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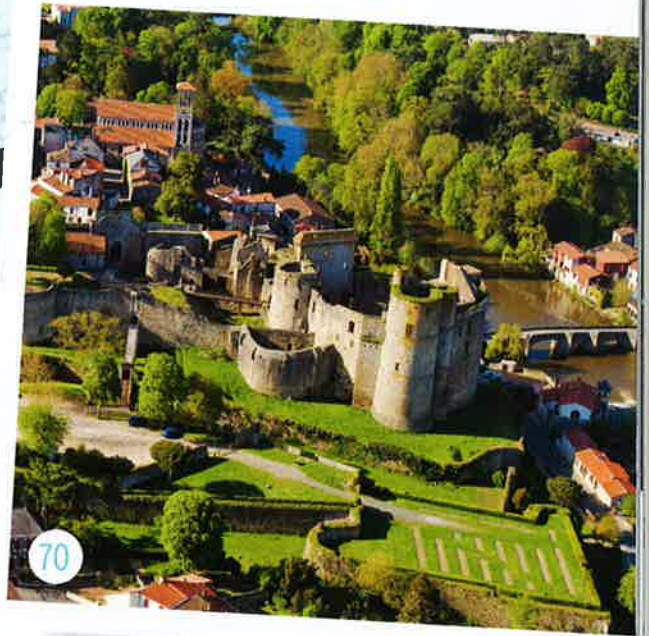
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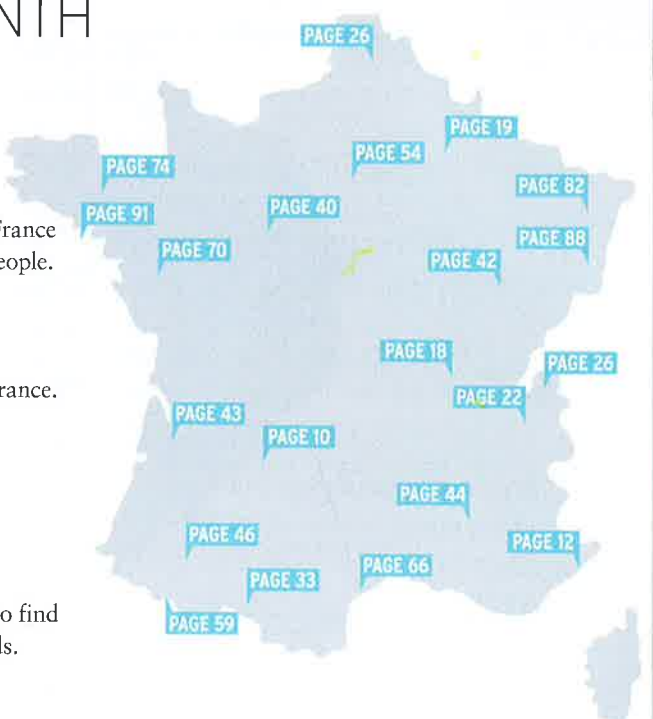
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course and is a great base for exploring the town's museums and the area's Christmas markets.

48 Boulevard Léon Gambetta
68100 Mulhouse
Tel: (Fr) 3 89 81 71 05
www.peonia.fr
Doubles from €120.

SC ▼ LE MOULIN
DE LA TUILERIE
Île-de-France

The Duke and Duchess of Windsor settled in Paris after the last war, following the duke's abdication as Edward VIII in 1936. In 1952, the couple bought this former 18th-century mill in the Chevreuse Valley, south-west of the capital, as a weekend retreat and made extensive renovations. The Landmark Trust conservation charity took over Le Moulin in 2010 – its first property in France. Visitors can rent the 11-bedroom main house (pictured below), a small cottage called *Le Célibataire*, which sleeps two and has its original 1950s half-bath and taps, or *La Maison des Amis*, which sleeps four.

Gif-sur-Yvette, Essonne
Tel: 01628 825925
www.landmarktrust.org.uk
Four nights in the main house from £979.



B&B ▲▶ La Distillerie
Franche-Comté

Forget 50 Shades: I have a better version of Gray for you. This one is a riverside town in the Haute-Saône *département*, roughly equidistant from Dijon and Dole. History buffs will swoon at the 16th-century *hôtel de ville* with glazed Flemish tiles and rose-stone pillars, and a tower built in 1548 with a hidden, revolving oak staircase; theatre aficionados will know of its tiny, renovated Italian theatre and lovers of boat holidays may be familiar with its port on the River Saône.

A quirky base from which to see the attractions is La Distillerie – a *chambre d'hôtes* in a self-contained, three-storey annexe to a 16th-century tower. Attached to the side of a Jesuit chapel, in the courtyard of the Hôtel de Conflans – one of the wealthiest houses in 16th-century Gray – La Distillerie is the result of loving renovation by its owner, Anne-Marie Petrequin, which included stripping plaster off the ceilings to expose vaulted brickwork and oak beams.

Technically it's a self-catering *gîte*, but because it's also let for one or two nights, Anne-Marie describes it as a *chambre d'hôte*. La Distillerie, named for its last-known use, is airy and spacious, offering 90 square metres over three floors. The ground level is under-utilised, with a large table and storage space; cosy living begins once you have climbed a contemporary spiral staircase. The large living area includes a kitchen, bathroom, balcony and sofa, plus a library. Above that is



a mezzanine made of oak and glass, with a double bed under a skylight.

Breakfast is provided in a wicker basket, left on the stairs in the morning: yoghurt, eggs to cook as you like, breads and pastries, cheese and *charcuterie*, plus home-made jam. Anne-Marie also provides several types of tea and four ways to make coffee.

It is slightly spartan with acres of tiles and heavy antique furniture from the Hôtel de Conflans, Anne-Marie's family home. It is also unique, practical and comfortable. You need a couple of nights to settle in; during that time you're likely to be invited to see inside the tower, visit Anne-Marie's garden and made to feel part of the family.

Judy Armstrong

71 Grande Rue
70100 Gray
Tel: (Fr) 3 84 65 63 77
Prices from €60 a night.