



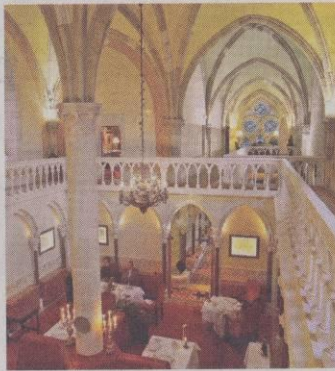
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pulse *travel*



SWEET SPOT: A crowd-pleasing dessert at Bernard Loiseau ironically called *Ce n'est ne pas une Pomme* (above); the Gothic dining room at the monastery-turned-hotel L'Abbaye de la Bussière (right).



L'Abbaye de la Bussière/Relais & Châteaux

DINING WITH

Book a Burgundy getaway at these 3 stays

By JENNIFER CEASER

JUST a two-hour train ride southeast of Paris lies one of France's top gastronomic regions — celebrated for its zesty wines, its tender Bresse chicken and its prized escargot. Heck, it's even got a dish named in its honor: beef bourguignon. So it comes as no surprise that Burgundy is home to an impressive 33 Michelin-starred restaurants — trailing only Paris (with 105) and Provence/Rhône (83).

This trio of Relais & Châteaux properties alone racks up six total stars — combining gourmet cuisine and stylish accommodations, all in a gorgeous French countryside setting.

LA CÔTE SAINT JACQUES, JOIGNY

It may have lost its third star this year, but the dual-starred restaurant, helmed by Chef Jean-Michel Lorain, hasn't lost one bit of its shine. Exquisitely prepared and creatively served, Lorain's dishes pop with bright colors and flavors: A perennial favorite is the lobster and fresh heart of palm salad; on a recent spring visit, it kicked off a

dinner that featured a delicate, lightly smoked sea bass in caviar sauce and Wagyu beef brisket, served "pâtrami style." And when the cheese trolley rolls into the dining room, prepare to be wowed. Menus range from a \$156, multicourse lunch to a four-course Gourmand dinner priced at \$210. The 32-room hotel is housed in two buildings; be sure to book a stay in the one that's nestled on the banks of the Yonne River to take full advantage of the waterfront views. Though the decor is a bit dated, rooms are spacious — especially the suites, some of which boast



IT TAKES TWO: Chef and owner of La Côte Saint Jacques, Jean-Michel Lorain (above), has earned two stars for his elegant cuisine; the hotel, restaurant and spa are set along the Yonne River.



La Côte Saint Jacques/Relais & Châteaux(3)

sprawling decks overlooking the river. The bilevel Côte Coon spa features a large heated indoor swimming pool with windows opening to the garden; the jacuzzi is perfectly situated to soak up the river vistas. (From \$240; relaischateaux.com/lorain)

BERNARD LOISEAU, SAULIEU

Though not the original owner of the property, which has been around since 1930 as Côte-d'Or, Bernard Loiseau took over the reins in 1982. In 1991, the restaurant was awarded

THE STARS

sainted by Michelin

three Michelin stars under his tutelage; two years later, under threat of losing a star, Loiseau committed suicide. It's a heartbreaking story, but his widow, Dominique, carried on, and today the five-star property — whose restaurant maintains its three stars — bears the late chef's name. The current man behind the stove is Patrick Bertron, whose inventive take on nouvelle cuisine features deconstructed, beautifully composed plates. (The kitchen also turns out a la carte dishes made famous by Loiseau, such as frogs' legs with garlic purée.) The set lunch menu is \$76; the dinner tasting menu runs \$245. Work off the cheese course in the garden: Stroll around the gorgeous oasis of aromatic plants and flowers, take a dip in the outdoor pool or try a game of pétanque. The hotel's 32 French country-chic rooms have antique wood paneling, wood-beamed ceilings and, in some cases, fireplaces and terraces. (From \$260; relaischateaux.com/loiseau)

L'ABBAYE DE LA BUSSIÈRE, LA BUSSIÈRE-SUR-OUCHÉ

This 12th-century Cistercian abbey-turned-five-star hotel might be the most grand stay you'll have in all of Burgundy. The gated property on 17 acres of lush parkland — rolling lawns, manicured hedges, ancient trees, a lake, botanical garden, even ponies — is anchored by the massive, white stone abbey. Inside, you'll find sweeping stone staircases, impossibly high vaulted ceilings and elaborate, original stained-glass windows; the rooms (just 18 of them, as renovations are gradual) are outfitted with rich fabrics, antique furnishings and large, modern bathrooms. The one-Michelin-star Le 1131 (the date of the monastery's founding) is helmed by Emmanuel Hebrard, who changes up the menu based upon what's in season. Open for dinner only, the tasting menu starts at \$103; a la carte is also available. (From \$240; relaischateaux.com/bussiere)



Bernard Loiseau/Relais & Châteaux(3)



TRIPLE PLAY: Intricate, beautifully executed dishes (top) are the hallmark of three-Michelin-starred chef Patrick Bertron (above) of Bernard Loiseau, whose property features a lush garden (left).