

# TRAVEL

Page

32

'We watched, entranced. That magical sight of whales alone made the trip worthwhile'

Martin Fletcher goes fishing in northern Norway



La Bastide Saint Antoine (2)

## The chefs' favourite foodie hotels

From Michel Roux Jr to Angela Hartnett and Giorgio Locatelli, top chefs reveal where they go for a gourmet break. **Fiona Simms** reports

### France

#### 1 L'Herbe Rouge Valaire, Loire

**Recommended by Ed Wilson (Terra's, London)** Just 15 minutes drive from Blois, this gem of a restaurant with rooms is the kind of place you dream still exists all over France but in reality doesn't. Owned by natural winemaker Thierry Puzelat and his wife Cécile, the restaurant with rooms (three two-bedroom apartments) in tiny Valaire offers delicious bourgeois cooking and a thrilling wine list. Wilson says: "The charcuterie is always good and the

cooking precisely in season. The wine list is driven by local producers in Touraine and the surrounding areas as well as some obscurities from further afield."

**Details** Rooms cost from €150 for the weekend (00 33 02 54 44 98 14, restaurant-herberouge.com). Dinner costs €20 for three courses

#### 2 La Bastide Saint Antoine

**Recommended by Raymond Blanc (Belmond Le Manoir aux Quat Saisons, Oxfordshire)** "I really enjoy eating at the restaurant in the Bastide Saint Antoine, run by my old

friend Jacques Chibois. He is a great master — one time I had a particularly wonderful camembert with a farci of truffle — and his cellar holds some special Provençal wines too. The rooms in the 18th-century building are either in Provençal style or contemporary and I always feel rested there. If you stay there, go to St Paul de Vence and eat at the Colombe d'Or. The food is good and simple and the works of great artists, who over the decades have paid for their meals in paintings, are scattered around the room. It had a huge impact on me at the Manoir."

**Details** Rooms cost from €316 a night, breakfast €24pp (00 33 4 93 70 94 94,



Raymond Blanc

jacqueschibois.com). Dinner costs €146 for a five-course menu

#### 3 Château 'Flash' Melle, Poitou-Charentes

**Recommended by Henry Harris (Racine, London)**

"This is one I recommend with my motorcycling helmet on (it's only for motorcyclists)," Harris says. "In the medieval town of Melle, this is more pension than hotel — it's basically three days of stunning guided motorcycling, with a great French dinner every night and the opportunity to talk into the wee hours about all manner of bike nerdery. For confident motorcyclists, this really is a dream weekend away." There are seven bedrooms, though none are en-suite.

**Details** A four-night stay, including breakfast, dinner and wine, and the guided motorcycling, costs €430 per rider, based on two sharing (flashtours.co.uk) ▶





**14** This is Exeter's quirkiest boutique hotel, its 59 rooms kitted out in mid-century furniture and contemporary artwork housed in what used to be The West of England Eye Hospital. "I love the style of the place, but it's chef Ben Butler's cooking, made with fresh, local ingredients and offering a menu of crowd-pleasers, which makes you want to go back again and again," Outlaw says. Dishes include grilled quail, smoked aubergine and pomegranate, accompanied by an interesting selection of wines. **Details** Rooms cost from £160, B&B (01392 281000, themagdalenchapter.com). Dinner costs from £26 for three courses

### 13 The Gallivant Camber Sands, East Sussex

**Recommended by Henry Harris**  
(Rachine, London)  
New England meets Old (1950s) England at this 20-bedroom hotel, a shell's throw across the dunes to one of Britain's best beaches and a short drive from Rye. The wild Romney salt marshes provide chef Ben Fisher with some of his produce. "It's good local produce cooked by an enthusiastic young chef, who has worked at The French Laundry among other great dining spots," Harris says. Expect dishes such as Rye frijo misto, roast turbot with Jerusalem artichoke and lemon, and



Winchelsea salt marsh lamb with garlic aubergine and buttery mash. **Details** Rooms cost from £125 (01797 225057, thegallivanthotel.com). Dinner costs from £32 for three courses

### 14 The Gunton Arms Thorpe Market, Norfolk

**Recommended by Kevin Mangeolles**  
(The Neptune, Old Hunstanton, Norfolk)  
An old hunting lodge in the middle of a deer park, the Gunton Arms was taken over in 2009 by an art dealer, Ivor Braka, so there is original artwork everywhere. "It might sound and look rather grand but it has a very relaxed feel — it's almost like staying at a friend's house," Mangeolles says. "The restaurant is also casual — chef Stuart Tattersall, who is ex-Mark Hix, cooks in an open kitchen, serving up great rustic food. A highlight is the duck hearts on toast." **Details** Rooms cost from £95 a night,



Angela Hartnett

B&B (01263 832010, theguntonarms.co.uk). Dinner costs from £28 for three courses

### 15 The Three Chimneys Isle of Skye, Scotland

**Recommended by Angela Hartnett**  
(Murano and Hartnett Holder & Co)  
"The Three Chimneys sits in the middle of nowhere on the Isle of Skye — the setting is truly beautiful. When I first visited, it was in the middle of the winter with snow so white covering the landscape, the beauty almost made you cry. The food is fantastic. I love the chef/director Michael Smith's food and his style — he is a true master of Scottish gastronomy. There is an amazing array of Scottish ingredients, from lobsters to Black Isle beef. Their six bedrooms have sea views." **Details** Rooms are from £345 per night (01470 512558, threechimneys.co.uk). Dinner costs £60 for three courses



### 16 Sa Plana Estellencs, Majorca

**Recommended by Eddie Hart**  
(Quo Vadis, London)  
Estellencs is a picturesque village with streets that tumble down the hillsides from the Serra de Tramuntana mountain behind. Sa Plana is a traditional stone-built house with four bedrooms and a larger suite with views over the mountain and the sea, and also has a swimming pool. It offers traditional local cooking and their own wines. "Sa Plana is a charming hotel," Hart says. **Details** Rooms cost from £78, B&B (00 34 9 71 61 86 66, saplana.com). Dinner costs from £25 for three courses

### 17 Hotel Atrio Caceres, Extremadura

**Recommended by José Pizarro**  
(Pizarro Restaurant, London)  
"What I love about this hotel is the location — right within the old walls of Cáceres. The town is a Unesco World Heritage site, and there is a peacefulness that makes it a perfect weekend destination. Then there's the food, of course, which is the main attraction for me, not to mention the views from the restaurant," Pizarro says. Chefs José Polo and Toño Perez have won two Michelin stars for their cooking, and for their wine cellar. Pizarro says the squid with pig's ear is a dish he will never forget.

**Details** Dinner and room costs from £330 a night for two (00 34 9 27 24 29 28, restaurantatrio.com)

### Portugal

#### 18 Aquapura Douro Valley

**Recommended by Matt Tebbutt**  
(The Foxhunter, Nantyleerry, Monmouthshire)  
In eight hectares of land on the banks of the Douro River, Aquapura has 50 rooms and suites, and 21 villas. "We stayed here while visiting Graham's port lodge and vineyards. It has stunning views of the Douro. The restaurant serves a modern take on traditional Portuguese dishes and provides a great opportunity to drink all the styles of port," Tebbutt says.

**Details** Rooms cost from £155, B&B (00 35 12 54 66 06 00, aquapurahotels.com). Dinner costs from £35 for three courses

### 19 Park Hotel Kenmare Kenmare, Co Kerry

**Recommended by Rowley Leigh**  
(Le Café Anglais, London)  
This Victorian landmark dating back to 1897 boasts views over Kenmare Bay, and the Cork and Kerry mountains beyond, and has an 18-hole golf course and spa. "Everything is beautiful, with a wonderful wine cellar and a true sense of conviviality," Leigh says. Chef James Coffey makes the best of local produce. The 46 bedrooms offer old-school splendour, with antiques and objets d'art. **Details** Rooms cost from £150 (00 35 36 46 64 12 00, parkkenmare.com). Dinner costs £58 for three courses

### 20 The Tannery Dungarvan, Co Waterford

**Recommended by Richard Corrigan**  
(Corrigan Restaurants, London)  
In a friendly seaside resort beneath the Comeragh Mountains of Co Waterford, The Tannery offers modern Irish cooking at its best. Owned by Paul and Marie Flynn, it opened in 1997 in a disused leather warehouse. Paul is well known to Irish TV viewers and signature dishes include crab creme brûlée. "I particularly love the food and the decor, and the style of building too," Corrigan says. The Flynn's also operate a small hotel just around the corner, Tannery Townhouse, with 14 smart bedrooms. **Details** £45 per person for a double room, including pastries (00 353 584 5420, tannery.ie). Dinner costs from £25 for three courses



### UK

#### 10 Monachyle Mhor Hotel Lochearnhead, Perthshire

**Recommended by Tom Kitchen**  
(The Kitchen Restaurant, Edinburgh)  
With 14 bedrooms, this hotel is run by chef Tom Lewis and his wife Lisa May, with Tom's brother Dick. "This is a Scottish hidden gem in an idyllic spot overlooking the Lochs Daine and Voile," Kitchen says. "It's a real family-run business and some of the produce is sourced right on their doorstep." **Details** Rooms cost from £235 a night, B&B (01877 384622, mhorne). Dinner costs £55 for three courses

#### 11 The Pig Brockenhurst, Hampshire

**Recommended by Mark Hix**  
(Hix Restaurants, London)  
Even the cancellation list is long here, such is the success of Robin and Judy Hutson's New Forest gem, the first of four Pig hotels. "The Hutsons have created fantastic and stylish affordable rooms that make you want to go back," Hix says. "The chef James Golding used to work for me and has worked his magic on local and foraged produce from the forest. They also grow their own fruit, vegetables and herbs, James does his own smoking and curing too, which makes the menu unique." **Details** Rooms cost from £139 (0845 0779494, thepighotel.com). Dinner costs about £34 for three courses

#### 12 The Magdalan Chapter Exeter, Devon

**Recommended by Nathan Outlaw**  
(St Endoc Hotel, Cornwall)

