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FANTASTIC BEASTS

The Indre region in the heart of France is notorious for witchcraft, a reputation it owes to legendary feminist author Georges Sand. She wrote down many of her homeland's folk tales and ghost stories in the 18th century, painting a picture of werewolves, cocadrilles (some dragon/snake hybrid), lavandières (demonic washerwomen, true story) and other grandes bêtes, as she called them. The beasts are somewhat kinder at Chateau le Breuil, one of the many little manors dotting the beautiful region. The house's Rhodesian ridgeback Lutèce, a vivid backyard filled with chickens, different sorts of night owls, and mysterious bats invite you to slow down and abide by the rhythm of nature in this 16th-century manor turned maison d'hôtes. You can rent a room or privatise the entire chateau for more extended stays - it hosts up to 26 people. Surrounded by moats, groves and 22 hectares of woodlands, this secluded place is the ideal starting point for discovering the region's natural, historic and artistic attractions. La vie est douce in the Indre and you can spend days hiking, biking, horseback riding or trying your hand at water sports on the many recreation lakes. Artists and foodies love the romance of the landscapes and have created plenty of workshops and fine dining experiences all over the place. A couple helms Le Breuil itself - he's a sommelier, she's a florist - and translated their respective talents and passion into the entire experience. They host workshops: wine tasting with Roman, a floral art introduction with Julie (who grows wildflowers on the castle grounds!), yoga, baking, painting, or any other tailor-made experience. As far as children are concerned, the dormitory, playroom, tennis field and swimming pond are there to keep them entertained. We love the expansive music and book library (Babar's Castle gives us major nostalgic vibes) and the fact that musical instruments casually lie around this place. Nothing beats a guitar lullaby before resting your head in the picturesque rooms' universe of old tapestries and a tasteful overdose of flowers. Don't panic if a bat comes in for a little show before you fall asleep; it's normal. The sweetest dreams come with an innocent little hint of nightmare in this enchanted place.

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