



Tour d'Azur

Chasing the fragrances and flavors of the French Riviera in an Aston Martin DB12



For all its affiliations with a certain super-spy, an Aston Martin isn't a particularly discreet conveyance. So I discover as I pull away from the **Anantara Plaza Nice Hotel**—where I spent the previous 24 hours enjoying Breton seaweed spa treatments and rooftop Negronis—and onto Nice's famed **Promenade des Anglais**. Smartphones snap away at the rakish, Iridescent Emerald DB12 coupe as I head west,

the sparkling Mediterranean to my left. At Cagnes-sur-Mer, I lose the would-be paparazzi flanking the seaside road with a swift diversion to the A8 motorway, and then I'm Alps-ward on the **Route Napoléon**, named for the dethroned emperor who rode this way on his return from exile in 1815.

Above: the town of Grasse, a perfume industry center in the hills above the French Riviera

StockByM/iStock/Getty Images (Grasse)



Clockwise from top left: diners outside Restaurant Acchiardo, in Nice's Old Town; the gardens at Hôtel Château de la Chèvre d'Or; Trésors Publics, an artisanal shop in Nice; a suite at the Anantara Plaza Nice Hotel

Blazing through the gears and the switchbacks, I marvel at the profusion of flowers and the sweetness of the air in the hills around Grasse, a center of perfume manufacture for centuries. It's a place I wanted to see (and smell) in

person, as I have a date with a perfume this afternoon. Brimming with the fragrances of jasmine, lavender, and orange blossom, I curve back toward the sea, drinking in the howl of a hand-built twin-turbo V8.

Back in Nice's historic center, I lunch on crispy-creamy *panisses* (chickpea flour fritters) and fillets of bream dressed in tangy *sauce tomate* at **Restaurant Acchiardo**, a font of Niçoise specialties since 1927. Afterward, at **Trésors Publics**, a shop dealing exclusively in artisanal French goods, I stock up on *herbes de Provence* and scented soaps from the very town I just circumnavigated, Grasse. Treasures in hand, I slip back into the DB12's hand-stitched leather embrace, shooting past the verdant **Promenade du Paillon** and east out of the city to the



Moyenne Corniche, one of the most scenic roads on the planet.

I race upward along the cliff's edge to the Medieval village of Èze. In the workshop of **Maison de Parfums Galimard**—originally founded in Grasse in 1747—I inhale the tutelage of Galimard's perfumer, Yusuke Masuda, who leads me in a fragrance-creation course.

By the end of the lesson, I've concocted a perfume laced with white musk, fig, neroli, bergamot, and lavender. The synergy is intriguing: floral, with a subtle animal intensity.

From Galimard, it's a short, steep walk to **La Chèvre d'Or**, the two-Michelin-starred restaurant at the **Hôtel Château de la Chèvre d'Or**. Swooning over the view of Golfe de Saint-Hospice (not to mention chef Arnaud Faye's preserved octopus with rose-scented bees), I consider my next move in the DB12. A quick lap of Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat? Or perhaps an expedition to Paris? I know a nice little restaurant off the Place de la Concorde, and this Aston Martin can fly.

THE CAR

2024 Aston Martin DB12



Last May's Cannes Film Festival was an appropriate venue for the unveiling of the Aston Martin DB12, considering that the British automaker's DB series is as synonymous with cinema as it is with the jet set among which M16's top agent tends to circulate. The coupe is so potent (671 horsepower, a top speed of 202 miles per hour) and luxurious (hand-stitched Bridge of Weir hides, an 1170-watt Bowers & Wilkins sound system) that Aston Martin calls it the world's first super tourer. From \$245,000, [astonmartin.com](https://www.astonmartin.com)

Hemis/Alamy Stock Photo (restaurant); courtesy of La Chèvre d'Or (garden); courtesy of Anantara Plaza Nice Hotel (suite); courtesy of Trésors Publics (shop)