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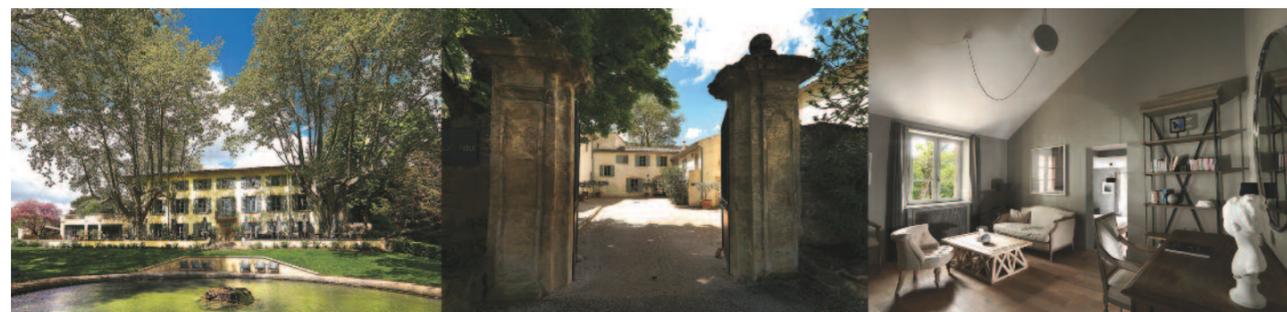


DOMAINE DE FONTENILLE

In 2013, two French entrepreneurs, Guillaume Foucher (gallery owner) and Frédérique Biousse (former CEO and co-founder of prêt-à-porter brands), decided to buy Domaine de Fontenille in the Luberon Regional Natural Park in the South of France.

They wanted to create the renaissance of a great wine estate, a luxury hotel and Michelin starred restaurant in and around a dilapidated classic Provençal Country House. They asked studio Lafourcade Architecture, from Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, to reconstruct the old villa and to build a new winery that would merge with the 35 hectares of the historic vineyards around the Domain.

production: Izabel Fonk
photos: Hans Fonk



Top left: Domaine de Fontenille, recently restored and reorganized by architect Alexandre Lafourcade. Garden architect and designer Dominique Lafourcade designed a new layout for the gardens around the old trees and existing water basins. The complex is now a luxury hotel with its own winery next door.

Below that: the water basin in front of the Provençal country house, the entrance gate and one of the suites on the first floor.

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Top: the lounge area on the ground floor opening up to the terrace and the park. Below that: the interior of the gourmet restaurant, Le Champ des Lunes, run by Michelin-starred chef Jérôme Faure. The Center for Contemporary Art is now located in the old winemaking cellars.

Bottom: one of the suite overlooking the gardens and the park.

The Domaine de Fontenille was built between the late 16th and early 17th century, a few kilometers from Lourmarin in the South of France. It was the stronghold of the Savornin family from 1640 onwards.

Alphonse de Savornin added a manor house to the existing buildings in 1850. The main entrance, ornamental lake as well as the main trees in the park date from this period. His granddaughter, Amélie, continued to develop the park. She was Fontenille's last occupant before the WW II.

The restructuring of the estate and the restoration of the country house began in 2013 under the direction of the architect Alexandre Lafourcade. The challenge was to respect the existing architecture as much as possible while transforming the Provençal Country House into a luxury hotel.

After a year and a half of work, the series of rooms on the ground floor opened again on the park and the Durance valley, and 19 rooms had been fitted out on the upper floors.

There were two restaurants included in the plans: one of them is now the gourmet restaurant, Le Champ des Lunes, run by Michelin-starred chef Jérôme Faure.

The vaulted cellar dating back from the seventeenth century was transformed into a reception hall and a Center for Contemporary Art was created in the old winemaking cellars.

Alexandre highlighted the estate's aristocratic dimensions while developing a friendly atmosphere. He restored the entrance by adorning it with a monumental gate.

He then reappointed each room and restructured the ground floor, which he divided into different rooms and halls including the restaurant. In the reception rooms, which are all arranged in a row, the sober contemporary décors borrow discreet details from the 18th century.

It was the idea of Alexander to separate the winery from the old house and create a new one between the vineyards. This turned out to be an exercise in style as it aimed to let the new buildings to blend in. He worked with the Cabinet d'Agronomie Provençale to combine the new wine cellars with traditional architecture.

Laurence Berlemont, oenologist, agronomist and a specialist in Provence wines was called in with the aim of restoring the Domain to its original size: 35 hectares of vines in one geographical area. As an advocate of sustainable farming, the Domain has been converting itself to organic farming since 2014, and benefits from the latest wine making techniques.



Left: the entrance to the vinification cellar. In the background the shop. Beside that: the wine tasting area adjacent to the cellars.

Bottom left: the Fontenille wine cellars. The Domaine de Fontenille enjoys exceptional terroir. The vines draw their strength from the clay, limestone and stony soil. The slightly steep slopes provide perfect sunshine and better water drainage. The Provence Mistral naturally cleans the grape.

Below: the winery designed by Alexandre Lafourcade in a new traditional way to blend in into the surroundings.

