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...Just a couple of miles further west towards St Raphael will bring you, when you have more time, to one of the most extraordinary oases on this stretch of the coast.

Welcome to Boulouris and the Villa Mauresque, a residence that is to bed and breakfast what Escoffier was to slap-up dinners. Tucked away behind high, castellated walls off the Route de la Corniche, the spacious, discreet and wonderfully cool Villa oozes stylish tranquillity. Designed in 1860 by Chapoulard, who left examples of his neo-Moorish style all along the coast, there are in fact two buildings in more than an acre of garden that sweeps right down to the sea.

The rooms are sumptuously furnished and named after writers and painters. You can take a bath in the Rimbaud bathroom, armed with a pair of binoculars to spy on the super-yachts out to sea. Breakfast is served on a terrace at the water's edge and you can either spend the day in the gardens, oblivious to the razzmatazz beyond, or take advantage of its private port to go canoeing, windsurfing or scuba-diving.

One snag is that you have to leave your private paradise to find dinner, although a chef can be brought in to cook for those special occasions if you cannot drag yourself away. Though if you want a house party to remember, you can hire one or both villas and make the place your own. The whole place will cost you up to €37,000 (£24,000) a week in August but for that you can just lie back and get someone to fan you in the Baudelaire suite.

The Financial Times, by Mike Cassell
"Coasting away from the herd"
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