

## The oldest city

The largest with an area of 4 564 hectares, largely made up of marshes and forest at the seaside but the least populated with about 13 100 people.



**The oldest** because She is the one who has seen the original inhabitants of the country of Olonnes who were probably Celts so Olonne could mean "above the water", and if need be, the best witnesses of this precedence would be the megaliths whose famous twins of Pierre Levee are the oldest of the Vendean coastal. The Seigneurie d'Olonne in the Middle Ages is one of most important of lower Poitou. The village of Olonne then grew around its church Ste Marie d'Olonne, built on a foundation of the fourth century, and was restored in 950 but its known history begins around 1050, is the oldest church in Olonne and it's worth to visit its own history covering 10 centuries. Then in Olonne was created the first seaport, some remains are still visible.

The beautiful beach at Sauveterre all along the forest of 9 kms, surrounding an area of 11000 hectares is very busy in summer months by tourists and in winter too the inhabitants of Olonne who appreciate its changings when alternately huge waves under westerly winds and strong tides shatter over the sand beach and the rocks. The castle of Pierre Levee is also very popular, it was inspired by le Petit Trianon in Versailles and was built in the 18 th century. The tourist office in olonne sur Mer regularly organizes visits and every year in August a show which relates his history through scenes with 200 extras and lightings. Close to the castle there is a 18 holes golf course opened all year long. See also the originals coastal villages like La Girviere

with its so called brush, ie with an outside staircase. The visit might be completed by Le Moulin des Roses, and the manor of La Jarrie.

Remember too that the seaport in Olonne before the current port in Les Sables d'Olonne, if we may say initiated our trade with the United Kingdom and from there left ships delivering salt, wine and reporting on the tin.