

Fabric Magazine – August 2018
Terre Blanche – PCL Generated

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Patio perfect
Our pick of design-led pieces to inject some style into your outdoor space this summer

She's electric
Take a tour of interior stylist Sacha Berger's dazzling home

Made in Mayfair

Cocktail king Tony Conigliaro and ex-El Bulli chef Rob Roy Cameron offer a fresh voice on the W1 scene

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Terre Blanche might feel like more of a village than a hotel, but this is no average village, with four al fresco restaurants dotted across the site. I'm determined to discover all of them before I leave... First up, Michelin-starred Le Paventia. A destination in itself for gourmands, offering contemporary gourmet French cuisine and an exquisite wine menu. It is not to be missed. I enjoy a more casual evening of fine dining at Provençal-flavoured Le Gaudina. Set on a beautiful terrace it is the perfect place to relax on a warm summer's evening. Specially designed lighting creates a romantic but stylish ambience as the sun gradually sinks behind the trees in the distance. The chef here has created a seasonal and locally-produced menu – be sure to try one of their signature, summer inspired cocktails and indulge in some local strawberries and shortbread (giving the British a run for their money). I enjoy a couple of long lazy lunches at Les Caroubiers at the golf clubhouse, perfect after a morning on the fairway. And discover that Le Toussou is the place for light poolside lunches – gourmet treats include freshly caught lobster, a selection of grilled meats and salads.

I am more relaxed than I have been in some time, especially after a visit to the spa. Set over 35,000 sq ft this is the ultimate pampering palace. Dramatic white pillars and towering ceilings set a very grand tone, and there are no less than 14 treatment rooms (two for couples), but it still feels deliciously intimate. An extensive treatment list has been developed by Valmont and KOS Paris to offer targeted treatments for the whole body. I opt for a 60-minute full body massage by candlelight, and am so relaxed I can barely move afterwards. Fortunately there are lots of private areas to escape to. I choose to relax on a sun lounger, listening to the gentle sounds of leaves rustling and birds singing, whilst enjoying the views of the luxuriously planted grounds, before taking a dip in the secluded outdoor vitality pool. Reenergised I head to explore the sauna, steam room and large heated indoor pool.



THE DETAILS
Rates start from
€400 per night
in a Suite Deluxe
during low season,
excluding breakfast
(+33 4 94 39 90 00;
terre-blanche.com)



While the spa's watering holes offer wonderful serenity, the resort's main pool is equally special. It is nestled in the aromatic and enchanting wisteria entwined gardens, overlooking the forested panorama of the valley below. Cabanas and sun loungers hug the water's edge and staff are on hand with complimentary fresh towels, sun cream and water. Nothing is too much trouble for the team here at Terre Blanche – I have rarely been so well looked after.

I could easily spend the whole holiday within the resort grounds, but it feels wrong not to venture outside to explore the charming surroundings, and I'm glad I do. I spend a happy morning at the weekly market in neighbouring Fayence, which offers local produce and colourful stalls, a real taste of authentic France. But top of my holiday wish list is a tour and tasting at one of the local vineyards, which I ask the concierge team to arrange for me. They tell me that Château d'Esclans is the place to go. Just 40 minutes up the road from Terre Blanche it is set in one of the grandest looking châteaux in Provence and is known for producing the world's most expensive rosé wine, Garrus, and its three very pale siblings (Whispering Angel, Rock Angel and Les Clans). Famous for being almost white in colour, Garrus rosé is fresh, has a vital, fruity taste and a burgundy-like silkiness. I learn that temperature control of the grapes from the vineyard to the barrel is critical for keeping the natural aromas of the wines, and to avoid the extraction of too much colour from the skins. Definitely one to remember when I have a spare €100 to part with...

All too soon my stay draws to a close – it has been very special indeed. As I make my way back to Nice, on perhaps the world's most picturesque airport transfer, I reflect that the true magic of Terre Blanche lies in its stylish mix of serenity and luxury. I feel thoroughly spoilt, and soothed to my very soul.



REVIEW

The great escape

For travellers craving peace and quiet, Terre Blanche resort is a haven of serenity; the perfect spot for some authentic yet stylish Provençal rest and relaxation

WORDS PENNY CLEMENTS

Just 35 minutes from the beach in the magical French Riviera, you will find Terre Blanche, a beautiful oasis hidden in the wooded heart of Provence. The fuss-free 45-minute drive from Nice International Airport finds me winding through forested countryside roads, past Lac de Saint-Cassien and its crystal clear blue waters, before sweeping up to the hotel's grand gated entrance. Arriving feels like driving into a fairy tale; accessed via a small road flanked by greenery and wild flowers, Terre Blanche has already delivered, but I am promised so much more (a relaxing infinity pool, a super luxe spa, an 18-hole championship golf course, a Michelin starred restaurant...). It seems there truly is something for everyone, including the children, whose activities are apparently given as much thought as those for the grown-ups, with a dedicated clubhouse complete with heated pool, a vast itinerary of daily activities and a kids-only restaurant. Something that interests me only because it means that, as a child-free traveller, the peace of the pool should not be disturbed.

I am enchanted: designed to echo its surroundings, Terre Blanche (French for white stone), tumbles higgledy-piggledy down the forested valley like an old medieval village. Twisting and turning, its paths lead through the vast 750 acres of immaculate landscaped gardens and accommodation that come in the form of 115 suites or private villas. As I make my way to my own suite, heavily fragranced plants, tropical coloured flowers and traditional cypress trees make it easy to forget that I am in a resort. And the interiors are equally impressive. My suite is the epitome of understated luxury: classic Provençal yellow and terracotta walls, neutral luxury linens and minimalist sculptures from hotel owner, Dietmar Hopp's personal collection. There is a separate living room, a large walk in wardrobe and an even larger bathroom with heated marble floor. Spacious and filled with natural light, I think that I will be very happy here indeed.

Above: poolside cabanas with a view
Below: the resort is designed to look like a traditional Provençal village

Opposite, from top: Le Paventia enjoys an enchanting setting; one of two 18-hole golf courses; the grand spa pool

