

STAYCATION



## LOCK-IN ANYONE?

THE BRITISH BOOZER CONTINUES TO EVOLVE AS A CHAMPION OF LOCALLY ROOTED FOOD AND A SHOWCASE OF CONSIDERED DESIGN. WE TOAST THE LATEST PUBS WITH ROOMS ACROSS THE UK. EDITED BY FIONA KERR



## THE DOUBLE RED DUKE

It's easy to spot this wisteria-clad 17th-century coaching inn, with its candy-striped umbrellas forming a jaunty Soho House-style beacon. In many ways the revamped Oxfordshire pub (part of the Country Creatures group) draws parallels with the global members' club. Aimed at city-living weekenders, rooms are decorated with floral wallpaper, botanical block-print lampshades and velvet headboards in burnt orange and teal. Kick off with a house cocktail crafted with gin, basil, white pepper and lemon. Or a vodka: with a whole page of the menu dedicated to local blends – such as silky-smooth Wood Brothers and Toad Rye – the pre-prandial hour can easily slip into two. Luckily, there's plenty of delicious fare to keep things on an even keel. Whipped broad-bean mash with flatbreads, say, alongside wood-roasted scallops, followed by a Montgomery Cheddar soufflé with lobster and chips – well earned after a stomp around the bosky dells of Clanfield village. And homemade salted-caramel petits fours so good you'll wish you could buy some to take home. Staff, wearing Fifties bowling jackets, are unfailingly enthusiastic, and the only sounds at night are the hoot of an owl and the gentle rustle of leaves. **BOOK IT** *Doubles from £120; countrycreatures.com* JEMIMA SISSONS

## THE BEAR INN

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**THE BEAR INN**

'I went about this job as if I was designing a private house,' says interiors whizz Octavia Dickinson of her recent work at this spot in the north Shropshire village of Hodnet. Working alongside her was her friend and The Bear's landlord, Tom Heber-Percy, whose family own much of the pretty Tudor village, including Hodnet Hall. Out went all legacies of the pub's long and chequered past, most notably the bear pit, revived for a nefarious spell in the 1970s when the tenants kept two grizzlies on site; in came bold colour and playfulness, fine art and furniture and lashings of fabric sourced from a roll-call of British interior design and auction houses. Each room (there are seven in the main building and five in the coach house, all named after trees) has its own personality – Juniper, Rowan and Ash have small sitting rooms; dog-friendly, ground-floor Sycamore and Birch open onto the courtyard. Food is taken

seriously here – more posh pub grub than fine dining (rabbit parties; pork belly with baked celeriac) with an emphasis on local produce, some straight from the hall's 200-year-old walled garden. Eat in the open-plan informal dining room and bar, or in one of the stable-style booths by the outdoor area that's designed to resemble a French village square – the furniture is the same as found in Paris's Luxembourg Garden. **BOOK IT** Doubles from £110. [thebearinnknot.com](http://thebearinnknot.com) PAMELA GOODMAN

**THE LOCH & THE TYNE**

The sign that swings outside this Windsor address doesn't have a castle or crown on it but the words 'Sustainable British Luxury', words that will hopefully become as ubiquitous as Red Lion one day. It's the first pub from chef Adam Handling, who's had a busy year – pivoting to home dinners in lockdown, cooking for the G7 leaders in Cornwall and opening an outpost of his London Butterfly restaurant near St Ives. As for the sign's premise, it runs through this place like blue blood through royalty. Water's recycled, furniture upcycled and the cycles themselves made from old Nespresso pods. It looks and feels like a proper pub, though, with a guitarist covering Eighties hits on Sunday and the chance of a pint and burger at the bar – albeit the best burger you'll ever have, according to head chef Jonny McNeil, thanks to the lardo he uses. Scottish-born McNeil's the Loch of the title. Steven Kerr is the Tyne, and the pair smuggle low-Bru into a cocktail or two. Newcastle Brown in the sourdough, on a menu that works hard to be zero-waste – trimmings from the star dish of lobster wagsu, for example, go to make croquettes, sauce for a brace of bedrooms, well-tailored in bamboo and mango-wood furniture, with Haecceles bath pouroos, a cocktail from Handling's drinks lab, and a terrace with many views over the fields. Nourishing on many levels. **BOOK IT** Doubles from £187. [lochandtyne.com](http://lochandtyne.com) RICK JORDAN

**THE GEORGE & HEART HOUSE**

While Margate has long outgrown its up-and-coming tag, the town's transformation continues to gather pace with the revival of one of its original pubs. On the edge of Old Town – seconds from the beach, the Turner Contemporary and must-try restaurants

– this 18th-century inn has been reincarnated as one of its most charismatic places to stay. Owners Kelly Love and Dan Williams first made waves running a tiki bar as street-food hub The Sun Deck; then they set about a major restoration of the George & Heart House, which opened at the end of 2019. This summer, six rooms were added to the wabi-sabi-like top floor, with its wonky floorboards, gold-leaf-adorned staircases and striped point revealing decades-old wallpaper. Ranging from shimmering Seventies chic to black-and-gold Art Deco glamour, each one (two share bathrooms) has been created by a local artist. The Hideaway, for instance, has a freestanding bath at the end of the four-poster bed, a tongue-in-cheek framed quote by Margate-raised Tracey Emin and gold drapes that reveal glimpses of Turner's beloved sunsets across the rooftops. Guests have exclusive access to Reggie's Bar, a cute spot for fixing a late-night dram or early-morning coffee, as well as a wellness area and palm-lined garden. Perhaps the biggest draw, though, is the prospect of a bed above one of the area's best booters, where a roster of takeovers, Sunday roasts and chef pop-ups ensures you see first-hand why this seaside town is buzzing again. **BOOK IT** Doubles from £115. [georgeandheart.com](http://georgeandheart.com) BEN OLSEN

**THE BRADLEY HARE**

Wiltshire's smartest new countryside inn is set in the tiny village of Maiden Bradley, part of the Duke of Somerset's estate, where waves of barley and manicured tree tunnels shape the landscape beyond. Here, a bunch of ex-Soho House creatives – including James Thurstan Waterworth, former European design director – have given the old-school pub a cool, considered makeover. Provençal farmhouse interiors come with a touch of flamboyance – a tub for two, say, or a curtained bed tucked in a nook. In the 12 characterful rooms (some are above the pub; the largest are in the Coach House), earthy Farrow & Ball hues are teamed with repurposed fabrics, 18th-century furniture and vintage Persian rugs. Downstairs, the deliberately low-key look – scuffed wooden floors, rickety chairs and cosy corners with roaring fires that have kept villagers returning – belies the skill of Dave the bartender, who appears with a Limoncello Spritz at precisely five o'clock, and the sustainable approach to the

Opposite, clockwise from top left: The Taybank bedroom; staircase at The Bradley Hare; the Alice Hawthorn; lunch at The Bradley Hare; The Taybank. Previous pages, The Double Red Duke's garden; The Tyne; The Lamb Inn pizza; The Taybank.

PHOTOGRAPHS: JONATHAN KNIGHT; ROBERT LEE; MARTIN MORRELL; JIM FOSTER

