

The Château's dining room

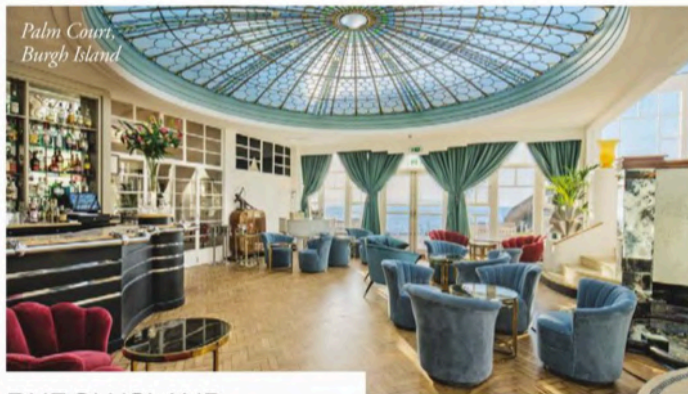


Baron's Suite, Château du Grand-Lucé

HOTEL CHÂTEAU DU GRAND-LUCÉ

Loire Valley, France

This quintessential French château is film-set perfect, cocooned in neo-classical gardens still lined with sculptures (house-warming gifts from Louis XV to the owner Baron Pineau de Viennay) and a swimming pool fashioned out of an original fountain. The château has been many things since it was built in 1764 – a bolt-hole for Rousseau and Voltaire, a safe haven for a cache of the Louvre's paintings – but never a hotel until its meticulous transformation by Californian hotelier Marcy Holthus, a genius restorer with an eye for colour and whimsy. Utterly bewitching, it has vast swagged and gilded rooms with claw-foot baths and chandeliers that sparkle like something out of a Wes Anderson film. Gastronomic delights are prepared by rising star chef Maxime Thomas. Staying here is the ultimate rococo fantasy – a perfect marriage of romance, intimacy, beauty and exquisite attention to detail. *Double, from £410 (chateau-grandlucé.com).*



Palm Court, Burgh Island

BURGH ISLAND

Devon, England

Where the Famous Five meet *Swallows and Amazons*, with a dash of Agatha Christie, Burgh Island is a bastion of Englishness, an art-deco beauty which is exactly how you would imagine a 1920s cruise: refined hedonism, black tie dinners, plenty of jazz. Nancy Cunard, Noël Coward, Josephine Baker and Christie all stayed in this old-school seaside palace hotel. A quaint sea tractor ferries you across; if the tide is high, you're cut off from the mainland. Nettlefood, the seafood

restaurant, is fabulous, particularly for Seaside Martinis (made from Cornish sapphire gin) paired with Exmoor caviar; the impromptu drinks party in the Palm Court is always fun; but the black tie dinner in the Grand Ballroom is the ultimate theatrical time warp experience with copper-domed trolleys serving racks of lamb and lemon sole. The hotel is enchanting, offering the most innocent of seaside pleasures, such as swims in the seawater lagoon known as Mermaid Pool, and crab sandwiches at the Pilchard Inn, which dates from 1336. The glamorous island setting could come straight from the pages of Christie's *Evil Under the Sun*. *Double, from £295, including dinner and breakfast (burghisland.com).*



Grand Suite cabin on the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express

VENICE SIMPLON-ORIENT-EXPRESS

Venice to London, Europe

A classic of style and design, the elegant aesthetics of the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express have been carefully preserved, paying homage to the Roaring Twenties, that glamorous decade of jazz bands, cocktails and long ropes of pearls. So it's fitting that for 2020, Belmond is launching a new immersive time-travelling journey, *The Party*. This two-night trip is the epitome of romance. Check in to the Belmond Hotel Cipriani and you can dance the night away in a bellini-induced haze before setting off the next morning for London. Expect even more old world glamour onboard, especially in the new Grand Suite cabins with their gargantuan beds and fabulous marble showers. It's all about dressing up for dinner in bias-cut silk dresses and free-flowing champagne as you chug past Lake Maggiore and through the Swiss Alps. For character, romance and soul, this train has no rival; the food is exquisite, as are the stewards, who will fulfill your every whim – whether to package up some Lalique glassware to take home or bring you scrambled eggs with caviar at midnight. *Belmond (belmond.com) offers The Party, 27–29 March 2020, from £3,760.*

A quaint sea tractor ferries you across to Burgh Island – a bastion of Englishness