

ABBAYE DE LA BUSSIÈRE, CÔTE-D'OR

A pre-dinner champagne cocktail in summer among the topiary yew hedges in the garden, or a foray on to the pond in the rowing boat, are among the many memorable moments of a celebratory stay at Abbaye de la Bussière.

The British owners of this Burgundy retreat have preserved the sense of spirituality and charm of this former Cistercian abbey while restoring and enhancing the building and parkland (uncovering frescos and breathing new life into unloved spaces), transforming it into an outstanding property that is a member of Relais & Châteaux. The cuisine is well worthy of a big celebration (the *abbaye* was awarded a Michelin star in 2007), while the affable sommelier presents some surprising, noteworthy local vintages that you're unlikely to have even heard of. Rooms are comfortable



and characterful, such as the junior suites in the eaves, transformed from former monks' cells into upmost luxury, with views over the hamlet of La Bussière and the Ouche valley. The crypt plays host to blessings and services for the renewal of vows; while the recently restored *orangerie* is perfect for a private party. For couples wishing to

venture beyond the *abbaye*, take a private wine tasting tour to some of the regions least-accessible producers; or borrow the Westfield sports car for a romantic drive along the *Route des Grands Crus*. @

Kate Crockett

Rooms from €200. Abbaye de la Bussière, La Bussière-sur-Ouche, 21360 Dijon. Tel: (Fr) 3 80 49 02 29, www.abbaye-dela-bussiere.com