

that may have taken place in those who were present. Yet perhaps those unseen moments are the true work of the World Subud Council.

Like the forests surrounding Rungan Sari, they grow quietly. Like the river flowing beside it, they continue their course long after the gathering has ended.©

For more information and photos about the WSC meeting go to:

<https://subudvoice.net/wp-content/uploads/WSCMEET.pdf>



The river does not argue, but continues to flow...



Finding Festiv'ales: Where Creativity Takes Wing

Caroline Phillips writes...

Some places are special because so few people know about them. Drop a pin on a map of France and, if you're lucky, you might land on an exceptional Subud community of international souls living about 43 miles south of Toulouse in the Haute-Garonne, beside the village of Montbrun-Bocage. They're nestled by the Pyrenees, the spectacular mountain range forming the border between France and Spain. There. Secret's out.

Nine members of this Pyrenees community live in Amaranthe—an eco-village built in 2022 after a decade of planning—its straw-bale houses overlooking the rolling Volvestre countryside and a sculpture park.

The name Amaranthe refers both to the mythical unfading flower and to the highly nutritious grain, reflecting how many residents feel about life there.

It was on Subud land adjoining Amaranthe that, in July 2026—buoyed by the success of the inaugural festival in 2025—the group held its second Subud Festiv'Ailes ("ailes" means "wings"), a week-long event dedicated to participants spreading their creative wings.

Between 20 and 36 members came and went throughout the week. Folk arrived from France, Spain, England and the US—and me from Australia, via a bleary 22-hour journey (with a stopover in my hometown of London first). We spoke English, French and Franglais, with volunteers translating. Manouela—Amaranthe resident, festival organiser, and a woman fluent in Greek, French, English and probably Babylonian—proved herself the likely prototype of Google Translate.

Tree-Shaded Clearing

Festiv'Ailes was largely held on a peaceful, tree-shaded clearing. Organisers had erected an al fresco kitchen with running water, a gas stove (strong enough to soft boil an egg in oooh, about seventeen minutes), two dry composting toilets, and a large tent for Lati-hans. This site is where the community plans to build its permanent Subud hall—and a coconut curry supper, whirled up by Aussie eco-warrior Dave, became a crowd-

funding event towards it. Your spare euros, rupees and crypto are still welcome.

The Festiv'Ailes programme, shaped partly by participants on the first day, ranged from daily Lati-hans and kejiwaans (spiritual guidance sessions) to mask-making, dance ("fun for the inner child," >



Bachtiar Lorot, classical guitar performance.



Frances Madden.

as one Subudite put it), physical warm-ups (at 7.30 am... aggh), open-mic night, macramé, a classical guitar concert, workshops on youth, enterprise and humanitarian projects, and even a marionette session entitled Puppets as Ambassadors for Peace. The days' activities ran from dawn to dusk, everything optional.

Most Rewarding Time

Some of my most rewarding time was spent in the daily Latihans. As outside temperatures sometimes reached 40 degrees and the marquee became too hot, we did Latihans instead in the fresh, cool atmosphere of the almost-finished straw-bale house belonging to Pascale, a lively Dutch woman and organiser, and her partner Thierry, a French former social worker, festival organiser and one of the eco-village's founders, whose love for everyone was palpable.

It was there, amid all that straw, that the week turned personal for me. I was going through a rough patch. In just six months I'd endured too many Ds: Divorce, Deaths (including my dad's), Disaster (being caught in a terrorist attack), and Difficult Decisions. I ended many of my Latihans in tears. It felt cleansing and authentic; meanwhile Erica, an Italian helper, offered me invaluable support and wisdom.

I also treasured my private walks beside the lake with Amalia, another of the festival's organisers. She intro-



Maya and Dave.

“Spiritual, fun and inspiring...”



Pizza.

duced me to The Work, Byron Katie's method of self-enquiry, born from her own awakening after depression and addiction: four questions for any stressful thought—Is it true? Can you absolutely know it's true? How do you react when you believe it? Who would you be without it?

Food and Dance

And then to dance. I especially enjoyed the Biodanza session run by Agnès, a Subudite who also happened to be a paediatrician. Developed in the 1960s by Chilean psychologist Rolando Toro Araneda, Biodanza uses music across many genres to encourage emotional expression and connection.

The Festiv'Ailes food also got a big tick. Pascale ran the kitchen with aplomb, while participants took turns preparing simple but delicious, mostly organic vegetarian meals using ingredients and recipes already provided—vegetable fried rice, chickpea casserole, Greek salads, tiramisu and always plenty of it. (The challenge came when it was my turn for a group culinary session: think three highly competent, strong-minded cooks sharing one kitchen....)

We ate at trestle tables beneath the trees, where four-year-olds chatted happily with fifty-year-olds and an 84-year-old shared meals with people in their twenties. The mix of generations, personalities, ethnicities, beliefs (and no beliefs) was another major plus. How many places can you spend time with people this varied, this open, everyone treated as equals? When I didn't feel like talking, I simply sat and quietly observed.

Away From the Festival Site

Montbrun-Bocage's boulangerie served croissants and sourdough that competed with the village's fifteenth-century town hall and thirteenth-century castle ruins for the spot of top attraction. The Sunday market overflowed with goats' cheese, oregano and ginormous tomatoes, plus candles, ageing hippies >

and singing bowls.

Our group trek along a shaded mountain path led to a place that knocked spots off Paradise, complete with ensuite mountain waterfall "shower". Then there were our chilly swims in a beautiful, secluded waterhole, where Subud Yoof launched themselves from a terrifyingly high rock they'd happily re-purposed as a diving board.

The Fun Didn't Stop There

I sang opera for the first time—butchering Carmen at open mic alongside three decent singers—and, on another evening, I was pleased to be asked to introduce a soul-and-jazz-inspired set by pianist-singer-songwriter Frances Madden.

One of her gigs was broadcast internationally during Australian Open, and she's supported the legendary Dionne Warwick in concert. So now Frances has performed in the world's great musical capitals: London, Sydney...and Amaranthe.



The waterfall.

happen. Kudos to them all.

During the closing ceremony, participants expressed gratitude for everything from sérénité and conversations profondes through to fluidité, joie, énergie and partage de talents. Loosely translated: it was ab fab.

I'm already counting down to next year. See you there, now you know where to find it. Just turn left at the Pyrenees.

Information on the 2027 Festiv'Ailes from manouelas@gmail.com and Amalia ylvieboute@yahoo.fr

“ *Fluidité, joie, énergie et partage de talents...* ”



The rapture.

My gold star went to the five-year-old who held forth during the closing ceremony, briefing a circle of 26 people on the details of his birth. I loved that everyone at the festival had a voice. I also appreciated that children were actively welcomed. The atmosphere embraced families, but also singletons and couples, while the twenty- and thirtysomethings offered real hope for Subud's future.

It was great too that charges were kept minimal—just €7 a night for camping and €8 per lunch or dinner—so that most who wished could attend. Plus, volunteers acted as unpaid chauffeurs, ferrying to and from the station.

And participants could sleep beneath canvas under a canopy of trees, or stay in eco-homes, friends' spare rooms or nearby Airbnb's and gîtes (mine came with a landlady who wandered around topless, and a fellow guest who liked to play piano nude from the waist up—a Tantric practice, apparently).

Overall, Festiv'Ailes was spiritual, fun and inspiring; a feat organised by nine Subudites — including Olivier, Saul, Aubert, Maya and Rohanna, who haven't yet had their hero's mention here —working for seven months to make it