

*Happy New Year to you all and our best wishes!*

2024 has come and gone, so join us for our annual pictorial recap of the past year to reflect on what we did, the people we spent time with and the moments we shared.

### **Heavy duty Work in Bardou**



*The master house got a new roof. Spot the before and after.*



*Brian, Ken and Seamus laying the Optic Fiber*



*Alyoscha Jans and Markus Vollmer taking it in turn to cut the beam for Bianca's bed, and Bianca sanding the cut beam.*



*Brian recycling an old tree trunk, Bianca enlisted for extensive polishing work.*



*Old trunk, now new Mezzanine support beam.*



*Nuschka closely inspecting the underfloor heating work.*



*Our future living-room, currently masquerading as our bedroom.*

In the second half of September, Holger Gerdes renovated our kitchen & bedroom floor and we are delighted with the result!



*Can you spot the glossy new railing leading up to the Forum Terrace?*



Who wants a slice? Brian engineering tree felling to secure the area around the new dry toilets Franz, Peter and Klaus built in February.



*Ken, Johnny (Brian's nephew) & Cécile helped Brian take down one of our oldest Chestnut trees which unfortunately was rotting from the inside.*



Max has a secret project for which 5 huge beams had to be carried into the woods; Wolfgang, Martin & Seb lend a helping hand.



*Max and friend*

## Music

The season opened with the *Sinfonietta*, organised by Jonas Hees, with two concerts in June and two in July.

As always, it was a treat to be invited to Jonas's meals, our very own Bardou Michelin Chef.



*June Sinfonietta's private concert in Bardou*



*July Sinfonietta's glass bottle private concert in the Theatrum*

**Selim Mazari** followed with three wonderful concerts overlapping with the Sinfonietta and Thomas Posth's music group. Selim brought his own invigorating brand of inspirational enthusiasm to the village, which was enjoyed by musicians and villagers alike.



*Selim playing in the Music Room in Bardou*

**The Académie de Musique de Chambre de Bardou**

Directed by Thomas Posth, Maria Pache and Markus Sudermayer; their concerts always bring rapturous applause!



*The Académie de Musique de Chambre de Bardou at their concert in Saint-Chinian*



The *Solistes de Bardou* reunited after many years bringing this time a few new members to play Strauss's Metamorphosis and other pieces for septets. A storm brewing outside created an impromptu symbiosis with the tempestuous music, the result of which was an absolutely breathtaking concert.



*Kumiko,  
Gernot Mätzel, Volker  
Uminski, Sarah Pape,  
Angelika,  
Franz Lichtenstern,  
Volker*

*Fritz & Gerswind Kircher*, our virtuoso stars from Vienna, drove all the way from Austria to perform four beautiful concerts for us in Bardou and the area.



*Gerswind and Fritz Kircher*

*Eunsley Park* and *Natalia Morozova* came together to form a stunning duo whose elegance was only matched by the beauty of their program and performances.



*EUnsley Park & Natalia Morozova*

Iris has been coming to Bardou since she was a child. This year she came with a family of musicians (the Krafts) who formed a Choir and gave a beautiful concert in the church in Mons along with Iris, her children and partner.



*Iris's four children; Leonie, Meret, Konstantin and Lorenz and the Kraft family in Mons.*

## Help & fun

New Year's with Valerie & Alex pouting for the camera on the Côte d'Azur.



*Valerie & Alex Breal*

Franz Meurer has been one of the pillars of Bardou for over 40 years and every year he comes with some very handy friends and a project. This year Franz, his brother Peter, Clemens and Klaus build two more dry toilets. As they are sparkling new and quite roomy and equipped with wifi and a mini-bar, we dubbed them *Versailles*. Now we are waiting for someone to decorated them in Louis XIV style.

We are accepting applications!



*Clemens, Franz and us*

Max Förster came three times this year. In October, he came with his brother Jonas to help on our secret project. Here is Max with his family and some friends for the Easter egg hunt. Susanne and Elisabeth (Ing. Léo's mother), helped hide the eggs!



*Josephine (Max's wife) Max, their daughters Rosie and Lorelei as well as their son Jaro, Elisabeth, Max & Josie's friends, Suzanne and Elisabeth*

In April, Anne and Wolfgang came and invited us for lunch with a view of the mountain.



*Elisabeth, Elisabeth K., Heribert, Brian, Wolfgang and a bit of Anne...trying to take a selfie.*



*Suzanne and Seamus testing the weight limit of the hanging chair.*

At the beginning of April, Bianca's school friend Caroline visited with a friend, and barely had they finished their slice of their Tropezienne were they put to work tidying up the entrance ;)



Mid-April, the most important date of the year, Elizabeth's birthday rolled around. Here we are celebrating with friends and family.



*Heike & Carsten, Jonas Hees, Ing. Leo, Leggy & Lucas, Cécile, Dominique, Bianca, Elizabeth & Brian, Sean & Shannon*

My brother James visited shortly afterwards and came back in November (he also got roped into helping with Bianca's beams!).

End of April, Heike & Carsten looked after Bardou so that we could go to Sicily (Cefalù) for 10 days with Jonas (on one of his Symphonic Holidays). Cécile and Bianca joined us, as did Seamus. We loved Sicily!!!



*Brian, Cécile, Elizabeth, Bianca – Seamus took the picture.*

Dr Léo came beginning of May with a friend, Tom, who also gave us a helping hand ... followed by beer sampling.



*Brian, Tom and Seamus*

End of May, Brian's siblings, John, Mike & Dympna came to visit for a few days.

Beginning of July, we visited our good friends, Jenny, Patrick and Svenja (my god daughter!) in Nice where we met Svenja's boyfriend Max for the first time! Approved!!!



*Jenny, Svenja, Max, Elizabeth, Brian, Patrick and Seamus*



*Johnny, Cécile and Bianca getting physically (and mentally) ready to empty Brexit!!!  
(the dry toilets!)*

End of July we went to Brian's nephew's wedding near Nottingham, leaving Bardou in the expert hands of Ing. Leo and Susanne; here enjoying a break with Wolfgang and Anne.



*Wolfgang, Ing. Leo, Suzanne, Anne*



*Shannon, Sean, Cécile, Elizabeth, Brian and Bianca looking our very best for the wedding.*





*The newly-weds : Connor (Brian's nephew) & Natascha*

Jenny and Christoph come regularly to Bardou with their 2 children, Zach & Moritz. Zach often gives us a hand.



*Zach, sitting in the window of Roma's.*

In August, there were Pizza nights, long hikes and beer brewing!



*Pizza night with Brian, Annette, Christine, Bernhard, Frank & Gerda (who spent 3 months in Bardou this year!)*



*Eunsley, Svenja (our god daughter) & Cécile on a hike*

Mid-August, Carmela came with June to visit for a few days and brought Pia – much to Seamus’ delight. Erik; Carmela’s other half couldn’t make it but came end of October for a few days with his twin sister and his mother.



*June, Brian, Carmela, Bianca and Pia*

Beginning of September: Franzi came with friends and renovated all the windows in School.

Their second mission was to make the roof of the pergola water tight with Max and Felix, and a very good job they did too!

Once that was done, Brian and Ken made benches to go along the pergola.



*Felix, Franzi, Elizabeth and Brian*



*Max working on the pergola roof*

Beginning of August, Brian's brothers, John and Mike came to visit along with Mike's family.



*John is a good cook!!!*



*Standing : Johnny, Brian, Elizabeth  
Sitting : Mike, Christa, Christa's niece, Cécile & Bianca*

Bianca initiated her boyfriend Harry to the annual vendange tradition. Here they are picking grapes in La Voulte. Sore backs need not apply.



*Bianca & Harry*

Trip to the area around Perpignan with friends who set up a small film festival in Bardou during their stay.



*Albrecht, Sigrid, Elizabeth, Brian, Petra, Irma*

In October, the Cologne group came with Max Zimmermann & Heribert who organised a painting and photography expo in the Rittersaal.



*Max's paintings and Heribert's photos of Bardou*

Very sadly, Max passed away unexpectedly in the night of the 21st of December. He has been in our thoughts this Christmas.



*Max Zimmermann*

This year, wedding bells rang in Bardou as we hosted our neighbours from Pibons' wedding. It was wonderful to have them and we were delighted to be invited to the wedding party.



*Danièle & Denis, our new neighbours from Pibons*

Adrian and Karen came with their grandchild Sami and looked after Bardou while we went to London for Cécile's Birthday. We (Brian & Elizabeth) stayed with Barbara and Roger, my second family, who I (Elizabeth) lived with for 4 years after university.



*Barbara, Elizabeth & Brian in London*



When we got back, my first cousin Debbie and her daughter Autumn arrived from the US, we took a trip to Conques which is a beautiful medieval village in the center of France well worth visiting.



*Conques*



*Autumn & Debbie*

Markus and Heike also came in November. All the outdoor furniture and flower pots got taken in, the fruit trees trimmed, and Bardou got a general tidy up. Markus and Seamus looked after Bardou while we went to England for Brian's birthday end of November.



*Markus and Seamus enjoying some fireside bonding.*

We finished the year in Le Lau, at Hans & Karens with our Le Lau friends and our besties Jenny & Patrick (and their daughter Astrid) who came from Vienna.



*Karen, Patrick, Astrid, Elizabeth, Ginnie, Brian, Gégé, Pierrot, Lisa, Birgit, Jenny and Hans*



*Jenny, Patrick and Astrid*

## Villennes and Family

Sean now lives in Villennes with his wife Shannon and his 2 dogs; Cécile and Bianca often visit and so do we and are happy to get to enjoy the house! Cécile still lives and works in London and Bianca has just completed a masters at Exeter University (Falmouth) and is now looking for a job which will determine where she will move to next.



*Thanksgiving with Sean (the cook!) Mark, Berit, Jeff, Florence, Tristan (friends from Villennes), Lizbet and Adhelchi (Adhelchi is a school friend of Sean's).*

For the Christmas week, we rented a large house neat St Malo in Brittany with our family and Brian's brothers' families.



*Sean, Shannon and their 2 dogs, Mike & Johnny (his son), Elizabeth & Brian, Bianca, Cécile and Christa (Mike's wife)*

## Bardou animals and nature

Seamus has grown, adjusting to life in Bardou. He has learned not to chase cats, peacocks and chickens and loves the Bardou hikes and sticks! It was hard choosing only 3 photos, we have millions!



*Seamus & Susanne*



*Not sure who he loves best...*



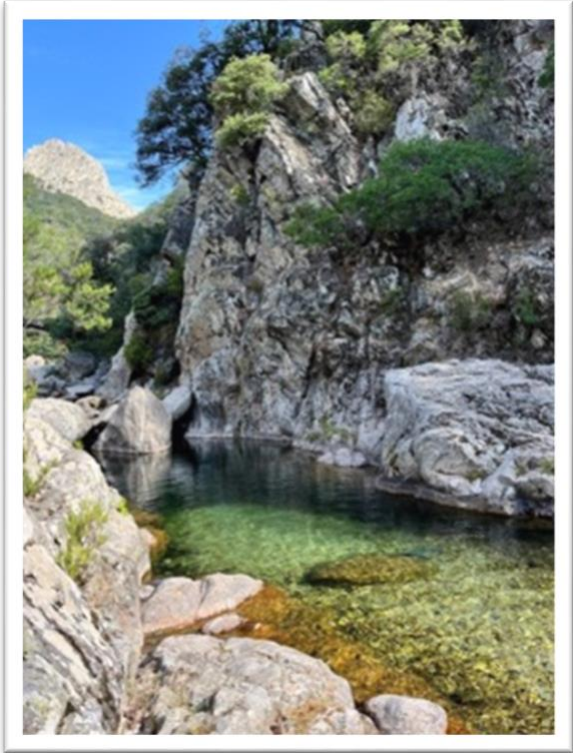
*Nushka as nonchalant as ever.*



*Rolland brought us chickens who have hatched some very cute chicks  
The tiniest Salamander yet spotted in Bardou.  
Pun intended.*



*Peacocks maintaining a high standard of beauty.*  
**Our most beautiful natural portraits**



*Sometimes it rains...*

Resulting in “natural disasters”...



*The Mairie sent someone the same day to clear the road!!!*

And sometimes it even snows...



Happy New Year and hopefully see you in 2025!

Elizabeth, Brian and Seamus

