



**WE LOVE...
Yotel Gatwick**

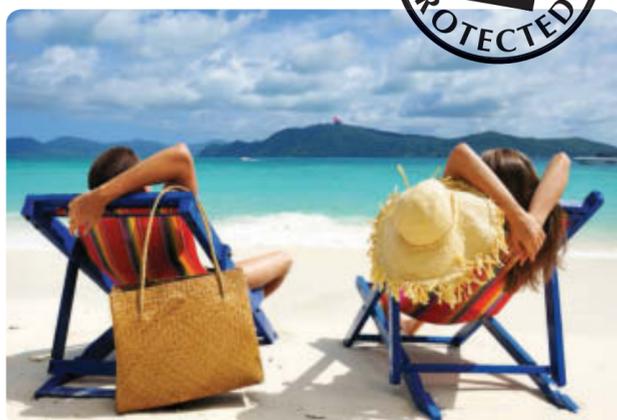
WHETHER you are looking to book an overnight stay before your morning flight or simply require a few hours of peace and quiet from Gatwick's busy departure hall, Yotel Gatwick is the perfect retreat. With space age-style cabin accommodation, the quirky airport hotel offers everything you need for the night/day or just a few hours. Located on the floor below the international arrivals hall in the South Terminal, this 45-room hotel offers twins with bunk beds, standard singles and premium double cabins. A smart ensuite bathroom, separated from the room by a glass panel, has a super monsoon shower and there is free wi-fi. "Mission control" (the reception area) offers complimentary hot drinks. Toasted sandwiches and soups can be ordered too (at extra cost) and delivered in 15 minutes. Book a wake-up call and you get a knock at your door by a cheerful member of the "crew".

GETTING THERE
Yotel Gatwick (020 7100 1100/com) daytime cabins from £27, overnight from £42. Other locations include Heathrow Terminal 4 and Amsterdam Schiphol.

QUIET RETREAT: One of the cabin-style rooms

CHARLOTTE CIVIL

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A French connection

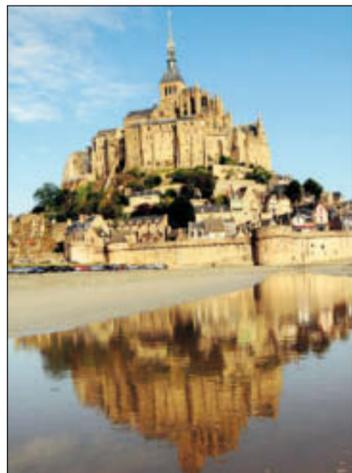
Lonely Planet's top experiences in... FRANCE



FAIRYTALE: The chateau at Azay-le-Rideau



RETAIL THERAPY: Savour Provence markets



MYSTERIOUS: Imposing Mont Saint-Michel

CARCASSONNE AT DUSK
That first glimpse of La Cité's sturdy, stone, witch's-hat turrets above Carcassonne in the Languedoc is enough to make your hair stand on end.

To properly savour this fairytale walled city, linger at dusk after the crowds have left, when the old town belongs to its 100 or so inhabitants and the few visitors staying at the handful of lovely hotels within its ramparts.

Do not forget to look back when you leave to view the old city, beautifully illuminated, glowing in the warm night.

PROVENÇAL MARKETS
No region is more of a market-must than this one.

Be it fresh fish by the port in seafaring Marseille, early summer's strings of pink garlic, melons from Cavaillon all summer long or wintertime's earthy "black diamond" truffles, Provence thrives on a bounty of fresh produce, piled high each morning at the market.

Every town and village has one but those in Carpentras and Aix-en-Provence are the best known.

While you are here, stock up on dried herbs, green and black olives marinated a dozen different ways, courgette flowers and oils.

D-DAY BEACHES
This is one of France's most emotional journeys. The broad stretches of fine sand and breeze-blown bluffs are quiet now but early on June 6, 1944, the beaches of northern Normandy were a cacophony of gunfire and explosions, the bodies of Allied soldiers lying in the sand as their comrades charged inland.

Just up the hill from Omaha Beach, the long rows of symmetrical gravestones at the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial bear solemn, silent, testimony to the terrible price paid for France's liberation from Nazi tyranny.

LOIRE VALLEY CHÂTEAUX
If it's aristocratic pomp and architectural splendour you are after, this regal valley is the place to linger.

Flowing for more than 620 miles into the Atlantic Ocean, the Loire is one of France's last fleuves sauvages (wild rivers) and its banks provide a 1,000-year snapshot of French high society. The valley is filled with beautiful châteaux sporting glittering turrets and ballrooms, lavish cupolas and chapels.

If you are a hopeless romantic seeking the perfect fairytale castle, then you should head for moat-ringed Azay-le-Rideau, Villandry and its gardens and the less-visited Beaugard.

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ASTONISHING: Lonely Planet suggests there are 101 ways to 'do' the Eiffel Tower

THREE CORNICHES, NICE
It is impossible to drive this dramatic trio of coastal roads, each one higher and with more hairpin bends than the last, without conjuring up cinematic images of Grace Kelly, Monaco high life and the glamour of its royal family, while absorbing big views of sweeping blue sea fringing Europe's most mythical coastline.

To make a perfect day out of it, shop for a picnic at the Cours Saleya morning market before leaving Nice.

MONT SAINT-MICHEL
The dramatic play of tides on this abbey island in Normandy is magical and mysterious. Said

by Celtic mythology to be a sea tomb to which souls of the dead were sent, Mont Saint-Michel is rich in legend and history, keenly felt as you make your way barefoot across rippled sand to the stunning architectural ensemble. Walk around it alone or, better still, hook up with a guide in nearby Genêts for a dramatic day's hike across the bay.

EIFFEL TOWER
Seven million people visit the Eiffel Tower annually and from an evening ascent amid twinkling lights to lunch at 58 Tour Eiffel in the company of a staggering city panorama, there are 101 ways to "do" it.

Pedal beneath it, skip the lift and hike up it, buy a crêpe from a nearby stand or a keyring from the street. Snap yourself in front of it, visit it at night or, our favourite, on the odd occasion when all 1,062ft of the tower glow a different colour.

Extract taken from Lonely Planet's guide to France, £17.99.

TRAVEL BULLETIN

★ **THE world's largest cruise ship** will be visiting Southampton on October 15 next year as part of a 13-night Westbound Transatlantic cruise. Resort-style Oasis of the Seas (0844 493 2061/royalcaribbean.com), which comes complete with an outdoor park the size of a football pitch, is wider than six buses parked end-to-end and can accommodate 6,400 passengers. The Royal Caribbean International vessel will be offering cruises in Europe from autumn next year and UK visitors can join the ship in Southampton. Bookings are available from April 11, 2013.

★ **SOVEREIGN Luxury Travel** (0843 770 4078/sovereign.com) has announced an exclusive summer sale event offering the chance to save up to 40 per cent on its most popular holiday packages.

Experience a real summer with all-inclusive discounted trips to destinations throughout Europe, Mexico, the Maldives and more. The sale, which ends a week tomorrow, also offers a range of complimentary treats, room upgrades, resort credits, free nights and free meals.

★ **BANKS in Cyprus reopened last Thursday after two weeks, but if you are planning a trip there the Foreign Office** (fco.gov.uk) advises visitors to have enough euros to cover the duration of their stay. Withdrawals at cash machines are currently limited to €300 per day.

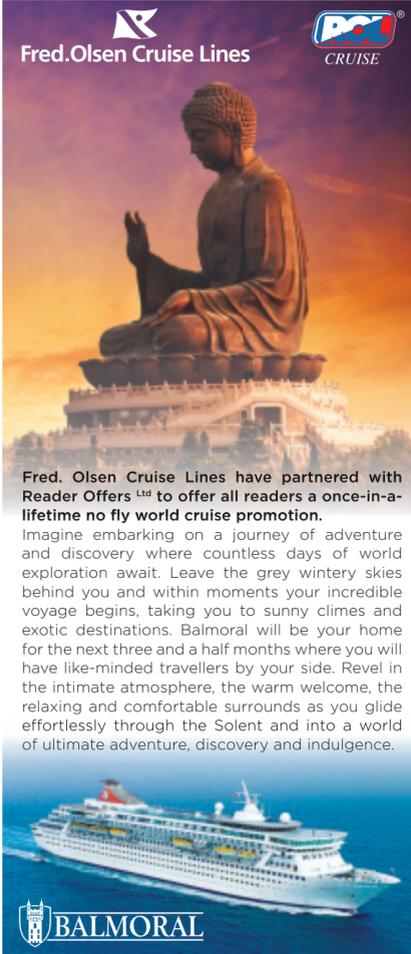
★ **JURYS Inn** (0870 410 0800/jurysinns.com) will be 20 this year and guests of the hotel group can celebrate with overnight stays for £20. The group is offering 2,000 rooms at this special anniversary price. The offer is available at 32 locations and is valid for dates until the end of the year. Bookings will be available from Wednesday to April 11 only.

★ **BERGEN in Norway is easyJet's** (0843 104 5000/easyjet.com) newest destination. The airline has announced that it will commence flights to the Gateway to the Fjords from London Gatwick on May 20. It is the 33rd country the company now flies to. Fares from £36 (one-way).

★ **INDULGE in a different sort of treat over the Easter break** with a B&B hotel stay for £75 at Thistle Hotels (0871 376 9099/thistle.com). Rooms must be booked before April 14 and the offer also includes free children's meals.

THOMAS JONES

WIN A WORLD CRUISE



Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines have partnered with Reader Offers Ltd to offer all readers a once-in-a-lifetime no fly world cruise promotion. Imagine embarking on a journey of adventure and discovery where countless days of world exploration await. Leave the grey wintery skies behind you and within moments your incredible voyage begins, taking you to sunny climes and exotic destinations. Balmoral will be your home for the next three and a half months where you will have like-minded travellers by your side. Revel in the intimate atmosphere, the warm welcome, the relaxing and comfortable surrounds as you glide effortlessly through the Solent and into a world of ultimate adventure, discovery and indulgence.

ARE YOU PASSIONATE ABOUT CRUISING?

As part of the official 2014 world cruise promotion Reader Offers Ltd and Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines are giving away two places on board Balmoral 5th January 2014 world cruise, worth up to the value of **£16,500***

Entries must be made by 8pm 15th April 2013

To enter and view more unbeatable offers log on to www.readeroffers.travel/draw and answer four cruise questions correctly. The draw will be held at Reader Offers Ltd Headquarters on 16th April 2013 at 3pm - log on to www.readeroffers.travel/draw to see if you are the winner

Prize Draw Terms & Conditions: *Entry for the Fred. Olsen 2014 world cruise free prize draw is based on two adults sharing a standard outside 2 bedded cabin on the Balmoral 5th January 2014 world cruise, total value of £16,500, based on the current selling price of an F grade cabin. Entrants must be available to travel between the 5th January 2014 to the 19th April 2014. Only those names specified on the entry are eligible to win, the voyage is non-transferable and no cash alternative will be offered. Any entrants already booked on a Fred. Olsen 2014 world/Grand voyage or sector with Reader Offers Ltd only are still eligible to win and are able to transfer their existing cruise. For full terms and conditions visit www.readeroffers.travel/draw.

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