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# Southern Sojourn: the Hippest Places to Stay in Narbonne

First published: July 16, 2023 by [Steve Turnbull](#)



*From a Haussmann mansion turned sexy latin-inspired hotel, to stunning châteaux riding a sea of vineyards, unsuspecting Narbonne, in the Aude département, offers travellers hip accommodation options for all budgets and styles.*

Narbonne may not be the first name that comes to mind when thinking about the [south of France](#), but it's a charming city whose rich history extends back to Roman times. The Narbonne natural park also holds many attractions including the Massif de la Clape with its ruggedly Mediterranean landscape and renowned wine appellation, and the coastal village of Gruissan with its delightfully ramshackle chalets (made famous by the film *Betty Blue*) and pink salt lagoons. The stunningly beautiful Abbaye de Fontfroide nearby is also well worth a visit. All the accommodations below provide easy access to the city and attractions.

## Château Capitoul (4-star)

This lovingly restored 19th-century *château* at the heart of the Narbonne natural park offers 'understated luxury' and 'effortless style'. It's also one of three châteaux/wine estates in the Domaine & Demeure collection run by Irishman Karl O'Hanlon and his wife Anita Forte.

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The tall pine trees shading the entrance set the Mediterranean tone and the views from the south-facing property are simply glorious. These extend across the vineyard (run in partnership with the Bonfils family) and 'flamingo filled' lagoons, to the peaks of the Pyrenees beyond. You can also enjoy them from practically anywhere on the naturally elevated site, including the spacious terrace of Asado, the Occitan grill restaurant, and huge, eye-shaped, infinity pool.

The Mediterranean theme continues with the terraced gardens, designed by four times Chelsea flower show Gold medal winner, James Basson, which are wrapped around the accommodation. This is in the hotel, which has 8 rooms and suites decorated with a blend of art nouveau, art deco, and classic French elegance, or the hamlet of 44 self-catering villas, most of which have a private pool. The hotel also houses a gastronomic restaurant, Méditerranéo, with Michelin star aspirations.

Relaxing in the Cinq Mondes spa with its four treatment rooms, pool, and

The château also prides itself on its environmental approach. For example, it uses no pesticides, herbicides, fertiliser or even water for the plants, and supplies its restaurants with fresh produce from the permaculture garden.

*Hotel rooms at Château Capitoul are from €140 per night; self-catering accommodation begins at €345 per night in a 2-bedroom property with private garden.*



Château Capitoul is a beautifully restored 19th-century castle © Patrick Brunet

