

Cognoscenti

magazine

Domaine de Valmouriane
Saint Rémy de Provence

Because life is short

The air was fragrant with the smells of blooming lavender and rosemary as **Cognoscenti Magazine** editors settled into a room at the **Domaine de Valmouriane** one balmy spring afternoon. Wonderfully situated between Les Baux de Provence (5 kms) and St-Rémy de Provence (2 kms), the Domaine is nestled in a valley of the Alpilles range. You can literally walk out the front door of the hotel and set off on an informal network of walking trails—a rare feature that contrasts very favorably with some other hotels in this region, which have a kind of “penned-in” feel caused by their proximity to highways. The hotel also works nicely as a base for discovering nearby Saint-Rémy, where your nose may lead you to the *Musée des Aromes*, your eyes can wander the old stone houses and chapels, and your palate will discover the region’s olive oil and pungent goat cheeses.



An ideal location in Provence

Our room, one of 14 in this classic provençal stone manor house (including 1 junior suite and 1 deluxe room), was comfortable and spacious. Worthy of note was the “comfort tray” offering a selection of in-room hot drinks—tea, cappuccino, hot chocolate—and the extra large (and cozy) armchairs. Throwing open the windows over the verdant countryside, we enjoyed bucolic views of olive trees and grape vines while listening to birds chirping away. The one drawback in the room was the lighting—there were only three lamps equipped with dim 40- or 60-watt bulbs, none of which proved very effective at brightening the space at night.

The finest of hotels carefully separate business and leisure activities, thereby respecting the substantially different needs of each group; however this is not the case

at Domaine de Valmouriane. Our room let directly onto an upstairs sitting room, which *might* have been a pleasant place to read or play a quiet game of chess, had it not been put into service as a conference room for a large business meeting (replete with audio-visual equipment) that began at 9 a.m.—far too early to suit most vacationers’ laid-back schedules. Since all televisions have been removed

from the guest rooms for “their wellbeing and relaxation,” as the hoteliers phrased it, having to endure steady conference noise in television-free quarters seemed like something of a bad joke.

Facility maintenance wasn’t quite up to four-star snuff, either. Upstairs there’s a nice billiards room, a fact we greeted with considerable pleasure—until we noticed that the tips were broken on all of the cue sticks. There’s also an idyllic-looking outdoor hot tub, but as we started to climb in we discovered the temperature of the tub was only lukewarm—perhaps the best adjective to describe our overall experience here.

This article was written by Contributing Editors to *Cognoscenti Magazine*. Photo courtesy of *Domaine de Valmouriane*.

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