

Ultimate itineraries

8-page special

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Stephen Bayley Get a taste for Madrid

The design guru eats his way to culinary bliss in the Spanish capital
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Marcel Theroux Cycling slowly along the Loire

'Ordinary life keeps going under the chop and turbulence of the headlines'
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TRAVEL

Wonder Wall

Michelle Jana Chan reveals why a Hollywood blockbuster can never do justice to China's greatest construction - and suggests 10 great ways to visit it for yourself



HOTELEGRAPH



The Artist Residence, Penzance, left; The Idle Rocks, St Mawes, right; and Padstow Townhouse, below

For a complete guide to the best hotels in Cornwall, see: telegraph.co.uk/tt-cornwallhotels

THE TOP 10

The cream of the crop, from Bude to Penzance

Full of character and with quirky designs and a sense of style, these are our favourite luxury hotels in Cornwall

The Idle Rocks, St Mawes

Interior design is by owner Karen Richards and exudes the joy of the committed collector: paintings by artist David Pearce, French laundry baskets, driftwood jewellery and vintage items. The collection – and staff who seem happy – makes the Idle Rocks feel more like a contemporary country home than a hotel. Rooms exude joie di vivre – tangerine velvet cushions and vintage burnt-orange shoe trees pick up the gaudy beach towels in a David Pearce painting, or a distressed raspberry-hued wardrobe echoes the pink of a botanical print textile. ● Doubles from £150 telegraph.co.uk/tt-idlerocks

St Petroc's Hotel, Padstow

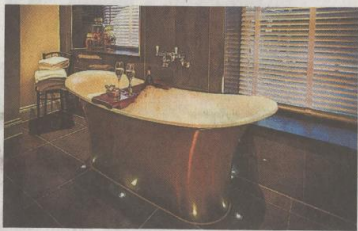
Fine hotels, like fine wines, improve with age – even tiny ones like St Petroc's, which opened in 1988.

Simple touches, like the eclectic selection of books left behind by guests over the past 38 years, and crammed into bookcases, do much to give the hotel life, soul and humour. The little sitting rooms and library are lovely – think comfortable leather sofas and shabby-chic furniture. ● Doubles from £112 telegraph.co.uk/tt-stpetrocs

Chapel House, Penzance

A triumphant renovation of the former home of Admiral

Linzee (he fought at Trafalgar), one of the most beautiful buildings in Penzance. Inside is graceful, luxurious and refreshingly uncluttered. The owner also understands how colour, shape and texture can work together. The result is a feast for the eyes: antique pieces sit alongside modern designer icons and beds set into hand-built oak frames. Floorboards are painted a soft grey and covered by well-chosen kilims. Public rooms have a convivial air. ● Doubles from £150 telegraph.co.uk/tt-chapelhouse



Padstow Townhouse, Padstow

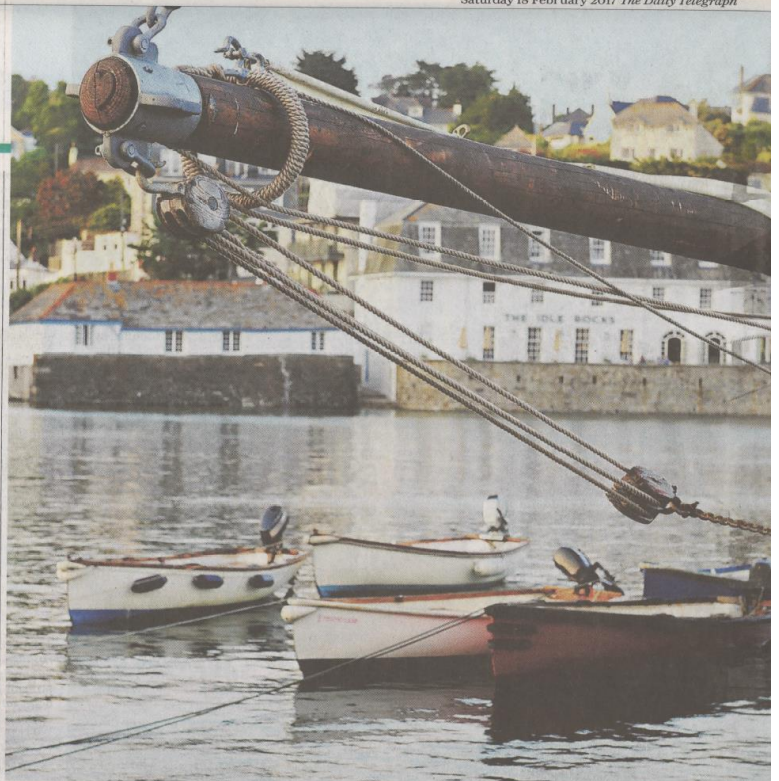
In Padstow's High Street: in fact a quiet, narrow residential street in the upper town, full of attractive houses and a short stroll from the harbour. The house has been restored to a very high standard and decorated with panache. There is no lounge, but instead a beautifully equipped and well-stocked "honesty" pantry where guests can mingle and fill up wicker baskets to take back to their rooms. The rooms cocoon you luxuriously: all are equipped to a high standard, with creatively stocked minibars and "larders". ● Doubles from £280 telegraph.co.uk/tt-padstowtownhouse

Artist Residence, Penzance

A quirky boutique hotel with a characterful Georgian air, whitewashed interiors and friendly service in the heart of Penzance. At ground level, there's a stripped-back white exhibition space. Bedrooms are up narrow stairs, each decorated in a quirky style: Admiral Benbow has colourful murals of Penzance street scenes; Upcycled has a mushroom-shaped bed and cubist iconography; An Enchanted Forest has silver flowers and trees. Breakfast is delivered to rooms in a pink carrier bag, with pastries, fresh fruit salad, yogurt with honey and granola, and apple juice. ● Doubles from £70 telegraph.co.uk/tt-artistresidencepenzance

The St Mawes Hotel, St Mawes

Perfect for guilt-free hedonism, helped along by the gin cocktail hour kicking off at 4pm. Bare boards, wooden tables, chalkboards and nautical paraphernalia give the bar the feel of a French bistro – while the upstairs lounge and dining room, with French windows opening on to a balcony overlooking the bay, is more hygge, with open fire,



Special offer

The Beach At Bude
£139 per person for 2 nights in a Superior Double Room, b&b and dinner on one night. Book by March 17 for stays between Feb 18 and May 25: 03331 229 570; telegraph.co.uk/tt-beachat-bude

soft lighting, gorgeously upholstered sofas, kilims, bookshelves and a collection of French enamelware on a distressed dresser. ● Doubles from £140 telegraph.co.uk/tt-stmawes

The Beach at Bude, Bude

New England-style rooms with limed-oak furniture, Lloyd Loom chairs and king-

size beds with cloudy duck-down duvets. Many have decks or balconies with sea views, although you can always sit on the bar's terrace, drink in hand. The vibe is contemporary, young and unpretentious, though it's a hotel enjoyed by folk of all ages. Rooms are flooded with dazzling north Cornwall light – at least on sunny days – and contain big baths perfect for warming up after a swim or surf. ● Doubles from £97 telegraph.co.uk/tt-beachatbude

Trewornan Manor, Wadebridge

The grown-up, traditional English exterior – all rose-covered walls, lavender beds and manicured lawns – belies a contemporary, fresh interior, where period features such as flagstone floors, log fires and shuttered windows are funked up

with statement lighting, velvet sofas, artistic flower arrangements and Louis XV-style furniture. Rooms have stylish, sumptuous décor and window seats looking on to the grounds, and come with thoughtful touches such as fluffy hot-water bottles, glossy magazines and fresh milk each morning. It's worth staying for the cream teas alone. ● Doubles from £99 telegraph.co.uk/tt-trewoanmanor

The Pedn Olva, St Ives

As makes sense in a hotel with a pub and restaurant at its heart, hotel life is lived on the terraces and in the open-plan bar/restaurant and its lounge offshoot (with huge squishy leather sofas and more lovely views). Terraces have wicker furniture and

a mixture of dining and coffee tables, while interiors strike a retro note with Sixties-styled furniture and upholstery (leather, prints and tweed). Rooms have a chic seaside boutique look. ● Doubles from £89 telegraph.co.uk/tt-pednolva

The Old Coastguard Hotel, Mousehole

Stunningly situated above the harbour wall at Mousehole, with views from the restaurant down to the sea. The hotel offers comfortable beds, good linen and thick towels and a laid-back vibe. The emphasis is on the atmosphere and the food, which is simple but properly done. ● Doubles from £130 telegraph.co.uk/tt-oldcoastguard

Reviews by Ros Belford, Gill Charlton and Fiona Duncan