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Ideas for 2021: The best 25 vineyard stays in Europe

Pop open a sparkling vinho verde in comfort in the Douro Valley or relax in a wine-themed spa in La Rioja

Burg Schwarzenstein, Rheingau
GETTY IMAGES

Nina Caplan | Friday August 21 2020, 5.00pm, The Times

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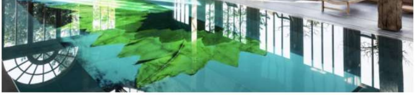
1. Burg Schwarzenstein, Rheingau
In the late 19th century, when the Rheingau's best wines were more expensive than top bordeaux, a winemaker built himself a medieval-style castle with breathtaking views through the riesling vineyards down to the Rhine. Today that eccentric castle has been expanded into a much-praised 39-room hotel and restaurant, constructed from locally quarried stone and rounded out with picture windows, within its own two-hectare park.
Details B&B doubles from £230 (burg-schwarzenstein.de). Fly to Frankfurt



Les Sources de Caudalie in Bordeaux

2. Les Sources de Caudalie, Bordeaux

Château Smith Haut Lafitte has been an admired Bordeaux vineyard since the 14th century; the Cathiards — former ski champions — have owned it since 1990. They opened the elegant hotel, with its two-Michelin-starred restaurant and grounds dotted with artworks. But it was their daughter who created the vinotherapy brand Caudalie, which has been pampering guests with grape-based treatments in the hotel spa since 1995.

Details B&B doubles from £215 (sources-caudalie.com). Fly to Bordeaux

La Terre d'Or, Beaune

3. La Terre d'Or, Beaune

This bijou upmarket B&B on a hilltop just outside Beaune is surrounded by premier cru vineyards, some belonging to the Hospices de Beaune, a charitable institution founded in the 15th century. Interiors are farmhouse-chic, with terracotta-tiled floors and pale stone walls, and trees shade the lovely pool. Better yet is the Jacuzzi, housed in a cave; reservation is essential, but there's no extra cost, unless you decide to sip a bottle of wine while you bathe. The family also has a vineyard, kitchen garden and for children, a treetop adventure course.

Details B&B doubles from £145 (laterredor.com). Fly to Lyon

Vedema Resort in Santorini

4. Vedema Resort, Santorini

The crescent-shaped volcanic island of Santorini does two things better than anywhere else: sunsets, thanks to its west-facing curve, and assyrtiko, a white grape that loves the dry heat and makes wonderfully mineral, savoury wines. Vedema, in the medieval village of Megalochori, was a wine cellar 400 years ago; it's still surrounded by vines, but the cellar's arcing stone walls now hold a restaurant and tasting room. While the vines in that porous, volcanic soil struggle for water, there's a pool, a Jacuzzi and, in some suites, a private whirlpool, so guests certainly do not.

Details B&B doubles from £196 (marriott.com). Fly to Santorini

B Vintage, Alsace

5. B Vintage, Alsace

Much of Alsace is almost ludicrously pretty, and Riquewihr is no exception; a medieval town, but for a few cars, a lot of shops and a plethora of smartphones. Jean-Luc Brendel is chef of the Michelin-starred Table du Gourmet and a passionate soil-to-plate gardener; his wife, Anne, oversees their gorgeous gîtes, including this two-bedroom townhouse, decorated in vintage without a shred of kitsch. Despite the central location, the lengthy balcony has views up towards the surrounding vine-covered hills, including the nearest grand cru, Schoenenbourg.

Details Two nights' self-catering for four from £495 (jlbrendel.com). Fly to Strasbourg

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6. Château Bauduc Farmhouse, Bordeaux

Gavin and Angela Quinney moved to Bordeaux from Britain 20 years ago to live the winemaking dream and sell their excellent, good value wines to restaurants owned by Gordon Ramsay and Rick Stein. Amid their vineyards stands an 18th-century farmhouse that they let out from April to October. The Quinneys understand British holidaymakers: the furniture is comfortable, the kitchen well equipped and there's a heated outdoor pool with a vine-covered eating area and barbecue. Bordeaux is 30 minutes away, as is pretty Saint-Émilion, and the Atlantic beaches of Arcachon are only 90 minutes' drive — but a tour of the Quinneys' winery or a jaunt to the Sunday oyster stalls is much closer.

Details Seven nights' self-catering for eight from £1,400 (bauduc.com/farmhouse-introduction). Fly to Bordeaux

Bokes Barn in Kent

7. Bokes Barn, Kent

Sam and Phil Cornish were storing tractors and a neighbour's pet project, a fire engine, in this gargantuan barn before they renovated. It opened last year as a lovely six-bedroom holiday home with open-plan living area, wood-burning stove and views over the Wealden Down, part of Kent's official area of outstanding natural beauty. The next-door vineyard is leased to Chapel Down, and guests have special permission to walk through its bacchus, pinot noir and siegerrebe vines; tours to wineries can also be organised. There's a large terrace with firepit and barbecue, and a very well-equipped kitchen, including wine fridge.

Details Three nights' self-catering (with welcome hamper) for 12 from £2,328 (ruralretreats.co.uk)

Denbies Vineyard Hotel in Surrey

8. Denbies Vineyard Hotel, Surrey

In the pretty Surrey Hills, one of England's largest and most successful wine estates has had the foresight to reimagine its 1850s farmhouse as a relaxed hotel, with vine-covered wallpaper inspired by designs from the Jane Austen House. There's also a new wing and a good restaurant with panoramic views over the 265-acre estate. Top-floor rooms in both buildings are the ones to book for vineyard vistas; those on the ground floor look on to the courtyard . . . but they also have the wallpaper.

Details B&B doubles from £145 (denbies.co.uk)

Tillingham, East Sussex
ANDREW HAYES-WATKINS

9. Tillingham, East Sussex

An 11-room boutique hotel in a former hop barn offers views across the organic, biodynamic Tillingham vineyards and the Victorian farmstead. The decor is quietly elegant, there's a wine bar with a selection from its favourite producers as well as its own, mostly sparkling wines, a weekend pizza service and a restaurant upstairs that takes full advantage of the capacious on-site kitchen garden and other convenient produce: this is, after all, a working farm.

Details B&B doubles from £165 (tillingham.com)

10. Mastinell Cava & Boutique Hotel, Barcelona

A quirky yet appealing hotel in cava country, less than an hour inland from Barcelona, Mastinell is designed to resemble a double stack of cava bottles in the vineyard; the bottle base is the window of your bedroom, and it's simple and contemporary from within. Outside lie the vines, the terrace, the pool and the Sant Pau mountains; activities include Segway tours of the property.
Details B&B doubles from £167 (hotelmastinell.com). Fly to Barcelona

Abadia Retuerta le Domaine in Valladolid

11. Abadia Retuerta le Domaine, Valladolid

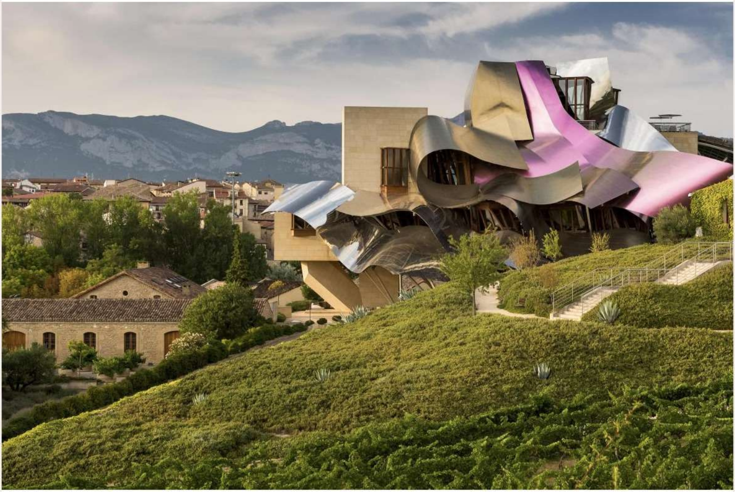
All 30 rooms in this repurposed 12th-century Spanish abbey on the edge of the Ribera del Duero wine region have views over vines — and since the property is only 5km from Dominio de Pingus and 10km from Vega Sicilia, two of the world's most revered wine names, these are vines worth looking at. The graceful vaulted ceilings now arch above 21st-century comforts: the monks' refectory has become a Michelin-starred restaurant with a superb wine list, and there's an informal restaurant in the cloister garden (when weather permits), a wine bar and a spa.
Details B&B doubles, including minibar and an hour in the spa, from £355 (abadia-retuerta.com). Fly to Madrid

Vineyards in the Priorat wine region of Spain
ALAMY

12. Hotel Trossos del Priorat, Tarragona

Just outside the village of Gratallops, atop the quartz and slate hill that produces some of Spain's best red wines, this hotel commands vistas far beyond its own steeply terraced vines, across Catalonia's blue-misted mountains. It's easy from up here to see why the monks who founded Priorat's first winery, in the 12th century, called it Scala Dei — the Ladder to God. The hotel has wine-themed quotes on the walls, tables wittily constructed from cut-down wine barrels, and restful pale furnishings to match its light stone exterior — but then Priorat's rich and powerful wines, wrung with enormous dedication from these meagre soils, provide all the colour you need.

Details B&B doubles from £82 (hoteltrossosdelpriorat.com). Fly to Barcelona



Hotel Marqués de Riscal in La Rioja

13. Hotel Marqués de Riscal, La Rioja

The architect Frank Gehry isn't known for the subtlety of his buildings, but this addition to a famous Rioja winery must be one of his most startling creations. In the sandstone medieval Spanish village of Elciego, his shining tangle of purple and silver titanium makes something of a statement. In front lie calm rows of vineyards; the mountains of the Sierra de Cantabria form a backdrop. The location is amazing: the Michelin-starred restaurant and even the Caudalie spa, with its grape-based products offering another way for wine lovers to enjoy their favourite fruit, have vineyard views.

Details B&B doubles, including winery tour and tasting, from £347 (marriott.com). Fly to Bilbao

Relais San Maurizio in Piedmont

14. Relais San Maurizio, Piedmont

What would the original 17th-century inhabitants make of their monastery now? Their cells have been converted into luxury accommodation for the many fans of Piedmont wine (the village of Barolo is 22 miles away) and their cellars are a Michelin-starred restaurant. The salt caves have become a spa, where herbs from the garden perfume the sauna. The only entirely familiar sight would be the nebbiolo vines, which still, thank goodness, cover every visible hillside.
Details B&B doubles from £185 (en.relaissanmaurizio.it). Fly to Turin

La Foresteria in Sicily

15. La Foresteria, Sicily

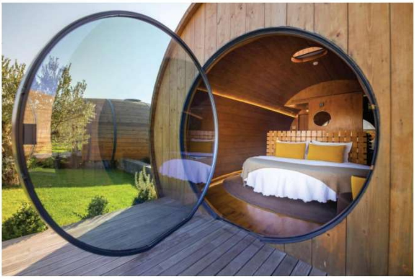
With five wineries across this geologically diverse island, the Planeta family are among Sicily's most important winemakers, but they have had a farmhouse in Ulmo since the 16th century, so it's no surprise that they chose to site their hotel just 14 miles away, a stone's throw from Porto Palo Beach (a stretch of which is privately available to guests). Their vines aren't just visible from the hotel; the lovely infinity pool seems to spill right on to them. The 14 rooms are decorated in calming Mediterranean colours and are named for the herbs that perfume the property and appear in Chef Angelo's dishes in the evening.
Details B&B doubles from £130 (planetaestate.it). Fly to Palermo

Six Senses, Douro Valley

16. Six Senses, Douro Valley

Port made the spectacular terraced vineyards along the Douro River famous and today there are great dry reds here too. This luxury hotel in a 19th-century manor house takes full advantage of the wines and landscape, with terrace views, its wine library for pre-dinner drinks, daily tastings and wine-and-dine river cruises. There's also a gigantic spa, a yoga deck, a blissful pool overlooking the valley and tile-painting workshops for those who occasionally think about something other than wine.

Details B&B doubles from £325 (sixsenses.com). Fly to Porto



Quinta da Pacheca in Douro

17. Quinta da Pacheca, Douro

In the vineyards beyond the 18th-century manor — where you'll find the hotel and excellent restaurant of one of the Douro's oldest estates — stand ten giant barrels; each is a bedroom, with an oversize porthole that doubles as a door, and a deck on which to sip and gaze at the vines. The owners, Paulo Pereira and Maria do Céu Gonçalves, aren't the first to try this, but they have executed it exceptionally well; instead of a cramped novelty, there is 25 sq m, plus en suite shower. The tariff includes a tour and wine tasting.

Details B&B doubles from £165 (quintadapacheca.com). Fly to Porto

L'And Vineyards, Alentejo

18. L'And Vineyards, Alentejo

The Alentejo wine region, near southern Portugal's border with Spain, is enormous — bigger than Belgium — and very lovely, with silver-green olive trees and umber cork oaks interspersing the vineyards. These 30 elegant suites and villas gaze over vineyards, and some have a roof that opens to the stars. The restaurant uses local organic suppliers, and the spa offers vinotherapy treatments. And when all that peace, wine and relaxation get too much, you're just 60 miles from Lisbon.

Details B&B doubles from £165 (l-and.com). Fly to Lisbon

Royal Champagne Hotel & Spa

19. Royal Champagne Hotel & Spa, Champagne

The owners of Leclerc Briant champagne have recreated an old coaching inn on a hilltop as an all-suite hotel with a huge roof terrace, a Michelin-starred restaurant and an expansive spa where even the pool, coated in fish-scale-silver tiles, has views on to Moët & Chandon's vines. The hotel has electric bikes for a scenic ride through these Unesco world heritage-classified vineyards, despite the gradient, and the exceptional range of champagnes in the bar offer a suitable reward for all that effort.

Details B&B doubles from £365 (royalchampagne.com/en). Fly to Paris

Schwarzer Adler Hotel in Vogtsburg

20. Schwarzer Adler Hotel, Vogtsburg
The Kaiserstuhl terroir is a former volcano, which suits the Keller family's pinot noir, chardonnay and pinot gris vines beautifully. Guests can watch them thrive from several of this top-tier gasthof's 14 colourful, spacious rooms, and taste the wines in one of three restaurants. Schwarzer Adler has been Michelin-starred for half a century, while its Kellerwirtschaft bistro sits atop the winery, which is built into the vine-covered hillside.
Details B&B doubles from £150 (franz-keller.de). Fly to Zurich

Villa Lavaux, Lake Geneva

21. Villa Lavaux, Lake Geneva
Swiss wine is less known than it should be — because the locals drink most of it — which is a great excuse to go there for a wine holiday. The vineyards that descend towards Lake Geneva below this upmarket B&B, between Lausanne and Montreux, form part of the Unesco world heritage site. Explore them on foot, by bicycle or via a little sightseeing train, or take a cruise on the lake and look up at them instead.
Details B&B doubles from £175 (villalavaux.ch). Fly to Geneva

La Bastide de Marie in Luberon

22. La Bastide de Marie, Luberon

In the depths of Luberon's regional park, with its scented undergrowth, milk-white cliffs and centenarian cedars, this gracious 18th-century farmhouse has been luxuriously repurposed into 15 suites decorated in Provençal style, with views over the estate's vines and two outdoor pools that cascade into one another. There's a stone-and-timber dining room, a spa and a lovely terrace. Just beyond are the vines that make the estate's wines, including the pale rosé for which the region is famous.

Details B&B doubles from £300 (en.labastidedemarie.com). Fly to Marseilles

Loisium in South Styria

MISCHA NAWRATA

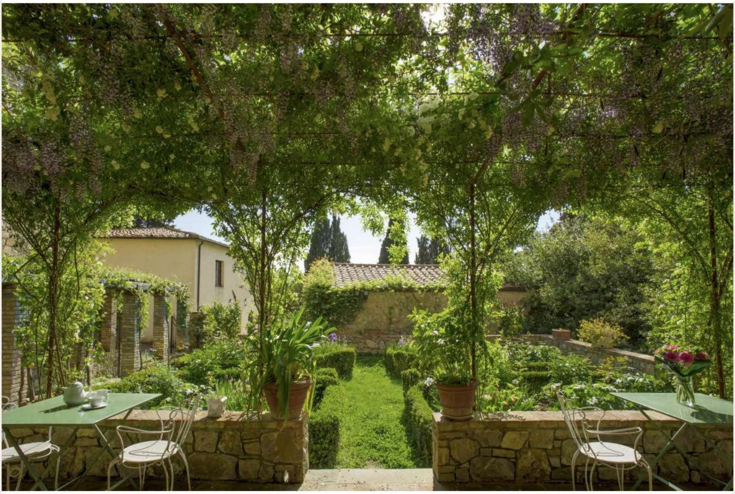
23. Loisium, South Styria

Above the glassed-in ground floor of this high-design Austrian hotel among the Kamptal vines, 82 rooms appear to float. Despite the sharp exterior angles, there's plenty of comfort to be found: contemporary art in every room, a heated outdoor pool, an expansive spa and a formidable array of local wines, especially the Kamptal's famous rieslings and grüner veltliners. Those curious about the surrounding vines can stroll past them to Loisium World of Wine for a virtual tour through 900 years of wine history, plus tasting, inside another startlingly modern building.

Details B&B doubles from £130 (loisium.com). Fly to Vienna

Babaneuris Marani, Kakheti

24. Babaneuris Marani, Kakheti
In the foothills of the Greater Caucasus mountain range, this Georgian winery uses techniques that have barely changed in 8,000 years to make wine from indigenous grapes. The 13-room boutique hotel is built from stone, turreted and festooned with balconies looking on to the forested hillsides and vines. There's an excellent on-site restaurant showcasing different Georgian cuisines. Tour the winery, hike through the Babaneuri Nature Reserve next door or just sip local wine beside the heated pool.
Details B&B doubles from £50 (babaneuri.com). Fly to Tbilisi



Castello di Fonterutoli in Chianti

25. Castello di Fonterutoli, Chianti
Fonterutoli is one of the most admired wine estates in Chianti Classico, itself the home of the best chianti. The owners, the Mazzei family, have converted part of a medieval village that lies within the estate into a 16-room upmarket B&B plus apartments; there are terracotta floors, wooden beams and lovely views of the sangiovese vines that are Tuscany's signature variety. Those who want the vistas should book the Duca or Duchessa rooms or the Loggia suite, with its balcony. Or just taste the results, honed over 600 years of winemaking, during a tour of the winery, or over lunch or dinner in the Osteria.
Details B&B doubles from £108.50 (castellodifonterutoli.com). Fly to Florence

Nina Caplan is the author of *The Wandering Vine: Wine, the Romans and Me* (Bloomsbury, £7.99)

Travel advice
Please note that the Foreign & Commonwealth Office currently advises against non-essential travel to France, Spain and Austria, while those flying to Scotland from Switzerland will be required to quarantine for 14 days from August 22. See fco.gov.uk

Have you ever stayed on a vineyard? Let us know in the comments below

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