

The compact

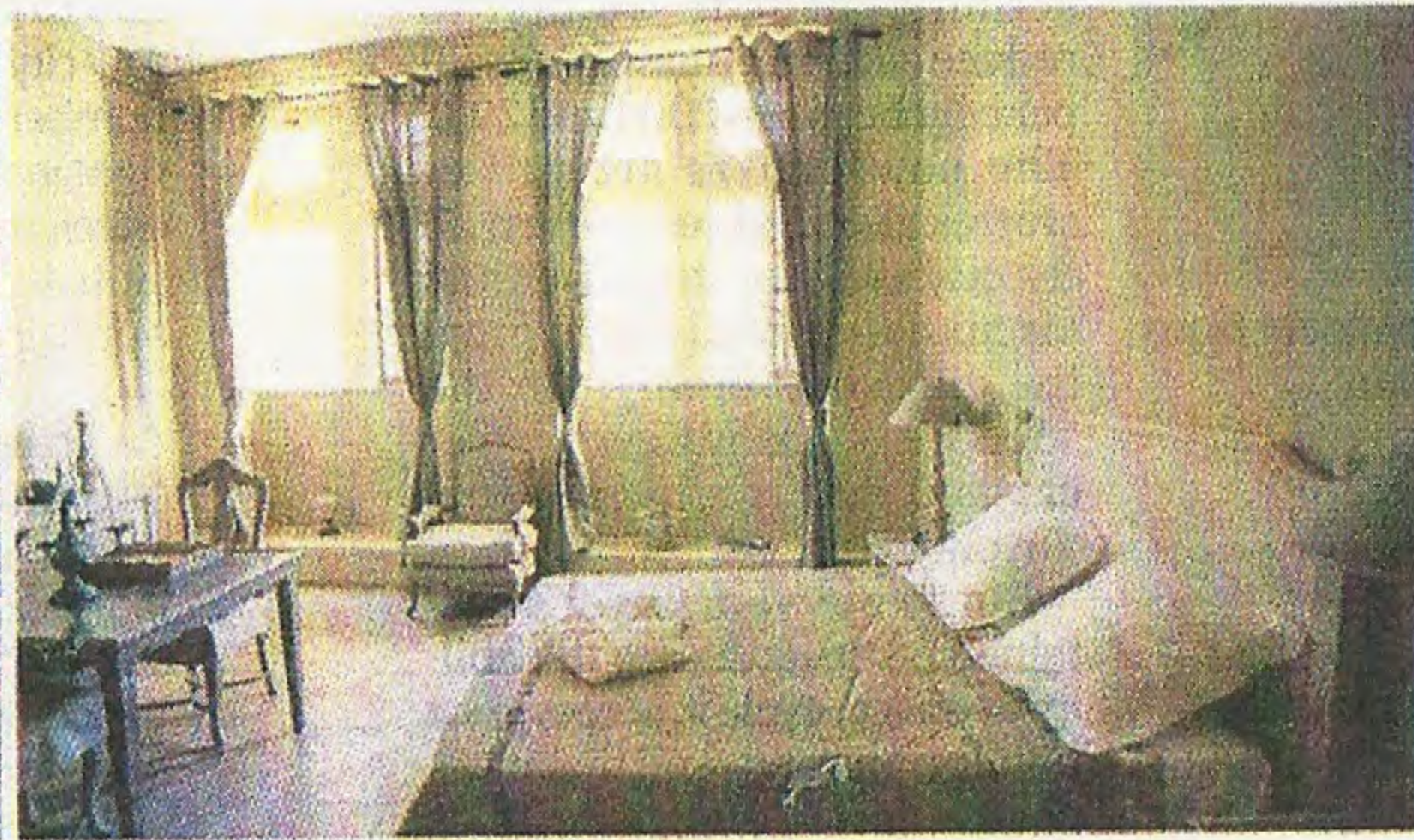


THE INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY

25 MAY 2008

# Traveller

## HOTEL OF THE WEEK



## Get thee to a cool, calm nunnery

**Step through the** doors of Le Couvent d'Hérépian and you'll find a bijou bolt-hole you can make your own in the leafy surroundings of the High Languedoc.

The sympathetic restoration of this 17th-century convent has resulted in a rural retreat characterised by cool, calm chic.

The building was stumbled upon first; the concept followed. The aim was to open a small, sophisticated hotel, where guests could delight in the discovery of this little-known part of south-west France.

The sleepy village of Hérépian is where you'll find Le Couvent, hidden in a landscape of such variety that one could easily while away a week here. The mountains, river valleys and Canal du Midi are the

backdrop for active pursuits, and Blue Flag Mediterranean beaches are a 30-minute drive away.

Then there's the wine; this is the biggest vineyard in the world. Until recently it was the producer of the people's plonk, but today it offers enviable vintages.

### The bedroom

The 13 suites are simply but elegantly furnished, blending modern and rustic, many with mountain views. Rooms vary in size, but all are spacious and en-suite, with kitchenettes and dining areas. Flat-screen TVs, DVDs, Wi-Fi, pre-loaded iPods and docks are standard.

### The food and drink

A "petit-déjeuner du terroir" - fruit, cheeses,

charcuterie and pastries - is laid out in the vaulted kitchen. There's a tapas menu and, with a day's notice, deli owner Michel Aninat will prepare regional dishes.

### The extras

The small spa use natural local ingredients.

### The access

Access is limited because of steps. Children are welcome. Small pets allowed.

### The bill

From £130 per room per night b&b.

### The address

Le Couvent d'Hérépian, 2 Rue de Couvent, 34600 Hérépian, France (00 33 4 67 11 87 15; [couvent.herepian.com](http://couvent.herepian.com)).

**Simone Kane**

Holy spirit: the 17th-century convent, left, has been transformed into a boutique hotel with 13 suites, right