

TOWN&COUNTRY

The Best Room At ... Belden House & Mews

A historic Connecticut mansion, renovated by discerning locals, has found a charming new life as a destination hotel.

BY [ADAM RATHE](#) PUBLISHED: AUG 23, 2025



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“I couldn’t help myself,” says Anthony Champalimaud. “It’s an affliction. A compulsion, really.”

Champalimaud is talking about breathing life into great properties, something he and his wife and business partner Charlie did previously with [Troutbeck](#) in the Hudson Valley, and then again recently with [Belden House & Mews](#), a 31-key property in a charming residence dating back to 1881 in picturesque Litchfield, Conn, just about two hours from New York City. Of course, the compulsion in question can be understood when you realize that the Champalimauds live just a few doors away.

“We live five doors down from Belden, and it’s always been a head scratcher as to why Litchfield didn’t have that storied, keystone hotel that you generally see in towns of note,” he says. “It’s always been culturally attractive, it’s drawn interesting people, there’s plenty to do—and then a unique opportunity presented itself.”





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The living room of the three-bedroom Belden House Penthouse Suite, which offers access to all of Belden House’s charming amenities as well as privacy for you and your guests.

That opportunity was to restore a mansion built by Dr. Charles Belden (as well as a 1959 addition behind the main house) and turn it into a country inn, which today draws in visitors and locals alike with its Belden Bathhouse spa, an all-day restaurant helmed by chef Tyler Heckman, an enticing bar, and three-acre grounds which are home to a pool, lawn games, and a historic fire house that is being repurposed into a social destination. “The hope,” Champalimaud says, “is that we can introduce to Litchfield a hotel that hasn’t existed, and that holds up a mirror to the town and reflects all of its wonderful characteristics.”

Here, we speak with Champalimaud about the hotel’s best accommodation, the charm of small-town life, and the lure of the great outdoors.

What do you consider to be the best room at the property and why?

The three-bedroom Belden House Penthouse Suite—and there are a couple of reasons for it. First of all, we decided to call a penthouse because there’s a little tongue-in-cheek going on throughout our entire narrative, and we’re leaning into that a bit. Before we renovated, it didn’t exist. It was an architectural flex that when Dr. Belden first had his house designed, he wanted a roof arrangement that resulted in a large, unused cavity on the upper floor. So, there was a very narrow staircase that went up the back and there was also a plan in our proposed use that



necessitated the introduction of a stair tower that was going to end at the floor level of what was then the attic. We thought, that's kind of cool because it gives us this terrace up there, so we laid it out and made it work. I also like attic rooms and getting them to fit. I had it in my mind that this would be a great suite for being social, and we're seeing people use it in just that way—it feels a bit like being in your own country house, you're experiencing your stay with friends and family. But you also have a kitchen and living room, and a butler who'll send your breakfast up on a dumbwaiter or provide cocktail service.



SCOTT PARKER

The pool at Belden House. We'll grab the lounge chairs, you order the lobster rolls?

How much does it cost per night?

It starts at \$2,600.

How would you describe the guests and vibe at the hotel?

Our neighbors, both locally and regionally, were initially driven by curiosity pop in. Now I think they're becoming habituated to the idea that there's a high street hotel in Litchfield and you can stop by to have a martini or a seafood tower—it's supposed to feel accessible. We respected the fact that this building had a living room and a dining room; we amped up the bar a bit and introduced the library, but otherwise we didn't fiddle much with it, so the house flows in a really lovely way. Guests are just charmed by the place, they'll drive by and decide they want to come in for a drink or a meal, or even to stay. It's always a lively space.



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The Library at Belden House, just off the lobby, is by day a quiet corner for reading and also an after-dinner destination for board games and people watching.

What feeling about Litchfield do you hope to impart to guests?

The nice thing about these old houses is that you always find remnants of your predecessors, which I think conveys a certain warmth and a sense of continuity—we're custodians more than anything else. So, hopefully Belden retains that feeling, and while we're looking after something, we're adding to it as well. I hope it feels warm and that it's as much about the rooms, the spaces, the decor, and the aesthetic as I think it is about our people.

What's a local attraction that you always recommend?

There's probably not a day that goes by that we aren't in one way or another spending time at the [White Memorial Conservation Center](#), which is a private foundation established by the White family, and encompasses trails, Bantam Lake, and a wonderful museum. It's five times the size of Central Park, with miles and miles of trails, but at no time do you feel as though you've gone too far—there's always a way back. So that one's important. [Ripley Waterfowl Conservancy](#) is also extraordinary, and the best time to see it is in the winter. And a visit to the [West Street Grill](#) is always great.

