

# The Region of Picardy in northern France

## ~ a case history in a nutshell

**WHERE FRANCE BEGAN AND THE REAL FRANCE BEGINS**



We ran a successful and impactful press campaign for Picardy, but felt that more was needed in order to drive people to the region, develop word of mouth publicity, spread the economic benefits of tourism and involve the cooperation of partners. Thus was born the **Picardie Pauses** programme of “**2-nights-for-the-price-of-1**”.

We were first appointed by the Picardy Regional Tourist Board (CRT de Picardie) to handle an advertising campaign to develop the region’s awareness and image. Until appointing us, all Picardy’s publicity was handled through the French Government Tourist Office, but this region – like many others – felt unable to develop its own identity when ‘submerged’ into the whole of France and its many far better known regions.

Our response was:

### ▪ **Devise an appropriate positioning**

The positioning is summed up in the slogan “Where France began and the real France begins” - recalling the region’s historic importance and the fact that, though close by car to the UK, it is sufficiently into France to benefit from being truly French with all that the concept evokes.

### ▪ **Bring the visitors, build word-of-mouth**

Our first year’s advertising (press) was highly successful in image and response terms, bringing 4000+ requests for information compared to the maximum 600 or so in previous years. However, we advised a change in strategy to focus on increasing the number of actual visitors, each of whom would be a potential ‘missionary’ for Picardy among their circle of friends and colleagues.

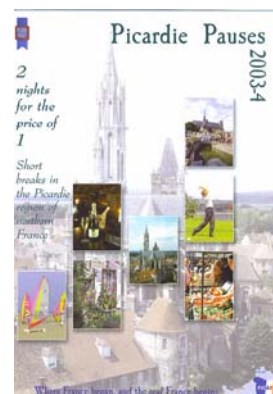
### ▪ **Do something radical to grab attention**

We devised, in collaboration with several hotels, château-hotels and B&Bs, a programme of 2-nights-for-the-price-of-one, available only when the establishment was unlikely to be full. We produced a detailed brochure each year, secured support from many partners such as Eurotunnel and SeaFrance.

The ‘**Picardie Pauses**’ programme, as we named it, completed its 7th successful year at the end of 2004. It has provided:

- A compelling focus for advertising, allowing us to use small space advertisements to extend coverage and frequency
- A focus too for the region at tourism fairs
- An impetus to PR: not only was this a highly innovative approach from a Tourist Board, it allowed us too to remind journalists of the offer in the context of events, news items, specialist subjects, etc.
- It developed consumer loyalty and got the ‘word-of-mouth’ machine working
- It provided a snappy ‘point of entry’ for on-line media

In short, it was a perfect example of **Brand Experience Marketing**.

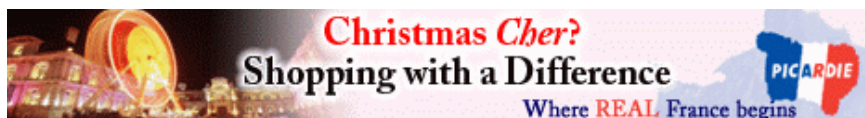


### ▪ **Spread the economic benefits of tourism**

Shopping, like food and wine, is an important motivator in travel to France. What’s more, it’s of particular relevance to people travelling in their own car, rather than, say, by low cost airline. Picardy’s location in northern France is hugely dependent on visitors coming in their own cars. We thus researched and produced two little guides - one for SHOPPING including farm shops, markets and Christmas markets (“**The Little Black Book**”) and one for RESTAURANTS including Fermes Auberges and vegetarian-friendly establishments (“**À Table**”).



These were publicised on Picardy’s website, on Eurotunnel’s website, and through Press Releases, etc. - allowing us to capture interested parties’ names and addresses in response to requests for one or other guide.



▪ **Take initiatives for maximum effectiveness**

We drove through a number of other initiatives:

- Create a **website designed from the British tourist's point of view**. In fact, the British site was up and running over two years before the French site, attracting visits from all English speaking countries as well as northern Europeans (Scandinavian, German, Dutch, etc.) who are more at ease with English than French. [click here to go to the website]
- Use **Search Engine Optimisation** to drive browsers to the Picardy website (an opportunity for Picardy to increase awareness of its diversity of interests)
- Use **on-line media** to promote Picardy Pauses and thus widen the target base Research, write and despatch **newsletters** to our database
- With the growing use of the internet, we converted the postal newsletter to **regular e-newsletters**. We 'converted' as many postal addresses to email addresses as possible (we built and managed a database of over 40,000 up-to-date contacts for Picardy and about 6,500 email contacts) [click here for a sample of our e-newsletters]
- Concentrate on **specialist sectors** (gardens, food & wine, specific activities, etc.) especially for PR in order to maximise the number of times the national press could cover the region
- Implement a regular programme of **Press Releases** to build 'front-of-mind' awareness and convey a sense of a region where a lot is happening
- Seek the collaboration of **partners** like Eurotunnel and SeaFrance for joint press trips (good way to reduce costs!) and for special offers on cross-channel crossings for people taking a Picardie Pause.
- Work closely with **tour operators** and **group travel organisers** to (a) maximise the number of visitors to the region or specific sites, and (b) take advantage of the free publicity from being present in their brochures and websites
- Draw attention to Picardy's **environmental heritage** of preserved wetlands and ancient forests: plan and produce three complementary 'environmental' study subjects as part of the UK National Curriculum for Schools and accessing The National Grid for learning website.

▪ **PR and other publicity**

We organised and accompanied group press trips and familiarisation trips for tour operators and group travel organisers, and often represented Picardy at trade and consumer tourism fairs, carrying out the necessary follow-up. We produced whatever literature was required – be it brochures, fliers, mailers, etc – and at times simply contributed the English text for multi-language literature produced in France.



We produced all advertising material, negotiated and booked space.

▪ **A custodian role**

In the absence of appropriate resources, we played the role of Picardy's marketing department with special responsibility for the UK.



## 2 Warm welcomes for the price of 1.



Just down the autoroute from Calais, the real France begins. In Picardie.



And with the real France comes real French hospitality. The Picards are people who inhabit a land steeped in history, with their own culture, their own cuisine, and their own traditions.

One of which being the warm welcome they extend to visitors from our side of the Channel.

How warm? Well, look no further than Picardie Pauses – a typically generous offer that provides two nights for the price of one in many hotels and chambres d'hotels throughout the region.



You can find out plenty by visiting [www.picardy.org](http://www.picardy.org). Or call 020 7836 2232. But you'll find out even more when you visit the real thing, and experience a warm welcome (or two) for yourself.

Where France began, and the real France begins



## For lovers of nature, lovers of culture, lovers of gastronomy, and...er...lovers.

Who would have thought that just one hour south of Calais lies one of the most romantic regions in France?

If you're in search of romance, Picardie can provide all the vital ingredients. Oysters from the Baie de Somme, champagne from the Marne valley, home-made goodies from the local chocolatier, fairytale hideaways with



roaring log fires and, of course, the Roses of Picardy that love-lorn Tommies sang about in the trenches.

So for the music of love, not to mention the food, drink, horse-drawn carriage rides, moonlit canals and woodland wanderings of love, now's the time to stroll arm in arm through [www.picardy.org](http://www.picardy.org) (or call 020 7836 2232) and see for yourself how Picardie really has got the lot.

– And why grandma's probably going to get the kids for the weekend.

Where France began, and the REAL France begins



## More ways of working up an appetite than you can shake a baguette at.



You'd never suspect it from the drive down the autoroute, but between Calais and Paris lies France's great outdoors.

From the Channel in the west to the Champagne vineyards in the east, Picardie is chock full of ways to knacker yourself before dinner.

Don't take our word for it; jump in the car and find out for yourself. But while you're packing the boot, don't forget to pack the walking boots. Not to mention the golf shoes, the waders, the riding boots, the flip-flops and the flippers.

One way or another you'll be guaranteed to work up a healthy appetite. So why not find out how to satisfy it by visiting

[www.picardy.org](http://www.picardy.org) (or call 020 7836 2232) and downloading our guide to the best restaurants in Picardie? You'll find it slips into your cycling shorts a treat.

Where France began, and the real France begins



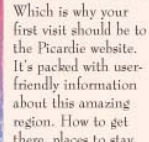
## For a virtual tour of the real France come to [www.picardy.org](http://www.picardy.org)

Have you ever been to Picardie?

If you have, then you'll know you've hardly scratched the surface. There's so much to explore, so many things to do, so many



things to eat... And if you haven't been to Picardie, then you don't know what you're missing.



Which is why your first visit should be to the Picardie website. It's packed with user-friendly information about this amazing region. How to get there, places to stay, things to see and do, famous sites, potted histories, and up-to-the-minute news about events and festivals. Plus really useful stuff like easily-downloadable

glovebox-size guides to shopping and eating out.

Picardie is probably closer than you think: just one hour south of Calais down the autoroute.

But [www.picardy.org](http://www.picardy.org) is closer still. (24-hr brochure line 020 7836 2232 isn't too far either!).

Where France began, and the real France begins



**Christmas Cher?**  
**Shopping with a Difference**  
 Where REAL France begins