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Wake Up Here: Chateau Les Carrasses, Languedoc-Roussillon, France

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Set in the Languedoc-Roussillon countryside, **Chateau Les Carrasses'** turreted 19th-century castle and vineyard is a go-to for luxurious suites, self-catered cottages and revelling in a laid-back Mediterranean pace of life (read: quaffing rosé).

Not far from the bustle of Narbonne and spires of Béziers, Chateau Les Carrasses sits on an isolated hill. Beyond the domaine's grounds, ancient vineyards undulate towards the Gulf of [Lyon](#), peppered only by occasional tumbledown farm buildings. This is Languedoc-Roussillon at its finest; none of the manicured pretences of [Provence](#), yet pretty enough to match its better-known neighbour.

The Chateau was built in 1886 when the region around Béziers experienced a wine boom thanks to a new railway line connecting the area to [Paris](#). At this time, Les Carrasses was responsible for over 700,000 litres of wine per year. A renowned Bordeaux architect designed the grand estate, where the De Zélicourt family produced wine until they ran into economic difficulties in 1998.

Since then, Karl O'Hanlon has sensitively transformed the chateau and outbuildings into a luxury retreat, while the wine-making has been handed over to nearby sister winery Domaine de Cibadiès. So careful and considerate was the renovation that it took three years, and you can tell; Les Carrasses treads that fine line between comfort and style. From the outside, the buildings are virtually unchanged, while inside they have every mod con conceivable.

The ethos and service match this unpretentious take on luxury. Scattered apartments and suites of all shapes and sizes (some with private pools) make privacy easy to come by. Meanwhile, a vast communal pool, grounds and bar area create an easy-going and social vibe.



Rooms

Les Carrasses caters to all accommodation needs. For romance, opt for one of the nine cosy double suites in the turreted chateau where lofty ceilings and pretty tiled fireplaces exude 19th-century charm. By contrast, the self-catered terraced cottages in the outbuildings are more contemporary, with neutral tones, French country-inspired interiors and spacious living spaces.

Amenities are organic and come in refillable containers, showers have novel pebbled floors and kitchens are stocked with wine fridges, coffee machines and local pottery and glassware.

Apartments and suites come in all shapes and sizes, some with terraces, pools and gardens, so it's worth checking what suits you best when booking.

What's for breakfast?

Breakfast can be as casual or extravagant as you wish. The pastry chef takes bread and croissant orders each evening. Alternatively, there's a continental spread of homemade goods — bread, jams, cakes, local cheese, cured meats and organic yoghurts and fruit. For a change of scene, take breakfast in the morning sun beside the pretty glass orangery (rumoured to be designed by Gustave Eiffel).

How about lunch and dinner?

Les Carrasses' laid-back approach to eating and drinking is refreshing and there's no pressure to eat in the restaurant. Locally curated picnic baskets, barbecue packs and pizzas allow guests to eat in or enjoy the communal, rustic barbecue area. The hotel is also happy to recommend local supermarkets and markets at which to stock up.

In the restaurant, there's a menu of the day for 25€ at lunch (starter, main, and dessert) and 38€ at dinner (three courses) as well as a simple à la carte menu. Chef Valère Diochet scours local markets before landing on recipes, emphasising the best of Languedoc and Catalan flavours. Come summertime, the weekly seafood feast is a must-try.

Is there a bar?

The terrace overlooking the pool is the social heart of the hotel – from here it's possible to get stuck into the melee or slink off to a quiet corner. There are cocktails and G&Ts aplenty, although it's hard to stray from the quaffable Les Carrasses rosé.

The hotel can organise bespoke wine-tasting trips and tours and, throughout the summer, there are regular wine tastings and guided walks around the vineyards.

Amenities?

The main pool is the centrepiece – at 30m long, it has as much exercising potential as it does lounging. Also onsite is a clay tennis court, volleyball court, petanque pitch and complimentary bikes and sports equipment.

There's no spa, but the hotel can arrange for local therapists and beauticians to visit.

Things you should know

Les Carrasses has a sister hotel on the other side of Béziers ([Château St Pierre de Serjac](#)) and a new hotel in the making by the coast (Capitou). Both make for pleasant outings for a day, or link them up for a luxed-up Languedoc-Roussillon road trip. Ditch the airports and instead hop on the train – there are direct trains from Paris to Narbonne and Béziers, both just a 30-minute drive from Les Carrasses. Couples might want to shy away from school holidays when the property becomes overrun with family groups.

Within a short walk you will find?

Bucolic vineyard views as far as the eye can see. For a quick stroll, wander up to the woods behind the hotel for expansive sunset views. Alternatively, hop on one of the free bikes to whizz between vines and along car-free tracks. Village squares, churches and markets in Capestang, Quarante and Puisserguier are just a short ride away on easy-to-navigate cycle paths. To really feel and look the part, Citroën 2CVs are available to hire for novel adventures further afield.

