FRANCE

HOTELWATCH In the ancient towns of Monpazier and Cadouin, J

Hotel Edward 1er

The location

Monpazier is one of the finest fortified towns in Périgord and a national heritage site. The three-star hotel, a 19th-century mini château, takes its name from the English monarch (and Duke of Gascony) who established the town in 1284. Standing on the edge of town, it has far-reaching views over open countryside to the west and across elderly roof tiles to the east, yet is just two minutes' walk from the central square and the bars, restaurants and small shops. Market day is Thursday.

We like

The quiet position and the hands-on, charming and energetic young Dutch owners. Marije's cooking is impressive, modern and inventive. She eschews local bakers and makes her own croissants and pains au chocolat for breakfast, which is served until a lazy 10.45 (11.30 in your room). We also like the beautifully laid-out pool area.

Not so keen

The floorboards of the room above ours creaked somewhat. And we are not fans of French bolsters; thankfully there was a pillow each in a cupboard.

The rooms

All very comfortable and warm (those on the top floor have air-conditioning); antiques and tapestries abound. Suites include a small seating area in the turret, a Jacuzzi and bathrobes. Smokers are accommodated and there's one room for the disabled.

The other guests

In April, we were all English-speaking in the dining-room; one couple lived next door. The French and Dutch holidaymakers arrive with the warmer weather.

The food and drink

Marije's small menu of stylish dishes changes daily and is the best food in town. You can choose three/four/five courses: €28/€32/€36 (£22/£25/£28). For an evening under the shade of a wisteria, try their more informal Bistrot 2 in town.

The 'beautifully laid-out' pool area at the Hotel Edward 1er

The bottom line

Standard rooms from €76 (£61) breakfast €12 (£9.50).

The details

Hotel Edward 1er, 5 rue Saint-Pierre, 24540 Monpazier (0033 553 224400, www.hoteledward1er.com).

Telegraph rating

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