

Travel Notes

Spring 2008

The Art du Voyage Newsletter

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The Lavender Roads



7 days / 6 nights
from \$2499*

If Paris is the heart of France, then Provence is its soul. Since Roman times, the land of lavender has been famous as a feast for the senses. Experience this pastoral paradise for yourself along Provence's lavender roads.

Grignan Your journey down Provence's lavender roads begins in the tiny village of Grignan. In the Drome valley between the Alps and Vaucluse mountains, this medieval village perches high above lavender fields, olive groves, and truffle-filled forests. Cobblestone streets lead you past picturesque medieval houses and wind around the magnificent Chateau de Grignan. In late spring, Grignan is in full bloom with over 200 species of old roses planted throughout the village. Be sure to visit the local market held every Tuesday morning.

Montélimar Just 30 minutes' drive from Grignan, lies Montélimar, the capital of nougat. During your visit to this historical village, famed for its round-tiled roofs, you'll have the opportunity to experience the ancient handcrafted process of making nougat. Guided by a traditional nougat maker, you'll be able to taste this exquisite provencale treat for yourself. Of course that sweet, nutty nougat is just a small taste of what Provence has to offer. During your stay in Grignan, boost your knowledge of French cuisine with your own private cooking class and learn the virtues of lavender in the kitchen. During truffle season, find the elusive "black diamonds" with a truffle dog and experience the joy of 100% truffle cooking.

Lourmarin Following your time in the pays Grignan, it's time to head to Lourmarin, the beautiful village made famous in Peter Mayle's *A Year in Provence*. Listed as "one of the most beautiful villages in France," this jewel of the Luberon is nestled amid vineyards, olive groves and almond trees. In the village, you will notice the typical Mediterranean architecture in its winding narrow streets, lovely old restored houses, and well shaded public squares where you can immerse yourself in the relaxing Provencal ambience.

Manosque Less than an hour east is the charming village of Manosque, known for its colorful markets, and home to the Occitane Factory. Take the factory tour and discover the traditional methods of manufacturing Provencal essential oils, soaps and perfumes.

Moustiers Sainte Marie Let the murmuring of this village's lovely old fountains awaken your senses. Spend the day strolling in the narrow streets and take the time to stop by a faience workshop to discover the traditional methods of producing this glazed earthenware pottery. Situated over

Featured Property

Le Couvent des Minimes
Hotel-Spa in Mane en Provence



Opening May 2008

Located at Mane, in the Alps of Haute-Provence, Le Couvent des Minimes is a haven of peace. Founded in 1613 by the Marquis Forbin de Janson to accommodate the monks of the order of Minimes, this former convent has always had an organic connection with the local harvest. Tucked into the landscape and sheltered from the Mistral the convent gardens long provided food to help the impoverished survive the harsh winter. Nearly four centuries later, Le Couvent des Minime's relationship with the land continues. 2008 will see the transformation of this charming hotel of 46 rooms and suites, complete with a spa by L'Occitane. Staying true to its natural origins, the hotel's spa and gourmet