

The cool hotel guide

The Talbot, Malton, North Yorkshire

In a nutshell

Sam and Georgie Pearman headed north to reboot this coaching inn after they left the trendy Lucky Onion group of Gloucestershire hotels and restaurants — including No 38 the Park — that they had co-founded. Their impact is most obvious in the inn's sleepy snug, where mismatched armchairs abut window-seats with cushions, and a fun, three-level bar with Victorian portraiture and log piles. Funky music sounds softly throughout the building and spills outside, where sun terraces overlook vegetable beds, lawns, striped deckchairs and, eventually, the River Derwent.

What are the rooms like?

High ceilings and lush navy or jungle-green walls create a cosy feel. There are a lot of distressed gilt mirrors, while pale-wood furniture, carpets and floral curtains lend homeliness and cheer. Art — an insect print here, a watercolour there — is slowly being added. Some rooms have red bathtubs; all the bigger ones have four-poster beds.



JOHN CAREY

Which is the best room?

No 16, a vast family room, extends into a bay window and there are views across the river from a retro red-leather sofa.

What's the food like?

Malton claims that it is "Yorkshire's foodie capital", and the Talbot's high-end pub fare aids that campaign. I enjoyed devilled kidneys on sourdough to start, before tender — if slightly chewy — local pork belly with new potatoes and lardon-studded celeriac. Dessert brought a twist: sticky-toffee ginger pudding, the slightly tart taste rendering it less sickly.

Breakfast was a fine fry-up, plus a huge pot of coffee and just-baked croissants.

Who goes there?

Day-trippers from York, gourmards, lots of locals and anyone hiking the North York Moors or Howardian Hills.

The highs, the lows, the verdict

Eight and a half out of ten Whether sipping cocktails on the terrace, taking a bath or sleeping-deeply, I was blissfully relaxed. The young staff are tremendous.

Richard Mellor

Need to know

Richard Mellor was a guest of the Talbot (01653 639096, talbotmalton.co.uk). B&B doubles from £100 a night; no single-occupancy discount; one wheelchair-accessible room; four dog-friendly rooms

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Alex McFadyen

Writer, Times Expert Traveller
Expert Traveller hotel rating: 8/10

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