

Inns and outs

Announcing the latest in UK hotel chic – small pubs with rooms

Britain is famous for both its pubs and its B&B culture but less so for successfully melding the two together. Now a group of sleek, newly vamped public houses is changing that.

This month sees the opening of the Ragged Cot Inn in Hyde, Gloucestershire, a quintessentially British pub with rooms, by the people behind the fashionable Kensington Arms in Bristol, while Hotel du Vin launches its first Pub du Vin, a stylish pub with 12 rooms, in Brighton.

Later in the year, two tired coaching inns, Ye Olde Bell, near Maidenhead, Berkshire, and The Crown in Amersham, Buckinghamshire, both recently snapped up by Dhillon Hotels (dhillonhotels.co.uk), will be unveiled following a spectacular bedroom, dining room and culinary makeover by designer Ilse Crawford.

Even the godfathers of the boutique hotel movement are developing new projects this year: Crazy Bear in Oxford (crazybeargroup.co.uk) will open a sumptuous 15th-century coaching inn in Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire, this month; the Bull in Bridport (thebullhotel.co.uk) will unveil its gorgeous new bedrooms; and both the White Swan in Pickering, North Yorkshire (white-swan.co.uk), and the nearby Star Inn in Harome (thestaratharome.co.uk) are rolling out chi-chi new rooms next year. All you need do is take your pick. **Francesca Syz**



Scene stealer
Ilse Crawford's mood board for Ye Olde Bell (Berkshire) and The Crown (Buckinghamshire)

Zurich's jewel in the crown



Nowhere in the world does old-school glamour better than Switzerland's cultural capital, Zurich.

But in the past year, old school and new have been courting each other in a series of major regeneration projects.

First came the exquisite modern glass extension of the neoclassical Museum Rietberg, then there was the launch of Sihcity, the futuristic city-within-a-city housed in a 19th-century paper factory, but the *pièce de résistance* must be Foster + Partners' dramatic transformation of the fairy-tale Dolder Grand hotel.

Perched high up on a hill overlooking the city and the Swiss Alps beyond, the iconic property, built as a huge 220-bed

health spa in 1899, reopens this month after a two-year refurbishment. The hotel's 173 rooms are shared between the original historic building and two brand-new sweeping wings designed by Foster.

The hotel's enormous modern spa has 21 treatment rooms, an extensive hydrotherapy circuit, outdoor whirlpools, a black Bisazza mosaic pool and even a room filled with snow.

For the full revamp experience, be sure to book one of the luxurious new suites created by London-based United Designers, in a style they describe as Alberto Giacometti meets the Rolling Stones. Doubles from €549 (£409). +41 44 456 60 00, thedoldergrand.com

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LEGENDARY LANDSCAPE

If you've ever considered a trip to Patagonia, a peruse of *Patagonia: a Cultural History* (£12, Signal Books), a new book by Chris Moss, may well swing it for you. From giant dinosaur fossils to towering glaciers, this vast triangle at the southernmost tip of South America is one of the most beguiling places on earth. It's ability to grip the imagination is legendary. Charles Darwin, Bruce Chatwin and Paul Theroux were all captivated, and even Butch and Sundance took time out to run a ranch near the Patagonian Andes. **FS**

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