

IN THE SPOTLIGHT
BERGERAC, DORDOGNE, FRANCE

NEED TO KNOW...

WHERE
Bergerac, Dordogne, France

TRAVEL
The farmhouse is just 15 minutes from Bergerac Airport. Ryanair flies from Bristol & London Stansted and flybe from Southampton.

ACCOMMODATION
The 19th century farmhouse in the heart of the Dordogne region can sleep 10.

BERGERAC TENNIS CLUB
• Three clay courts
• Four hard courts (two floodlit)
• Two indoor clay courts

HOSTED TENNIS TRIPS
• May 8-11
• September 4-7
• £300 per person (includes coaching, 3 nights' B&B, airport pick-up, 2 days' lunch, dinner first night - single supplement applicable)



RUSTIC FRENCH TENNIS

Good food, wine and clay court tennis. What more could you want from a tennis break?

WORDS: JO CARTER

If a fortnight in a big all-inclusive resort isn't really your cup of tea, a long weekend in the Dordogne offers the perfect blend of tennis and culture.

Staying in a 19th century farmhouse, the hosted tennis trip includes three nights' accommodation with eight hours' tennis coaching complemented by trips to local vineyards and French markets.

On arrival at Bergerac-Roumanière airport, you will be transferred to the idyllic French farmhouse, which dates back to the 1850s. And what better way to acclimatise and immerse yourself in the French culture than a trip to a local chateau to sample the local tipples?

The area is rich in vineyards and offers some of the finest wines in the Bordeaux region. Chateau du Grangemont, located in the town of Saint-Aubin de Lanquais, is 12 kilometres from Bergerac and offers red, white and sparkling wines for tasting.

On returning to the farmhouse, a local chef will provide an authentic Perigordian meal, with the truffle, 'the black pearl of the Perigord' a local delicacy.

With such fantastic cuisine on offer, it would be easy to forget about the tennis. But after a good night's sleep in the cosy farmhouse, the following day features a trip to Bergerac Tennis Club, a short drive from the accommodation.

The package includes eight hours of coaching, and in the event of inclement weather, there are indoor clay courts available. The trip offers a perfect opportunity to play on clay. Whether you've never really played on the terre battue before or want to brush up on your clay game, coach Steve Riley focuses on helping players adapt their game to the surface, and uses video analysis to help aid his teaching.

The hosted tennis weeks are targeted at intermediate players looking to improve their clay court game, but Steve, an LTA Level 5 Pro coach with over 25 years' experience, tailors the sessions to suit the standard of the group.

"The content of the tennis coaching is based on the personal requirements of the customers, so I adapt the sessions to suit the individuals," says Steve, who stays in the farmhouse with the guests. "Our coaches use a well proven formula to achieve maximum fun and improvement."

After two hours of sliding around on the clay courts, lunch is taken on the terrace overlooking the courts, before heading back on court for the afternoon, topped off by a trip to a local vineyard.

Following dinner at a local restaurant, relaxing with a glass of vin rouge after a busy day of tennis and culture, it seems like the kind of routine you could get used to. With a log fire and WiFi, this really is

"AFTER TWO HOURS SLIDING AROUND THE CLAY, LUNCH IS TAKEN ON THE TERRACE. THE AFTERNOON IS TOPPED OFF WITH A TRIP TO THE LOCAL VINEYARD FOR TASTING"

the best of both worlds. Less than two hours' flight from London Stansted and only 15 minutes' from the airport, you feel a million miles from anywhere.

"It is a complete change from the norm," says Steve. "Complete tranquility, in the middle of the French countryside with great food, wine and clay court tennis."

"We've been hosting these trips for 13 years and we have customers coming back year on year. It is a great insight into French rural tennis and community living - with clay court tennis that's complemented with great food and wine from the region. Staying in a 19th century farmhouse the smells and culture of the

Dordogne are guaranteed!"
On the final morning, if you haven't had your fill of tennis, you can head back to the club for one final session, or head to Issegiaac, a medieval village for the

Sunday morning market, widely considered to be the best in the area.

Before flying back home, there's just enough time for lunch back at the farmhouse, sampling the fresh breads and cheeses, freshly purchased from the market.

If you're looking for a short break, with food and wine and just a little culture, a long weekend in a French country farmhouse could be just the ticket. ■

The farmhouse is available to hire throughout the year (except late July to end-August). Phone: +44 (0)207 226 1625 / www.willtwin.co.uk/tennis-holidays/ email: holidays@willtwin.co.uk

