

EUROPE

## 20 best hotels in the Languedoc

From a bolt hole by the Med to a vineyard château, Carolyn Boyd knows where to stay in this stunning part of the south of France

Carolyn Boyd

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Le Château Valmy, near Perpignan

Provence might have the bling-bling of the Côte d'Azur and the lavender of Luberon, but for a taste of a wilder, unspoilt (by hordes of tourists at least) south of France, you should head west to the Languedoc. Now part of the larger Occitanie region, it offers wide and wild golden beaches, fascinating Roman heritage sites and, to the west, the foothills of the Pyrenees and a sinuous red-cliffed road through picturesque fishing villages that are adored by artists. What's more, the region's wines are making a serious comeback, along with an accompanying rise in the

number of stylish vineyard hotels. Here's our pick of the bunch.

### **1 Le Château Valmy, near Perpignan**

Perched above its own vineyards, with views down to the Roussillon coast, the 19th-century Château Valmy in Argelès-sur-Mer has five spacious rooms, individually styled with splashes of colourful decor. There's an outdoor pool and hot tub, but the main attraction is its restaurant, which draws on the bounty of local flavours, including fish from the coast, accompanied by flights of the château's wines.

**Details** B&B doubles cost from €160 (£143) (00 33 468 81 25 70, [chateau-valmy.com](http://chateau-valmy.com))



Château les Carrasses

### **2 Château les Carrasses, near Béziers**

This 19th-century wine château and its estate have been transformed to an exquisite standard to offer myriad options for a break between the coast at Narbonne and the charming town of Pézenas. With hotel rooms in the château, as well as apartments and villas around the estate for self-catering, guests have the best of both worlds and can enjoy the winery, restaurant and a dreamy infinity pool. There is also a kids' club, tennis courts and a host of activities, including cycling along the Canal du Midi.

**Details** B&B doubles cost from €189 (00 33 467 00 00 67, [lescarrasses.com](http://lescarrasses.com))



Village Castigno

### 3 Village Castigno, near Béziers

The 24 rooms of this “scattered” hotel are spread through 12 houses in Assignan, a charming village in the countryside 45 minutes inland from Béziers. The hotel has given the village a new lease of life, with three restaurants, a spa and a new winery. There are no TVs and no phone signal, and there’s a single wifi spot, so it’s an ideal place to escape the world and enjoy the programme of activities and workshops, including wine-tasting, bread-making and pottery. Each of the hotel’s rooms is decorated in vibrant reds, pinks and purples — inspired by the colour of wine — with a Moroccan vibe.

**Details** Double rooms cost from €130, breakfast is €23 (00 33 467 24 26 41, [villagecastigno.com](http://villagecastigno.com))



Jardins Secrets

#### 4 Jardins Secrets, Nîmes

Hidden away in a walled garden in the heart of the Roman city of Nîmes, this luxury hotel is an Aladdin's cave of chandeliers, antiques and objets d'art. There are 14 decadent rooms, myriad salons and terraces in which to recline, and a cosy chandelier-lit barn in which to sip liqueurs from dainty glasses. Further relaxation can be found in the cloistered spa room, with sunken pool, hammam and massage suite; there's a pool in the garden, shaded by olive trees.

**Details** Doubles cost from €280, breakfast is €29 (00 33 466 84 82 64, [jardinssecrets.net](http://jardinssecrets.net))



Domaine de Verchant

#### 5 Domaine de Verchant, Montpellier

Set on a 16th-century wine estate on the outskirts of Montpellier, this five-star hotel with 23 spacious rooms blends contemporary design with rustic natural stone walls. The hotel's main attraction is its enormous spa, which offers dreamy treatments along with a hammam, sauna, hot tub and large indoor pool, as well as an infinity pool overlooking the vineyards. There's also a poolside bistro and a gourmet restaurant.

**Details** Doubles cost from €220, breakfast is €28 (00 33 467 07 26 00, [domainedeverchant.com](http://domainedeverchant.com))

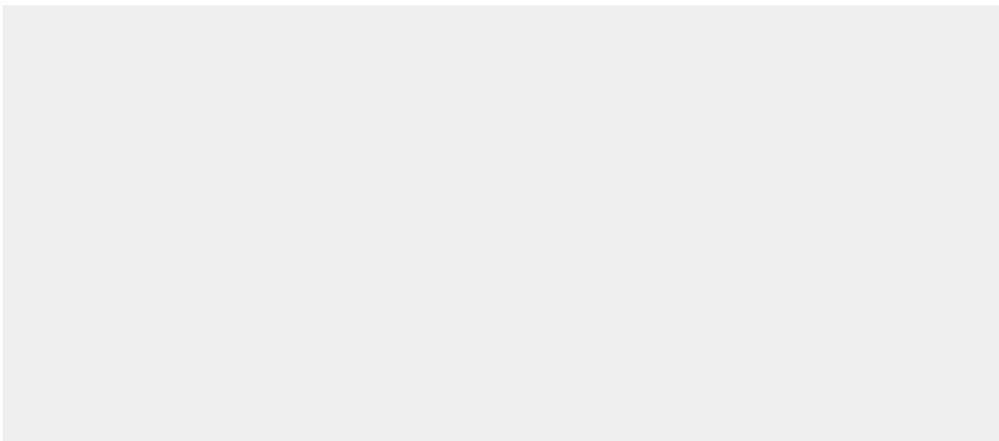


Château de Riell

### **6 Château de Riell, near Prades, Pyrenees**

Set in the village of Molitg-les-Bains in the foothills of the Pyrenees, with views of snow-capped Mont Canigou, the enchanting Château de Riell is a quirky bolt hole. The salons and 19 bedrooms and suites are filled with antique furniture and have parquet floorboards, voile fabrics and kooky wallpapers. Its safari-themed bar is the perfect place to sip cocktails mixed by the long-serving barman, Michel, and breakfast is served in the Russian dacha. The hotel is linked to the spa in the village, where you can enjoy treatments using the mineral-rich water in the marble baths.

**Details** Doubles cost from €165, breakfast is €22 (00 33 468 05 04 40, [chateauderiell.com](http://chateauderiell.com))





Château Saint Pierre de Serjac

### **7 Château Saint Pierre de Serjac, near Béziers**

The sister property to Château les Carrasses, this former wine estate in the village of Puissalicon also offers hotel rooms and self-catering apartments and villas, as well as a chic restaurant and bar. If its 30m infinity pool doesn't tempt you, there is a winery for multiple tastings and a Cinq Mondes spa, a small fitness room and yoga classes. The estate is only half an hour north of Béziers and the wide sandy beaches of the Languedoc coast are 40 minutes away.

**Details** B&B doubles cost from £220 (00 33 467 80 76 00, [serjac.com](http://serjac.com))



Château de la Redorte

### **8 Château de la Redorte, near Carcassone**

One of the region's most famous attractions is the Canal du Midi, but if a night on the water doesn't appeal, drop anchor at the Château de la Redorte, a short stroll away. The château is half an hour's drive from both Narbonne and Carcassone and surrounded by vineyards that produce the estate's minervois and corbières reds and picpoul and viognier whites, which you can taste in the vineyard bar. The 25 suites are decorated in pale greys, and each has a kitchenette. There's also a long skinny pool and a spa.

**Details** Double suites with kitchenettes cost from €19, breakfast is €15 (00 33 468 90 41 43, [chateau-redorte.com](http://chateau-redorte.com))



Hôtel Le Mas Trilles

### **9 Hôtel Le Mas Trilles, near Perpignan**

Near Céret, about 30km from Perpignan in the foothills of the Pyrenees, the enchanting Hôtel Le Mas Trilles is a three-star establishment set in a 14th-century manor house overlooking the River Tech. There are 11 rooms, all spacious, while some have their own balconies. There is also an outdoor pool and glorious gardens. If you can tear yourself away from the tranquillity, the town of Céret is ten minutes' drive away and is famous for its cherries and art. Its tree-shaded streets drew such artists as Picasso and Matisse, and their works are celebrated at the town's excellent museum.

**Details** Doubles cost from €85, breakfast is €13.50 (00 33 468 87 38 37, [le-mas-trilles.com](http://le-mas-trilles.com))

### **10 La Maison d'Ulysse, near Nîmes**

In the wild and fragrant countryside north of Nîmes, this converted farmhouse blends contemporary style with rustic charm. There's one cosy room in the tower and eight other spacious rooms, each designed with neutral tones and splashes of vibrant colours. After a day of sightseeing — the Pont du Gard Roman aqueduct, Nîmes and Avignon are near by — cool off in the lavender-fringed swimming pool or book a massage or hammam in the vaulted spa.

**Details** B&B doubles cost from €229 (00 33 466 81 38 41, [lamaisondulysse.com](http://lamaisondulysse.com))



Hôtel du Château et Spa Carita

### **11 Hôtel du Château et Spa Carita, Carcassonne**

Just outside the walls of the fortified city that abounds with Cathar history, Hôtel du Château has 20 cosy rooms and suites, a sunny outdoor pool and manicured gardens. However, its pièce de résistance is its Carita spa, where you can hide away and be pampered, soak in the hot tub or relax in the steam room when you're worn out from sightseeing.

**Details** Doubles cost from €146, breakfast is €15 (00 33 468 11 38 38, [hotelduchateau.net](http://hotelduchateau.net))



Le Relais des Trois Mas

## 12 Le Relais des Trois Mas, near Perpignan

With its colourful harbour and jumble of terracotta-roofed houses, the fishing village of Collioure is one of the most picturesque spots on the Mediterranean coast. For a great view, book into Le Relais des Trois Mas across the bay. Rooms are minimalist, but it hardly matters when the pine-shaded pool is so inviting and the Michelin-starred restaurant so enticing. In Collioure, visit the buzzing market and follow the Fauvism art trail, which showcases the modern-art movement that was founded here in the early 20th century by Henri Matisse and André Derain.

**Details** Doubles cost from €100, breakfast is €20 (00 33 468 82 05 07, [relaisdestroismas.com](http://relaisdestroismas.com))



Baudon de Mauny

### 13 Baudon de Mauny, Montpellier

Tucked away behind a mysterious black door in the narrow streets of old Montpellier, the boutique hotel Baudon de Mauny exemplifies the city's historic *hôtels particuliers* — elegant mansions set round a tranquil inner courtyard. The hotel has nine exquisitely decorated rooms, some minimalist, others matching Cole & Son wallpapers with original features such as elegant granite fireplaces. Breakfast is a sumptuous buffet eaten in a light-filled breakfast room with a high glass roof.

**Details** Doubles cost from €165, breakfast is from €10 (00 33 467 02 21 77, [baudondemauny.com](http://baudondemauny.com))



### 14 L'Oustau Camarguen, near Montpellier

On the edge of the Camargue wetlands park in the coastal town of Le Grau-de-Roi, many of this welcoming hotel's rooms open out on to a central garden, allowing for an alfresco vibe. Each room has its own character and is decorated with the bright colours and gypsy patterns typical of Camarguaise style. There's a restaurant serving local cuisine, a spa and an alluring swimming pool, while the beach isn't far away.

**Details** Doubles cost from €90, breakfast is €14 (00 33 466 51 51 65, [oustaucamarguen.com](http://oustaucamarguen.com))

### 15 L'Hôtel Particulier, Béziers

With the lively city of Montpellier so close and accessible, it's easy to overlook Béziers as a destination in its own right, but this historic city has much going for it, from its Roman amphitheatre to plane-tree shaded boulevards. In a quiet corner of the city centre this elegant mansion house has rooms that are bright and breezy, combining contemporary style with the original features, such as glossy parquet floors and ornate ceilings. There is a dainty pool in the courtyard, and the verdant garden is a lovely place for breakfast.

**Details** Doubles cost from €115, breakfast is €15 (00 33 467 49 04 47, [hotelparticulierbeziers.com](http://hotelparticulierbeziers.com))



Hôtel de l'Atelier

### 16 Hôtel de l'Atelier, Villeneuve-lès-Avignon

Just over the River Gard, which marks the border with Provence, Avignon's sister city is a quieter alternative to the home of the Palais des Papes. With open white shutters set against the ivy-clad walls, it has 22 bright bedrooms, cosy salons and a sunny courtyard in which to devour the generous breakfast of local cheeses, eggs, pastries and homemade jams.

**Details** Doubles cost from €75, breakfast is €9.50 (00 33 490 25 01 84, [sawdays.co.uk](http://sawdays.co.uk))

### 17 Hôtel de Vigniamont, Pézenas

Pézenas is one of the Languedoc's most beguiling towns. With its tangle of medieval streets and grand historic townhouses, it's a place to wander and soak up the atmosphere from a café. The best place to bed down for the night is Hôtel de Vigniamont, a boutique B&B set in a 17th-century *hôtel particulier*, with five traditionally decorated rooms. The host, Babette, welcomes guests for an informal aperitif to sample local wines.

**Details** B&B doubles cost from €105 (00 33 467 35 14 88, [hoteldevigniamont.com](http://hoteldevigniamont.com))



Les Chambres de l'Artémise

### 18 Les Chambres de l'Artémise, near Nîmes

There's something special about the small town of Uzès, with its winding medieval streets, shady squares and interesting market. A short walk from the centre, Les Chambres de l'Artémise is set in a 16th-century farmhouse and incorporates rustic beams and exposed stone walls into its otherwise modern design. It has a popular restaurant as

well as outdoor and indoor swimming pools, the latter in the vaulted spa.

**Details** Doubles cost from €230, breakfast is €17.50 (00 33 466 03 13 81, [lartemise.com](http://lartemise.com))



### **19 Le Couvent d'Hérépian, near Béziers**

Surrounded by the dramatic landscape of the Haut-Languedoc nature park, this bijou hotel is set in a 17th-century convent. An elegant winding stone staircase leads to its 13 suites, set over three floors. Each room has a small kitchen and some have a terrace, ideal for evenings grazing on local cheeses, charcuterie and wines in the evening sun. Its small spa is tucked beneath vaulted ceilings, with treatments using Mediterranean herbs and oils.

**Details** Doubles cost from €175, breakfast is €14 (00 33 467 97 16 24,

[couvent-heropian.com](http://couvent-heropian.com))

## **20 Hôtel Plage Palace, near Montpellier**

In Paris, Hôtel Costes is the place for supermodels and film stars to be seen, and in summer the glitterati make a beeline for its hotel by the sea. Set in the beach resort of Palavas-les-Flots, the project has been a closely guarded secret to maintain the Costes' signature air of exclusivity. Some of its 70 rooms overlook the hotel's private fine-sand beach, while others overlook the garden.

**Details** B&B doubles cost from €200 (00 33 467 85 96 61,

[plagepalace.com](http://plagepalace.com))