

**Sun** travel

Edited by LISA MINOT

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## COTSWOLDS OFFERS TOT IN THE ARM

IT'S only midday but I'm already enjoying shots of absinthe and gin and tots of whisky – and no one bats an eye.

That's because I'm touring the Cotswolds Distillery, founded by Daniel Szor, who after nearly 30 years as a currency trader quit in 2014 to follow his passion.

Now, the native New Yorker produces award-winning single malts and gin. The distillery offers 90-minute tours and tastings (£15 per person), but no high heels or under-eights are allowed, which is probably wise.

It also does longer masterclasses for those wanting to delve a bit deeper. You'll need to book in advance though, or you'll go thirsty. Drivers get samples to take away, but thanks to my partner I can get stuck in straight away.

Our guide, Hattie, takes us through a humid barn full of barrels ready to be filled with whisky-to-be (three years is the minimum ageing period allowed for a whisky to be called just that) and hands out samples of the tippie.

We've already been in the distillery's production areas, where you can see and smell the processes in action. And then we head to the tasting room to try its 12 bottles of spirits, which change by season. Later on we grab some food in the cafe and buy the lavender-infused cloudy gin.

A five-minute drive from the distillery is Feldon Valley, a hotel with newly built lodges with views over its 18-hole golf course.

It offers accommodation of various sizes – our suite was equipped with a kitchen, lounge, two balconies and a bed so soft we'd later sleep like babies.

Having escaped the hustle and bustle of London, we are at peace here. And we're not even golfers. The floor-to-ceiling windows offer views you could stare at for hours.

It's just two hours from central London, but it feels far more remote – in a good way.

The complex also houses a restaurant, The Kitchen, with head chef Darren Brown, who earned a Michelin star at a previous restaurant. The mouth-watering menu is as local and seasonal as it gets. Our dinner consists of beef tartar, crab, pork fillet, and hake. The cherry on top was the honey parfait and pannacotta.

The next morning, we head back for a full English breakfast and later make our way to Stow-on-the-Wold. The town is home to the Porch House, which has existed since 947AD, which means it can call itself Britain's oldest inn.

We also stumble across Roly's Fudge Pantry where staff are cutting up fudge in full view. As we've both got a sweet tooth, it would be rude not to and the fudge is melt-in-your-mouth goodness.

*We had only been in this corner of the Cotswolds for a little over 24 hours and we were far more zen (and fuller) than when we arrived.*

**ALICE GRAHNS**



**COPPER LOAD OF THIS . . . whisky being distilled**



**REAL TONIC . . .  
Cotswolds G&T**





**CHILLING . . . lodge with view over the fairway**