



HANGOUTS OF THE STARS

Who hasn't indulged in a touch of "Isn't that...?"/"Stop staring, you're embarrassing me" action in a hotel? It's all part of the fun, we'd suggest, particularly in the swankier hangouts. We've had our spies out and about again this year. Here's who they spotted (and possibly selfie bothered).

Soho Farmhouse in Great Tew, Oxfordshire, hosted **Meghan Markle's** hen party. Indeed, most weekends the 100-acre estate is like a 3D version of Heat magazine — there's always a good chance you'll recognise someone off the telly. Regulars include the **Beckhams**, **Eddie Redmayne**, **Alexa Chung** and **Liv Tyler**.

Further west, the Sheppey Inn draws on its proximity to Glastonbury to attract a procession of well-known artists. The singer **Paloma Faith** recently checked into its new cottages, while actors **Rhys Ifans**, **John Hannah** and **Anna Friel** have all been seen propping up the bar.

Coldplay's **Will Champion** and Keane's **Tom Chaplin** are among the musicians who stay at the West House in Biddenden, Kent (chef-patron Graham Garrett drummed for 1980s rock bands the Dumb Blondes and Ya Ya). Other guests have included **Cate Blanchett**, **Max Beesley** and **Julian Clary**. But Garrett is probably more excited by the presence of fellow chefs **Gary Rhodes** and **Richard Corrigan** checking out his food.

After the restaurant critic Giles Coren claimed the Bell Inn, in the Cotswolds, offered the "best mouthful of my life", **Kate Moss**, **Jade Jagger** and **Steve Winwood** have all been spotted here. Boxer **Anthony Joshua** swapped his usual diet of raw eggs and steak for the tasting menu at Lymptone Manor in Devon, while guests working up an appetite at Watergate Bay, outside Newquay, include the film critic **Mark Kermode** and actors **Stephen Mangan** and **Meera Syal**. At the other end of the UK, Marmalade, on Skye, has proved a luxurious hideaway for Star Trek Hollywood star **Chris Pine**.

Susan d'Arcy

The indoor pool at Cowley Manor. Below, **Anthony Joshua**, **Cate Blanchett** and **Meghan Markle (as she was)** have all been spotted this year



impressed: the location is spot-on for exploring the Bard's block, while back at base you can eat chateaubriand in the smart bistro and sleep in a well kitted-out bedroom cocooned in HdV's signature dark colours. There's fabulous, child-friendly service and an extraordinary wine list (the clue's in the name). *Doubles from £120, B&B; mains from £13.50; hotelduvin.com*

□ HAMPTON MANOR WEST MIDLANDS 11 & £££

"Just outside Solihull" is factually accurate but cruelly misleading, because this foodie hideaway at Hampton in Arden, once owned by 19th-century Tory prime minister Sir Robert Peel, has a 45-acre buffer zone from anything urban. It is an unpretentious temple to cutting-edge cuisine: so, the restaurant is Michelin-starred but the waiters are in chinos, and guests can join gin tastings or have after-dinner brandies around the terrace's

firepits. Bedrooms, meanwhile, have been inspired by the Arts and Crafts movement. *Doubles from £175, B&B; four-course tasting menu from £75; hamptonmanor.com*

□ RAGDALE HALL LEICESTERSHIRE 11 & £££

Everything runs with Swiss-like efficiency at this cheery red-brick Victorian mansion in Melton Mowbray. The spa's excellent therapists collect you bang on time, energetic trainers work you hard (but finish to the second), waiting staff deliver tasty calorie-counted meals seamlessly, and you never wait at the bar, which these days serves alcohol. Admittedly, the decor is conservative and the rooms functional, but that only encourages you to spend more time in the vast thermal suite and glamorous £4m rooftop infinity pool. *Doubles from £207, full-board, with a 50-minute treatment; ragdalehall.co.uk*

□ THE COW DERBYSHIRE 11 & £££

New last Christmas, this boutique boozier is enlivening an unlikely part of Derbyshire with its English tapas menu and country-chic decor. The Cow dazzles white beside Dalbury Lees's village green, offering a dozen box-fresh bedrooms full of slick urban touches such as timber ceilings, basalt basins and tellies you could surf on. Out front, the bar-cum-restaurant succeeds in being both decadent and democratic; only a few tables can be reserved, allowing for walk-up trade, while the small-plates menu is well priced and great for grazing. *Doubles from £130, B&B; mains from £11; cowdalbury.com*

BEST NEVER GOES ON SALE