

LASCAUX IV

PRESS RELEASE 2025



DORDOGNE-PÉRIGORD

LASCAUX

SEMITOUR PÉRIGORD SHARING & PROMOTING A UNIQUE CULTURAL HERITAGE



ANDRÉ BARBÉ
Managing Director of Semitour Périgord

For over 25 years, under the management of André Barbé, Semitour Périgord has established itself as the leading private stakeholder in managing cultural and tourist sites in the Dordogne. Every year more than 800,000 visitors from all over the world discover these exceptional sites, which are a must-see in Périgord.

Our mission? To offer a unique and continuously updated experience, thanks to our expertise and our passion for heritage.

With eight emblematic cultural sites — including the prestigious Lascaux IV International Centre for Cave Art — as well as three accommodation and activity sites, we offer much more than a simple visit. It is a total immersion in history and art.

Our promise to you? A warm, professional welcome, innovative tours, activities for all ages, and unforgettable experiences that showcase our exceptional cultural heritage.

“As guardians of a precious treasure, we are committed to promoting, sharing and making this unique heritage accessible. With our ever-creative approach we seek to arouse curiosity and wonder, while inviting visitors to reflect on our history and humanity. Join us on this timeless cultural adventure, and discover the many facets of a living heritage that resonates with past, present and future generations.”

ANDRÉ BARBÉ

THE SEMITOUR PÉRIGORD SITES



- TRAVEL AGENT**
Semitour Périgord
- 1 LASCAUX IV, INTERNATIONAL CENTRE
 - 2 LASCAUX II
 - 3 PARC DU THOT
 - 4 PREHISTORIC ROCK SHELTERS OF LAUGERIE-BASSE
 - 5 GRAND ROC CAVE
 - 6 CLOISTER OF CADOUIN ABBEY
 - 7 AUBERGE DE CADOUIN
 - 8 CHÂTEAU DE BIRON
 - 9 CHÂTEAU DE BOURDEILLES
- CAMPINGS AND OUTDOORS ACTIVITIES**
 - 10 Lac de Rouffiac campsite and activity centre
 - 11 Saint Estèphe lake campsite and apartments
- RESTAURANTS:**
 - A Le Bistrot at La Jemaye
 - B Le Moulin du Grand Étang
 - C Café Lascaux at Montignac-Lascaux

SEMITOUR IN FIGURES



A DESTINATION IN THE VERY HEART OF FRANCE

BY CAR

PARIS / TOULOUSE: A20 MOTORWAY
LYON / BORDEAUX A89 MOTORWAY

4 hrs PARIS
4hrs LYON
3 hrs TOULOUSE
1hr 15 BORDEAUX

BY AIR

BERGERAC DORDOGNE-PERIGORD AIRPORT
BRIVE-VALLÉE DE LA DORDOGNE AIRPORT
Daily flights Orly-Brive - www.hop.com

BY TRAIN

PÉRIGUEUX STATION
BRIVE-LA-GAILLARDE STATION
PÉRIGUEUX > PARIS 4 HRS. BY TGV VIA BORDEAUX

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THE VÉZÈRE VALLEY, AN EXCEPTIONAL WEALTH

Situated in the heart of the Périgord Noir region, the Vézère valley is an emblematic site, officially scheduled by ministerial decree on 11th December 2015.



This scheduling recognises and protects a heritage of exceptional value, characterised by its unique landscapes of cliffs bordering the river Vézère.

Inhabited by man for thousands of years, the site has preserved remarkable traces of prehistoric occupation, notably caves and troglodytic dwellings, as well as more recent buildings such as castles and churches, all of which contribute to the valley's appeal and bear witness to its continuing historical interest.

The Vézère valley has also been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1979, due to 15 of its caves and prehistoric sites, including the famous Lascaux cave.

The many objects, skeletons and works of art that have been found provide invaluable evidence of the quality and complexity of these prehistoric civilisations in Europe. These remains have been used to establish a chronological framework that is now recognised as a world reference.

The abundance and remarkable conservation of archaeological sites in the valley have played a key role in the development of the study of prehistory. This heritage is at the heart of a regional project launched in 2009, involving 37 municipalities and numerous local stakeholders to ensure its preservation and sustainable development.

LASCAUX CAVE: DISCOVERY

8th SEPTEMBER 1940: when Marcel Ravidat was walking his dog Robot, he discovered a hole in the hillside of Lascaux.

THURSDAY 12th SEPTEMBER 1940: Marcel returned with three friends: Jacques Marsal, Georges Agniel and Simon Coencas. By discovering this masterpiece of humanity, they became the discoverers of the cave.

DECREE OF 27th DECEMBER 1940: scheduling of the cave as an Historic Monument.

13th JULY 1948: the cave welcomed its first visitors.



BETWEEN 1940 AND 1963: more than a million visitors could admire this masterpiece.

LASCAUX CAVE: BIOCLIMATIC CRISIS

1955: the first signs of deterioration were noticed on the walls. This was due to an excess of carbon dioxide linked to the large number of visitors (already 30,000 a year).

1960: development of 'green disease' caused by algae and 'white disease' linked to calcite. Both were identified by the cave's curator, Max Sarradet.

1962: spread of green patches due to colonies of algae; 100,000 visitors recorded during the year, with peaks of 1,800 people a day in the summer.

20th APRIL 1963: André Malraux, then Minister for Cultural Affairs, decided to close the cave and ban access to the general public because of the damage to the paintings.



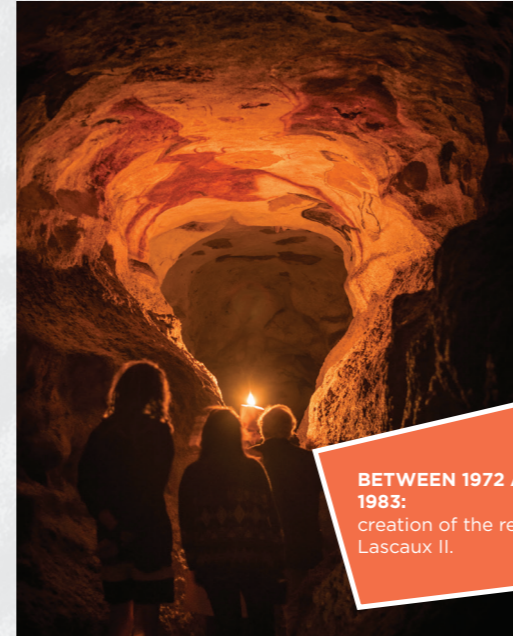
OCTOBER 1979: placing of the original cave on UNESCO's World Heritage List.

ADVENTURE LASCAUX II

1972: the owner donates the cave to the State, retaining the copyright for 30 years. On the basis of this agreement, France decided to build a replica of part of the original cave.

18th JULY 1983: located 200 metres from the original, the replica, named "Lascaux II", opened its doors to the public.

TODAY: along with Lascaux IV, it is one of the most famous sites in the Dordogne, with 250,000 visitors a year. In over thirty years, Lascaux II has welcomed more than 10 million visitors.



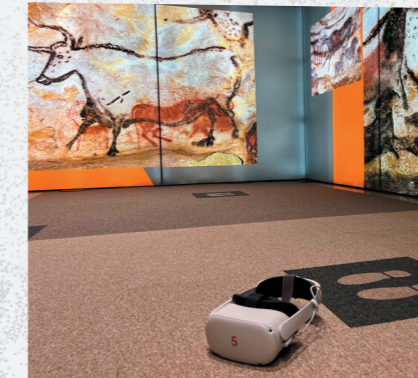
BETWEEN 1972 AND 1983: creation of the replica, Lascaux II.

LASCAUX III AROUND THE WORLD

Lascaux goes round the world: The Conseil Départemental de la Dordogne commissioned the production of replicas of scenes from the Lascaux "Nave" cave section, a gallery not represented in Lascaux II.

This is the 'Lascaux révélé' exhibition, also known as Lascaux III, which will be travelling the world for several years as an ambassador for the Dordogne and its Vallée de l'Homme.

The international touring exhibition, which offers a totally new and immersive visitor experience thanks to virtual reality, was presented in April 2024 at the Musée d'Anthropologie in Monaco.



LASCAUX IV

DECEMBER 2012: presentation of the Lascaux IV project.

18th OCTOBER 2012: the Norwegian firm Snøhetta was chosen by a jury from over 80 architects from all over the world.

24th FEBRUARY 2014: issuing of planning permission.

24th APRIL 2014: the first stone of Lascaux IV is laid by the Minister of Culture, Aurélie Filippetti.

JUNE 2014: construction began at Lascaux IV site.

6th MARCH 2015: signature of the 15-year operating agreement between the Conseil Départemental de la Dordogne and Semitour.

10th DECEMBER 2016: inauguration by French President François Hollande.

15th DECEMBER 2016: public opening of Lascaux IV, an 11,000m complex². The one millionth visitor was welcomed in 2019.



THE ORIGINS OF THE PROJECT

Protection

In order to guarantee the conditions for safeguarding the cave and ensuring its long-term survival, the Scientific Council in charge of the site recommended that the Lascaux hill should be completely protected. This recommendation dictated the general layout of the project, which is set out below the hill.

The Lascaux IV site in the municipality of Montignac-Lascaux lies on the border between the Vézère valley and the Lascaux hill. It is a building-landscape that gives the impression of the incision of a horizontal fault.

Snøhetta chosen for the project

On 18th October 2012, the Norwegian firm Snøhetta was chosen by a jury from over 80 architects from all over the world. Founded in 1989, Snøhetta is run by Craig Dykers and Kjetil Trædal Thorsen and is based in Oslo, New York and San Francisco, Paris, Adelaide, Melbourne, Hong Kong and Shenzhen. The agency brings together architects, landscape architects, interior designers and graphic designers.

Laying the first stone

On 24th April 2014, Minister of Culture Aurélie Filippetti laid the foundation stone for Lascaux IV.



The choice of scenography

The architectural approach of the project is sober, being neither too ostentatious nor overdoing the shapes or materials. Nevertheless a real power emanates from it. The scenography, meanwhile, was entrusted to the design agency Casson Mann, who thought in terms of the visitor experience and envisaged the adaptation of places and stories in the space.

Founded in 1984, Casson Mann is a design agency dedicated to creating innovative projects for its clients. Thanks to their skills as interior designers, they know how to use the space itself as one of their main working tools. Whatever the subject, their approach focuses on the visitor, what they think, feel and appreciate.

Houen Award

2023: 7 years after the construction of Lascaux IV, Norwegian architects Snøhetta were awarded Norway's most prestigious architectural prize: the Houen Foundation Award.

Created in 1893, this award rewards projects for buildings or groups of buildings of exceptional architectural quality. This is the third time Snøhetta has been awarded the Houen Award, following the Library of Alexandria in 2008 and the Norwegian National Opera and Ballet in 2012. Snøhetta, which has just completely refurbished the Musée National de la Marine in Paris, should be celebrating this new distinction very soon.

SITE MAP



Illustration: Catherine Gout

- 1 RECEPTION AND TICKETING
- 2 LIFT
- 3 BELVEDERE
- 4 SHELTER
- 5 DISCOVERY TRAIL
- 6 CAVE
- 7 COURTYARD
- 8 THE LASCAUX WORKSHOP
- 9 THEATRE OF PALAEOLOGIC ART
- 10 CINEMA
- 11 THE GALLERY OF THE IMAGINARY
- 12 IMMERSION ROOM
- 13 SHOP
- 14 "CAFÉ LASCAUX" RESTAURANT



BELVEDERE AND SHELTER

Visitors to Lascaux IV can access the belvedere overlooking the Vézère valley.

The visitor's journey begins at the belvedere. The ascent to the roof of the building is made possible by a glass lift that simulates both a journey through time and the feeling of symbolically climbing the hill of Lascaux. It's an observation point with a breathtaking view over the Vézère valley. It enables the guide to evoke the environment of Lascaux in the Palaeolithic period with their group.

An immersive screen conjures up a vision of the Vézère valley almost 20,000 years ago, when the Lascaux landscape was totally different from today, resembling a steppe, dominated by animals. A leap forward and visitors are now in 1940.

The landscape changes. A group of four young teenagers cross the screen. They set off on an adventure in the woods of Lascaux and invite us to follow them.

THE CAVE

The replica represents the entire original cave accessible to the public, reproduced using the techniques and art of the Atelier des Fac-Similés du Périgord and the Atelier Artistique du Béton.

Inside this replica, the atmosphere is that of a real cave. It's cool and dark. Sounds are muffled. Visitors can enjoy the splendour of the works in an authentic atmosphere, with minimal interruptions. This space is devoted to contemplation. In small groups and accompanied by their guide, visitors will have as personal an experience as possible. As they explore the walls, the guide will provide commentary to enhance their visit.

VISITORS ENTER AN ENCLOSED SPACE TO GET USED TO THE HALF-LIGHT... THE JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY BEGINS...



The scree cone
The guide tells the story of the discoverers' journey to reach this jewel of prehistoric art, and also evokes the entrance to the cave as it was 21,000 years ago.



The Chamber of Bulls
Also known as the Rotunda, this is the room with the most imposing paintings, including 4 huge aurochs. The last is the most famous due to its size (5.60 metres): it is in fact the largest representation in European cave art!



The Axial Gallery

The ceiling of this gallery earned Lascaux the nickname of the 'Sistine Chapel of Prehistory' by Abbé Henri Breuil.

The Lascaux bestiary includes 10 different figures



The "Passage"

The first engravings in the cave can be seen in this room. The images are hidden from view. Four hundred engravings have been made here, and the limestone is raw.

Nearly 600 painted representations and 1,400 engravings are listed.



The Apse

The Apse contains a profusion of representations unequalled in the rest of the cave. In a jumble of figures where the eye gets lost, Abbé Glory has identified 1,000 graphic elements.

400 abstract signs with mysterious meanings run through the cave, accompanying the animal figures.



The Nave

Some of the cave's most emblematic paintings can be seen here: 'The Black Cow', 'The Deer Frieze' and 'The Back-To-Back Bison'.

Before you leave the cave, the guide will explain how the cave extends towards the Chamber of the Felines

THE LASCAUX WORKSHOP

NUMEROUS SCENOGRAPHIC FEATURES ARE ON OFFER TO VISITORS TO THE WORKSHOP

After their guided tour, visitors receive a digital tablet to help them learn more. This 'Visit Companion' offers several routes adapted to different ages and is available in 9 languages. As visitors approach the various scenographic areas, they are offered interactive content (videos, audio commentary, augmented reality, etc.). A whole range of activities for a fun and rewarding experience!



1



Animated walls

On blank walls, an animated film and audio commentary explain how the paintings were created.

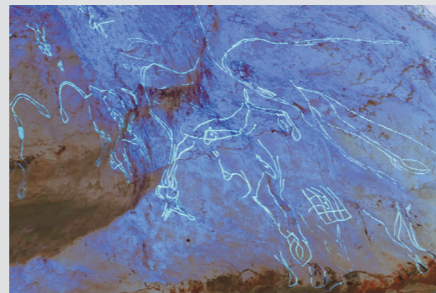
2



Scanning the walls

Using their Visit Companion, visitors scan the key paintings on the walls and unlock additional audio explanations.

3



The invisible at Lascaux

The Workshop is an opportunity for visitors to discover certain areas that were inaccessible during their visit to the cave.

4



Interactive areas

Using touch screens and movement detectors, visitors - alone or with their families - can learn through play and interaction.

THE THEATRE OF PALAEOOLITHIC ART

VISITORS ARE INVITED TO ENTER A MODERN THEATRE, OR RATHER A SERIES OF 'SMALL ROOMS' STAGED AS THREE ACTS.

ACT 1

19th CENTURY: THE RENAISSANCE

Visitors to the 1878 Universal Exhibition discovered the first decorated caves. Prehistorians questioned the finds and their authenticity. Is it really possible that prehistoric man painted such masterpieces?



ACT 2

20th CENTURY INTERPRETATION

The show brings to life the ideas and working practices of two famous men specialising in prehistory in the 20th century: André Leroi-Gourhan and Henri Breuil. They talk about the most important archaeological discovery of the 20th century: the Lascaux cave.



ACT 3

21st CENTURY RESEARCH

This act is resolutely focused on the present and the future: the incredible world of cutting-edge technology used by our contemporary researchers and archaeologists.



THE CINEMA



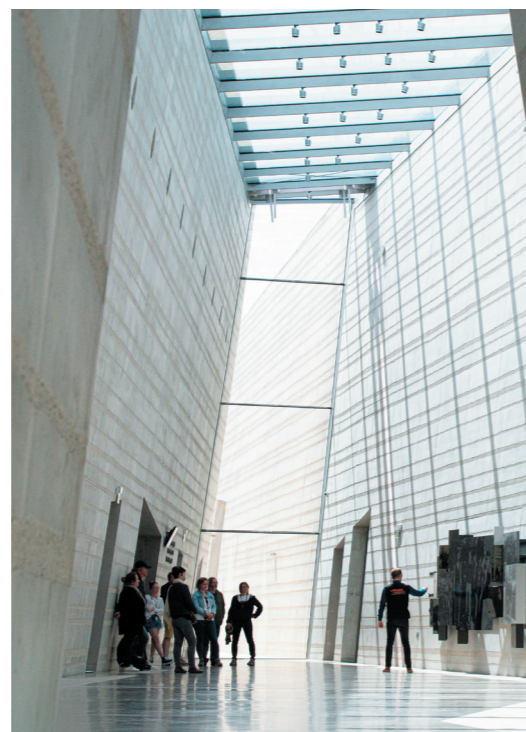
The cinema offers an initiatory journey to the heart of Lascaux and a glimpse of prehistoric art from around the world.

The first screen shows images taken from 3D surveys of the original cave. The second shows footage from other decorated caves around the world.

The film, entitled 'Lascaux and the World', asks the viewer questions about man's place in the past, present and future.

THE FAULT AND THE DISCOVERERS' WALL

With its impressive sloping walls bathed in natural light, it crosses the entire length of the 8,000m² building.



Like a mille-feuille of geological strata, it reminds us of the passage of time....

A stop in front of the 'Discoverers' Wall' is an unmissable stopping point in the Fault and a chance to admire archive photographs while being told the legendary story of the discovery by a guide.

These images show the four teenagers who discovered the cave: Marcel Ravidat, George Agniel, Simon Coencas and Jacques Marsal.

In 1940, the history of the village of Montignac was turned upside down. On 12th September, the four teenagers made one of the most prestigious archaeological discoveries of the 20th century: the Lascaux cave.

THE GALLERY OF THE IMAGINARY a real digital cave



This room allows visitors to explore the links between the different works, from cave art to contemporary art. Around them, a wall of 90 screens, featuring images and works by renowned artists such as Miró, Tàpies and Picasso, makes up this unusual exhibition.

Jean-Paul Jouary, philosopher and curator of the exhibition, has selected different works from the world of Lascaux in terms of techniques, themes, modes of representation and artistic inspiration, in order to explore the link between cave art and contemporary art.

Six interactive stations face the visitor. The public are invited to put together their own exhibition by selecting images. This selection of images of modern art combined with images of cave art can be assembled into a single exhibition, by the visitors themselves and visible to all.

MIRÓ, PICASSO, TÀPIES...

THE IMMERSION ROOM

Since 2022, the visitor experience has been enhanced by the Immersion Room, which completes the tour.



EXPERIENCES ON OFFER

The Prestige visit



An exclusive visit by torchlight to discover Lascaux like never before... A timeless moment you'll never forget!

During this in-depth 2-hour visit, the guide will accompany you not only through the reproduction of the cave but also through the Lascaux workshop (you can arrive earlier to discover the other exhibition areas).

Prestige evenings Cave art & gastronomy



Who hasn't dreamt of the chance to enjoy as emblematic a site as Lascaux after it has closed to the general public, and to experience a timeless moment?

This is now possible thanks to the Cave Art and Gastronomy Evenings, a wonderful opportunity to experience an exceptional moment, out of time, at the crossroads between the origins of Humanity and prehistory-compatible Gastronomy.

After a Prestige visit, visitors will be treated to a gourmet dinner by a Michelin-starred chef, in the heart of one of the areas of Lascaux IV, for an even more immersive experience.

Story telling Tour

This tour, offered mainly during the school holidays, has been specially designed to delight children.

For an hour and 15 minutes, children follow a very special tour with an unusual 'explorer' guide who takes them on a tour of the cave and then into the workshop to learn more about prehistoric tools and their contemporary equivalents.

An overview of the storyline...

Young explorers enter the Lascaux cave equipped with a lamp, where they have a surprising and shocking encounter. A Homo sapiens who lived 21,000 years ago is standing in front of them! An extraordinary journey to the heart of prehistory begins for our young adventurers.

While the intrepid young explorers set off to discover the Lascaux cave, accompanying adults enjoy their own guided tour, right behind the children's. It's a great way to have a visit that's suitable for all ages and without compromising!

Recommended tour

For children aged between 5 and 10, a guided tour lasting around an hour, followed by a self-guided discovery of the other areas.



Self-guided and audio-guide tour at your pace and in 9 languages

To help visitors discover the cave at their own pace and in the language of their choice, digital tablets are available to accompany them along the entire route and in the various immersive areas. This tour is available in 9 languages and is suitable for families and children.



LASCAUX AND ITS CERTIFICATION LABELS



Lascaux IV continues its efforts to protect the environment



Lascaux IV was awarded the label with congratulations from the jury in 2022. Following this, Semitour Périgord is continuing to work to strengthen its commitment to a policy of sustainable development in line with changes in AFNOR (French national organisation for standardisation) criteria. It is, as ever, concerned about the ecological footprint of its major site and is more than ever keen to be at the heart of the initiatives launched by the Nouvelle-Aquitaine Region, the Conseil Départemental de la Dordogne and the communities of municipalities of Terrasson en Périgord Noir and Vallée de l'Homme,



Ecotourism in the Vézère

Eco charter « **Ecotourism in Vézère** » is the fruit of collaboration between two inter-communal bodies and their respective tourist offices: the Office de Tourisme Lascaux Dordogne-Vallée Vézère, the Office de Tourisme Vézère Périgord Noir & the Vézère Valley Grand Site operation, the communities of municipalities of Terrassonnais en Périgord Noir Thenon Hautefort, and the community of municipalities of Vallée de l'Homme.

Developed in 2018-2019, this initiative aims to engage local tourism stakeholders in a sustainable approach. Objectives: to formalise the commitment, create an eco-responsible network, structure the offer and promote the pillars of sustainable development. So it's with great enthusiasm that Lascaux IV has become a member of the 'Ecotourisme en Vézère' eco-charter, an initiative designed to contribute to more responsible and respectful tourism in the Vézère Valley, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and Grand Site de France!



Accueil Vélo

Soft mobility, such as cycling, is booming, encouraging the development of national and local cycle routes. As the Dordogne is a major destination for cycle tourism, Semitour Périgord has applied for the Accueil Vélo label in 2024 for its sites in the Vézère valley (Lascaux IV, Lascaux II, Parc du Thot and the Grand Roc cave). This approach is part of a wider initiative by the Dordogne département and local authorities in the region.

The Accueil Vélo label is a national label guaranteeing a welcome, services and specific facilities tailored to the needs of cycling tourists using cycle routes and paths. It promises a high-quality welcome for cyclists in France. Getting the 'Accueil Vélo' label means that we are responding to the needs of an ever-growing number of people who are keen to enjoy active holidays getting about in an eco-friendly way.

A universal venue and tours accessible to all



In 2019, Lascaux IV was awarded the label 'Tourisme et Handicap' thanks to the improvements made to its building and to adapted tours from the moment it opened suitable for the four disability 'windows' (a visual representation of disability type on the label logo - physical, mental, visual and hearing disabilities)

Since then, the site has constantly upgraded its reception and outreach facilities to meet the requirements of the 'Tourisme et Handicap' label.



Physical disability

- The site is 100% accessible to people with reduced mobility and wheelchairs
- Visitors can borrow wheelchairs free of charge.
- In each area, the touch screens and furniture have been designed to be accessible to all, at the height of children and people in wheelchairs.



Hearing disability

- Some headphones are equipped with ARC technology, allowing people with the latest generation hearing aids to simply place the headphones on their shoulders. In this way, the chip transmits sound directly to the hearing aid
- From the start of the visit to the end of the cave, a tablet allows you to follow the tour with commentaries designed by our guides in French sign language. This tour is also available in text format in French, English and Spanish. Visitors choose the mode that suits them best on the application at the start of their tour
- For the rest of the tour, the Visit Companion offers the "subtitling" option for audio and video content in the language of their choice. These subtitles are available in 9 languages



Visual disability

- The guided tour of the cave is entirely designed to provide a descriptive and immersive experience for all
- Thermo-inflated booklets are provided
- An option activates the appropriate content on the Visit Companion: colourimetry, graphic theme and font size



Mental disability

Each guide is committed to providing the best possible support for these visitors, within a group and at any age.

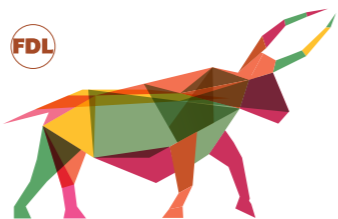
Generally speaking, the reception, security and guide teams are aware of the need to cater for all types of visitor and do their utmost to guarantee the best possible conditions for all visitors.



LASCAUX

A name, a heritage

Help share 20,000 years
of history



**FONDS DE DOTATION
LASCAUX**
PATRIMOINE DE L'HUMANITÉ

The Lascaux World Heritage Site Endowment Fund is a not-for-profit organisation of general interest created to develop access for as many people as possible to the accounts left by the Lascaux artists.

Thanks to the sponsorship of committed companies, the Fund helps disadvantaged groups who are far removed from the cultural scene to discover their heritage.

Since its creation, more than 3,500 people have been welcomed free of charge, in partnership with associations and social or educational structures (Secours Populaire, the French Red Cross, medical-social centres and children's homes).

Our actions include: discovery of Lascaux guided by Lascaux IV guides, virtual visits to enable those who cannot travel to discover Lascaux, encounters with prehistoric animals at the Parc du Thot, educational workshops for children, etc.

USEFUL INFORMATION

**OPEN FROM FEBRUARY TO
DECEMBER**

**Timetables available at
www.lascaux.fr**

**CONTACT INFORMATION
GENERAL PUBLIC**

LASCAUX IV
Avenue de Lascaux 24290
Montignac-Lascaux
Tel.: 05 53 50 99 10
contact@lascaux.fr
www.lascaux.fr

PRESS

If you'd like to come and meet us and find out more about our sites, we'd be delighted to hear from you. We will draw up a programme for your press trip.

- You can find our press releases and press kits online on the Lascaux IV page:
<https://lascaux.fr/fr/dossiers-et-communiqués-de-presse/>
- Take advantage of our online photo library by registering at:
<https://www.semitour.com/fr/presse/phototheque>
- More videos on our Youtube channel:
<https://www.youtube.com/user/SemitourTV>

PRESS CONTACT

Clémence DJOUDI
+33 6 40 91 65 53
c.djoudi@semitour.com



www.semitour.com

@LASCAUXOFFICIEL

