

HOUSE OF COCO

£5.95

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*A lush
Mediterranean
hideaway
in St Tropez*

IMAGES:
LOU PINET





While St Tropez is known as the summer party capital of the South of France, the Hotel Lou Pinet offers an alternative and low-key getaway away from the hustle and bustle of the marina. **HANNAH TAN-GILLIES** checks in for a taste of the joie de vivre of the Côte d'Azure

Hidden amongst verdant lavender fields, you'd be forgiven for missing Hotel Lou Pinet on the country road on the outskirts of St Tropez. This cosy, colourful and stylish Provençal-style hotel by family-owned French hotel group Maisons Pariente is elegant without being stuffy and absolutely exudes effortless pastoral chic.

Feeling more like the stylish country home of your most elegant rich, unmarried French aunt than a hotel, one foot inside the Lou Pinet and you will instantly feel like you've been summering in the Côte d'Azur for as long as you can remember.

Two turquoise vespas are parked in front of the hotel entrance and can be rented to explore the beautiful pastoral landscapes of St Tropez. Designed by the legendary architecture and interior design duo of François Vieillecroze



and Charles Zana, Hotel Lou Pinet is a joyful colourful homage to 1960s St Tropez, with every curated artwork, vase and tile reflecting the sun-soaked colour palette of the South of France.

Here, terracotta floors meet quirky, sculptural ceramics while a joyful collection of abstract art and contemporary prints cover the walls. The art, finishings, lighting and even the giant commissioned fresco on the walls of the main restaurant have all been joyfully curated to celebrate the Tropezian way of life, maximising the golden light of the South of France and evoking a vintage chic aesthetic that's impossible to replicate.

You pass through the hotel's main restaurant, which opens up to an alfresco dining area, before descending down a small stone staircase into the glorious pool area and courtyard. At Hotel Lou Pinet, most of the rooms boast elegant French doors which open up to the courtyard, where fragrant scents of lavender and rosemary greet you.

With only 54 bedrooms and suites, Lou Pinet feels intimate



without being too crowded. Inside, everything is très chic and we wouldn't blame you for looking at the tags of all the soft furnishings for some interior inspo (we sure did). Each room has its own private garden and outdoor lounge, perfect for enjoying a cup of coffee made from your own in-room Nespresso machine.

From the colourful tapestries on the headboards, Le Labo and Tata Harper toiletries and the lovely welcome package - which includes a stylish linen beach towel, Tata Harper skincare, hairbrush, tote bag and Lou Pinet branded cap - you'll quickly assimilate to life in the South of France from the moment you check in.

The hotel's main restaurant, Beef Bar, originally popularised in Monaco, serves up a delectable menu of Japanese and Mediterranean dishes that will surely impress. Led by Head Chef Riccardo Oltraudi and described as the 'antithesis of a steak house' Beef Bar is undoubtedly one of St Tropez's best restaurants. This is thanks in part to its excellent selection of beef, which include American Black Angus Prime, Australian Wagyu WX and melting Japanese Kobe Beef. The star offering, of course, is the beef but the crispy and mouth-watering Tonkatsu Milanese is definitely worth a mention too. It was so delicious I ordered it two nights in a row.

Breakfast is served either at the Beef Bar or on the gorgeous al fresco terrace, which is decorated with wicker lamps and



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shaded from the sun by a vine-covered pergola. There is a delightful buffet bar complete with glistening croissants, danishes and Tarte Tropeziennes - which are a local delicacy. The hotel also offers a selection of hot breakfast options including scrambled eggs and whatever kind of omelette you can imagine.

The underground Tata Harper Spa is a haven of tranquility and offers a small menu of massages and facial treatments from the cult beauty brand. There is also a small gym which offers morning yoga sessions - perfect for banishing the toxins from the day before.

While Lou Pinet feels a world away from the busyness of St Tropez, the hotel does offer regular shuttle services to Place des Lices - which is the heart of the city. Here, you will find a glittering array of luxury boutiques, stylish restaurants and bars and of course, plenty of yachts moored by the harbour. On Saturdays, Place des Lices is home to a vibrant market which offers everything from recycled silk pyjamas and vintage jewellery to delightful French delicacies.

In the evenings, the glitterati of St Tropez come out in full force to enjoy the city's world-famous nightlife. St Tropez has an all-day and all-night party scene so you can dance all day in one of the beach clubs in Ramatuelle or drink bottles of Minuty Rosé in any of the wonderful restaurants and nightclubs in the evening. No matter what you fancy, there is no better feeling than returning to Lou Pinet to reset and recharge, a truly glorious five-star Tropezian hideaway that will make you feel as chic as a local.*

* Nightly rates at Lou Pinet start from €430 on a bed & breakfast basis. To book visit loupinet.com

