

COUNTRY & TOWN HOUSE

JULY 2009 £3.00

SCORCHING
SUMMER
STYLE

ROCK
STEADY
THE UK'S
BEST
FESTIVALS

ENTERTAINING
WITH NINA
CAMPBELL

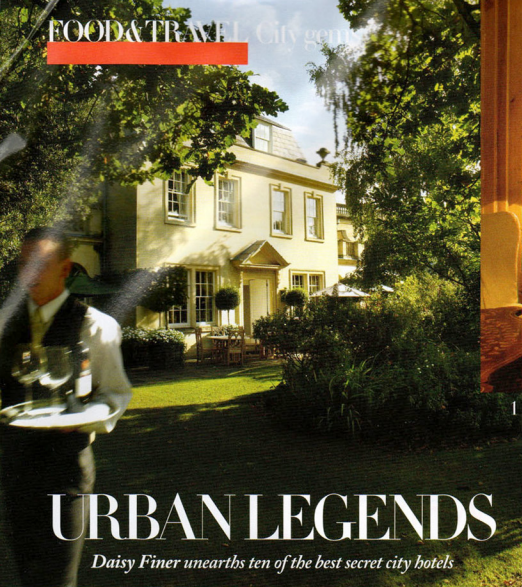
Celebrate
summer

CORNISH
CREAM
SOUTH
WEST'S
BEST

PARADISE
WE'VE
FOUND
THE NEW
MUSTIQUE

PLUS
HOMES
FOR HORSE
LOVERS





URBAN LEGENDS

Daisy Finer unearths ten of the best secret city hotels

1 THE ROYAL CRESCENT HOTEL, BATH

What an enchanting weekend away. Bath is a hotspot of great shops and restaurants (including a new Jamie Oliver outpost). Stay right in the heart of its historic centre at this 18th-century golden-hued and terrifically handsome hotel. Authentic period details abound and there are some exceptional paintings by Reynolds and Gainsborough. And then there is the spa in the converted coach house and stables, with a pool, plunge tubs and a range of soothing treatments. ROOMS FROM: £195 (01225 823333; royalrescent.co.uk)

2 THE EGERTON HOUSE HOTEL, LONDON

Calm, discreet, intimate – if you want a homely bolthole in London this is it. Overlooking a quiet, tree-lined street in the heart of Knightsbridge, this lovely, traditional hotel knows how to make you feel looked after; it's more like staying with a friend than at a hotel. It's the little details that make the difference – champagne in your room, candles lit in your bathroom at dusk, fresh flowers, plenty of water and staff as shiny as buttons.

Bedrooms are traditional without being stuffy, with big beds, splashes of colour and immaculate bathrooms.

ROOMS FROM: £235
(Book through *Chic Retreats*, 01284 828 804)

3 OHTEL, WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND

A funky new arrival in Wellington – a small, friendly city, abuzz with activity – the Ohtel is filled with cool design, high-tech media and interesting lighting. The über-contemporary look is combined with thoughtful, personal service and fantastic insider recommendations. Explore all the wonders of the city and then return into the comfortable arms of a modern hotel with atmosphere and bath tubs big enough for two. Wellington is also the gateway to some of the country's most spectacular landscapes (think *Lord of the Rings*) so an essential stop-off on your journey.

ROOMS FROM: £200
(Book through *Chic Retreats*, 01284 828804)

4 CASA HOWARD, ROME

Casa Howard is Rome's secret pied-à-terre, hidden exactly where you want to be down



a side street near the Spanish steps. There are five stylishly decorated bedrooms, each different, but all combining comfort and flair. The Chinese Room is swathed in glamorous silks and the White Room is a fresh mix of toile de Jouy and delicate antique furnishings. OK, so you have to walk down a corridor to get to the bathroom, but kimonos and slippers are provided to ease the way. Breakfast is a feast of warm buttery pastries, fresh juices, and homemade jam from the owners' Tuscan farm. ROOMS FROM: £145

(Book through *Chic Retreats*, 01284 828804)

5 CARON DE BEAUMARCHAIS, PARIS

Caron de Beaumarchais is what you want from a hotel in Paris. It's small, affordable and bohemian. The position is perfect, bang in the middle of the Marais district, the staff are cheerful (which means a lot in Paris), and the historic interior oozes character: think *Dangerous Liaisons*. The 19 bedrooms retain their original oak beams and are decorated with elegant French fabrics and Gustavian furniture. Be warned that top-floor rooms really are tiny, but they do have balconies with sweeping views across the Right Bank.

ROOMS FROM: £115
(+33 1 42 72 34 12; carondebeaumarchais.com)