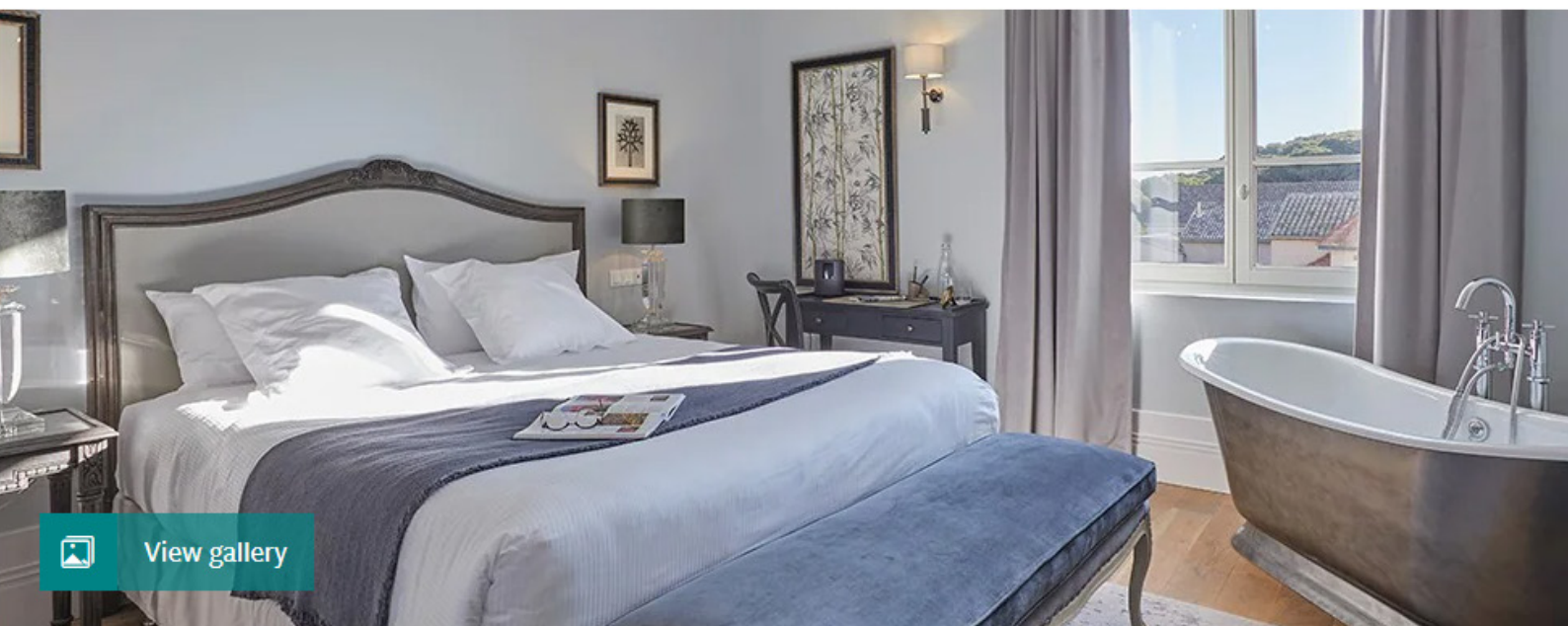


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View gallery

9/10

Telegraph expert rating

" The vineyards, wild lagoons and mountains cocooning this luxury chateau resort on a Languedoc wine estate inspire its chic interior design, destination gardens and Mediterranean dining. Hotel rooms are the epitome of French elegance, and luxury self-catering villas with private pools are a dream for families. "

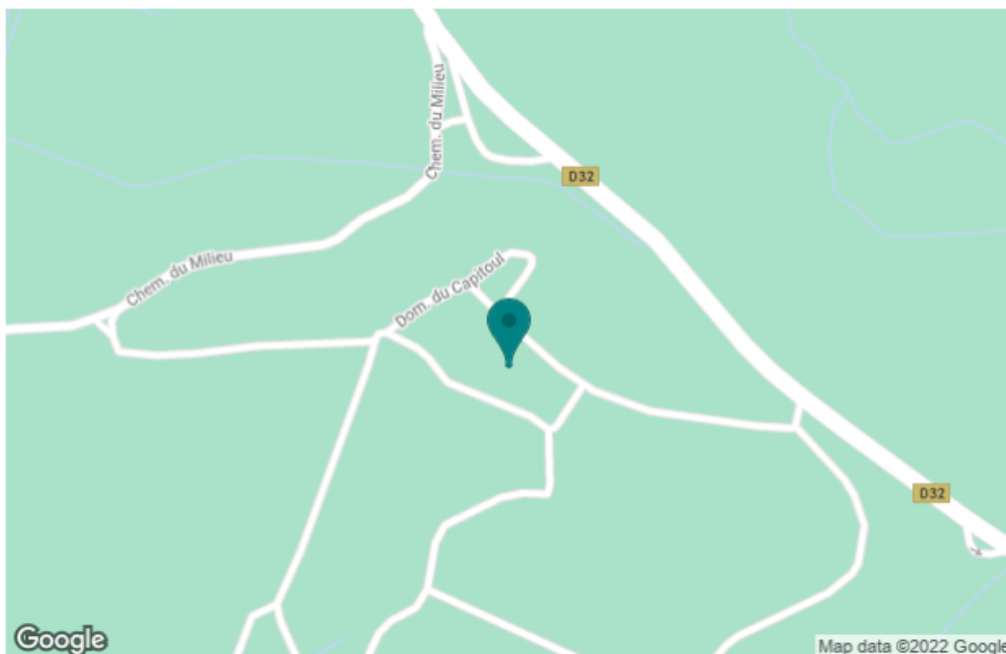
Telegraph Review



By Nicola Williams, DESTINATION EXPERT

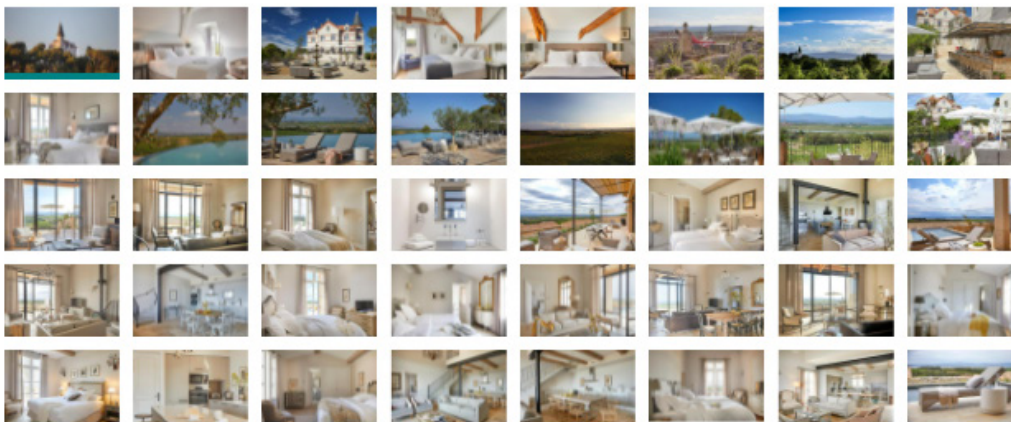
9/10 **Location**

Perched on a hillock overlooking vineyards, pines, lagoons and the evocative rise and fall of the Massif des Corbières and Pyrenees beyond. The estate neighbours the Massif de la Clape, a nature reserve in the Parc Naturel Régional Narbonnais en Méditerranée and hiking, biking and running trails abound. The enchanting fishing village of Gruissan – ideal for boutique and café moochers – is a 3.5-mile cycle ride. Or continue half a mile to the golden sands of Gruissan Plage, a sailing and kite surfing hotbed in summer. Roman history buffs will fall for the new Narbo Via museum, designed by Sir Norman Foster in Roman Narbonne, 7.5 miles north. Béziers-Cap d'Agde (a 40-minute drive), Montpellier-Méditerranée (one hour) and Toulouse-Blagnac (an hour and 45 minutes) are the nearest airports.



9/10 **Style and Character**

Visionary hoteliers Karl and Anita O'Hanlon proved their worth in the Languedoc a decade ago with wildly successful sister properties Château Les Carrasses and Château St-Pierre de Serjac. But this time the sassy charismatic Dubliner duo, comfortably at home in this sun-scorched corner of France since 2006, have surpassed themselves. Capitoul is an ode to the exceptional natural beauty and heritage of the local terroir, lorded over by a whimsical winegrower's chateau since the 1890s. The celebrated vineyards of winemaker Bonfils sit – quite literally – at the heart of the 120-hectare estate and British Mediterranean-landscape whizz James Basson designed the rocky, climate-defying terraced gardens. Inside, framed botanical samples from period herbaria, 50 vintage chandeliers and a Pandora's box of curiosities sourced by Karl and Anita at antique fairs provide endless musing and inspiration in public areas.



[See more images at Booking.com](#)

9/10 Service and Facilities

Friendly and flawless. Be it gourmet picnic hampers, e-scooter/e-bike safaris, yoga, vineyard walks or wine-tasting, the bilingual reception staff oblige. Guests can borrow racquets and balls for the estate's tennis court and pétanque alley, and bikes are freely available. The vineyard and mountain panorama from the designer infinity pool, with loungers shaded by olive trees, is sublime – as are treatments in the serene Cinq Mondes spa with sauna, steam room, hot tub and pool. E-motorists are catered for with four charging stations.

- ✓ Bar
- ✓ Laundry
- ✓ Pool
- ✓ Room service
- ✓ Spa
- ✓ Tennis court
- ✓ Kids' club
- ✓ Parking
- ✓ Restaurant
- ✓ Sauna
- ✓ Steam room/hammam
- ✓ Wi-Fi

9/10

Rooms

Eight exquisite doubles languish in the chateau. Swoon over the 19th-century staircase and entrance tiling before spiralling up to your room to swoon encore over graceful interiors dressed in soothing blues and greens to compliment the green vines and blue sky view pouring in through big windows. Antique drawings of birds, flowers and other natural beauties decorate pale eggshell-blue walls, and the illustrated gardening tomes provided as bedside reading are the perfect invitation to disconnect. Kudos for the printed estate map with detailed birding and nature notes. Iron and board are tucked in cupboards in suites, and complimentary water, Nespresso coffee and kettle with Kusmi teas and herbal infusions are standard.

Some rooms spoil with in-room standalone bathtub – with view of course – in addition to a spacious bathroom with rain shower and Portuguese ceramic tiling in dramatic marbled blues, greens and earthy burnt ochres. Luxurious micro-cotton towels and robes are made in the Vosges mountains, and toiletries are from organic French brand Cinq Mondes. A short walk from reception, a hamlet of 44 self-catering villas – 26 with pools – cater to families, with two to four bedrooms, aromatic Mediterranean garden and killer sunset views. Extra housekeeping and breakfast are add-ons.

8/10

Food and Drink

Mini croissants, cakes fait maison and nutty granola are must-tries in the continental breakfast buffet, served in the Asado grill or on its sweeping terrace with vineyard-and-mountain panorama. Eggs, bacon and other supplements (€4 [£3]) are cooked to order. Asado's signature live cooking over flaming charcoal and old dried vines was inspired by Anita and Karl's travels in Argentina (mains from €20/£17). Candid black-and-white snaps of celebrities, politicians et al enjoying food pepper the walls and juicy chalkboard specialities to share include monster tomahawk ribeye steaks, racks of lamb and local lobster.

Signature cocktails (€16 [£14]) in the outdoor bar ooze originality: Bacchus includes local craft gin distilled from marc de raisin (grape-press residue) and Venus stars homemade lavender syrup crafted with blooms from Massif de la Clape. Gastronomes can indulge in the Mediterranean cuisine of Valère Diochet at Méditerranéo (mains from €28 [£24], tasting menus €65 [£55] and €85 [£72]), a chic gastronomic restaurant with just 28 covers. Double Michelin-starred chef Lionel Giraud from Maison Saint Crescent in Narbonne oversees a menu sizzling with local seasonal produce and aromatic herbs from the estate's kitchen garden. Unusually for France, wine pairings travel palettes the length of the Med.

Value for Money

Double rooms from €196 (£165) in low season; and from €371 (£313) in high. Breakfast included. Two-bedroom self-catering apartments from €345 (£291) in low season; and from €666 (£562) in high, minimum two-night stay. Breakfast basket delivery €15 (£13). Free Wi-Fi.

Access for guests with disabilities?

Two villas have a wheelchair-accessible bedroom and common areas.

Family-Friendly?

Two- to four-bedroom villas cater for families with any number of kids or generations, and the Asado grill serves a tasty menu enfant (€15 [£13]) for under-12s. The chateau is very adult – cots only and no small children allowed in the gastronomic restaurant.

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