

# Red travel

Hotels, breaks, escapes

*Edited by Amanda Morison*

## Glam Britannia

No more grumpy landladies and lumpy pillows with our top 10 most glamorous places in the UK and Ireland



# 7 HURST HOUSE, WALES

Amanda Morison in the Welsh countryside

I giggled when I walked in to the bar at Hurst House in West Wales. The modern art and plasma screen seemed so incongruous after the howling gale and soggy-looking cows outside. But part-owner, Neil Morrissey, aims to provide a 'home from home for discerning customers where they can enjoy fine food, wine and excellent hospitality'.

The location on the flat marshes of Carmarthen's coast is a bit odd – I'd been expecting rolling Welsh hills – and the breakfast could do with a revamp. But dinner was excellent – contemporary with a comfortable twist – as were the cocktails.

While there, don't miss the nearby town of Laugharne and a drink in Brown's, watering hole of Dylan Thomas. Now owned by Neil Morrissey and business

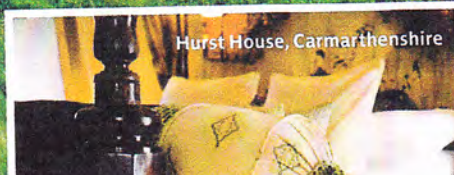
partner, it's still a gritty, local affair with pork scratchings behind the bar.

I'd love Thomas's take on Cefnmeurig, an 18th-century farmhouse about 15 minutes from Laugharne. It's cosily decorated with flashes of designer brilliance – raspberry pink walls, chandelier strip lights, and a framed red velvet dress that belonged to the owner's mother. Perfect for a funky, noisy house party.

Next, Llandeilo and another incongruous stopover – what was a contemporary hotel like The Cawdor doing in a sleepy market town? By the weekend all 23 of the rooms

were full and guests zipped into the lobby laden with bags from the town's branch of Toast (floaty, boho-chic clothing) and Peppercorns (fab kitchenware). My room on the top floor was all timeworn floorboards and exposed beams with a view to the park and hilltop bandstand where local youths smoked illicit cigarettes – some things never change. And in honour of Thomas, I'll drink to that. Newly cool, occasionally wacky Wales has a timeless appeal that even ultra-contemporary hotels won't change. ☛

*Hurst House, Laugharne, (01994) 427417; hurst-house.co.uk, doubles from £185 b&b. The Cawdor Hotel, Llandeilo, (01558) 823500; thecawdor.com, doubles from £65 b&b. Cefnmeurig, (029) 2089 9280; visitwestwales.com, one week from £660 including hamper*



Hurst House, Carmarthenshire



The Cawdor Hotel, Llandeilo