

25

Travel

Page

32


'Dizzying cliffs rear up from the Atlantic above crashing white-capped waves'

Helen Ochyra on the Islas Cies, off northwest Spain



20 best foodie hotels in France

From a hotel with a Michelin-starred restaurant in the Dordogne to a château with gourmet food in Normandy, Carolyn Boyd picks the best getaways



1 Beetroot salad at Maison Pic

1 Beetroot salad at Malson Pic

THE TIMES Saturday July 29 2017

26 Travel



4 Abbaye de la Bussière Burgundy

Step through the gate of this former Cistercian abbey and you're immediately at ease, such is the tranquillity of the gardens, which feature weeping willows, lily ponds and Paul Day sculptures of Charolais cows. Inside, the stone-pillared staircase is drenched in coloured light from the many stained glass windows, while the 20 opulent rooms look out over the gardens. The Michelin-star restaurant is led by local chef Guillaume Royer, whose home-reared crayfish make it to the menu with other local produce. His signature dessert is made with honey from hives on the premises.

Details Double rooms cost from €225, breakfast €25; set menus cost from €29 (00 33 3 80 49 02 29, abbayedelabussiere.fr)

5 Le Montrachet Puligny-Montrachet, Burgundy

Surrounded by some of Burgundy's most respected vineyards, Le Montrachet's large restaurant draws locals and visitors to enjoy chef Luc Fila's Michelin-star food. Tuck into classics such as snails with parsley and garlic butter, as well as sophisticated dishes featuring succulent Bresse chicken and Charolais beef. Between each course, his amuses-bouches are fresh and often alcoholic, complementing the world-class wines. The hotel is set in a former coaching inn, and has 31 comfortable rooms.

Details Double rooms cost from €157, breakfast €21; set menus cost from €32 (00 33 3 80 21 30 06, www.chateauxhotels.co.uk)

6 Château de la Bourdaisière Tours, Loire Valley

Nothing beats the taste of a sun-ripened tomato plucked fresh from the garden, and the tomatoes at Château de la Bourdaisière must be seen — and tasted — to be believed. In a beautiful walled garden 650 different varieties grow in all sizes, shapes and colours. The small Bar à Tomates serves simple lunchtime recipes such as gazpacho and tomato salad, while the hotel's gourmet restaurant serves other fresh produce grown on site. The 29-room château hotel has a colonial air, with furniture and objets d'arts collected from abroad by its aristocratic owner.

Details Double rooms cost from €110, breakfast €16; set menus cost from €33 at the château restaurant, €17 at the Bar à Tomates (00 33 2 47 45 16 31, labourdaisiere.com)

7 Hotel Brittany Roscoff

Few views can rival the one from the stone-arched windows of the Hotel Brittany restaurant. Gaze out over the blue bay as fishing boats pootle across and the sun sets behind the islands on the horizon... and eat. Michelin-star chef Loïc Le Bail's clever menus blend the best of Roscoff's produce; the town is famous for its pink onions, artichokes and cauliflowers, while the seashore provides a variety of seaweeds and local fishermen bring in the catch of the day. The hotel added 11 modern seaview rooms last year, while other rooms offer a more classic style of decor. There's an indoor pool and a spa offering seaweed-infused treatments.

Details Double rooms cost from €140, breakfast €24; set menus cost from €58 (00 33 2 98 69 70 78, hotel-brittany.com)

8 Château des Briottières Anjou, western Loire

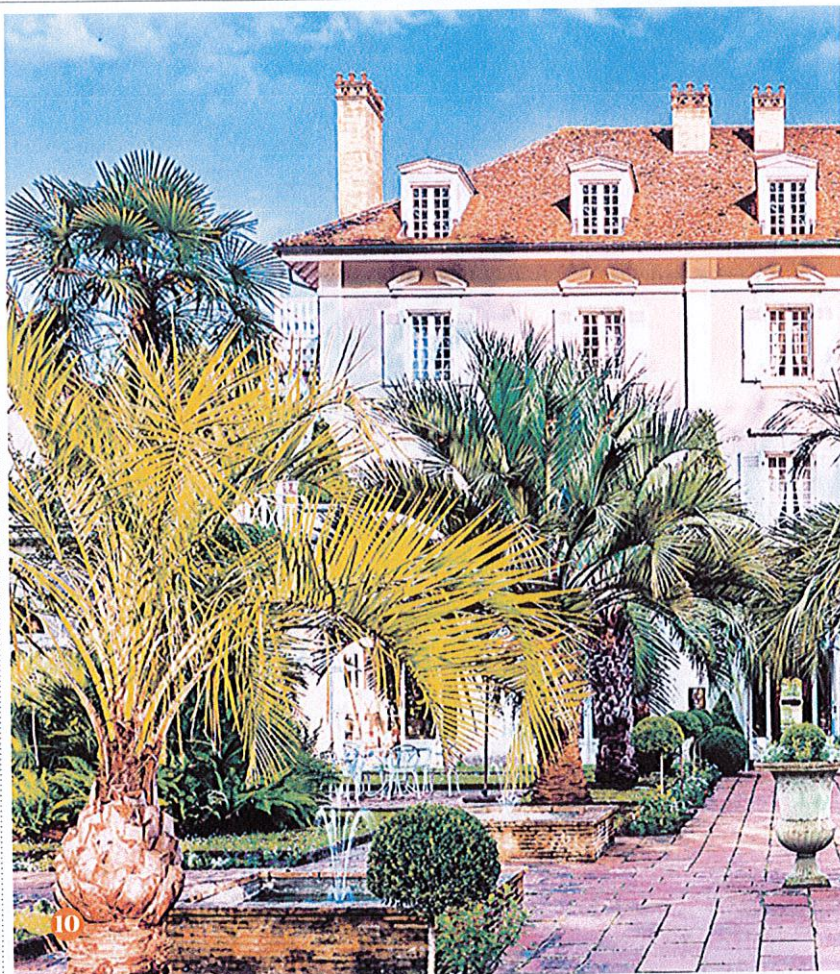
This family-run château just north of Angers offers a peaceful retreat from the world. Set in huge parkland, with rambling walled gardens, this country pile is a great place to enjoy French hospitality at its best. Owner and affable host François de Valbray serves aperitifs on the sunny terrace, while his wife, Hedwige, presides over the *table d'hôtes* (the host's table), serving home-cooked Loire specialties such as perch with beurre blanc, and the creamy dessert *crêmes d'Anjou*. Afterwards, enjoy digestifs from the honesty bar in the opulent salon, before retiring to one of the elegant, classically decorated bedrooms.

Details Double rooms cost from €180, breakfast €20; set evening meal costs €49 (00 33 2 41 42 00 02, briottières.com)

9 Le Saint James Bordeaux

If there's something in a name, Nicolas Magie's brand of magic comes in his sublime menus, which include dishes such as red mullet with asparagus and traditional Bordeaux sweetbreads with vodka-sautéed onions. The hotel, high on a hill overlooking Bordeaux, was designed by the iconic French architect Jean Nouvel and has sensational views from every one of its 18 rooms. There's also a cookery school should you wish to create your own culinary magic.

Details Double rooms cost from €195, breakfast €25; set menus cost from €45 (00 33 5 57 97 06 00, saintjames-bouliac.com)



10 Les Près d'Eugénie Landes, Nouvelle-Aquitaine

Legendary chef Michel Guérard is celebrating 40 years of holding three Michelin stars, an accolade achieved by only three other chefs. His colonial-style estate, Les Près d'Eugénie, is set in the tiny spa resort Eugénie-les-Bains in the Landes countryside, where the local speciality is poultry. Prepare to indulge in homemade foie gras, tender guinea fowl and plump pigeons. Guérard is known for his *minceur*, or slimming, cuisine, so weight-watchers will love his mouthwatering set menu, which comes in at 600 calories for three courses.

Details Double rooms cost from €232, breakfast €30; *minceur* menus cost from €60 (00 33 5 58 05 06 07, michelguerard.com)

11 Le Vieux Logis Trémolat, Dordogne

This cosy 16th-century priory set in a meander of the River Dordogne has been welcoming guests since the 1950s and, although it is now a luxury hotel, it still exudes the atmosphere of an old *relais* inn. Its refined restaurant is set in the former tobacco-drying barn, which has cosy alcoves and wooden beams. Chef Vincent Arnould is passionate about using Dordogne's famous flavours, such as truffles, foie gras, duck and walnuts, in his Michelin-star menus. For more traditional dishes, the hotel's Bistrot de la



