

Château de Valmer
La Croix-Valmer

The charming coastal town of La Croix-Valmer, south-west of St Tropez, is surrounded by windswept umbrella pines with not a designer shop in sight. Château de Valmer is a genuine, 42-bedroom bastide, owned by the Rocchietta family since 1949, set in six-hectare grounds planted with ancient oaks and vines. A smart, low-key retreat, it has lovely bright rooms, two terrific restaurants (one down at the beach), home-grown organic wine, a glass-walled spa offering Carita and Cinq Mondes treatments, an outdoor pool and a heated indoor pool for when the Mistral kicks up. The hotel's star attractions are two red-cedar treehouses overlooking the vineyards. Each has a canopied bed, squirrel-themed knick-knacks, vintage furniture, a large porch (mind the trunk), plus a bathroom stocked with Cinq Mondes toiletries. Gigaro Beach, a

curve of white sand which is uncrowded even in high season, is just a 10-minute walk down the palm-lined path.

La Croix-Valmer (00 33 4 94 55 15 15; www.chateauvalmer.com). Doubles from €210; treehouses from €350



The palm-lined path at Château de Valmer outside St Tropez. Opposite, the waterfall at Sillans-la-Cascade; scallop and avocado crumble at La Verdoyante in Gassin; this way to the beach at Cassis