Coeur de Lion: *Arrival, Parking, Settling in*

This is the one document you'll need to have with you (on your smart phone or pad) on landing. All other important documents available on the web.

Most guests fly into Toulouse, so we'll begin there—but, except for the first section below, the rest of this information applies to everyone.

Driving from Toulouse airport:

Note: You'll need a total of 6 or 7 Euros for some of the toll roads. (Get them from an ATM at the airport). Some tollbooths may accept debit/credit cards (which you should have cleared with your bank/credit card company before you left), but some won't.

If you are entering a tollbooth and do not yet have a "ticket", you will push a button and the booth will dispense one. When you exit the toll road, you will insert your ticket, after which you will pay with coins or bills. Enter a booth with a green "T" (there may be only one or two) as these are the booths that accept coins and bills. There are no people in the booths. If you need assistance, you can find a button to push and a live person will come on the speaker and help you. They often know English. They are patient.

Basic groceries and supplies before you arrive:

*If you are driving from Toulouse airport, you can make an easy stop at the supermarket Carrefour in Lalbenque, just by getting of A 20 at exit. Here's a map link. At our house, you should find toilet paper and handsoap (bottled). But it's hard to be sure what else. So you might want to pick up some basics, especially for Saturday night dinner, and for Sunday morning breakfast (**unless you want to grab some delicious croissants on Sunday morning in the Tour de Faure boulangerie on you way to the Sunday farmer's market in Limogne, which we recommend**). For coffee, we have a French press, a drip coffee machine, and a Nespresso machine (NOT a Senseo or other brand) so only buy pods made for Nespresso, and buy the bio, recyclable pods if possible (rather then the aluminum ones).*

To repeat (apologies), I wouldn't buy much because, unless you feel it necessary to sleep in very late Sunday morning, you can do all your main food shopping at the wonderful Limogne outdoor market on Sunday. (And there is a small supermarket too for non-food items, on the edge of Limogne on Route de Cahors)—but like the open market, it closes around 12:30)

On your arrival evening you could find a restaurant in the village, and/or stop at the Proxi convenient store in Tour de Faure (a four minute drive), right across the bridge from the village, for some dinner and/or breakfast goods.

Limogne Market (Sunday morning)

Once at the house, you can assess what you may need, make a list*, and head to the Limogne outdoor market on Sunday morning (a short, beautiful drive, a great 60 minute bicycle ride, only a little hilly towards the end).*

*There's also a great butchery next to the outdoor market, as well as a small indoor store, and a pharmacy further down the main street, for basic sundries. Up the main street a half mile, at the edge of town (on the Route de Cahors) is a larger supermarket —with whatever basics you found missing at the house. But, remember, the indoor and outdoor shops on Sunday **close around noon**, so give yourself time.*

Arriving at the Village:

If your GPS takes you to the South side of the river, you will arrive at the top of the village. Stay to the right, on the main road (don't enter the village proper) and drive down all the way past the village (the village will be on your left), and turn around somewhere just before you reach the bridge that crosses the river into Tour de Faure. (Just across the bridge is the Proxi convenient store—a French 7/11 except that it has nearly everything you might want). *(You might also want to note that the public lot on your right as you drive down toward the bridge is where you will be recycling bottles and glass; it has a large green ball recycling bin.)*

Now, as you are driving up from the bottom of the village, you have **three choices**—to go directly to the house, to go directly to the owner's parking lot, and a compromise (to be explained). There are advantages and disadvantages to each.

1) ***I recommend that you drive directly to the private owners lot*** (I'll explain why I've been doing this of late) You will need to pull your luggage up a flight of stone steps, then roll your luggage a couple hundred yards through the medieval gate and up to the house—fairly flat terrain. It's less convenient but if you take it slowly it is a lovely walk. For some, carrying heavy suitcases up the stone stairs may be too much. (Instructions for getting to the owner's lot are further down.) If this sounds too hard, here's a second option:

2) ***This option*** avoids the steps and makes it easier to turn around without driving through the village. It does mean rolling your suitcases a couple hundred yards to the house, as in the second option (but without any steps), then returning to the car to take it to the owner's lot. In this option, you turn on the road to our house (and towards the ancient gate), but pull off to the side and wheel your luggage through the gate and to the house. (See photos and directions below).

1) ***For the more adventurous, you can drive right up to the house.*** But remember, the village street is single lane and narrow (a Land Rover would be a very tight squeeze), and there may be lots of pedestrians. You can drive carefully up to the house, park outside the door, get the key from the lockbox (see info below), open the front door and unload your baggage and groceries. Any cars exiting will wait for you to unload and should allow you to drive forward and/or back into a spot and turn around. The best way to turn around is either to back into an empty parking space and turn around or drive uphill and find a space to back in and turn around. *You may want someone outside the car to guide you as you back around, as the street is very narrow and the stone walls are very sharp.* If you can't find a way to turn around, you can drive uphill slowly to near the top of the village and exit onto the main road, then drive back down the main road, village on left, to the owner's parking lot (instructions below).

These photos will take you through these alternatives. This is your first adventure. Take it easy and enjoy the ride. (In a day or two it will become second nature.)

Option 1— The Owner's Lot

Driving up from the bottom of the village, you'll see a large public parking lot on the right. Directly after that, you'll see this sign on the right. Turn onto this road.

At the first fork, turn left (at the Acces Village sign). Continue past the Spider Web gate on your right, drive slowly (the road is bumpy) and you'll come to another fork. Bear right hear and it will take you into the owner's private lot (it says that a Macaron— a parking sticker- is required, but they have never checked, although we usually keep a few by the entryway of the house). Park wherever you can, and find the stone stairway up to the village.

It's a bit of a climb, but once you are at the top of the stairs, bear right (past the mailboxes), walk through the Medieval Gate, and follow your way a couple hundred yards to the house (the 4th house on the right). It has a Lion's Head sign above the door and a statue of a woman on the window sill. Get the key from the lockbox, open the front door (and return the key immediately please), and make yourself at home.

Option 2:

Starting from the near the large public parking lots below the village, you'll see these signs as you wind up the hill (although the signs do occasionally get changed). Look carefully for this side road here:

….and bear right here. (See the red 'minus' sign, it's a 'do not enter' sign, but you will enter here! The Medieval Gate is just around the corner.) Here is where you could park briefly (leaving room for cars to get by) and roll you luggage down the hill, through the medieval gate, and then a couple hundred yards to the house. A long, but easy, lovely walk. You'll return to the car (don't leave it for more than 15-20 minutes) and take it to the owner's lot.

Option 3:

If you prefer to drive up to the house, continue forward, driving through the Medieval Gate. Go slowly, pedestrians will move to the side. You are looking for the 4th house on the right, with the Lion's Head sign above the door and a small statue of a woman on the arch window sill.

You'll drive up to the house, stop the car, get the key from the lockbox, and quickly unload. The road is narrow, often populated, and it can be hard to turn around. The easiest way is to find an empty parking spot and back in and turn around. Have someone get out of the car to direct you as you turn around. If you can't find a spot to back in and turn around, then you'll have to drive slowly up to the top of the village to exit.

FINDING THE KEY

The key to Coeur de Lion is in a lockbox on the right (downhill) side of the house. I will send you the combination before you leave for France.

To close the box it must also be set to that combination.

Please, always leave the key in the box when you leave the house, in case of emergencies, etc.

Morning Coffee:

The village's morning coffee and croissant place was taken over by an organic restaurant last year. Alas. New businesses are opening and hopefully we'll get back a morning café. In the meantime:

1) We have a variety of coffee making machines at the house— 2 French presses, a grinder, a standard drip coffee maker, and a nespresso machine.
2) The Le Saint Cirq Gourmand has coffee and lots of great snacks. It is on the main road that runs along the side of the village, about half way up (you can walk up into the village and cross over). But not open until 10 a.m.

3) **Le Panetiere de Vacances** a new boulangerie, just opened near the village center—breads, desserts, sandwiches, cheeses, and *fresh coffee*. Impressive, although as yet unclear how early it opens.

4) The main local boulangerie/patisserie is in Tour de Faure, right across the bridge and a quarter mile to the right. Baguettes, walnut bread, croissants, pastries. It's a brisk 15 minute walk (longer on way back), or hop in the car and bring back croissants and chocolatines for everyone. They open early. They serve coffee, and there are outdoor tables. Isabel is the lovely proprietress.

5) If you need coffee or milk, or cheese or duck, or cereal or champagne, the Proxi convenience store is just across the bridge into Tour de Faure. It has everything.

Art on Walls

The large colorful murals on our walls are by ***Nerida de Jong***, an artist of international renown. She was a long time inhabitant of the village, but now spends her time between Greece and Provence, near family. For viewing, or purchase, check out her website: neridadejong.com

Our neighbor across the road, ***Denise Ramsay***, is a phenomenal artist, specializing in botanical watercolors—you'll find two examples in the house. Originally from New Zealand, Denise spends almost half of her year in our village, finding inspiration for her watercolors, from the fields surrounding the village to the wild blooms in her own backyard. Click here, Denise Ramsay, to see more of her art, to buy art, or to request commissions.

At the Musee de Vin, near the center of our village, ***you can purchase reproductions*** of some of Denise's work, perfect for hanging, for gifts, or as remembrances of your special time here.

Arrival time is 4 p.m. or later. (After dark, you'll need your smartphone's flashlight.)
Departure time is ***10 a.m. sharp*** (the cleaners insist.)