

French Family Luxury at Château Capitoul

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If a luxury family holiday in the **South of France** sounds like an oxymoron then I'm pleased to tell you that you are wrong! Having stayed at three properties by Domaine & Demeure, the company behind **Château Capitoul**, not only is it possible for families and luxury to go hand in hand but *everyone* will enjoy themselves too.

I recently spent a long weekend at Château Capitoul in the middle of the Languedoc region of southern **France**. It's a beautiful, historic property **dating back to 1896** surrounding by rows of perfectly symmetrical vineyards. If you are looking for a luxury break – with or without the kids – then here's why **Château Capitoul could be the perfect place**.

Guest post by Andrea Fellman. Andrea was a guest of Chateau Capitoul for the purpose of this review. See our full [disclosure policy](#) for more details.



Poolside at Château Capitoul, France

Château Capitoul is the third property to be established by **Domaine & Demeure**, a company founded by Irish couple, Karl O'Hanlon and Anita Forte. In 2008 when they started renovating their first property, **Château les Carrasses** later opening **Château St Pierre de Serjac** and now Chateau Capitoul proving that three times is a charm!

As with their other properties, Château Capitoul is **extremely elegant**. The original Château building has been brought back to life and transformed into an **intimate four-star boutique hotel** with eight hotel rooms and suites, all beautifully decorated.

The rest of the property has **44 incredible self-catering villas**, all with private gardens and terraces. Many of them come with their own private pools and all enjoy stunning views of the vineyards.

The **real-life fairytale property** is in the Languedoc region of France on the **Massif de la Clape**. It's a dreamy 15 minute cycle from the fishing town of **Guissan** and the Mediterranean coast, and just 7 miles from the small Roman city of **Narbonne**.

Fortunately for me, it's also a short train ride from **Barcelona** where I live and perfect for my daughter and I to escape for the weekend.

We've visited the other two properties belonging to the Domaine & Demeure group as an entire family but with my daughter heading off to university shortly, I wanted this trip to be just for the girls, a **special mother-daughter trip** before my daughter left home. So, we hopped on the train to Narbonne, and about two hours later arrived at the impressive Chateau Capitoul.



Bikes to borrow at Château Capitoul, France

The Landscape & Gardens

Domaine & Demure have a strong **commitment to sustainability** and this is something that I really noticed with their gardens. The **25 acres of gardens** and 220 acres of woodland, olive groves, and vines create a pretty eclectic landscape. As someone who loves lush green gardens, I noticed right away the dry gardens around the property, which later I would learn was very intentional to be **environmentally conscious** and more sustainable.

The company worked with a garden designer to create a '**dry**' garden with Mediterranean plants that don't need much water and that can grow without fertilisers or herbicides. That's why you'll see lots of lavender and rosemary plants as well as Judas Trees and soft grasses.

Surrounding the chateau are also **rows upon rows of vines**. Apparently, wine was first introduced to the region by the Romans and today the estate produces some **excellent wines**. Domaine & Demeure have partnered with the Bonfils family who own **Vignobles Bonfils** to produce their own fine wines, many of them award winning.

In the name of research I tried several of their French wines and enjoyed them all!

There are hundreds of other wineries to discover nearby too so if **wine tourism** is your thing then Chateau Capitoul is the perfect base.



Mother daughter time at Château Capitoul, France

Luxury Family Villas

Kids over the age of 3 aren't allowed in the **hotel rooms** located in the **original chateau** so take a look at the **luxurious villas** if you're visiting with your family. With terracotta roof tiles, traditional wooden shutters and oak beams, these really are beautiful places to stay.

Each of the **44 luxury villas** varies in size and **sleep between 2 and 10 people** and are perfect for families. They're like a posh home away from home with everything you need to enjoy your vacation, you definitely will not feel cramped or as though you are all on top of each other.

When traveling with kids it's nice that after you have been out for the day that everyone can go back to a comfortable home-like atmosphere so everyone can have their own space and independence.

The villas come with **full kitchens**, so you can have plenty of snacks and food on hand for the kids and it's nice not to have to eat out for every meal. This is a dream when traveling with multiple families, the kids can run around and swim or play while the adults that enjoy cooking can spend time together making a meal and socialising.

All villas enjoy **large terraces** with oversized sun loungers. Some also come with **swimming pools** that are heated from April to the end of October.



The swimming pool at Château Capitoul, France

The Infinity Pool & Activities

Having lived in **Costa Rica** for a while, I have seen my fair share of **infinity pools** but the **enormous outdoor infinity pool** at Chateau Capitoul is extraordinary! It's really quite something, even my hard-to-impress teen was pretty impressed.

The main pool has been carved into the hillside with **spectacular views** over the wine estate. Olive trees line the terrace alongside a poolside restaurant and bar perfect for having lunch.

While spending the entire day here is pure happiness, there are **other activities** on the property for when you want to move your body, keep the kids active or find some solitude for yourself. Chateaux Capitoul has **complimentary bike rentals**, a full-service **luxury spa** (the Cinq Mondes Spa) with an indoor pool, and yoga classes. Some of the villas also have private pools and some come with a hot tub.

There is also a **Masterclay tennis court** and a pétanque court, and the chateau offers a walking tour of the vineyards and wine tasting.



Amazing food at Château Capitoul, France

Dining & Restaurants

There are two restaurants at Chateau Capitoul: **Asado and Méditerranéo**. Asado is the main restaurant with a dining terrace that looks out onto the vineyard and has the **most incredible sunset views!** We had dinner here on both nights and the sunsets were simply magical.

Friday night we were treated to a wonderful **tapas-style dinner** (don't miss the flame-grilled baguettes!) and there was live entertainment as well.

Asado is also where you will have your **breakfast**. They have plenty of freshly baked bread and pastries and locally sourced items set up buffet style. There is also a chef on hand to prepare any type of egg dish you may prefer.

Asado has a large inside dining room and bar as well, but the **large terrace** is where you'll want to take in the views. There is plenty of seating for large families and groups and the service is wonderful.

Not surprisingly, the restaurant has a **generous wine menu** but don't worry if your grape knowledge only extends to white wine versus red wine, the staff are happy to make suggestions!

Méditerranéo is an intimate gastronomic restaurant situated in the château's original dining room. The fine dining menu has been created by chef Valère Diochet and local Michelin Star holder Lionel Giraud and is best saved for an adult date night without the kids.



A day trip to Gruissan

A day trip to Gruissan

One of the highlights for me was borrowing **mountain bikes** from the chateau and cycling into the nearby **seaside town of Gruissan**. I'd recommend biking there only if you have older children, it is not a bike ride for young children, as the way back is mostly all uphill.

Gruissan is an **adorable seaside village** that dates back to Roman times with a castle and a town built in a circle around the famous **Tour Barberousse** (Barbarossa Tower).

Gruissan was built as a **fortress to protect the nearby city of Narbonne** as the port of Gruissan was how ships would enter this area. The circular town only had two ways in and out, making it easier to close off the village from attack. Only one castle tower remains and you can hike to the top to get a beautiful birds-eye view of the area.

The village is filled with many **local shops and markets** selling local products such as olive oil and local fish. The restaurants have large tables outside that line the streets for serving ginormous pans of **different seafood and rice dishes** and Paella.

We were there on a Saturday and so the streets had lines of people waiting for food and the cafes were packed with people enjoying **wine and oysters** while watching the world go by and soaking up the incredible sunshine.

I highly recommend going to wander and spending the day in the beach town of Gruissan; bring cash as many of the food vendors are cash only.



The Roman town Narbonne

Day trip into Narbonne

On a rainy morning, we headed to the **Roman town of Narbonne**, which is just a short 15-minute drive from Chateau Capitoul. As we exited the Narbonne Cathedral the sun came out and we were able to enjoy everything this **perfect little city** has to offer from shopping and lunching to seeing some historic sights.

We found a lot of **funky boutiques**, antique shops, and even a vegetarian restaurant for my daughter. If you have little ones in tow there is a **city trolley** that can take you around the town and there are plenty of bakeries and sweet shops to bribe the kids with as well.



Château Capitoul, France

The perfect South of France escape

When traveling as a family it's always important to make sure there is **something that everyone will enjoy**. I have been traveling the world with my kids for 18 years and while some vacations have been geared a little more toward the kids, I always make sure that there is plenty I want to do as well.

That's why **I love the family friendly Domaine & Demeure properties**; they cater to families in a relaxed but sophisticated way meaning that both kids (whatever their ages) and parents are both happy. And while the property is so incredible you could stay and never leave, what makes it more appealing is that not far away are **two great day trips** for small and manageable adventures that don't need to be pre-planned or overthought, you just go!

My daughter and I had a **wonderful time together**. We've travelled to so many countries and it's fun to see how her travel style and taste has changed over time. Chateau Capitoul ticked all the right boxes for both of us and allowed us some **special one-on-one time**. Hopefully this was just the first of many, mother-daughter trips to come in the future!

How to get to Château Capitoul

Château Capitoul is located on the edge of the Massif de la Clape nature reserve in the Aude department, 5 minutes south of Narbonne and five minutes from the fishing port and beach town of Gruissan.

The nearest train stations are at Montpellier, Beziers and Narbonne. There are airports at Carcassonne, Beziers, Nimes, Montpellier, and Perpignan.

About The Author



Katja Gaskell

Katja is a travel writer, mum of three and the founder of globetotting, a family travel blog dedicated to discovering the world with kids. Katja has also written guidebooks for Lonely Planet, tried and tested boutique hotels for Mr & Mrs Smith and written for publications including Lonely Planet online, BBC Food, Angels & Urchins and The Australian among others. She's a member of the British Guild of Travel Writers and is also the European Editor of Twist Travel Magazine. She spent 12 years living overseas with her family in Australia, India and Mexico and is now based in London, U.K. She's a firm believer that you can - and should! - travel with kids everywhere. Follow her family's travels on Instagram.