



Away from the shiny marina scene of Porto Vecchio, Corscia's rugged northern coast is being revived by a new hotel with beach-shack vibes



There's a special kind of darkness up on Cap Corse. When the sun slips off the west coast of the peninsula, the crepuscular lavender fades into inky mauve and the far-flung northern tip of the Ile de Beauté – as the French sentimentally call Corsica – becomes a landscape of pure suggestion. A Genoese fort, so pretty in the sunset, is newly menacing in the dusk. Militant FLNC graffiti flashes from a rock face. Something stirs on the road ahead: a freedom fighter? A smuggler? Ah no, a wild boar. It snorts in my direction and trots away into the interior.



The pool at Domaine Misincu, Corsica

CREDIT: FELICIA SISCO

It's a darkness that isn't really conducive to driving up and down narrow unlit roads above deathly precipices with the ever-present risk of running into local [wildlife](#), but perhaps all worthwhile journeys ought to contain a hint of jeopardy. The islanders can generally distinguish a hire car from a local car and are adept at overtaking at 70 to 80kmph. You won't feel a thing. It was in such a darkness that I approached the Domaine Misincu, about 45 minutes' drive north from the airport at Bastia. A few moments later, I was looking out over the moonlit bay, marvelling at the stillness. This is western [Europe](#), still, but it feels wildly remote.



A pool at Domaine Misincu, Corsica
CREDIT: FELICIA SISCO

Corsica is notorious for its unspoilt, untamed countryside, its egalitarian spirit, and also a certain allusive delicacy. The English aristocrat, Dorothy Carrington, who made her home on the [island](#), marvelled at the quality of its village food, 'in which aroma can hardly be distinguished from taste'. But they're rugged, the Corsicans, like the scenery, which is almost all hills and mountains. French Resistance fighters took their name, the Maquis, from the fragrant yellow shrub that scents the island in spring. The 18th-century rebel Corsican Republic under General Pauli was a beacon of Enlightenment values and the first place in Europe to install universal suffrage (in 1755!). Corsica was also the land that shaped Napoleon Bonaparte.

The island was handed over by its Genoese occupiers to the French in 1769, was declared an official French département in 1796 and over time has become a favoured retreat for chic French travellers. In the summer, the natural pools and hiking trails can become over-run, but Cap Corse in the north retains an old Corsica vibe. You might think of it as Corsica's Corsica. It's 40km long by 10km wide, shaped like the island in miniature, a place of mountain passes, rolling hills and rustic beaches where you're more likely to hear Corsican dialect than French.



Domatne Misticu, Corsica

CREDIT: FELICIA SISCO

Misíncu, which opened quietly late last summer, aims to bring some of the south-coast smartness to the peninsula, but in a way that is sympathetic to Cap Corse – ‘*pas bling bling*’, as the owner Sylvain Giudicelli puts it. It’s built across a small river in a marine national park on the site of the beloved Hôtel le Caribou, which hosted Alain Delon, Serge Gainsbourg, Brigitte Bardot and President Valéry Giscard d’Estaing back in the day. When Giudicelli got wind of the fact the site was up for sale, memories of bohemian parties from his childhood flooded back to him. ‘For someone from Cap Corse to be able to buy the Caribou is like a Parisian buying the Eiffel Tower,’ he says. He and his business partner Reza Zographos have reimagined the old lady into a 29-room hotel, with two restaurants, a spa, and a gorgeous, aquamarine-tiled swimming pool. Interiors were overseen by Zographos’s partner, Olympe.



A bedroom at Domaine Misincu, Corsica
CREDIT: FELICIA SISCO

Tra Di Noi ('Between Ourselves' in Corsican) is the main place to eat, where the chef is talented Clément Collet, who has spells under H el ene Darroze at The Connaught and Pierre Gagnaire on his CV. Local touches include the majestic ewe's-cheese *brocciu*, shellfish and peerless charcuterie (those acorn-fattened boars don't go to waste). Still, it feels more aimed at Michelin inspectors than overnight guests, to judge from the amount of jus and espuma on the menu - plus the old-school Gallic annoyance that descended upon the waiter when I explained that vegetarians don't eat veal. A Spartera, down on the beach, is much more relaxed, a driftwood set-up on the sand where *fritto misto*, ceviche, antipasti and grilled octopus are served under a bamboo shade. And if you venture out, there are restaurants in nearby Erbalunga and a little further afield in Saint-Florent, where the unpretentious Mathys is a particular highlight. Perilous drive back, mind you.



Souped-up beach-shack is the aesthetic in the bedrooms: shale stone floors, white walls, lots of wicker and copper, but oddly dark. The overall look is handsome, even if there's a high probability of bumping into the lampshades. But until they turn up the lights, Misíncu's natural advantages come to the fore. It overlooks a miraculous bay where the water is filtered translucent by the seaweed, making for a [Caribbean](#)-like swim. Days fall into an easy routine of deliriously good breakfasts (thanks to that brocciu), excellent massages in the spa, and morning idling on the balcony, before heading out to explore in the afternoons. Then, you can let that darkness fall and the imagination take over.



Breakfast at Misíncu, Corsica

CREDIT: FELICIA SISCO



Table settings at Misíncu

CREDIT: FELICIA SISCO



Outside Misíncu, Corsica

CREDIT: FELICIA SISCO



Interior details at Misíncu

CREDIT: FELICIA SISCO



A living area

CREDIT: FELICIA SISCO



Smart beach-combing design at Misincu

CREDIT: FELICIA SISCO



The pool at Misincu, Corsica

CREDIT: FELICIA SISCO



A stand-alone bath in one of the villa's bathrooms

CREDIT: FELICIA SISCO



A bedroom

CREDIT: FELICIA SISCO



Outside Misíncu

CREDIT: FELICIA SISCO



A stairway at Misincu

CREDIT: FELICIA SISCO



Flower wall art details

CREDIT: FELICIA SISCO



Exterior details Misincu

CREDIT: FELICIA SISCO



Misíncu

CREDIT: FELICIA SISCO



The private villa pools at Misíncu overlook Corsica's wild landscapes

CREDIT: FELICIA SISCO



A shady seating area at Misíncu

CREDIT: FELICIA SISCO



Overlooking the sea at Misíncu

CREDIT: FELICIA SISCO



The gardens at Misíncu

CREDIT: FELICIA SISCO



Details at Misíncu

<https://www.cntraveller.com/gallery/misincu-corsica-review>