

# CANARY WHARF

JANUARY 2011

## THE MAGIC *of* Languedoc

IF THE THOUGHT OF VENTURING TO WARMER CLIMATES TO INVEST HAS EVER CROSSED YOUR MIND, THEN LOOK NO FURTHER THAN THE TRULY MAGICAL GARRIGAE RESORTS SCATTERED AROUND THE SOUTH OF FRANCE IN THE DELIGHTFUL LANGUEDOC REGION

**W**hen reflecting on the South of France we automatically think of the wonderful St. Tropez or the super-chic Cannes; however, it seems that the secret of the still relatively undiscovered Languedoc region is about to be uncovered.

Launched in 2003 with three operational developments already under their belt, Garrigae seems set to make their mark on the picturesque South of France; a dreamy location that has so much to offer visitors from all around the world and is fast becoming a fashionable tourist destination.

The company created by Miguel Espada and his wife Cecile, both Languedoc natives, has the personal touch that larger companies are lacking. With their respective families being wine makers for generations, it seemed only natural that their love of the vineyards and home-produced fine wine would be entwined in their passion for property.

With a vision to provide a little piece of their enviable French lifestyle to investors and visitors alike, Garrigae set out to build and restore boutique developments that would remain authentic and classy, yet not pretentious. The charming Le Couvent de Herepian, a 17th century building that used to house nuns, has been beautifully and sympathetically restored by Garrigae to showcase the very best of French architecture and design. Set in a breathtaking countryside location, the 13 suites ooze glamour and sophistication, as well as fascinating charm - a perfect lovers' retreat.

By complete contrast, Port Rive Gauche, yet another luxury retreat and spa, offers uninterrupted views of the Mediterranean from its 11 uber-chic contemporary two bedroom suites. Situated in the quaint village of Marseillan, its people make their living from the cultivation of oysters and the distillation of Noilly Pratt - a locally produced and rare authentic vermouth. Why not take a tour around the distillery and enjoy seeing first-hand how this famous beverage is made?

The tranquillity of Les Jardins De Saint-Benoit, an extension of the village of Saint-Laurent-de-la-Cabrerisse, has its very own on-site vineyard, which owners have a share in, as well as a three-acre olive grove. One of Garrigae's larger developments, this international resort offers outstanding facilities for families with children, as well as high-quality conference facilities. The on-site spa offers a full range of holistic treatments, as well as luxury facilities, including a pool and Jacuzzi.

Travelling around the rest of the beautiful countryside and quaint villages of the Languedoc region, Garrigae has cherry picked another two sites to work their magic and share with the world a slice of their wonderful French lifestyle.

My favourite by far has to be the 18th Century Chateau De La Redorte, tucked away in the Minervois. An authentic and untouched area of the Languedoc, the Chateau has been the residence of the d'Artois family for five generations, and with the resident Countess d'Artois's full blessing, Garrigae is now ready to give this architectural masterpiece a new breath of life, restoring the Chateau back to its original beauty. Originally a wine-making estate, Garrigae have arranged a partnership with the Chateau and Franz Yénes, owner of Domaine Massamier La Mignarde, one of the most renowned wine estates in the Minervois region. Each owner will be able to participate in the wine-making process, both tasting and mixing the wine in the Chateau's secret tunnel. As well as 11 luxury apartments within the Chateau itself, there will also be new outbuildings consisting of 12 duplex properties carefully constructed to lend themselves to the style of the Chateau, all located around a stunning swimming pool.

Due for completion in early 2012 is Les Templiers, a 49-unit development located in the pretty medieval town of Pézenas, with its gorgeous cobbled streets and period architecture. Boasting mild winters and long summers, Pézenas would make the perfect retreat to buy that second home close to the Mediterranean.

The Languedoc's coastline is home to one of the longest Mediterranean beaches, stretching 220km along the sea. With its exceptional climate, stunning architecture and pure unspoilt beauty, this location really does offer excellent quality of life. The pace slows down as soon as your plane hits the tarmac, and being just over an hour away from the UK by plane, it makes your second home very close to home indeed. ■

[www.garrigaeresorts.com](http://www.garrigaeresorts.com)

