

GRANDE-BRETAGNE

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France Magazine

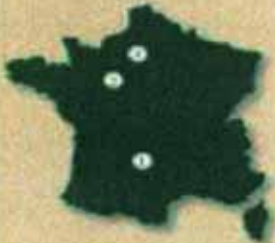
LES PRATIQUES

Dormez BIEN

Where to stay in style

This issue: Water mills

If you're looking for an unusual getaway, you can't go far wrong with a stay in one of the many converted mills dotted along France's waterways. With thick-set walls and solid wooden beams, their centuries-old façades exude an air of calm matched only by the water flowing gently alongside. Whether you want to relax in simple country surroundings, or live the luxurious lifestyle of the royals, take a look at our pick of the best.



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Milling about

Hotel: Restored beauty blends with luxury in the Lot Valley

Spanning five départements and four regions, the Lot Valley has much to offer visitors to France. Where merchants would once travel along the waters of the Lot to trade goods and barter for produce, today the river continues to provide for the area as a key attraction for both tourists and locals alike.

Standing as a legacy to times past, the Moulin de Cambelong is a converted 18th-century watermill located on the banks of the River Dourdou, a tributary of the Lot. Set just outside the Plus Beaux Villages of Conques on the Chemin de Saint-Jacques de Compostelle, the approach to the four-star hotel is no less inspiring, with the main route winding its way through hills down to the riverside. The path leading to

the main reception area separates the mill's outdoor terrace from the water below, and is bordered by a plethora of home-grown herbs used by Michelin-starred chef and owner Hervé Busset in the hotel's restaurant.

The interior of the Moulin de Cambelong successfully blends the traditional with more modern touches - heavy beams and cosy sofas in the lounge area, for example, are offset by vast sliding windows leading to the outdoor swimming pool. The eight rooms and accompanying suite have hi-tech bathrooms and sleek interiors overlooking the river below. Although set next to the main road, the hotel faces the water, and the rooms are free from traffic noise.

Along with the home-grown herbs, the ground floor

restaurant showcases a variety of mouthwatering dishes that use local and seasonal ingredients to produce the much-lauded cuisine on offer. Breakfast is equally well thought-out, offering guests freshly baked pastries, just-pressed fruit juices and homemade jams.

In a nod to the wildlife surrounding the mill - keep an eye out for nightingales, hensers and red kite among others - dogs are allowed to stay for an additional €15 a night. With lovely surroundings and a warm welcome, both man and his best friend can take in the beauty of the Lot Valley in this stunning setting.

Eve Middleton

€ Doubles from €110, suite €350, breakfast €18