

DESTINATION OF THE MONTH

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JARDINS SECRETS, NIMES, PROVENCE



- Style** Opulent classic.
- Setting** Roman Nimes.
- Rates** €220-€350, excluding breakfast.

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One of the most romantic hotels in the South of France, if not the world. Boutique-hotel lovers should salute the French couple behind this 17th-century city villa, for opening their heavenly antiques-enhanced home to us all. The dainty sitting rooms of this tranquil townhouse hotel in Nîmes are filled with books, photographs, musical curios and aviaries of tiny singing birds.

Such an attention to detail reveals the owner's professional backgrounds: he is an interiors and food photographer; she is a stylist. The sumptuous and spacious chintz-swathed bedrooms are decorated with impeccable French taste down to the fresh roses and charming *objets* artfully arranged. Breakfast on the bougainvillea-framed terrace of **Jardins Secrets** is divine - fragrant exotic preserves, melt-in-the-mouth pastries, and heart-shaped butter pats - Cupid would surely approve.

Guests can explore the many wonders of ancient Nîmes, or better still, relax under the shade of olive trees or giant palms or in the emerald-hued swimming pool in the hotel's lush, foliage-filled garden. And this spring, Jardins Secrets has even more to celebrate - it has added ten exquisite rooms

to its previous four, as well as a petite spa, hammam and wading pool. There is a Roman thermal baths feel to this R&R oasis - a nod to Nîmes' Latin past. Best of all, the spa is small enough to be reserved for private use. The spa exclusively uses Kama Ayurveda products for the first time in France, and treatments include health-giving Ayurvedic and Japanese massages as well as pampering therapies for face, hands and feet. A secret paradise worth shouting about.