



Opposite page: Exploring the Route des Vins de Bordeaux in Graves and Sauternes (photo © phlabguerie); surfing in Biarritz (photo © CDT64).

# New-Aquitaine

## Wonderful WEST

IN THE LUSH WINE COUNTRY OF **NEW-AQUITAINE**, UNFORGETTABLE ADVENTURES AWAIT THOSE WHO LIKE A LITTLE ACTION TO COUNTER ALL THAT INDULGENCE. BY SOPHIE IBBOTSON

### BEACHES OF BIARRITZ

**B**eyond the city of Bordeaux lies the region New-Aquitaine, whose vineyards give birth to world-famous wines. The Garonne and Dordogne Rivers weave their way through a landscape dotted with fairytale châteaux. Explore on foot, by bike or by boat, rewarding yourself with Cognac tasting or a day on the beach in Biarritz.

Down on the coast of New-Aquitaine, about two hours' drive from Bordeaux, beautiful Biarritz ([www.tourisme.biarritz.fr](http://www.tourisme.biarritz.fr)) has been a hub for sun seekers and surfers since the 1950s. In 2017, Biarritz marks 60 years of fame as a surfing destination, and visitors will be able to enjoy celebratory events such as concerts, surf art, surf movies, contests and more. The program continues through to September 3

### ACTIVE NEW-AQUITAINE

With a cycling cruise on the Le Bordeaux ([aquitaine-cruises.com](http://aquitaine-cruises.com)), make the most of both water and land. By day, cycle through the fertile orchards of Little Holland, across the Sauterne wine region, and admire the châteaux of the Médoc. Come nightfall, dine aboard on gourmet dishes as you sail gently down-river to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Saint-Emilion.

Watching pro surfers at the top of their game is exhilarating for spectators, and if you're inspired to get on a board for the first time, or to refine your surfing skills, Biarritz has no fewer than 10 surfing schools.

Boats are available on the Garonne River for the day with Bordeaux River Cruise ([bordeaux-river-cruise.com](http://bordeaux-river-cruise.com)), or you can sleep onboard with Le Boat ([www.leboat.com.au](http://www.leboat.com.au)) for a longer, more leisurely experience in the Lot-et-Garonne.

Biarritz boasts the second-oldest golf course in Europe, great museums, fine dining options, an art deco oceanarium, and a superb contemporary dance company, Malandain Ballet Biarritz. Accommodation options in the region range from the historic and opulent Hotel du Palais in central Biarritz, to the chic and modern Hotel & Spa Villa Seren at Hossegor, and the budget-friendly Okko Hotel in Bayonne.

Cyclists might also take on the famous Dordogne, east of Bordeaux, with its glorious sunshine and well-marked routes. Highlights include the romantic medieval-era town of Bergerac, and the magnificent Magdalene-era caves at Lascaux ([www.lascaux.fr](http://www.lascaux.fr)). A world-class discovery centre here gives visitors an immersive simulated experience of the caves, themselves long off-limits to visitors. The Tour de France will pass through Dordogne this July, another reason for cycling enthusiasts to visit.

### SPOTLIGHT ON COGNAC

Among the esteemed vineyards of New-Aquitaine is Cognac, which is located about one-and-a-half hours' drive from Bordeaux ([tourism-cognac.com](http://tourism-cognac.com)). Here you'll find the world-renowned spirits cellars of Remy Martin, Hennessy, and Martell. Each of them offers exclusive and distinctive tours. Production is strictly regulated: Cognac can only be made in one of six designated zones, it must be twice distilled, and then aged for at least two years in French oak casks. You can learn more about making Cognac on a vineyard and tasting tour.

At harvest time on the Jurançon Wine Route, you can help with grape picking on the hillside terraces. Or go beyond the grapevines altogether, and try the Pau region's cycling, whitewater and golf offerings, overlooking the Pyrenees ([www.pau-pyrenees.com](http://www.pau-pyrenees.com)).

The city of Cognac is bursting with historic sites, including the Royal Châteaux and several churches. The Musée des Arts du Cognac ([www.musees-cognac.fr](http://www.musees-cognac.fr)) is set within a 16th century



Above: The Lascaux caves replicated in astonishing detail at the new museum in Dordogne (photo © Bruno Chanet/CRTA); tasting cognac in Cognac (photo © Région Nouvelle-Aquitaine/M Anglada).

mansion and has extensive collections on everything from viticulture to alchemy.

**Further Information**  
New-Aquitaine Tourist Board  
[www.visit-new-aquitaine.com](http://www.visit-new-aquitaine.com)