

Harper's Bazaar – March 2016

Les Manoirs de Tourgéville



NICOLE KIDMAN

Her return to centre stage

BAZAAR

ESCAPE

Edited by SASCHA SLATER

DEAUVILLE, MON AMOUR

The timeless allure of the Normandy coast. Plus: the artist Polly Morgan in Washington; and where the editors stay for Fashion Week

*'Untitled' by Rieko
Kawachi,
photographed on the
Normandy coast*



ALL THE PRETTY HORSES

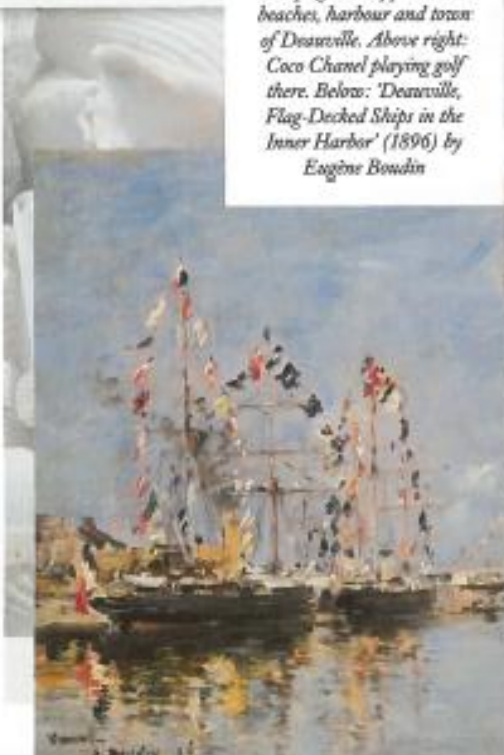
SASHA SLATER discovers the charms of Deauville, both maritime and equine, that have captured the imaginations of designers, authors and artists for centuries



This page and opposite: the beaches, harbour and town of Deauville. Above right: Coco Chanel playing golf there. Below: 'Deauville, Flag-Decked Ships in the Inner Harbor' (1896) by Eugène Boudin



Right: Yves Saint Laurent at his home in Deauville in 1993



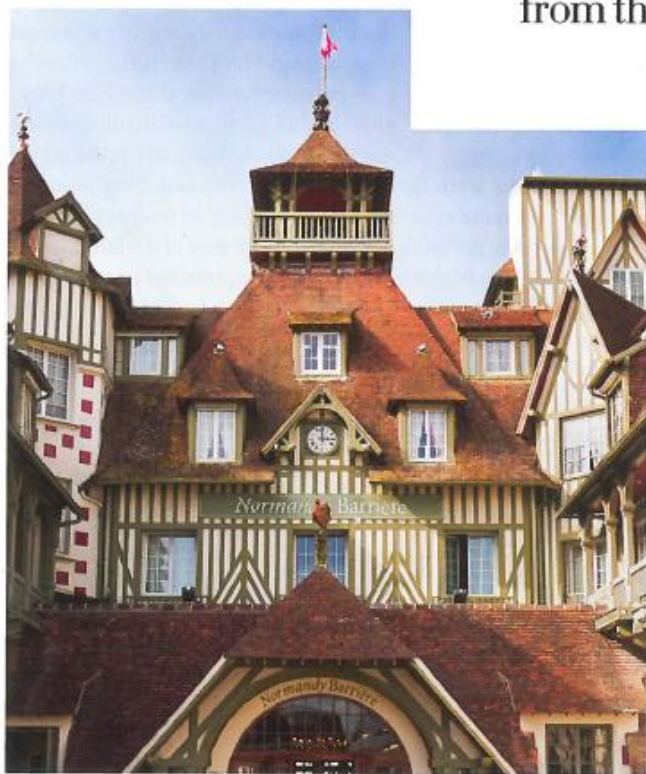
Right: Coco Chanel with her aunt in front of her boutique in Deauville in 1913



For a little seaside town on the Normandy coast, Deauville has far more than its fair share of glamour and literary glory. The novelist Gustave Flaubert lived on a farm on the site of what is now a Rothschild mansion, the Villa Strassburger. The place inspired some of Guillaume Apollinaire's most evocative poetry and Eugène Boudin's and Raoul Dufy's breeziest paintings. Colette summured here and Françoise Sagan won enough in the casino to buy herself a dream house in the nearby countryside.

The area's fashion credentials are no less impressive: Yves Saint Laurent lived in bucolic splendour at Chateau Gabriel, just minutes from the beach, and Jean Patou worked here. But it was Coco Chanel whose involvement with the town was the richest. Her lover, Boy Capel, was an inveterate horseman and he introduced the designer to the Normandy countryside in the first years of the 20th century. Not only did she open a wildly successful boutique in Deauville in 1913, but the region's two great hobbies, horses and boats, provided her

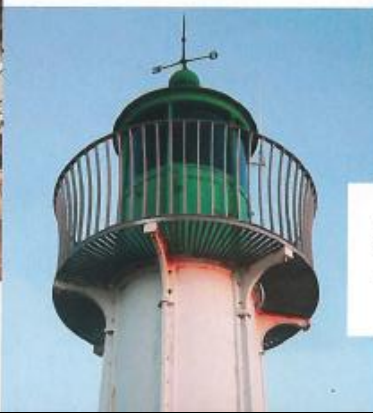
Yves Saint Laurent lived in bucolic splendour just minutes from the beach



with inspiration. The nautical stripes, plimsolls and wide-legged trousers that are so much a part of her silhouette come straight from the yachtsmen and sailors of the Channel's foam-flecked waters, while the iconic cross-stitching on her quilted bags references the numnahs under the saddles that cushioned the backs of Capel's polo ponies.

The combination of gambling, sailing and riding has been a potent lure ever since the days of the racing-mad Duc de Morny, who first persuaded his peers that the sea air would be good for their jaded livers in the 1860s, and turned the sleepy region known principally for Camembert, Calvados and cider into 'the Paris Riviera'. The Al Thanis of Qatar have bought an equestrian centre at Menil-Vicomte just south of the town. The Al Maktoums of Dubai – equally horse-obsessed – are resident too. At Le Drakkar, the town's brasserie and a social hub of the racing set, we ate mussels and steak at the personal table of John Magnier, the Irish racing tycoon.

Indeed, horses and boats are hard for anyone to avoid here – but then again, why would you want to? A jaunt on the *Doris*, a motorised launch owned by a French Navy commander, accompanied by the head of the Deauville Yacht Club,



From far left: Hôtel Barrière le Normandy. The lighthouse. A postcard of horse racing at Deauville from 1913



This page and opposite: Deauville's beaches, boats and boardwalk. Below: Josephine Baker with her pet leopard in the town in 1930

Apple orchards surround turreted chateaux that you can glimpse through the trees

led to an introduction to a racehorse trainer with whom we watched gallops on Deauville beach the following morning at dawn. Both experiences were equally beautiful and exhilarating. My sister and I also had a glorious hour being drilled by a severe equestrienne at the Pôle International du Cheval, a swish riding centre worthy of Jilly Cooper, where the gilded

youth of France learn the finer points of polo and show jumping. Everyone was quite astonishingly welcoming: so long as you show an interest in the prevailing passions, you're part of the family.

Even if you are frightened of horses, disapprove of gambling and feel queasy on a punt, there is still much joy to be had from a trip to Normandy. In many ways, it is like an idealised South Coast of England, but one in which the sun shines, the champagne sparkles and the food, from the oysters that start a meal to the creamy cheeses you toy with at the end, is exquisite. The landscape and buildings are recognisable to visitors to Cornwall or Dorset, but here, somehow, it's all just a little bit more special. The thatched cottages have irises planted along the top of the eaves, adding a sprinkling of fairy-tale prettiness. There are rolling green fields where ponies graze, but these aren't plump Thelwell cobs – they're liquid-eyed Arabians. Apple orchards surround magnificent, turreted chateaux that you can glimpse through the flickering shadows of the trees as you pass. The beach isn't





Right: riding at the Pôle International du Cheval in Le Chateau riding boots



foot-torturing pebbles and flints, but the wide, generous expanses of soft tawny sand that prompted Monet to reach for his paintbrush. The seafront at Cabourg inspired Proust's elegiac descriptions of a fin-de-siècle seaside resort complete with Grand Hotel, sea front and bathing machines, in *A l'Ombre des Jeunes Filles en Fleurs*. Even the themed restaurants (and I confess, on one occasion we gorged ourselves at Les Tonneaux du Père Magloire while seated inside a giant Calvados barrel) serve food to make you whimper with delight. To explore properly requires a car – you can't be dependent on public transport here – and, this being a highfalutin area, you want one that fits in. We found a Mercedes V Class people carrier transported us and our brood of seafaring riders in appropriate style from stables to sand dunes and back again, via bewitching little *brocante* shops that beckoned us off the winding lanes.

Many of these antique shops were half-timbered, and so was our hotel, but that is

The beach is of soft tawny sand that prompted Monet to reach for his brush



where the resemblance ends. Les Manoirs de Tourgéville was once the home of the film director Claude Lelouch, whose *Un Homme et Une Femme*, with its breathy theme song and Sixties glamour, has inspired endless dreamy fantasies of French lovers. Now run by the Groupe Floirat, which also owns the Hotel Byblos in Saint-Tropez, Les Manoirs has a 50-seat cinema where Lelouch would show his latest film to his New Wave friends and in which guests today enjoy private screenings. The spa, swimming pool, tennis courts, wild-flower meadows and superb restaurant 1899 – with the friendliest, most understanding and accommodating maître d' – meant that it was a wrench to leave. But each time we ventured from the hotel we were rewarded with some new dazzling sight round every bend in the sun-dappled road. □ Les Manoirs de Tourgéville (www.lesmanoirstourgeville.com), from about £120 a room a night. For more information about Deauville and Normandy, visit www.deauville.org or www.normandy-tourism.org. Mercedes-Benz.co.uk. Brittany Ferries (www.brittanyferries.com) operates between Portsmouth and Caen, from about £155 one way for a car plus family of four; you can enjoy a cabin, a film and lunch.



Right: the terrace restaurant at Les Manoirs de Tourgéville

