

Exploring the Pays Basque-Béarn Region On The Road - a stop at Château de Lamothe



The Château de Lamothe in the village of Moumour (Béarn)

TOURING IN THE PAYS BASQUE AND BÉARN

During a recent stay in the Pays Basque-Béarn region of France's Aquitaine, we made a delightful discovery that we want to share with our readers: We found total luxury, privacy, tranquility in a stunningly beautiful and quiet corner of South West France at the **Château de Lamothe**.

The painstaking restoration of this spectacular 12th century property, the original Moumour village castle and former bishops' palace, has been a labor of love for its Dutch owners, who took five years to restore it to sheer perfection, with extraordinary attention to detail.

In the original château the owners have created five gorgeous, luxuriously decorated, sumptuously outfitted rooms (4 doubles and one family suite), all equipped the finest of creature comforts, including heavenly king beds outfitted with down pillows and duvets, bathrobes, Italian showers, cast iron baths, flat screen TV, internet access, and coffee and tea making facilities. Each of the five bedrooms has views of the park and is individually decorated in a highly sophisticated yet relaxed, eclectic style with well-chosen antiques and original art work.

Château de Lamothe



This lovely château B&B (Chambres d'hôtes) is located in the pretty little village of Moumour, near Oloron-Sainte-Marie, just forty-five minutes west of Pau and its airport.

The château sits in a lovely park on one stunning hectare atop a hill with uninterrupted 360-degree views of the Oloron valley and the majestic Pyrénées-Atlantiques.



View from the garden

In addition to the five elegant chateau bedrooms, the property also offers an annex with first floor gîte, or private apartment (sleeping six), for families or friends that can be rented on a weekly basis.

This apartment consists of three charming double bedrooms, each with en-suite bath, a spacious, well-equipped kitchen (including washing machine), a large living room with open fireplace and a private terrace affording stunning Pyrénées views. And renters are invited to use all of the chateau's fine facilities including pool and sports room.



In this annex building guests will also find a sizable state-of-the-art conference room for corporate

use with bar for refreshments, an art gallery displaying the owners' works and an exercise room filled with the latest and best equipment.

Other estate amenities include a large, secluded heated pool, a billiard room, a boules court, a small home cinema and lovely manicured gardens in which to read and relax. Or guests can take a painting class with Laurent or a sculpture class with Christine, a highly accomplished sculptress who has adorned the grounds with her exquisite works.

Oh, and the cuisine!... Not only will you be charmed by your accommodations, you will also be impressed by the elegant dining room and its sophistication rivaling that of any Michelin starred restaurant.

Here you will enjoy hearty breakfasts and sumptuous dinners of local provender....salmon, local foie gras and duck confit, artisan Brebis, pure sheep milk cheese, accompanied by local wines of the Jurançon, whose vineyards lie just a short drive away, or even labels from beyond the South West, from the chateau's well-endowed cellar.



The main living room of the chateau



Château de Lamothe's elegant dining room on the main floor

We found the Château de Lamothe to be a simply delightful country base, a perfect hideaway spot to unwind, sunbathe, have a massage, enjoy a book from the library, write, draw, paint or simply commune with nature and soak up the estate's captivating views.



The village of Moumour as seen from the Château's annex



One of the guest bedrooms in Château de Lamothe

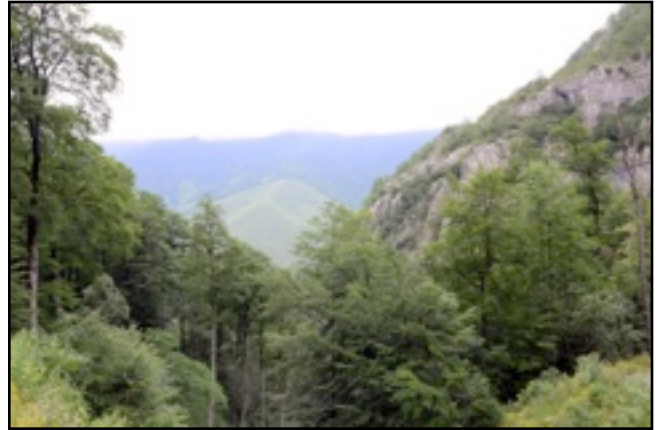
And just a short drive away one can enjoy wine tasting, visit the cathedral and Friday morning market in Oloron or attend its July jazz festival, tour Henri IV's castle in Pau, play golf, go rafting, fish for salmon, take in a thermal bath or explore the stunning nature that surrounds the property.



The annex building: gym, art studio, apartment and conference center

Within an hour's drive guests can explore the second largest cave chamber in the world, **La Verna** near Sainte-Engrâce La Pierre Saint-Martin, walk the dramatic, 180 meter-high suspension bridge of Holzarte, hike in the spectacular gorge of Kakuetta, take a ride on the Petit Train d'Ardouste, the highest train in Europe, enjoy winter skiing or summer hiking in the Pyrénées National Park.

And then there are the surfing beaches of the Atlantic, the fishing port/resort city of St-Jean-de Luz, regal Biarritz and the charming chocolate capital of the Pays Basque, Bayonne, just 1-1/2 hours away.



In the mountains high above Sainte-Engrâce, at the entrance to La Verna



"Farm to Table" from the market in St-Jean-de-Luz



The historic 11th century Romanesque church of Sainte-Engrâce

Ask Iberian Traveler to prepare a special getaway package just for you to the exceptional and completely unique Château de Lamothe. Allow yourself to be pampered by the highly personalized service of its engaging hosts, Laurent and Christine.



On the beach at Biarritz