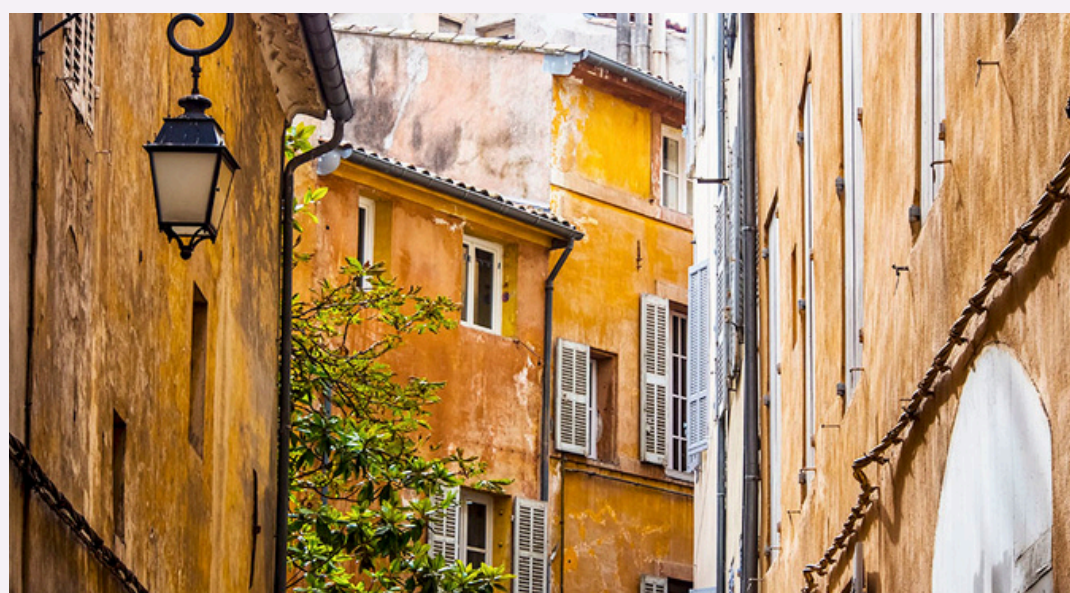
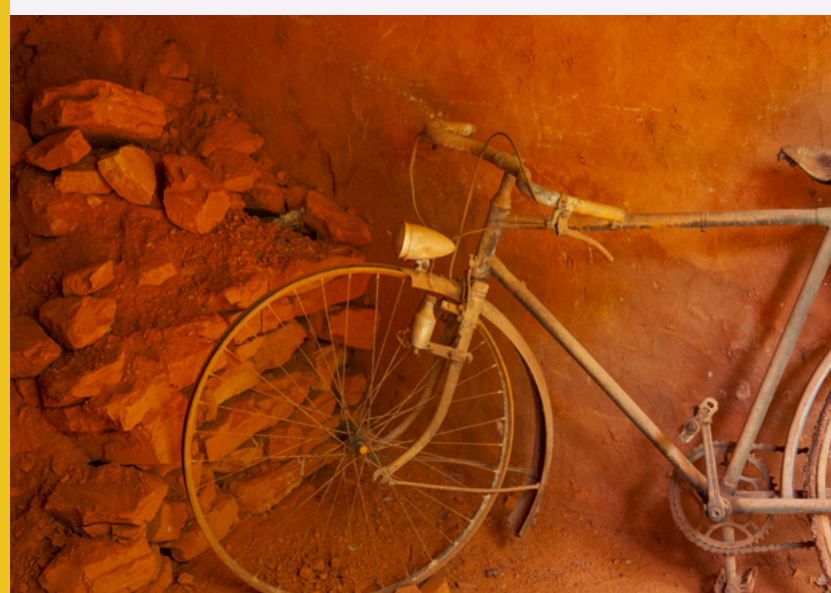




OCHRES DU LUBERON

Oil Painting Retreat in Provence



June 21-28, 2025
June 28- July 5, 2025
September 13-20, 2025



Introduction

Ocres du Luberon is a residential oil painting course set in the heart of Provence, where colour becomes a heightened sensory experience.

Not everyone knows that the Academy of Fine Arts in Rome was founded by the French in the 17th century with the aim of encouraging artists to share, rather than conceal, their exceptional knowledge of colour. One of the Academy's earliest directors spoke of promoting a “sensual use of colour”, believing that the quality of a painting lay in the richness, beauty, and intensity of its hues.

Spending a week in the Luberon — a region renowned for producing outstanding pigments for art suppliers in Paris, Buenos Aires and Tokyo — is a remarkable opportunity to study the true substance of painting.

Here, where colour is born — among old 19th-century pigment factories and dusty ochre trails — we will set up our easels and work immersed in the landscape.



Our programme in detail

Art lessons tailored to everyone, combined with cultural visits and nature excursions

Day 1:

Arrival at the villa at 6:00 PM. Room assignments, a welcome toast, and a candlelit tasting to kick off the week.

Day 2:

Morning: **The Alchemy of Fine Art Materials** — a lesson on colours and pigments: their origins, unique properties and behaviour in painting.

Afternoon: Canvas preparation (**Imprimitura all’Italiana**), planning the composition, and sketching the draft.

Evening: **Stargazing** with astronomer Alain Gau, who will guide us through an unforgettable night sky with his telescope.

Day 3:

Morning: Visit to the renowned **Sénanque Abbey**, a masterpiece of Cistercian architecture, gracefully nestled in lavender fields (in bloom during June and July). Exploration of the village of **Gordes**.

Afternoon: Application of the first layer of paint, which is never the final colour, according to tradition. A study of **Verdaccio**: the modernity and the magic of Giotto's painting lesson.

Day 4:

Morning and afternoon: A day of intense work at the easel. At this stage, the layering of colours aims to give solidity and depth to the subject we are painting. This is likely the most critical and defining moment in the creation of a painting.

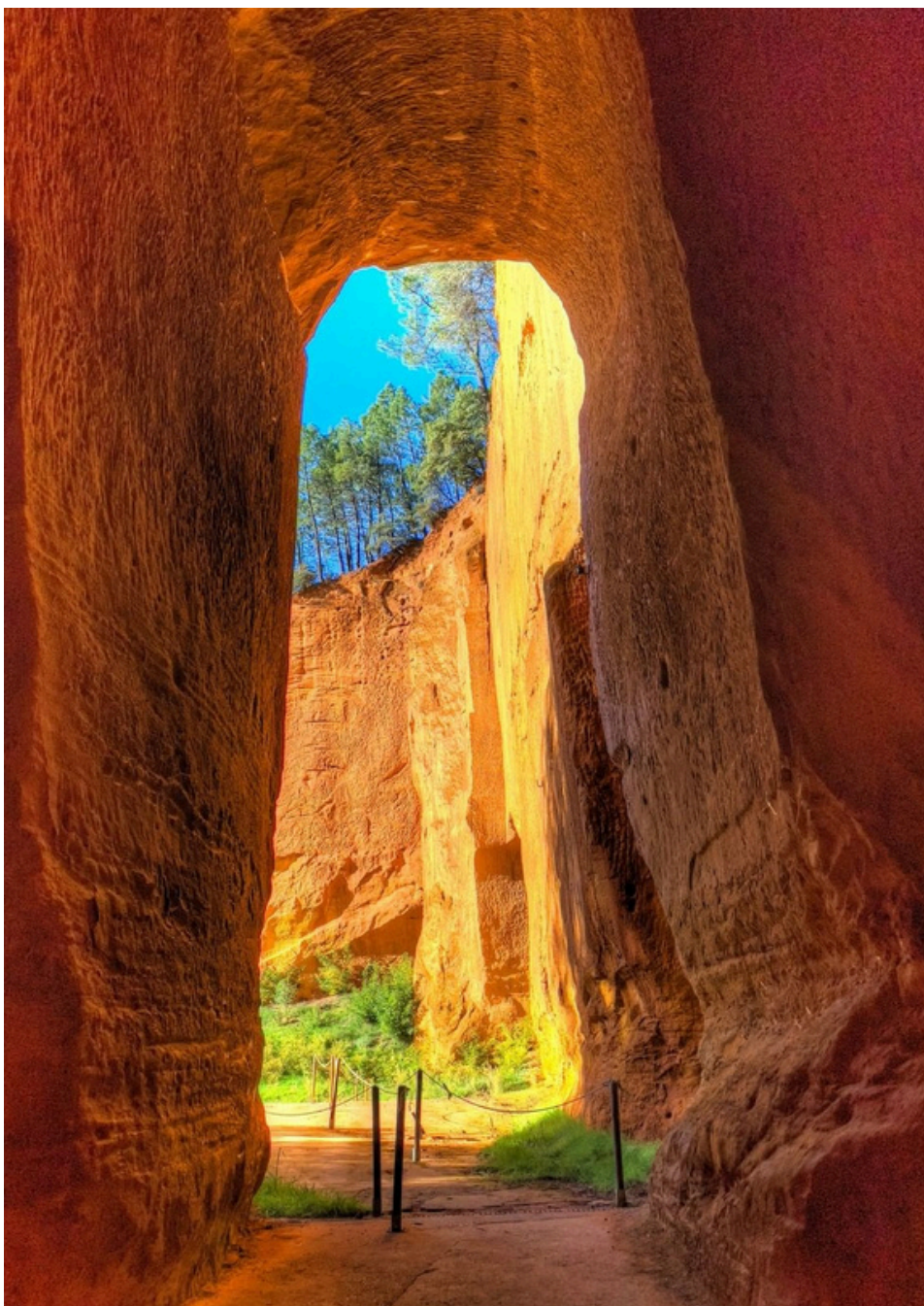


Day 5:

Morning: Visit to a perfectly preserved 19th-century pastel factory, where we will observe the creation of pigments and their transformation into various art materials (pastels, watercolors, oil paints, etc.). Followed by a walk along the **Sentier des Ocres**—a stunning natural canyon in shades of yellow, orange, and red near the village of **Roussillon**.

Afternoon: Painting session at the easel.

Day 6:



Visit to the **Bruoux Mines**, a labyrinth of underground yellow pigment galleries stretching over 40 km beneath the hills.

Explore the medieval village of **Lacoste**, dominated by the castle once owned by the Marquis de Sade.

Return to the villa to continue painting.

Day 7:

Morning and Afternoon: Intense painting sessions, focusing on finishing each work. Participants will receive guidance at every stage: light layers, glazing, and fine detail work.

Techniques using natural drying oils, once standard before the industrialization of art supplies, will be applied to speed up the drying process.

Day 8:

Application of a protecting final varnish to the painting. House tidying, packing, and a mid-morning garden breakfast.

The programme is designed to strike a perfect balance between studio time at the easel and leisure moments exploring the vibrant, authentic, and dazzling Luberon — a truly unique corner of Provence.



The programme will be scrupulously followed as planned but may adapt to the needs of the paintings and their drying times. Consequently, the order of visits and extracurricular activities may vary. Also, the stargazing night will be chosen by Alain, in order to enjoy the sky in its best possible condition.



The villa

The course will take place in an 18th-century historic villa with a swimming pool, nestled in the French countryside amid blooming lavender fields and orchards. The villa is not accessible by public transport, so it is essential to have your own vehicle or arrange to share a journey with someone who does.



Domaine de Saint Pons is a charming 1700s "gîte," lovingly restored while preserving its original beams, floors, and fireplaces. Perched on a hill overlooking the valley, it is surrounded by an expansive park, oak woods, vineyards, and lavender fields.

The villa boasts an impressive 21-metre swimming pool on a panoramic hilltop, offering breathtaking 360-degree views of the surrounding landscape. The interior is a delightful blend of classic, antique, and contemporary styles.





We love food!

Without claiming to offer a Michelin-starred experience, most meals are included in the participation fee. These will be fresh, summery dishes featuring plenty of fruit and vegetables.

We will stock up on provisions for the entire week, with an option to restock midway if needed.

The menu will be predominantly vegetarian but not exclusively so. If any participant is vegan or has specific dietary requirements due to allergies or intolerances, please let us know at the time of registration.

There will be no designated chef; everyone will contribute to cooking and help each other prepare meals, as well as keep the villa clean and tidy. If you have recipes to suggest or know of a unique and interesting dish to add to the menu, feel free to share—it will be warmly considered. The kitchen will remain accessible to everyone, including those who wish to prepare something for themselves.

Any stops at cafés or shops during excursions will be at the participant's expense.



Fees and Regulations

The base cost of the retreat is € 1,300 per person, based on a, ample shared double room.

This fee may be subject to reductions or increases in the following cases:

- 10% reduction for those bringing a friend or companion to share a double room with a king-size bed.
- 30% surcharge for those requesting a double room for single use.
- 10% surcharge in the months of July and August (high-season)

Regardless of the group composition, the art retreat will proceed only if the minimum number of 8 participants is reached. The availability of rooms in different configurations is limited, as the venue is a villa and not a hotel. The organisers will do their best to accommodate all requests within the constraints of the facilities. Please kindly notify us of any food allergies or intolerances during registration.

As an art school, we are unable to provide travel insurance for participants, and we strongly recommend obtaining private insurance.

Participation in the art retreat requires membership in the Cultural Association La Musa d'Argento APS, which requires an annual membership card of €30.

Registrations for this art retreat must be firm. In case of cancellation by the participant, the participation fee is non-refundable (but it is possible to transfer your spot to a friend). Please register only if you are genuinely interested in attending, as registration is binding.

To confirm your participation, a deposit of 50% of the fee is required as a confirmation deposit – this deposit is non-refundable.

INCLUDED IN THE FEE

- Seven nights' accommodation in a spacious 5 star villa with a garden and pool.
- Tourist tax.
- House cleaning and utilities.
- Seven breakfasts, five lunches, and six dinners.
- An evening of stargazing with an astronomer.
- Entry to the Abbaye de Sénanque, the Mines des Bruoux, the Ochre Trail, and the historic pastel factory.
- A 36-hour oil painting course.
- Canvases, paints, and brushes. While experienced painters are encouraged to bring their own supplies, the provided materials are of professional quality and sufficient for all needs.

NOT INCLUDED IN THE FEE

- Travel to and from France.
- Any additional meals, dinners, or drinks in villages and towns.
- Personal shopping.
- Anything not specified under "Included in the Fee."

All activities are voluntary. Each participant is free to carve out personal time or decide whether to join the communal activities planned during their free time.

The core aim of the retreat is to spend serene days dedicated to painting and exploring special locations, surrounded by like-minded individuals who share common interests and a kindred spirit.

This is a cultural initiative managed by an association. We are not a tour operator.

