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THE SUITE LIFE

A historic mansion is reborn, perfectly blending the craftsmanship of yesterday with the indulgence of today

by JAMIE MARSHALL



above: The penthouse bedroom below: The sun-filled living room off the main entry



When it comes to the perfect post-holiday getaway, Litchfield County strikes all the right notes. For one thing, it's within easy driving distance from Fairfield County. For another, it's sophisticated and laid-back. Outdoorsy and cultural. There are fine restaurants, charming cafés and cozy coffee spots. Travel a few miles in any direction, and you'll find enchanting villages to explore, glorious trails for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing, a lake for ice skating, even local ski hills. What they lack in elevation, they make up for in customer service and a relaxed vibe. Throw in a stay at the newly opened Belden House and Mews in the historic town of Litchfield, and your getaway is complete.

Once home to a prosperous doctor, the 1888 Colonial Revival/ Queen Anne Victorian and adjoining Mews (built in 1959) is the latest luxe offering from the folks behind Troutbeck in Amenia (see *GREENWICH* magazine October 2025). Spurred on by that property's success, owner Anthony Champalimaud and his investor group bought Belden House in 2022. Together with his mother's firm, Champalimaud Design, they spent the next three years transforming the property, returning it to its former Victorian glory—and then some.

"It's both a retention and a restoration of original details wherever possible," says Champalimaud, who lives a few doors down with his wife Charlie and their two children. "We focused on maintaining an authentic narrative that is reflective of a local sensibility to preserve, respect and reanimate these historic structures."

Located on North Street, home to many of the town's historic mansions, and within walking distance of the village green, the three-acre estate features 31 guest rooms and suites—ten in the main house and 21 in the adjacent Mews. A gracious front porch leads into an inviting foyer. To the right is a cozy wood-paneled and booklined library. To the left, a living room with curved bay windows, fireplace sconces and a silver chandelier that are original to the house. A light-filled dining room opens into a snug bar painted an eye-catching green (Richmond Green by Benjamin Moore, to be precise).

"It was an opportunity to have fun, to not take it all too seriously," says Champalimaud. "A bit glamorous, a little mischievous, and it looks great in that light." This chic jewel box is a wonderful spot to perch before dinner, sipping one of Michele Alfonso's signature cocktails—a house favorite is the passionfruit negroni. Upstairs there are a variety of rooms, including several suites, and a 2,100-square-foot penthouse on the third floor. A fun perk—bUTLER service is available for all of the rooms 16 hours a day.

On the opposite end of the spectrum is the Mews—the standalone building behind Belden House with a distinctly California midcentury vibe. The



above: The locally sourced cuisine of Chef Tyler offers something for every palate.
below: The beautifully appointed library is a perfect place to unwind.





Attention to historic details with modern accents is the charm of Belden House.

rooms have a Zen-like ambience, all blonde wood and neutral tones. Some have their own little garden terrace, while others have balconies, some of which overlook the lawn and the property's spa called Belden bathhouse. This inviting spot features a compact gym—complete with a Pilates reformer—two treatment rooms for massages and facials that incorporate Wildsmith products, a sustainable and clean line from the U.K. There is also a sauna, steam and a 225-gallon Japanese Ofuro tub for hydrotherapies and cold plunges—or hot soaks.

With its attention to detail and discreet hospitality, it's no wonder Belden House was recently awarded one Michelin Key. "It's a huge honor, especially considering



The penthouse guest room



Keeping the fires stoked

we have been open less than a year," says Champalimaud. "We are one of two Connecticut hotels to receive the key."

One of the things that makes Belden House stand out is the wonderful amalgamation of historical accuracy, modern comfort and exquisite—often whimsical—details.

Who can resist trying to decipher the writing etched into the stone of the original fireplace in the front hall? (Here's a hint—it's a famous quote from *Macbeth*.) Or taking in the way the library shelves are perfectly illuminated by the small bulb lamps by local ceramicist Charles Dumais? (You'll find his handiwork in the guest rooms as well as the work of other local artisans.) Or admiring the fish scone in the living room, which was done by a friend of the Champalimaud's in Malta?

Don't even get me started on the hanging pendants in the bar with their jaunty fringed shade, the glazed tilework that surrounds the downstairs hearth's grasscloth wallcoverings edged with elaborate swirls meant to evoke the Victorian love of pattern.

Just as at Troutbeck, it's easy to slip into the rhythm of the place, which is precisely the point. For some that may mean doing little more than staking out a spot on a sheepskin-covered chair near the fireplace and whiling away the hours between meals with a good book and a hot toddy. For others,

it may mean enjoying time outdoors. (Check out the Explore section of the website, which features guides to all the nearby villages.) Join the locals who flock to nearby Bantam Lake for ice skating (or stick to the public rink behind town hall). Skiers will want to head to Mohawk Mountain in Cornwall for skiing and tubing or Butternut Mountain just over the Massachusetts line in Great Barrington. Book tickets and rental gear in advance, as both tend to be busy on weekends.

The White Memorial Conservation Center has miles of trails that are open for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing—or hiking, depending on snow cover. Or take the time to meander through the many enticing lifestyle and design shops.

For starters, there's Privet House, Pergola, Plain Goods and J.Seitz in New Preston. Nearby Washington Depot is home to George Home with its beautifully curated selection of midcentury, antique and vintage finds. In Falls River you'll find Bunny Williams' eclectic shop, 100 Main, and John Robshaw Home with its gorgeous collection of textiles and bedding.

Don't miss a trip to Arethusa Farm Dairy, founded in 1999 by two former Manolo Blahnik executives. One taste of the ice cream, and it's pretty obvious it is the byproduct of very happy cows. (Next door is the farm's restaurant, Arethusa al Tavolo.)

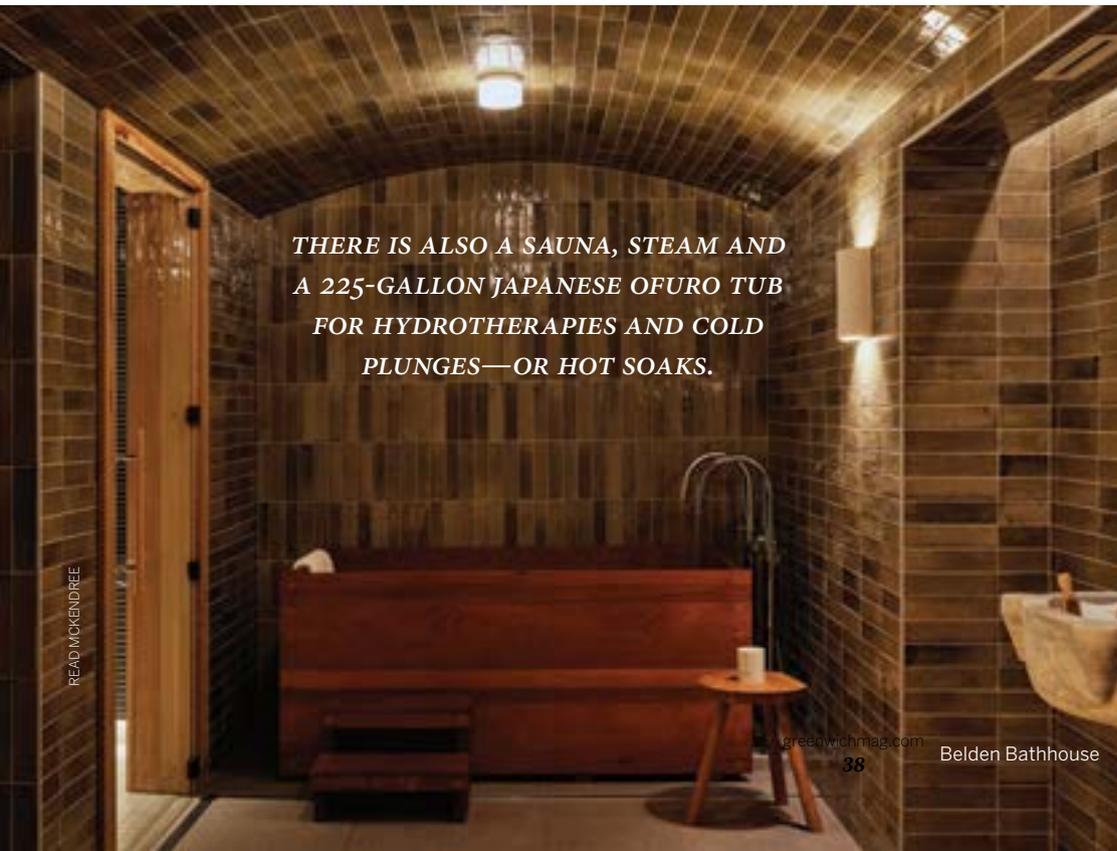
There are many fine restaurants in



Penthouse dining room



The Mews



THERE IS ALSO A SAUNA, STEAM AND A 225-GALLON JAPANESE OFURO TUB FOR HYDROTHERAPIES AND COLD PLUNGES—OR HOT SOAKS.

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the area, including Community Table in New Preston and closer to home West Street Grill in Litchfield. But given a choice, I'd stick close to Belden House, where Chef Tyler, a Connecticut native who spent several years as sous chef at Troutbeck and in some of NYC's most celebrated restaurants, does a terrific job of bringing out the best in the mostly locally sourced ingredients. My personal favorites are the pumpkin seed bisque and the fettuccini with bottarga and peekytoe crab.

Come morning, it's all about the buttermilk pancakes. They are the perfect way to fuel up for a day spent doing a whole lot or not much at all. beldenhouse.com 