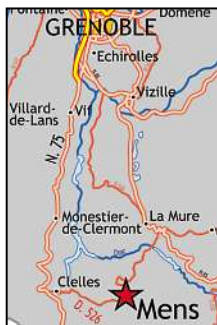


Discover a new eco-friendly lifestyle



■ Mens

LESS than four hours' drive from the Riviera, south of Grenoble, is a nature discovery centre called, Terre Vivante.

This 50-hectare domain, located between Vercors and Dévoluy in the commune of Mens, is open to the public every day throughout summer and is a great place to learn more about the environment.

There is a large sanctuary with a research centre, an 'ideas laboratory' and a leisure park where children and adults can learn how to observe and protect nature, save energy, discover intelligent materials or the cycle of water.

Everything is explained and shown clearly and sim-



BEAUTY: Nature at best



NATURAL: Centre is wealth of information about ways to help save the environment

ply to visitors. Children's educational books are also published by the company which has been campaigning for nature conservation for the last 25 years.

The company has also created an ecology school where visitors can spend up to three days discovering and learning about nature.

A guide takes visitors in small groups through the gardens but it is also nice to let yourself be guided by your curiosity and take in all the information which is available at the site.

There are areas to suit all tastes: for those who love flowers, organic food, birds, those who want to build a house in wood or insulate it with non-polluting materials or those who are looking for ways to save water.

Everything is explained

well and also put into practice, from organic gardening to solar panels, ecological dry toilets and construction with eco-friendly materials.

The centre welcome questions to do with ecology.

Be adventurous and take the chemin de Chantemerle into the forest. It leads to glades where there are goats and small donkeys.

Have fun following insects and dragonflies on the ponds and get to know nature which, the centre explains, needs protection.

■ **Terre Vivante, Domain de Raud in Mens (Isère). Open every day until October 21.**

Tickets: €8.50; reduced price: €6.50; children: €1.50. Tel: 04 76 34 80 80 or www.terrevivante.org

How to get there

THE simplest way is to take the motorway towards Grenoble. Take exit 23 which arrives in Mens after the col de la Croix haute (1,179m).

The motorway may also be reached from Grasse and Digne near Sisteron and the road is more picturesque.

■ **Mens Tourist Office Tel: 04 76 34 84 25**

What to bring back

THE eco-boutique of Terre Vivante sells organic products, ecological products, energy-saving products and also specialised books and leaflets. From the region: bouffettes from Mens (biscuits of Savoie), pognes (tarts with a

Daily activities for children



PLAY CAN BE LEARNING TOO: Nature workshops

WHILE parents are learning how to save energy or planting a vegetable garden, kids can find lots of educational and amusing activities to keep them occupied. From the age of six specialised staff take care of them, helping them discover the plant village, the universe of Mili the bee, the donkeys Charlotte and Myrtille, look for the mysterious Bêtacones or observe the unusual insect hotel.

Educational games, initiation workshops - the daily programme is available at the reception area.

brioche dough), ravioli, goat's cheeses or cow's cheeses (Carré du Trièves). These products are for sale at Mens market on Wednesday morning, place de la mairie.

Events

■ **September 15 - 16:** AN organic produce fair in the village organised with Terre Vivante with about 100 producers of organic goods.

Where to eat

AT the organic restaurant in the Terre Vivante centre. Complete set menus for less than €12. Those who prefer picnics may buy everything from the centre and take their food in a basket to the several areas reserved for picnics in the domain.

■ **Le Café des Arts in Mens village A good meal at €12.50. Tel: 04 76 34 68 16**

Where to stay

CAMPING at beautiful sites, hotels, guest houses, self-catering lodging, rooms in private houses: all at reasonable prices. Information at the tourist office.

Activities nearby:

BESIDES the organic gardening workshops offered at the Terre Vivante centre, you will find many activities from Mens: hikes or bicycle excursions, La Mure small railway track circuit, visits to the Sautet dam, the cheese dairy or nearby arboretum

■ **www.alpes-trieves.com**

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National kite-surf championships at Hyeres this weekend

Follow the nesting instinct

Metamorphose

100s of events for this week