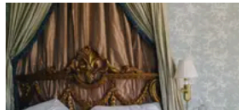
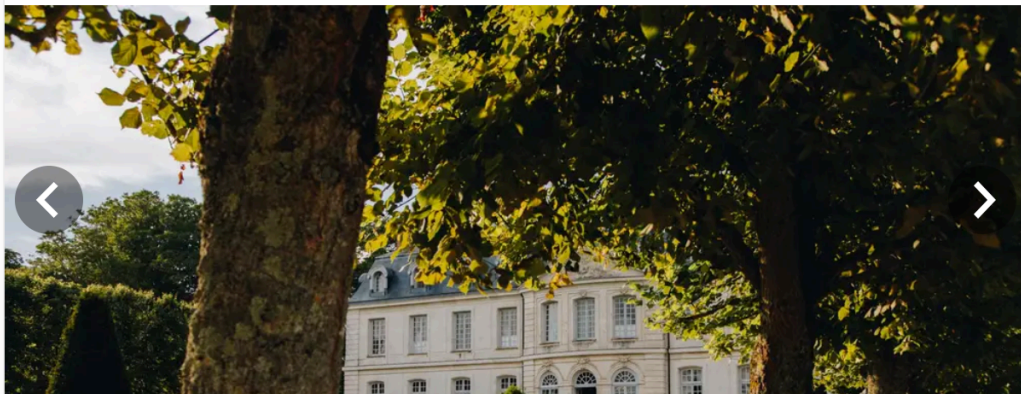


Outstanding Stays: Hotel Château du Grand-Lucé

In our Outstanding Stays series, we ask the team at Mr & Mrs Smith to shine a spotlight on some of the very best hotels in the world. This week, Harriet Charnock-Bates discovers a show-stopping château in the Pays de la Loire

HARRIET CHARNOCK-BATES | 14 hours ago |  0 comments

Hotel Château du Grand-Lucé - in pictures



show all

The Look

Encircled by exquisite gardens, amid the rolling landscapes of the Loire Valley, Hotel Château du Grand-Lucé is a sight to behold. One of the few estates to emerge almost entirely unscathed from the Revolution, it's a gloriously French confection of creamy-white limestone, sweeping stairways and hand-carved boiserie; every inch of it as break-your-heart beautiful as the next.

Aubusson tapestries hang beside gilt bergères upholstered in rich florals, towering candlesticks sidle up next to handsome busts hewn from solid marble, and canopied beds are silhouetted by chandeliers the size of small planets. Giving the interiors a run for their money are the landscaped grounds, as immaculate as they are far-reaching, with borders of blousy hydrangeas and an abundance of symmetrically-sculpted hedges.

Statue-strewn parterres give way to bountiful potager gardens, beyond them sits a ravishing ornamental lake with a bevy of swans, and to the left, an unspeakably elegant fountain-turned-pool dotted with pistachio and cream-striped parasols. The sheer scale of it is astounding, and the attention to detail second to none.

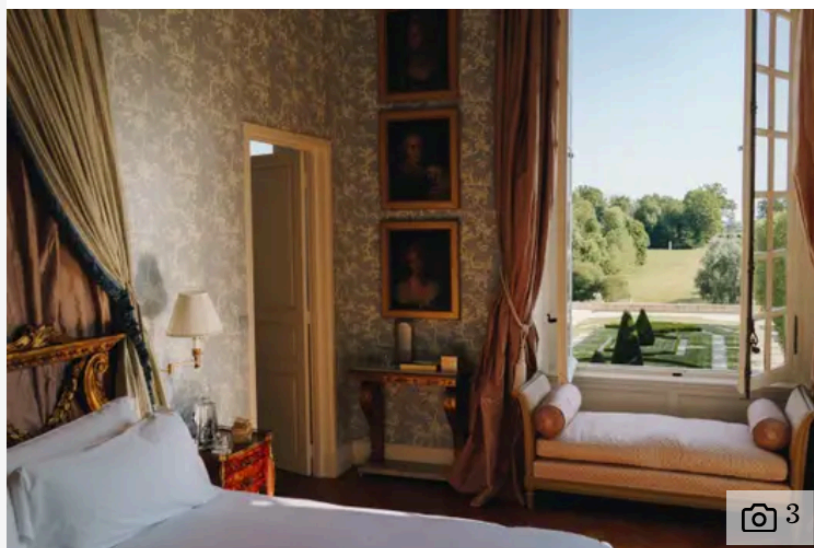


(Louis A. W. Sheridan/Mr & Mrs Smith)

The Feel

From the second the iron gates clang open, this pristinely-preserved French pile casts a powerful spell. It's rare to find a place with an atmosphere quite like this: though undeniably grand - with its neoclassical façade, exquisitely carved ceilings and gargantuan windows - Hotel Château du Grand-Lucé is not the least bit stiff, but rather, somewhere to let go and loosen-up a little.

The sun-drenched salons make for irresistible lounging territory and the lawns cry out for rosé-fuelled picnics. Yes, candlelit evenings call for a slight upping of the ante (cue glad rags and a spritz of something seductive) but the overarching mood is utterly without pretence - a stately home-from-home, if you will - and nobody will bat an eyelid should you spend the most part of your stay floating about in a bathrobe.



(Louis A. W. Sheridan/Mr & Mrs Smith)

The Experience

Hours can be whiled away rummaging for treasures and trinkets at the local brocantes (with its weekly markets and generous smattering of antique shops, sleepy La Chartre-sur-le-Loir ticks just about every box) before returning to the Château for languorous, sun-dappled lunches out in the vast gardens.

Waiters pour ice-cold Sauvignon Blanc with plates of roasted asparagus as huge dragonflies flit between frothy pastel blooms. Afterwards, pad along the tree-lined pathways and descend the steps to commandeer one of the thick-cushioned loungers beside the pool, or take a turn through the grassy meadows where weathered statues tell tales of eras gone by.

When it comes to first-rate wineries, the surrounding valley has a fair few of them up its sleeve. Langlois-Chateau - with its sigh-inducing Loire River vistas - bottles the finest Crémant for miles, while Domaine de Bellivière's apricot-y Elixir de Tuf is effectively liquid sunshine.

When it's time to turn in, absurdly sumptuous suites await: sweet dreams are all but a given.



(Louis A. W. Sheridan/Mr & Mrs Smith)

Insider info

To glimpse the patchwork vineyards from a different perspective, soar above the Pays de la Loire in a hot air balloon - it's a thrill that's utterly intoxicating, and best paired with a bottle of the region's finest fizz.

Getting There

Fly direct to Tours Val de Loire airport from London Stansted. From there it's around an hour by car to Hotel Château du Grand-Lucé.

mrandmrsmith.com/luxury-hotels/hotel-chateau-du-grand-luce ■