

Hotels, Reviews, Travel

Discover the Saint Tropez boutique hotel the celebs don't want you to know about

3 DAYS AGO by MITRA WICKS



I've always been a fan of prolonging the summer months for as long as I shamelessly can. Why stay shivering and glum in the chilly confines of the British Isles when you can just set off on a short flight and find yourself in one of Europe's sunnier, more fabulous nooks of the world?

Saint Tropez has always been a favourite summer destination of mine. I had always visited during the peak season awash with glamorous tomfoolery and delightful pomp, yet this year I craved an early autumnal escape with more of a focus on unwinding rather than dancing on the tables of VIP room.

One hotel I had the pleasure of visiting with my other half and our two friends was the quaint, yet breathtakingly chic **Hotel Lou Pinet**.

Exquisitely situated away from the hubbub of the town's heaving centre, this elegant home away from home mesmerised us as soon as we arrived.



We were given a tour of the grounds and marvelled at the provincial style buildings housing minimalist yet opulent suites around an emerald green swimming pool (said to be the biggest in Saint Tropez), surrounded by stylish white and red parasols.

During a quick tour of the relaxing spa area, I noticed that my favourite organic skincare range by Tata Harper was used for treatments – great skincare brands are always the sign of an exceptionally good hotel in my book.

After cocktails and extremely Instagramable hors d'oeuvres at the alfresco poolside bar we made our way to the hotel's famous Beefbar restaurant for a meaty feast we would never forget.



Chic interiors in the restaurant

This global restaurant concept by head chef Riccardo Giraudi has featured in the world's most glamorous destinations and the South of France's offering in Hotel Lou Pinet was said to be a gastronomic experience of most carnivores dreams.

The restaurant itself was breathtakingly elegant complete with modern furnishings with a touch of cote du azure chic. We marvelled at the avant garde paintings on the walls and quirky white plates with various Instagram emojis emblazoned at their centres – a unique, cheeky touch.



We chose to dine outside on the glamorous terrace to make the most of the balmy autumn evening and take in the scenic view of the hotel's swimming pool shimmering under the moonlight.

As we scanned the menu over chilled glasses of vintage rose and ice cold Perrier, we felt spoiled for choice at the wide variety of decadent choices.

Black Angus Prime, Wagyu and Kobe beef dishes called out to us alongside grilled fish, ceviche, carpaccio and a selection of seasonal salads.

As a group of ardent foodies, we meticulously chose a number of dishes to share and were more than impressed with the gastronomical delights we were presented with.

First to arrive was the iconic pizza – a heavenly pizza to end all pizzas made of pillowy dough and topped with roquette, parmesan, truffle cream and summer truffles.

Next was the tasty rib eye “ham” – flavoursome slices of cured beef, and mounds of crispy rice topped with tuna taratre and a creamy yuzu mayonnaise.

Our mains were hearty slabs of various steaks – the French Terrior filet mignon, Black Angus Ribeye and the practically regal Wagyu beef tagliata.



All steaks were cooked perfectly – as they usually always are in France, and left us in a delightful haze of merry meat comas, yet we decided to plough on though this epic foodfest. Especially after we heard about the majestic pudding.

Our attentive and warm-natured waitress had informed us she would be serving an exciting mystery dessert, and that we had to trust her. She said this with such confidence we let go of any pudding-related concerns and eagerly awaited this mysterious offering.

We certainly weren't disappointed when a humungous fluffy chocolate soufflé appeared at the table accompanied by the creamiest vanilla ice cream I ever had the pleasure of devouring.

Our smiling waitress served us hefty portions of the soufflé's and then left us to adorn our puds with cheeky dollops of the ice cream and a variety of other toppings such as crushed pistachios, buttery fudge pieces, chopped strawberries and silky chocolate sauce.

I must confess that I have been anti-sugar for the last year and resist even natural fruit sugars, yet I broke all the rules on this balmy French evening in this beautiful alfresco space as I savoured this almost otherworldly dessert.



Afterwards, as I nipped into the breathtakingly elegant ladies loos for a quick face touchup before leaving, I noticed a large portrait of Bridget Bardo – the queen of St Tropez herself staring down at me with a cheeky smile on her beautiful face.

Something in her eyes said “you know that sugar rush was worth it,” and I had to agree...