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# FRENCH COUNTRY HIDEAWAYS

Château de Guilguiffin is one of the most distinguished historic properties in western Brittany. The current château is the latest aristocratic residence to occupy the site since 1000. The Marquis of Ploec built it as a hunting retreat during the reign of Louis XV, with stones from the ruins of a fortified residence. Its ground-floor salons and first-floor guest suites retain an authentic 18th century character with a lively color register of paint and fabrics.



A view of the Château de Saint-Loup from its garden. Located in the Vendée region, this magnificent Poitou landmark has been standing since the 1300s. It was purchased by Charles-Henri de Bartillat in 1991, who once remarked that "I'm such an uncompromising purist that I can't concede to restoring something less than perfectly."

Château de Ternay, in the Loire Valley. Loic de Ternay has the distinction of living in a château bearing the family name. His ancestors occupied it for three centuries. Far from blasé, Loic is committed to preserving and animating Ternay, considering it a duty to transmit its history to younger generations.



Another de Commarque property is La Poujade, a short drive east of Château de la Bourgonie in the hamlet of Urval. An enormous trellised grapevine on the terrace of the estate is reputed to be the largest and oldest in Dordogne.







Château de la Bourgonie. Its proprietors, Hubert and Christine de Commarque, have not one but three château properties in the Dordogne Valley plus the most venerable name in the region. This is their family residence, a distinguished *demeure* constructed in the 14th and 17th centuries around a large central courtyard on a manicured 74-acre estate of gardens, pastures, and woodland.

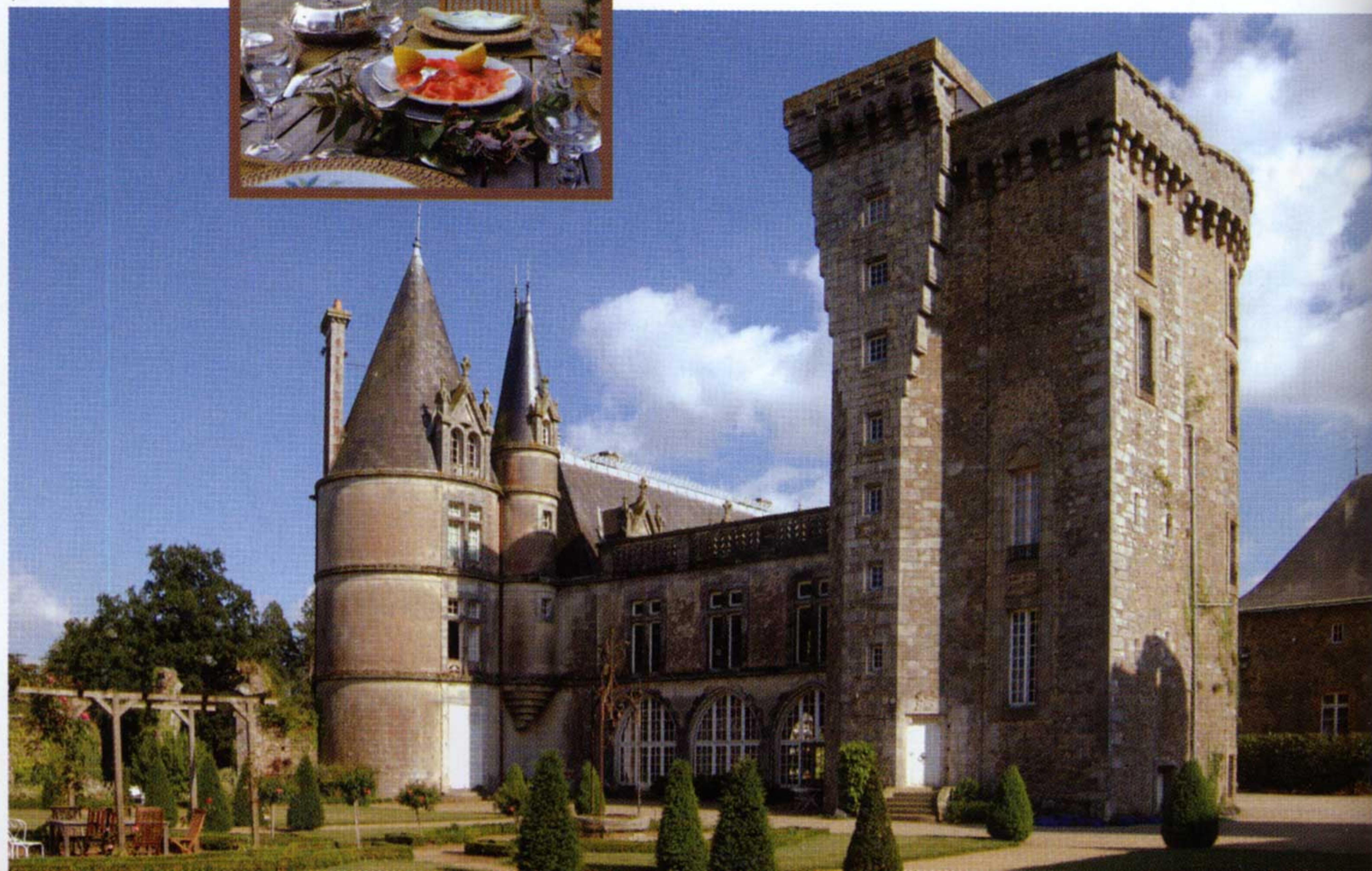


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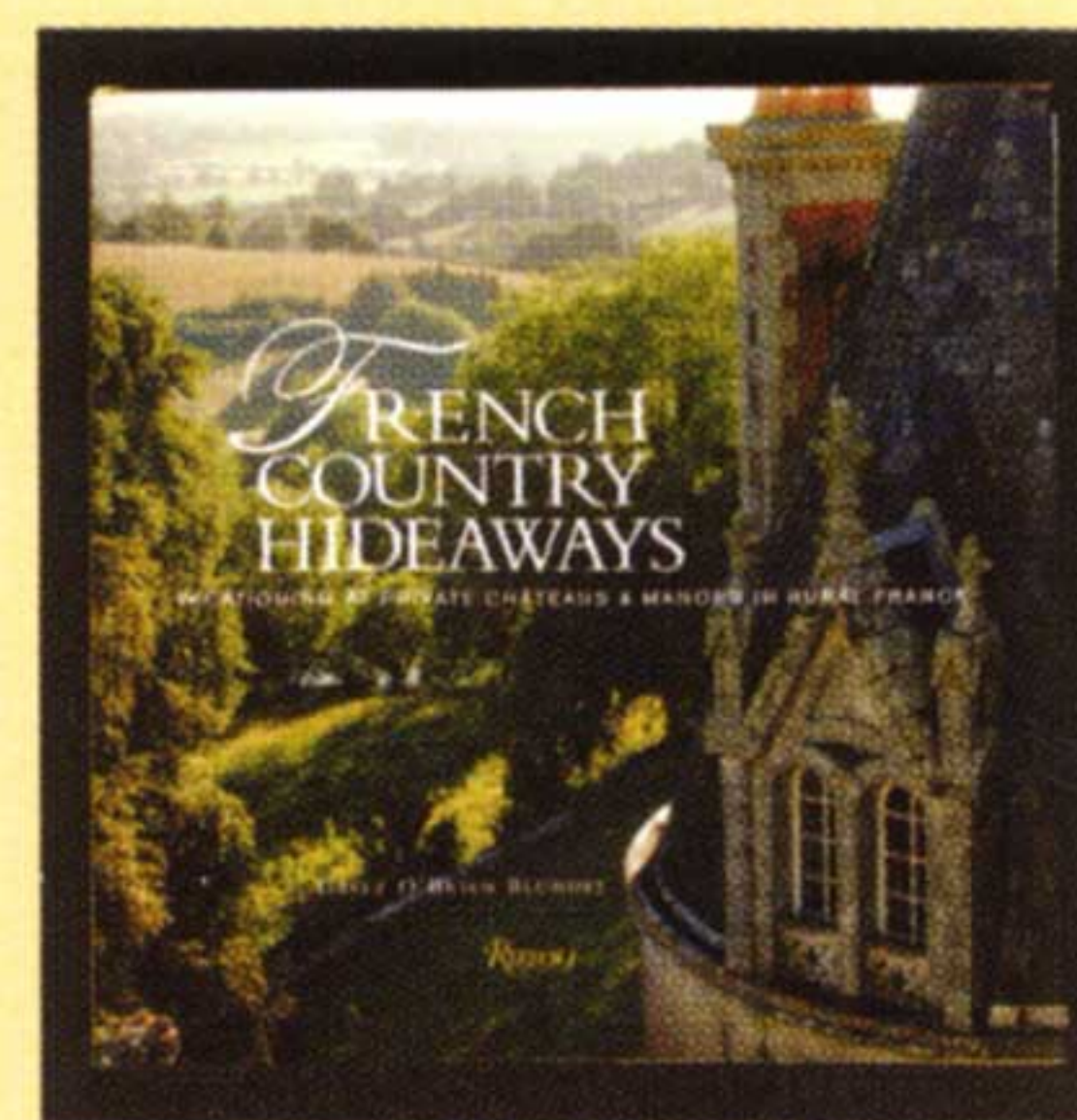
An al fresco salmon dinner at the Château de la Flocellière. Another treat at this estate is regular costumed Renaissance evenings. Elaborate costumes await guests in their rooms.

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The Château de la Flocellière translates as "flower of the skies" because its stately gardens have a profusion of flowers. Standing since at least 1090, its guests are immersed in a millennium of history. A reward of straying from the habitual tourist trail is that one encounters such unexpected treasures as châteaux that were once important fiefs and bore witness to the wars, passions, and political intrigues of France's turbulent past. For those seeking a historic home experience, this enchanting estate is hard to beat. It has six towers of varying epochs.



Château d'Esparron is located in the Provence region. Esparron is at the southern limit of Alpes de Haute Provence, where Lake Esparron flows into the canyons of the Basses Gorges du Verdon. These foothills of the Alps have some of the most dramatic scenery and purest air in Provence. The craggy terrain is carpeted with green oak and pine. This château has overlooked the lake since the Castellane family first implanted a fortress in 1218. While the château was transformed gradually in a composite of styles through the 19th Century, the current owners are progressively restoring it. The family of Count Bernard Castellane, the owner, is the 31st generation of his family to inhabit the property.



## To buy the book:

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Beynac-et-Cazenac, overlooking the Dordogne River in the Dordogne region. Second to Paris, Dordogne has the richest legacy of historic monuments in France. Famed for its dramatic river valleys, verdant landscape, and magnificent forests, the region is popular with nature lovers, anglers, cyclists, kayakers, hikers, and equestrians. It's also an idyllic setting for leisurely promenading, riverside picnicking, or escaping into a good book.

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