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TRAVELING THE WORLD IN SEARCH OF TRULY ENCHANTING PLACES

INTIMATE HOTELS, QUIET BEACHES, SUPERLATIVE SEAFOOD

THE OTHER SOUTH OF FRANCE

French real estate law provides one of the reasons for the Var's emergence as a newly fashionable destination. After a period of disastrous overbuilding along the Côte d'Azur, stringent laws were passed that restricted the construction of new hotels, especially in areas close to the sea. This means that hotels with *pieds dans l'eau* ("feet in the water") that were built prior to the new zoning rules have increased in value exponentially, catching the eye of developers and leading to numerous upscale renovations.

An example of this trend is the newly renovated 55-room **Le Bailli de Suffren** in Rayol-Canadel-sur-Mer. Built in the 1960s, the property was revamped by Paris-based architect François Champsaur. His shrewd retro redesign channels the glamour of the Riviera in the '50s and '60s. The real charm of this place, however, comes from the setting, right at the edge of the sea, overlooking a private beach backed by shaggy palms.

We immediately loved our spacious seaview room, appointed with a cool terracotta tile floor, an unusually comfortable bed made up with high-quality white linens



and a pair of petroleum-blue armchairs. Sliding doors led to a balcony with sun beds and chairs. The sea seemed so close, it was rather like being aboard a ship.

The hotel has three restaurants run by talented chef Stephan Demichelis: *Restaurant Le Loup de Mer* bistro, the seasonal

Restaurant L'Escale and *Restaurant La Piscine*, next to the pool. We had an excellent dinner at *Restaurant Le Loup de Mer* of rock-lobster ravioli with morels, and baked monkfish in a light saffron sauce. Other amenities include a small Carita spa.

LE BAILLI DE SUFFREN 94

LIKE Gorgeous views of the Mediterranean and good-looking and very comfortable rooms. Friendly young staff.
DISLIKE The hotel's cramped parking lot. **GOOD TO KNOW** The hotel offers complimentary mountain bikes to its guests.
Deluxe Room, \$740; Club Room, \$780. Golfe de Saint-Tropez, 18 Avenue des Américains, Rayol-Canadel-sur-Mer. Tel. (33) 4-98-04-47-00. lebaillidesuffren.com