

Red

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Kate

*an old-fashioned
family girl at heart'*

THIS COULD BE THE FIRST THING *you wake up to tomorrow*

*You're just one click away from
the weekend you want... Red has
shortlisted the best city breaks – log on
and book in for an exclusive deal*

Edited by BEN COOPER

BEST FOR... KEEPING THE LITTLE ONES ENTERTAINED

Casa Howard, Florence



FLORENCE MIGHT NOT SEEM THE OBVIOUS choice for a family minibreak, but wherever you go in Italy, bambini always get a very warm welcome.

Stylish but

affordable Casa Howard could hardly be more child-friendly. The idea behind the hotel was to set up a guesthouse that would be the opposite of impersonal hotels, and operate on trust. The result is that from the moment you cross the threshold, you feel as though you're being invited into someone's home.

Each of the 12 rooms is individually decorated and features bags of charm and chic design. But the real

genius of Casa Howard is how well it suits your needs if you're travelling with children. For starters, it's only a five-minute walk from the train station, sparing you one of those grizzly bag-hauling journeys to the hotel en famille. Then there's the Play Room, a suite especially for families: it's well-stocked with Disney films and even has a climbing wall, so little ones can spend many a happy hour climbing it – as opposed to driving you up it.

A compact city, Florence is ideal for little legs. Introduce them to the great painters, or let them run around the courtyards of the Pitti Palace. The lush 16th-century Boboli Gardens are a great place to escape the crowds, as is a boat trip in the cool breeze on the River Arno. KAMIN MOHAMMADI

The Red deal: Book three nights and, on each day of their stay, children can have a free pizza and cola at Tarabaralla Pizzeria, which is next door. Rooms from £95. »

FIND IT, BOOK IT, AT REDONLINE.CO.UK Who has hours to spend finding the perfect boutique getaway? We've done the searching for you, and we only feature properties that have been given the Red seal of approval. These are brand new to Redonline.co.uk, so book now and see for yourself why we love them.

BEST FOR... HITTING THE SHOPS

Riad Kaiss, Marrakech

AMID THE NOISE AND CHAOS OF the Marrakech medina, Riad Kaiss offers a stylish sanctuary of peace and calm within easy bag-carrying distance of the busy souks.

One vast market place, the Marrakech medina sells everything from spices to leather goods to carpets, all of which you'll see at vastly inflated prices in top UK stores. It's hectic, so you need somewhere to escape to, and Riad Kaiss is just the place, with a babbling fountain at the heart of its hushed, traditionally tiled courtyard.

There are just nine luxurious rooms and suites, all beautifully decorated in a traditional Moroccan style with a contemporary edge. But it's definitely worth treating yourself to one of the two luxurious suites – rooms three and nine, with their own private roof terraces.

Riad Kaiss is a sort of decompression tank for the city. During the day, you can nip back to drop off your shopping and

catch a few rays on one of the rooftop daybeds, or treat yourself to a massage in the teal-coloured hammam.

From the riad, it's a two-minute walk to one of the main entrance points to the souks. Leave your map at home, as it'll be useless once you set foot in the labyrinth of stalls. Boutiques worth keeping an eye out for? Beldi (9-11, Rue Mouassine) does a nice line in high-end kaftans and cushion covers; Akbar Delights (Place Bab Feth) specialises in better-than-average babouche slippers and belts; Rue Laksour has a couple of good options, including Essence des Sens (No. 52) – a great place to pick up some argan oil products – and Alyed Gallery (No. 66), a glittering Aladdin's cave of antique Berber jewellery. HANA HYBS

The Red deal: Book two nights and get a third night free. Rooms from £165.



TOP AND RIGHT: Traditional tiles make an impact at Riad Kaiss
ABOVELEFT: The minaret at Koutoubia mosque

BEST FOR... ROMANTIC HIDEAWAYS

Relais Christine, Paris

IT'S PARIS. IT'S THE LEFT BANK. It's a stunning, centuries-old abbey... What could possibly be more romantic?

You enter Relais Christine, in Saint-Germain, through a high iron-gated entrance and then a lovely cloistered courtyard, making you feel as if you've been transported to a country house (it's actually a 13th-century abbey), rather than somewhere in the very heart of Paris.

Inside is an intimate, sophisticated boutique hotel of mostly antique décor – you'll spot wood-beamed ceilings (with original paintwork still in evidence), suits of armour, exposed brick walls and oil paintings.

All the individually decorated rooms and suites are super-cozy, with wonderful Louis XIII-style furniture and Victoriana-print wallpaper. And they don't begin and end with the traditional styling, either – all have WiFi, DVD players and flat-screen TVs, while the marble bathrooms,

with their un-13th-century fittings and indulgent Molton Brown toiletries, are to die for. It's well worth pushing the boat out and booking into either room 11 or 12 for access to the hotel's private back garden and a little wooden terrace for outdoor lounging and breakfast a deux.

If you can tear yourself away, there are bikes you can take out to explore. Park up and settle in with a champagne picnic lunch for a couple of hours at the nearby Jardin du Luxembourg, followed by macarons and tea at Ladurée Royale (16, Rue Royale). In the evening, choose between oysters at the Huitrier Régis (3, Rue Montfaucon) and the fabulous restaurant/jazz bar/socialite haunt La Sociétié (4, Place Saint-Germain-des-Prés). ISABEL CLIFT

The Red deal: Get an exclusive Relais Christine scented candle and a ticket per guest to either the Louvre or the Musée d'Orsay. Rooms from £250. »



TOP: The garden at Relais Christine ABOVE AND RIGHT: Paris is filled with gourmet treats and iconic sights

