

# Elegantly Fashionable

LUXURY FASHION, TRAVEL & LIFESTYLE

## LA MAISON D'ULYSSE – PROVENCE, FRANCE

OCTOBER 10, 2017 NO COMMENTS



"Are you sure you got the right address?", my husband was looking at me but frankly, I was just as confused as he was. It was October 29<sup>th</sup>, midday, and we had just reached our destination in the province of Provence, France (which is just divine this time of the year by the way). We had landed at the airport and made our way to [La Maison d'Ulysse](#). Luggage by our sides, we were standing in front of a typical French looking home. We looked at the board and it was indeed the boutique hotel we had booked for. Phew!



*The gorgeous house*

We pressed the doorbell and a nice lady greeted us , stepping inside, our luggage soon disappeared into the hands of the eager staff that carried it to our room. The owner of the establishment, Guy, soon came in to welcome us. He offered us a tour of the hotel which we weren't going to refuse. I'd heard a lot about this place and now needed to see for myself.

Guy was an amicable person. Engaging in conversation instantly as if we were old friends that were meeting for their yearly trip.

La Maison d'Ulysse was a farmhouse dating back to the 16th century. It gets its name from Ulysse Dumas, the farmer, and artist that lived here with his family. Guy told us how he had purchased the property more than ten years ago from Anita Dumas, the previous owner and renovated it into what it is today. Gauthier and Guy enhanced the original design while preserving the much-loved charm and spirit of the old property. The restoration blends contemporary features with the charm and authentic classic style of the property.

Though initially, he used it as a bed and breakfast for guests, Guy along with his partner and co-owner Gauthier, soon turned it into a luxury boutique hotel.



*Room Ulysse*



Following his lead, we walked through each part of the house turned hotel. He was generous with his time and attention, taking us through each room, each place in the house while describing the story behind every room, every piece of furniture, and each article that adorned the rooms right up to the drapes!

**The north garden**, or the Wild Garden as the owners rightfully call it with a small path ran through the length of it, wild grasses on each side. The garden, he informed us, was home to White Mulberries, some of them still dotted throughout the place. The Mulberry trees were planted somewhere in the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century to provide food for silkworms, as the house had been used for sericulture (rearing of silkworms to produce silk). The windows too had been kept small for this very purpose; to provide just enough light for the farming of silkworms. Under their care, all kinds of plants and grasses grow of their own accord in the Wild Garden throughout the year.

**The south garden**, namely the Dry Garden, was a different story. It had been a wasteland before the owners bought the place. Gauthier, the co-owner however, put his heart and soul into researching and carefully planting plants suited to the Provençal soil and climate. He used a gravel mulch with volcanic minerals that retain moisture and prevents weeds from spreading.

We followed Guy to a tour of the kitchen which looked and felt like a home kitchen. We made the acquaintance of the two very skilled chefs Valerie and Lucas that Guy and Gauthier had met through a contact in Brazil. We had a hard time picking lunch and dinner as the menu was so good and so inviting. Later, we were offered drinks and towels to relax by the pool.



*Me on the roof of room Petit Prince*

The centrepiece of the hotel is the outdoor swimming pool fringed by trees, plants and flowers overlooking the south garden which integrates seamlessly with the property. I made my way, on the pine deck lining the side of the pool in the middle of the dry garden, to recline on a sun lounger. My husband chose to take a dip into the pool instead. I put my head back and took in the fragrances from the greenery. I tried to not to think of the short duration of my stay and feel bad and instead focused on the nature sounds, the aroma, the sounds from the pool, and the overall calming surroundings. It was something I certainly wouldn't mind getting used to.



*Lunch freshly prepared by chef Valerie and Lucas*



Lunch came, and not too soon. I was practically ravenous. My husband introduced himself to the lamb he'd ordered while I was presented with the catch of the day. The fish was accompanied by quite a selection of vegetables, I am not a vegetable person so I was bit unsure for a minute, upon tasting, however, the whole thing tasted so good I practically left my plate spotless.



*At the balcony of suite Ecume Des Jours*

It was time for the rooms tour. Each room had an open plan bathroom and a look unique to itself. The traditional floor and ceiling had been kept wherever and as much as possible. Guy told us how he had designed each room to the last piece of furniture personally. He and his partner had practically scoured antique markets and contemporary furniture shops in regions of France, Belgium, and even Holland. Each room had distinct lighting which you might have thought would look out of place but blended well in the mixture of traditional and contemporary.



*Suite Odysee*

Our own room, the Odysee suite had French doors lending us a view of the patio and the gardens overlooking the south garden and Provencal countryside. The majestic shower and bath stood proudly in the center of the room. It was spacious, with high ceilings and a loft feel. After the room tour Guy invited us to join them for an aperitif, which we did and gladly.



*Standing on the patio outside our room*

We got to know them better as Guy reminisced about his travels and their journey together into making the hotel what it is today. Gauthier told us he used to cook in the kitchen when they were running it as a bed and breakfast and I realised why the kitchen felt so homely.

Shortly after the drinks we had dinner prepared by chef Valerie and Lucas which was innovative and enlivened. Fantastic items from the kitchen garden of the hotel were joined with more outlandish fixings making us rejoice every bite.

The next morning, we had breakfast set up by Gauthier which was equally good. The menu was impressing us more and more with every meal. The homemade jam from organic fruits Gauthier grows himself was just too good. The standout item for me was the homemade crepe which Guy refers to as the little touch of Brittany in Provence.





At Uzes Market



Uzes Market



After breakfast, we made our way to the Uzes market with Guy where he bought olives, bread, and tapenade, before taking us to the La Fougasse d'Uzes boulangerie where we bought the fabled fougasse, a local favorite. Next up, he took us to a wine cellar called Le 8 Eme Peche, with a wine collection so exquisite I regretted traveling with hand luggage only flight which kept me from buying any.



*La 8 Eme Peche*





At Les Pots D'Uzes

The entrance to the wine cellar was a thing of its own. We had to pass through an incredible pottery store called Les Pots D'Uzes , housing some of the most beautiful pottery. Later, we walked through the town to street corner bar near Uzes market. There was a shellfish stall opposite the bar, where we ordered oysters. The bar although sells its own food allows people to bring and have their own food instead if the purchase drinks. This was something both delightful and surprising for us.



*Oysters and Fougasse*

We were joined by Gauthier as well, as he and his partner laid the table for us outside. We had a pleasant picnic experience at the bar, and even a little rain failed to dampen our spirits as it was still warm. Lunch ended, and Guy took us to see the Cathedral and Duchy of Uzes.

Shortly afterward, I and my husband drove to see the Pont Du Gard. The centuries-old elevated aqueduct is the highest and most well maintained of all the Roman aqueduct marvels. It was the last day of our stay, the next day we had to take the flight back. I was still trying not to think about it too much, about leaving this magnificent place so soon.





*The lounge near our room*

Evening came, we were invited to drinks with some other guests and then had dinner at the restaurant. A Mexican guest entertained everyone with Margaritas he made for us all. We sat around the wood fire, engaging in conversation, sipping drinks, with cheese and cold meats platter.

The fateful morning dawned. I enjoyed the delights of the hotel's kitchen one last time. Then said farewell to our excellent room, our amicable and friendly hosts, and the whole peace and calm I had become used to during my stay at La Maison d'Ulysse. I was going to miss this place and was already planning to try and come back again with some friends as we headed to the airport.

A huge thanks to Guy and Gauthier from La Maison d' Ulysse for hosting us.