

Eating out in Languedoc- Roussillon

5 Apr 2010 by Jancis Robinson

There's a [useful thread](#) in the travel section of our Members' forum on places to eat and producers to visit in the Languedoc- Roussillon. Here are the restaurants and more modest places to eat that we recommend to people based around Carcassonne, although some of the recommendations are for places we have not visited ourselves for some years, so I advise you to check in advance that they are open – especially outside the summer months. Our colleague Tamlyn Currin is in the Languedoc at the moment so may have some additions and deletions to add/ impose when she returns.

I have listed them in approximately descending order of price/ smartness with a space between the really smart places, the middling places and the very simple places.

LANGUEDOC

The **Jardin des Sens** in *Montpellier* won its third star in 1998 and you can certainly eat well there (if in rather strange surroundings).

Auberge du Vieux Puits in *Fontjoncouse*, a tiny village in the Corbières hills, has been plugging away for years and has finally landed its third Michelin star.

In *Carcassonne* itself there's the most ambitious new restaurant of the region, Franck Putelat's **Le Parc**, just below the southern ramparts of the Cité. We've had three good meals there now. Lunch is best value. Interesting wine list too.

Mimosa is a lovely, well- established country restaurant in *St- Guiraud* way north of Béziers in wine country which now has an associated wine bar, **La Terrasse du Mimosa** at *Montpeyroux*, as well as a nearby simple hotel.

Octopus in *Béziers* is a new (2007) find, good in a modern, sub El Bulli way. 12 rue Boieldieu, 34500 Béziers, just off the tree-lined Av Paul Riquet near Av St- Saens. Tel 04 67 499 000.

In *Narbonne* there is, or at least was, the really rather grand **La Table St- Crescent** (04 68 41 37 37) in the same building as the Palais du Vin/ Caves du Palais wine store on the Perpignan road out of Narbonne. They will do a children's menu even though they don't display one.

Just south of here on *La Clape* is the very capable restaurant associated with Gérard Bertrand's big wine operation at **Ch l'Hospitalet**. Modern and fresh.

Ambitious, modern and opened in 2006, is **Domaine Gayda**, a well- funded winery cum fancy restaurant on the road to *Limoux*. Turn right towards Brugairolles and it's a big yellow 'Tuscan' building on the right just after the D19 has passed Malvies. Tel 04 68 31 64 14. Good wine to buy too.

Other newish, ambitious places are **La Bergerie** (04 68 26 10 65) in the pretty village of *Aragon* north of Carcassonne and **Le Puits de Tresor** (04 68 77 50 24) in Lastours 10 km due north of Carcassonne. We had a superior three- course lunch for 14 euros in April 2003 and saw the very smart restaurant which was then open Wed- Sat nights and Sun lunch. You could combine a meal here with a climb up to the Château de Lastours, which sit on the crags immediately above, but service is said to be slow.

In the heart of the Minervois is the **Hotel d'Alibert** at *Caunes- Minervois* (hearty food, unchanging menu, beautiful courtyard at the back) and **Relais Chantovent** in *Minerve*, both as much for the village and setting as anything else.

Opened in 2008 is **Charavari**, a very stylish- looking wine bar at *Domaine Borie de Maurel* in *Félines Minervois*. It's open only Thu- Sat eves and you have to book in season. (I should imagine it closes for the winter too.) Tapas and their good wines by the glass. Not expensive though not very substantial. Tel 04 68 91 68 58 or charivari@boriedemaurel.fr.

A really nice, simple place for a lunchtime outing is **La Fargo** (04.68.43.12.78) just south of St- Pierre des Champs just south of *Lagrasse*. Very fresh, rather limited lunchtime food prepared by someone whose brother runs quite a well known restaurant in NYC. You need to book first.

North of Carcassonne is the very mom and pop **L'Oustal à Citou** (04 68 78 08 99) in *Citou* north of Caunes- Minervois. Hardly any choice and you eat in their small dining room. An 'experience'.

For very simple but ozone- fuelled eating right on a long sandy beach try the Plage des Pilotis just south of *Leucate* (follow signs for Centre Conchylicole, rive gauche). Two attractive beach shacks (neither takes credit cards, I think) are **Les Pilotis** (06 26 34 17 86 and pictured above) and **Biquet** just north of it (06 69 05 68 69), which is supposed to have slightly better food.

ROUSSILLON

Very Catalan food can be had at **Domaine de Rombeau** at the entrance to *Rivesaltes* village in a vast old winery.

Auberge de Cucugnan in the high Corbières has also been highly recommended to us by wine lover and writer Bruce Palling: 'hidden in a maze of one- way lanes and approachable only on foot. Lack of a mobile signal meant we had to find a spot with glimpses of the snow peaked Pyrenees in order to clinch a reservation — which was just as well, since they were already turning people away at 12.30 on a Sunday. It was truly worth the journey. Rough rendered walls surrounded ten tables mainly occupied by local elderly couples in their Sunday best, which meant frayed tweed jackets and purple cloche hats. And the food...! I will mention only the selections of local charcuterie, foie gras and olive oil flavoured salads; wild boar poached in its own blood (*civet de sangre*); the saddle of rabbit; and the *filet de boeuf*. From the local wine co- operative came a 14.5% *Domaine de Grand Arc* Corbière which had the depth to complement these powerful dishes.'

CATALUNYA

And then the best meals we have had down here in recent years have been over the Spanish border in **Hotel Emporda** in *Figueres*, **Els Pescadores** in *Port Llanca*, **Celler de Can Roca** in *Girona*, which seriously rivals El Bulli, and now (2009) apparently **Miramarin Llanca** has an ex Bulli chef. See [this review](#) in Your views.