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RESPONSIBLE
TRAVELER

ecolodge

LEBANESE GRAPE
VARIETIES

auberge

SHOUF
BIOSPHERE

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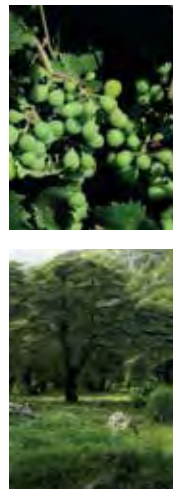
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Working in the Bekaa valley has been a very rewarding experience for me ever since I started 10 years ago. I have always been passionate about the land and agriculture and the Bekaa valley is the richest piece of agricultural land in Lebanon. It has so much to offer in all the different fields in general and more specifically in my field of wine making. I have been lucky to work with the family business of Domaine des Tourelles winery in the Bekaa. The Bekaa Valley is known to be one of the best terroirs of the world due to its high altitude, diversity of soil, extensive sunshine, and the correct rainfall for a large variety of agriculture. Geographically the Bekaa valley, especially Central Bekaa, is very well connected to all corners of Lebanon versus other agricultural areas such as Akkar in the North and the South of Lebanon. The current highway project that will be completed very soon will also bring the Bekaa closer to the capital, Beirut. This will further facilitate the sales of agricultural products produced in the Bekaa in all parts of Lebanon and abroad. As a young entrepreneur and winemaker in Lebanon, I would definitely advise other young and passionate entrepreneurs to pursue a career in agriculture in the Bekaa valley as it has yet a lot to offer and no one will know the real value of this rich land unless they experience it firsthand.

Faouzi Issa,
Winemaker and Managing Director
Domaine des Tourelles

ARCENCIEL'S CERAMICS

Established in 1994, the ceramic workshop is part of the Employment Program at arcenciel, which aims at reintegrating people in society. From molding to painting, all items are entirely handmade by a team of 14 people.



The manufacturing process is lengthy and technical: A liquid paste is molded for a first bake. The molds are then cleaned and dipped in glaze; the material is then reinserted into the furnace to obtain the hard porcelain material. The final product is later transferred to the painting workshop for illustration and design. Finished ceramics are cooked one last time for the paint to properly set and so that the items can become waterproof, dishwasher friendly and microwavable



Each collection is uniquely designed by the team according to seasonal events (Christmas, Easter, Spring and Lebanese design).



The ceramic workshop can also handcraft custom and personalized series to meet individual requests (birthday gifts, baptism, birth, travel and wedding souvenirs...)

When buying arcenciel's ceramics, you contribute to the employment of persons with disabilities in Lebanon.

The ceramic workshop team is currently preparing for the Christmas edition.

For special orders and inquiries, you can contact Zeina el Helou on 01.56 56 55 ext 2122.



Discover more by watching the video



ECOLODGE DE TAANAYEL

From its inception 10 years ago until now, the Ecolodge de Taanayel village has been growing and improving its services to better satisfy its visitors.

This year, Al Khan al Makssoud inaugurated a new two-level terrace, increasing the restaurant's capacity by 210 seats. The two terraces of the restaurant Al Khan are suited and equipped for weddings, birthdays, group meals, and family or friends events.

The team has just welcomed a new special member to its team: Chadi, Organ and Oud player.

You can drop by and listen to Chadi's oriental musical repertoire, that ranges from Fairouz to Oum Koulthoum and Wadih el Safi, as well as his own compositions. Chadi performs at Al Khan al Makssoud every day from noon to midnight.



Al Khan al Makssoud is preparing to host its first Arak festival, which will take place at the end of September – aiming to promote the discovery of the region's traditions, cuisine, folklore, and above all its typical drink. Local Arak producers will participate in the festival, giving all attendees the opportunity to taste and purchase local, handmade Alcoholic beverage of this region.

For you to learn traditional handicraft techniques, Ecolodge de Taanayel diversified its workshops to include*: mud-brick making, saj, wheat grain molding and coffee preparation.

*workshops are available for groups of +20 and need to be booked in advance.

Ecolodge de Taanayel – Al Khan al Makssoud
Damascus Road, Taanayel, Bekaa.
Bookings 08 544 881 / 03 124 279.
Open everyday all day long.

What to see?

The village's name "Niha" translates to "Dreamer" in Syriac; this village is a typical wanderer's delight. The village has much to offer to the adventurous spirit such as, natural occurring caves, temples, citadels, the historical St. Antoine and St. Elie churches, a monument of the prophet Nabi Najm, and many others. This village's agricultural fresh water is supplied by the "Ain Al Akoube" water source.

The great temple is a historical milestone that used to host prayers and rituals. Its stunning entrance door has an eagle sculpted onto it, just like the one adorning the Bacchus temple in Baalbek.

The second temple is Phoenician and dedicated to the thunderstorm God 'Hadaranes' as well as the Mother Goddess 'Atargatis', Goddess of water and sources. People would worship the water element in this temple.

At the top of the Mount Niha (el Hosn) stands a third temple where the roman style is similar to that of the Baalbek temples.

Niha city from Ecolodge de Taanayel : 15km

LEBANESE GRAPE VARIETIES

Lebanon is the most ancient viticulture country in the world. The Bacchus temple dedicated to the wine god in Baalbek reminds us of a prosperous past for wine in the Bekaa region. In 1857, the Jesuit Fathers brought the grape varieties back from Algeria : Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay.

One of the Lebanese native grapes, the Obeidi, nicknamed "Orphan variety", has no link with any other variety and only grows between Lebanon and Syria.

Mostly found in Arak, the Obeidi is now used by Chateaux such as Clos St Thomas, to produce a monovarietal wine named after the grape variety.

Obeidi's lightness and freshness add up to its beautiful acidity where can be felt flowers and exotic fruits tastes.



© Houda Kassatly

These varieties are now among the most common in Lebanon along with Carignan, Cinsault, Grenache Noir and Tempranillo for red wines. In terms of white wines, Lebanon wines are mainly made of Clairette, Sauvignon Blanc, Ugni Blanc and Viognier.

Did you know?

As of the 8th century, the Arab alchemists discovered various distillation techniques and the specific properties of alcohol. But the word 'arak' was only used from the 11th century to designate this aniseed distilled wine.

Its history is very much linked to that of the wine distillation process which dates back to the Middle Ages. In the 14th century, grapes became a central element of distillation.

In Arabic, 'arak' means 'sweat', referring to the condensation process happening during distillation: fumes condensate into micro-drops which is comparable to our sweating process.

Arak is a traditional brew in several neighboring countries in the Middle East. It is made in Lebanon, south-eastern Turkey, Palestine, Syria and Iraq.

SUMMER AT AUBERGE SAINT MICHAEL

From May to October, summer is the perfect season in the Shouf region: local markets, traditional and religious festivals drawing in many tourists.

Auberge Saint Michael offers several accommodations to meet the needs of its diverse clients with diverse budgets. Family rooms are designed to host 2 to 5 persons, be it families, friends, companies or schools who would like to discover the Shouf area. Auberge Saint Michael also includes three dormitories with a capacity of 33 people, perfect for groups or lower-budget travelers. The traditional guesthouse Beit el Hana also provides double rooms for couples to enjoy the peace and quiet of the region. At Auberge Saint Michael, each night includes a traditional local breakfast.

Many events take place in the region during the summer:

In August, the Virgin Mary is venerated in the whole Shouf region. Major celebrations happen on August 6th and 15th.

Moreover, Jabelna festival takes place on a yearly basis during a September weekend in Maasser el Shouf. It generally aims at focusing on the environment and heritage: honey, aromatic plants, birds, and the traditional local dance: dabke. More than 250 producers of the region participate and free hikes are offered in the forest of Maasser el Shouf.

Auberge St Michael – Maasser el Shouf Village
Reservation: 03 107 182. Open everyday.

What to see?

Baadarane, meaning 'station' in Syriac, used to be a major stopover on trading routes between the north of Sinai, Palestine and Syria.

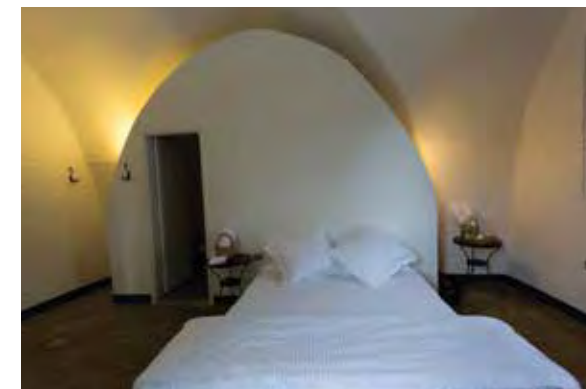
Nowadays, the village is known for its Ottoman houses, old wine presses, traditional weaver workshops and churches, including Saint Elie.

Baadarane village also contains historical monuments such as:

Khalwat Al-Qatalib, a Druze place of worship, located on a hill. This Khalwat dates back from the 15th century, it is surrounded by a forest of Oaks and Arbutus as well as an Olive grove.

The palace was built in the 18th century by Cheikh Ali Jumblatt and is typical of the ottoman architecture in Lebanon. House of the Cheikh Muhammad Abou Shakra, Doors of Abou Shakra and Tajeldin

Baadarane Village from Auberge Saint Michael : 13km.



© Spice photography, May 2016



© Spice photography, May 2016

SHOUF BIOSPHERE RESERVE

The Shouf Reserve is the biggest natural reserve in Lebanon. Registered site by UNESCO since 2005, the Shouf Biosphere Reserve encompasses 22 villages from Northern Dahr Al-Baidar to its southernmost point: the mountains of Niha.

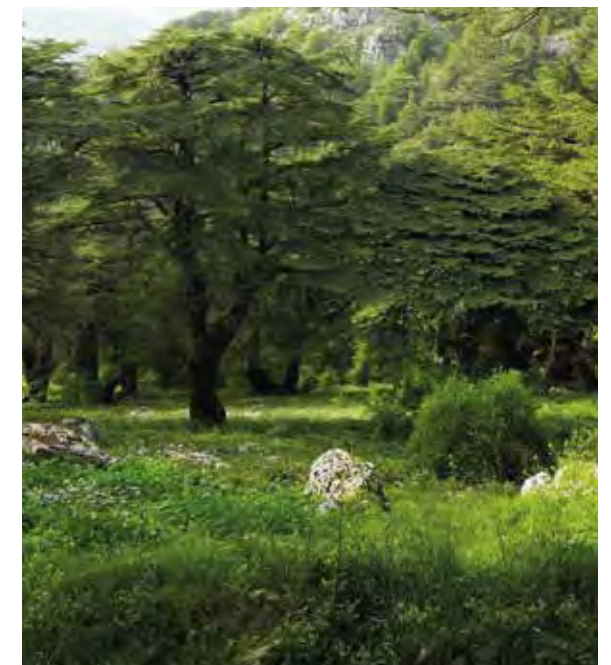
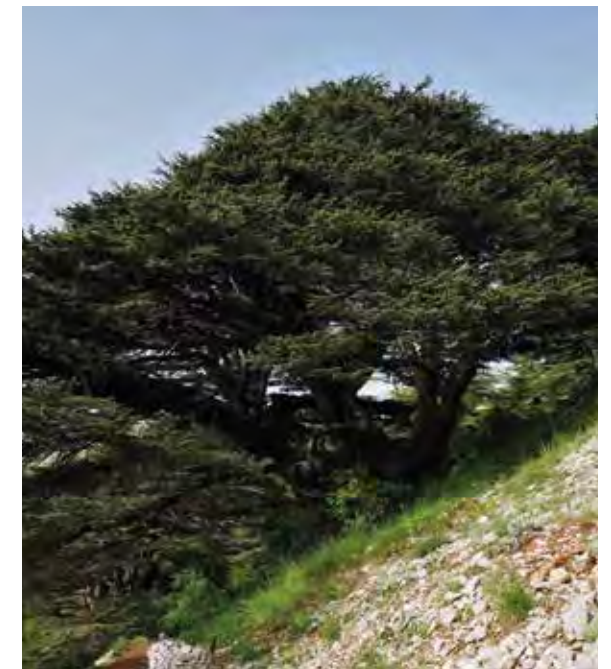
The Shouf Reserve shelters an impressively diverse Fauna and Flora. It hosts around 520 species of plants, including many medicinal and aromatic varieties. Its forests are made of species such as Oaks, Syrian Pear Trees, Juniperus, and Lebanese Cedars (around 620 hectares). One of the must-sees is the Cedar under which Lamartine is said to have sat under and drawn inspiration, near Maasser el Shouf.

Fauna is also very varied; around 32 species of mammals live in the Reserve, one of the last sanctuaries in Lebanon for that many wolves, hyenas, jackals, foxes and porcupines. As for birds, 275 species seek refuge in the Reserve; storks, eagles and falcons, among others. The 31 species of reptiles include lizards, many types of frogs...

The Reserve also supports the surrounding villages in the Shouf by promoting their architectural and historical wonders.

Local craftsmen (weavers, carpenters), farmers, beekeepers, mountain guides and the Shouf Reserve all share a common goal: to preserve natural and cultural assets of the region.

Entrance to the Reserve of Maasser el Shouf is 7km away from Auberge Saint Michael.



ECOTOURISM ACTIVITIES

Domaine de Taanayel belongs to the Jesuit Fathers, it has been managed by arcenciel for the last 10 years and remains under arcenciel's management to this day.

It stands as one of the few wooded places in Lebanon, sheltering impressively diverse fauna and flora.

Covering an area of 230 hectares, it encompasses 3 lakes, vineyards, forests, agricultural plots and ecotouristic activities.



3 000 visitors come and enjoy Domaine de Taanayel's site and activities each week. During the 15km-walk around the lakes, you can discover at your own pace the sceneries on the Mount Lebanon and the Anti-Lebanon Mountains.

If you like exercise, a fitness path has been arranged in the Domaine de Taanayel's forests and bikes are available for rent. Groups of 5 to 6 people can experience carriage rides. Farm animals are also part of the Domaine de Taanayel's identity:

the "maternité" hosts the veals and their mothers, and the birdcage mixes peacocks, budgies and pigeons. The herds of sheeps wander with their shepherds in the Domaine de Taanayel, passing by the horses and the deers as they come back from the lake.



The Laiterie du Couvent de Taanayel sells dairy products made with the milk from the Domaine de Taanayel's livestock. All the products are made without coloring or preservatives: yogurt, Labne, fresh cheeses such as halloumi, akkawi, kariche, chanklich,. Take away or on-trade.

Domaine de Taanayel – Damascus Road, Tanail, Bekaa : 08 543 105.
Open every day 8am – 6pm.



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2016
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BIOPESTISIDE

The agricultural sector contributes to a small but stable part of the Lebanese economy.

Through its three interrelated dimensions (economic, social and environmental), the agricultural sector plays a vital role in the management of natural resources, contributes to sustainable development; and is a prerequisite to socio-economic stability and environmental conservation. The development of the sector participates to decreasing urban sprawl and limiting overutilization of natural resources in response to climate change impacts.

Born from this concept, the agriculture program of arcenciel includes the promotion of sustainable agriculture practices and the improvement of farmers' socio-economic conditions by providing the farmers with technical knowledge of the sector, by marketing their products and by creating pilot projects that support agricultural work in the Bekaa area. One of these pilot projects is the biopesticides factory.

Global warming and water pollution makes it increasingly difficult for local farmers to provide healthy and nutritious produce. Water pollution, hectic weather shifts, and an increasing number of pests have driven farmers to use larger amounts of chemicals (pesticide, fertilizers) on their land. The increase of chemicals threatens the consumer and environmental health and makes us question the reliability of local produce and leads to an increasing demand for organic products. As a result, chemical use advocates for more imported foods. It is a vicious circle that financially puts pressure on local farmers.

The biopesticides are a sustainable alternative for the chemical pesticides. Increasing the use of effective, ecofriendly

products like bio-pesticides decreases the farmers' dependency on harmful chemicals necessary for crop growth. A problem, however, is that bio-pesticides are expensive and they are mainly imported since there is no local biopesticides production.

Addressing this concern, arcenciel's agriculture program and the Sciences Faculty at USJ succeeded in developing Lebanon's first bio-pesticide factory. Made from local strains of *Bacillus Thurengensis*, our bio-pesticide is effective and cost-efficient. The bio-pesticide was tailored to fight Lepidoptera, a pest family that is currently threatening Lebanese pine forests and may cause damage to many crops: vine, olives, tomatoes, apples...



Though the chemistry behind the process of bio-pesticide production is difficult, the theory is simple: the bio-pesticides contain crystals that are indigestible to Lepidoptera. It has no effects on humans, micro-organisms, animals or other insects. They specifically target Lepidoptera. These factors are very important to preserve every level of the ecosystem biodiversity. Also the use of the biopesticides can guarantee safer nutritional products, that are less contaminated by chemical pesticides that harm the human and the environment health. It may be a step towards sustainable farming in Lebanon.



AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

Awareness and Education empowers people to change their surrounding community and country. By initiating social and environmental projects within Lebanon's groups, universities, institutions, schools and corporations, Awareness and Education spreads a message that any person can organize their community to enact social change.

Projects with Youth

The typical project begins in the classroom with team-building activities, games, and an arcenciel overview. By understanding arcenciel's operations and spirit, students can leverage our resources for their own projects.



Near the end of the class session, students break off into groups, brainstorming project ideas and electing student leaders. A small committee of student leaders and an arcenciel representative is formed to implement and manage the projects. The committees' tasks this year included interviewing local government, gathering community opinions, organizing fundraising initiatives, and creating promotional material.

By working together, students create powerful and impactful projects. This year, students have:

- Bought 2 prosthetic legs for people living with disabilities
- Implemented sustainable medicine boxes that have provided over 1000 boxes of medicine to people in-need
- Sold cookies to fund the adaption of a woman's car so that she may drive autonomously
- Created a 2 x 4 meter mosaic mural using recyclable waste
- Raised over 10,000 dollars to social causes
- Fundraised a basketball game where people living in wheelchairs play against a school team in wheelchairs
- Planted over 100 plants in Bekaa

Youth's ability to brainstorm, lead, organize and enact change continues to inspire our own work and growth at arcenciel. Thanks again to all the youth this year and keep up your inspirational work – it makes a difference.



Discover more by watching the video

POST-HARVEST FACILITY

The syrian crisis has dramatically affected the export of agricultural products. Consequently, arcenciel with the funding from EU's aid, are constructing a post-harvest facility, of 1 000 m2 at the Domain de Taanayel. It will be equipped with refrigerated rooms, and a packaging/sorting space. The post-harvest unit will dramatically reduce waste and add value to a highly perishable produce, by offering to the farmers the service of cold storage, packing and sorting of fruits and vegetables.

PROCESS MED ARCENCIEL FRANCE'S PROGRAM

processmed is a cooperation program in social and solidarity economy between France, Tunisia and Lebanon. In June, 20 French students spend one week at the Ecolodge de Taanayel to meet social entrepreneurs and work on arcenciel's issues in the Bekaa. We cannot wait for other students in January 2017!

NEW CENTER AT SED EL BOUCHRIE

arcenciel and its social program will open their new center at Sed El Bouchrie, a social boutique where donors can drop off clothes that are then distributed to the people in need.

BROCANTE DES ARTISTES

The event La Brocante des Artistes happened on the 13-2- of July in the Asseily Villa in the heart of Ashrafieh, where Lebanese artists re-purposed the brocante classic items into trendy creative artworks.

This project not only promotes the cultural scene in Lebanon, but also promotes the reduction of waste and the employment of disabled people.

The funds collected by the arcenciel brocante will be re-invested into arcenciel's social and environmental works.

HERMES AGRICULTURAL PROJECT

Climate change and the increasing threat of urbanization are wreaking havoc on Lebanon's biodiversity. In order to fight the impact of these threats, arcenciel and agriculture program are training a team of volunteers to keep our forests safe. The team of young volunteers will start their training in early August in the Shouf Biosphere.

To be a volunteer: [click here](#)
For more info, please contact :
alexis.nassif@arcenciel.org,
tel: +961 3 555 063

events

22

Baalbeck festival
Bekaa
22th July until 28th August

8

Beiteddine festival
Shouf
8th July until 9th August

20

Niha festival
Bekaa
20th July until 20th August

Stars night
French Institut
Zahlé
August

20

Bouchrieh arcenciel
Inauguration
20th August

12

Zahlé International Festival
12th July until 1st September

4

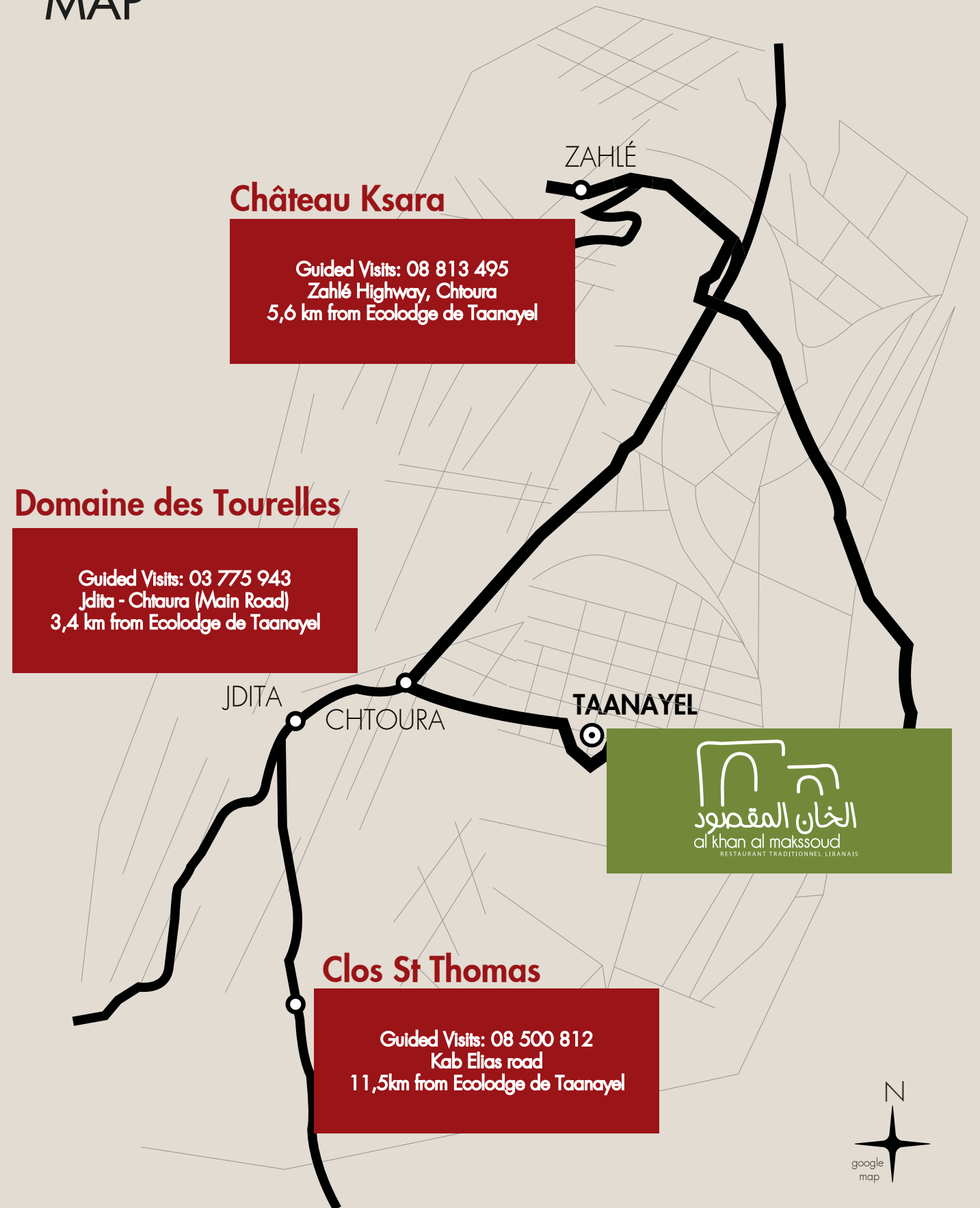
Jabelna Festival
Maasser el Shouf
4th september

24

Arak festival
Al Khan al Makssoud
24th September

VINEYARD
MAP

map



address

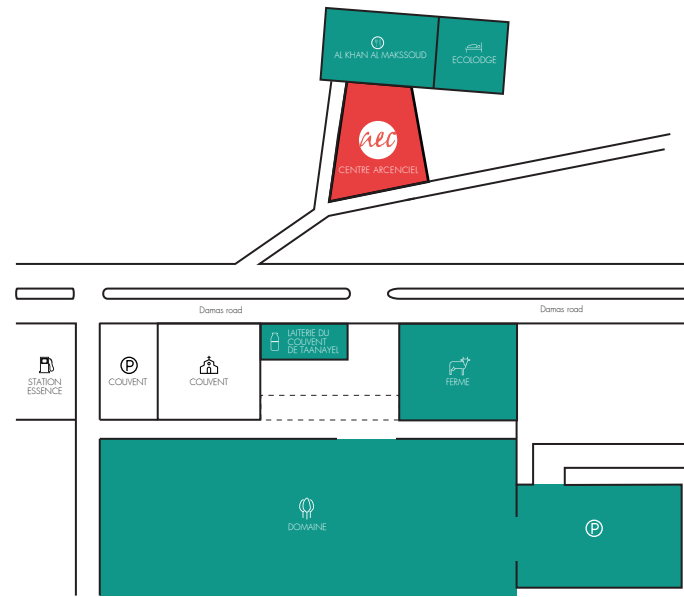
BEKAA

Ecolodge de Taanayel & Al Khan al Makssoud

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 www.ecolodge-arcenciel.org



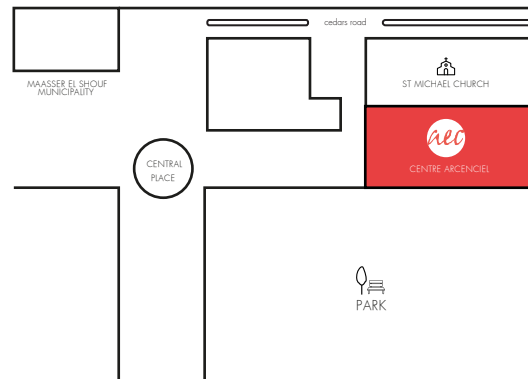
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SHOUF

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محمية الشوف
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درب الكرم
 food heritage trail

