

Angela Gaillard; Pierre Jacques/Hemis/fr

SUMMER 100

Continued from page 11

32 Escape the Brits

£££££

It often seems that we've discovered every square foot of France by now, but there is a choice little titbit British tourists haven't colonised: the wild Allier gorges, in the Massif Central. Heady uplands, lost villages, terrific walking, riding, rafting and canoeing down the foaming Allier itself (Tonic Aventure can fix up trips; tonic-aventure.fr). It also hides the excellent Haut-Allier (00 33 4 71 57 57 63, hotel-lehautallier.com), with Michelin-starred food and a dramatic gorge-side setting. Doubles start at £79, room-only, making a week a pretty reasonable £278 each — though allow the same again to do the food justice. Fly to Lyons with EasyJet or British Midland International.

33 The peak of the Pyrenees

£££££

Question: how good a mountaineer do you have to be to scale the highest mountain in the Pyrenees? Answer: you don't have to be a mountaineer at all. Yes, you've got to rope up, use crampons and carry ice axes to reach the spectacular 11,168ft summit of Pico Aneto, but there's no technical climbing



involved — just good fitness and a head for heights. The scenery can take on the best of the Alps and win. Go on, you can do it. The mountain-walking specialist KE Adventure (01768 773966, keadventure.com) will coach you up there on a week's trip, with two demanding warm-up walks, for £795 in June or August, including five nights in a chalet, two in a mountain refuge and almost all meals. Fly to Toulouse with Jet2 or EasyJet.

34 Chic in Provence

£££££

If you've enjoyed a stay at one of the establishments in Britain's Hotel du Vin chain, you might wonder if there's anything

similar abroad. You should relish this. Crillon le Brave (00 33 4 90 65 61 61, crillonlebrave.com) is the brainchild of Peter Chittick — the co-founder of HdV — and the comfy-chic vibe, Frette linens and Farrow & Ball colours may feel familiar. The location, however, is something else: a jumble of mellow stone buildings in a classic Provençal hilltop village, with views stretching over Côtes du Ventoux vineyards to the Alps, best admired from the lovely terrace pool. For somewhere this romantic, it's not *that* pricey, at £741/£860. Fly to Marseilles with EasyJet or Ryanair.

Continued on page 14 >>



Rumble down Alpine slopes (28) or roll with it in Provence (34), left

CAN'T WAIT TILL SUMMER? INDIAN OCEAN NOW!

half-board, a saving of £392. Nearer the budget end, Hayes & Jarvis (0871 664 0246, hayesandjarvis.com) has taken a hefty £466 off the three-star Merville Beach, where a week, departing on February 23, now costs £829, half-board.

Even Le Prince Maurice — arguably the best hotel on the island, a palatial Relais & Châteaux place with a Guerlain spa, a top golf course, a floating restaurant and wall-to-wall flunkys — is doing deals. With Exsus (020 7337 9010, exsus.com), a week, half-board, is £1,800 — a saving of £1,000.

There are big reductions in the **Maldives**, too. A week at the celebrity-strewn Soneva Gili is going for £3,500, B&B, with Scott Dunn (020 8682 5075, scottdunn.com). Hardly bargain-basement, granted, but that is £1,550 off the previous price — February rates in the Maldives can be stratospheric.

The five-star Constance Halaveli costs £2,140, B&B,

a saving of £1,235, with Bailey Robinson (01488 689700, baileyrobinson.com), if you book before Tuesday. And you won't find much cheaper here than an all-inclusive week at the Adaaran Select Hudhuranfushi for £1,520, a saving of £100, with British Airways (0844 493 0758, ba.com/maldives) — again, book before Tuesday.

Of all the Indian Ocean destinations, **Kenya** throws up the friendliest prices. Tropical Sky (0844 332 9349, tropicalsky.co.uk) has the four-star Sarova Whitesands, on Bamburi beach, for £899, half-board, for two weeks, departing on February 7.

If that's still too much, you could go three-star at the Reef Hotel, on Nyali beach, departing on February 7. Monarch Holidays (0871 423 8642, monarch.co.uk) has a week from £530, B&B.

All prices are per person for departures in February, and include flights and transfers

EXTENDED OFFER!

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