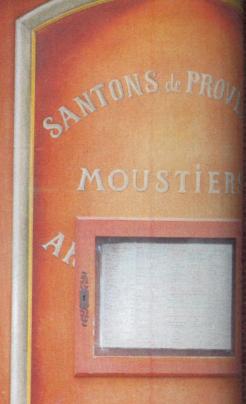
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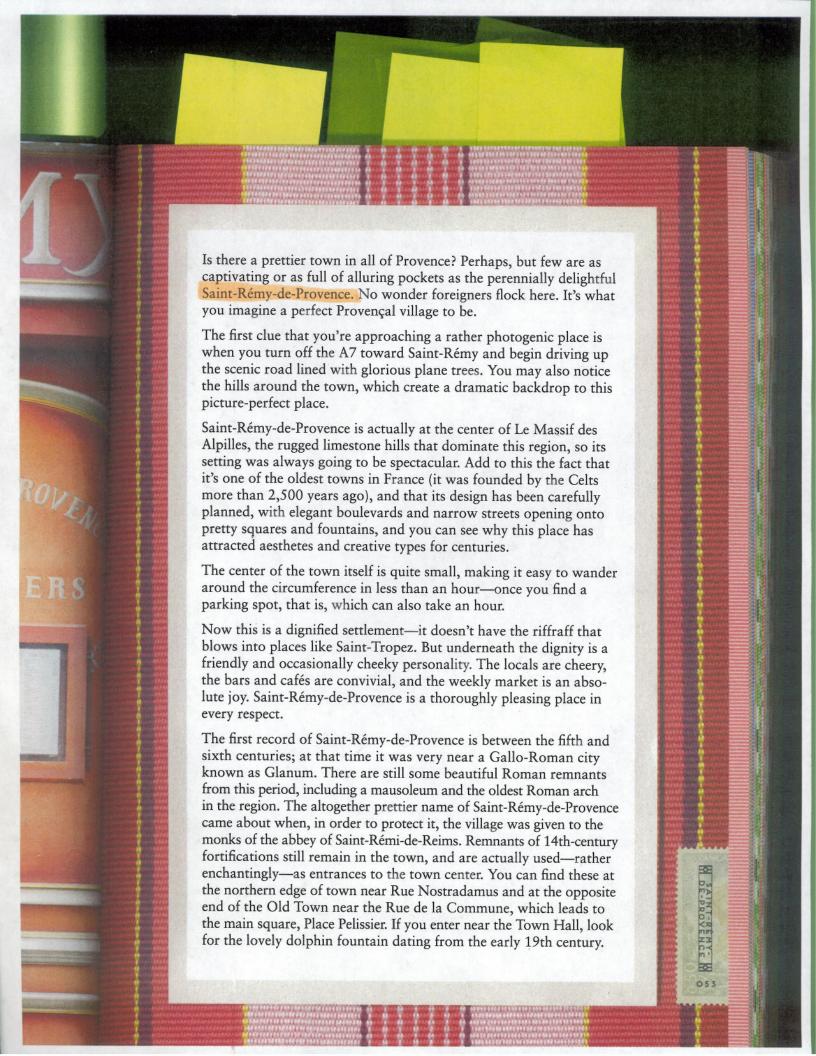


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You can still visit van Gogh's asylum, Saint-Paul-de-Mausole. The route begins at the Tourist Office and is marked by reproductions of van Gogh's paintings. It's a moving experience, seeing the two small rooms where the artist lived and imagining the peace and stability he found within their walls, and then, when you emerge, seeing the irises and lilacs of the garden, and the wheat fields, vine-yards, cypresses, olive trees and hills beyond that inspired him to take brush to canvas in such a prolific manner. (His legacy is still evident today in the bright sunflower-patterned plates and homewares you can buy in the town.)

Once you've seen Saint-Rémy through van Gogh's eyes, it's time to look at it through your own. If you are here on a Wednesday, start with the market—a celebration of life and outdoor living. You won't be able to miss it: Its stalls sprawl through squares and along streets, proffering produce, clothing, soaps, flowers, and art.

Once you've strolled through the stalls, go wander through the myriad lanes of the Old Town, most lined with modern boutiques. Saint-Rémy is a shopper's town, with stores that are both interesting and upscale. There are interior design stores, linen stores, and shops that sell striped French canvas fashioned into deck chairs, bags, seats, and awnings. There are luxury food stores, stylish fashion stores, and, of course, ceramics stores with designs as bright as van Gogh's canvases.

The most charming part of Saint-Rémy-de-Provence is the fact that you can park your car and walk everywhere—most of the good shopping finds are tucked away down pedestrian lanes—and afterward find a café in the sun for lunch. It's as if Saint-Rémy has worked out the secret of a good life and designed the town around it. Certainly, the mix of beautiful Beaux-Arts buildings, medieval walls, shady tree-lined streets, and elegant squares creates a charm that isn't lost on all those who visit, or those who stay for good. Princess Caroline of Monaco was so enamored with Saint-Rémy's peace and timelessness that she settled here with her family following the death of her second husband.

Nostradamus, too, was rather fond of it. The French physician/astrologer was born here in 1503, and you can still see the remains of his birthplace in Rue Hoche. Who knows whether even he would have been able to predict the popularity of this lovely place?



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