

The home hero

The Fox at Oddington, Gloucestershire

Everything Carole Bamford touches turns to gold, including The Fox at Oddington, a pub with rooms, a couple of miles away from the original Daylesford Farmshop. 'Oh my, this is an upgrade,' exclaimed someone excitedly as they walked past my table.

There are few surprises here, it's all very recognisably Daylesford, including the pub menu (look out for local Jeremy Clarkson's Hawkstone Lager behind the bar), but that's surely why people are going to come. Colour has been used sparingly and the rooms are all undyed linens, hefty wooden beams and exposed brick walls. One has Crittal doors that lead out onto a terrace.

On the other side of the road, there's an elegant townhouse that wouldn't look amiss in a Richard Curtis film, peeking out from behind some scaffolding. It will hold more rooms and, I'm told, will also be available to hire on an exclusive-use basis. *RP*

From £225 (01451 767000; www.thefoxatoddington.com)



Harvest time

NOW that the pandemic is (cross your fingers) over, Coquillade Provence Resort & Spa is finally able to luxuriate in its staggering €70 million facelift. The former French wine-making village, tended to by monks for centuries before its sprawling buildings were united to become a single hotel, is at its best in autumn, when the grape harvest is in full swing. There are 11 grape varieties growing on the neatly pruned vines, such as Grenache, Viognier, Caladoc and Syrah. The cooler autumn air also attracts cyclists; handily, the hotel's recent updates include a world-class cycling centre, open to amateurs and professionals alike. *Phoebe Hunt*
From €750 (about £640) per night, including a welcome gift, a selection of the minibar, breakfast, access to the spa and fitness classes and passage to the Aureto Winery

A Cornish missive

THE NARE, a vision of COUNTRY LIFE by the sea, was my father's favourite hotel. He loved the interior design, subtle formality and the astonishing views across the secluded bay. The recent additions of the Whittington Suites provide a new level of comfort with huge rooms, deliciously comfortable beds and separate drawing rooms.

They are Cornwall's latest hotel wonder and if the sea feels within touching distance, it's because it almost is. Cornwall in summer can be full to the brim with people, but The Nare, set above a secluded beach, provides a perfect retreat. Even better, book now and go in late winter when the magnolias and camellias bloom in the great gardens dotted around southern Cornwall—you will have heaven pretty much to yourself. *MH*

From £192 per night (01872 501111; www.narehotel.co.uk)



Welcome back to Bali

BALI has reopened its borders to international travellers for the first time since the covid outbreak. Visitors to the most-frequented Indonesian island will find a new hotel, Nirjhara (www.nirjhara.com), a sustainable hideaway named after a waterfall in Tabanan, and its sister boat, Vela (www.vela.kesato.io), a six-cabin yacht available for private charter around the Indonesian archipelago.



Into the woods

Lime Wood's Herb House spa in Hampshire has launched a series of rewilding retreats. Some, such as the Forest Fix Retreat, will focus on mobility and strength, others, including the Power of Nature Retreat, will include guided walks and forest bathing. For more information, visit www.limewoodhotel.co.uk →

Don't forget to *write* home

Hugh Francis Anderson discovers the charms of Sils Maria that once entranced Hermann Hesse

Where? Waldhaus-Sils, Sils Maria, Switzerland

What? Assorted works

Why? It's 1949 and Hermann Hesse gazes east through the forest of Swiss stone pines towards Lake Sils, which lies under a heavy blanket of snow. The air is fragrant with the heady aroma of burning wood; the lights of Waldhaus-Sils a beacon in the fading light. 'We stroll again beneath the larch and pines, grateful for the grandeur and nobility of this, the most beautiful mountain scenery that I know', he wrote. 'The brisk, cool, dry mountain air lends a special freshness to every colour.'

Although he was the recipient of the 1946 Nobel Prize in Literature, Hesse never wrote another novel and, instead, spent his time writing poems and painting, often at Waldhaus-Sils, where he spent a total of 370 days during the decade before his death in 1962. The hotel (above) now hosts the Sils Hesse Days,



a four-day event held every June that sees people congregate to celebrate the great writer (*right*).

The business is a family one, the property owned and managed by Claudio and Patrick Dietrich, the great, great grandsons of founder Josef Giger. Giger had always dreamt of a hotel in Sils-Maria that resembled a fortress upon a hill and was 'beautiful, practical and solid'. Completed in 1908, Waldhaus-Sils soon became



a magnet for the cultural elite and its former guests count Albert Einstein, Thomas Mann, Neville Chamberlain and David Bowie among their ranks. Today, it is still regarded as one of the finest historic hotels in Europe.

How? To make the most of the Engadin's sublime skiing it's best to visit Sils-Maria in mid January, when snowfall is high and there are fewer people on the mountains.


From 485CHF (£430) a night (www.waldhaus-sils.ch)

Hotel of the month

F Zeen, Kefalonia, Greece

I AM sitting cross-legged in the forest, mildly intoxicated by its clean, green scent. The rhythmic crash of waves drifts up from below. 'Let go of your thoughts,' encourages our yoga teacher, needlessly—mine have already been drowned out by Nature and the warmth of the Greek sun as it sets pinkly on the horizon.

'Reconnect, recharge, rejuvenate' implores the website for family-owned, adults-only retreat F Zeen on the island of Kefalonia (no excited shrieking piercing the calm here). Sprawling over the hillside leading down to the Ionian Sea, the warm stone and clever landscaping—with koi ponds and natural-looking planting—of the 63 rooms, pools, spa areas, yoga decks, outdoor gym, tennis courts, golf simulator and restaurants blend into their surroundings rather than intruding on them; this really is a 'retreat', not a hotel.

Yes, there are large boards listing the many activities available each day (hikes, mindfulness and snorkelling; circuit training and body sculpt for the dedicated), but it's more than that. The moment you pass through the gates, the rest of the world seems to melt away, to be worried about on another day, by another you. When the taxi driver tells you you're staying at 'the best place', you suspect you're in for a treat. At F Zeen, you certainly are. VM 
Rooms from €300 per night (00 30 26710 31423; www.fzeenretreat.com).

