

#1 The People who live here.

#2 DIANE CALVERT, AN AMERICAN, WHO "ILLUMINATES" (lights up) THE YONNE (the Yonne is the name of a "county" in Burgundy [a region in France])

#3 Diane Calvert lives a fairy tale in Nagere-sur-Serein by creating a job out of her passion: the art of illumination. Her arrival in the Yonne is also that of a fairy tale. Once upon a time...

#4 Once upon a time, a New York couple, a textile designer & her husband decided about 12 years ago to leave the New World & move to Paris.

Diane Calvert worked in fashion & textile design. To wind down, she practiced her favorite hobby: Illumination, the art of decorating the principle letters from medieval manuscripts.

In 1994 during a vacation trip with a friend (because the Calvert family has never had a car!), road work on Freeway A6 caused the group to detour through Nagere. The couple spent the weekend looking at houses for sale... and bought one: "The faucon there & town where we were warmly welcomed. From then on", Diane explained, "our social life was no longer in Paris, but in Nagere".

#5 IN MEDIEVAL COSTUME

Diane then developed her illumination work in this medieval community. An American friend, (Victor) who also succumbed to the charm of Nagere, let her use the ground floor of his house which she made into a gallery. Word of mouth worked very well: the artist now has a local clientele, and also an international one (Japan, England, the U.S...): "I work from reproductions in books, bibles, or tapestries dating from the 7th to the 15th centuries. Each of my illuminations is original". And Diane tells us some of her secrets: "I do everything in the tradition of the Middle Ages, using the same techniques and recipes. I use sheepskin parchment, gold leaf, & I made my own colors using semi-precious stones, plants, and diverse colored earths".

(over)

The process of alchemy is one of the most successful!

Diane is equally passionate about the entire medieval period, in that from Easter to late autumn, it is in medieval dress (hand made, of course) that she enlivens her gallery and classes. This is what makes her husband say, "her grandmother told her too many fairy tales when she was little!" Smiling, Diane adds, "Plus, I live a real fairy tale. It's wonderful to have a dream come true while making money doing it". An art which must have the finger... of a fairy!

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