



Braveheart

Crillon le Brave

Place de l'Église, Crillon le Brave
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crillonlebrave.com

WORDS JANE WRIGHT

High up in the hills of Provence, Mont Ventoux presides over a lush, rolling rural landscape of orchards, vineyards, small farms and ancient villages. In one, Crillon le Brave, a visionary group of stylish Brits saw the potential in a mostly abandoned hamlet of tumbledown stone houses, picked up four or five for a song and set about realising their dream of a hilltop luxury hotel created by connecting and extending these old townhouses.

Marrying traditional craftsmanship with contemporary French country interiors that reflect the landscape – wood, tile, slate, flowers and herbs – these sun-filled rooms epitomise the comfort and attention to detail in this magical place. There is no snootiness in the staff, an expertly schooled group of young, charming, can-do people whose aim is to make your stay as memorable as possible.

In summer Crillon le Brave is cool and airy, with a breeze ushered in from the poplar trees outside; in winter the hotel is cosy and

atmospheric. Come here to decompress and do as little you like; there are myriad nooks to idle in, reading books or contemplating the view, and an elegant jade swimming pool sits on a narrow terrace. Beneath is a mini-spa where you can have an indulgent massage with (local) lavender-infused oils.

The excellent restaurant, overseen by ambitious young chef Jérôme Blanchet, is surely

heading for Michelin territory, but for more laid-back dining, there is a less formal bistro, where guests can enjoy classic French fare.

Crillon le Brave is a perfect romantic escape, revolving around this exceptional landscape, from the views of its lovingly restored buildings to the provenance of the food, to its serene power to unknot busy people from their everyday lives. Rooms from €290.



Manoir de Lébioles

Domaine de Lébioles 1/5
Spa, +32 (0)87 79 19 00
manoirdelebioles.com

WORDS CLODAGH KINSELLA

A five-minute drive from Spa, the Belgian resort town that launched an entire beauty industry, lies the Manoir de Lébioles – known as 'le petit Versailles' of the Ardennes. Built in the early 1900s by Georges Neyt, rumoured to be a son of King Leopold I, it once hosted concerts and balls, and attracts a steady stream of well-heeled Europeans in its current incarnation as south Belgium's finest luxury hotel.

Renovated in 2006, the main building combines a library, bar, restaurant and 16 bedrooms, all in grand country-house style. A suitably impressive wellness annex is equipped with sauna, steam room, Kneipp footbaths and a glass-encased vitality pool. A sculpting head-to-toe treatment based on the Thermes de Saint-Malo skincare range proves a more indulgent cure than drinking the town's famous waters.

Continuing the theme, the idyllic Imperial Suite comes with a four-poster bed, freestanding bath, relaxation area, and panoramic woodland views. Downstairs, chef Olivier Tucki, ex-of London's Connaught Hotel, creates modernist menus based upon produce from a 1km radius, including sublime house-smoked salmon. While not strictly medicinal, it's just the stuff to revive the spirits. Imperial Suite from €419.



Lamée

Rotenturmstrasse 15
Vienna, +43 (0)1 532 2240
hotellamee.com

WORDS CHRIS BEANLAND

Art deco didn't die in Vienna – its influence is fused into the city's architecture and design. The outside of the Hotel Lamée is white, clean, high deco. The rich elegant interior is something altogether more seductive and closer to art nouveau.

Craftsmanship reigns supreme, with little details like the elaborate lamps on the walls particularly memorable. And it's never fusty or out of date – a problem in many tired-looking Vienna hotels. That quality, of course, is what you get for spending €12m on one small hotel – which has only been open since the tail end of 2012.

The angular patterns on the brown marble feature walls and cream

bedspreads seem to evoke the wavy tiled roof of St Stephen's Cathedral – the church that composes a truly inspiring view from the bedroom window.

While handy for restaurants and bars, to miss the in-house eatery, Bloom, with its biodynamic wines and delightful little plates of *apfelstrudel* would be a crying shame. There's a calmness in the air, but also enough glitz and glamour to make you feel like a holidaying Hollywood star. Indeed the communal areas, with their 1920s and 1930s art, are inspired by L'Estrange Fawcett's 1928 pronouncement that Vienna "is like a European Hollywood". It certainly feels that way inside the Lamée. Rooms from €179.



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