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WEBSITE OF THE YEAR

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Lifestyle › Travel

The cosy Cotswold hotel perfect for a foodie getaway

The Swan, hidden away in the picture-perfect village of Ascott-Under-Wychwood, is the perfect escape for gastro-enthusiasts

 The Swan, Ascott-Under-Wychwood - in pictures



One of the largest Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the UK, the **Cotswolds** is an easy getaway for jaded Londoners.

With its honey-hued stone, idyllic cottages and rolling hills, and the fact that it's only 1 hour 20 minutes away by train (Paddington to Charlbury), it makes for the perfect weekend country escape.

We headed down to **The Swan** in the village of Ascott-Under-Wychwood to experience the Cotswold charm for ourselves (and sample its impressive pub menu).

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35 Inverness Street, London, NW1 7HB United Kingdom

T: +44 (0) 20 3178 3981 M: +44 (0) 776 605 0192 www.gerbercomms.com

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Where is it?

The Swan is nestled in the chocolate-box village of Ascott-Under-Wychwood, near Chipping Norton in the Cotswolds. Described by a local taxi driver as a 'one pub, one shop' village, The Swan is the 'one pub' – and it's the only one you need.

Elsewhere in the area are the villages of Milton-Under-Wychwood and Shipton-Under-Wychwood – both within easy walking distance and ideal for a post-Sunday lunch ramble. The Hare in Shipton is a perfect destination for an afternoon pint and snack.



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Cool stay of the week: a cosy cottage in the Cotswolds countryside

Style



The inside of The Swan (Country Creatures)

From the outside, The Swan mimics the rest of the properties in Ascott-Under-Wychwood, clad in Cotswold Stone with blue-painted window frames. The entrance leads to the downstairs pub, with open fireplaces, low ceilings and worn wooden floors.

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Everything about it screams country retreat. It's cosy, warm, inviting and – even though we visited on a warm August evening – is begging for a Christmas tree and a glass of mulled wine to greet you with as well.

The eight rooms of the hotel are up a small, steep set of stairs. The beds are wide and supremely comfortable, with a deep, free-standing bath to the side, and closet toilet at the front.

A window seat dotted with plump cushions offered the perfect nook to sit and look at the horses trotting past. Freshly ground coffee was placed on a tray with biscuits, and bathrobes were clean and fluffy, like a warm hug when you put it on.

Food & Drink

The food is undoubtedly the main event at The Swan. Obviously hugely popular with the locals, the restaurant was buzzing on a Friday evening.

The chopped raw hanger steak and pickled dressed crab made for delicious starters, while the chicken and leek pie was phenomenal as the main course. On a bed of fluffy, creamy mash and silky gravy, it was served alongside a cool glass of Picpoul.



Pie at The Swan (Country Creatures)

Other highlights of the menu were the 'mucky toast'- dripping soaked sourdough with salty scratchings laid atop, while the burger is one you can't put down.

In the morning, a generous free buffet is laid on top of the bar for you (including make-your-own Bloody Marys), with hot food also available to order. The luxurious eggs royale was delicious, with hugely generous portions of smoked salmon and lashings of hollandaise.

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Which room?



One of the rooms at The Swan (Country Creatures)

Go for one of the rooms with a bath rather than a shower – the tubs are enough to make you want to spend an entire weekend soaking there.

Best for

Couples looking to get away from the city – especially as The Swan is also dog-friendly.

Details

Rooms from £151.20, countrycreatures.com/the-swan/ ■

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