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# Six of the best GASTROPUBS WITH ROOMS

*Delicious food and comfy beds await you in these picturesque places to stay, finds **Rhiannon Batten***

## **The Bell at Skenfrith, Monmouthshire**

In the shadow of a Welsh hill, with a river running past outside and a bar and restaurant within, The Bell at Skenfrith is popular with walkers and Sunday lunchers, as well as overnight guests. Recently refurbished, its former country-house style has been replaced by a more contemporary look (traditionalists will appreciate the vintage tables tucked among modern stick-back chairs, and the various antique pieces peppered through the 11 bedrooms). Order a pint of Butty Bach then enjoy smoked ham hock, mustard and parsley croquettes or truffled wild mushroom, spinach and potato gnocchi.

[thebellatskenfrith.co.uk](http://thebellatskenfrith.co.uk)

## **The Bath Arms, Wiltshire**

This creeper-clad inn sits in the winsome village of Horningsham; listen from the mill pond and you might just hear the roar of a lion – this is Longleat Estate territory and the safari park is close by. Refurbished by the Beckford group last year, The Bath Arms is now the best dining pub for several West Country miles, with 16 smart bedrooms to boot. Flagstones, open fires and attentive staff are crowd-pleasers. As is food more polished than the unpretentious atmosphere suggests. Beckford's side business as a wine supplier means you won't go thirsty either.

[batharmsinn.com](http://batharmsinn.com)

## **The Gunton Arms, Norfolk**

Set within an ancient deer park and owned by art dealer Ivor Braka, this much-loved Norfolk pub pairs inglenook fireplaces and candlelight with graphic works by Tracey Emin, Gilbert & George and Anthony Caro. Exuding a lived-in, bohemian glamour, The Gunton Arms' 16 bedrooms were designed by Robert Kime (and are as textile and antique-rich as you would expect, with pops of contemporary art). Food-wise there's also a duality, with gastropub classics (think crab pasta with chilli) on one side and gutsy steaks, chops and sausages cooked over fire on the other.

[theguntonarms.co.uk](http://theguntonarms.co.uk)

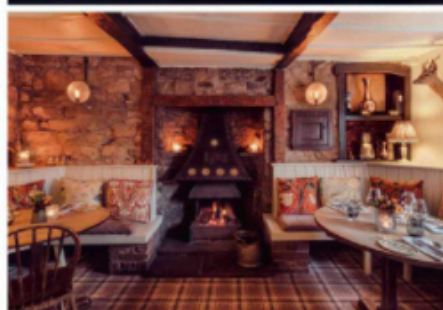






### CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT

The Bell at Skenfrith sits prettily beside a river; pub classics are cooked with flair at The Bath Arms; The Star's ancient bones have been smoothed with Richard Smith fabrics and antiques; the wisteria-draped Double Red Duke dates back to the 17th century; breakfast at The Double Red Duke; The Queen's Head is smartly rustic, with open fires and tapestry cushions; the dining room at The Bath Arms; finessed dishes at The Queen's Head.



### The Star, East Sussex

The latest opening from the team behind Cornwall's Hotel Tresanton, this 30-bedroom, 15th-century inn has been lavishly revamped by Olga Polizzi, its ancient bones smoothed with floral Richard Smith fabrics and antique pieces from Martin D Johnson. In the heart of Alfriston, with its antiques shops and easy access to heritage sites such as Charleston, The Star is centred around an elegant restaurant and courtyard. For a more casual lunch or supper, however, head to the front of the hotel – 'the inn' – to enjoy dishes such as dark chocolate tart with nutmeg and fior di latte ice-cream in oak-beamed, fire-lit splendour.

[thepolizzicollection.com](http://thepolizzicollection.com)

### The Queen's Head, Cumbria

The second of two dining pubs opened by the Lowther Estate, The Queen's Head sticks to the group's culinary philosophy – finessed dishes cooked with produce reared, foraged and grown in and on its farms, hedgerows and kitchen gardens (think watercress soup with peppered Thornby Moor goat's curd or garden rhubarb, in season, with Lowther honey, malt and mead). Open five nights a week, it's smartly rustic, with open fires and tapestry cushions. The pub's six bedrooms offset gorgeous pea-green paintwork with antique furniture and there's a cottage for two, too.

[queenshead-askham.co.uk](http://queenshead-askham.co.uk)

### The Double Red Duke, Oxfordshire

The third pub by ex-Lucky Onion hoteliers Sam and Georgie Pearman to open in the Cotswolds, the wisteria-draped Double Red Duke dates back to the 17th century. Previously The Plough, the inn's 19 bedrooms mix bespoke fabrics and wallpapers with antiques, while the pub marries moss-coloured velvet banquettes with studded leather dining chairs. Food literally takes centre stage, however; on an open fire in the centre of the dining room, ex-Hawksmoor chef Richard Sandiford cooks wood-roast scallops with garlic butter and spit-roast porchetta with apple.

[countrycreatures.com](http://countrycreatures.com)