



TRAVEL

My Provence: By Ex Nihilo fragrance entrepreneur Benoît Verdier

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SUPPLIED

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Insider travel tips for this beautiful region in southern France

When he's not at the helm of boutique fragrance brand Ex Nihilo with co-founders Sylvie Loday and Olivier Royère, Benoît Verdier can be found pedalling around on his beloved bicycle. The Frenchman grew up in Provence, the home of perfumery in the south of France, and now lives in Paris. Verdier spoke to EDGAR about Provence, including his favourite cycling spots, things to do and places to stay.



Pool at Crillon le Brave

WHERE TO STAY

"Crillon Le Brave is an amazing five-star hotel with a scenic view of Mont Ventoux. The rooms have been renovated from an ancient Provençal village. The swimming pool is never too busy and the restaurants are excellent. I would recommend booking a table on the terrace for a romantic evening."



2 Explore bric-a-brac in L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue

WHERE TO BUY ANTIQUES

"If you are a vintage design addict like we are at Ex Nihilo, then the little town of L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue is a must. You'll discover some vintage gems for your home – from furniture to objects and collectables. Most of the sellers work with the famous Saint-Ouen flea market in Paris. Don't hesitate to negotiate."



3 French charm in Aix-en-Provence

WHERE TO SEE HISTORY

"I was born in Avignon, but I would suggest staying around Aix-en-Provence, a stunning town that has kept its historic identity. The inner city is charming: from the main strip Cours Mirabeau to the Quartier Mazarin neighbourhood, you will have your shot of Provence. Relax, buy a newspaper and order a coffee at one of the numerous terraces to feel the vibe."



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WHERE TO SEE NATURAL BEAUTY

"I would drive the small roads to the village of Roussillon. It's beautiful, it smells of lavender everywhere, and you will be able to see geological curiosities and red rocks that remind people of Colorado in America."



WHERE TO SEE ART

"Château La Coste is a resort where you can walk through a beautiful outdoor art collection including pieces from Louise Bourgeois and buildings by [Japanese architect] Tadao Ando. Château La Coste is also a vineyard and has enjoyable restaurants."



6 Mont Ventoux - not for the faint-hearted



7 Benoît Verdier

WHERE TO CYCLE

"For mountain biking, I'd say go for a ride around Sainte-Victoire mountain. Otherwise, if you are in a good shape, I would suggest you ride up to the top of Mont Ventoux, one of the most iconic stages of the Tour de France. The view at the summit is stunning. I did it last time with my fixed gear bike - it was challenging!"

Ex Nihilo has released Gold Immortals, a limited-edition fragrance to mark the UAE's 49th National Day