

Riviera Times Painting of the Month by Gerry Clarke

March 2004 Drawbridge at Langlois by Vincent Van Gogh

Vincent Van Gogh was born in Holland in 1853. Son of a Dutch preacher, his early years were restless, spent working in various jobs in Belgium, England and France. During this time he took up painting and went to work for his brother who was an art dealer in Paris.

In 1888 Vincent left Paris for the warmer climes of southern France and settled in the town of Arles, where, under the bright blue skies and burning sun of Provence, he began painting everyday scenes of fields, peasants, and the rustic life of the region. His painting of the drawbridge at Langlois is typical of this period. Endowed with a peaceful serenity, the painting depicts a bridge over the local canal, perhaps reminiscent of his Dutch homeland, and demonstrates the beginning of Van Gogh's dramatic use of colour, light and tone. This impressionist techniques soon developed into the use of swirling brush strokes and intense yellows, greens, and blues that were characteristic of his later works. Sadly, after spending months suffering from mental illness, he committed suicide in 1890. During his lifetime he was a very prolific artist, producing over 750 paintings and 1600 drawings which have become increasingly valued by the art world. One of his paintings fetched over 45 million euros at auction!

Today if you visit the old Roman town of Arles it is well worth taking a tour to see some of the sites that Van Gogh painted. The Drawbridge at Langlois is just a short drive south of the town centre on the edge of an industrial estate and is well signposted

Drawbridge with carriage by Van Gogh The same bridge as it is today



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