



Eating out in... Dordogne

Paola Westbeek found Michelin stars aplenty scattered around the town of Bergerac, where mouthwatering meals are best enjoyed while overlooking spectacular scenery

1 LA TOUR DES VENTS, MONBAZILLAC

Gloriously situated at the summit of Monbazillac's rolling vineyards is La Tour des Vents, a restaurant that has rightfully earned itself a Michelin star with its exquisite culinary repertoire – and one where the views will literally make you gasp in amazement.

The location alone is spectacular and while sipping a chilled glass of vouvray, I sit back and take it all in; the majestic setting with panoramas that extend 80 kilometres into the distance, the tranquility of the French countryside and the delicious anticipation of the meal ahead. A refreshing watermelon gazpacho crowned with a sorbet of raspberries and sweet peppers sets the stage for our three-course *'Retour du Marché'* menu.

The first course is a *méli-mélo* of



tomatoes brightened with a hint of lemon verbena. Sweet-and-salty Iberico ham and tiny dollops of fromage frais provide a velvety contrast in taste and texture. It is a match made in heaven paired with the 2015 Domaine l'Ancienne Cure Jour de Fruits, a balanced blend of sauvignon



blanc and sémillon with citrusy notes and floral aromas.

What follows is nothing short of an epicure's gourmet dream; tender lamb ribs served beautifully rosé and infused with just the right amount of candied garlic. An almond dacquoise topped with ripe apricots and bourbon vanilla ice cream rounds off a culinary experience that went well beyond being purely gustatory. The artful presentations and extraordinary setting made it a visual feast to remember.

Open lunchtime and evenings.
Closed Mon-Tues. In July and August, closed only Monday.
À la carte and set menus ranging from €39 (weekday lunch) - €129.
Moulin de Malfourat, 24240 Monbazillac
Tel: (Fr) 5 53 58 30 10
latourdesvents.com

2 LA TERRASSE, DURAS

The charming Medieval village of Duras, located approximately 30 kilometres south-west of Bergerac, is known for its imposing 12th-century château and fantastic wines; not very different from those of Bergerac. In fact, the Côtes de Duras appellation has been part of the Bergerac wine region since 2014.

If you want to sample Duras's wines with local dishes, head to La Terrasse, situated directly in front of the château and run by friendly couple Mathias and Eléonore Billaud. The menu features regional classics such as confit de canard and foie gras as well as juicy steaks, a few seafood options (their briny Arcachon oysters are silky-smooth and pair beautifully with the house sauvignon blanc) and even excellent fish 'n' chips, enjoyed by the village's large English expat population.

For lunch, our three-course set menu starts with a salad of avocado and prawns. The greens are perfectly dressed and scattered with ripe cherry tomatoes while pine nuts provide a crisp contrast.



The main is a rustic dish of filet mignon de porc en croûte served with tender French beans. For dessert, the gâteau au chocolat accompanied by a scoop of praline ice cream is the ultimate sweet culmination to a truly satisfying meal.

In the evenings, ending dinner al fresco while sipping an armagnac and watching the sunset bathe the pretty terrace in golden hues is one of the many reasons we keep coming back.

Open lunchtime and evenings. Closed Tues-Wed. In July and August, closed only Wednesday.

À la carte; lunchtime set menu on weekdays €16.

4 Place Jean Bousquet, 47120 Duras
Tel: (Fr) 5 53 84 29 62

3 LES FRESQUES, MONESTIER

There are restaurant experiences that amuse the palate and visually impress with their clever arrangement of top-notch ingredients into culinary masterpieces. Les Fresques (part of a hotel housed in the exquisite 16th-century Château des Vigiers) is such a restaurant. The elegant decor boasts enchanting wall frescoes (hence the name), while the terrace affords sprawling views over the establishment's renowned 27-hole golf course. And that's only part of what makes it so special.

Our lunch opens with a glass of Laurent Perrier and a selection of amuse-bouches, including a memorable creation of smoked salmon with beetroot jelly and tarragon. The first course is a refreshing sea bream tartare with a bright green apple dressing that tickles the taste buds, temptingly preparing them for the wonders to come. And the next dish is certainly exemplary of Chef Didier Casaguana's culinary genius and deep love of quality, locally sourced ingredients – he crowns a fresh



strawberry tartare with succulent lobster and velvety duck liver escalope to create an alluring medley of textures and flavours. The sea bass fillet that follows is perfectly roasted and paired with a rich compote of greengage plums. A two-part dessert, including a *sablé* topped with blackcurrant jelly and lime mousse is the start of the meal's tasteful finale. Add to that an extensive wine list and impeccable service and it isn't any wonder that such a level of gourmet refinement was acknowledged with a Michelin star.

Open Tues-Sat for lunch and dinner, Sunday for lunch & Monday for dinner. Closed Wednesday. À la carte and set menus ranging from €45 - €110.

Lieu Dit Le Vigier, 24240 Monestier
Tel: (Fr) 5 53 61 50 00
vigiers.com

Eating in

WINE

Maison des Vins

241000 Bergerac
Tel: (Fr) 5 53 63 57 55
vins-bergeracduras.fr

Bergerac counts thirteen appellations that produce wines similar to those from Bordeaux but cost a fraction of the price. The best whites come from Montravel in the far west of the region and the best reds (with a good storing potential) from Pécharmant, northeast of Bergerac. To learn more, visit Bergerac's Maison des Vins, housed in the historic 17th-century cloister, Le Cloître des Récollets. After a tasting, hop on a *gabarre* (flat-bottomed boat) and enjoy a cruise along the Dordogne.

REGIONAL DELIGHTS

Boutique Valette

241000 Bergerac
Tel: (Fr) 5 53 57 17 15
valette.fr

Since 1920, Valette has been delighting customers with its mouth-watering range of edible souvenirs. Splurge on tins of foie gras, confit de canard, black Périgord truffles and other regional delicacies. Done shopping? Take a photo with Cyrano de Bergerac's statue before sitting down for a drink on Place Péliissière.

MARKET

Place Gambetta & surroundings

241000 Bergerac
Spend a Wednesday or Saturday morning soaking up culinary inspiration as you stroll through Bergerac's colourful market. Admire stall after stall piled high with seasonal produce, fragrant breads, local cheeses and fresh seafood.

CHOCOLATES & PRUNES

Maison Guinguet

47120 Duras
Tel: (Fr) 5 53 83 72 47
maisonguinguet.com

Maison Guinguet specialises in fine chocolates and Pruneaux d'Agen. The regional prune is available in all its natural glory (perfect for snacking and in recipes), covered in chocolate or stuffed with fruit purées. Try their prunes preserved in Armagnac – ideal for a no-fuss dessert when served over vanilla ice cream. 🍷