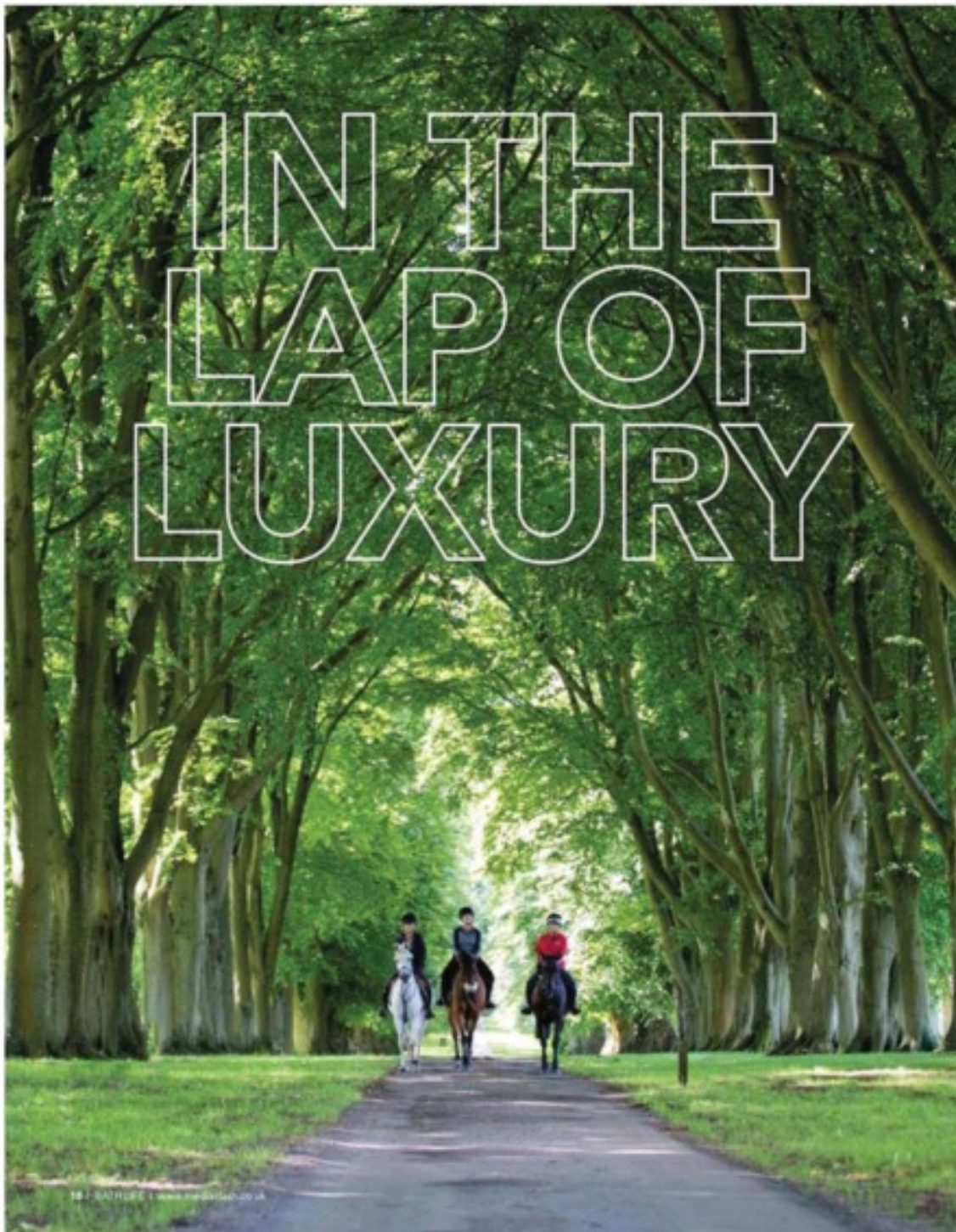


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*“The creeper-covered
palladian mansion is
set within 500 acres
of parkland”*

LUXURY HOTELS

Soothing spa sessions,
exquisite country
houses, Michelin-starred
dining...get away from
it all by staying close
to home
By Sarah Moolla

I mean you could set up daily notifications for those fluctuating red, amber and green lists of countries; there's nothing stopping you researching the varying and various rules for Covid-testing to enter those countries; and by all means do consider how much you might have to pay if you're obliged to quarantine on return. Or, plan B, keep it local, luxurious and relaxed. We've researched 15 amazing stays, all on our doorstep and all offering gorgeous, pampered, and safe breaks. With the money saved from the potentially stressful, and most definitely uncertain, holiday abroad, you could take time out in at least a couple of these gems.

Lacknam Park Hotel & Spa, Lacknam Park, Colerne, Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN14 6AZ.
tel: 01225 742777; www.lacknampark.co.uk
The creeper-covered palladian mansion is set within 500 acres of parkland, and five acres of beautiful formal gardens. Within the grounds there are 43 rooms and suites, with three country cottages.

EAT This summer, and for the first time, guests will be able to eat al fresco enjoying the Restaurant Hywel Jones in the bloom-filled terrace tucked in the walled gardens of The Brasserie. (Turn to page 96 for our review). Lacknam are also working with local family-run suppliers to create BBQ hampers prepared in the kitchens for guests to enjoy on the estate.

SLEEP The grand master suites were originally the master bedrooms of the house, and have become so once more. Elegantly decorated with a large sitting area, an open fireplace, a dining table, writing desk and a stately four-poster bed. The splendid bathrooms are finished using the finest marble, and the huge windows boast views down the mile-long avenue drive of 400 lime and beech trees that were planted in 1827.

USPA The ESPA spa is complete with 20-metre indoor pool, indoor-outdoor hydrotherapy pool, relaxation rooms, and thermal cabins. There's also a substantial equestrian centre with 35 horses, which offers lessons and hacks to all ages and abilities. An arborist can be found on the grounds filled with some 200 trees and has been designed for all seasons.

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2 *The Queensberry Hotel and Olive Tree Restaurant,*
4-7 Russell Street Bath BA1 2QF. tel: 01225 447928;
www.thequeensberry.co.uk

The multi-award-winning Queensberry Hotel is made up of four beautiful Grade II listed Georgian townhouses in the city, which were converted into a luxury boutique hotel in 1987.

EAT The hotel is home to Bath's only Michelin-starred restaurant, The Olive Tree. With the talented executive head chef, Chris Cleghorn at the helm, the restaurant menu is described as 'striking, delicious and frequently changing, and showcasing all of the high-quality artisan food producers worth their salt round the West Country.'

SLEEP From open plan and spacious doubles to lovely cosy and club rooms, to the uber luxe four poster suite, complete with a gargantuan seven-foot square of a bed overlooking Bath's Russell Street, different guests come for different reasons with various budgets. All rooms have been recently high-end refurbished, and each has a unique style and feel. Room 26 is a deluxe room of Georgian proportions, floor-to-ceiling windows, elegant fabrics, stunning light fittings and an expansive walk-in shower as well as a roll top end-to-end Burlington bath.

USPs A bed and breakfast 'Let's Get Fizz-ical' two-night special for £175pp offering dining in The Olive Tree, breakfast and a bottle of the Queen's favourite bubbles, Winton Brut NV. As well as special arrangements with No.1 Royal Crescent and the Bath Preservation Trust, the hotel has teamed up with Fred Mawer, a Blue Badge guide, who can offer bespoke tours curated for the guest's interests.

3 *No.15 Great Pulteney by GuestHouse,*
15 Great Pulteney Street, Bathwick Bath BA2 4BS.
tel: 01225 807015; www.guesthousehotels.co.uk

A gracious and elegant Grade I-listed building under new ownership, the GuestHouse brothers Tristan, James and Tom.

EAT The hotel's relaxed restaurant sparkles from its Hilbert-masterminded makeover and showcases chef Matt Gillard's delicious



above: Enjoy a cocktail at The Queensberry Hotel;
below: No.15 four poster beds are worthy of a period drama, and pancakes

'Wild British' cuisine. Chef's refined comfort food champions the best local produce, meat and fish; sample dishes include line-caught sea bass with lentils and spring greens with hedgerow oil, and dry-aged Somerset fillet steak with watercress, fresh howeradfish, pancetta and baby onions.

SLEEP The Hideout is Bath's standout hotel room. If you can call it a hotel room. The 55sqm Hideout feels like an apartment with a spa. It gives its guests the very deepest sense of privacy and relaxation. The star of the show is its huge bathroom with steam room and hot tub that feels as though it is outdoors. But its bedroom, dressing room, lounge with fireplace and Sonos system are all part of the allure, too. It's a space for guests to dim the lights, settle in, and drift into sanctuary.

USPs Guests can take advantage of a fleet of celebratory packages, designed to coincide with the hotel's GuestHouse relaunch and shaped around the philosophy of championing local. This includes 'You Time' which starts from £326, with a two-night stay, breakfast on both mornings, a picnic or afternoon tea on one day, and dinner on one evening. A No.15 Spa treatment, an hour-long sound bath at Soul Spa, an hour-long yoga/Qigong/cardiio session at one of their partner studios, and a Shinrin-Yoku experience. Each guest is issued their own copy of *The Guest List* on arrival, a guide by GuestHouse of nearby art galleries, food markets, hidden bookshops, hard-to-miss historical sites, and lesser-known boutiques.



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4 *The Manor House, Park Lane, Castle Combe, Chippingham SN14 7HX. tel: 01249 782206; www.exclusive.co.uk/the-manor-house*

The Manor House is a luxury Cotswolds estate comprising luxury hotel, championship golf course and club, and The Castle Inn pub, all located in the heart of Castle Combe.

EAT Year after year, Robert Potter and his team retain their Michelin star dining at Bybrook restaurant and one glance at the menu gives you a clue as to why – Newlyn mackerel. Portbally oyster, cucumber, caviar; Wiltshire Downlands lamb, violet artichoke, black garlic, turnip, grolles, jus gras; and Nourrit black fig rosemary caramel, almond sable. Much of the produce is grown and reared on the grounds themselves. There’s also afternoon teas options in the drawing room, casual dining in the lounge spaces, and a nearby visit to The Castle Inn pub, which is owned by the Manor House and is just a short stroll away, in the heart of the village.

SLEEP All 50 of the luxe bedrooms and suites are individually styled with their own features such as four poster beds, spa baths, private gardens, and fire places. Options include rooms in the main house, and also from the nooks of messes cottages.

USPs The Manor House Golf Club is nestled in 365 acres of Cotswold countryside, bordering the village of Castle Combe. The championship 18-hole golf course also houses The Clubhouse for food and drink; The Loft, a state of the art gym; and The Waterfall Lodge suitable for overnight golf breaks.

5 *The Yard in Bath, 1 Monmouth Place, Bath BA1 2AT. tel: 01225 448896; www.theyardinbath.co.uk*

The Yard in Bath is a 14 bedroom boutique hotel in the heart of the city and centred around a beautiful historic courtyard.

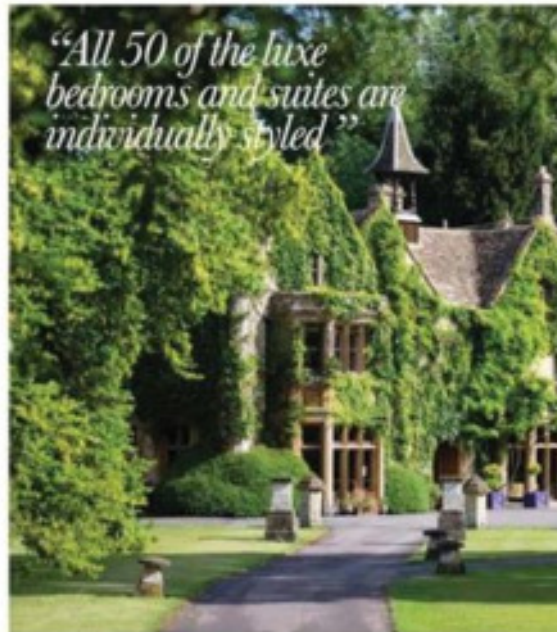
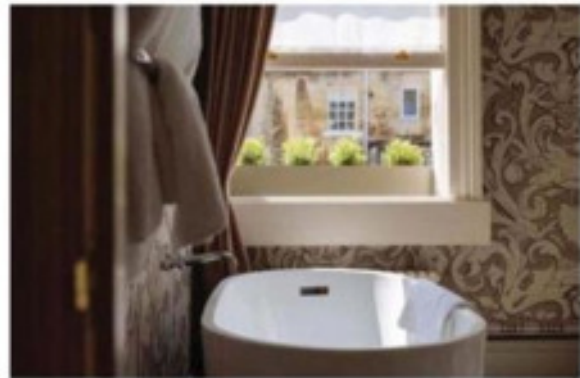
EAT There may not be a full menu but small plates are on offer to accompany the extensively curated selection of wines with a notable

focus on offering some unexpected options alongside the mainstays. There are the easy-sipping classics but also some from emerging wine hotspots such as Lebanon and Romania for those in the mood to try something new. Seasonal cocktails such as Aperol Spritz, Rhubarb and Elderflower Fizz are also on offer, along with local indie beers and ales.

SLEEP The largest bedroom, and the hotel’s most sought after room, comes with its own roof terrace. The bedroom has plenty of space for a comfortable weekend and the layout centres around a large stone fireplace. The roof terrace, accessed directly from the bedroom, has space for two to enjoy breakfast privately outside and the floor-to-ceiling sash windows flood the bedroom with sunlight on a nice day. The bathroom has a freestanding bath, separate shower, and bespoke wallpaper from Lewis & Wood.

USPs The small courtyard, decked out with plants and flowers, has three tables of two and one table of four. This cosy enclave catches the afternoon sunshine making it the ideal spot to enjoy an evening glass of wine or cocktail. In the morning, this space offers a peaceful haven for a quick coffee or a leisurely breakfast.

ABOVE: A city centre view from The Yard’s bathroom; **BELOW:** The Manor House boasts an 18-hole golf course



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Yellow News...



above: The 14-acre grounds at Woolley Grange contains playhouses, nature garden, trampoline and giant swing; across next row: Many of the original features like deep seat windows have been restored at Timbrell's Yard; across next row: The opulent and striking drawing room of The Bath Priory

6 Woolley Grange Hotel, Woolley Green, Bradford on Avon, BA15 1TX. tel: 01225 864785; www.woolleygrangehotel.co.uk
Part of the Luxury Family Hotels collection, Woolley Grange is a family-friendly Jacobean manor, with Elemis spa, indoor and outdoor pools and Ofsted registered crèche.

EAT The kitchen team, headed up by award-winning chef Dean Westcar, is passionate about using sustainable seasonal produce, dovetailing with their equally passionate gardening team. The two work together to deliver a delightful menu of fresh and flavoursome dishes throughout the year. They are committed to using the best small, local suppliers including eggs, which are supplied by the local Southview Farm, and meats coming from award-winning Waher Rose and Sons in Devizes.

SLEEP The Hayloft suite is rather special. With a king and a twin bedroom, a gorgeous bathroom and large living area, it can accommodate a family of six. It is housed in what was once the stable block, come-coach house, come-first NHS ambulance station after the war. There's a lot of history here. New to Woolley Grange is a luxury family glamping offering of two bedded glamping suites, complete with bathroom, living space and veranda for those guests who want a more outdoor holiday. The Glamping site also has the Hideout Cafe and Bar – perfect for relaxing with a glass of something special whilst the children chase chickens!

USPs In the holidays and at weekends there are complementary family activities such as pesto making with chef, willow weaving and flower crown making, the family challenge (think welly wanging and obstacle courses), and marshmallow toasting. Private yoga lessons can be booked.

7 Timbrell's Yard, 49 St Margaret's Street, Bradford on Avon, Wiltshire, BA15 1DE. tel: 01225 869492; www.timbrellsyard.com
The stylish riverside dog-friendly boutique hotel is a Grade II listed building, and once the site of an 18th century dye mill owned by Mr Timbrell.

EAT Jack Stoodley is the head chef and along with exec chef Tom Blake, they've created a delicious menu with a focus on local West Country

producers. Recommendations include the White Lake pecorino and spring pea arancini with green herb mayonnaise; for main the merguez spiced lamb rump with smoky aubergine and pepperonata; and to finish the rhubarb pavlova with vanilla and mascarpone cream.

SLEEP The loft suites have a cool, contemporary Nordic feel with mezzanine bedrooms, large picture windows and window seats overlooking the meadow river and the church spire. In the older wing, the rooms have thick, heavy beams clad in vintage linen and freestanding cast-iron baths. All the rooms feature crisp white linen, soft merino wool and modern textiles.

USPs Not only a dye mill building, the property once housed the Tariff Reform Club, the Town Library, and then the Conservative Club. In 1960, Bradford on Avon Rowing Club took over the building having merged with the Conservative Club, and it later became the Riverside Inn which later closed. It was about to be converted into offices and housing when the Stay Original Company bought it and undertook a complete refurbishment. It re-opened, utterly transformed in 2015, into a beautiful 17-bedroom boutique hotel, complete with original low beams, deep-seat windows, and wacky floors, on the banks of the River Avon.

8 The Bath Priory, Weston Road, Bath, BA1 2XT. tel: 01225 331922; www.thebathpriory.co.uk

A family-owned 33 bedroom luxury hotel, restaurant and spa with indoor and outdoor pool, set within four acres of gardens in Bath.

EAT The restaurant is renowned as one of the city's best, with new head chef Jusca Catalin now heading up our kitchen, having recently moved to the hotel from the Priory's sister hotel in Canterbury. There's a brand-new look and menu for its garden terrace – now open for all day al fresco dining, and serving breakfast, brunch, lunch and supper.

SLEEP Fresh flowers and fruit greet guests in the sumptuous and spacious master Crescent suites, each named after one of Bath's famous crescents and all offering beautiful garden views. 'Cavendish' features a calming, muted palette whilst 'The Royal' double room includes a decadent roll top bath. The spacious living rooms are individually designed with pure relaxation in mind.



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USPs The Bath Priory has an indoor and outdoor pool, available to use by hotel and spa guests, as well as croquet and bowls in the garden. This summer, visitors can indulge in a new yoga concept, which offers self-guided practices detailed on complementary new card sets along with yoga mats, to be enjoyed either within the privacy of guests' bedrooms, or in a quiet spot in the hotel's gardens – maybe under the ancient mulberry tree or in the perfumed rose garden.

9 *Whitley Manor Hotel and Spa, Easton Grey, Malmesbury, Wilts, SN16 0Df. tel: 01666 822 888; www.whitleymanor.com*
A grown-up getaway in the heart of the Cotswolds, set in 12 acres of gardens with 26 distinctly different areas.

EAT Under the direction of executive chef Niall Keating, The Dining Room currently holds two Michelin stars. Niall's menus showcase his accomplished modern cooking with clever and creative use of Asian influences. There's also the sophisticated Grey's Brasserie, and the Courtyard Lawn Outdoor Dining Experience offering a vibrant new seasonal menu, small but perfectly formed and bursting with flavour.

SLEEP The Grand Suite is split over two levels, with an enormous bathroom and freestanding Philippe Starck bath. There is a reception room, followed by the living room, leading into the beautiful exposed beam bedroom, and offering views out over the grand lawn and into the open countryside beyond.

USPs Whitley Manor have just been awarded five Earthchecker globes for their work on sustainability. There are regular ticketed events such as a lunch with Giles Beardsley and the Sunday Cinema Club. There is a newly installed hydrotherapy pool, heated stone recliners, steam room, sauna and a float pool, plus treatments by the Aquarius Spa team include facials using Gaia skin care, and salt scrub showers.

top: Whitley Manor's indoor-outdoor hydrotherapy pool; bottom: Welcome to the 250-year-old Royal Crescent Hotel



10 *The Royal Crescent Hotel and Spa, 16 Royal Crescent, Bath, BA1 2LS. tel: 01225 823 333; www.royalcrescent.co.uk*
A luxury hotel based in the centre across two houses on the world's most recognisable Georgian Crescent.

EAT Along with al fresco options and picnics, the 3AA Rosette Dower House Restaurant, with executive head chef, David Campbell leading the kitchen, offers up seasonal and celebrated options including the tasting menu which lists delights such as Salisbury Plain venison saddle, and mandarin cheesecake. To mark World Gin Day in June there's a Sipsmith Sipping menu with a range of specially created gin cocktails.

SLEEP There are 45 individually-designed bedrooms and suites to choose from and one of the hotel's most breath-taking suites is the Duke of York suite, named after Prince Frederick, who visited Bath in 1795. With duck-egg blue décor, original ceiling mouldings, a glamorous four poster bed, and floor-to-ceiling views of the stunning Crescent lawn.

USPs The acre of hidden gardens boasts a winding lavender path, abuzz with bees and butterflies in summertime. The spa with 12-metre relaxation pool, vitality pool, steam room, Himalayan salt sauna, luxe pampering treatments, and a fully-equipped gym. Their Escape to the English Villa package gives exclusive use of a standalone private residence that can sleep up to eight people, plus a private courtyard.

"There is a newly installed hydrotherapy pool"



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above: The reception area of the creative and boutique Hotel Indigo Bath; above: The £10.1 million refurbishment has transformed DoubleTree by Hilton Bath

11 Hotel Indigo Bath, South Parade, Bath, BA2 4AB.
 tel: 01225 460441; www.bath.hotelindigo.com
 The 166 room hotel opened its doors on 9 September 2020 after a multi-million-pound major restoration project.

EAT The Elder is the on-site restaurant where executive chef Mike Robinson, the UK's leading authority on wild food and game, brings his core 'field to fork' philosophy, creating an exceptional dining experience with a focus on sustainability, seasonality and locally-sourced produce. This is the gem *Guardian* food critic Jay Rayner called, "A brilliant beam of sunshine."

SLEEP The rooms are designed around five themes reflecting the history and locality of Bath. These include 'Romance & Mischief' rooms, 'Literary Hideaway' rooms, 'Architectural Beauty' rooms, 'Garden' rooms and 'The Vaults'. Modern and stylish, they reflect the influences of the architects and novelists who made Bath famous for its storytelling and passionate social scene. All rooms are equipped with comfy Hypnos beds with luxury Egyptian cotton linen, and spa-inspired bathrooms.

USPs Famous figures from history have stayed in the properties in their previous guises of The Pram's Hotel and The Halcyon Hotel including Sir Walter Scott, William Wilberforce, and the Duke of York. The exclusive-use house comes with its own entrance, eight bedrooms, a lounge/meeting room and a restored original Georgian kitchen.

12 DoubleTree by Hilton Bath, Walcot, Bath, BA1 5BJ.
 tel: 01225 463 411; www.dtbath.doubletreebyhilton.com
 A recent £10.1 million refurbishment programme has transformed the 176 room hotel that was originally built in 1973.

EAT The hotel has launched various afternoon and savoury teas situated in the Secret Garden, as well as cocktail promotions on Emma's Terrace, with the sharing platters a huge hit locally. Plus there's a new doggy menu which includes specially crafted doggy ice creams and snacks.



SLEEP The bedrooms have benefited from the recent renovations, which range from budget-friendly twin guest rooms to a split level master suite with a separate living area and a luxurious loft-living feel to it.

USPs The hotel's central Bath location and the Secret Garden with unique River Avon views as well as vistas of Pulteney Bridge and Sham Castle, make this pretty special. There is also on-site, state-of-the-art fitness equipment.

13 The Gainsborough Bath Spa, Beau Street, Bath BA1 1QE.
 tel: 01823 358888; www.thegainsboroughbathspa.co.uk
 A luxury five-star hotel with 100 bedrooms, originally built in the 1800s, and occupying two Grade II Listed buildings with distinguished Georgian and Victorian façades

EAT A watch-this-space, with head chef Joe Lacey at the helm of a summer opening of the new Gainsborough Brasserie, which looks set to impress "with its Georgian architecture, original artwork and impressive wine wall open to hotel guests and non-residents, and contemporary British cuisine inspired by fresh, seasonal ingredients in a stylish and relaxed environment."



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SLEEP Spacious and beautifully appointed, the Bath Spa Suite includes dedicated in-room thermal water service from the alcove mill-top bathtub within its under floor heated marble bathroom, plus the unique Gainsborough Scented Candle, and luxury eye pillow.

USPs Tapping into the original thermal springs, Spa Village Bath offers a contemporary perspective on the city's thermal water heritage. Coupled with the historic use of aromatherapy in Great Britain, this spa, set beneath a glass atrium within this hotel, gently supports the brand's philosophy of honouring the healing traditions of the region, while sharing the gift of select signature therapies of the original Spa Villages in Malaysia.

14 *The Bird, 18-19 Pulteney Road, Bath, BA2 4EZ. tel: 01225 580438; www.thebirdbath.co.uk*

Part of the Kaleidoscope Collection, owned by Ian and Christa Taylor, The Bird was bought in 2018 and underwent a complete refurb delivering a quirky, stylish and unique experience.

EAT The Bird's Plate Terrace, Domes and Pavilions will be serving the very best of local delights, delicious food, and stunning cocktails. In July, The Plate Restaurant and Bar will also be hosting a supper club of locally inspired dishes in partnership with Champagne Tastinget.

SLEEP There are 31 bedrooms, each telling their own story, from compact, comfy doubles to the rather fabulous feature room with a copper rolltop bath, high ceilings, Abbey views and gorgeous seating area. Plus there's the private hot tub room which promises "a hotel stay with flashy flashdance".

USPs The Taylors' creative vision offers a stunning stay like no other with artwork, a complimentary guest locker, and handcrafted wallpaper. Guest activities on offer include private personal training sessions and cocktail making classes.



10: The heated outdoor swimming pool at Homewood; 11: 10: There are 31 bedrooms, each telling their own story, at The Bird; 11: 10: The Gainsborough Spa Village Bath taps into the city's original thermal springs

15 *Homewood, Abbey Lane, Freshford, Somerset, BA2 7TB. tel: 01225 580 439; www.homewoodbath.co.uk*

A luxury 31 bedroom country house hotel set in 20 acres, Homewood Bath, was re-launched in January 2020 by experienced hoteliers Ian and Christa Taylor.

EAT Along with the renowned Olio Restaurant and Terrace with chef-gardener Darren Stephens, guests will be able to indulge in their very own Big Green Egg barbecue dining experience with their very own grill buffer, whilst nestled amongst the tree lined lawns, and enjoying unbroken views over the hotel grounds.

SLEEP Room 18 includes a separate living room, art deco vibes, large bathroom with standalone bath, a shell chandelier, French doors onto a private terrace, garden with gates out to a spa and a private hot tub.

USPs Homewood's spa and wellness facilities include an indoor hydrotherapy pool, sauna, and steam room, as well as a heated outdoor swimming pool and hot tub with views over the valley. Each of the luxurious bedrooms include Dyson hairdryers, Porter bathrooms, Hypnos beds and Smeig or Nespresso machines. There is also a complimentary locker for guests to indulge in. ■

