

## Alastair Campbell's heaven on earth: Puyméras

**Alastair Campbell spends his summers in Puyméras in Provence, where he likes to cycle up Mont Ventoux with his son.**

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Villagers in Puyméras helped Alastair Campbell and his family avoid journalists. Photo: AFP

I love visiting Puyméras, a charming little village near Vaison-la-Romaine, in Provence. My partner, Fiona, and I have been going there for our main holiday for almost 30 years. The weather's generally good, the region boasts some lovely scenery, and over the years we've got to know both the place and the people well. In fact, we discovered the village by chance. We had been renting a house on the other side of Mont Ventoux in a place called Flassan, but it became unavailable, and an agent found the house in Puyméras. We were instantly smitten.

The must-see attraction in the area is Mont Ventoux and we have a fantastic view of it from the house. It seems different every time you look at it. My elder son and I cycle up it once a year (last time it took me just 90 minutes longer than Lance Armstrong).

I can recommend a very good local restaurant, Le Girocedre (0033 4 90 46 50 67), which serves excellent French cuisine. The owner has become a good friend. The first-time visitor should also head for the terrace of Le Sanglier et L'Abricot (90 46 40 71), get to know some of the local characters, and make friends with Zizi who runs the bar. That's another thing about Puyméras: the locals are so friendly and hospitable. A couple of years ago, toward the end of my time in Downing Street, a few unfriendly journalists flew over to bother us, but the villagers made sure they were usually in the wrong place at the wrong time. Fiona and I, plus our three children, all love Puyméras and it is hard to imagine summer without it.

Alastair Campbell's novel, 'All In The Mind', is published by Arrow Books in paperback on Thursday..