

The 14th hole, surrounded by fescue-covered dunes at Donald Trump's superb new course



THE HANDBOOK

Update SCOTLAND

With the addition of a stunning world-class golf course and a raft of new (and new-look) hotels, Caledonia's charms grow by leaps and bounds. **GARY BUCHANAN** reports

For all its bounty, Scotland is a strangely mutable place, its skies unpredictable, its rivers untamed, its history capricious and violent. Lying at the apogee of imagination's reach, it sells itself as a land of misty mountains and quiescent glens; but beyond the clichés it hosts the best Hogmanay party in the world and is the home of golf, tartan and whisky. Enhancing these traditions are recently unveiled, game-changing links courses and recherché hotels that epitomise Old Caledonia's new image, one that overflows in chutzpah.

1 LAKE SUPERIOR

Superlatives crowd each other off the page at Loch Lomond. Local clan chief Sir Malcolm Colquhoun owns the **Loch Lomond Arms Hotel** in the bucolic village of Luss. After a lavish £2.9m refurbishment of this 19th-century inn, eclectic design by Serena Williams-Ellis is now a hallmark of the 14 idiosyncratic bedrooms. lochlomondarmshotel.com



Loch Lomond Arms Hotel

2 GREENER PASTURES

Sequestered amongst 500 hectares of Aberdeenshire's coastline, Donald Trump's long-awaited Scottish golf course, **Trump International Golf Links**, is an absolute gem. Designed by Martin Hawtree and destined to become one of the greatest in Britain, the immaculate par-72 course is challenging and sublime with half a dozen holes that play directly on to the windswept sea. trumpgolfscotland.com



The honeymoon suite at Shieldhill

3 AWAY IN THE CLYDE

Raising the bar in the beautiful Upper Clyde valley, the **Shieldhill Castle Hotel** effortlessly exudes low-key luxe. Fresh from a full refurbishment, this 26-room bolthole is artfully unfancy and comes complete with its own chapel. There's no risk of gastronomic ennui with fresh

local produce served in the Chancellor's restaurant within the castle, which dates back to 1199. shieldhillcastlehotel.co.uk



Nira Caledonia restaurant, with rack of lamb, inset

4 SMART NEW NUMBER

What was once Number Ten, the **Nira Caledonia** townhouse hotel occupies two neoclassical buildings in Gloucester Place - one of the most exclusive addresses in Edinburgh. The 28 bedrooms are a techie's dream, yet also exude a cosy vibe, while the leitmotif in the restaurant takes its inspiration from China and Venice. niracaledonia.com

5 EDINBURGH ENIGMA

Edinburgh is a Dorian Gray city and secreted within the gracious boulevards of the New Town the soigné **Atholl** encapsulates a contemporary iteration of refined elegance. The discreet entrance gives no clue to the four copious Georgian suites within. Gourmands can savour cuisine overseen by Albert Roux, whose chefs prepare bespoke menus accompanied by fine vintages. theatholl.com

6 PRINCES' PRIDE

Two grand hotels stand like sentinels at either end as Edinburgh's Princes Street presents one of the world's most distinctive urban profiles. Known locally as the "Caley" the century-old grande dame that is **The Caledonian** has been elevated from a Hilton to a 241-room Waldorf Astoria following a £24m transformation. thecaledonianedinburgh.com

7 LURE OF KINTYRE

With its unmatched location above Campbeltown Harbour on the Kintyre Peninsula, the **Royal Hotel** was once favoured by the Scottish elite. Now a new chapter is unfolding and, following a manicured restoration, this 23-room haven is once again above par. Golfers, as well as those who don't know their nine-iron from their niblick, revel in the natural beauty of the Machrihanish Dunes Golf Course. machrihanishdunes.com



The Royal Hotel

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