to relax. Learning to relax, meditated or being able to turn inwards to listen again to ourselves is now more than ever very important. Some people can learn to tune out the noises of a city, but others will need help. Some may not even realize that they are living with stress and for some they may need help to break out of it.

Cities have become increasingly automated, computerized and simply non-personal and we have forgotten that we still need on an emotional and spiritual level more to survive. City folks will need to escape, they will be looking for pure sensory stimulation from smelling a forest or dirt, seeing a sunset or rise, hearing the wind blow or birds sing. Such simple things as the pureness of nature can do wonders to relax, soothe and even re-energize the bodies and soul.

Rini and I being products/victims of society have seen and lived that fast life. We enjoyed contributing and being part of it but realized that we were not being totally true to ourselves.

We have realized that we can be better contributors by creating a place, "Montautre", to nourish the souls and bodies of those who need it.

Our Beginning

After two years of searching in the United States, Bahamas and Europe we realized the importance and significance of our project can only take place in a pure, peaceful, historically rich, and energy filled countryside of Limousin. An important criterion for



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choosing the proper location was that it needed to be surrounded by land and nature, and seclusion was a very important element. We wanted warm weather, but coming from Holland that is to be expected. At first we looked further south but it was usually over crowded and too touristy, which is not the atmosphere we wanted for our project. We also realized that although we were anxious to be in a tropical climate we needed a place with seasons, thus various characters. There is something very romantic and poetic about the changing in seasons, and we wanted to create a place, which respected those versatile and pure qualities of nature. The changes in seasons make room for the changes in our body, souls and minds.

This connection between man and nature is the philosophy of “Montautre”.

The structure of the building was very important, because it had to have character. We were looking for something robust which had a pure beauty of its own. A place that had been through a lot, but still kept its originality.

Montautre was exactly what we were looking for. A place that has been in the same family since the 15th century. It is an honor for us to have the chance to bring back life to such a magnificent place. Montautre also reflects a place of grandeur because of the building structure, but it is a very humble place. There are no frills or rich pompous structures to the building. Montautre is pure, peaceful and mystical, perfect for us to create a very special Bed and Breakfast.

The B & B

At Montautre we began a Bed and Breakfast (B & B), by restoring six bedrooms and remodeling six bathrooms. All the restoration was done by us during a period of 2.5 years. Our goal and challenge was to always respect the beauty which already existed in the building. Montautre is first of all a home, which was and is for a large family. The warm feeling of family creates a place where people can stripe away every disguise, protection or worry, and truly find themselves again. Learning to break down these barriers is important to find our true self, and only then can we strengthen ourselves, appreciate our senses and get closer to who we are. Our doors are open to everyone, for the individual or for a group that wants to do a workshop or share time with each other.

Montautre offers its guests a chance to go back in time and appreciate the pureness of life and at the same time be able to relax the bodies and enjoy wholesome meals. On the premises there is a swimming pool and a sauna. On request we offer body massages done using an ancient Indian method where the masseuse uses her feet. There are also entire body water massages which again is a very healing method of relaxing the body and mind. On request Reiki classes will be given as well as an analysis of your life tree. Montautre also offers yoga and Tai chi classes.

Workshops

Montautre also offers its guests the possibility to be involved in a wide assortment of arts and crafts. On the premises, there will be a clay table and a pottery oven for those inspired to create their own ceramics. On request, classes on how to make pure soaps from an herbal garden as well as candles. Our guest also has a chance to be involved with the vegetable gardening, and a professional kitchen gives the possibility



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to cooking classes. That professional kitchen also gives the possibility for catering banquets and parties.

In the near future we are planning to re-construct the old Bread Oven room into its original state, and here we would also like to offer authentic Bread Oven Cooking classes. Breads, of course will be made as well as a pizza's, traditional stews and lamb dishes. It will be large enough for 12 students, which can book for five days or a long week-end. The Haut-Vienne is not a wine producing department, but Bordeaux vineyards begin at only 2 hours away, and it is the wine most frequently drunk here. Wine tasting classes can be given on advance request, like all other classes.

Cooking classes

Norma will be teaching the cooking and wine tasting classes, and the teachers for all various activities will come from Holland, France and even the United States. We are also open to all teachers that are intrigue by Montautre, and would like to work with us, and come with a group of students to do a course.

Montautre's Activities

Montautre is situated on 35 hectares, 10 hectares is forest and which borders on 150 hectares of more forest. This environment allows our guests to enjoy long walks through the forest for inspiration, or as a form of meditation, but we will make sure a picnic basket went along just incase our guest was captured by the beauty of nature and wanted to take a break .If you allow it nature can be very healing. There is 1800 km of walking and hiking paths in the Haut-Vienne, and still today one of the best way to explore an environment.

We have two horses for our own use, but experienced riders could, on request, go out with one of the owners. Fromental also has a riding school and all over the Haut-Vienne there are riding paths for half-day journeys and one could ride for days in the nature. There are approximately 30 riding schools in the Haute-Vienne. Montautre is also equipped with drawing or painting material and the forest may inspire a drawing session.

Montautre has a great library filled with books in various languages for the guests and an assortment of games, for adults and children. Even on a cold raining day the guests can curl up to a warm fire and watch a movie in the T.V. room. There are also mountain bikes and bicycles for guests that feel courageous enough to challenge the rolling hills.



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Montautre's Surroundings and Activities

Montautre is situated forty kilometers north of the metropolitan city of Limoges, whose population is 200.000 and is 2000 years old. “Capitale des arts du feu”, Limoge’s fame in fine porcelain and unique ceramics dates back to the Middle Ages. Today porcelain is a thriving industry yet it has never ceased to be an art. Since the 10th century the goldsmith monks, were also very creative with enamel, which is still today well known for this region.

The Haut-Vienne is the department in which Montautre is located, but the entire area is called Limousin, which is essentially a green area dominated by forestry, pasture and water. The trees found in this area are Oak, Chestnuts, Beech, cherry, and firs, which cover 31% of the grounds. Due to the vast amounts of forestry is this area also famous for all the delicious wild mushrooms, chestnuts, walnuts and apples. From fruit bush come the delectable blackberry, red currant, black currant, raspberry and strawberry, which are made into liqueurs, there is even a chestnut liqueur. On the subject of food, we must not forget the Limousin cow one of the best re-known beef, the abundance of sheep known for this area, and the “black bum” pig. The Limousin cow has given the region a well-known traditional trade in leather, especially for its Haut couture ladies gloves.

One of the greatest lakes in France “le lac du Vassiviere” is one of the thousands of water surfaces in the area. The lake Vassiviere has a surface of 1000 ha. Wide with 45 km long banks and 108 millions m³ (cubic) of pure water. The water activities available in this area are wind surfing, water skiing, rafting, canoeing, kayaking and sailing. It is also amazing the variety of activities besides all of the water sports, that are available here; hiking, horse riding, mountain biking, bike riding, golf, mini golf, tennis, fishing, and tree climbing. Lake Vassiviere is approximately 50 km from Montautre, but Montautre has its own lake of one hectare and borders on a lake of approx. 4 hectares, where fishing can also be done. The Haut-Vienne has 2242 km of rivers, 1956 km of first quality and 286 of second quality. This is one of the reasons fishing is so prominent here. Trout and Carp of excellent quality are in abundance here as well as Fresh water Salmon, which is known to exist in only the cleanest waters.

The soil is not rich enough to be used as a profitable arable land, but it is highly rich in minerals such as: tin, lead, gold, copper, coal, quartz, uranium and kaolin. Kaolin is white fine clay, the real reason why porcelain could be made and famous for this area.

This beautiful landscape interchanging between forest, rolling hills, deep valleys, land rich in minerals, purest rivers and hundreds of lakes is why the location of Montautre is perfect.

The property is located 10 minutes from the A20 highway, which is the artery from Paris to Limoges. At 350 km from Paris it is a perfect place for Parisians to drive to for a weekend. The distance from Holland being 850 km makes it also possible to get to by car in one day. The train is located at 10 km away in La Souterraine, and Limoges has a small international airport which flies everyday from England.

Montautre is unique in many ways besides its surroundings. It is extraordinary to still find in the 21st century a chateau that dates back till the 15th century, and that



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has and that has been in the same family ever since. Lovers of architecture will enjoy exploring this typical Limousin scenery with its outstanding examples of life as it was in the Middle Ages: churches, towns and above all castles, which are open to the public to visit. There is a very picturesque route, “Richard Coeur de Lion”, which is worth taking.

More on Montautre’s Surrounding and Activities

Another interesting historical site is the meteorite that fell in Rouchecourt 160 million years ago. It is the only meteor in the world that its crater and foundation can be observed three dimensionally.

There are twenty-four museums in the Haut-Vienne, eight in the Creuse and twenty-two in the Correze. In the Haut-Vienne there is from contemporary art, archaeological collections, vintage cars, distillery history, photography, sculpture, and of course porcelain. Monet also painted many paintings of the Creuse and Renoir was born here.

French Markets have always been a special attraction in themselves and there are food markets everyday during the summer and otherwise specialty food markets throughout the year.

Medieval markets are also usually during the summer and they have medieval activities, performances and even sometimes foods.

There are also various antique markets, flea markets and great shops to find fascinating items.



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Who we are and, How we Function

We want Montautre as a Bed and Breakfast to have a form of healing for people, whether it is a physical, emotional or spiritual one. The structure, surroundings and energy are already here and make it a unique place. The building's original form shines its own character and we want people to find their originality and shine their own character.

In the chateau we will have six beautifully decorated and spacious rooms, all with their own private bathrooms. We will offer guests the cleanliness and service expected from a top hotel, but with the personalized service that is quite often missed. Breakfast will be served between 8:00-10:00 outside under the Lime trees, in the dining room or in the kitchen on the old wooden family table in front of a roaring fireplace. We will offer the guests a traditional French breakfast, and also the possibility to have a more extensive breakfast. On request we have fresh eggs from our own produce, cheese and charcuteries, pancakes or French toast.

We do not serve Lunch, but will be glad to prepare a picnic basket if ordered in advance.

We serve dinner every evening with reservation only. Dinner starts with an aperitif at around 19:30, depending if all guests have arrived, followed by a five course meal.

Montautre has a large vegetable garden and most of the meals will be made with our own products, otherwise bought by local biological farmers.

All meals will be prepared by Norma and everything is homemade. Her cuisine is International, with an emphasis on French and Italian dishes and many American deserts. Dinner will be served outside during the summer, in the dining room and in a nostalgic kitchen when there are four guests or less.

Banquet Room

Across the chateau is another building which is the so-called "knights room". It is the building in which the guards, at the time, would stay to protect the lord of the house. This beautiful large room, with robust beams, granite fire place, and 400 year old small terra cotta tiles is an inspiration to walk over. This room is the Banquet room. This room is grand enough to entertain large dinner parties, receptions and even hold important meetings.

Montautre guest can be an individual, couples, family, a group, business executive and their power team, as well as the artist, the dancer, the chef, the horseback rider and people into a spiritual awareness.

Our Public

We must not exclude a large group of our guests will be traveling south, wanting to break their journey with an evening at Montautre. Another group of guest may be traveling to Limoges, interested in a porcelain factory, or just interested in the cultural festivals in between July (Theatre and Music) and November (Jazz Festival).



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Shop

Besides the B & B, and the Banquet hall, there is even a small shop at Montautre which sells some antique items, as well as furniture pieces made by Rini and local products, such as; marmalade, Jams, and hand crafted objects.