

Escape The Bosville

A refurb that mixes contemporary design with local touches has transformed this hotel into the new must-visit destination on Skye

Photography Rosie and Andrew Woodhouse Words Caitlin Clements

We arrived to the worst weather you could have for an island getaway, in the midst of a worthy-of-a-name kind of storm. The wind was howling, the sky was ominously grey, and the rain was battering off the windscreen. Despite this, the Isle of Skye showed its true colours – literally. The sea magically remained an almost turquoise blue, and the main town of Portree, with its row of multicoloured houses, looked picture-postcard perfect. We felt as if we'd truly escaped already, and we weren't even at the hotel yet.

Our destination was the Bosville Hotel, overlooking the harbour at Portree, the town jokingly referred to by the hotel's director of operations, Angela Finlay, as "the Las Vegas of Skye" for its array of bright lights. It has been formed from what were once three separate buildings and converted to include 19 bedrooms, a bar and a restaurant.

Taken over in 2013, the hotel had been scheduled for a transformation, which was completed in March this year. The result is a cool mix of the contemporary and the traditional, with a continuity of design throughout. The bedrooms are decorated in a palette of greys, with simple but well-crafted furnishings, completed with wooden elements and brown leather touches for warmth. Roca fixtures kit out the en-suite bathrooms. A good deal of thought has clearly gone into the design, both of the aesthetics and the



[Left] Painted tongue-and-groove and warm throws by Skye Weavers are part of the updated bedrooms' cool, stripped-back style. [This page] The hotel looks out over Portree harbour



IN THE AREA

Wander through the town of Portree, explore its shops and make sure to snap a picture of the multicoloured row of houses at the harbour. Buy local wares at **SkyeSkyns**, **Isle of Skye Candle Company** and **Skye Weavers**. Take your pick of stunning landmarks, from **Neist Point** to the **Old Man of Storr**. Not for the faint-hearted, the **Cuillins** can count 12 munros among their peaks. Head to one of the island's many beaches, such as beautiful **Coral Beach**. Visit the magical **Fairy Pools** and **Fairy Glen**. Eat fresh from the **Oyster Shed** and drop into the **Talisker Distillery** for an education and a dram. Explore the island by bike or choose a boat trip for a fresh perspective.

practicalities, to enhance the guest experience, and it works. There are Scandinavian-inspired elements to the pared-back style, but it is more than that. It doesn't feel stereotypically Scottish (there's no tartan to be seen) yet the island itself is its main theme.

The scheme was created by Glasgow's legendary Graven Images then handed over to local architects Rural Design, who brought it to life. Soft furnishings in the bedrooms, such as the bright orange statement throws on the beds, are by Skye Weavers, and the crockery is by Skye-based Lenz Ceramics. It's not just the finishing touches that represent the island, however; everyone involved, from the contractors to the joiners and the electricians, were from Skye.

Using local craftspeople was a no-brainer for the hotel. ▶



[Clockwise from top left] The redesign has used a palette of soft greys and stylish wooden touches for warmth; each bedroom has an en-suite Roca bathroom; the design and local elements continue into the Dulse & Brose restaurant; sip Scottish gin and Skye beer in the Merchant Bar; the views are superb; leather and woven textiles offer a cool take on tradition



“Visitors come to the island for the artisan culture,” says Angela. “It made no sense not to utilise that.”

This local feel continues downstairs and into the restaurant. Pre-dinner drinks of Scottish gin and tonic and Isle of Skye Brewery beers were had by the fire in the hotel’s Merchant Bar, before we headed through to the Dulse & Brose restaurant for dinner. Helmed by head chef Mandy Todd, around three-quarters of the menu’s ingredients are sourced within a five-mile radius of the hotel – knowledge of which makes the food taste that bit more delicious.

Again, the culinary experience paired the traditional and contemporary. On our first night my choice was local crab, Asian-spiced, served with a glass noodle salad, followed by sirloin steak and finishing with a chocolate mousse sphere with a raspberry centre and a berry sorbet. The restaurant’s style and exciting menu is approved by locals, loved by guests and is drawing in a younger, cosmopolitan crowd.

We had clear skies for the rest of the weekend, and with a wealth of adventure on our doorstep, we set off early after

returning to the Dulse & Brose for a delicious breakfast. First, we headed to the mythical Fairy Pools at the foot of the awe-inspiring Black Cuillins. Then, after lunch, it was on to Coral Beach, on the north-west of the island, with its breathtaking white sands and crystal-clear water.

After a day’s adventuring, it was lovely to return to our inviting room and know that we just had to step downstairs to enjoy another wonderful dinner. This time I had a starter of Moroccan-spiced duck confit with preserved lemons and couscous, followed by the special, a fillet of halibut with new potatoes, carrots and mussels in a tarragon butter. To finish was French toast panna cotta with poached apple and homemade ice-cream – bacon-flavoured. After this surprisingly delicious confection, we retired for the evening, replete.

Next morning, after breakfast, was time to depart. We were relaxed, refreshed and reluctant to go home. As we headed back over the Skye Bridge, we watched the island disappear in the rear-view mirror, vowing to return soon. ■

To book, go to www.bosvillehotel.co.uk

