

## Think Horses: Think Pompadour

*For centuries Pompadour has been synonymous with equestrian activities, which are now to be boosted with a major development of new facilities.*

*In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, beneath the wall of the ancient chateau of Pompadour, a stud farm was created to supply horses for the military. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century a training centre was created for the military and Madam de Pompadour created a private stud farm in the vast chateau stables. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century the National Stud was formed and then came the first fusion of thoroughbred English stock with an Arab horse brought back from Egypt by Napoleon 1 creating the first world famous anglo-arab horse. In the same century horse racing began and continues to this day.*

*The chateau housed for many years the overarching organisation of the National Stud farms of France until being rehoused locally in more modern premises. The coordination of the show-jumping, dressage and eventing still takes place in the chateau grounds with over 150 days of public equestrian activity. During the spring and summer in the adjacent hippodrome there are also eleven race meetings, with flat, steeple and cross country events.*

All the above is now about to be enhanced by an investment in the Pays de Pompadour, the community of six communes surrounding Pompadour, of several million euro. The investment comes from the Lebanese family of Nazih Najem, who have built a business empire around their marble quarries around the world, and who have a family wide interest in equestrian activity, bringing all their equestrian interests together in Pompadour.

They have bought the Domaine de la Noaille comprising some 60 hectares, which previously housed a large Club Med equestrian and tennis centre. Furthermore they have bought other properties including the former National Stud Farm which is already operating as the family's stud farm, stocked with some 60 horses.

Their prime objective is to create a world class international Riding Academy using the renovated Club Med facilities, calling it **Etoile de Pompadour**, focussing primarily on all aspects of showjumping. A new Pony Club will be created, stables for privately owned horses, and an equestrian clinic. Horse sales will be developed and competitions organised. Forty rooms are being redeveloped to hotel standards to house the initial visitors and renovation of the site will include the offices, reception, restaurant, the indoor and outdoor riding rings, and the tennis courts. A second restaurant will be created in the Chateau itself.

This first phase has already begun and will continue into 2017. It will be followed by a second phase of development, conditional on appropriate planning permission, of further residence facilities comprising 15-20 apartments in 2018, to be followed by a Spa, Hotel and a number of villas.

This investment will reinforce the local equestrian activity adding yet more interest to visitors to the Pompadour area. Together with the Chateau, its surrounding stables and buildings, and the race course, it will make Pompadour a focus for all who are enchanted with horses.

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*The Pays de Pompadour comprises six communes around Arnac-Pompadour, to give it its full name. It is a small historic town high in the beautiful green undulating hills of the western part of the Corrèze Department. Access is easy via road with its proximity to the north-south A20, and the east-west A89. The nearby cities of Limoges and Brive-la-Gaillarde which are less than one hour away by road from Pompadour, have international airports and are regularly served by Ryanair and other companies. To both cities there is a fast train service from Paris.*

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