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THE SUNDAY TIMES



Travel



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SCOTLAND



★ WINNER ★
HOTEL INDIGO NEW
DUNDEE **11 & £**

Chain hotels are boring, right? Not this quirky, cut-price cracker, which opened this summer after a £23m renovation of a once-derelict jute mill. It's littered with witty Dundonian touches: copies of the Beano on the bedside tables are a nod to the publisher DC Thomson, and the ingredients for Dundee cake are written on the bedroom walls. There are 102 rooms, and the vibe is industrial chic, with original red-brick ceilings and exposed ventilation pipes and girders. A perfect base for waterfront strolls and visits to the new V&A Dundee. *Doubles from £79, B&B; mains from £12.50; ihg.com*



DOUBLE VISION Views at the Machrie

THE MACHRIE NEW
ISLAY **11 & ££**

Reopened last month after a five-year refurbishment, this is a spectacular reworking of a 19th-century golf hotel. Set on the southernmost outpost of the Inner Hebrides, an easy stroll from seven miles of sand (and only a 15-minute drive from the Bowmore, Laphroaig, Lagavulin and Ardbeg distilleries), the Machrie has lost none of its thick-walled cosiness, while adding a spa, artworks galore, a 30-seat cinema, whisky bar and acres of glass offering views of dunes and links from the double-height dining room and lounge. *Doubles from £145, B&B; mains from £15; themachrie.com*

AUCHRANNIE RESORT
ARRAN **11 & ££**

You don't need kids in tow to enjoy Auchrannie, a 50-minute ferry ride from Ardrrossan. There are six "Couples' Retreats", a spa to soak your feet in after a day spent on Goatfell (2,867ft), and three excellent restaurants. But family breaks are what this upbeat, unpretentious resort does best. Two- and three-bedroom lodges are surrounded by footie-friendly lawns; an on-site activity centre offers gorge-walking, Segways and mountain-biking; while little ones will love the three-tier play barn, sports hall and swimming pools. *Main house doubles from £109, B&B; two-bedroom lodges (sleep six) from £149, room-only; mains from £13; auchrannie.co.uk*

DUNSTANE HOUSE
EDINBURGH **11 ££**

Dunstane House, in the city's West End, has been variously occupied by merchants, musicians and distillers since it was built in 1852. Recently pepped up by a £1m renovation, it is now a sumptuous 16-room hotel with high ceilings and original stucco features. Haggis bonbons are a must at dinner, and look out for atmospheric old photographs of Orkney in the hallways, a nod to the roots of the



DISTINCT FLAVOUR You'll eat well at Auchrannie, above. Hotel Indigo, far left; and Dunstane House



owners, Shirley and Derek. Do make time for one of barman Sean's lethal whisky cocktails in Ba' Bar, a drinking hole named after the brutal Orkney football game. The Forth is within reach for morning strolls. *Doubles from £174, B&B; mains from £9.50; thedunstane.com*

TIGERLILY
EDINBURGH **11 & ££**

Put aside the Georgian facade and posh George Street postcode: this brash, boutique boudoir is glitzy, young and unashamedly fun. Glitterballs sparkle in the stairwell, there's a nightclub in the basement and Auld Reekie's hippest cocktail bar is just off the lobby. The 33 seductive rooms come with stripped-wood floors, crimson flock curtains, pink lighting and slimming mirrors. Check out Tigerlily's intriguing events, too, including cocktail classes, makeovers, burlesque school and Dirty Dancing lessons. Very different from dirty dancing lessons, note. *Doubles from £135, B&B; mains from £13; tigerlilyedinburgh.co.uk*

GLENEAGLES
PERTHSHIRE **11 & £££**

Lording it over an 850-acre Highland estate in the heathery glens, this baronial 1920s railway resort was bought by the hip Hoxton group in 2015, which has spent millions replacing tired tweed with art-deco glam. Golf is the big draw, of course (Gleneagles hosted the 2014 Ryder Cup), but the estate also offers fishing, riding, shooting, a spa, an indoor pool, a high-end boutique arcade and Scotland's only two-Michelin-star restaurant. A choice of 120 single malts at the Century Bar is the ideal way to toast the end of a busy day. *Doubles from £390; mains from £14; gleneagles.com*

OLD COURSE HOTEL
FIFE **11 & ££**

Take the best-located hotel in St Andrews – it's literally just a sliced drive from the Old Course's 17th tee and a three-minute

walk across the fairways to West Sands Beach – splash £17m on the bedrooms, gym and plush spa, and throw in a three-AA-rossette restaurant, and what you get is one very deserving Best Scottish Hotel gong at this year's AA Hospitality Awards. Service is slick and super-friendly; children are amply catered for. It really is a treat. *Doubles from £195, B&B; family rooms from £245, B&B; mains from £11; oldcoursehotel.co.uk*

MARMALADE HOTEL NEW
SKYE **11 & ££**

Marmalade was once a slightly tired and tatty bar-with-rooms, on the hill above Portree. It's now a stylish 11-bedroom hotel that reopened last year after a £1m makeover. The handsome Georgian building sits in 15 acres of oaks and rhododendrons, with views across the harbour to the Cuillins, the mountains that dominate Skye. Chef Pete Cullen has been nabbed from Kinloch Lodge, an hour's drive south. Skye beef and oysters head a menu that fairly moos with local produce, while whisky from the nearby Talisker distillery beckons at the bar. *Doubles from £120, B&B; mains from £15.50; marmaladehotel.co.uk*

THE TORRIDON
WESTERROSS **11 & ££**

Wedge between loch and ben in the rugged coastal wilds 50-odd miles north of Fort William, this former Victorian shooting lodge is now a magnificent family-owned, 18-bedroom hotel dwarfed by vast mountain views. Guests get one free activity a day at the hotel's own outdoor-activity centre, and there's a grand firelit lounge waiting for après-yomp. A converted two-bedroom boathouse right on the shore offers self-catering with a view, but don't forgo the hotel's three-AA-rossette dinner and whisky snug, with some 350 malts and gins to choose from. *Doubles from £165, B&B; four-course set menu from £60; thetorridon.com*

BEST FAMILY HOTEL