



2 Château le Mas de Montet in the Dordogne

39 New museum in Champagne-Ardennes

After a ten-year closure, the Museum of War and Peace in Ardennes opens its doors again this month to coincide with this year's commemorations of the centenary of the end of the First World War. The museum covers the three significant wars that put the surrounding countryside at the crossroads of European conflict: the Prussian War of 1870, and the First and Second World Wars (guerrestpaix.fr).

Details: Doubles at Auberge de l'Abbaye in nearby Signy l'Abbaye cost from €59. breakfast is €3.50 (00 33 3 24 52 81 27, auberge-de-labbaye.com)

The 50 best holidays in France

From a budget break in Normandy to a cycling trip in the Camargue, Carolyn Boyd picks the top places to go in France this year

Best for families
1 Village retreat near Paris

Le Barn in Rambouillet is a cool retreat with 71 rooms and the conveniences of a luxury hotel with a laid-back village vibe. It is due to open in April on the Haras de la Cense horse training estate 45 minutes west of Paris. Rooms will be in an old mill house and various outbuildings set in acres of countryside to explore on horseback or on foot. Food is served on a collective central table. Parents can also enjoy some R&R in the spa, cinema room or cosy fireside living areas, while the children are entertained by the on-site nannies.

Details: Double rooms cost from €180 (£160; 00 34 971 72 23 52, marugal.com)

2 Château with kids' club in the Dordogne

Château le Mas de Montet in Petit-Bersac is a marvellous, partially ivy-covered chateau with turrets, ten comfy rooms and a great outdoor pool. As well as offering a kids' club, there's childcare and babysitting, all for an extra charge. But it's the lovely pool terrace surrounded by a lawn, combined with the sense of history, that really makes the chateau special. The interior is traditional,



3 Le Country Lodge, Normandy

with gilt-framed mirrors, antique furniture and a restaurant with tall silver candlesticks.

Details: B&B doubles cost from €170 (lemasdemontet.com)

3 Farm stay in Normandy

Le Country Lodge is a collection of 16 beautifully designed lodges and cabins that opened in the tranquil Perche area of Normandy last autumn. Guests are encouraged to learn about the animals on the farm and help to tend the vegetables in the organic garden. The lodges all have access to a central