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## DAY 6 – Porcelain, Secrets, and the Magic of the Dordogne

Monday, Novembre 10, 2025 –

Gorgeous autumn skies

We awoke in our temporary French homes, scattered across the Limousin countryside, still glowing from last night's unforgettable home-hosted dinners. Some of us stayed with David and Ika at the Ancien Couvent des Carmes, with its peaceful cloisters and friendly cats. Others experienced Colette and Patrick's grand estate at Château de Ribagnac, complete with horses grazing nearby. Delphine and Andrew at Jardin des Lys welcomed more of us into their charming house—where Leonidovitch, the resident “royal” cat, graciously allowed us to stay.

Over breakfast—fresh bread, homemade jams, and strong coffee—we shared stories of our dinners, of wine and conversation flowing easily, of the warm welcome from our hosts. It felt like we had stepped into another rhythm of life, and it made saying goodbye bittersweet. By mid-morning, we were all reunited, closer as a group and ready for the day ahead.

Our first stop was Arquié Porcelaine, just outside Limoges. Gwen and Jérôme welcomed us back on board, and we met Alexandra, our guide through the factory. She revealed the secrets of Limoges porcelain, a craft that has made this city famous since the discovery of kaolin clay in the 18th century. We learned about the three firings in the kiln—up to 1,300°C!—the glazing that gives porcelain its brilliance, and the decorating process, which can still be done by hand. The street-art murals scattered throughout the factory gave the experience a colorful, modern twist.

Back on the road, the rolling Corrèze countryside kept us company as Gwen shared the story of Marcel Marceau.

Soon we arrived in Uzerche, called la Perle du Limousin (the Pearl of the Limousin). The village, perched above the Vézère River, looked mystical in the alternating sun and drizzle. We passed through its medieval gates, paused at Napoleon's surgeon's house, and admired the first chapel dating to the 10th century. At the Abbatale Saint-Pierre, its Romanesque arches and centuries of history left us quietly impressed.

Lunch was a feast of local flavors: Limousin beef, fresh salmon, or creamy risotto, followed by flognarde—a baked custard with apples or pears, a cousin of the clafoutis.

The afternoon drive brought quiet reflection, accompanied by music: Fréro Delavega's *Même si c'est très loin* and *Sur la route*, Stéphane Eicher's *Déjeuner en paix*, Ludovico Einaudi's piano piece *Experience*, and the familiar, calming strains of Bach's Cello Suite No. 1 in G major.

Crossing into the Périgord, Gwen introduced us to its four “colors”:

- Périgord Vert – green and pastoral
- Périgord Blanc – chalky, limestone country
- Périgord Pourpre – wine country
- Périgord Noir – dark forests, truffles, and Sarlat, our destination

We followed the Vézère River, passing near Montignac and the famous Lascaux caves, whose Paleolithic paintings are over 17,000 years old. By the time we arrived in Sarlat-la-Canéda, the rain had eased, leaving behind a fresh, earthy scent.

Our home for the next three nights is the Grand Hôtel de Sarlat, a comfortable property of two manor houses and peaceful gardens. After settling in, we met our local guide, Justine, who led us through Sarlat's medieval streets. We saw the Lantern of the Dead, learned about Sarlat's unique enfeus (medieval burial niches), and discovered how André Malraux's 1962 heritage law saved this town from ruin, allowing its golden façades to glow today.

The evening ended with dinner at Le Malraux.

Some of us walked back through the gas lamplight streets, others soaked in the spa, but all of us ended the day feeling grateful—for the sun, the history, the flavors, and the people we are lucky enough to share this journey with.

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