

TRAVEL

Hotel news, the hottest destinations, and how to get there in style

JAMAICA

LICENSE TO CHILL

No ordinary hotel, Jamaica's **GoldenEye** is a collection of private beach villas, "huts," and lagoon cottages set amid the lush tropical gardens that made James Bond creator and erstwhile owner Ian Fleming fall in love with the island. Located on Jamaica's northeast coast, and occupying 52 acres (21 ha), GoldenEye also features four restaurants and bars, and offers visitors a range of activities including watersports, deep sea fishing, and snorkeling. There is a spa, too. For the ultimate GoldenEye Bond experience, book yourself into the beachfront bungalow—now known as Fleming Villa—where the author is believed to have written all 14 spy novels.

goldeneye.com





PORTONNOVI, MONTENEGRO

Balkan beauty

Perched at the entrance of Boka Bay on Montenegro's Adriatic coast, **One&Only Portonovi** is the first European opening by the hotel brand. Modeled on the architecture of Venice, the complex has its own private beach, a spa that combines Chinese medicine with the latest Western wellness technology, and six pools. Dining options include Asian-inspired tapas at Tapasake Club and an Italian menu with lots of fresh fish and seafood at the alfresco beach restaurant, Sabia. As well as stylish rooms, there are two private villas, each with a garden and a pool. Longer-term guests are welcomed, too—check in for 21 days or more and the team will create a bespoke stay just for you. oneandonlyresorts.com



KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE, U.S.A.

Cocktail hour

How do you like your negroni? Classic? Spicy? With a dash of mescal? All these variations and more are available at **Brother Wolf**, the first ever negroni bar in Knoxville, Tennessee. Conceived as a "love letter to Italy," the bar comes from Aaron Thompson and Jessica "Rabbit" King—the former is a certified sommelier with 25 years of experience, the latter a master mixologist. The pair became enchanted with the drink, and Italy's aperitivo culture, during a vacation to Europe. Sharing plates and pasta dishes are served courtesy of Milan-born chef Amalia Brusati. brotherwolf.com



BROOKLYN, NEW YORK, U.S.A.

CLEAN SWEEP

Brooklyn's **Bathhouse** bills itself as "the anti-spa spa experience." You won't hear faux whale song here. Instead you'll find massages that are more sports locker room than spiritual journey, invigorating body scrubs, saunas, and steam rooms. Housed within a converted factory in the heart of Williamsburg, the Bathhouse is, says its team, "socially engaging, sophisticated, and approachable." There is a café, too—Bathhouse Kitchen, which serves a seasonal menu, sustainable wines, and creative cocktails, all of which align with the spa's mission to be "a home for people who strive to look, feel, and perform their very best." abathhouse.com



COUNTY MAYO, IRELAND

WORLD OF ADVENTURES

From morning walks with resident wolfhounds to clay pigeon shooting and some of the finest salmon fishing in Ireland—not to mention a spa and award-winning dining options—Ashford Castle is a grown-up playground waiting to be explored

Words **STEVEN SHORT**

“It can be a bit *Game of Thrones* sometimes,” Mel Souef tells me, as she ties Lima to my arm. Lima is a South American Harris Hawk, Souef her falconer. The *Game of Thrones* reference relates to the flock of 30 hawks (plus Dingle the owl) that call **Ashford Castle** home. “They’re pack hunters but they definitely have their fights,” Souef adds.

A walk with Lima, or one of her fellow hunters, through the stunning castle grounds is just one of more than 30 activities available at the recently restored property—part of the Red Carnation Hotel group.

To say that no expense has been spared transforming the castle, built in 1228, into the exclusive retreat that it is today is an understatement. The scaffolding alone—needed to replace every window—cost €1.2 million (\$1.395 million), and at one point there were 365 workmen and artisans on site restoring the 83 guest rooms, restaurants and bars, and extensive common areas.

The guest accommodation is sumptuous: my room is furnished with expertly curated antiques and its walls adorned with embroidered wallpaper. A roaring fire greets me, along with a pair of perfectly sized Wellington boots, provided for my time exploring the extensive estate—home to the Guinness family until 1939.

If you’ve ever wondered what life in a castle is like, and perhaps even

considered buying one yourself, Ashford Castle offers the perfect way to find out. Public spaces are grand, and decorated exactly as you would hope: the double-aspect Oak Room, for example, has a carved ceiling and balustrades, suits of armor keeping an eye on things, and a mezzanine library that is home to 800 antiquarian books. The Connaught Room, meanwhile, is illuminated by a vast, sparkling chandelier, has an ornate carved fireplace, and is the perfect spot for afternoon tea.

Diners of all persuasions are catered for at the castle. Informal options include The Dungeon, which serves a bistro-style menu, and the American diner-inspired Stanley’s, where, sitting

40 years. Dinner here might include Kilkenny rose veal sweetbread, west coast turbot, or Skeaghanore duck breast, all locally sourced and served with estate-grown vegetables and foraged herbs.

There are plenty of dining options for children, too, and the castle even has a Lego butler who, in a suit and white gloves, will bring a silver tray of bricks to Junior’s room.

The Ashford Castle team knows that as well as outstanding hospitality (you are treated like an old friend here), guest experiences help set a place apart. “Experience expert” Eoin Warner will happily spend a day taking you to visit local artisans from the world of food, drink, and arts and

“The culinary star here is the George V Dining Room, where the *mître d’* has been welcoming guests for more than 40 years.”

at the bar, you can watch chef prepare your burger or Elvis sandwich—a heady combination of peanut butter, banana, and streaky bacon.

The culinary star here, however, is the George V Dining Room. Built for—and named after—the then Prince of Wales, who visited in 1905, the formal restaurant (gentlemen must wear a jacket) is overseen by *mître d’* Martin Gibbons, who has been welcoming guests for more than

crafts. My stay includes a visit to see renowned basketweaver Joe Hogan at work and tuck into coffee and cakes freshly baked by his wife, Dolores, but not before an unexpected stop-off to enjoy a glass of whiskey and admire the breathtaking scenery of Connemara.

Warner speaks to guests ahead of their visit, so he can “show them the jewels of Connemara—and plan surprises that will delight them.” ashfordcastle.com



Rural retreat: Join resident wolfhounds Cronan and Garvan (below) for a morning walk before a day exploring the castle grounds (below left) or the

spa (above). Enjoy tea in the Connaught Room (left) or in your own suite (top left). The Oak Room welcomes guests to the castle (bottom).





ACCESSORIES

IT'S A WRAP

As flying long haul becomes possible again it's time to invest in new travel accessories, and "wearable art atelier" **Alba Amicorum's** limited-edition scarves are the perfect cover-up. The work of artists including Man Ray, photographer James T. Murray, and painter Mary Jones has been printed onto the finest silks and cashmere. Alba Amicorum is the brainchild of Darshana Shilpi Rouget, and the brand follows a unique zero-waste policy—each scarf comes in a reusable fine cotton muslin pouch with a recycled tag that, when planted in soil, grows into wildflowers. albaamicorum.com

NALADHU, MALDIVES

TROPICAL PARADISE

The secret to hospitality is to evolve and to continually find new ways of delighting guests. It's something the team at **Naladhu Private Island** understands very well. Following a six-month renovation and redesign, the resort has launched new experiences for 2022 including a snorkeling tour with its marine biologist to see some of the 2,000 species of fish and sea mammals that call the island home, and to learn about coral conservation. naladhu.com



SPIRITS

Just the tonic

A visit to a gin bar in the Basque Country inspired Danny Cameron to set up the award-winning **Dyfi Distillery** in Corris, Wales. Cameron and his brother Pete worked on creating a series of small batch gins that reflect the UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve where they are produced, using 28 locally foraged botanicals. You can try them yourself at the distillery or order online. dyfidistillery.com



BRAY, BERKSHIRE, ENGLAND

FANTASY ISLAND

A mere 30-minute drive from London's Heathrow Airport, Monkey Island has long been a retreat for monarchs, aristocrats, and artists. Today it is home to the **Monkey Island Estate**, where guests can choose from two Grade I listed pavilions with 40 superb rooms and suites. In Bray itself, there are six private residences including Lavender House—its façade is believed to date back to the early 1700s. You can dine at the Monkey Island Brasserie and enjoy a dram in the Whisky Snug. Moored nearby is The Floating Spa (pictured), offering the Monks' Elixir treatment inspired by friars who settled at Bray Lock in the 12th century. monkeyislandestate.co.uk

LUBERON, FRANCE

The grape escape

Wine lovers seeking a vacation that offers the chance to indulge in their passion should bookmark **Coquillade Provence Resort & Spa**. Open year-round in the heart of the Luberon, it has a series of rooms and suites, as well as a *bastide* (a mini manor house) that sleeps 14. Guests can savor Tramontanes and Tempestas in the on-site Aureto tasting room, and wine-focused weekends are also available. The Coquillade Provence Resort & Spa Wine Weekend, for example, takes in the organic wines of Château de Mille and the Château la Canorgue in Bonnieux—the location for Ridley Scott's *A Good Year*. The day ends with dinner at Avelan, the hotel's fine dining restaurant. coquillade.fr

