



TRAVEL

LIFESTYLE

## CHATEAU DE LA *Redorte*

To stay in a beautiful chateau, to gaze into the alluring street-level windows of a patisserie, to sit down to dinner under an exquisite chandelier. These gloriously Gallic experiences are savoured by Lorna Weightman at Chateau De La Redorte in the South of France.

MAGPIE

**W**e all love to escape sometimes, even if it's just for a long weekend. It's amazing how a change of scenery can refresh the body and soul, and I desperately seek out quaint, but alluring, destinations where I can do just that: refresh. This time, it's the Languedoc region of France that has drawn me in.

Between the foothills of the expansive Pyrenees and the historic city of Carcassonne is the small country village of La Redorte. One of many small hamlets along the Canal du Midi, it is built around the Chateau de la Redorte; which has become a 25-suite residence as well as my latest weekend retreat. The Chateau, having been in the same family for seven generations has had an extensive refurbishment, supported by its current owner Countess Dominique d'Artois. Its sweeping staircase and vast drawing rooms once hosted parties for the nobility. The only contemporary additions are the villas located at the front of the Chateau where I resided for the weekend. Villas can sleep up to six, making them an option for families or a group of friends. I may have been a lone traveller, but the resort was full of the noise of families and couples on a weekend escape.

One of the appeals of the location is its close proximity to the Mediterranean, and over the Spanish border even Barcelona and Girona, should you wish to take a longer break. But I felt captivated by the region and I found myself wishing to stay and walk lazily by the canal and eat pastries all day. The Chateau has its own restaurant with a simple, yet delicious menu for dinner. There is something incredibly pleasant about being able to eat outside, and despite the light evening breeze I ate on the terrace and sipped on wine from the Chateau's vineyard.

Speaking of wine, there is also a 'wine tunnel' to explore, which will eventually become a place for drinks receptions or just an evening tittle. As part of my trip, I tried several wines from the local Minervois region and developed a taste for their fruity notes; the wine also made the perfect accompaniment to a plate of grilled gambas I devoured at dinner.

The surrounding villages are sleepy, but charming, and provide some lovely afternoon excursions. I visited the La Mas D'Antonin to sample the region's finest olive oils and truffles; as a die-hard foodie, I was in my element and I feel rather well informed as to the uses of truffles, including in sandwiches (I fully intend on continuing this pairing in Ireland).

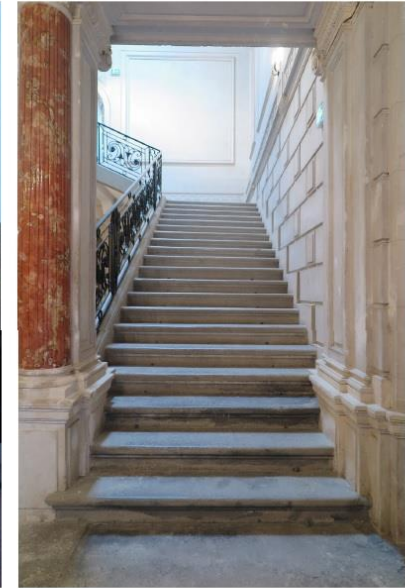
The beauty of this destination is not only the appeal of the quintessential French chateau, but the warm and friendly welcome that comes with it. Yes, it's a hotel, but the management and staff make you feel like it's your home. So if you add this hospitality to the delicious food and luxurious surroundings, you may not want to leave.

### *The Details*

Classic Suites at Chateau de la Redorte start at €119 per night in low season, to €229 per night for the Poolside Villa.

Fly directly from Dublin and Cork to Carcassonne (30Km) with Ryanair or Dublin to Toulouse (120Km) with Aer Lingus.

[www.chateau-redorte.com](http://www.chateau-redorte.com)



Clockwise from top left: The Chateau de la Redorte faced in pale rose brick and white stone is an elegant reminder of the 19th-century chateaux built during Languedoc's first 'wine rush'.

Beautiful stone staircases and elegant plasterwork are key features of the building.

Left to decay for decades during the 20th century, the chateau has recently been renovated to the highest standards.

A 25 metre pool, framed by soft stone paving, forms the centre-piece of the development's gardens.