



8 | 23.10.04

UK

That great British institution, the B&B is changing fast — and for the better.

Alastair Sawday chooses 10 of the new breed from his latest book

Welcome homes

Bed and breakfast visitors — and bed and breakfast owners — are getting younger. And young people, apparently, like their privacy. Is it years of being shut away in their own rooms with sound systems and TVs? Whatever the explanation, they are finding privacy in several new B&Bs. Some might even put you to bed in a cottage (exquisitely furnished, more likely than not) in the grounds — to which your breakfast will be discreetly delivered.

What you might traditionally expect from a B&B has changed; we have one owner who offers shiatsu in a garden studio. The palette is crowded: pilates, pottery, gardening, yoga, cookery and numberless other diversions. The food is getting better too. Many owners grow their own veg (some organic) and make their own bread, jam, wine and beer.

Those hatchet-faced landladies against whom we have long railed are now an endangered species.

Wren House, Donnington, Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucs

Speckled brown-and-gold and dating from the 15th century, Kiloran McGrigor's house oozes style and charm. Open the wrought-iron gates flanked by hollies, walk through the pretty garden and into the hall. Wren House was built before the English Civil War and Kiloran has spent two years renovating it. The result is a joy. Downstairs, there are light-filled elegant rooms with glowing rugs on pale Cotswold stone; upstairs, fresh, sunny bedrooms, good bathrooms and a doorway to duck. Luscious breakfasts include cream from the nearby Jerseys. Children over eight welcome. ▶▶▶ 01451 831787, wrenhouse.net. Two twin/doubles; £80, singles £50.