

Get up-close-and-personal with a wolf pack in the French Ardennes

A region of France already renowned for being synonymous with wildlife and nature, the French Ardennes will be giving all of its visitors an opportunity to get 'up-close-and-personal' with a wolf pack from Easter Saturday.

Located to the east of Sedan, in the dense Ardennes forest, Nocturnia has already established itself as a popular family attraction where visitors can discover "nature by night".

But the appearance of the Wolf Park has added an entirely new dimension to the experience, and has resulted the attraction being re-launched and re-christened "Parc Argonne Découverte".

The new Wolf Park is now set to open on April 3rd, and will initially feature three wolves - two males and one female. This belief is that this combination gives the best chances for reproduction and, with luck, the Park will be showing-off the first of its wolf cubs from June of this year.

The wolves themselves will now live in a large parkland area neighbouring the Nocturnia complex.

Visitors will be able to observe the relationship between the animals, and see them eating. And – in keeping with the original concept of Nocturnia – the attraction will also be organising some very special occasions when experts will be on hand to accompany visitors, to see the wolves at night. At the moment, the dates when this will be happening are as follows: 24th April, 29th May, 26th June, 31st July, 28th August and 25th September. Escorted evening tours will cost an additional 10 Euros.

Now expanding sensitively, Parc Argonne Découverte has a range of attractions within the one complex, as well as a large refreshment area overlooking the stunning Ardennes forest.

For further details, visit www.nocturnia.fr.

Another animal synonymous with the Ardennes, of course, is the wild boar, which still roam free in the area, and are hunted for their meat which finds its way onto the menus of many of the region's best restaurants.

But there are several other ways that the visitor can come into contact with the animals – not least, in the animal park of Saint Laurent, one of the most popular family attractions near to Charleville-Mézières.

And anyone approaching the French Ardennes by road from the south will also come into close contact with Woinic – the world's largest boar, and the Ardennes' equivalent of The Angel of the North.



Created by artist Eric Sléziak, Woinic took 11 years and 12,000 working hours to make, from small metal pieces.

Regions of Italy and Belgium also coveted Woinic, but the local council, Conseil Général des Ardennes, took delivery of the world's greatest wild boar on the occasion of the Ardennes' Fest on August 8th, 2008. And it now stands proudly in its true 'homeland' as the symbol of the French Ardennes.

Another new attraction in the French Ardennes for 2010 is the Domaine Fortifié des Ayvelles, near to the region's capital of Charleville-Mézières.

Built after the Franco-Prussian War, the attraction replicates a defensive fort capable of housing 900 men. Originally designed at the end of the 19th century by General Séré de Rivières the site was intended to prevent a German invasion, and is described as "a moving, yet strangely serene new visitor attraction", located within a calm and peaceful forest.

Further details can be seen at <http://fort.ayvelles.free.fr/>.

The latest *Discovery Guide to the French Ardennes* can be obtained by telephoning +33 (0) 3 24 56 06 08, or by e-mailing info@ardennes.com.

For further information, visit www.ardennes.com.

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