



a wisteria-draped village pub with plush, antiques rooms. Minster Mill, however, has gone from next-door annexe to centre stage. There's a new light-filled restaurant with oak beams and flagstones, serving dishes such as veal sweetbread with butternut squash. The 38 just-refurbished rooms include 10 with river views and private firepit-warmed terraces. Book ahead for the dinky spa, which costs £25 if you're not having a treatment. *Doubles from £150, B&B; mains from £19; minstermill.co.uk*



THE SWAN OXFORDSHIRE 11 11 & £

This Cotswolds pub has just had its second facelift in five years. The new owners have moved the front door and introduced York stone, firepits and an oak pergola to the 100-seat garden. Inside, the bar area is still welcomingly crepuscular, with open fires and reclaimed wood floors. The restaurant at the rear is brighter, with excellent pies and well-cooked fish and meat mains. There are eight refreshed bedrooms, with

Left, Thyme, Gloucestershire. Above, one of the Piglets at Soho Farmhouse, and the Bell Inn, both in Oxfordshire. Below left, seafood at the House at No 131, Gloucestershire

exposed beams and weathered wooden bedside tables; blown-glass lamps and cast-iron canopied four-posters bring splashes of modernity. *Doubles from £90, B&B; mains from £12; countrycreatures.com/the-swan*

OLD STOCKS INN GLOUCESTERSHIRE 11 11 ££

This 300-year-old coaching inn has a generous approach to hosting: minibars are free; a loyalty scheme rewards returning guests; and, if you fill in an online form, they'll shout you a drink from the bar. You'll sleep well, too, on Hypnos beds in contemporary rooms with wonky floors, bold-coloured fabrics and Alexa primed to answer questions about the area. There's a coffee shop, a garden terrace and an excellent brasserie. Eat mussel-loaded risotto on teal leather chairs overlooking the medieval village stocks. *Doubles from £124, B&B; mains from £14.50; oldstocksinn.com*

THE CROWN INN OXFORDSHIRE 11 11 ££

This 17th-century pub is one of the Cotswolds' last proper boozers. The owners have kept it reassuringly rustic, with flagstone floors, sturdy wooden counters and an open fire. Things are

a little different in the conservatory restaurant, where pork belly comes with pumpkin tortellini, and mackerel with raw slaw and hazelnut salad. Upstairs, it's a world apart. The five stylish bedrooms and the swanky studio have trendy slatted wooden walls, tactile fabrics in soft corals and sunbleached greys, and battered midcentury leather chairs. Hot-water bottles and Kilner jars of yoghurt-covered honeycomb are generous touches. *Doubles from £110, B&B, mains from £11.50; crownninstone.co.uk*

SOHO FARMHOUSE OXFORDSHIRE 11 11 & £££

The latest changes to Soho House's wildly popular Cotswolds outpost are nothing to snort at: there are 40 new rooms called Piglets, which are 280 sq ft corrugated-iron pigsties that have been converted into luxury rooms, with terraces, emperor beds, rainfall showers and cocktail-making stations. Also new are 10 garden rooms with rolltop baths and woodburners. Retro milk floats bring cocktails, breakfasts and even chefs to cook barbecues on your terrace; they can also ferry you to one of the hotel's five restaurants. The Boathouse's pool and the sauna are good places to hang out. For privacy, book one of the spa hot tubs. *From £270; mains from £8; sohofarmhouse.com*

THE POINTER BUCKINGHAMSHIRE 11 11 ££

This pub-cum-hotel in the village of Brill was our hotel of the year in 2017, and it's perfect for a low-key romantic weekend. Earthy tones and fraying patterned armchairs set the vibe. There's a good-sized garden and a woodburner for cosy evenings. Three rooms have been added this year, and, though they lack some of the pub's charm, they're plush, in greys and duck-egg blue. The food ranges from ham, egg and chips to rump steak; the wine list is also unpretentious. The bar serves its own Pointer Pint ale, a collaboration with a nearby brewery. *Doubles from £120, B&B; mains from £14; thepointerbrill.co.uk*

BARASET BARN WARWICKSHIRE 11 & ££

This restaurant with rooms feels like a mini village. In converted outbuildings

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