

# Chateau de Candie : An Appetizing Getaway in the French Alps

Sisters Deborah Unger and Eileen Wise  
visit Chateau de Candie

[CULTURE & HISTORY](#), [EUROPE](#), [GASTRONOMY](#)

By Deborah and Eileen

Posted on 4 September 2024 (Updated 20 August 2024)



Our first glimpse of the Chateau de Candie, a historic small luxury hotel near Chambéry in the heart of Savoy, France, was picture postcard perfect. A winding road skirted a field of young vines to our right with the ivy-covered walls of the 14<sup>th</sup> century castle emerging from a lush forest backdrop. Across the valley the Chartreuse Alps sparkled under an azure sky.

We were in France for a three-day sisters' getaway, which is the ideal place for some rest, relaxation and fun. The scenery is spectacular; there's plenty of culture and good walking. And of course, delicious food and wine. The Chateau de Candie, just over an hour from both Geneva and Lyon, is in the middle of it all.

## Chateau de Candie History

Over the centuries the chateau has been home to noble Savoy families from France and Italy, and it retains the feel of a private country house. The Candie coat of arms features an escutcheon decorated with Fleur de Lis, a motif that appears in various shades and designs on wallpaper in many of the bedrooms and common areas.

It may well have been the idea of Didier Lhostis, an entrepreneur and art collector, to introduce the theme when he undertook extensive renovations in 1990 before opening the chateau as a hotel in 1994. He certainly had an eye for historic detail.

Thirty years later the hotel is still going strong and is now owned by Purple Summer. But good to see Purple Summer's Chateau de Candie still retains Lhostis' sense of style throughout.



Chateau de Candie



Its 25 rooms are individually decorated, each with their own character, antiques and vibe. There are smaller doubles and a range of so-called 'prestige rooms' and family suites including a duplex. There is also a triplex in a round tower – set at a distance from the main building, which used to be a dovecote in days gone by, and an artist's studio.

## Weddings at Chateau de Candie

Chateau de Candie is an idyllic location for weddings, so as we wandered around the grounds it was easy to imagine a bride and groom tying the knot by the fountain below the castle terrace, the featured pergolas decorated with spring flowers. The Tower triplex is also a favourite of newlyweds, with its winding staircase that links a living room to the bedroom and the bathroom above.

As we were taking our tour of the property, we spotted a mother and daughter also on a tour with the hotel's in-house wedding planner. It's not hard to see the appeal.

There's a wonderful terrace and garden, a ballroom crying out for a band or DJ, plus super restaurants, which we will explore in more detail below.

## Prestige Living



*Accommodation at Chateau de Candie*

We stayed in a spacious prestige room with regal feel about it which looked out onto the forest behind the hotel. There was a separate dressing area with minibar, kettle and a Nespresso machine leading to a spacious bathroom with a double sink, a decorative stand-alone bathtub and a superb shower: All very comfortable.

The vines we saw as we drove into the grounds are not there just for show. The chateau makes 3,000 bottles annually of its delicious dry white Candie 1891, made from viognier grapes. It's on the menu along with an extensive selection of fine wines from the region and beyond

## Wine Tasting and Dining at Chateau de Candie



*Oysters and champagne, photo by Lucas Pavy*

On our final night we experienced a spectacular wine tasting experience – an experience that the chateau offers to guests.

The charming chateau's resident sommelier, Raphael Diatta, who came to France from Senegal to study wines some years ago was our knowledgeable host for the evening. He talked us through six wines that all used the chardonnay grape. Eileen is pescatarian and her favourite dish on the menu was a ceviche of local fish; Deborah thoroughly enjoyed the Chardonnay Bugey Peillot with the Omble Chevalier de Cévennes, a beautifully moist river char served with fennel and potatoes.

The chateau offers lunch and dinner either on the terrace, weather permitting, or inside in one of two different cosy dining rooms, the Canteen and the Orangerie. The menu is devised and prepared by an inventive head chef Badara Gueye, also from Senegal.





*Oyster and Champagne bar at Chateau de Candie, c. Art Prism*

His dishes feature a mixture of traditional French and Savoy recipes, often with a twist. The ingredients are sourced locally.

In addition to the wine tasting, the chateau has picnic experiences which we were supposed to sample but unfortunately the weather put paid to that. However, we did have an oyster and Champagne treat inside instead. There's an impressive Champagne bar as you walk into the restaurant from the terrace, lit by a startling chandelier of elegant, inverse flutes. Certainly worth looking up!

## **Lac de Bourget and Aix-les-Bains**



*Lido restaurant on Lac de Bourget, c. Art Prism*



The Chateau is a 15-minute drive from France's biggest lake, Lac de Bourget, that sits in the shadow of the distinctive Dent du Chat – cat's tooth – peak. Here there's an opportunity for swimming and other water sports, plus fishing.

We opted for a leisurely lunch at the Lido Restaurant, Purple Summer's sister restaurant on the lakeshore. The setting right on the edge of the lake is stunning and fun to watch all the birdlife. The menu is varied and like Chateau de Candie prides itself on serving locally sourced food.

Chateau de Candie is just outside the town of Aix-les-Bains, which is certainly worth a visit. It was once known as the Alpine Riviera during the Belle Epoque and there's still a casino for those inclined to a flutter.



*Deborah and Eileen enjoying themselves*



Unfortunately, we picked a day when the wonderful Faure Museum, which features a renowned impressionist collection, including works by Rodin, Degas, Cezanne and Corot, was shut. All the more reason to return.

## Chanaz

We had more luck in Chanaz, a small village on the other side of the Lac du Bourget.

It is built on the canal that links the lake to the Rhone river and has a four-metre-high lock that allows boats to pass from one to the other. We took a pleasant excursion on a river boat to see how it works and enjoyed watching some colourful birdlife.

Chanaz is also famous for walnut and hazelnut oil, made using a press dating from 1868



*Boat trip at Chanaz*

We watched as the nuts were crushed using a millstone, powered by a mountain stream, and then transferred into a wood-burning oven. The man working the equipment said the length of time the nuts were kept in the oven was determined by the smell as he pointed to his nose. When he deemed them done, he transferred them to the press and less than five minutes later the oil starts dripping out. It was good to see that a centuries-old skill still continues today. There are a range of products available made from the oil, including walnut mustard which we highly recommend.



## Chambery

On our final day we went to Chambery, a medieval town with its impressive Castle of the Dukes of Savoy dating from the 13th century. At the tourist office you can pick up a helpful walking tour map that will lead you past most of the old town sites.

We were especially impressed with St. Francois de Sales Cathedral that was built in 1779 with an interior almost completely covered with 6,000 square metres of trompe l'oeils paintings. You think you are looking at carved walls and vaults, but it is all just paintings.

We could also have spent a day in nearby Annecy or tried to scale the Dent du Chat, which we were told would take a four-hour round trip, but we ran out of time. We managed a shorter one-hour circular walk from the base of the Chateau de Candie through the Bois de Candie.



Deborah also enjoyed a relaxing massage, which the hotel can arrange. Though the weather wasn't as cooperative as we would have liked, there was a gap in the clouds one afternoon which allowed us to spend some time at the pool. There's also a small gym with a running machine and cross trainer plus weights of many kinds.

The French Alps are just as enticing after the snow melts and for those of us who prefer to feel the earth under our feet perhaps even more so. Walking through the forest and pretty wildflower meadows is a very pleasant way to spend a few hours. The Chateau de Candie with its friendly staff provided us with a great base to enjoy the sights, sounds and especially the tastes of Savoy.

---

## Château de Candie

Nightly rates at Château de Candie start from €200 per room on a bed and breakfast basis. The property is available on an exclusive hire basis from €15,000. For more information and to book, visit: <https://purplesummer.com/destinations/accommodation-in-the-french-alps/>

*Main image by Lucas Pavy.*