

You are here: [Home](#) / [Travel](#) / [Destinations](#) / [Discover Languedoc-Roussillon: A Wine-Lover's Paradise](#)



Discover Languedoc-Roussillon: A Wine-Lover's Paradise

By Luxury Lifestyle Magazine on 16th July 2017

Languedoc may not be as glamorous as the more famed parts of Southern France, but it's just as memorable. Luxury travel writer Nilufer Atik explains why...

With its golden beaches, rustic countryside and heady mix of chic towns and sleepy villages, not to mention exquisite eateries, it's no wonder the South of France is one of the world's most popular holiday destinations. Over eleven million people flock to the Cote d'Azur (the country's most popular tourist spot) each year to sample the glitz and glamour of resorts like Saint-Tropez, Cannes or Nice.

But head further west and you hit the stunning region of Languedoc-Roussillon. Often referred to as 'the Languedoc', this historical coastal area extends from Provence all the way to the Pyrenees Mountains and the border with Spain. And while it may not possess the same 'bling' as its more affluent counterparts, it certainly makes up for it in terms of natural beauty.





Roquebrun is found in the Herault department of Languedoc, about 25km inland from Beziers

Surrounded by breathtaking Mediterranean hills and snowcapped mountains, this area is famed for its huge vineyards, lush fields and historic cities with superb Roman remains. There are still plenty of beaches if you want them however, one of the finest of which is Espiguette which stretches for miles of fine sandy dunes. With far fewer tourists, there is always space to be found.

The best thing about Languedoc is that it still feels traditionally French, with villages that stay open throughout winter, countryside that remains unspoiled and restaurants that serve dishes based on local, organic produce. Then of course, there's the wine.

For those who enjoy the odd glass of vino, this is the ideal place to visit. The history of Languedoc wines can be traced right back to the fifth century BC and from the 4th century through to the 18th and early 19th centuries, the area was renowned for producing high quality vintages.

The northern part of the Languedoc is actually the single largest wine-producing region in the world and is home to several varieties of grapes, including Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc. Accommodating around 700,000 acres of vines, it's responsible for more than a third of France's total wine production, with Vin de Pays d'Oc and sparkling Crémant de Limoux among its best-known varieties. To sample some of these, all you need to do is jump into a car and drive around the numerous vineyards that carpet the countryside with a few sip-stops along the way.



Château Les Carrasses offers 28 luxury suites, villas and apartments

If you want to learn more about the wines and how they are produced however, it is better book an actual wine tour.

These tours are a booming business in the Languedoc, not only because they provide an educational experience, but you get to taste some of the most interesting new wines on offer and chat to the makers themselves. Stay overnight at one of the luxurious wine estates scattered around and you make your experience a truly unforgettable one.

One of the best is undoubtedly the Chateau Les Carrasses. Restored as a luxury self-catering estate, this 19th century wine domain comprises a unique collection of luxurious self-catering villas circled around an on-site restaurant, winery and top-notch hotel facilities.

Overlooking 150 acres of grounds and vines stands the Chateau's main building – a glorious crème structure that combines the rustic charm of a French farmhouse with the exquisiteness of a grand Victorian mansion. Inside is the Brasserie, where the chef serves seasonal Mediterranean cuisine. The food is simply exquisite and the restaurant has a very casual yet cosy feel. You can even dine alfresco, whetting your appetite first with one of the chateau's deliciously fruity signature cocktails.



Château Les Carrasses is a magical chateau in the middle of the southern French countryside

The main building also houses the bar which features a huge selection of wines. Built in 1886, Château Les Carrasses produced wine continuously until 1988, when the vineyards were finally sold off. In 2011, following the sale and renovation, the estate was reunited with its original vines but these days they are made at the nearby Domaine de Cibadiès.

You don't have to be a wine enthusiast to enjoy Les Carrasses though. It's also perfect holiday-makers simply seeking a bit of rest and rejuvenation. It may be situated within a short driving distance of hundreds of wineries (offering a wide range of wine-related activities including tastings, guided walks and wine-making workshops itself), but the huge outdoor pool area is the ideal place to sit and sunbathe and with a clay tennis court, beach-volleyball and boules available on site as well as a stunning glasshouse where you can sit and order afternoon tea, there are plenty of other things to do.



The Le Grand Salon Master Bedroom at Château Les Carrasses

If you want a more active experience, simply hop on a bike and take a leisurely tour of the Haut Languedoc national park or go kayaking along the beautiful River d'Orb. It takes three hours to cover ten kilometres from Vieussan to the small village of Roquebrun, costing around 30 Euros per person with Canoe Roquebrun, who've been running canoe and kayaking tours in the heart of Languedoc since 1986.

There are numerous scenic stop offs along route and a few small rapids to add a bit of excitement. Finish off your river tour with a light lunch at Cave Saint Martin in the small village of Roquebrun, where the owner serves up mouth-watering tapas of local sardines, tuna, cheese, and olives, topped off with a cool, crisp Rose. The main course delicacy is the baby fresh goat, slow cooked in a lentil sauce, which you can savour while watching the river flow from the terrace.





The Oliveraie Bedroom at Chateau Les Carrasses

Of course, if you'd rather spend more time at Les Carrasses itself, the villas are well-equipped for comfort and luxury. Each has a swimming pool, an outdoor seating area, modern kitchen, TV and DVD player, as well as a surround-sound music system – not to mention a selection of wines in the rack just waiting to be sipped. Some even come with their very own wine cellars beneath the ground floor.

Les Carrasses may have opened six years ago, but its 28 suites, apartments and villas, with their cream walls, exposed beams and long, muslin drapes, all look brand new – a testament to how immaculately well looked after the estate is. And despite being a five-star facility, there is no pretentiousness here. The atmosphere is one of relaxed friendliness among both staff and guests. You can even sit outside in the garden area if you choose and take your breakfast, lunch or dinner with you.



Chateau Les Carrasses is the perfect destination for wine lovers

Just a short drive away sits Les Carrasses' sister estate, Chateau St Pierre de Serjac. Once the seat of the deCrozals dynasty, St Pierre opened in April 2016 following an extensive two-year 25 million Euro (£197m) renovation and now features a vineyard, eight hotel rooms, a restaurant, spa and 36 luxury self-catering properties carved from the original estate outbuildings. Set in 200 acres of colourful countryside, this estate has a more modern and glamorous feel but is equally as tranquil.

You can fly direct to Montpellier from London Gatwick in just under two hours, with a one-hour transfer to Les Carrasses and flights run all year round. It rarely ever rains in Languedoc. Another good reason to visit this French gem.

A one night stay at Les Carrasses during high season starts from 249 Euro (£218) www.lescarrasses.com. A one night stay in a room at Chateau St Pierre de Serjac starts from 220 Euro (£193) www.serjac.com.