



PRESS KIT

Destination LUBERON

Journey to the Luberon





THE LUBERON

Exploring a vineyard region
full of light and exciting
experiences



The wines of the Luberon, in the Rhone Valley, offer reds, whites and rosés with a complex, appealing aromatic palette. This typicality is due to the grape varieties, the soil, the climate and, of course, the winegrowers' expertise.



Exploring the Luberon vineyards means discovering a world of light and colour beneath a languid, indigo sky. A bird's eye view of the region reveals a mosaic of terroirs: a little paradise decked out in a harlequin suit. Here humankind has shaped the landscape since virtually the dawn of time. On soil sometimes tough to work but free of the loose surface stones used to build walls and bories (small drystone houses), people have planted vegetables, fruit, cereals, olive trees and vines. A long history preceded the founding date of 1988, when the Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée (AOC) was recognised under the name Côtes du Luberon, which became simply Luberon in 2009. Entirely contained in the Parc Naturel Régional du Luberon, it covers 36 municipalities and 3,400 hectares, with a production of 140,000 hectolitres, or nearly 20 million bottles (in 2021).

Though the names of labels may change, the landscape seems to have transcended time. In comparison, human lives are mere grains of sand in the hourglass of eternity. Above all, the Luberon was, is and will always be a chain of medium mountains culminating at 1125 metres in the Mourre Nègre, stretching 55 km from west to east. The vineyard lies at the foot and on the slopes of this limestone massif made up of safres, marls and molasses. It is naturally bounded to the north by the valleys of Calavon and Apt, to the south by the Durance valley, to the east by Manosque and the beginning of the Alps, and to the west by Cavaillon and the Vaucluse plain. The chief characteristic of the Luberon wine-growing region is that it is a mid-mountain vineyard, with 95% lying at an altitude of between 200 and 500 metres.

This means that here, some 60 kilometres from the sea, the climate is not purely Mediterranean. The Luberon is in the South of the Rhône Valley. The very real continental influence leads to two things: colder winters than near the coasts, and a considerable temperature range between the days and nights, meaning that grapes mature slowly. These are two decisive factors in making great wines and resisting the increasingly evident impact of global warming.

We are in the South, but around, at the foot or on the slopes and hillsides of the Luberon. The wines are rounded, balanced, fresh and elegant.

THE TEN COOPERATIVE WINERIES AND 61 PRIVATE APPELLATION WINERIES PRODUCE 25% RED, 25% WHITE AND 50% ROSÉ. 19% OF THIS PRODUCTION IS ORGANIC: A PROPORTION THAT HAS DOUBLED IN FIVE YEARS.

The appellation specifications stipulate that wines must be made from a blend of at least two grape varieties. Syrah and Grenache Noir are the main varieties used, supplemented in red and rosé wines by Carignan, Cinsault and Mourvèdre, as well as a few authorised white grape varieties on a small scale.

To explore this vineyard region and its high-quality wines, which can be drunk on the terrace or at table with the mouth-watering local cuisine, several options are available.

WE PROPOSE FIVE THEMATIC "VIGNOBLES & DÉCOUVERTES" TOURS DESIGNED FOR GOURMETS, PARTY-GOERS, NATURE LOVERS, SPORTS ENTHUSIASTS AND HERITAGE FANS.

In any event, we know that the Luberon is a welcoming land full of exciting experiences to be shared and savoured, where the silence speaks to those who have ears to hear. This is what René Char wrote to his friend Albert Camus: *«The Luberon has a fine, nurturing presence. I long to walk through it again with you. That will be; soon I want to stand tall, and walk on the good stones at your side. With all my affection.»*

Syrah-dominated Reds are balanced wines, fresher than those of the Rhone Valley, with the peppery notes characteristic of this variety. When Grenache Noir dominates, it gives relatively full-bodied wines with an appealing bronze colour. The secret and practically alchemical art of assemblage is carried out in the cellar and owes much to the sensitivity of the winegrower.

For some years now, the whites of the Luberon have been gaining in popularity. Sommeliers and oenologists acclaim the attractive floral nose, the fruity mouth, the sensation of freshness known as minerality, and the fine bitter finish. To achieve this result – the subtle aroma and moderate alcohol content that now contribute to the typicality of these wines –, the grape varieties increasingly used are the new local stars: Clairette, Vermentino, Bourboulenc and Ugni. White Grenache, which still represents 36% of the appellation, gives fuller-bodied, rounder, less acidic wines when it dominates the assemblage.

There is no doubt about it: **TODAY, THE LUBERON OFFERS GREAT WHITE WINES THAT ARE BALANCED, DIGESTIBLE AND THIRST-QUENCHING, AND GO BEAUTIFULLY WITH GASTRONOMIC FISH OR WHITE MEAT DISHES.**

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A TASTE FOR CELEBRATING



Evenings and concerts in unforgettable venues

Whether you fancy a concert, or a spot of singing and dancing in the extraordinary setting of a wine estate, the Luberon winegrowers welcome you for an evening to taste their wines and feel truly special.

The idea of “relishing” isn’t confined to eating. One can relish life, exchanges, meetings, song, dance, never-ending evenings and celebrations. After all, to quote the philosopher Gaston Bachelard (who played his cards close to his chest under his long grey beard): «A celebration is a kind of excess permitted and even commanded.»

THERE ARE AMPLE OPPORTUNITIES IN THE LUBERON.

From June to September, the Festival “**LES MUSICALES DANS LES VIGNES**”, which covers Bouches du Rhône, Var and Nice (the tenth took place in 2022), obviously features in the South Luberon. With jazz, classical and world music, the range of wine-tasting concerts in the heart of beautiful vineyards is decidedly eclectic and always unforgettable.

As well as the Festival to which it contributes, the magnificent **CHÂTEAU DE SANNES** lays on wine and music events in an outstanding setting.

The **DOMAINE DE FONVERT** does the same in a magnificent Provencal farmhouse built by a Huguenot family in the second half of the 17th century. If you drop by on a Thursday evening during the summer for the Apéros du Cabanon, remember to admire the coat of arms over the main entrance before sampling the delights of organic and biodynamic wines, charcuterie and cheese.

At the **CHÂTEAU DE CLAPIER** once belonging to the Marquis de Mirabeau, the current owner, Thomas Montagne, welcomes you if you bring your own picnic, which you can eat in a setting of pallets and barrels while listening to a concert. The wine is sold at the bar. With the estate’s reds,



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the iconic grape of Burgundy, pinot noir, is used in the assemblages. Try them out for an experience with a difference.

Another must is **LA CAVALE**, in Cucuron. The estate was founded in 1986 by the entrepreneur and co-founder of the Accor group, Paul Dubrule. Since then, as a true pioneer of wine tourism in the Luberon, he has created a remarkable wine storehouse that also hosts introductory workshops on wine-tasting, ampelography and wine and chocolate pairing. But another way to discover this range (recognisable from the prancing horse on the label) is to come to the «*Judis de la Cavale*» in the summer: Thursday evenings of music and wine-tasting.

When it comes to spending a good night out in the Luberon, there are not only individual initiatives. Evening events at the **CAVE DE SYLLA** in Apt, one of the 10 local cooperative cellars, are very popular. The cellar, lying right next to the viaduct, is easy to find. Its position is historic, for ease of access to the rail network and to facilitate the transport of wine to the Rhone Valley. These evenings are ideal for discovering some of the wines of the 110 producers working in 14 municipalities of the Pays d'Apt, in the north Luberon.

Make a date in your diaries for the third Thursday in July. The **WINE**

& DINE EVENING, now a summer tradition, brings together several dozen AOC winegrowers at the Fruitière Numérique in Lourmarin, labelled one of the "most beautiful villages in France". The programme of this event launched in 2017 includes top vintages on offer for tasting and sale by the winemakers themselves. Various food trucks provide different types of cuisine, in a musical atmosphere.

Last but not least, the **SUNSETS VIGNERONS EN LUBERON** give you special treatment by welcoming you to their estates. These events, every Tuesday evening from June to September, are a dream come true: a stroll through the vineyards, followed by a tasting session with local wines and an introduction to food and wine pairings, as the sun sets over the Luberon. A pure moment of poetry at sunset that you'll remember for ever. «*Fortunate the one who can lovingly/ Salute his setting, more glorious than a dream!*» wrote Charles Baudelaire.

WHAT IF YOU WANT TO ORGANISE SOMETHING MORE PRIVATE?

A birthday party, a family reunion, a hen party or simply a holiday celebration?

Then head for the **DOMAINE DE LA PARPAILLE**, in Cucuron. This imposing 17th century building in the midst of vines and lavender has



been restored in a contemporary bohemian spirit. Eve, the owner, has created a charming place in the estate where she spent her childhood. When you meet her, you see that her motto is not a mere marketing ploy: here you can truly enjoy the passing of time and live at your own pace. For a party, four bedrooms, a suite and a loft are available, with a total of 14 beds. Not forgetting the swimming pool with a gorgeous view for pool parties... You can be independent or have catering included, if you just want to make the most of it all and rest during the day... Don't forget, as the journalist and writer Yvan Audouard wrote: «*in Provence, the sun rises twice: once in the morning and once after the siesta.*»



A TASTE FOR GOOD FOOD!



Welcome to the paradise of all gourmets

With olive oils, wines, fruit, vegetables, wildflowers, candied fruit and more, there is much to make the mouth water. This extraordinary region also fires chefs to concoct a multitude of delicacies. So make ready for the land of simple pleasures.

The Luberon awakens the senses. First of all, the gaze, lost in the blue skies and beautiful light of the South. Then, at the local markets, you find a dazzling display of colours, with fruit and vegetables forming a Pointillist painting by what all gourmets call the Luberon school. You hardly know where to turn. And this is just the beginning! Take one step forward, and soon smell and taste come into play, with scents and savours jostling for attention. Here we take a taste – and our slumbering senses awaken to celebrate this moment. The Luberon is quite simply a magical land of gastronomy.

We begin our journey in the south Luberon and **LA CLOSERIE**, in Ansouis, one of those oases of pure delight you never forget. In the kitchen, Olivier works in rhythm with the seasons. Don't bother to look for the menus on the restaurant's website; you won't find any. And for good reason: nature decides, just as the muse guides the artist. Three top notch menus are available, accompanied by a fine wine list including some glorious AOC Luberon wines. What do the menus have in store? Delphine, in the dining room, will tell you. And if your mouth is already watering, that's unsurprising: the restaurant has a star in the Michelin Guide. The inspector wrote, «*This Closerie is an ode to Provence! At his stove, the chef composes rich, flavoursome recipes with the freshest possible products, all accompanied by good wines from the South of France. A sweet melody that gourmets will thoroughly appreciate, especially with such a charming welcome.*»

Another version of Provençal charm is **LA CAVE À AIMÉ**, lying in the heart of Mérindol, a village well known to Peter Mayle's readers. Here, on the terrace, around the village fountain, at the counter or in the Gatsby room (a vaulted stone cellar with furniture sought out in second-hand stores), you will find only



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local or French products, never from further away. Organic wines have pride of place among the 250 references, enriched by new entries every month and some old vintages. They go perfectly with sietos (Provençal plates) of cheese and charcuterie from the Luberon, sweet garlic and summer truffle cream, grilled aubergine riste (a relative of ratatouille) or crushed tomatoes.

At **L'ATELIER L'ART DES METS**, in Les Taillades on the road to Robion, Peggy and Romain offer a natural, refined cuisine that celebrates wild flowers and plants. In May, Romain goes out to pick them twice a day in the Oppède massif. Using immortelle, the small yellow "everlasting" flower that owes its name to its longevity (also known as curry herb because of its slightly sweet and spicy taste), Romain prepares a mousse to go with his desserts. A spoonful of immortelle open the gates not to paradise, but to happiness here and now, hic et nunc.

Now we head for Cucuron where, a few steps away from the pond, you can listen to the plane trees grow if you are quiet. An impassioned chef, whose love for the tastes and flavours of the region is in his very blood, proposes an appealing cuisine that is first and foremost an ode to sharing. We are at the **DAME JEANNE** (here they also say "Bonbonne"), with Thomas Richard, as seen in the "Masterchef" TV programme. A very attractive list of local wines makes for remarkable combinations with the flavourful dishes of this talented chef.

At **LA FENIÈRE** (a word meaning a barn for storing hay), in Cadenet, Nadia in the kitchen and her husband Ernest in the sommelier department have taken over the family business and offer what they call «cuisine libre»: "free cooking". What is it? «A conscience in action; an operational approach to food as a vehicle for happiness,» they say joyfully. It is 100% gluten-free and totally tolerant of intolerances.

Whatever restaurant you choose, an essential ingredient of local gastronomy will delicately tickle your taste buds: "green gold", i.e. olive oil and its variations: green and fruity, black and fruity, flavoured - you name it. An exquisite nectar with antioxidant properties that has been central to Mediterranean gastronomic culture for thousands of years.

If you linger in Cadenet, Carine and Roland can welcome you at the **BASTIDE DU LAVAL**, where they set up their own mill in 2014. At **CHÂTEAU DE SANNES**, in the eponymous municipality, in an exceptional historical setting that exudes calm and serenity, between plane trees, vines, cherry trees and lavender, you can ponder this phrase cited by the estate: «there is as much to see in an olive tree as in the rest of the world.» Nonetheless, what strikes you at the **COLORADO OIL MILL** in Rustrel is a sense of being elsewhere, in a very different world, in an ochre landscape that extends to Roussillon.



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Colours, colours and more colours! At the **MAISON DU FRUIT CONFIT**, in Apt, the world capital of candied fruit, your eyes, taste buds and nose will appreciate one last bouquet in a remarkable olfactory tour as sweet as it is delicious. Brought back from the East with the Crusades and developed in the 14th century with the popes of Avignon, the art of candying fruits (as you will learn by visiting the museum) benefits from the quality of the Luberon's products: bigarreau cherries, melons and watermelons from Cavaillon, rosy apricots, and more.

A journey like this that alerts all your senses, now caressed by the simple yet rare pleasure of a stay in the kingdom of beauty and goodness, needs a fitting conclusion. And this is provided by the gourmet Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, in his Physiology of Taste, published in 1825: «From whatever point of view gourmet eating is considered, it deserves only praise and encouragement.»



A TASTE FOR DISCOVERY!



Visit the local heritage: wine is also a journey through time

With châteaux and estates many centuries old, a museum dedicated to the arts and crafts of wine, and more, winegrowing is closely linked to the history and cultural heritage of the Luberon.

The magic of the Luberon, a land blessed by the gods, is also found in its mix of historical and natural heritage: a wealth of beauty that gives this area devoted to both living and leisure the elegant feel of an open-air museum. Here the legacy of Roman civilisation is prominent, because the Luberon is crossed by the Via Domitia linking Italy to Spain. But the following centuries were generous to the region too. The high-perched villages, the dry-stone huts known as bories (which symbolise the Regional Nature Park), the pigeon lofts, chapels, abbeys, Protestant churches and fortified castles all embellish the relief like garlands glittering beneath the local sun.

In the south Luberon, the **CHÂTEAU DE LOURMARIN** is a must-see. The oldest, Renaissance-style part was built in the 15th century by Foulques d'Agoult, chamberlain to King René, the Duke of Anjou who became King of Naples and Sicily before moving to Luberon. After falling into ruin in the 19th century, the château was bought in 1920 by the Lyon industrialist Robert Laurent-Vibert, owner of Pétroles Hahn, when it was about to be auctioned off for use as a stone quarry. On his death, the castle was bequeathed to the Académie des Sciences, Agriculture, Arts et Belles Lettres d'Aix-en-Provence, with the idea of creating a Foundation. Today, this Foundation, which is named after him, still welcomes young artists in residence during the summer, and hosts concerts, conferences and exhibitions throughout the year. It also offers activities for children (treasure hunts, "Mistouflon" tours around a six-legged sheep-like creature in a children's book, the Young Writers Competition, Historical Days, etc.).

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Still in the south Luberon, like the Château de Lourmarin the **CHÂTEAU DE LA TOUR D'AIGUES** - which belonged to the Comtes de Forcalquier and then the d'Agout family - hosts a summer festival in its main courtyard and numerous cultural events throughout the year (exhibitions, shows, etc.). It also houses the magnificent Musée des Faïences in its 900 m² basement. A Renaissance masterpiece with architecture inspired by the Louvre, Ecouen and Anet in Ile-de-France, the château burned for five days in 1792. Only partially restored in the 20th century, its stone portal makes a striking first impression. Nonetheless, the building was listed as a historical monument in 1984 and is home to the Luberon Sud Tourism Office.

While the village of La Tour d'Aigues is surrounded by vineyards, the oldest wine estate in the region, the **CHÂTEAU DE MILLE**, lies in Apt, in the north Luberon. The papal archives mention it in 1238. Found on site, a pressing vat cut into the rock dates back to 2000 years BC. Villa Milonum then became a major stop on the Via Domitia. The Château de Mille is singular in that it is built both on and within a rocky escarpment. It contains several troglodytic dwellings, a monolithic suspended staircase, Renaissance mullioned

windows, machicolations, gargoyles, a vaulted room, a chapel high up in its tower, a dovecote and a large bread oven. The estate covers a hundred hectares, including 25 hectares of vines, between Apt and Bonnieux. Its owners, Constance and Lawrence Slaughter, converted the vineyard to organic in 2018 and are always delighted to welcome you.

At **CHÂTEAU LA VERRERIE**, in Puget-sur-Durance, the circuit takes you on another immersion in the history of a splendid estate of 150 hectares, 56 devoted to wine-growing. The two-hour guided tour takes you through the vineyards and the wine-making and maturing cellars. You then taste the estate's organic cuvées, including the prestige cuvée Grand Deffand: an almost 100% Syrah well worth the detour!

To continue your journey through time and the history of viticulture, vine-growing and vinification (the art of transforming grapes into wine), you really should not miss a visit to the wine arts and crafts museum at **CHÂTEAU TURCAN**, in Ansouis, where 3,000 objects displayed in 1,300 m² reveal every stage from the vine to the glass. A huge range of tools illustrate work in the vineyard and the cellar. A rarity: 14 wine presses dating from the late Middle Ages to the beginning of the 20th century are on show. A laboratory of the 1900s presents the oenologist's instruments, like the mustimeter, which measures the density of the must, and the ebullioscope, which measures the alcohol content. This amazing journey through time ends with a cooperage, a glass factory and the gallery of masterpieces. Plenty to satisfy all those with a thirst for knowledge and heritage.





A TASTE FOR SPORT!



Go into sports mode, and the vineyard becomes your playground

Discovering the Luberon vineyards while burning calories is definitely an option. Here are some ideas for strolls, hikes and bike rides.

Coffee on the terrace that goes on forever; siestas that become a little more extended; hours of idle relaxation and evenings that get longer, between tasting local wines, picnics and concerts... Maybe this isn't your typical sort of day, because you always devote time to some physical activity. But that's not a problem. The Luberon is also perfect for sportspeople who are keen to explore the vineyards provided they burn a few calories!

Several winegrowers' paths zigzag around the foot of the Luberon, a medium mountain limestone massif. Walking enthusiasts looking for either a quiet ramble or a more strenuous hike will all find something to suit them. The only provisos: wear good walking boots, and take sun cream, a cap and a bottle of water. Because the virtues of walking are within everyone's reach. As Jean Giono wrote: «If you can't think, walk; if you think too much, walk; if you think bad thoughts, walk.»

So what are you waiting for! The 90 min. walk between the vineyards and woods of the **CHÂTEAU LA VERRERIE**, in Puget, is an excellent warm-up.

At the **DOMAINE LA GARELLE**, the waymarked circuit with free access starts from the cellar. The brochure you are given tells you about the seven grape varieties used in the estate's assemblages. You'll find this walk very instructive as you discover the various plots of land, the different stages of work in the vineyard and cultivation practices used on the estate.

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The **DOMAINE DE FONTENILLE**, in Lauris, takes you along the Roquefraiche route, an easy 2.5 km walk through the vineyards and the village, lasting about an hour. Don't forget to take the explanatory booklet available at the tasting shop!

At **CHÂTEAU FONVERT**, in Lourmarin, you can choose between two easy loops on the Chemin de Pierrouret: one 1.5 km long, lasting 1 hour, the other 1.7 km, lasting 1 hour 15 minutes.

If you contact **HORIZONS LUBERON**, in Apt, you can go up a notch and try out the discovery hike: a little more energetic than the ramble. Jessy, Philippe and Olivier, state-qualified sports educators, adapt their routes according to the weather and the participants. One route has an appealing title: «Sunset colours on the Lioux cliff». After drinking in the sight of these 80 meter-peaks north of the village of Roussillon, you return to the Domaine de la Tuilière where a glass of wine and a platter await you. Horizons Luberon also offers tailor-made hikes.

If you'd rather feel the wind in your face and see the splendid landscapes go by a little faster, opt for a bike!

At "**LA PÉDALE DOUCE**", in Cavaillon, you can rent whatever suits you best: a mountain bike, an electric bike or even a scooter for however long you want, up to 10 days. You can then explore the Luberon on an adventure between vineyards, scrubland and hilltop villages.

The "**Luberon à vélo**" itinerary stretches over 236 km and tends to use small roads, but there is nothing to stop you choosing a section that links two villages.

Another possible itinerary is the «**Véloroute du Calavon**». Its family-friendly version follows an old railway line for 8 km between Robion and Les Beaumettes. It continues in the direction of Apt, covering 36 km all in

all. More experienced mountain bikers can embark on the Vaucluse crossing, which passes through Gordes.

If you have any doubts about your abilities, contact **CYCLING AROUND** in Pertuis. Stephan is mad about biking, and as a triathlete and ultradistance cyclist is well-versed in the Tours du Grand Luberon, de la Sainte Victoire, Ventoux, Lure and Izoard. He will be your guide and share his knowledge of a region he truly loves, showing you secret places that are not all in the guidebooks, like quarries, stone bridges, old chapels and ancient sheepfolds. So there's every chance you'll have a really unforgettable experience - summed up by Maurice Leblanc, creator of the famous gentleman burglar Arsène Lupin: «*On a bicycle, you breathe, admire and hear nature itself. Movement endows us with a hitherto unknown sensitivity.*»



A TASTE FOR NATURE!



Explore a unique vineyard in the heart of a regional nature park

Committed to protecting a natural area of unprecedented richness and variety, winegrowers are keen to share this heritage of wildlife and plants, scents and panoramic views with you. It's also an ideal spot for relaxing outdoor activities.

One characteristic of the Luberon vineyard makes it unique: all the vines of the Luberon appellation d'origine contrôlée (AOC) label lie in an extraordinary regional nature park created in 1977. This setting, a real reserve for wildlife and plants, is home to 290 vertebrate animal species (70 protected), 145 bird species, 2,300 butterfly species and 2,100 plant species. It covers 185,000 hectares and two départements: Vaucluse and Alpes de Haute-Provence. In addition, this territory is recognised as a **Biosphere Reserve** and a **Global Geopark** by UNESCO and has 10 **Natura 2000** sites. The local winegrowers have long been aware of the need to cohabit with this magnificent natural heritage. They are committed to protecting and defending this priceless legacy, which they intend to pass on and share.

At the foot of a village called Bonnieux, **CHÂTEAU LA CANORGUE** was the very first vineyard in the Luberon to be certified organic, in 1979. In this estate, which owes its name to the underground pipes the Romans cut into the rock to collect water, the vines have always been cultivated without any chemical products. Since 2000, Nathalie has been working hand in hand with her father Jean-Pierre to care for the vines and offer high quality wines that can be tasted on site, in the cellar.

Another reference in the region is the **MAISON DE VIGNERONS MARRENON**, in La Tour d'Aigues. This union of winegrowers works with great respect for an environment it is keen to highlight, organising picnics in the vineyards. Every Thursday, from June to September, a Marrenon winegrower takes you on a one-hour walk, followed by a Provencal picnic and,

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of course, a wine tasting session. In the heart of this unspoiled nature, you can just sit back and enjoy it all to the hilt!

In Cadenet, **LA BASTIDE DU LAVAL** offers you a waymarked walk among the olive trees, with an educational booklet and audio guide. Naturally this enjoyable moment of calm and serenity ends with an oil and wine tasting session.

At **CHÂTEAU GRAND CALLAMAND** in Pertuis, three guest rooms are available. They overlook the grounds of the estate and offer a breathtaking panoramic view encompassing Sainte Victoire to the south and the Grand Luberon to the north. The Souzan-Delagrave family, who have owned this château (built in the 16th century by poet and parliamentarian François Malherbe) since 2004, were eager to share the majesty of the place. A brilliant idea! Because if you pass by the **Château Grand Callamand** in late June or early July, you will see a grey-blue, purplish sea in the distance from the balcony of your room. The lavender, or hybrid lavender, rather, is in flower.

You can visit the **LAVENDER MUSEUM** in Coustellet to learn about its history and the expertise of lavender growers from the 16th century to the present

day. It's a truly thrilling experience. This smell, like Proust's madeleine, will take you back to your childhood. *«I slipped this letter into my "imitation", an old book that belonged to my mother and still smells of lavender - the lavender sachets she used to put in her linen, in the traditional way,»* wrote Georges Bernanos, in *Journal d'un curé de campagne*.

To enjoy further enchanting aromas, head for the **GERBAUD FARM** in Lourmarin. Paul will take you for a 90-minute introductory walk exploring aromatic plants. In this waterless valley 3 km north of Lourmarin, fields of thyme, rosemary, sage, savory, oregano, everlasting flowers and hybrid lavender adorn the slopes and tickle your nostrils with the scent of Provencal herbs. While your mind takes off into unknown regions, Paul tells you about the legends and symbolism of these plants, which are used in health-giving infusions and Provençal cuisine. It's all fascinating.

Another form of extraordinary garden can be found at the olive farm called **LES CALLIS**, in Gordes. There, on the 8,000 m² surrounding the farm, an eternally green Mediterranean garden awaits you. You reach it after walking along a field of olive trees and vines

and going through a small hidden door. Behind it lies a paradise of holm oaks, laurel trees, pistachio trees, euphorbias, myrtle trees, box trees, and healing and aromatic plants. Time stands still. You connect with nature. The alchemy created by light, beauty and silence imbues you with the joy of living intensely in the present moment.

The magic continues. In Ménerbes - *«like a boat in the ocean of vines»* according to Nostradamus - the **DOMAINE DE LA CITADELLE**, long famous for its corkscrew museum, now offers a tour of the botanical gardens. Six 18th century terraces have been discovered and cleaned up, and are now home to a truffle plantation, medicinal herbs and aromatic plants. During the walk, which ends with a tasting of the estate's wines, visitors can enjoy a stunning view of the Luberon, the Monts de Vaucluse and the Ventoux.

To recover from all this excitement, you can try out **AIRFIT PROVENCE**. This nomadic wellness studio, run by Dan Zhu, offers outdoor, wellness and relaxation activities, including yoga in the lavender fields, Nordic walking and Tai-Chi. The noisy, teeming everyday world seems very far away. Well, that's not surprising: you are in the Luberon.



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Accommodation

LA BENVINGUDE

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