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FRANCE MEDIA



Alexandra Palace in Deux-Sèvres is considered to be a national treasure and sits in a particularly verdant corner of France.

and chocolate tones – while restaurant *Le Logis* epitomises elegant French dining. www.logis-saint-martin.com/en

Château de Beauvois

(Indre-et-Loire)

If it's pure Loire Valley refinement you're looking for in your next chateau stay, Château de Beauvois has it in spades. With its impressive royal links – its 15th-century Renaissance tower was once King Louis XIII's preferred destination for hunting trips – plus top-table gourmet and wine offerings, it is a must-visit for *bon viveurs* with a taste for the finer things in life. Just one example comes in the form of its magnificently stocked wine cellar, which houses over 50,000 of the rarest bottles. Ideal for accompanying your meal at the Louis XIII restaurant, where chef Régis Guilpain's haute cuisine makes the very best uses of seasonal, local produce. Decor in the rooms and suites is suitably

sophisticated, with a nod to royal traditions, with authentic beams and furniture dating back to the 17th century. www.beauvois.com/en

Alexandra Palace (Deux-Sèvres)

Alexandra Palace, formerly known as Château du Petit Chêne, is nothing short of a national treasure, bearing Monument Historique status. In 2016 it suffered devastating fire

damage and was forced to close its doors. It took three years of renovation work to get the castle-cum-hotel back into full working order and guests can now enjoy its new and improved interior. As well as the fresh, luxurious feel that comes with a major refurbishment, guests can look forward to making good use of its renowned 18-hole golf course, 160 acres of unspoiled woodland, spa and wine cellar.

Plus, the Deux-Sèvres département is an especially green patch of France, home to such treasures as the Marais Poitevin and 'Green Venice'. www.youanacollection.com/en

Château Le Prieuré

(Maine-et-Loire)

With rows of beautiful chestnut trees leading up to its grand entrance, dreamy Château Le Prieuré lies in Chênehutte-Trèves-Cunault, sandwiched between Saumur and Angers. This 4-star castle hotel is positively brimming with refinement, and enjoys panoramic, fairy-tale views of the Loire River. The history of Château Le Prieuré dates back to the 10th century and the Benedictine monks who found the beauty and serenity of the area an ideal backdrop for their life of prayer. In the 19th century, along came the Count of Aubépin, followed at the turn of the 20th century by the Count of Castellane, both of »



Château Le Prieuré started out as a place of prayer and meditation

PHOTOS: © ALEXANDRA PALACE, CHATEAU LE PRIEURÉ



Clockwise from above: Tee off at Domaine de Vaugouard; relax in the charms of a bygone era at Château de Verrières; Hôtel Saint-Martin radiates elegance

Château de la Perrière (Maine-et-Loire)

A classified Monument Historique, Château de la Perrière has a long and fascinating past. The building's completion in the 17th century is attributed to François II Goddes de Varennes, who expanded the house that his father built from older dwellings – something of a family legacy. From 1982 to 2008, no longer occupied, the castle was restored to its former splendour by local specialist companies, with great attention to the woodwork, tapestries and paintings within. Golfers will be kept quiet with 185 acres of course to cover, including both an 18- and nine-hole course. And for those searching for bigger fish to fry on their chateau hunt, fear not: this is the perfect base from which to

see the Château d'Angers, just 15 minutes away by car, and Château de Saumur, about 45 minutes to the south east. www.youanacollection.com/en

Château D'Ortaffa (Pyrénées-Orientales)

In France's most southwesterly corner near Perpignan and picturesque Collioure (not to mention the beaches of Spain and the Dalí-lovers magnet, Cadaquès), Château d'Ortaffa is run by Michelle and Alain. It was formerly the episcopal palace of Elne bishops, with the castle's origins dating from the 12th century, and today the focus is firmly on guest comfort and pleasure. Take your pick from the Tuscany suite, the Baroque and Picasso rooms or the Collioure mini-suite. A real treat is breakfast time – normally outdoors thanks to the

300 sunny days a year. Expect delicious homemade marmalades and regional products, served on the vast terrace looking out on the village of Ortaffa. www.chateau-ortaffa.com/en

Domaine de Vaugouard (Loiret)

Here is one for outdoor enthusiasts. Once a hunting ground for the Duke of Orleans (eldest son of King Louis Philippe I), the Domaine de Vaugouard is a 4-star hotel with a spa, gourmet restaurant, and an 18-hole golf course, all of which combine to provide an ideal destination for a weekend getaway. The Domaine also offers a wide range of amenities, including a heated outdoor swimming pool, sauna, fitness centre, pétanque and tennis courts, and games room.

Stay in the castle or in one of the charmingly renovated outbuildings.

www.vaugouard.com

Hôtel Saint-Martin (Deux-Sèvres)

Small means beautiful at this elegant 4-star boutique hotel located in Saint-Maixent-l'École in the heart of the Poitou region, between Poitiers and Niort. Surrounded by a magnificent park facing the Sèvre Niortaise river, the Hôtel Saint-Martin has 13 rooms and two suites – including a duplex in the dungeon tower. Given its location, the hotel is often used by guests seeking a mid-point stopover when driving down to the South of France. Guest accommodation combines refined decoration with modern comforts – such as the elegant superior rooms with their blue >>