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FRANCE

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WHERE TO STAY



◀ CHÂTEAU LE CAGNARD, Côte d'Azur

This 15th-century château forms part of the city walls of Haut-de-Cagnes, and will be a favourite among art-lovers. Not only was the village an inspiration to artists such as Pierre-Auguste Renoir, but the château itself boasts some impressive works of art as part of its decor. In 1928, the Guard Room was painted by artist Émile Wéry, a friend of Henri Matisse, who brought a touch of the exotic in his frescoes of elephants and the orient. In 1968, the restaurant's famous retractable roof was created, and in 1986 its 200 panels were hand-painted by the famous architect Philippe Robert. The four-star hotel was completely renovated in 2012, and has 28 rooms and suites, each named after a famous artist. All rooms feature elegant decor with wooden beams and antique furniture – and have sensational views of the surrounding area. Nearby are the equally inspirational locations of Saint-Paul-de-Vence and Nice. Rooms from €150. Tel: (Fr) 4 93 20 73 22 www.lecagnard.com

◀ Château de Riell, Pyrénées

High in the Pyrénées near Prades, not far from the Spanish border, Château de Riell offers a real escape. There are 19 rooms and suites in total, in the château itself and in cottages in the grounds. All are beautifully decorated, with toile wallpaper and antiques in the classic rooms, and more globally inspired themes in others. The château has its own spa, with baths created from rare green, ivory, black and amber marble, so guests can take advantage of the benefits of the thermal waters characteristic of the Pyrénées. If that wasn't relaxing enough, then the beautiful gardens that overlook Mont Canigou, the Out of Africa safari-styled bar and Russian dacha (perfect for breakfast) are ideal places to switch off. Tel: (Fr) 4 68 05 04 40 www.chateauaderiell.com Rooms from €120, breakfast from €22.



▼ CHÂTEAU RIBAGNAC, Limousin

If the thought of a château stay fills you with anxiety at the potential damage that could be wrought by your small children, Château Ribagnac should allay any fears. Geared towards families, the *chambre d'hôte* run by former lawyers Patrick and Colette offers all the practical help you need when travelling with little ones (be it high chairs, cots, nappy-changing paraphernalia) as well as the entertainment that makes a holiday special. In the 35 hectares of parkland

that surround the château, children can follow nature trails, play outdoor games, swim in the lake and simply explore. Inside, the five suites offer stylish furnishings and a catered stay, while the additional three holiday cottages in the grounds are available for self-catering (although these can be catered too, if you wish). With so much on hand to enthrall your children, there's little chance of idle hands finding mischief.

Tel: (Fr) 5 55 39 77 91
www.chateauribagnac.com
Rooms from €120 including breakfast.



PHOTOGRAPHY: C. BOUTIER, P. BARRON, T. BARRON, N. BARRON