



2 Brimstone Hotel

20 Heckfield Place Hampshire

This elegant country-house hotel offers an unusually sharp, earthy style. Think lime-plaster walls, minimalist floral arrangements and hand-woven headboards. Outside are 400 acres of grounds to tramp, including an arboretum and farm, or you could just stay put: the intimately lit Moon Bar serves cocktails and an autumn cultural programme includes film screenings and wreath-making workshops. The chef Skye Gyngell oversees the food; of the two restaurants, the low-key Hearth and its fire-grilled food is perfect for chillier days. Look out for the fig leaf and honeycomb yogurt at breakfast and the freshly cooked scones at afternoon tea. There is also a spa and gym.

Details B&B doubles cost from £350 (0118 932 6868, heckfieldplace.com)

21 The Cow Dalbury Lees, Derbyshire

Unlike many inns-gone-boutique, the Cow, set on a village green amid striking countryside west of Derby, has ensured that regulars remain as welcome as its newer, more style-conscious clientele. A smart bar menu helps to lure the latter; snacks are more blue-cheese puffs and homemade beer crackers than pickled eggs, while the main menu features creative dishes such as pig's cheek

and miso croquettes, and chicken thighs with a peanut butter and jelly glaze. Interiors have been stripped back to expose original features, while a dozen revamped bedrooms feature oil paintings and grey tartan blankets. Hikes between the Peak District's limestone crags, spectacular in silvery autumn light, add further motivation to head this way.

Details B&B doubles cost from £130 a night (01332 824297, cowdalbury.com)

22 Soho Farmhouse Great Tew, Oxfordshire

Near Chipping Norton in the perfectly preened Oxfordshire Cotswolds, this Soho House offering is set across a hundred acres of fields, lakes and 200-year-old farm buildings. It's your own playground and it's absolutely huge — hence the complimentary electric milk floats that ferry guests about. Go for the Cowshed spa, cinema, cookery school, indoor pool, tennis courts, horse riding, spinning studio or kids' club. The food is good too, ranging from sustainable British classics served in a huge barn to a boathouse sushi grill. Or go for the spacious, timber-framed cabins: handsome, rustic retreats epitomised by hurricane lamps and vinyl turntables. Their private decks have rocking chairs, great for late-afternoon hot chocolates as the sun sets.

Details B&B doubles cost from £350 a night (01608 691000, sohofarmhouse.com)

el guide



1 Gara Rock

Wainwrights' Inn serves smoked meats, fish and cheeses alongside local ales.

Details B&B doubles cost from £350 a night (01539 438062, brimstonehotel.co.uk)

3 Tuddenham Mill Suffolk

Dating from the 17th century, Tuddenham Mill blends design-hotel smart with country comfort. Rooms in the original water mill typify that balance: they have 6ft Presotto beds, Bose sound systems and Frisbee-sized shower heads, but also original beams and two-person stone baths. Days can be spent lazily, playing board games and ▶

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A Georgian house in Hampshire, a Lake District spa or a Hebridean hideaway — **Richard Mellor** picks the UK's 30 best places to stay

1 Gara near Salcombe

A new addition to the Gara Rock autumn break are dotted with panelled log baths and a spa, indoors as well as a perfect for menu, served restaurant, with optional cider-s transfer from of Salcombe