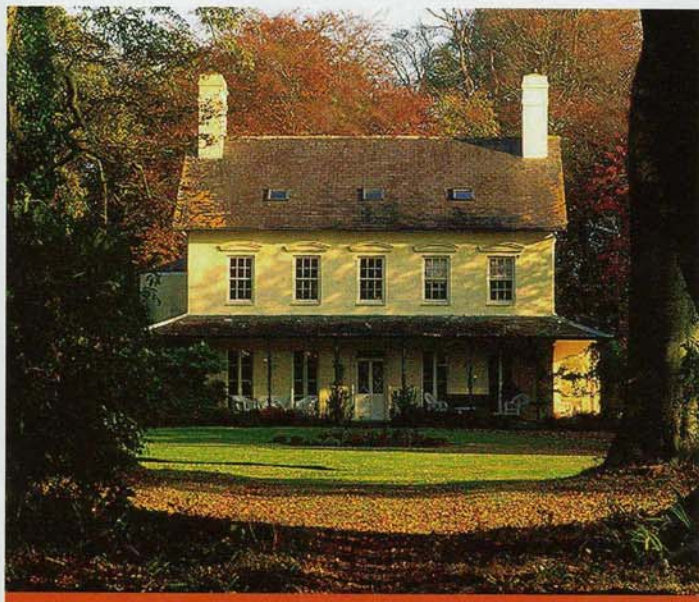


10 BEST GOURMET GREATS



21 DOMAINE DES ANDEOLS, PROVENCE

Take one expanse of bucolic Provence, add a dash of pastel hamlet, stir in works by Man Ray and some trendy furniture, then top with a **romantically chandeliered modern restaurant** from Michelin-star-magnet Alain Ducasse. *Et voilà* – the perfect gourmet break. (00 33 4 9075 5063, www.domainedesandeols.com; two-bedroom house from £270 per night, room only)



22 PLAS BODEGROES, LLYN PENINSULA, WALES

Until recently Plas Bodegroes was the only Michelin-starred restaurant in Wales. The Crown at Whitebrook might have bagged one last year, but there's no arguing with experience. Owner and chef Chris Chown, who trained at The Dorchester on London's Park Lane, has been running the show here for 21 years. Now he's enlisted Gordon Ramsay graduate Aled Williams to work magic: after **warm salad of monkfish, Carmarthen ham and mushrooms**, curl up in one of the 11 cosy rooms. Before you know it you'll be dreaming of breakfast. (01758 612363, www.bodegroes.co.uk; doubles from £55, B&B)

24 HAMBLETON HALL, RUTLAND

A brown-on-white coating like wood-veneer on the chocolate pavé. **Surprise space-dust in your starter.** At Hambleton Hall, high over Rutland Water, the food is somewhere between an art and a science. Which is all the more unexpected when you learn how unpretentious chef Aaron Patterson is – and how committed to organic produce. The Victorian hotel is all calm rusticity, with garden light pouring on easy sofas. After a sound slumber you'll so relax into Saturday-paper rustling and champagne that it'd be madness not to stay for lunch. (01572 756991, www.hambletonhall.com; doubles from £200, B&B)



23 MASSERIA TORRE MAIZZA, ITALY

If you're the sort who likes to know exactly where your dinner's come from, you'll love it here. The organic garden of this farmhouse-turned-boutique-retreat is just a cucumber toss from the alfresco dining room. **Nearly everything on the menu uses home-grown produce:** fennel, courgette, sweet peppers, beans, melons, oranges and wild herbs. And the menu changes daily, with dishes such as thyme-encrusted lamb, squid-ink risotto, and fresh lemon and mascarpone mousse. Steps away is a decked pool, screened by a walled garden – secure one of the daybeds for a digestive nap in the sun. Then amble back down the path and you'll be just in time for supper. (00 39 080 482 9310, www.masseriatorremaizza.com; doubles from £190, B&B)



25 ROSA ALPINA, SAN CASSIANO, ITALY

A diet is usually in order after a trip to Rosa Alpina in the Italian Dolomites: food really means business here. Gourmets in the know head straight to the St Hubertus restaurant for dishes such as thinly sliced beets with horseradish mousse, or **lobster with calf's head dressing** (among the many reasons for chef Norbert Niederkofler's second Michelin star this year). Then it's a short walk to the fiery hearth and large bed of the coveted Kaminsuite. (00 39 0471 849500, www.rosaalpina.it; the Kaminsuite costs from £277, B&B)

26 ABBAYE DE LA BUSSIÈRE, BURGUNDY

A 12th-century abbey-turned-gastronomic-retreat, the Abbaye makes a lavish base for foodie forays into France's culinary heart. Cocooned in manicured parkland, it flaunts faded frescoes, colonnaded hallways, stained glass and spiralling stone staircases, and is **within sloosh-and-spitting distance of Burgundy's vineyards.** Michelin-starred chef Olivier Elzer sources local produce for the gourmet restaurant to create dishes such as spice-roasted pigeon and foie gras with Szechuan-pepper and apple jelly. Save room for something gooey from the cheese trolley. (00 33 3 8049 0229, www.abbayedelabussiere.fr; doubles from £101, room only)

27 LA BOUTTE, TROIS VALLEES, FRENCH ALPS

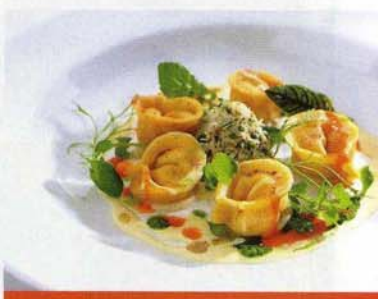
In the hamlet of St Marcel, La Bouitte is a ginger-timbered gem with weathered doors and gingham curtains. In the dining room, you'll be served the kind of Michelin-starred cooking that ought to cost months' salaries. Yet here, ambrosial starters in shot glasses and **fish mains such as warm sashimi** are as affordable as they're astonishing. The raspberries in a hollowed-out tomato are a revelation. (00 33 4 7908 9677, www.la-bouitte.com; doubles from £155, B&B)

28 DA GIOVANNI, NR PORTOFINO, ITALY

Portofino is an idyllic spot, and that's why it can all too often fill to the brim, despite the prices demanded by the cafes on the cobbles. So head to San Fruttuoso cove, along the coast. Annexed to the Benedictine abbey in the bay, Da Giovanni rents boarding-house-simple rooms, and serves **superb home-made pesto lasagne with jugs of house white.** You'll have the pebbles practically to yourself after the last boat has sailed. (00 39 018 577 0047; doubles from £60pp, half board)

29 GIDLEIGH PARK, DEVON

These days, celebrity chefs do ads, promos, TV... but rarely much cooking. Michael Caines is an exception. Presiding over the kitchen at Gidleigh most nights, this **whizz-kid produces Michelin-starred meals** with a tastebud tang you'll dream of for years (below). Gidleigh is a storybook country retreat in a beautiful corner of Dartmoor, so you can count on a visual feast in more ways than one. (01647 432367, www.gidleigh.com; dinner and breakfast from £440)



30 THREE CHIMNEYS, ISLE OF SKYE

Stay at the remote House Over-By on Skye and you're in for stunning sea views across to the Outer Hebrides. You're also likely to **spot seals basking on the rocks** of nearby Loch Dunvegan, the occasional dolphin, and perhaps even the odd swooping, soaring sea eagle. Then there's your split-level suite with five-star extras – booking a room gains you automatic entry to the adjacent Three Chimneys restaurant, a tiny converted crofter's cottage bristling with awards, and a place of pilgrimage for gourmands the world over. The catch? There are only six rooms, so book early to avoid disappointment. (01470 511258, www.threechimneys.co.uk; doubles from £350, including three-course meal and breakfast for two) >