

● Clockwise from main: the quite stunning setting of Le Domaine de Rochebois; one of the famous Lascaux cave paintings; an elegant bedroom; spa facilities; dining al fresco with spectacular views.



P.S.

The Cro-Magnon artists responsible for the original Lascaux cave paintings 20,000 years ago were incredibly advanced. For example, they utilised a concave area of the cave to portray the three dimensions of a mighty bull. Humans did not understand perspective again to that degree until the Italian Renaissance. To say the Cro-Magnon painters were way ahead of their time is something of an understatement.



● Perfect summer escape at the Roxburghe

## Travel news

Whether you're looking for something relaxing or a more active getaway, here are some UK countryside breaks worth checking out.

### Pedal power

Murrayshall Country Estate in Scone, Perthshire, has unveiled a number of new pursuits, a new wellness weekend and spa treatments in their newly refurbished Gate House.

The hotel has introduced a range of mountain and e-bikes for guests to roam around the 365-acre estate and beyond with carefully created maps showing walking and cycling routes.

The hotel has also teamed up with Willowgate Activity Centre where guests can enjoy axe throwing and laser clay shooting at the back of the 400-year-old manor house.

Guests will be offered a selection of spa treatments using luxury Scottish organic seaweed products from Isha. Visit [www.murrayshall.co.uk](http://www.murrayshall.co.uk)

### Beautiful Borders

With new cottages, a newly launched spa, restaurant and upgraded activities centre, plus a number of nearby cycling events to enjoy, SCHLOSS Roxburghe in the Scottish Borders is the perfect summer escape.

Guests can also benefit from 25% off the standard rate with all bookings as part of their grand opening offer.

This summer, 26 new cottages are opening up in the woodland estate.

With a mix of one and two bedroom options, some with their own private saunas, a total of 61 cottages will be available by May 2024.

Visit [schlosshotel-roxburghe.com/en/rooms-offers/offers](http://schlosshotel-roxburghe.com/en/rooms-offers/offers)

### Surrey spa

Located among 120 acres of Surrey woodland is Pennyhill Park, a luxurious spa and hotel retreat which has just launched four new private spa cabanas for guests to spend the day relaxing in the comfort of their own personal haven.

Designed like a luxury hotel room brought out into the great outdoors, guests can enjoy a luxurious and private setting, while soaking up the sun and enjoying all of its award-winning spa facilities.

Visit [exclusive.co.uk/the-spa-at-pennyhill-park/spa-days/](http://exclusive.co.uk/the-spa-at-pennyhill-park/spa-days/)

# Give in to temptation and feel the magic of Rochebois

**L**e Domaine de Rochebois, the only five-star property in the Dordogne in south-west France, is a member of the Tempting Places hotel group. It's well named. After a delightful stay there recently, I'd be sorely tempted to go to this place again. Following a fascinating history, during which it was both home to a Catholic order and an orphanage, le Domaine de Rochebois opened last summer as a luxury hotel. A magnificent chateau built in 1850, it offers 40 gorgeous rooms. Mine has a terrace, very much larger than the whole ground floor of my home. Le Domaine de Rochebois is located in the middle of 33 perfectly manicured hectares, including a nine-hole golf course. Sitting pretty on a hilltop near the beautiful medieval town of

WORDS  
JAMES RAMPTON

Sarlat, le Domaine de Rochebois unequivocally declares: "I am master of all I survey."

It boasts all the accoutrements you'd expect from a splendid chateau turned five-star hotel.

Handsome classical architecture fashioned from the sort of lovely, honey-hued stone often seen in the Cotswolds? Check.

Elegant formal gardens on several levels stepping down from the property? Check.

Immaculately kept, militarily precise lines of mulberry trees flanking the gardens? Check.

An eye-watering number of windows – 234, since you ask – for no discernible reason? Check.

Wonderful vistas of the River Dordogne snaking through the

grounds of the property? Check.

A superb Nuxe spa that people travel several hours down from Paris to be pampered in? Check.

A private wing with extra rooms set aside for celebrities? Check.

As if that wasn't enough already, le Domaine de Rochebois also serves food that I would walk 500 miles to sample.

In the refined M Restaurant, we are treated to an astounding seven-course tasting menu prepared by head chef Jean-Philippe Vecco, who trained under the legendary Alain Ducasse.

The standout dish is langoustine with watercream, teamed with citrus and wild myrtle.

It is not merely the sense of effortless class that sets le Domaine

de Rochebois apart. It also possesses a welcome quirkiness which is reflected in the hotel's many unorthodox details.

The property is, for instance, adorned with brilliantly imaginative pieces by the acclaimed sculptor, Pierre Treilhes. You are greeted at the hotel entrance by a three-metre-high cockerel made entirely out of old keys – no, me neither.

And by the swimming pool stands a sculpture of Don Quixote, constructed from twisted strips of metal. The knight's drooping donkey is so lifelike it appears on the verge of giving up.

The historic destinations in the vicinity of le Domaine de Rochebois are equally captivating.

The highlight is Lascaux IV, a replica of the stunning 20,000-year-old paintings discovered in the original Lascaux cave by a group of adventurous boys in 1940.

Five hundred metres away from Lascaux IV, the original site has been closed to the public since 1963 as the humidity and pollution generated by thousands of visitors were damaging the artworks.

It may only be a copy, but Lascaux IV still takes your breath away. Featuring more than 2,000 figures depicting horses, bulls, oryxes, stags and unicorns, the cave was a spiritual site for Cro-Magnon Man.

Making you feel as if you are travelling back millennia in the most vivid, spectacular time machine, the cave has a similarly soulful effect on contemporary visitors.

The sophistication of the paintings is humbling, reminding us that, contrary to our own arrogant belief, we are not the smartest cookies ever to have walked the earth.

Displaying what are thought to be the oldest cave paintings in the world, Lascaux IV has been described as "the Sistine Chapel of pre-history." It's easy to see why. It engenders the same sense of wonder as Michelangelo's masterpiece.

At one point, our guide uses a phrase that sums up the whole Lascaux IV experience: "Feel the magic happening around you."

Also well worth a visit is the Château des Milandes, which was once the home of the extraordinary Josephine Baker. This remarkable woman managed to cram several lifetimes into her 68 years.

She was a world-renowned singer and dancer in 1920s Paris, a spy for the French Resistance, an early proponent of the "rainbow society" who adopted 12 children from different cultures and a passionate civil rights activist who

spoke just before Dr Martin Luther King Jr delivered his famous "I have a dream" speech at the March on Washington in 1963.

As a tribute to this astonishing woman, the bar at le Domaine de Rochebois is named after Baker. There you can toast her memory with a cocktail called "Josephine's Favourite", an enticing mixture of cognac, Champagne, sugar cane and orange.

The cocktail is intoxicating, irresistible and immensely memorable.

Rather like le Domaine de Rochebois, in fact.

### Factfile

Le Domaine de Rochebois costs from £150 per room per night. See [rochebois.com](http://rochebois.com) Flights to Toulouse: [ba.com](http://ba.com)