



VILLA CLARISSE, Île de Ré, France

If you long for the summers of yesteryear, take a look at Île de Ré. Easily accessed via an arching bridge from west coast France, it's a 30km slither renowned for salt marshes, sandy beaches and miles of cycle paths. Parisians see it as their Hamptons. Pack an appetite and sunblock but leave your sausage-skin cycling kit at home – this is no place for MAMILs (middle aged men in lycra). Villa Clarisse, with the reassuring stamp of Relais & Châteaux, has just nine suites and is one of the island's most charming residences, an 18th-century mansion in the heart of Saint-Martin-de-Ré.

Interiors maestro Pierre-Yves Rochon had a hand in the design – spacious rooms in crème fraîche shades, ancient flagstones and shuttered windows, carefully edited furniture and touches of modern rattan. A small dining room caters for breakfast or eat in the garden where a sandpit and swimming pool keep little ones at bay. Excellent fishy suppers can be booked at sister property, Hôtel de Toiras, a short walk away. The staff will happily indulge any whim such as picnics or in-room massage and don't miss the best ice-cream – caramel fleur de sel.

BOOK IT: Doubles from £184 room only.

villa-clarisse.com



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