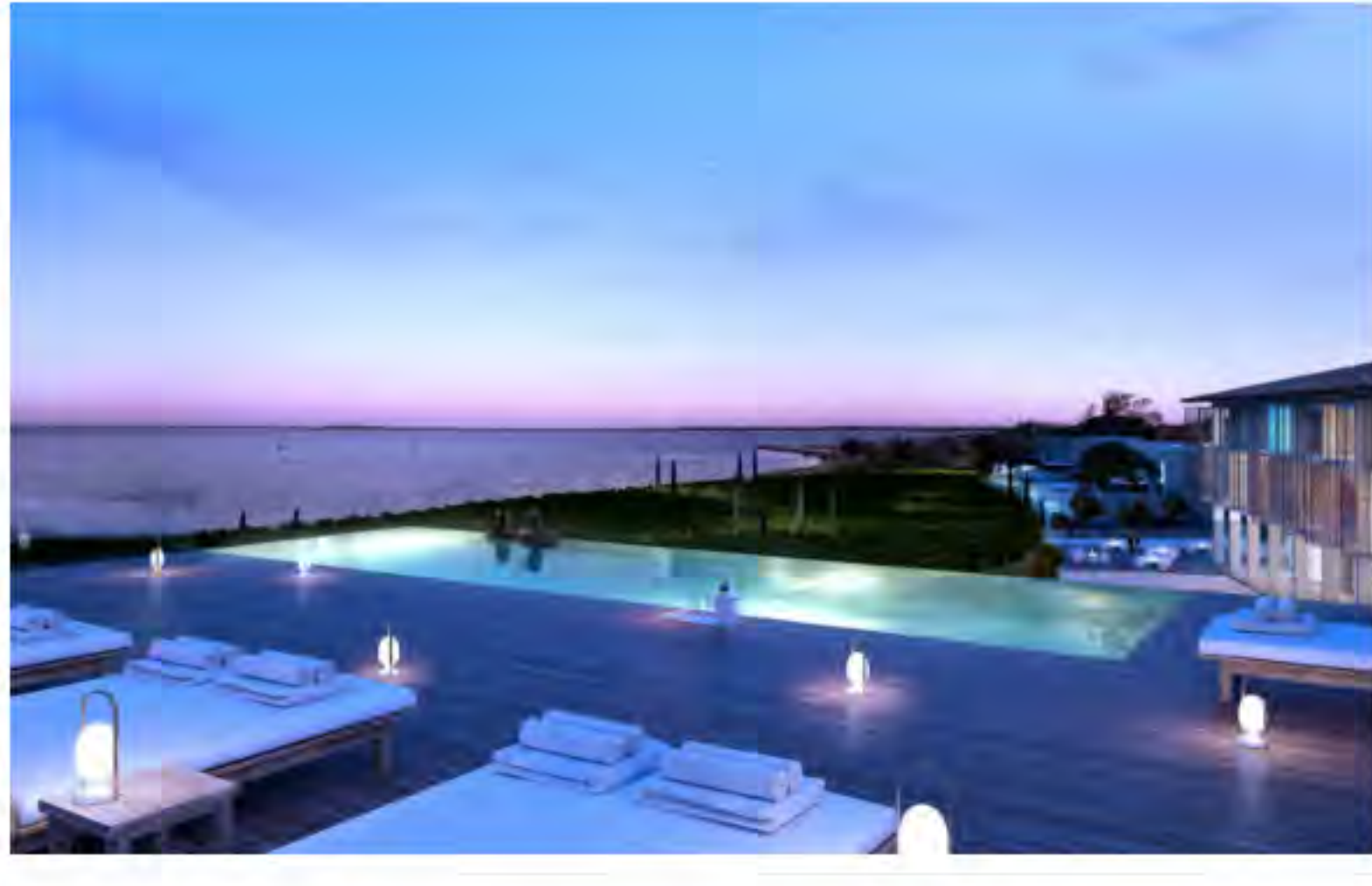


# An interview with Propriétés & Co Founder Miguel Espada

By Lauren Jade Hill

It was out of the idea to transform France's heritage-rich chateaux, abbeys and monasteries into luxury coastal and vineyard estates that Miguel



Espada founded

Propriétés & Co. Now considered a leading luxury real estate and resort developer, Propriétés & Co have an impressive portfolio encompassing the canal-side vineyard resort and spa Château de la Redorte, the Mediterranean vineyard estate Domaine de la Mandoune and the estate of Château des Roches Fleuries. Now the developer has another major opening on the horizon; the seafront vineyard to find out more about these real estate and resort projects.

## What was the inspiration behind Propriétés & Co ?

When my wife Cécile (a winemaker in Pezenas) and I decided to get married and return to the region where I grew up, I was seeking to create a new business, after having co-founded photoways.com, which is now photobox.com. At the same time, my father took me to visit an amazing site in the Corbières region that overlooked a chateau. This led me to think about developing this real estate concept further, and so we did so, with a talented architect from Leucate, Claude Certain. Our project: 15 villas amid lavender fields offering breath-taking views of the village of Durban and its medieval chateau. And so, the Domaine des Pins was born in 2005 – the first project that we created. What happened next: the buyers of these second homes in France asked me about the possibility of maintaining and renting their current properties. And then new hotels and resorts projects were developed step by step. It has been a learning curve over the last 15 years and we are now developing world class resorts.

## How did you first set about renovating the historic properties ?

The second project that we embarked upon was the complete renovation of a 17<sup>th</sup> century convent in Languedoc's national park. We have plenty experience dealing with heritage buildings since our family owns (and has renovated) a number of heritage buildings in the region, including Abbaye de Fontfroide, Chateau de Raissac, Seigneurie de Peyrat and Abbaye Saint André. I find it very interesting to combine ancient buildings, full of character, with contemporary luxury.

## What do you find most satisfying about seeing these projects realised ?

I am very fond of architecture and design. Therefore, for me, it's extremely exciting to develop concepts and projects from planning to completion. Projects that are designed also with the community in mind, and the destination. I find this highly satisfying.

## What makes the current properties in the group unique?

Propriétés & Co is both a long-term investor and a developer with an approach that focuses on overall resort development, management and agriculture. Prior to beginning a new project, we brainstorm with a large team in order to develop the right concept with the right sense of place. What's more, we are only entering into projects and selling villas and apartments where we have decided to keep real estate assets on a long-term basis.

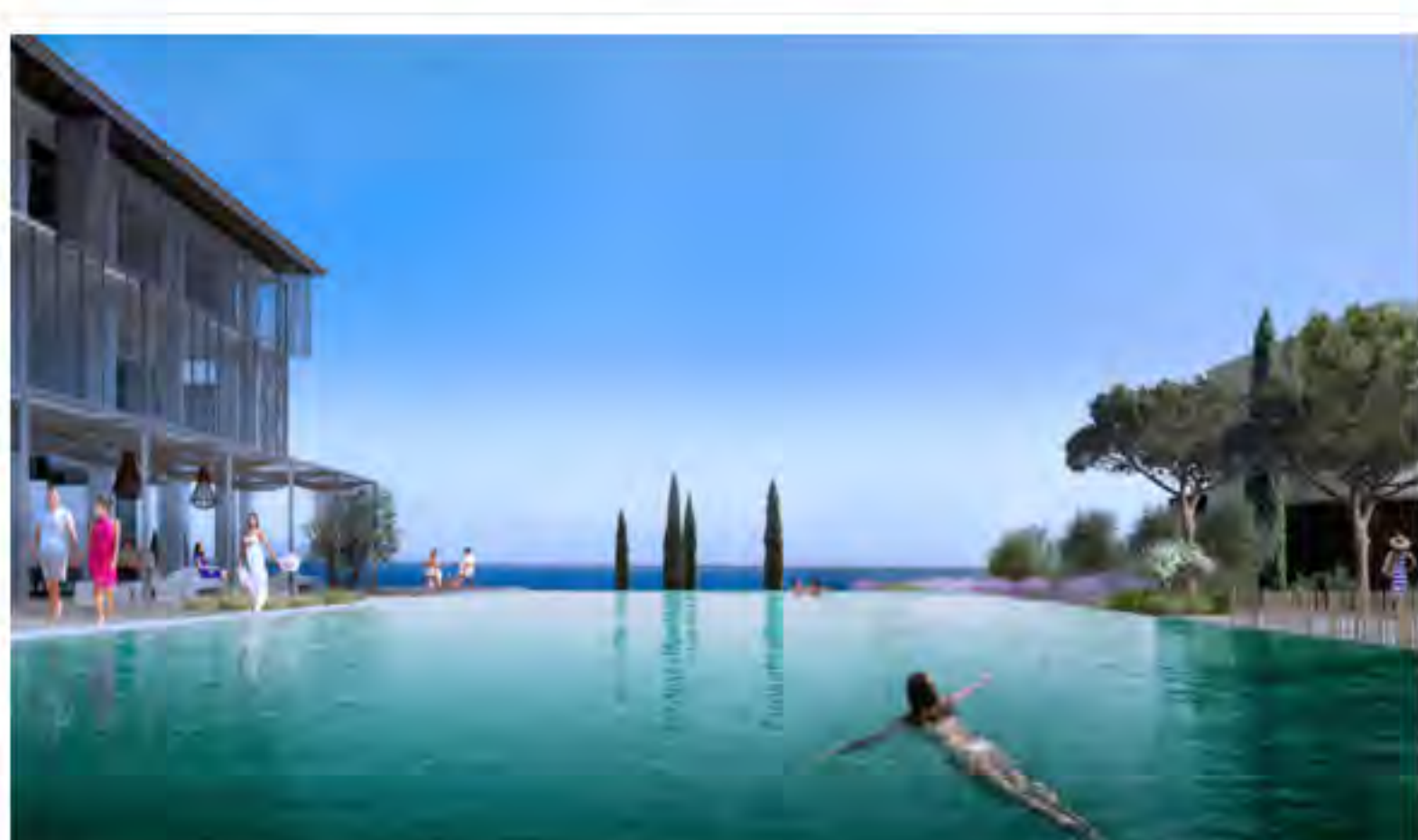


## Tell us about the new project La Baraquette ?

A magnificent holiday destination is being created just a stone's throw away from the port of Marseillan. Located in the South of France, the Thau Lagoon (seafood capital of the Mediterranean) is going through a similar renaissance to the one experienced by the Bassin d'Arcachon. Holidaymakers are attracted to this area for the authenticity that this region of oyster farmers, fisherman and wine growers offers. A mere 300m from the charming port of fishing and the oyster-farming village of Marseillan, the eco-tourism site of La Baraquette is a unique project situated on a beautiful (6.2 hectare) plot on the French Mediterranean coast. The site boasts panoramic views of the Bassin de Thau, Mont Saint-Clair and the Mediterranean Sea. The superb location of the La Baraquette project within a protected area of the South of France is unique, and its breath-taking views set it apart.

## How closely do you work with the architects and craftsmen on a project like this ?

Slow Life Architects for instance are almost part of our team: we



work very

closely and enjoy working together from the conceptual development stage through to delivery and ultimately the enhancement of properties in the future.

## La Baraquette is being created in partnership with Olivier Jolivet. What part is Olivier playing in this project?

Olivier is a leader in the corporate hospitality industry, formerly as the CEO of Aman Resorts. He has a hugely entrepreneurial spirit. As such, Olivier has decided to co-invest with me and the hotel of La Baraquette. At the same time, he is keen to invest and develop a hotel brand worldwide. We can expect some big announcements in the not too distant future.

## What can people expect from the new hotel at La Baraquette ?

When compared to other locations in the South of France, the sunsets witnessed at La Baraquette are unparalleled. The service will be second to none, to include a Mediterranean and a Japanese restaurant, and an organic juice bar close to the 1500sqm spa, which will overlook the vineyard and the Thau Lagoon.

## What future aspirations do you have for Propriétés & Co ?

Whilst our current focus is on the building and development of La Baraquette, we have also started to work on various projects in other parts of the region. These include the extension of Couvent d'Hérépian, endowing it with new features ten years on from its opening. We are also renovating and adding an extension to Sainte Croix Abbey in Provence, converting the large monastery into a resort retreat, and we are also planning three-five world class resort developments. For now, we focus less on those whilst we finalize various planning and building permits, so that we can realize this project here in France. We have also started some joint venture proposals overseas, with a view to co-developing a resort with local partners and international hotel brands. Indeed, it is an exciting time for Propriétés & Co.

[proprietes.co.uk](http://proprietes.co.uk)