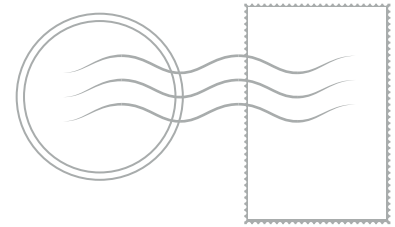


# POSTCARD

## Dartmoor



For a wholesome English country retreat for foodies – and dog lovers – head to Bovey Castle. **Clare Vooght** reports

As I turn the large metal wheel, round, red apples bounce up and down as they're jostled into the pulper, and the rest of the group holds the machine in place, before we scoop our mashed apples into muslin and into the barrel press. Cider-making, it turns out, is thirsty work, and I'm grateful for a cup of the sweet, cloudy apple juice that we've made. If we leave the rest for six months, it'll ferment into a rustic Devonshire cider.

We're in the Long Barn at Bovey Castle, a country resort defiantly perched on Dartmoor's rolling hills, at a cider and sloe gin-making workshop. Once we've tried the cider, we learn how to steep sloes in sugar and gin, before sampling an array of flavoured gins made by the staff, from lemon to strawberry.

Food and drink is taken seriously at Bovey Castle. Its Great Western Grill restaurant reopened this summer after a £1.7 million renovation of its kitchens and wine cellar, plus a complete revamp of its menu. The intention was to move away from formal, stuffy tasting menus to a more contemporary and accessible casual dining offering.

Expect British classics such as Dover sole and a signature dish of rare, tender Dartmoor beef wellington, enveloped in crisp pastry – served in a relaxed environment that's reflective of the rest of this 97-year-old country hotel. Guests are encouraged to kick back with a book by the fire in the cosy library, or with their dog over afternoon tea in the Cathedral room (it's a very dog-friendly place to stay, and guests with pooches needn't feel confined to their rooms or the separate lodge accommodation, but are welcomed into shared spaces).

Expect a roster of activities that capture all the wholesome trappings of English country life, from collecting eggs from the resident hens to impressive falconry displays – but there's also an 18-hole championship golf course and luxury spa, sauna, steam room and pool.

Perhaps leave the dog behind while taking the tour of Bovey Castle's deer park – an hour-long walk across woodland and pasture to meet the herd. And if you've developed a taste for West Country cider while here, consider the mile-long walk along the River Bovey for a pint in the local, thatched-roof pub in North Bovey, for even more chilled-out country vibes. **TW**



### BOOK IT

Bovey Castle is sold through Abercrombie & Kent and InterContinental Hotels Group. Rooms cost from £239 per night, based on two adults sharing on a bed-and-breakfast basis. Lodges are available from £649 per night, based on up to six adults sharing on a self-catering basis. [boveycastle.com](http://boveycastle.com)



FROM TOP: Bovey Castle; Great Western Grill serves whole grilled native lobster **PICTURE:** Bovey Castle; Shutterstock/Mikhail Grachikov