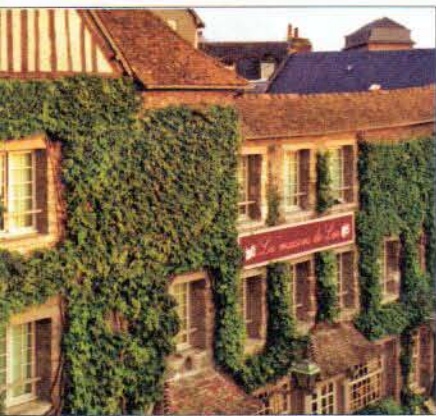


Spending it

Where to stay – Normandy

Historic hotel versus fabulous hillside apartments

Les Maisons de Léa



What's so special Nestled in the beautiful little town of Honfleur, Les Maisons de Léa is a collection of four 17th-century mansions that have been converted into a beautiful small hotel. You're close to the medieval port and most of the rooms look out on the town's unusual wooden church with its detached belfry.

How they rate it This is an "exceptionally welcoming, upscale hotel", says Greg Ward in The Daily Telegraph. "It evokes the feeling of staying in a plush, comfortable and somewhat eccentric private home sometime in the early 20th century, while nonetheless benefiting from modern plumbing."

The bedrooms are comfortable and spacious. The only drawback is the lack of "a beach or even a seafront".

The menu The hotel only serves breakfast, but there are many excellent restaurants in the town, notably Le Bréard (Restaurant-lebreard.com), which serves up three different set menus starting at €29 for three courses.

The cost Prices start from €150 for a double room. Visit the website at www.honfleur-hotel-france.com, or call 00 33 231 14 4949.

Hotel Pierre & Vacances Premium Residence

What's so special Set on a hill, this hotel overlooks the pretty seaside town of Houlgate and offers guests fantastic views of the English Channel. This is a fabulous French apartment complex, which is ideal for families looking for a last-minute escape for the summer holidays.

How they rate it There are a range of one- to three-bedroom apartments, each with their own terrace or balcony. The interiors are "pleasant, if uninspiring", says Kate Simon in The Independent. The rooms are self-catering, but the resort is happy "to help take the strain with shopping and dinner (featuring Normandy specialities) delivered to your door on request".

The hotel has a heated open-air pool, spa, playground and a children's club for four to 12-year-olds (although it only operates during French school holidays). There's plenty to see off site, with the beaches where the Normandy landings took place close by and inland there is Pays d'Auge, where you can learn how Calvados is made.

The menu If you get tired of eating in, there are "plenty of decent restaurants in the area".

The cost Apartments from €432 for a week for four (www.pv-holidays.com, 0870-0267 145).



Priorities for your bucket list

If you have a list of places and wildlife you want to see before you die, you should move this lot to the top, as "they may not be around for long", says Veronica Schmidt in The Times.

The Yangtze river is the longest in Asia. But industrial pollution, agricultural run-off and siltation mean it is getting blocked up. "Some lakes have been cut off from the river, worsening flooding."

The Twelve Apostles in Victoria, Australia, "were formed by erosion and may well be claimed by further erosion" – one of them collapsed in 2005. Erosion also threatens the ancient city of **Petra**



in **Jordan**, which is also facing problems caused by environmental degradation, seismic damage, pollution and tourism.

The San people, often known as the **Kalahari bushmen**, are "fighting a long-

running battle against the **Botswana** government to be allowed to stay on their indigenous land". Rising sea levels mean the travel paradise that is the **Maldives** (pictured) may soon end up disappearing under the water. Meanwhile, the snow on **Mount Kilimanjaro** is "expected to disappear due to global warming".

The tigers of **Rajasthan, India**, are facing the dual threat of mining in their natural habitat and hunting, meaning their numbers are now dwindling. Finally, increasing tourist numbers are threatening to destroy the **Angkor Wat temple complex in Cambodia**, so think carefully before visiting.