

O E N O

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WINE | SPIRITS | LIFESTYLE

Tour de France

FROM CHAMPAGNE TO CHASSAGNE, A CONNOISSEUR'S GUIDE
TO THE FINEST WINE, FOOD & TRAVEL

CLUB OENOLOGIQUE | SUMMER 2021
RUM | OYSTERS | CIGARS | COCKTAILS

Dreaming of la belle France

WE'RE ALL STARTING TO DREAM OF TRAVEL -
AND WHAT COULD BE DREAMIER THAN A STAY
IN THE HEART OF FRENCH WINE COUNTRY?
NINA CAPLAN AND ADAM LECHMERE
PICK OUT FRANCE'S FINEST WINE HOTELS

JOANN PAI

Château Troplong Mondot, St-Emilion

Premier grand cru classé Troplong Mondot sits atop St-Emilion's highest hill: the only place to gain a better panorama of the vineyards and the medieval white-stone town would be the top of the extraordinary Gothic church's tower – but then you'd miss the tower itself. The Keys of Troplong Mondot, newly repurposed as luxury accommodation, has exposed beams, stone fireplaces and three bedrooms all with superb views; the terrace faces the 18th-century château and the town beyond. Guests can dip in the slate-lined outdoor pool; book vineyard tours, tastings and yoga sessions; or explore the 43ha estate themselves, on bikes. Manager Aymeric de Gironde's preoccupation with sustainability and biodiversity means there are woods and vineyards to cycle through, as well as horses (employed to work the soil) to admire. There's also a cosy two-bedroom Vineyard House to rent in the grounds – or you can hire the whole tastefully modernised five-suite château, complete with bespoke meals by chef David Charrier, whose restaurant on the property, Les Belles Perdrix, reopened this spring after a three-year refurbishment. Unsurprisingly, several other top St-Emilion estates have ventured into tourism: Château Pavie has Hotel de Pavie (formerly Hostellerie de Plaisance), with Yannick Alléno now overseeing the restaurant; almost next door is Michelin-starred restaurant Logis de la Cadène, with its three rooms and two suites, which belongs to Château Angélu.

From €250 per night
troplong-mondot.com/en

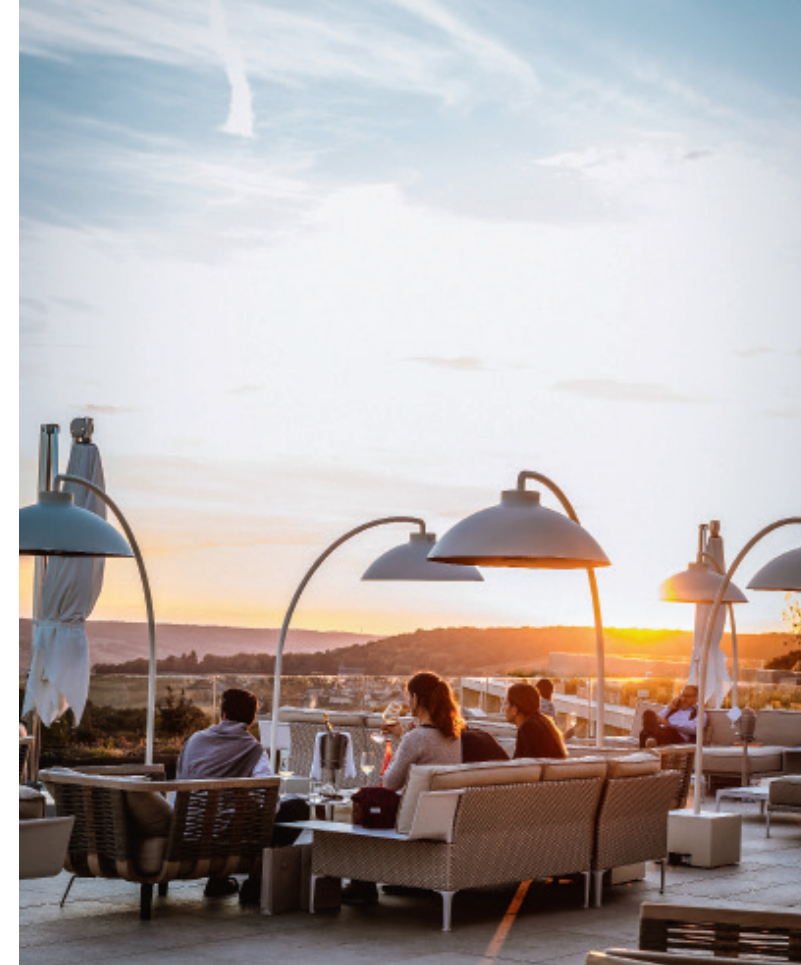


JOANN PAI

Royal Champagne Hotel & Spa, Champillon, Champagne

For one of the world's most renowned luxury brands, it's odd that Champagne has only recently gained its first contemporary luxury hotel. The Royal Champagne makes up for the shortfall – from its triple-height entrance hall, to the 16,000-sq-ft spa and pool and terrace, as well as balconied rooms that seem to float above a sea of vineyards, the serious wine traveller is amply catered for. The south-facing terraces offer panoramic views of the jewels of Champagne – the villages of Epernay, Ay, Chouilly, Cramant and Avize – all shimmering in the afternoon sun. Tours of the vineyards (by quad bike, horse or private jet) and visits to producers are part of the package, of course, or in both restaurants, Le Bellevue and the Michelin-starred Le Royal, you can 'tour' the Champagne houses, with cuvées chosen to complement chef Jean-Denis Rieubland's hyper-local dishes. This isn't one of France's most populated regions, and as night falls over the vineyards there's little to distract from the darkness other than sparse constellations of light from the fine old villages that surround you. Rural luxury in the world's most famous wine region – and soon to come to Burgundy, too, with the opening of a sister hotel there this summer.

From €560 per night
royalchampagne.com



Above: the terrace at the Royal Champagne (also seen on previous spread) looks out over the region's vaulted vineyards

Below: you could use Château St Pierre de Serjac as a base to explore the Languedoc, or you could just stay put



One of St-Emilion's top estates, Troplong Mondot has a rarefied status that is reflected in a property housing just three rooms



Château St Pierre de Serjac, Languedoc

The eastern Languedoc is one of France's most exciting wine regions, where the quality of its output has improved far beyond common perceptions. As a base to explore the sub-appellations of Faugères, Picpoul de Pinet, Pic St-Loup or Terrasses du Larzac, Château St Pierre de Serjac (which also has its own vineyard) is ideally situated; there are even bikes for a quick zip to highly regarded nearby estates such as Domaine de l'Arjolle. It is equally tempting, however, to go nowhere at all, given the eight luxurious bedrooms in the château, plus a range of self-catering accommodation in the outbuildings, the restaurant and wine bar, heated pool and spa, tennis court and 220 acres of garden, woodland, olive groves and vineyards. In addition to a sister hotel – Château Les Carrasses, a little farther west – the owners, winemaker Laurent Bonfils and hoteliers Karl and Anita O'Hanlon, are opening a third property, Château Capitoul, near Montpellier this summer. Between them, the three hotels appear to have the whole eastern Languedoc covered.

From €175 per night
serjac.com/en/hotel-beziers-luxury-villas-languedoc