

My journey through the French region most famous for its artists

Provence inspired the work of everyone from Picasso to Matisse — now there is even more reason to visit with a new Cezanne-focused art trail



Paul Cézanne was born and died in Aix-en-Provence
ALAMY

Nina Caplan | Tuesday August 05 2025, 5.00am, The Sunday Times

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The first art gallery I ever fell in love with was in St Paul de Vence, just inland from a Mediterranean coast as popular with artists as with tourists. The Fondation Maeght is an artwork in itself, built to show off the Maeghts' superb collection of modern art but also luring visitors through the pine-scented gardens with a wacky fountain by Joan Miró or a glimpse of those instantly recognisable elongated Alberto Giacometti figures (£16; fondation-maeght.com). I was 18, and I already knew art could be fascinating. But I hadn't realised it could also be fun.

Years later, I still love the Maeght — and I consider Provence itself to be the ideal art gallery. There are the startling blues and yellows of the chapel Henri Matisse decorated in Vence (£6; chapellematisse.fr) and the mystical paintings of Marc Chagall in Nice (£9; musees-nationaux-alpesmaritimes.fr). On my last visit this July, I even found a woman's vision embedded in the landscape, but I'll get to that. First, I went to Aix-en-Provence for the long-awaited opening of the country house and studio of the artist that Picasso — another Provence resident — called “the father of us all”: Paul Cézanne.

More hotels near to Cézanne galleries and sites

Toile Blanche, St Paul de Vence



Toile Blanche is a charming boutique hotel

Just down the road from the Fondation Maeght, one of the world's greatest galleries, this charming all-suite boutique hotel is in three low buildings on a hillside and run by the three Leroy brothers, who are all artists, so there is plenty of art here too. There is subtle good taste everywhere, from the quietly luxurious two-level suites in poured concrete and wood to the breakfast terrace overlooking the pool and the excellent restaurant, lit by bulbs on artfully draped ropes, with its superb wine list.

Details B&B doubles from £180 (toileblanche.com)