

Dear friends and guests,

Here is our first newsletter of 2026, in which Emmanuelle and I cover the following three topics:

- Highlights and a review of the past season
- 2027 bookings: a reminder of changes and important dates
- The “Ambassadors” program

Our 2026 season was a bit of a mixed bag (or *en demi-teinte*, as the French say—meaning, essentially, that it was... average).

This was due to a rocky start caused by a succession of technical issues, as well as a heatwave (40°C in the shade at Montrouant!) and an act of thoughtlessness (to put it mildly) committed by one of our guests.

Regarding the technical issues—some of you are already aware of them, as we made no secret of the situation:

1) Two weeks before opening, the hot water tank for the washroom facilities gave up the ghost! A plumber friend’s diagnosis was definitive: it had to be replaced! Admittedly, it had given nearly 35 years of faithful service...

2) Two days before opening, our swimming pool pump motor started smoking and refused to run. A professional assessment confirmed it was beyond repair and had to be replaced.

It was a mad scramble to find a hot water tank and a new pump on such short notice—and a significant expense, too!

Hot water was restored to the washrooms just in time, but the pool pump wasn't fixed; this was a real ordeal for my camping guests, who couldn't use the pool for ten days, even with temperatures hitting 40°C in the shade!

The extreme heat and inability to cool off led to some guests leaving early—a perfectly understandable decision—and I want to take this opportunity to thank those guests for their kindness and thoughtfulness. Despite this major issue, neither Emmanuelle nor I faced any harsh or bitter remarks; quite the opposite, in fact.

3) I must also mention the leak in our swimming pool. While in recent seasons we had noticed a drop in water level after a few days of use—easily remedied by topping up with fresh water one night out of four—that was not the case this year.

Was the drought to blame, perhaps causing ground movement through soil shrinkage or cracking? Possibly; regardless, we had to add water almost daily throughout the season.

Finally, to round out this run of bad luck, the renovation of the four new tents (the "Rent-a-tent" ones)—involving wooden decking and interior partitions—proved particularly complicated. The project could not have been completed without the help of my friends Coos, Hans, and Mimiche.

I won't forget it!

The intense heat, which made working indoors impossible in the afternoons, certainly didn't help matters—both regarding the work itself and the schedule, where my chronic optimism played tricks on me...

Yet that same optimism leads me to believe that, for the next ten years, we won't have to worry about hot water in the washrooms or the pool's water circulation system. The same goes for the four tents, as Emmanuelle and I intend to stop at that number.

As you will read later on, we are planning a more spacious and luxurious rental option for 2027...

I am now touching upon a subject so delicate that I hesitated greatly before sharing it with you; yet, this incident is part of the life here at the campsite—a life I have shared with you through these newsletters for years. Learning about it might also encourage you to take greater precautions when storing your bottles in my cellar... and, for my part, perhaps prompt me to “secure” the area by installing a small camera?

Last July, four bottles of prestige champagne were stolen from my cellar.

Unfortunately, they weren't my bottles, but those of a camper friend who—like many of you—stores his wine in the cool air on the cellar's stone floor.

Emmanuelle and I were appalled: a theft at Montrouant! And between campers, no less!

To us, none of you are capable of such a thing...

I must admit, the nights following this discovery were restless.

How did we feel? A sense of betrayal, and above all, sadness.

Sadness for our friends who were wronged, certainly, but also because of the heavy cloud that seemed to hang over Montrouant for a few days. It was a peculiar atmosphere that disrupted the summer mood, as well as our sense of certainty and, in a way, our equilibrium...

Of course, one cannot remain distressed for long. The season is in full swing; new faces replace those who leave. The joys of welcoming guests, of conversation, and of sharing quickly take over again. Yet, even now that the season is over, the matter still frequently comes to mind...

Don't go thinking this was the work of an outsider, because one striking detail refutes that theory.

You see, four bottles of prestige Champagne were stolen, but a single bottle from a different Champagne producer—specifically the Domaine Mea "Assemblage" cuvée—was left in the place of one of the stolen ones.

On reflection, I believe the thief had stored his own case of Champagne in my storage area—a case containing only three remaining bottles (perhaps the others were drunk at Montrouant, or shared...)—and he needed to leave one behind to perfectly fill the gap in his case. It's just a theory, of course, but it makes sense.

You'll surely agree that someone from outside the site wouldn't bring a bottle of fine Champagne along to commit a theft—several contacts with Domaine Mea have confirmed the excellent quality of their wines. It's certainly less practical than a crowbar!

There, I've said it—or rather, written it! And why write it?

To ensure this unscrupulous individual never stays at Montrouant again!

Because the bottle told the tale!

The information on the back label of the bottle left behind (bottling date, shipping date, etc.), combined with the buyer lists provided—for a specific period—by Domaine Mea and some of their key retailers, allowed us to identify the person by name.

Emmanuelle and I then made the following decision.

This first and last name will be kept secret... but this person must understand that they are, of course, **no longer welcome in Montrouant !**

Let us now turn to a completely different subject—one that is lighter but nonetheless important: bookings for 2027.

I would like to remind you of the decisions Emmanuelle and I made last year following the bankruptcy of our tour-operator.

1) We will begin accepting reservation requests for our rental units and camping pitches on November 1st of this year—in about two weeks' time.

2) We are maintaining the priority status granted to our long-standing guests as a token of appreciation for their loyalty. This priority applies to all our camping friends, regardless of whether previous stays were booked directly with Emmanuelle or through our former tour operator, Rent-a-Tent.

3) This priority period lasts for 45 days, running from November 1st to December 15th each year. After December 15th, reservations are processed on a first-come, first-served basis, just like at any other campsite.

4) The full balance for stays in tents, lodges, or apartments must be paid prior to arrival. Payment can be made in one or two installments on dates agreed upon between you and Emmanuelle.

5) Regarding bare camping pitches, the deposit required to confirm your reservation is increasing from €100 to €150.

So, get your calendars out, friends!

And for those it concerns: make sure to insist—kindly and diplomatically, of course—that your colleagues accept the dates you’ve chosen for your stay at Montrouant, and send those dates to Emmanuelle starting November 1st.

I now turn to the third topic of this newsletter:

The “Ambassador” Program—A Prepaid Holiday Credit.

You may have read in our 2025 newsletters that we plan to set up two new luxury lodge tents at Camping de Montrouant.

Barring any health issues, we hope to continue welcoming you to our small campsite for the next ten years.

These two new lodges will help ensure the long-term viability of this future ambition.

To bring this project to life, and with the help of René and Marc, we originally envisioned a crowdfunding scheme based on two or three years of prepaid stays. I won’t go back over the many details of that project, which were covered extensively in our November 2025 newsletter.

The 2026 season—marked by many discussions on the subject—gave birth (pardon the expression) to a more refined and simpler concept. Harm named it the “Ambassador Program,” and it is aimed specifically at our camper friends who wish to support Montrouant and take part in a new chapter of the campsite’s life.

This program is open until December 31, 2026.

You can participate with a contribution ranging from €1,500 to €4,000. The goal is to raise a total of €70,000 with absolutely no risk to our participating friends—a **sine qua non** condition for Emmanuelle and me.

I won’t say any more here, as this concept concerns only those who frequent our small campsite. There is no need for this wonderful prospect to be known to the general public! If you are interested in the “Ambassador” program—particularly regarding how to use this “Prepaid Holiday Credit” for future stays at Montrouant—please feel free to email us at **campingdemontrouant@wanadoo.fr**.

Emmanuelle will send you the document explaining the program, and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

I will be back in touch at the end of November to keep you updated on the project's progress; in the meantime, Emmanuelle and I send you our warmest thoughts and best regards.

Jean Mi