

A beautiful new château in the French countryside amazes, and the Four Seasons' first property in Los Cabos unites you with nature. by Becca Hensley and Emma Reynolds

New HOTELS

The hotel's grand exterior

Hotel Château du Grand-Lucé

GRAND-LUCÉ, LOIRE VALLEY, FRANCE

Picnicking on a blanket atop a grassy knoll shaded by trees, steps from a medieval wall, within sight of centuries-old, Greek-themed statues gifted by King Louis XV, guests at the newly opened Hotel Château du Grand-Lucé in France's Loire Valley may lose perspective. So timeless are the rose and apple-blossom-scented gardens, so captivating the view of the white 18th-century Neoclassical masterpiece, so lullaby-like the serenade of geese on the lake, vacationers might imagine themselves blissfully lost in another century. The château was built beginning in 1760 by Baron Jacques Pineau de Viennay, a favored advisor to Louis XV, with no expense spared in order to embody the best design elements of its era. Since then, it has served as salon space for the Age of Enlightenment's literati (including Voltaire and

Rousseau), been a hidden cache for the Louvre's art during the Nazi occupation, served a stint as a war hospital and was the private home of world-famous interior designer Timothy Corrigan. Today, its storied legacy lives on thanks to a meticulous restoration of the property and its gardens. In June 2019, the castle re-emerged as the Hotel Château, with 17 rooms and suites, reimagined, refurbished and redecorated by Pilot Hotels to its former grandeur, but with modern elan — just as the baron himself surely would have wanted.

FRENCH STYLE

A 45,000-sq-ft haven that lords over 80 acres of manicured gardens and forest, the château is a destination itself. It lies in the heart of an idyllic Loire Valley village, just an hour's train ride from Paris. Inside is a haven of curated antiques with bushels of velvet, silk and damask; gold gilt and sterling silver; crystal chandeliers; custom wallpaper; local limestone; original flooring; snow-white marble; and the occasional exposed rough-hewn beam. With such a bounty of extravagant materials and charm,

Hotel Château enchants inside and out. Outside, a pool in the Exotic Garden occupies a former fountain, a bevy of garden paths and mazes beckon, nooks inspire (think: passionate conversations fueled by fabulous local wine) and a ballroom, once the estate's stables, invites waltzing. The restaurant, Le Lucé, serves regional French food with seasonal daily menus and products harvested from the château's gardens. Intimate service ensures "your wish is my command" staff interaction on every level.

STAY

Opt for the Baron's Suite. Extravagant with 17-ft-tall ceilings, Versailles-patterned oak floors, and abundant sumptuous fabrics and furnishings, it encompasses a library, three entrances, huge windows and a marbled bath. Most astonishing is its separate Salon Chinois that boasts original canvas-flanked walls with Chinoiserie paintings by artist Jean-Baptiste Pillement. It is one of only two such works in the world — the other is in Versailles.

EXPLORE

A majestic home base to discover the famed castles and family-owned wineries of the Loire Valley, Hotel Château excels at arranging bespoke itineraries, sharing historical anecdotes and deftly handling support details like arranging rental cars and picnic lunches. Don't miss the chance to drive through local villages, alongside farms and sunflower fields, to visit such famous châteaux as Chenonceau (Catherine de Medici's home) and Clos Lucé (the domain of Leonardo da Vinci). Other activities? Go antiquing at Le Chartre-sur-le-Loir, a village that brims with ateliers and shops. Bike or horseback ride through the Bercé Forest — or hover above the valley in a hot-air balloon. Culture aficionados should definitely see the cathedral's labyrinth in Chartres and the walled city of Le Mans.

The Baron's Suite from \$15,000. Contact Michael Gregory, managing director, info@chateaugrandlucé.com, +33 255 484 040, chateaugrandlucé.com

