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Photo: Anne Emmanuelle Thion

# Loire Valley Lodges' Modern Treehouse Hotel Updates the French Country Retreat

By Sara Lieberman

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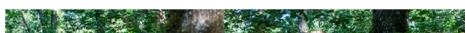
Guard dogs are not generally something you find at a luxury hotel, but Loire Valley Lodges announces the many ways it's different right away, greeting guests with a 13-foot-tall canine. "It's the biggest in France," property owner Anne-Caroline Frey says of the four-legged bronze sculpture by French artist Aurélie Ricard. The treehouse hotel, which opened last July in the middle of a 300-acre private forest about two hours from Paris, is the first foray into hospitality for Frey, an art dealer and collector who scattered dozens of other eclectic works throughout the property. Aside from its gallery-esque quality, here are three more reasons to visit this decidedly contemporary alternative to the area's famed chateaux.



Daybeds by the pool at Loire Valley Lodges / Photo: Anne Emmanuelle Thion

## In-Vogue Vibe

Located just outside the city of Tours, the hotel strikes a balance between chic and pastoral. At the property's center is a centuries-old farmhouse, which has been updated and now contains the main lobby, a concept shop that sells herb-scented essential oils and the like, a gastronomic restaurant, and a cocktail bar. The couture-in-the-country sensibility is evident in the decor (velour sofas, hanging Edison bulbs) and clientele (high heels, blowouts), but the place manages to feel chill regardless—especially when you're lying on one of the cushioned daybeds surrounding the 65-foot in-ground pool.

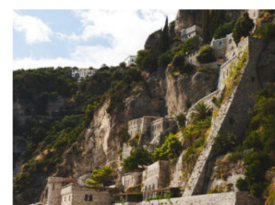


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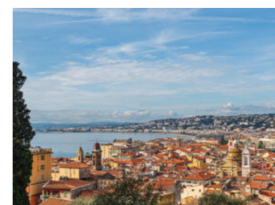
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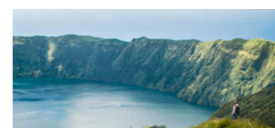




Photo: Anne Emmanuelle Thion



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## Elevated Accommodations

The 18 modern treehouses sit on stilts, with long cedar staircases and floor-to-ceiling windows that position guests in the forest canopy. Each interior is unique and conceptualized by a different artist. The Essentielle lodge, for example, features handwritten lyrics scribbled on the walls by French singer Tara, whose portrait hangs next to the bed, while the Lucien lodge pays homage to Serge Gainsbourg and comes with a turntable and records. There's no Wi-Fi or TV, but all rooms are equipped with a walkie-talkie to reach management. The privacy is nearly complete—the treehouses are far enough apart that they're not visible to each other—but convenience still rules, in the form of courtesy bicycles and breakfasts delivered in picnic baskets.



Photo: Anne Emmanuelle Thion

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## A Forest Hymn

While in-room massages can be arranged, the best therapy available here is the woods themselves. Guests are encouraged to participate in a "lyrical hike"—similar to the Japanese art of *shinrin-yoku*, or forest bathing. Offerings range from three hours of singing in the trees for a group of 20 to a private immersion hosted by Frey herself.

From \$548, [loirevalleylodges.com](http://loirevalleylodges.com)

**A Très Bien Vacation:** The Loire Valley is just a high-speed train ride away from [Paris](http://Paris). Book your flight at [united.com/paris](http://united.com/paris).