

How To Spend The Perfect Weekend In Guernsey

Guernsey offers the perfect weekend retreat, from wild beaches to capital mansion hotels, seafood galore, and eye-boggling history, says Lewis Nunn.

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Forbes South Coast Cliffs
VISIT GUERNSEY

Cradled in the English Channel, *Guernsey* rises like the lost city of Atlantis—a storybook island and self-governing British Crown dependency, with a rich tapestry of ancient history and wild beauty—far beyond the old tourist poster of sunny cream teas. Here, granite cliffs plunge into turquoise waters, and flower-filled lanes wind past medieval towers and hidden smugglers' coves—inspiring world-famous painters like *Renoir*—while French flair blends effortlessly with British charm.

As the second-largest of the Channel Islands, the island is quieter than its neighbor, *Jersey*, but still offers a surprising mix of sun-drenched beaches, secret gardens, eye-boggling history (from German bunkers to ancient castles), a few lively bars, adventure sports—like coastering and rock climbing—and a myriad of fabulous seafood restaurants. So whether exploring the cobbled lanes of its capital, *St Peter Port* (one of Europe's prettiest harbor towns), or venturing further afield to car-free *Sark*—here is our expert guide on how to spend a weekend in gorgeous *Guernsey*.

Best Hotels In Guernsey

The Old Government House



The Old Government House
RED CARNATION HOTEL GROUP

As Guernsey's only five-star hotel, the grand Victorian *Old Government House* sits in the bustling heart of *St Peter Port*, just a 5-minute stroll from the scenic quayside. A proud member of the highly-acclaimed *Red Carnation Hotel Collection*, it traces its roots to the 1700s, once owned by Guernsey's most revered Lieutenant Governor, *Sir John Doyle*. Today, it serves as a chic capital mansion with pumpkin marble pillars, Venetian chandeliers, stately drawing rooms, old-grandeur suites, a fabulous 'Aladdin's cave' spa, and exquisite restaurants from its apple candy-striped *Brasserie* to its dark, sexy *Curry Room*.

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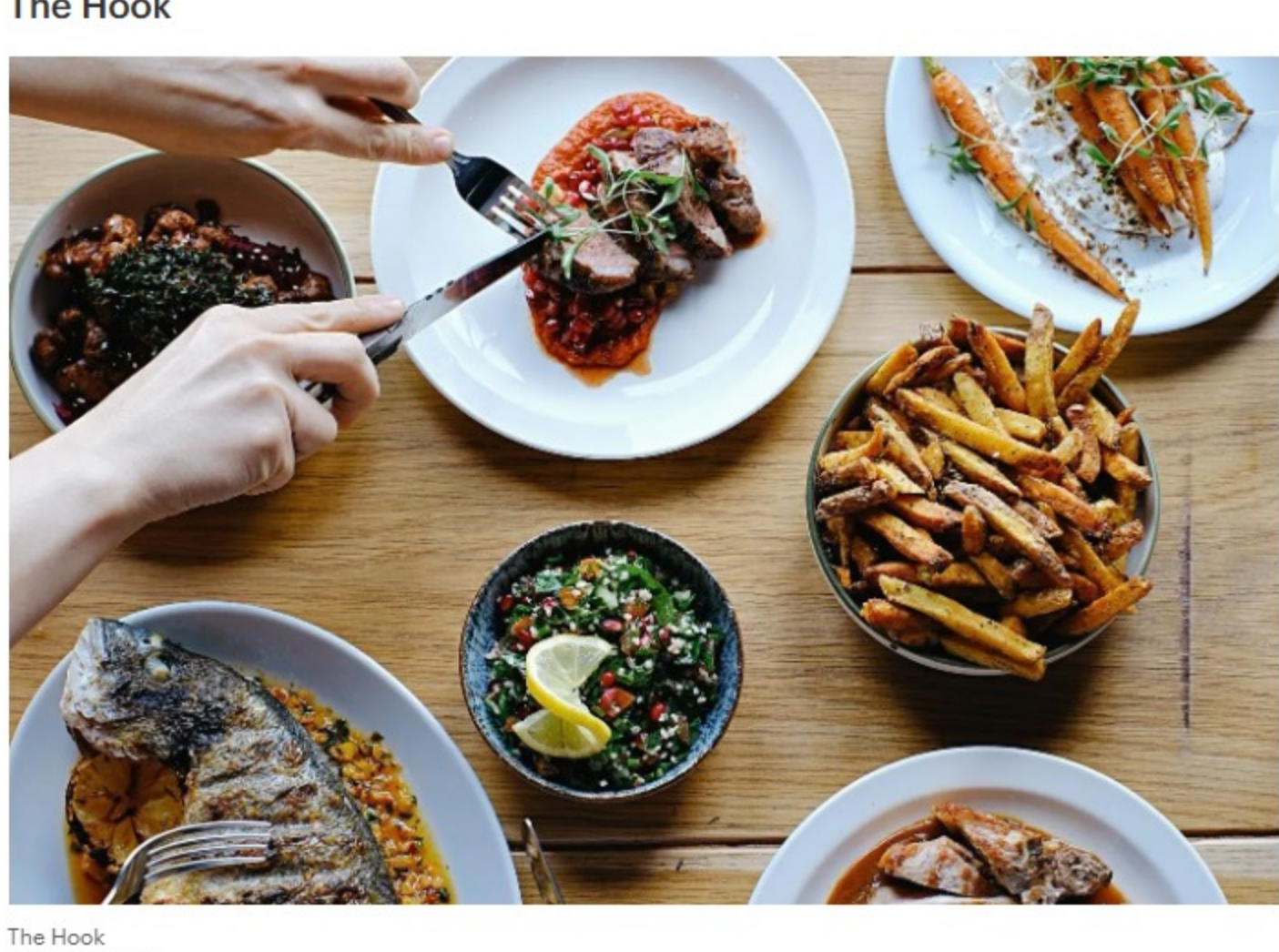
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Best Restaurants In Guernsey

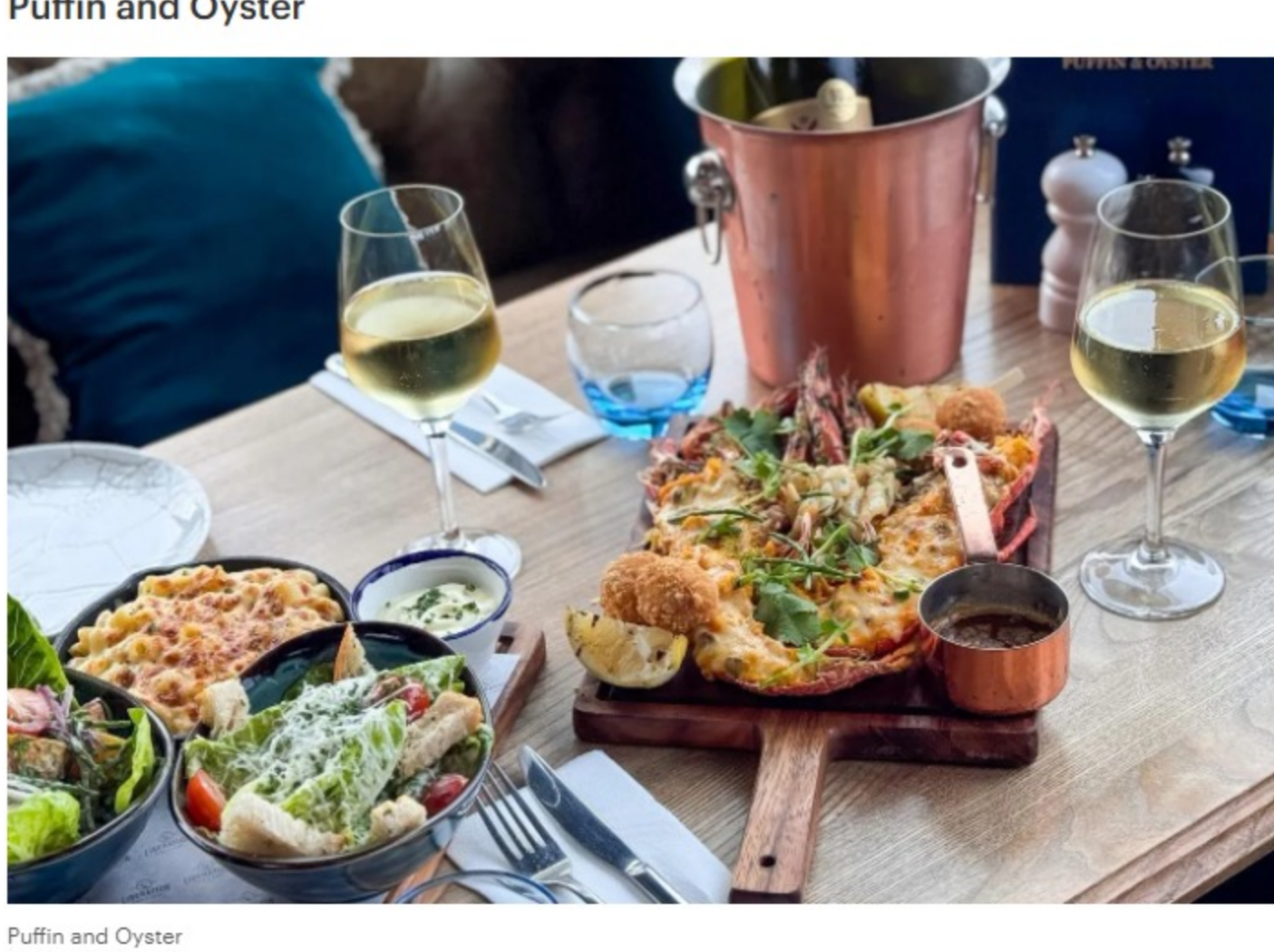
The Hook



The Hook
VISIT GUERNSEY

Nestled along the promenade of *St Peter Port*, *The Hook* serves a flame-kissed, no-fuss menu, cooked over coals. Begin with smoky oysters and grilled flatbread, before grazing on small plates of crispy chicken thighs, scallops, and tender lamb belly. Communal feasting is encouraged, sharing large plates of whole bream, pork chop, and succulent beef sirloin on the bone—complete with Basque cheesecake, chocolate ganache, or its daring 'beer ice cream'. Pair it with tickling cocktails like *The Botanist* (made with *St. Germain* elderflower liquor, Aperol, and martini vibrante) and plum-laced *Murasakis*.

Puffin and Oyster



Puffin and Oyster
VISIT GUERNSEY

Hidden in the snug harbor of *Le Grand Havre* on the rocky cove of Rouse—with little bobbing fishing boats and a small sloping sandy beach—the *Puffin and Oyster* is one of Guernsey's finest gastropubs, nestled between two ancient artillery towers, Chouet and Rouse tower, which defended the coastline in the late 18th century. Cozy and homely, you can snuggle up and pick at plates of hand-dived Guernsey scallops and crispy calamari—before feasting on juicy burgers and thick cuts of dry-aged 10oz ribeye with a cool pint of Liberation Ale (brewed at nearby *Jersey*).

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Best Things To Do In Guernsey

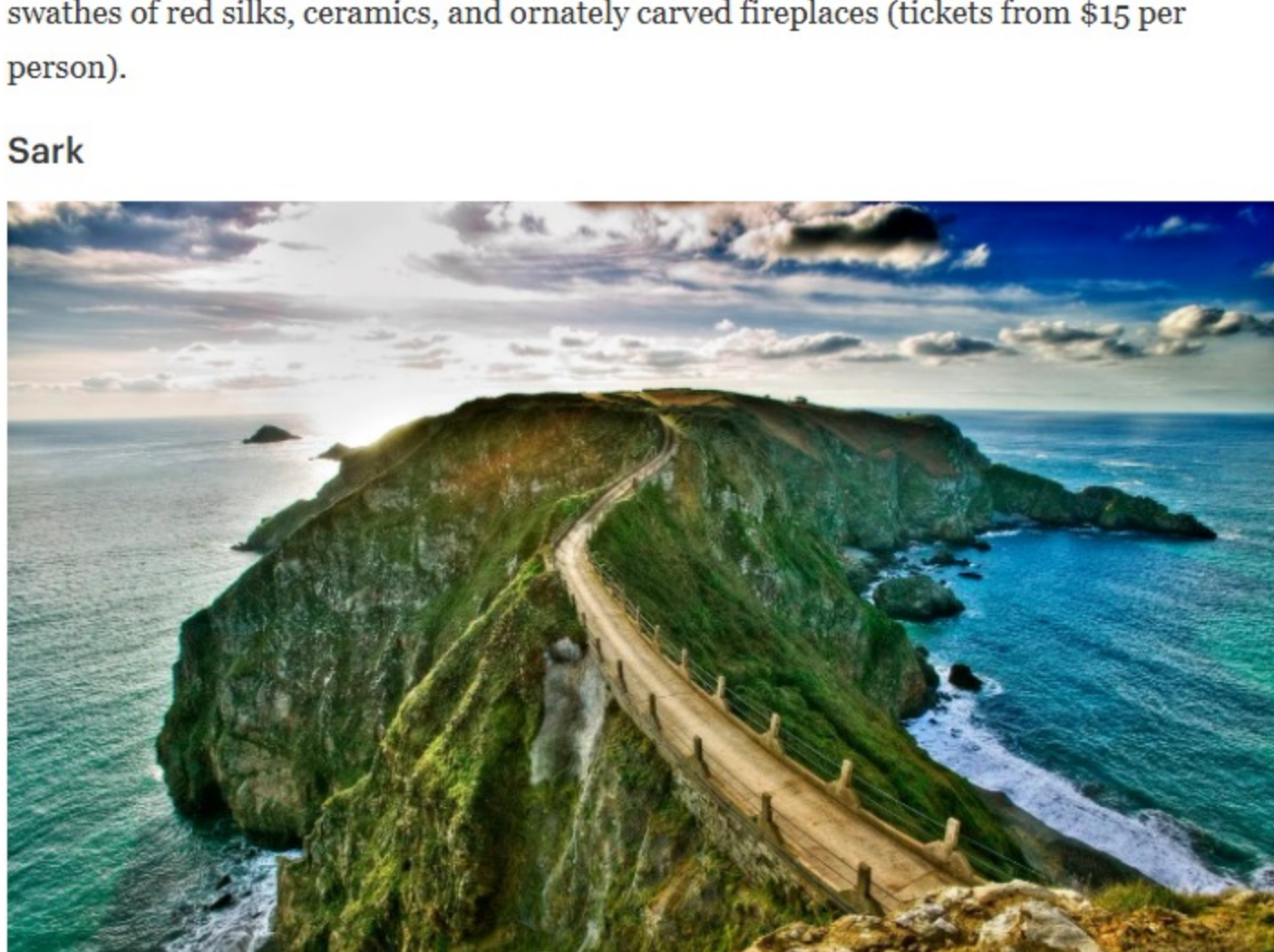
Hauteville House



Hauteville House
VISIT GUERNSEY

Perched on the heights of *St Peter Port*, *Hauteville House* was Victor Hugo's residence for 15 years during his exile in Guernsey, in 1855—where he penned many of his masterpieces, from *Les Misérables* to *The Toilers of the Sea*, from his glass "Look-Out" conservatory, with commanding views of the 800-year-old *Castle Cornet*. Each of the five floors unfurls like a chapter—sumptuous and eccentric, meandering from Gothic to Renaissance and Baroque interiors—with a myriad of Chinese tapestries, Turkish rugs, swathes of red silks, ceramics, and ornately carved fireplaces (tickets from \$15 per person).

Sark



Isthmus on Sark, Channel Islands, UK.
CHRIS GEORGE / VISIT GUERNSEY

Bobbing along the English Channel on a 45-minute ferry from *St Peter Port* (return tickets from \$38 with *Isle of Sark Shipping*), you'll reach *Sark*—a serene utopia, known as the 'crowning jewel of the *Channel Islands*,' with a distinctly French feel.

As a car-free island, you'll travel by horse-drawn carriage—clip-clopping down narrow wild lanes flanked by ancient bluebell woods and primrose-blanketed headlands—while discovering Sark's centuries-old history. The island was settled in 1565 by *Helier De Carteret*, who was granted a charter by *Queen Elizabeth I* to colonize and defend it against pirates. With forty men at his side, Helier became the island's first *Seigneur* and feudal ruler (*Sark* was the last feudal state in Europe until 2008) and helped cultivate the local Patois language, *Sercquaise*, still visible in almost all of the island's house, street, and landmark names today.



Sark horse and carriage ride.
CHRIS GEORGE / VISIT GUERNSEY

Cross the windswept isthmus of *La Coupee*—an organic bridge connecting *Big and Little Sark*—or visit Sark's postcard-perfect jewels like *The Mill*, *L'Eperquerie* (once used by the Monks on Sark to dry conger eels), *St. Peter's Church*, and the elegant *La Seigneurie House and Gardens* (tickets from \$16), considered one of the finest in the Channel Islands.

Dating back to 1675, it was previously home to two of Sark's Seigneurial families—the *Le Pelleys* and the *Collings*—but today, you can wander its walled garden filled with creamy blossoms, giant rhododendrons, an amphitheater, vineyard, and a pretty vegetable garden. Round off your day with a bite at its restaurant, *Hathaway's*—serving warm baked camembert and succulent lobsters pulled fresh from Sark's waters.

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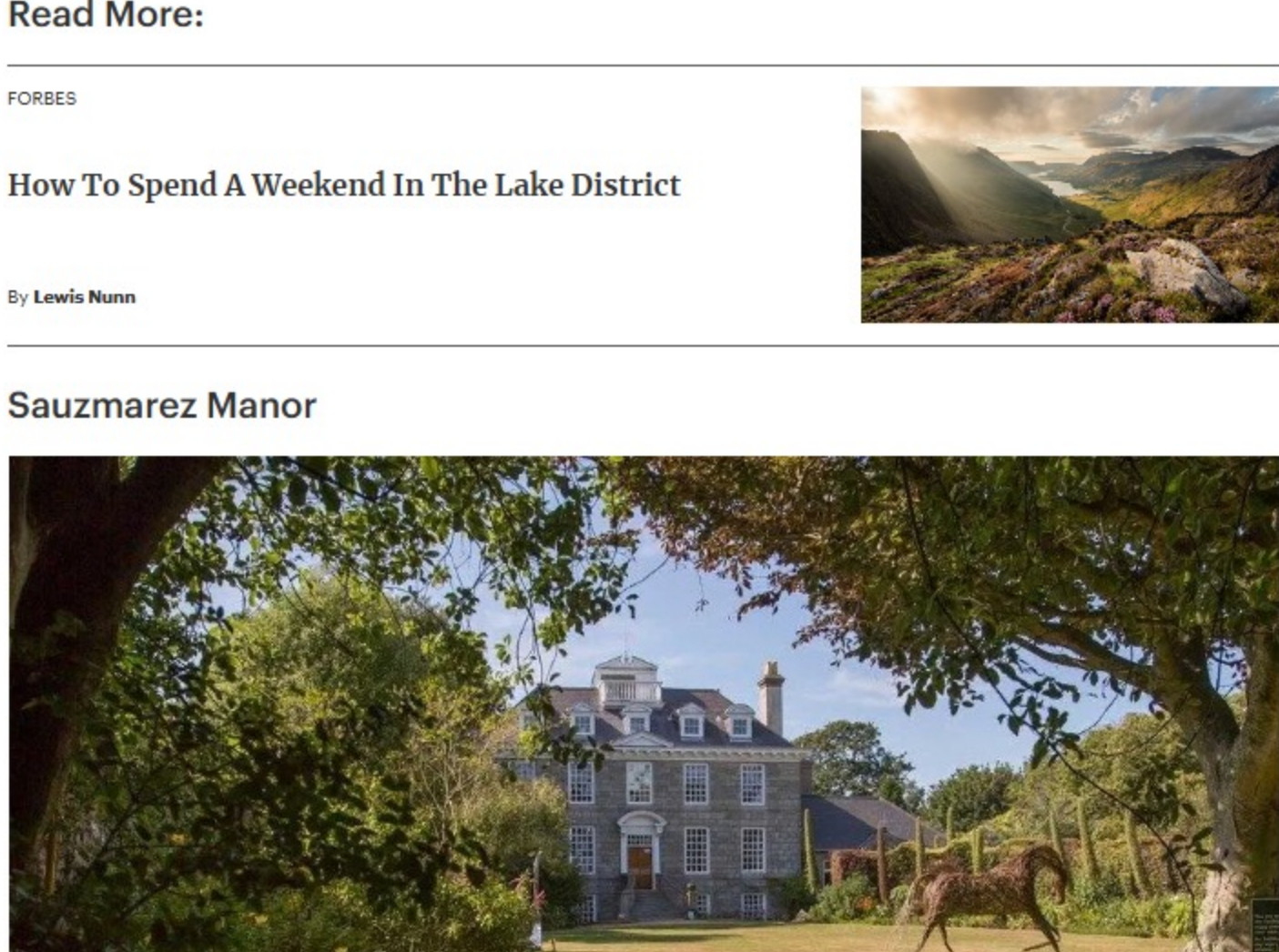
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Sauzmarez Manor



Sauzmarez Manor
VISIT GUERNSEY

Dating back to the late 12th century, *Sauzmarez Manor* is Guernsey's grandest stately home—under an 800-year-old occupancy of the *Seigneurs de Sauzmarez*, a family of sailors, Colonial governors, inventors, artists, high court judges, clergymen, diplomats, and more.

Join one of its house tours (tickets from \$13 per person) as you gawp at mesmerizing tapestries, a wall of *Seigneurs de Sauzmarez* family portraits, and the sofa the *Queen Mother* sat on during her royal visit in 1963. Outside, you'll find its *Wild Subtropical Garden*, an ancient woodland with narrow paths winding through towering palm trees, 200 varieties of camellia, Bromeliads, Ginger Lilies, and around 40 different bamboos.

There's even a miniature train, a sculpture garden, a 9-hole pitch and putt course, a coffee museum, and the only working coppersmith in the Channel Islands. In the summer, it hosts Guernsey's longest-running outdoor farmer's market—meanwhile, at night, you can join its famous ghost tours that bring the manor's haunted tales to life.

Moulin Huet Bay



Hydrangeas at Moulin Huet Bay, St Martin's, Guernsey, Channel Islands
GETTY

Hidden beneath dramatic cliffs, *Moulin Huet Bay* is a secluded cove sitting in the depths of Saint Martin's, where turquoise waters cling to its craggy façade. Follow the self-guided 'Renoir Walk'—a trail that reveals why legendary impressionist painter, *Pierre-Auguste Renoir*, fell in love with this hidden gem—inspiring 15 of his famed paintings after his visit in 1893 (one of which hangs in London's *National Gallery*).

You'll pass five marked viewpoints, each framed to mirror the artist's perspective (with a QR code on each frame to access an audio guide narrated by an art historian), before retreating to the charming *Renoir Tea Garden*—renowned for its homemade cakes, crab sandwiches, and slices of authentic Guernsey gâche.

How To Do It

Residents and travelers in London can hop on a speedy 70-minute direct flight from London Gatwick to Guernsey with *Aurigny*—one of the world's longest-serving regional airlines. With flights to 11 UK destinations year-round and more added seasonally, your island escape is merely a short hop away. Book now at aurigny.com. For travel tips and Guernsey inspiration, explore visitguernsey.com.

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