



At the Seafish Cafe



Hotel de France

Island provides entertainment for all

Tim Saunders takes his family on a long weekend to explore the delights of the island of Jersey

Victor Hugo, the French poet, once referred to the Channel Islands as “little bits of France dropped into the sea and picked up by Britain”.

We discover this at Jersey’s Living Legend Village where a fascinating video featuring Tony Robinson, John Nettles (who played Bergerac, Jersey’s famous detective) and other celebrities provides an insight into Jersey’s past. From smuggling through to German occupation, this is a land rich in history.

During our long weekend we spend time in St Helier not least because we stay at the four-star Hotel de France.

The wonderfully decorated hotel used to be a French chateau. There is refreshing artwork, from sculpture to figurative paintings.

Our family room at the back of the

before midday. Walking rather than driving does help introduce the visitor to the true feel of a place. There are a rich variety of accents and while a few islanders do speak French it is difficult to actually pinpoint the true native patois.

Many Europeans are drawn to Jersey, including the Spanish and Polish. For instance, at the Seafish Café where we enjoy crab cakes and posh fish and chips: cod, haddock, salmon and a Tempura king prawn, our waiter emigrated to the island from Madeira 26 years ago.

“There are so many more opportunities here,” he tells me. It does have the reputation of being a tax haven too and while we mooch along St Helier’s streets a new Lamborghini roars past. But that is the only supercar we see during our stay.



Liberation Square, St Helier

Nothing is too much trouble for the friendly hotel staff

hotel is far enough away from other guests for them hopefully not to hear the shrieks and screams from highly-strung daughter Heidi. Nothing is too much trouble for the friendly hotel staff who provide a mobile phone charger because we forgot ours.

They also source a dividing curtain to help our little daughters get to sleep at night... and us.

It is the hotel’s hearty breakfast that really scores highly, a choice of continental or full English, which does set you up for the day. And then we discover the softly lit luxurious swimming pool; the best we have ever swum in – it is so well designed, warm and not too busy. Suffice to say it is difficult to get out of the hotel itself

The balcony location of our enjoyable Sunday lunch at Sumas Restaurant overlooking fishing boats and the coastline provides the opportunity to savour the views around St Martin. The emphasis at this restaurant is very much to relax and enjoy.

Despite our daughters who cannot seem to sit still for more than five minutes, we do actually achieve this. We start with a Bucks Fizz and then a few glasses of Rose Pinot Grigio.

As it’s Sunday we try the Roast Angus and Yorkshire pudding; the largest Yorkshire pudding I have seen for some time. That certainly goes down well with Harriett and Heidi.

But it is the chocolate brownie and ice cream that truly captures their attention. Harriett gets a little nippy

on the balcony and so the fleece blankets that are provided to all diners out here are very useful. Harriett quickly wraps herself up to the amusement of fellow diners.

Afterwards we drive to Jersey Lavender where we see Maillette lavender imported from Provence and planted here in 1996. There are also other types from Norfolk and even their own homegrown variety, Elizabeth.

Those with a keen interest in lavender should enjoy a trip to the distillery where they can see the process in action together with samples to test. I didn’t know that lavender had so many uses but it can always be relied on for a good night’s sleep.

There are only two ways to travel to

Jersey: air or sea. We opt for Condor Ferries, sailing from Poole to St Helier. The journey takes around four hours.

In Club Class it feels as if we are in a cosy coffee shop, with waitress service. We sit in comfortable reclining leather seats where there are chocolate biscuits and cakes waiting for us together with tea and coffee as and when required.

The children’s video room is certainly much appreciated by our daughters as is Mr Colours, the resident balloon maker, on the return journey.

He makes Harriett a purple poodle, which she is very impressed by and for the first time this holiday, is lost for words.

Trip details

Attractions:
 Jersey’s Living Legend Village
www.jerseylivinglegend.co.je
 Jersey Lavender
www.jerseylavender.co.uk
 We visit the above attractions with The Jersey Pass, which can be bought in advance from £42 for two days and allows access to 11 attractions on the island.
www.jerseypass.com
Restaurants:
 Seafish Café, Liberty Wharf, St Helier
www.seafishcafe.com
 Sumas Restaurant, St Martin
www.sumasrestaurant.com
Travel: www.condorferries.co.uk
 Jersey Tourism: www.jersey.com
 Videos: www.travelwriter.biz