

Gassin



The hilltop village of Gassin was for a long time called "La Vigie du Golfe" (literally Gulf Lookout), and is today listed and classified among the Most Beautiful Villages of France. Due to its position, it was possible from this height to keep watch over the Gulf of Saint-Tropez - then the Gulf of Ramatuelle - and the Bay of Cavalaire as far as the Îles d'Hyères.



The village of Gassin receives its first mention in the 13th century. The remaining tower of the medieval castle bears witness to this past. The village extended inside the courtyard of the castle and then into the suburbs.

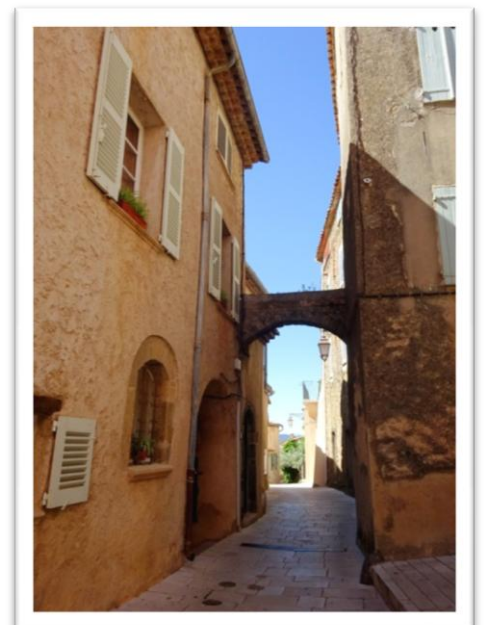
There is much historical evidence of its medieval past, including the Porte des Sarrazins (Saracens Gate), which probably opened in the 14th century, and the remains of a hinge, as well as the doors of the long street, the oldest of which dates from 1422.

When you arrive in Cassin, you can start your visit at the orientation board, just above the parking area at the entrance to the village. From there you have a magnificent view over the bay of Saint-Tropez and the surrounding hills. You can see a large part of the coast including the resorts of La Croix Valmer, Saint Tropez, Grimaud, Sainte-Maxime and les Issambres as well the Massif des Maures to the north.

You can continue by walking along the medieval terrace - the Promenade Dei Barri - where there are several restaurants offering a terrace with panoramic views.

The village is small and even the main square is barely wider than an ordinary road, but walking through the old streets of Cassin is a real pleasure. Look for the old well and the street called Androuno - said to be the narrowest street in the world.

You can also enjoy a stroll around the L'Hardy-Denonain garden, towards the south of the village, which contains examples of many of the plants commonly associated with Provence. This garden is officially classified in France as a "Jardin Remarquable" (Remarkable Garden) (closed on Thursdays).



There are few historical monuments in the village (unless you count the houses of course!), but you can see the Church of Our Lady of the Assumption, a 16th century Romanesque-style church with a square bell tower. Another religious monument is the Chapel of Notre-Dame-

de-la-Consolation, an 11th century chapel in a small park just below the main village. In the past, the village had five full time cork makers working in it. The other main trade in Cassin was the production of charcoal by the village 'bousquetiers'.

Interestingly, the new village of Cassin, which was built below the medieval village, won the first prize for the best 'new town' in Europe. It was designed by François Spoerry who also won praise for the design of the nearby Port Grimaud. It is true that it was very well designed in a manner based on the style of the medieval village.