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SOUTH OF FRANCE

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## LUXURY HOMES

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*Holiday at the*  
**BEACH HOUSE**

SET BETWEEN SAND DUNES, BEACH, AND OCEAN THIS SWEET,  
MODERN SERAGLIO IN ONE OF THE MOST EXPENSIVE ZIP CODES  
IN THE UNITED STATES IS MANNA FROM HEAVEN.

DEPARTURES





# Le Luxe de La Bergerie

*An opulent gem nestled between the Côte d'Azur and Provence, La Bergerie de Terre Blanche elevates the art of gracious living. Private Air touches down in the South of France for an indulgent week at the très luxueux, La Bergerie Villa de Terre Blanche.*

By: Gina Samarotto





Minutes away, yet light-years apart from the glamour of the Côte d'Azur lies the luxury of Terre Blanche. In a location as convenient as it is alluring, the French resort is nestled against the bucolic beauty of Provence - 35 minutes from Nice's Aéroport Côte d'Azur and reached easily by private air travelers arriving through Cannes' Aéroport Mandelieu. Rich in sumptuous accommodations, featuring two world-class golf courses and one of Europe's largest, most notable spas, Terre Blanche has yet another laurel upon which to rest - it is the home of the exquisite villa known as La Bergerie.

"La Bergerie is in the heart of Domaine de Terre Blanche and was once owned by the Marquis de Villeneuve," says David Rich-Jones, La Bergerie's owner and CEO of Richstone Properties, the London-based development company responsible for its recent recreation. "The original bergerie dates back to the 13th century, giving today's Villa a legacy rich in provenance."

Despite having roots deeply planted in medieval history, the Villa as it stands bears little resemblance to any rustic namesake. Wearing a grand façade and boasting immense windows framed in bronze-toned metal, the Villa is

surrounded by stunning landscapes and enveloped in an aura rife with five star service. In short, arriving at the elegantly monolithic La Bergerie was a heady, sigh-worthy experience that left me feeling as if I had been delivered into some lush fairytale.

Collectively, the architecture and landscape of La Bergerie is a cacophony of texture and color, curves and angles, old and new. Ancient oaks meld seamlessly with contemporary sculpture by British artist Linda Lindqvist, gurgling fountains dot the landscape and wafting everywhere is the sweet fragrance of roses and sun-warmed lavender. Completing the blissful picture, the presence of La Bergerie's staff gathered en masse on the Villa's stone steps to greet us with warm smiles and chilled champagne.

Despite the spectacular arrival, I found myself woefully unprepared for the sublime opulence to be found just beyond La Bergerie's impressive front doors. Centered on a soaring main entry flanked by two grand stone staircases, the breathtaking foyer features a wall of yet more windows intended to showcase the pool and gardens beyond. Additional steel-framed glass panels serve to define the adjacent salon and dining room while allowing for broad, unobstructed views across the expanse.





In an appealing mix of traditional European elegance infused with modern style, the villa's rooms are layered with tonal shades of texture. Ceresed oak, honed stone, sparkling crystal and richly woven fabrics come together to create a style that is as rich as it is soothing, as stunning as it is comfortable and oh so very utterly, quintessentially French. Adding to the scene and much to our delight, elegantly turned French doors had been left ajar to capture balmy breezes as they framed charmed views.

"Richstone has a very talented team of designers," explained Rich-Jones over cocktails served poolside. "What they've done here is to mix these slightly contemporary pieces with beautiful antiques and original art in order to give the Villa what we believe is a modern, international feel without compromising the integrity of its French heritage."

The upper floors of the Villa afford luxurious accommodations for twelve guests throughout six suites including a lofty master. The bedrooms – each one lovelier than the next – offer indulgent ensuite accommodations, most have patios or Juliette balconies and all possess a distinctive, refined style of its own. Of the bedrooms, two are in a separate area lending itself perfectly as an enclave for children, extended family or additional staff. As well, Richstone is in the

planning stages for an additional, two-bedroom guesthouse that will sit adjacent to the Villa.

Among all the myriad facets of La Bergerie, the security and seclusion she offers is among the most desirable. "Here within Terre Blanche, La Bergerie is completely private, yet it affords guests the best of what the Côte d'Azur and Provence has to offer," explains Genevieve Lawrie, Richstone's Head of Overseas Properties. "The Villa is very special but what makes it magical is the staff that brings it to life." Indeed, I could not agree more; the staff of La Bergerie personifies the very concept of luxury travel. Led by the endlessly talented Chef du Cuisine Helen Bate, La Bergerie's impeccably trained staff includes a butler, hostess, groundskeepers and chambermaids that anticipated my every need, whim, and want. As well, guests are afforded access to a dedicated concierge through whom everything from a car and driver to a helicopter and pilot can be arranged. "We present guests with a questionnaire prior to their arrival to ensure we have the information necessary to make their stay as comfortable and seamless as possible," Lawrie says. "From how they prefer their coffee to the wines they'd like in the cellar, to dining preferences; we use the information provided to design a completely bespoke experience."



CLOCKWISE: Captain Franck Poteau whisks us off for a glamorous French Riviera cruise aboard the 'Eden Erina'. Any way you turn, there's always something wonderful to discover at Chateau d'Esclans, Shanon Benoist and Alain Riviere of Chateau d'Esclans see us off after a traditional harvest lunch featuring Provençal fare, warm welcomes and an abundance of perfectly chilled Rosé. Two women stroll along the quaint village streets of Fayence, a picturesque village located between Draguignan and Grasse in the Provençal countryside, *Private Air* Senior Editor Gina Samarotto with Richstone Property's Genevieve Lawrie, aboard the Eden Erina. Le France Restaurant - the perfect spot to enjoy a traditional French bistro meal while enjoying quintessential French village views, and window displays at Sucré d'élise tempt passersby with glimpses of the sweet treats offered by the confiserie.





While the offerings of the Villa and Terre Blanche are seductive in their own right, there is no denying this region of France begs to be explored. A perennially favorite haunt, the nearby village of Fayence is home to open-air marchés where our group whiled away the morning browsing the stalls for everything from hand-stitched shoes to handcrafted soaps. A few steps away at a neighborhood bistro aptly named Le France, we lingered over a traditional French lunch amid the sounds of convivial conversation and the scents of les spécialités de la maison. For the more adventurous, Fayence is home to the Association Aéronautique, Europe's renown gliding center where one may soar silently through the air above unparalleled views.

If you prefer, as we did, to glide over blue water rather than soaring through blue sky, there are endless available vessels from which to choose. For our day in the sun, La Bergerie arranged a charter aboard the "Eden Erina." This 23m, sleek motor yacht is able to accommodate up to twelve for a day (or many days) at sea, and comes well equipped with

Jet Ski, paddleboards, captain and crew.

Of course, no trip to Provence would be complete without visiting the vines. The preeminent producer of Rosé in a land where Rosés are preeminent, Chateau d'Esclans is a magnificent manor and winery set amidst hectares of verdant vineyard. It's a fascinating look into the history - and future - of winemaking in Provence.

At the end of each glorious day, the Villa stood waiting for us against a backdrop of magnificent sunset and flickering candles. Over wines and suppers served by a staff that delights in delighting, we would rehash the day, plan our next and revel in the decadent, luxurious pleasure that comes with the experience of true joie de vivre. ✈

*To complement the La Bergerie experience in the south of France, the Richstone Collection currently has two Villas under development in Mauritius – each slated for a 2015 debut. For further information please visit [www.bergerieterreblanche.com](http://www.bergerieterreblanche.com) and [www.richstoneproperties.co.uk](http://www.richstoneproperties.co.uk)*