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La Motte (Clubref:D33)

A campsite for nature lovers, nestled in 3.5 hectares of luscious woodland, offering peaceful stays all year round.

Touring pitches: 45

Open: all year

Price from: £13.62 per night for electric pitch plus two adults (based on 1 Jan-10 Jun 2023)



Food & drink

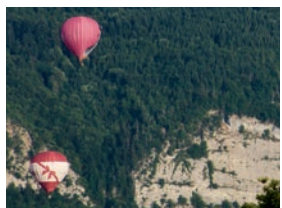
GAEC Les Barbins, Les Barbins, 17210 Orignolles
Contact: lesbarbins.fr, 0033 5 46 04 43 35

Culture

Château Chalais, 15 Rue du Château, 16210 Chalais
Contact: chateaudechalais.fr, 0033 6 12 33 32 76

Outdoor fun

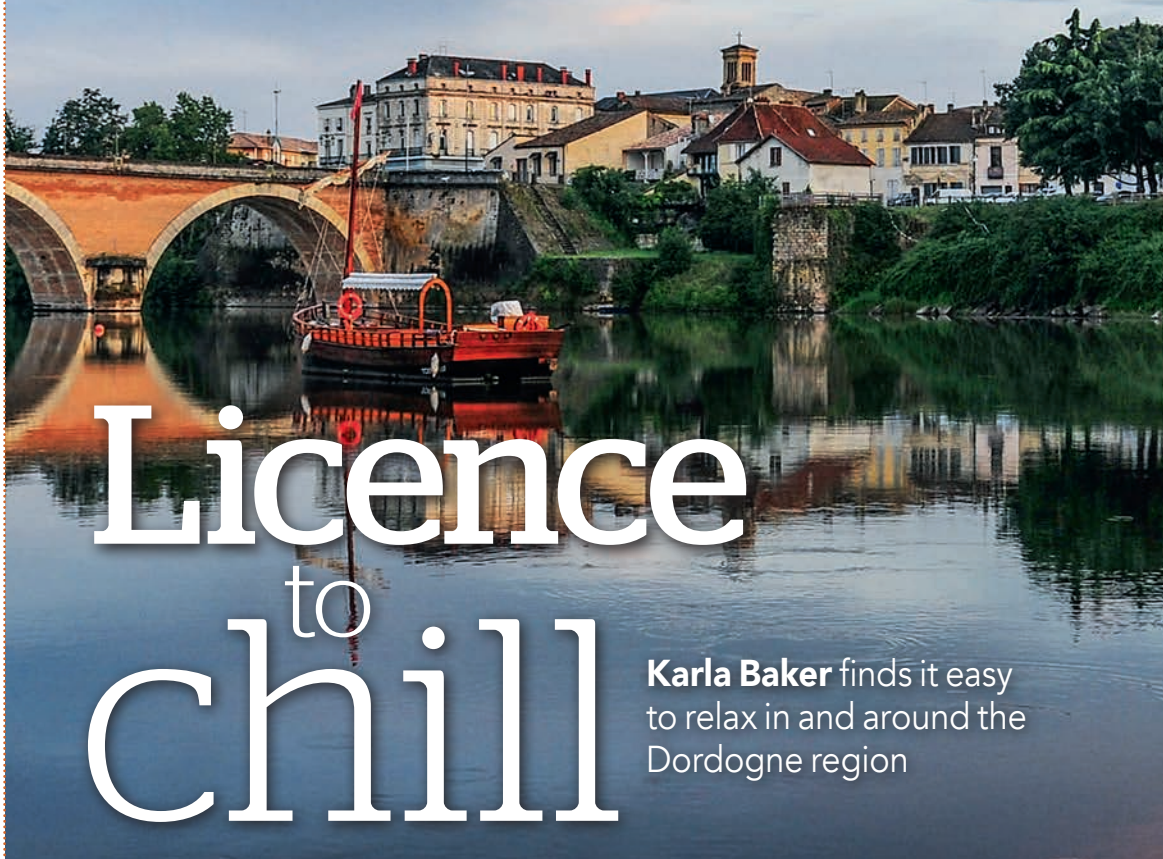
Charente Montgolfières (hot air balloon rides), 7 Rue Saint-André, 16250 Coteaux-du-Blanzacais
Contact: charente-montgolfieres.fr, 0033 5 45 67 01 45



For the family

Zoo de Bordeaux Pessac, 3 Chemin du Transvaal, 33600 Pessac
Contact: zoo-bordeaux-pessac.com

Scan here to book a pitch at La Motte



Licence to chill

Karla Baker finds it easy to relax in and around the Dordogne region

Some people use their leisure vehicle to tour from site to site in search of the next thrill, while others like to delve deeper into a particular area. Some drive long distances to explore faraway lands, while others happily pitch up five minutes from home. Some are out sight-seeing every day, and others prefer to spend their time relaxing in a camping chair with a book.

Perhaps living with a life-limiting disability has given me a 'seize the day' attitude, or maybe it's just naturally ingrained in my partner and me to explore. Regardless, we have been locked into adventure mode ever since buying our caravan: every trip is go-go-go and we barely find time to breathe.

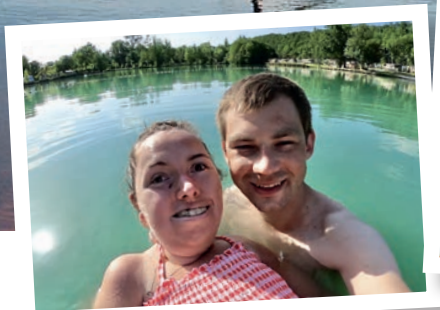
Don't get me wrong – we absolutely love exploring new places, soaking up the sights and really getting stuck in – but when we found ourselves in the sunny Dordogne as part of a larger French tour, it presented the perfect opportunity to slow down for once.

We arrived at our campsite, La Motte – around 75km north east of Bordeaux – on a warm afternoon in late May, and were greeted by the friendly Dutch owners. The rural setting attracted us, and the site certainly didn't disappoint! Each spacious pitch is nestled in its own patch of woodland, and with nothing but greenery surrounding us and gentle birdsong in the trees, it was something of a personal haven. It was finally time to breathe!

The campsite benefits from the likes of electricity on every pitch, good showers and toilets (including an accessible wet room), laundry facilities, fresh bread and pastry deliveries, and a peaceful fishing pond full of carp and roach. It's fairly basic in comparison to many other sites, but sometimes that's exactly what you need.

Being one of the few French campsites that is open all year round, it makes an ideal stop-off point en route to finding some Spanish winter sun, or is simply a good base for relaxing and exploring the local area. Surrounded by forests and vineyards, with Atlantic beaches to the west and the

The river Dordogne
running through Bergerac



picturesque wonders of the Dordogne to the east, there is much to be discovered.

RED RED WINE

The city of Bordeaux is about an hour's drive away, plush with landscaped gardens that line the Garonne river as it cuts gracefully through the centre. The surrounding region is famed for wine growing, and, unsurprisingly, the city is a hotspot for making, drinking and learning about the stuff. Head for the striking Cité du Vin attraction, which offers themed tours and audiovisual productions dedicated to wine and its history as well as the opportunity for tasting.

Following the Dordogne river to the south-east, we made it to our next campsite, Pomport Beach. Amenities here include modern wash blocks, laundry facilities, tennis courts, a restaurant/bar, an indoor pool, an outdoor pool with waterslides, crazy golf, bouncy castles, a private beach, and a two-hectare lake for

swimming, fishing and water sports at the centre of it all! We don't usually opt for this style of campsite, but as it was off-peak there was barely a soul around, and it was so peaceful that we instantly felt at home.

After setting up on our luxurious, fully serviced (a first for us!) lakeside pitch, we headed to the on-site restaurant for dinner overlooking the water. It was at this moment, as we watched the sun set over the lake, that we smiled at each other and said, "We're going to be very happy here." The cherry on top of a perfect day was a relaxed evening stroll along the smooth path that circles the lake with the stars twinkling above us, the chirping of crickets providing the soundtrack.

As you can imagine, we found it difficult to tear ourselves away from the campsite, but the region offers plenty, should you wish to explore. Pomport Beach is surrounded by vineyards that seem to roll out as far as the eye can see, as well as picturesque settlements full of bright

**Inset from left: swimming at
Pomport Beach; Cité du Vin**

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Pomport Beach (Clubref: A17)

A modern campsite with high-quality facilities and an endless list of on-site activities for people of all ages.

Touring pitches: 97

Open: 13 May-2 Sep 2023

Price from: £19.83 per night for electric pitch plus two adults (based on 13 May-23 Jun 2023)



Food & drink

Le Foncaussade, lieu dit le foncaussade, 24240 Mescoules
Contact: le-foncaussade-restaurant.business.site, 0033 7 80 45 21 90



Culture

Château de Bridoire, 24240 Ribagnac
Contact: chateaubridoire.com, 0033 6 31 83 92 99



Outdoor fun

Pro Sports 24 (outdoor activities provider specialising in watersports on the Dordogne river)

Contact: pro-sports-24.com, 0033 6 80 88 06 72



For the family

Griffon Park, 47120 Caubon-Saint-Sauveur
Contact: parcdugriffon.fr, 0033 5 53 20 23 81



Scan here to
book a pitch
at Pomport
Beach



Illustration: Louise Turpin



“As you can imagine, we found it difficult to tear ourselves away from the campsite”



Crazy golf at Pomport Beach

floral arrangements and shutter-clad buildings. About 20 minutes' drive away is the town of Bergerac, which straddles the Dordogne river and offers opportunities for peaceful boat trips. On the northern side of the river you'll find the cobbled streets of Vieille Ville (Old City). Dating back to medieval times, it's easy to feel like a time-traveller as you stroll along the narrow streets lined with half-timbered houses.

ANCIENT ART

If you want to journey even further back in time, a visit to one of the Dordogne's many caves is a must. Famous for the sheer quantity and quality of its prehistoric artworks, the Lascaux Cave was discovered in 1940 and is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The original cave is closed permanently to visitors in order to preserve it, but an impressive, full-sized replica has been created at the International Centre for Cave Art. The paintings have been immaculately recreated, using the same techniques as the original Cro-Magnon artists, and the temperature, humidity and acoustics of the space reflect conditions in the cave. Understandably, wheelchair-accessible caves are hard to come by, but the whole replica site is accessible, and

it also benefits from modern technology that helps to bring history to life.

Back in the present day, the temperature on the campsite was creeping up to the mid-30s and we were in full relaxation mode. For various reasons, I hadn't been swimming in about 15 years, but as I sat on the shaded pontoon, the glistening turquoise lake was looking increasingly inviting. So when Stephen asked me if I wanted to take a dip, I answered with a nervous "Yes please!" As we edged our way into the cool water together, I felt the sand between my toes for the first time since childhood, and any anxieties I had about swimming just melted away. The water allowed me to freely move my limbs in ways that are impossible on dry land, and, in more ways than one, I felt totally.. weightless.

This was a completely different type of adventure for us, but it was one that we'll remember for a very long time. It just goes to show that there is no right or wrong way to travel with a leisure vehicle – it's all about enjoying yourself and making memories.

■ If Karla has inspired you to visit this region, please visit camc.com/overseas to book the sites featured (and others).