



STAR ESCAPES

Dotted with magnificent châteaux and strung with vines, this glorious French region makes the perfect destination in autumn

Pays de la Loire

STAY

Built in 1764, Hotel Château du Grand-Lucé (3) is a confection of sweeping staircases, exquisitely carved ceilings, glittering chandeliers and immaculate neoclassical gardens. From the first “*Bonjour*” to the final “*Au revoir*”, you’ll want for absolutely nothing; days can be spent touring the region’s wineries and hunting for treasures at the local flea markets. As dusk falls, take a table at the front of the château and watch as huge dragonflies dip and dive above the hydrangeas.

TASTE

At Restaurant Lucé (2), the spotlight is on seasonal ingredients, with much coming from the château’s own orchards and potager: a standout dish is the zander from the Loire. In charming Tours, the bars lining Place Plumereau are a must for an evening aperitif, while in Le Mans, Michelin-starred Le Beaulieu is the place for a spoiling dinner, and the shelves at La Sablésienne are piled high with delightful biscuits – perfect for souvenirs.

INDULGE

When it comes to first-rate wineries, the verdant valleys of the Loire and its tributaries don’t disappoint. The hour-long tours and tastings at historic Langlois-Château are superb and, though Domaine de Bellivière is one of the younger wineries, it’s worth a visit for its sweet, apricot-y Elixir de Tuf alone. Brocante enthusiasts will feel at home in La Chartre-sur-le-Loir, with its antique shops and markets.

EXPLORE

The Loire Valley is confettied with some of France’s most impressive châteaux and its winding lanes, bordered by golden fields and vineyards, make for seriously scenic drives or bike rides. You’ll find picture-perfect villages at every turn and numerous woods and forests ideal for walking and cycling. It has to be said, however, that the grounds at Hotel Château du Grand-Lucé, with manicured lawns, a lake, meadows and statues (1), a gift from Louis XV, are a destination in their own right.

Kendall Jenner has explored the Loire Valley



WHAT TO PACK



Caudalie Limited Edition Beauty Elixir, £32; visit caudalie.com

Ruffled printed dress, £69.99, Mango; visit mango.com



The Remedy Chapter ii necklace, £260, Alighieri, from net-a-porter.com



› Rooms at Hotel Château du Grand-Lucé begin at £425 per night; visit chateau-grandlucé.com. Eurostar from London to Paris costs from £29 one way; visit eurostar.com. SNCF runs services from Paris to Le Mans; visit oui.sncf.