

Travel



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'The full moon gave Havana's crumbling colonial buildings a dream-like eerie glow'

Susan Ward Davies on the Cuba she fell in love with

Castello Banfi, Italy (2), and a bedroom at L'And (3), below



20 best hotels for wine lovers

From a château in Bordeaux to a colonial mansion in South Africa, **Annabelle Thorpe** picks the top vineyard stays

Europe

1 Château l'Hospitalet Languedoc-Roussillon, France

A sun-kissed wine resort in the south of France, L'Hospitalet is a working estate that offers the chance to really understand what goes into producing successful wines. Guests can join guided tours, tasting workshops or masterclasses, and bespoke experiences can be arranged. The 38 rooms are a touch corporate, but comfortable enough to soothe aching heads after an evening at the wine buffet, where there are 24 wines to

choose from, including the famed Gris Blanc rosé.

Details Doubles are from £79 (00 33 4 68 45 28 50, chateau-hospitalet.com/en)

2 Castello Banfi Tuscany, Italy

If you're looking for the perfect Tuscan wine retreat, look no further. In a hamlet dating back to the 1700s, and 44 miles from Siena, Castello Banfi has nine elegant rooms and five suites. The pool has views over the rolling Tuscan hills and the sangiovese vines used to produce the estate's prestigious wines, as well as a range of vinotherapy



products that feature in the bathrooms. Enjoy tastings in the wine bar, and a five-course dinner with six different wines.

Details Two nights' B&B for two cost from £1,010, with one gastronomic dinner (00 39 0577 877700, castellobanfi.com)

3 L'And Vineyards Evora, Portugal

Surrounded by the rolling hills of the Alentejo, L'And shakes up the concept of a wine hotel. Rooms are cool, with chocolate and cream decor, the pool area feels straight out of Ibiza, and the spa — with plenty of grape-themed treatments — is state of the art. Wine-wise, the ▶

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66-acre estate began producing own-label whites and reds in 2010, and tours and tastings are available at the winery. **Details** Doubles are from £124 B&B (00 351 266 242 400, l-and-vineyards.com)

4 Palas Cerequio Barolo, Italy

In the heart of Barolo country, Cerequio is part of an ancient village that has been lovingly restored to combine a nine-room hotel with world-class wine-tasting facilities and a cellar that holds a 6,000-bottle collection dating back to 1958. Each day there are tastings of five-year crus from Barolo, and the wine shop sells about 400 labels. Rooms are divided into past and future categories, offering either classic vintage charm or sleek, modern design.

Details Doubles are from £150 B&B (00 39 0173 50657, palascerequio.com)

5 Château de Bagnols Beaujolais, France

If you're after a hit of glorious opulence and giddy indulgence, De Bagnols will hit the spot — a spectacular 13th-century château, complete with moat, drawbridge and fairytale towers. At the heart of Beaujolais country, the hotel is surrounded by working wineries, and the concierge can organise escorted tours and tastings. The hotel's wine list is said to be one of the best in the whole of France.

Details Doubles are from £229 room-only (00 33 474 71 4000, chateaubagnols.com)

6 Marqués de Riscal Elciego, Spain

This is Spain's best-known wine hotel, in no small part due to the sinuous Frank Gehry-designed building that houses the quirky bedrooms, which come with zig-zag windows and tilted walls. The world-class Rioja it produces is pretty impressive too; the ticketed tours (approx £9pp) include tastings of two wines, and dinner in the Michelin-starred Marqués de Riscal restaurant offers a chance to explore the extensive wine list.

Details Doubles are from £233 B&B (00 34 945 180 880, hotel-marquesderiscal.com)

7 Les Sources de Caudalie Bordeaux, France

One of the most prestigious wine resorts in the world, Caudalie is housed on the Château Smith Haut Lafitte estate, and

offers tours through the vineyards on foot, bike or horse-drawn carriage. The timber-framed hotel oozes French style, with La Grande Vigne restaurant housed in an 18th-century orangerie, and a vinotherapie spa that utilises the grapes and wine in its products.

Details Doubles are from £165 room-only (00 33 5 57 83 83 83, sources-caudalie.com)

8 Conti di San Bonifacio Wine Resort Maremma, Italy

The Maremma is the quietest corner of Tuscany, perfect for a contemplative few days over a bottle or three of San Bonifacio's rich, delicious syrah. Rustic but stylish rooms are housed in the old farmhouse, with windows that look out over neat rows of sangiovese, cabernet sauvignon and syrah vines. It's a working wine estate, meaning tastings, tours and time in the wine cave are all part of the stay.

Details Doubles are from £155 B&B (00 39 0566 80006, contidisanbonifacio.com)

9 Le Relais de Franc Mayne Saint-Émilion, France

There are only nine rooms in this elegant country house, usually snapped up fast by oenophiles who come to tour the cellars, taste the Saint-Émilion wines and pick from the individually styled bedrooms, that range from vivid Indian colours to restrained British. There's no restaurant, but lunches and dinners can



be arranged and it's very much worth it — home cooking of the highest French order.

Details Doubles are from £158 (00 33 5 57 24 62 61, relaisfrancmayne.com)

10 Château Andre Ziltener Burgundy, France

One of the most beautiful estates in Burgundy, the château dates back to 1709, and now houses eight rooms and suites and two apartments, all furnished with elegant, French country-house-style furniture. The hotel's bistro-style Bar à Vin is the place to try the dangerously moreish white or red burgundies, with platters of local cheeses to soak it all up.

Details Doubles are from £198 B&B (00 33 380 62 41 62, chateau-ziltener.com)

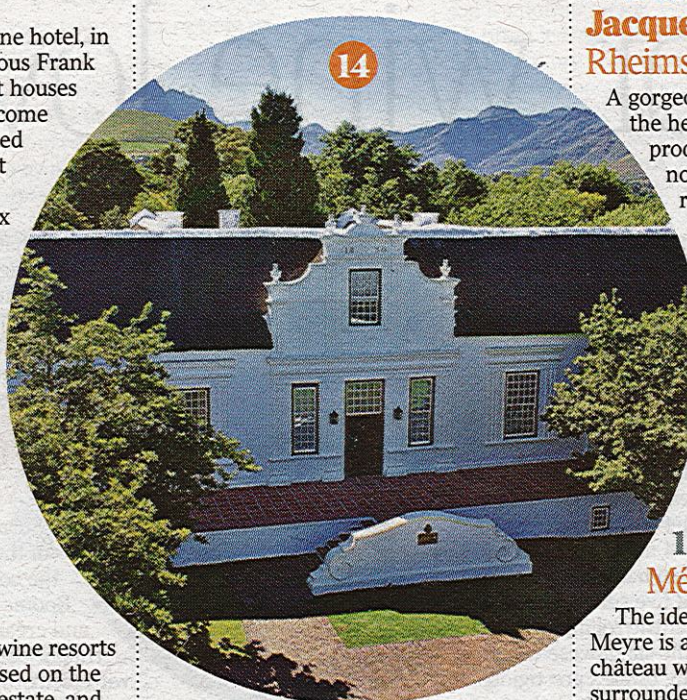
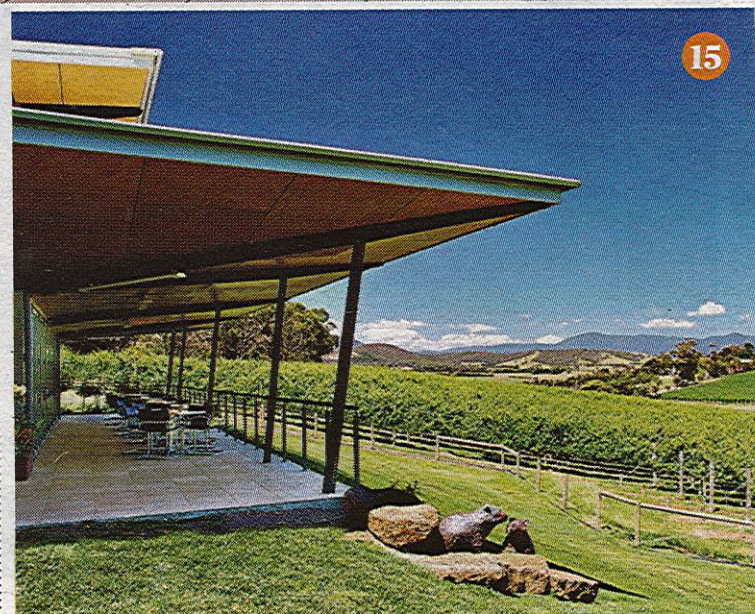
11 Domaine Ployez Jacquemart Rheims, France

A gorgeous 19th-century mansion at the heart of a small champagne-producing estate, the Domaine now offers B&B with five elegant rooms furnished in period style, with views out over the vines. There's an amazing wine cellar to be explored below the house, champagne dinners can be organised, along with tastings of the estate's sparkling and still wines.

Details Doubles are from £103 B&B (00 33 3 26 61 11 87, ployez-jacquemart.fr)

12 Château Meyre Médoc, France

The ideal choice for lovers of Medoc, Meyre is a magnificent 19th-century château with nine comfortable rooms, surrounded by lush parkland, with an





10 outdoor pool and tennis court. The vineyard has been in place for more than 300 years and now operates on a fully organic basis, and the hotel can organise two to four-day itineraries, visiting nearby wineries (from £71 for two people). **Details** Doubles are from £78 B&B (00 33 5 56 58 10 77, chateaumeyre.com)

Long haul

13 Babylonstoren, Stellenbosch South Africa

Owned by the former editor of *Elle Decoration* SA, Babylonstoren oozes style, with accommodation in a row of 18th-century thatched cottages on the estate. Guests are encouraged to get involved with the garden and vineyards — pruning or harvesting, or taking tours with the gardeners. Wine-tasting tours can be arranged, although the best way to try local vintages is over dinner at the hotel's fabulous Babel restaurant.

Details Doubles are from £270 B&B (00 27 21 863 3852, babylonstoren.com)

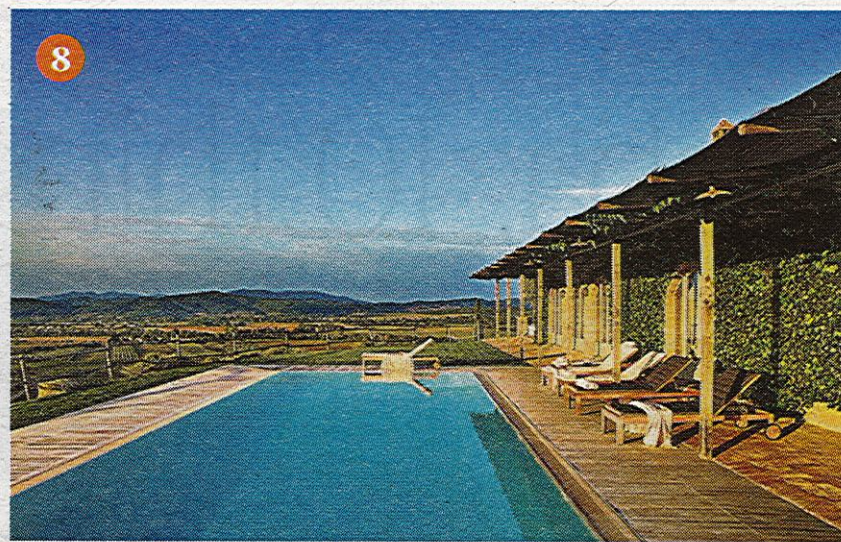
14 Lanzerac Hotel & Spa South Africa

Lanzerac is a beautiful Dutch colonial mansion with 48 rooms, filled with antiques and each with a private patio. The expansive cellar offers a wide range of tastings, including pairings with chocolate and cheeses, and there's a variety of eating options, including the new Lanzerac deli, offering locally made artisan breads, meats and cheeses. The spa keeps to the wine theme, using Theravine products.

Details Doubles are from £220 B&B (00 27 21 887 1132, lanzerac.co.za)

15 Balgownie Estate Australia

In the heart of the Yarra Valley, Balgownie has been producing wines



8 since 1969, and all guests are entitled to a free tasting, with more structured classes and courses available. Alongside the pleasures *du vin*, there are walking trails, an indoor pool and Natskin Spa, and the concierge can organise trips to surrounding wineries. Rooms are modern and pared-down, without being unnecessarily minimalist. **Details** Doubles are from £185 B&B (00 61 3 9730 0700, balgownieestate.com.au)

16 Takatu Lodge and Vineyard New Zealand

The contemporary-designed lodge at Takatu makes the most of the sunshine that floods across the vineyards, with glass walls and vaulted ceilings that create a sense of space and tranquillity. The vineyard runs on sustainable, organic principles and guests are welcome to explore and experience how the wine is produced, as well as try the sumptuous merlot and malbec at a tasting session or on your private balcony as the sun sets.

Details Doubles are from £271 B&B (00 64 9 423 0299, takatulodge.co.nz)

17 Boschendal, Franschhoek South Africa

Founded in the late 17th century, Boschendal has a lovely sense of tradition, where the newly opened accommodation is in converted historic cottages tucked among the vines and gardens. The vineyard produces renowned sparkling wines, chardonnays and merlots, and guests can join tastings, visit the cellars or experience the famed

Boschendal Pique Nique, a lazy, wine-fuelled al fresco lunch in the grounds. **Details** Werf Cottages, sleeping two, is from £103 (00 27 21 870 4290, boschendal.com)

18 Auberge du Soleil California, USA

A hit of Provençal life surrounded by the vine-clad hills of the Napa Valley, the Auberge du Soleil was started 30 years ago and is one of California's most beloved hotels. Rooms have a sunny Mediterranean feel with polished wood floors and Italian linens, and the Michelin-starred restaurant and less formal bar and bistro offer local organic produce teased into elegant French-style dishes, and the most comprehensive wine list in the valley.

Details Doubles are from £414 B&B (00 1 707 963 1211, aubergedusoleil.com)

19 Empire Retreat Margaret River, Australia

The emphasis is on "retreat" on this lovely, tucked-away estate that has more than a hint of Balinese style, with teak day-beds, marble mosaics and a wonderful "bush spa" offering eastern-style therapies, Pilates and yoga. Surrounded by the famous vineyards of the Margaret River region, including Voyager Estate and McCleod Creek, it has tranquil gardens. Guests can taste the wines with supper in the spectacular atrium-style dining room.

Details Doubles are from £156 B&B (00 618 9755 2065, empireretreat.com)

20 Entre Cielos Mendoza, Argentina

Famous for the malbec grape, Entre Cielos produces three Marantal wines, with a *terroir* dating back 80 years. Rooms are classed in the same way as the wines — Young, Reserva and Gran Reserva, but all feel chic and contemporary, with blond wood, light colours and furniture in fresh greens and yellows. The wonderful hamam and spa includes wine-themed treatments, and classic Argentine dishes are served up in the Katharina restaurant.

Details Doubles are from £357 B&B (00 54 261 498 3377, entrecielos.com)

