

A watercolor painting of a vast vineyard in Pauillac, France. The foreground and middle ground are filled with rows of green grapevines, rendered with soft, blended brushstrokes. In the distance, a church with a tall, dark spire rises above a line of trees and a few red-roofed buildings. The sky is a pale, clear blue. The overall style is soft and artistic, capturing the essence of the landscape.

# *Indulging*

*in the culture and flavors  
of Western France*

History and wine flow  
seamlessly between  
Brittany and the  
Pyrenees, and they're  
never far from the sea  
in this part of France.

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**Watercolors done on location  
by Michael Killelea**

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Quimper Cathedral dominates every corner of that city and overlooks the medieval buildings on Rue Kereon.

**I**n Brittany, with its own language and flag, people tend to think of themselves as almost a separate nation from France. But in truth, it's more like an introduction to the whole Atlantic coast of France.

Starting in Quimper (above), come along and enjoy a glimpse of cities and towns painted in random locations from northern to southern France in the hot summer of 2019.



# Locronan

Like many of Brittany's old towns, this one started in about 1510 in far western France. It was built of local stone. Lots of it. But the granite is softened by mounds of colorful flowers. A bright red sport bike has also brought a lively contemporary tone that may wake up some of the 834 residents there.

# Rochfort -en -Terre

With only 648 residents, this village in Brittany is even smaller than Locronan, but it won the prestigious label "Petite Cité de Caractère".

The winding streets rise and fall past shops and restaurants filled with the superb food for which France is celebrated.



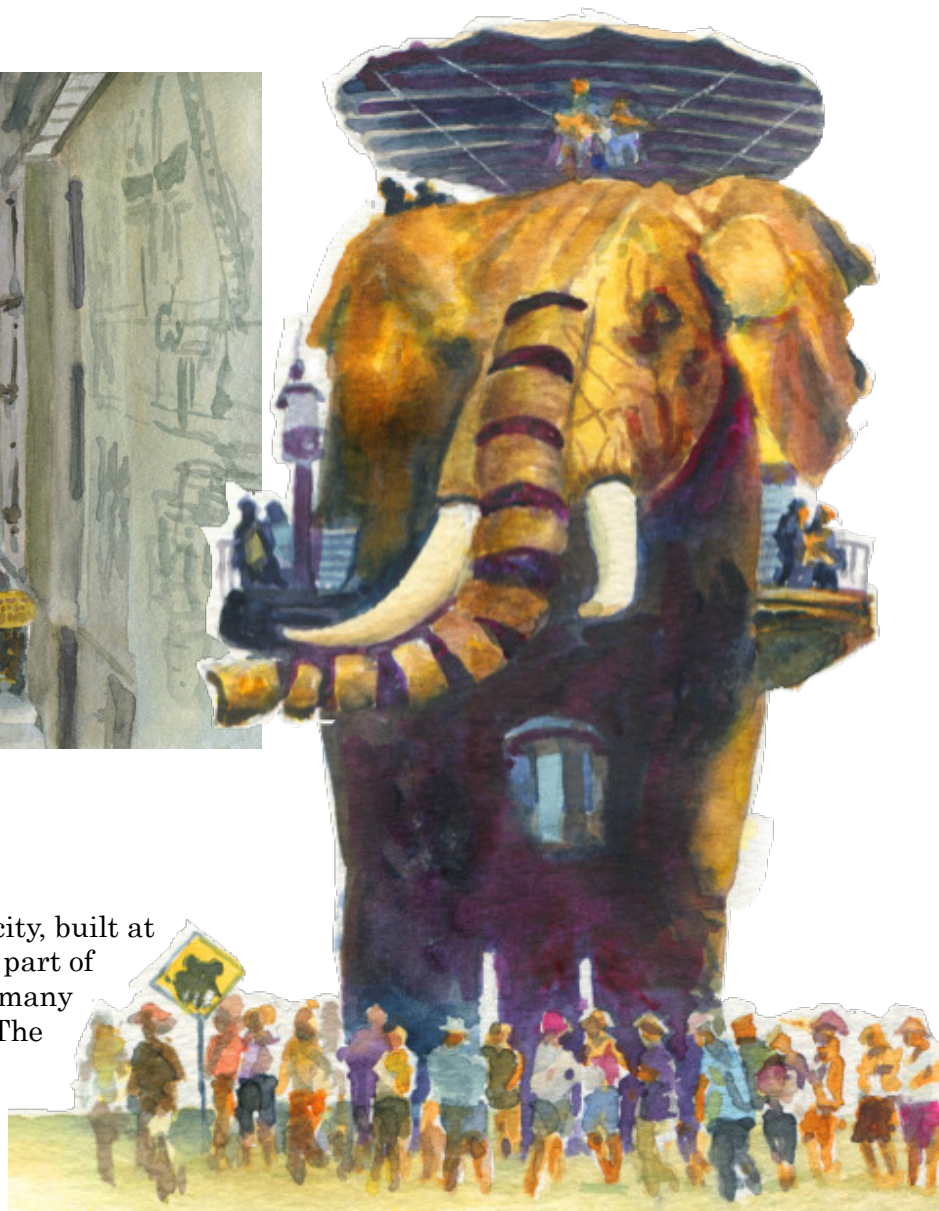
# Concarneau

This former ship building center in far northwest Brittany is more famous today for the medieval walled town of Ville Close, built on an island in Concarneau's harbor. The entire old city is fascinating, but tourists inevitably seem to cross the bridge to the shops and restaurants waiting on the island.



# Nantes

This is France's 6th largest city, built at the mouth of the Loire River, but culturally part of Brittany. It's a lively place, featuring among many things a park called "Les Machines de l'île". The giant creatures there lumber past visitors.





# L a Rochelle

Romans developed wine and salt production in this major seaport on the Bay of Biscay, but the town itself wasn't founded until the 10th century. Today the Old Harbour area caters to pleasure boats and seafood restaurant devotees.



# B ourg

The King's Stairway ascends 500 steps from the port to the upper village. It was built atop the golden limestone cliffs that give local buildings their color. Once a home to royalty, it has been a safe haven for hundreds of years at the intersection of the Dordogne and Garonne Rivers.

# B<sup>laye</sup>

The town sits on the right bank of the Gironde Estuary. It is famous for its Citadel, a fortress built on an enormous rock at the river's edge. But like most towns, it has a Wednesday marketplace where little kids chase each other while locals get a chance to gossip and shop.



# L<sup>ibourne</sup>

Town Hall overlooks the busy main square where just about anything can be found for sale on weekends. While wine production is superb in this southwest section of France, bakeries and restaurants are filled with affable locals indulging in France's satisfying edibles.





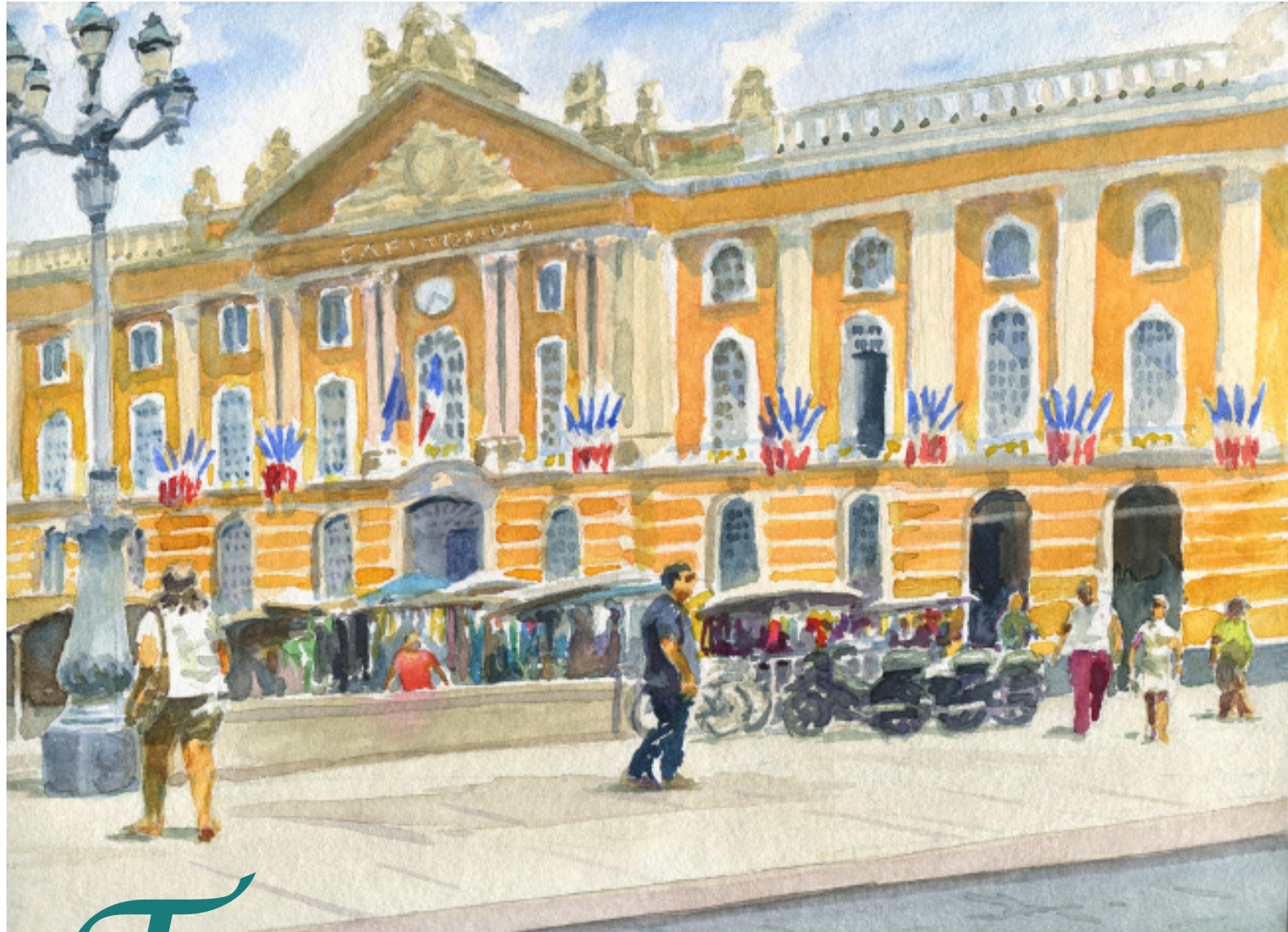
# Bordeaux

In a city with a great many highlights, the seventeen arches of the Pont de Pierre span the Garonne River and pay tribute to Napoleon I who ordered its construction. The steeple of Bordeaux's imposing Basilica of St. Michael rises on the left.

# Carcassonne

This fortified city within sight of the Pyrenees has been a strategic location since before the Romans. It's easy to imagine knights at the Narbonnaise Gate (right) ready to defend the walls and the Citadel inside from hordes of visiting tourists.





# Toulouse

France's fourth largest and most dynamic city is also the capital of Occitanie in Southern France. European Aerospace, universities and major industries, plus a start of the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela are all here. The Place du Capitole (above) is crowded with vendor booths, shops and restaurants.



## Mike Killelea

is an artist, author, teacher and traveler who relishes every opportunity he can find to paint almost anywhere he has time, unlike in Carnac (at left), among the prehistoric monoliths.

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More of his work is on his website [www.killelear.com](http://www.killelear.com) and you can follow the link there to the Killelear Facebook page. His email is [art@killelear.com](mailto:art@killelear.com).