

Dormez BIEN

Where to stay in style

This issue:
Southern France

With summer in full swing, the sunshine season offers ample opportunity to discover the south of France under the crystal-clear light for which it is renowned. In the Camargue, guests can spot wild horses and pink flamingos from the Mas de la Fouque, while in the Provençal hilltop village of Montfort, Les Vieux Murs cave dwellings set the scene for a unique experience. Should a city stay appeal, Mama Shelter in Marseille is a stylish budget hotel full of character.



CONTACTS

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Sunshine and shade

Luxury: Modern comforts in the wilds of the Camargue

The wild wetlands of the Camargue nature reserve on the River Rhône delta provide a dramatic setting for the Mas de la Fouque hotel. Pink flamingos, swans and the famous grey rare-breed horses roam the landscape and deserted sandy beaches are just a few kilometres away.

Designed in the style of a safari lodge, the hotel provides sweeping views from the rooms' private terraces to maximise each guest's experience of the flora and fauna. There is plenty of the latter to be enjoyed indoors too, including several cats and the resident parrot Marius, who is usually perched near the reception area.

While the decor is rustic, with exposed beams, neutral tones and natural materials, the accommodation is right up

to date. The rooms are airy, white-on-white affairs, decked out with sumptuous linen, roll-top baths, flat-screen TVs and in-room coffee machines. Guests can relax in the spa's hammam, heated pool and outdoor whirlpool bath as well as booking one of the luxurious treatments.

After settling into my spacious suite, I set off for a pre-dinner wander around the grounds. Surrounded by nature, the hotel blended effortlessly with its surroundings and although it had everything you would expect from a four-star establishment, the atmosphere was decidedly relaxed. Back inside, I enjoyed an aperitif in the cosy lounge while a trio of flamenco guitarists performed an intimate concert.

The informality extends to

the restaurant where head chef Frédéric Pelletier works with the finest local produce: AOP Camargue bull meat, wild crayfish, locally grown rice, and potatoes and carrots cultivated in the area's sandy soil. The seasonal menu offered an enticing selection of regional fare, emphasising the abundant seafood.

The buffet breakfast the next morning featured a delicious assortment of hot and cold dishes, served in the dining room or on the terrace in the warmer months. The Mas de la Fouque's charms were completed by dedicated staff offering a warm welcome and careful attention to every detail of my stay.

Alison Weeks

€ Doubles from €240, including breakfast.