

Then as the day is slowly winding down you'll end up in what some consider an unremarkable town, but for me it held a special magic.

Castellane awaits you. Stay at the **Hotel du Levant**, room 28, open the windows and
voilà ! a !



There atop a rocky pinnacle stands Notre Dame du Roc, a church and its bell tower dwarfed by this imposing mountain of granite.



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Place
Stamp
Here

Travelling to the South
of France??



Allow me to
suggest an
itinerary...

Getting there: If you fly into Paris, a great way to go is taking the train to Avignon and renting a car for the rest of the journey across Provence.

But First! Off the beaten path: After Arles and Nimes ...just keep going!

Sometimes the most relaxing places are the least advertised. Nowhere is this more true than the Mediterranean area known as the **Camargue**. Just west of where the Rhone river meets the coast of France are the vast salt marshes and pastoral setting of the Camargue. It is the land of pink flamingoes, white horses and black bulls awaiting their turn in the ring.

If you decide to go I recommend staying at



La Domaine de L’Amerique. It is a lovely little “gites” (guest house) just off the main road heading south to Salin de Giraud. As you

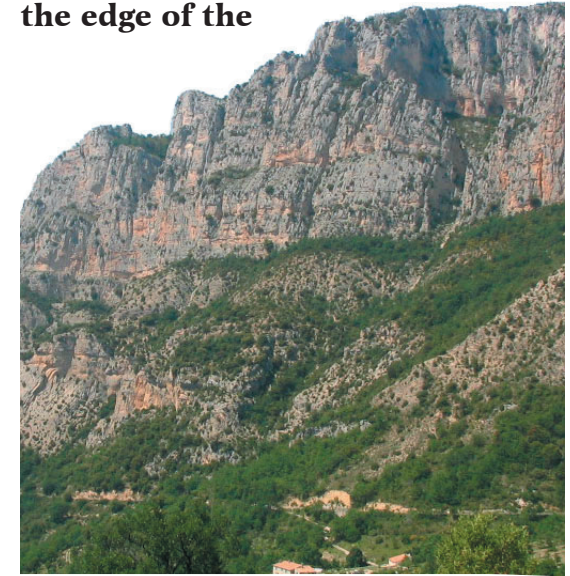
explore the area, two places not to miss are the **Parc Ornithologique** (bird park) and of course, who could pass up a dip in the Mediterranean at the **Plage de Piemanson**? This expanse is utterly vast and has nothing more to boast than plenty of sun, sand and sea, so if that is your slice of paradise as it is mine, pack a lunch, towel and beach mat for an exquisite afternoon.

As you make your way north and east through the terrain known as Les Alpilles take a lunch break in the town of St. Remy de Provence. Then push on to the hilltop town of **Gordes** at the start of the Luberon valley. It offers spectacular views of what I call Romeo and Juliet landscapes, steeply terraced roads cut across the hillside punctuated by



lush trees that will give you a taste for what comes next as you travel further east.

Past the lavender fields you start to ascend a rocky plateau which marks the beginning of the incredible **Gorge du Verdon**. Known as the French Grand Canyon it offers a scenic drive along the edge of the



“Route des Cretes”.

At one point toward the end there is a scenic overlook where you can gaze down over the cliff to the muddy river 2400’ below.