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26/08/2019



The Swan, Ascott-under-Wychwood, Oxfordshire: hotel review

Cosy up in this revamped Cotswolds gastropub grazing on pork pies and sipping espresso martinis served on tap

By [Clare Hargreaves](#)

August 26, 2019 at 6:16 pm

The Swan in a nutshell

A [Cotswolds](#) gastropub with rooms, where ancient timber meets contemporary design.

The vibe

This 16th-century half-timbered inn, at the heart of pretty Ascott-under-Wychwood, has been revamped by hotel gurus Sam and Georgie Pearman (the couple are also behind the spruced-up [Talbot in Malton](#)). It bears all their hip-yet-homely hallmarks, including playful, eclectic furnishings and art, sink-into beds and spot-on seasonal food. You'll also find the usual attention to detail, from swan-shaped room keys crafted at the local forge to homemade cookies in bedrooms. British to the core, it appeals to locals, young and old, and city foodies seeking a rural weekend escape.

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This 16th-century half-timbered inn has been revamped with playful, eclectic furnishings and art

Which room should I book at The Swan?

The previous owners commissioned well-known designers to create each room, so Sam and Georgie have left these largely unchanged. Room five, which overlooks the neighbouring church and graveyard, is probably the most 'Pearman', with pea-green walls, heavy cream drapes and an in-room bath stocked with 100 Acres Apothecary products made (by Georgie) from natural botanicals. For an attic hideaway, bag room six while, if you're coming with family, choose between the family room (sleeping four) or the cottage (sleeping six); the latter overlooks the garden courtyard.



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The food and drink

Seasonality and creativity drives head chef Adam Abbott, previously of [The Wild Rabbit](#) in Kingham. You only have to look at his pork pies, made using rare-breed meats from Herefordshire's Huntsham Court Farm, to see that he doesn't compromise on quality. Vegetarians will be happy here, too – starters might include broad bean hummus topped with spiced aubergine and grated hazelnuts, served with a platter of mixed sourdough breads from nearby Chipping Norton. From the choice of mains, try The Swan's signature smoked haddock Monte Carlo and a wholesome vegetables-and-grains bowl.



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Desserts are playful twists on classics, including Jaffa Cake chocolate pudding with pistachio ice cream, and custard tart with Ron Zacapa-and-raisin ice cream. There's also a pleasing nod to locality, with Banbury cakes and Blue Monday cheese (produced by former Blur band member, Alex James). Drinks are similarly fun, and in many cases local. On tap at the bar is Bobby Beer, Cotswold Lager and Pearson's cider. Local brewery Hook Norton rules the roost when it comes to beer, and for vodka, there's Black Cow from Dorset.



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Breakfast

Served in the bar, breakfast kicks off with a buffet of cereals, fresh fruit juices, cold meats, croissants and jams. Cooked dishes include a full English, a blow-out Prospector Breakfast (made using Huntsham meats) and Chapel & Swan hot smoked salmon served with scrambled duck eggs. The Mucky Toast makes a great change from the norm – toasted sourdough with slithers of lardo and blobs of toffee apple purée.



Cooked dishes include Chapel & Swan hot smoked salmon served with scrambled duck eggs

What else can foodies do?

The Chequers, Sam and Georgie's other Cotswolds venture, is four miles away in Churchill, and Daylesford organic farm shop, café and restaurant is also just up the road. If you want spoiling, there's Soho Farmhouse, or to stock up on British cheeses (including Blue Monday) pop into The Cotswold Cheese Company shop in Moreton-in-Marsh.

Is it family friendly?

There's a family room in the main inn, or cots and zip-and-link beds in room five. Alternatively, if you want your own space, there's a cottage across the garden courtyard. When it comes to food, simple options such as chicken with sweet potato ensure that children won't go hungry.

olive tip

Don't miss the espresso martinis served on tap at the bar – the perfect start to an evening.

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