Dolmen du palet de Roland ou de Saillant
Name: Dolmen du Palet de Roland  
Name of village/town: St Nectaire  
Owner: private

References:
GPS:
Longitude: 3°01'13.6"E  
Latitude: 45°34'11.7"N

Accessibility: only on foot. No vehicles are allowed on the plot (hayfield).  
At Saillant, take the D26. Access via a path from the waterfall.  
The dolmen is a 15-minute walk through a meadow.

Length of itinerary: 30 min round trip

Public parking and activities: 1 car park at the waterfall, a rest area and a park

Location of the artwork: Nearby immediate dolmen. The meadow is not open to the creation (hayfield)

Description of the site: type of soil/surface area/vegetation/exposure  
A major site for Roman artwork, famous for its spa water and St Nectaire cheese. It is also the capital of megalithism in Auvergne. No less than six monuments, dolmens and menhirs cross the area. We have placed our interest in the Dolmen du Palet de Roland.

The word dolmen originates in a ancient country legend with a hero called Roland. This young man with supernatural powers was said to have placed this enormous stone on the ground in play. It is still almost completely embedded in a gigantic tumulus made up of earth and stones over 8m in diameter and 2m high.

The 5 vertical pillars and the covering stone weighing 10 tonnes are made of basalt.

Doctor Pommerol excavated the monument at the end of the XIXth century, when he discovered human bones, pottery and slivers of flint, certainly plunder dating from the Middle Ages. The remains of human skeletons are proof that the dolmen was used as a sepulchre and date the construction of this monument in the final Neolithic/Chalcolithic period (end of the 3rd millennium before our era).

The proposed site is limited to the dolmen and the area between the trees or around an area of 50 m2 or less. The hayfield in which lies the dolmen is prohibited due to the creation of farming.

The dolmen is in the middle of a mown meadow of several hectares bordered by foliage. It is itself largely surrounded by large beech meadow, as the ruins can still be noticed, especially the low stone walls that separated the plots of land.

The path of access to the dolmen is edged with low stone walls and trees, this closed-off section of the itinerary contrasts with the entrance to the meadow from where the dolmen can be seen. The path is slightly uphill, with the slope accentuated towards the final part of the itinerary. This forested part of the path apparently housed a Neolithic village, as the ruins can still be noticed, especially the low stone walls that separated the plots of land.

The meadow is at an altitude of approximately 660m and is surrounded by Puys whose domes are covered in forests: the Puy de Conché in the south with 900m altitude, Puy d’Eraigne to the west at 950m altitude, Pisuissy to the north at 910m altitude and Bourgeassou to the east.

The dolmen and meadow face fully south so are in the sun all day.

Technical aspects of the site:  
The path of access is fairly narrow. Access to the site and meadow are prohibited to any type of vehicle. So, the material flow can only be done feet.  
The meadow is mown several times in the summer, from the middle of May and all 6 weeks after.  
The setting up the artwork do not disturb the farming activity.

Best points:  
A site that is full of tales and legends. The dolmen by its very nature is quite exceptional. The meadow is vast and it leads us to look over the surrounding landscape of the Puys.
Others views of dolmen
Ancien village Néolithique avant l’arrivée au pré

The meadow
Saillant’s waterfall nearby the carpark
Localization of the site
Localization of the site
Localization of the site