

# Press kit

**100<sup>th</sup> International Art & Antiques Fair of L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue**  
**50 years of the International Fair of Art & Antiques of L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue**



1966

C'est la  
**100!**  
ème!

2016

...le signe  
de l'excellence !

100<sup>e</sup> Foire Internationale  
**ART & ANTIQUITÉS**  
L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue  
Du 25 au 28 MARS 2016

 

[www.foire-islesurlasorgue.com](http://www.foire-islesurlasorgue.com)

## **International Fair of Art & Antiques of L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue 2016: a double anniversary**

City of fishermen in Provence, formed by the arms of a river, L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue launched the first regional antiques fair 50 years ago, in 1966.

Nowadays, the water wheels still turn along with the river, witnesses of an evolution which led to the little Venice of Comtat Venaissin to become renowned capital of antiques and second-hand goods.

Twice a year, for Easter and for the 15<sup>th</sup> of August, the International Fair of Art and Antiques of L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue offer to visitors a wide choice of ancient goods, artwork and quality decorative items.

**In 2016, we celebrate a double anniversary** with the 100<sup>th</sup> edition of the International Fair of Art and Antiques of L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue and the 50 years of this activity. It is today the emblem of the town and contributes to its international reputation.

In 1966, the first International Fair dedicated to the second-hand goods was initiated by passionate pioneers. With two editions a year, it contributes to make L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue one of the three main European spots of Antiques. Today, the second-hand goods, antiques, and decorative art sector are known as a strong sign of identity of L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue. The town owes its reputation, its touristic attractiveness and its economy to this sector.

- 1966 - 2016 : 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary !
- 100<sup>e</sup> edition from Friday 25<sup>th</sup> to Monday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2016
- 101<sup>e</sup> edition from Friday 12<sup>th</sup> to Monday 15<sup>th</sup> August 2016
- A year of events and celebrations

In order to celebrate as it should be the 50 years of the International Fair of Art and Antiques, L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue and Mercantour have made an ambitious cultural and festive program with major events of great extent. All the local representatives - professionals, groups of antique dealers, art galleries, designers, craftsmen and shopkeepers, associations - are fully associated to this collective dynamics.

- . There will be a special attention to the presentation of stalls and professionals will offer visitors high quality goods.
- . A « Second-hand goods & Antiques in L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue: 1966-2016 » retrospective will be divided into several categories: photo exhibition, illustrated book, etc...
- . A « 50 years of new trends in L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue » scenography: a designed area with the help of permanent group of antique leaders of the town, according to the different remarkable evolutions of decoration from the sixties until today.
- . Anniversary show
- . 100<sup>th</sup> edition Shop
- . Creation Brun de Vian Tiran
- . Special Edition Stamp (post office)
- . Campredon Centre d'Art : Expo Manuel Ruiz Vida (from 13/03 to 19/06/2016)
- . La Nuit des Chineurs ( the night of the fair)
- . Etc.

## **THE OLDEST INTERNATIONAL FAIR OF ART AND ANTIQUES OF EUROPE**

- L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue hold the record of the oldest International Fair of Antiques in Europe. Organized continuously since 1966, we celebrate its 50 years in 2016.

## **AN INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION**

- The fair has a worldwide reputation on the five continents both with professionals and the general public, and benefit also from a significant media visibility.

## **INSPIRATION DECORATION: TRENDS LABORATORY**

- Since 1996, L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue is in the forefront of new decoration trends and also a limitless source of inspiration for professionals from all over the world. The city was the first to decompartmentalize styles and associate singularly second-hand goods, antiques, decorative arts, design and contemporary creation.

Over the past 50 years, L'Isle sur la Sorgue created new decorative trends: old professions furnitures, industrial furniture, vintage design, etc.

## **A QUALITY ORGANIZATION CERTIFIED**

- Le SNCAO (National Union of the Antiques Trade, Second-hand goods and Art Galleries) recognize the Fair of L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue as an exemplary national reference in terms of professional organization.

⇒ As established in the quality charter elaborated by the Town and respected by the organizer, qualified experts, members of the French experts company of Antiques are available to the public in order to ensure the authenticity of second-hand goods introduced by professionals. Their advices are both for antique dealers, antique-hunters and particular customers.

⇒ Products clearly identified: the organization gives all exhibitors an individual sign and a code to qualify his activity: Second-hand goods, Antiques, Design or Decoration.

## **QUALIFIED VISITORS**

- 80 000 to 100 000 visitors / fair in average
- Antique-hunters and art lovers
- Professionnal social category ++
- More than 50% of foreign visitors
- VIP of the cultural, economic, political and sportif world.

## **AN EXCEPTIONAL CONCENTRATION OF PROFESSIONALS**

- 550 professionals specialized in second-hand goods, antiques, art, decoration :
  - ⇒ 250 French and European exhibitors
  - ⇒ 300 specialized shops
  - ⇒ Art galleries and contemporary artists

## **A GROWING MARKET**

- The antiques and second-hand goods sector has been showing a significant recovery for two years, contrary to the trend of the European market.

⇒ In august 2014, the 97<sup>th</sup> International Fair of Art & Antiques of L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue had recorded a great frequentation, as for the number of visitors (more than 100 000) but also for the amount of sales. It was one of the best editions of the past ten years.

## **A MAJOR ECONOMIC IMPACT**

(Estimations: 80 000 visitors for Easter and 100 000 visitors in August)

- The annual income realised by the 250 exhibitors during the two fairs is estimated to 2,5 million euros.
- The impact generated by visitors and exhibitors of the two annual fairs in L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue and injected into the local economy is estimated to 9 million euros.

## L'ISLE-SUR-LA-SORGUE 3<sup>rd</sup> EUROPEAN SPOT OF ANTIQUE SHOPS

L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue has developed second-hand goods and antiques trade in the 60's. In August 1966, about ten antique dealers have launched the first fair and created the enthusiasm which would have made of L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue a major European spot.

Since then, the town vocation is confirmed, attracting always more professionals and "antique hunters", and encouraging integration of different kinds of artistic expressions. Linked to this dynamic, decoration, international transport, valuation activities and artwork restoration and contemporary art galleries businesses have developed. This sector is today a major economic activity for the town which has grown from 7000 inhabitants to almost 20 000.

In l'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue, Antiques and art involve more than 300 professionals. An economic activity with different professions (antique dealers, merchants...)  
One of the local particularity, the « Villages » are real Aladdin's cave which gather under one roof several antique dealers. Particularism that positions L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue second among French platforms of antiques trade after Paris (St-Ouen) and the third largest in Europe after London and Saint-Ouen.



## HISTORICAL RECORD

In 1890, Joseph Légier was an antique dealer in L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue. He moved to Paris after the 1<sup>st</sup> World War. His son Raymond worked by his side and after the Wall Street Crash, the family came back to Provence. René Légier, Joseph's grandson, went to an art exhibition at the Popes' Palace in Avignon. With his friend Albert Gassier and the help of their wives, they decided to launch the first Antique Fair of L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue in August, 15<sup>th</sup> 1966.

14 exhibitors were there, among which Michel Agnellet, Henri Bey, M.Boussin, M.Pinnet, Albert Gassier, Denise Marignane, Charles Delpuech, Robert Zalova, M.Lagache, Guiseppa Ragnoni, Jean Aquaviva, M.Baraud, René Légier, Alice Valetti. A first television report on regional news... and the first edition was an immediate success. Albert Gassier and René Légier, municipal councilor, created an association with the help of the town, they organised in 1967 two great appointments, for Easter and the August, 15<sup>th</sup>. The number of exhibitors was growing and so was the number of visitors.

Daphné Rougon and Jean Nicolas initiated the creation of the first Antique Village «Le Village de la Gare» that included about ten professionals in the former Carpet factory of Avignon. Albert Gassier created « l'Isle aux Brocantes » then transformed the Sunday flea market into an institution. In the 1980's, the Antique Village of «Quai de la Gare», initiated by Jean Chysski, attracted a more elitist clientele on a high-end market.

At the end of the 1980's, the antiques trade became economically more important. Some professionals settled, and customers came from all over the world. The Espace Béchard invited personalities and VIP who succumbed to the charm of Luberon and then the Alpilles.

The "phenomenon L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue" grew and crossed the border. After the Italians and the Spaniards, it was the Americans who discovered Vaucluse thanks to the impact of Peter Mayle's books in the early 1990's. The Provençal art was particularly appreciated: decoration shops and art galleries were growing in parallel to the Antique Market.

The town became «the great Mediterranean second-hand goods market ». There were between 350 and 400 antique dealers and second-hand goods dealers at the end of each week in L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue. The two International and Annual Fairs draw the most important number of visitors during the year.

The International Fairs of Antique and Second-hand Goods of L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue were organised continuously by the festival committee of the town (1966-1973), Albert Gassier (1974-1987), M. Bartolini (1988-1992), M. Héroldi (1993-2002). In 2003, the town was in charge of the organization of the two events before entrusted it to Mercantour in 2008, by delegation of public service.

### **Economic evolution, opportunities and artistic plurality**

At the beginning of 2000's, the activity was strongly influenced by events in the USA (September 2001) and the disappearance of the American clientele, the competition of flea markets in France and of the e-trade. Moreover, the antiques and second-hand goods sector suffered from deep structural changes and disaffection of young generations for antique furniture.

In 2008, L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue entrusted the organization of the International Fair of Art & Antiques to Mercantour group led by Eric Bruxelle, as part of a public service delegation. The organizer engaged a deep reflection so that the international fairs would impulse great decoration trends and would play its role in the local economy. While promoting the historical heart of the fair, Eric Bruxelle and his teamwork were trying to stimulate again the event by proposing new interest poles (ancient book, contemporary art, design, vintage and decoration), a new communication and attractive animations (original exhibitions, Nuit des Chineurs, Easter eggs hunting, etc...).

In August 2009, the International Fair of L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue received for the first time a contemporary art exhibition with about twenty art galleries and a hundred artists. A way to expand cultural offer of the town by associating antiques, second-hand goods and contemporary art.

### **A federative organization**

Alongside the delegatee Mercantour company, the town is developing animations, coordinating La Nuit des Chineurs (the night of the fair) festivities during the Fair of August or the cultural tour of exhibitions of Campredon Art Centre. Services of the town and the local region on Pays des Sorgues, associations, decoration and antique dealers, professionals of local tourism are closely associated to the organization of the fairs.

## International Fairs of Art and Antiques of L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue

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