

Beat: Travel

## G7 SUMMIT IN BIARRITZ - THE BASQUE COUNTRY BY INSTINCT

From 24 To 26 August 2019

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**USPA NEWS** - The BASQUE COUNTRY is a French Region 2 Hours from Paris by Train and 1 Hour from London by Air. First a Small Shing Port, the Imperial City of Biarritz became a Famous Seaside Resort featuring the first Seawater Spas, capitalising on the Basque Coast's Waves, its Mythical Beaches, and the Rise of Surfing in Europe. Biarritz is located in the Pyrénées-Atlantiques Department in the Nouvelle-Aquitaine Region. It is Adjacent to Bayonne and Anglet and 35 kilometres from the Border with Spain. It is in the Traditional Province of Labourd in the French Basque Country.

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Beaches, Golf Courses, Thalassotherapy Centres, Culture and a Tradition of Gastronomy make Biarritz and the Basque Country so attractive for Tourists. Endowed with a Range of High-Class Facilities and Infrastructures, throughout the Year this Region can host Hundreds of Thousands of Visitors from across the World, who benefit from its Exceptional Commercial Dynamism. Beyond Leisure, Biarritz is developing a Flourishing Business Tourism, positioning itself as one of Europe's Leading Business Destinations, welcoming Tens of Thousands of Professionals each year to its Three Congress Centres and the City's Exhibition Hall.

Biarritz, like the Basque Country, welcome, in any Season, many Prominent Economic, Cultural and Political Events on a National and International Scale. This Year Biarritz will host the G7 from the 24th to 26th August. And many other Successful World-Class Events take place here, contributing to the City's Ambition to shine Internationally. There are many Unique Attractions that characterise Biarritz, an Ocean City open to the World.

Regarding Tourism : Rivers and Streams, Valleys, Sandy Beaches, Creeks and Clifs, Grassy Slopes, Agricultural Plains, Mountainous Terrain. This diverse Natural Landscape has to be preserved: 60% of the Region "" all its Forested Areas, its Waterways and Coastline "" are protected under the European Natura 2000. The Mountain Economy accounts for 15 to 20% of Tourism in the Pyrenees-Atlantiques. Winter Sports are a Key Attraction with 6 Ski Resorts and Nordic Areas: Gourette, Pierre St Martin, Artouste, Iraty, Issarbe and Somport. With a strong Historical Link with the Tour de France, the Department has been actively developing Cycling for Ten Years, adapting with Local and Regional Authorities close to 100 km of Green Lanes and 400 km of Cycle Routes. Slow Tourism, rising Concern about Health and the Environment, the Search for a more User- Friendly Town planning are also Strong Civic Motivations to develop Cycling...

\* The visit was in the company of Olivier MERCOLI Director Cité de l'Océan and Aquarium of Biarritz

The fabulous History of "The Biarritz Aquarium" : The Passionate and Persuasive Marquis Alexandre Guillaume Léopold de Folin embarked on intensive Scientific Activities and managed to convince the French Authorities to launch the first Scientific Campaign on board the "Travailleur" to explore the Depths of the Bay of Biscay. The Marquis de Folin declared that a "Seat of Learning" should be created "that will become a Centre upon which People will converge from all parts of the World". This Idea lay the Foundations for the Biarritz Aquarium, which was one of the first French Establishments where Oceanography was spoken about to a Public that was becoming increasingly enthusiastic about the fascinating World of the Oceans... The Biarritz Aquarium Extension opened in 2011 and now offers Visitors a more In-Depth Tour along the Gulf Stream, the Caribbean Sea, the Indo-Pacific region...The Scenography has been changed, the Surface area has doubled (from 3,500 m2 to 7,000 m2), more Aquariums have been added, there is one of the largest Pools in France (1,500 m3), a Caribbean Lagoon... (<https://www.aquariumbiarritz.com>)

The Universes of "The City of the Ocean" : Listen, Touch, Feel and Dive into the Depths of the Ocean through interactive and 360° Immersive Experiences, Playful Devices, 3D Animations, Surf Simulators will turn your Trip into an exciting Odyssey : finding out more

about the Blue Planet. Embark on an eventful Journey aboard the Bathyscaphe in the dynamic 4D Cinema, surf the Perfect Tube, put yourself in the Shoes of a Surfer and face the Mythical Waves, tease Archie the Giant Squid, listen to Christopher Columbus or Gilgamesh's Secrets, take a Seat aboard Seaborg, dive without getting wet with a Virtual Reality Mask, be amazed by the Beauty of the 40 minute Film and above all learn about the Wealth and the Needs of the Ocean. (<https://www.citedelocean.com>).

A Unique Feature of this Area is its Proximity and Natural Cooperation with three Spanish Autonomous Provinces: Euskadi, Navarre and Aragon. Across the Valleys, there have long been Daily Contacts between its Peoples that have left Historical Legacies that continue to this Day. The Basque Country has a Vibrant Linguistic and Cultural Heritage that is Exceptional and Unique. Euskara, the Basque language, is the Oldest Living Language in Europe. It's the Official Language of the Spanish Part of the Basque Country where, from Pamplona to Bilbao, more than 2.5 million People live. It has also seen a renewed Interest in the French Basque Country where nearly half of School Pupils now learn it. Basque Identity is as Linguistic as it is Cultural and Gastronomic. It inspires the South West of France and far beyond.

Another particularity of the Basque Country is the Eusko, a Currency created in 2013, which addresses both Ecological and Solidarity Concerns. It allows Professionals and Consumers to be part of a more Sustainable Approach that protects the Basque Language, Small-Holding Farmers, Local Businesses and the Environment. Basque People have settled across Five Continents. Basque Centres, Euskal Etxeak, create Thousands of Sociocultural Activities each year to keep the Basque Culture alive: Dance, Language, Songs, Gastronomy and Traditional Games. With its Population on average increasing 0.6% annually, Nouvelle-Aquitaine is one of the most Populated Regions in France. Even if Newcomers are often Young Parisian Graduates who settle mainly in the Metropolis of Bordeaux, there is also significant Movement across the Region from Bordeaux to the Landes, Charente-Maritime, Vienne and of course the Basque Country, where more than 9,000 People a year arrive.

The Basque Country and the Nouvelle-Aquitaine Region are both labelled Positive Energy Territories. Biarritz and the Basque Coast are investing in Blue Growth in Marine and Maritime Employment Sectors. This involves the Production of Renewable Energy at Sea and the valorisation of Marine Bio-Resources, including maintaining and revitalising Traditional Maritime Activities, Fishing, Aquaculture, Port Operations, Tourism and Water Sports.

\*\* The visit was in the company of Nicole BERGARA and her daughter Liza BERGARA

A Basque Native, Liza Bergara is an example of the Link between Heritage and its Creative Transformation. The "Makhila Ainciart Bergara", a Traditional Basque Walking Stick and Honorary Object, bears the name of the House in Larressore where it has been handcrafted for Seven Generations. Symbol of a Lifestyle and Way of Thinking, it is listed in the Inventory of Rare Crafts under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, and its Producer has been labelled as a Living Heritage Company (EPV) by the Ministry of the Economy. A Graduate of the Boule Arts School in Paris and President of the EPV Association, Liza Bergara, who joined the Family Business in 2017, has put her Mastery of Metal Engraving at the Service of a Traditional Expertise passed down over the years, reinventing her Profession and promoting this Label. ([www.makhila.com](http://www.makhila.com)).

The Menus of Leading Chefs feature some of France's most Iconic Products such as the Famous Piment d'Espelette, Pyrenean Suckling Lamb, Saint-Jean-de-Luz Hake, Ossau Iraty (ewe's Milk Cheese), Itxassou Cherries and Bayonne Chocolate. For an Aperitif, People take a Slice of Kintoa, the Exceptional Ham from Black Pigs reared on Mountain Slopes, while for Dessert, they savour Eguzkia, Basque Cake. Regarding The Espelette Pepper, is a Variety of Capsicum Annuum that is cultivated in the French Commune of Espelette, Pyrénées-Atlantiques, traditionally the Northern Territory of the Basque People. On June 1, 2000, it was classified as an AOC Product and was confirmed as an AOP Product on August 22, 2002. (Syndicat du Piment d'Espelette - <http://www.pimentdespelette.com/>).

Cédric Béchade (One Michelin Star in the 2009 Michelin Guide) and the Basque Country : a Heart Loving Story that begins at the Hotel du Palais in Biarritz with Jean-Marie Gauthier, whom he joined at the end of his Studies in 1996. Cédric then moved to the Hotel de Crillon, a Magnificent Parisian establishment... However, he promised himself to return to the Basque Country, as he cherishes so much the Values of this Region... Faithful to the Basque Country, after four years of Real Estate seeking, finally finds, and falls in love with the Auberge Basque in Helbarron located in the City of Saint Pée sur Nivelle. He purchased this Magnificent "Etxe" in March 2006. With a Beautiful Team of Basque Craftsmen he launched a Renovation Operation and Amazing Works, and made this Place the Contemporary Inn of his Dreams. "I was born professionally in the Basque Country", says Cédric and "I come back with Great Emotion, Respect for its Culture, its People and its Products." ([www.aubergebasque.com](http://www.aubergebasque.com)).

It's a Short Step from Culinary Delights to Tableware. And Basque Cloth is Legendary. Formerly called "Manteau de Boeufs" (Cow's

Mantle) because it protected Cattle from Insects, this 100% linen quickly found its place in the Home. Table Linen, Curtains, Cushions, various Accessories, Toiletry or Tote Bags are created by Names including Tissages de Luz, JeanVier, Artiga, Lartigues 1910, Ona Tisse and Moutet.

Regarding "Lartigue 1910 - Tissage de Linge Basque", in 1910 at Oloron-Ste-Marie, Calixte and Anastasie Lartigue established one of the Region's First Workshops producing Fabrics for Espadrilles and Berets. Since then, 4 Generations have perpetuated the Art of Weaving with Creativity and Passion. Philippe Lartigue, Creator and Weaver, created the "1910 Lartigue" Brand as a Tribute to the Family's 1st Weaving Workshop and launched a New Concept: the Guided Tour of the Weaving and Production Factory together with a Shop where People can find the Collections made there. (www.lartigue1910.com - Kitchen, Table, Decor, Bath time, Accessories, Bags and luggage, Children).

"Goicoechea Potier Céramique" : Poterie Goicoechea was established in 1960 from the Hand of Jean Baptiste Goicoechea. 50 years later, Poterie Goicoechea create and make Models from Classical to Contemporary Style. The traditional Know-How, Passion and Quality are behind the Family's Prestige. They are proud to display the Living Heritage Enterprises label (EPV), awarded by the Ministry of Economy. It is a State Recognition that recognises exceptional Craftmanship and Manufacturing Excellence. This Label is recognized Worldwide. (<http://www.poterie-goicoechea.com>).

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