

**Hunstanton Golf Club, Norfolk** Hunstanton is one of the finest links courses in the country and the 2006 winner of *Golf World's* 'Best 19th Hole in the Country'. It's not hard to see what attracted the magazine's attention: the club has none of the snootiness that you sometimes find on courses of this calibre (visitors can play for as little as £40) and after your round you can relax on either the outside terrace or upstairs balcony with stunning views of the sea and the closing holes. The local beer is the award-winning Elgood's but if you get a hole-in-one at the 191-yard 16th hole (as Robert Taylor did an astonishing three days in succession in 1974) then you might want to crack open their champagne. *Hunstanton Golf Club, Old Hunstanton, Norfolk (01485 532 811; www.hunstantongolfclub.com)*

**Dawnay Arms, Yorkshire** The picturesque York-to-Beningbrough cycle ride (nine miles each way) is one of the great routes in the north of England. The eventual destination is the National Trust property Beningbrough Hall & Gardens, but you would be well-advised to stop en route at the Dawnay Arms in the sleepy village of Shipton. The pub, which dates from 1730, has a decent selection of beers and a pleasant beer garden to enjoy them in. Fill up your water bottles with wine and cycle like the French do. *Dawnay Arms, Main Street, Shipton by Beningbrough (01904 470334)*

## TEN GREAT COUNTRY PUBS

... because sometimes you don't want a bloody mojito

**The Harrow, Hampshire** A tiny 18th-century two-bar inn hidden in Hampshire's steep-sided wooded hills, this belongs to a forgotten England, or rather it did. After its legendary landlady Ellen McCutcheon recently died at the age of 74 there were rumours of change. Did the place still boast a pipe-smoking dog and a poacher with a 12-bore shotgun strapped to his bicycle crossbar? It's still not easy to find. It sits, as elusive as the end of the rainbow, at the far point of a pedestrian bridge that crosses the four-lane A3. And it remains a lost bucolic inn that still manages to embarrass a 19th-century cake tin. Only the hum of the highway, which has done a superb job in cutting off the Harrow, gives an inkling of the hurrying world outside. *The Harrow, Steep, Hampshire (01730 262685)*



## COUNTRY PUBS

Red Lion, Leicestershire.

**Red Lion Inn, Leicestershire** The welcoming Red Lion is in 'hunting-within-the-law' country in the Vale of Belvoir. It has a central bar and an adjoining lounge with a pair of armchairs and a sofa with a tartan throw. Rather eccentrically there is a large collection of colanders on its walls. The food is exceptional and that includes its ploughman's that comes with a fine home-made pork pie. If Melton Mowbray is the only area allowed to claim rights to the pie then the Red Lion should also be given legal status under the EU 'protected-name scheme' as the best place in England to consume your pie with a pint. *Red Lion Inn, Stathern, Leicestershire (01949 860868)*

**Nobody Inn, Devon** This is Hollywood's idea of an English tavern in the days when it shot its films in Technicolor. Its dark low interior includes antique settles, oak tables and carriage lamps.

There are blunderbusses, shotguns and crossed swords hanging on the walls as well as a fine picture of Winston Churchill. Furthermore this free house, hidden among the rolling hills and patchwork fields a few miles west of Exeter, boasts an extraordinary wine cellar (a list of 800) with at least 20 different wines by the glass chalked up on the board. It is actually the 'No Body' Inn – the name change was made in 1952 after the locals inadvertently held a burial service around an empty coffin left in the bar. *Nobody Inn, Daddiscombeleigh, Devon (01647 252394; www.nobodyinn.co.uk)*

**Queen's Head, Cambridge** The speciality of the traditional 18th-century Queen's Head is brown soup. The wonderful Cambridgeshire pub was serving the nutritious liquid that is referred to by the smarter end of society as Brown Windsor Soup long before the colour was colonised by bad

interior decorators. It comes with a chart that allows customers to judge its quality according to shade. The hand-drawn guide in its see-through A4 file covers the spectrum from dark brown ('hits the spot') to light brown ('might be called a taupe') to greenish ('usually contains peas'). It is generally worth a five Fanny Craddock stars. *Queen's Head, Newton, Cambridge (01223 870436)*

**Rose Cottage Inn, Sussex** As its name suggests, this is a hanging-tile stone cottage surrounded by roses that sits discreetly in the pretty village of Alciston, a Sunday constitutional from the south coast. Inside are three small front rooms with a clutter of tables and Windsor chairs. A tiny bar is squashed into the middle room yet the whole feels more like a bohemian afternoon tearoom than a tavern. There are trays of free-range eggs on offer, home-made honey for sale and hand-written notices for bicycle repair kits at 90p. *Rose Cottage Inn, Alciston, Sussex (01323 870377)*

**Red Lion, Kent** The finest place in Kent to down a pint is at 'Doris's' on Romney Marsh. It stands alone at a crossroads in the boggy bit of the Garden of England. Its actual name is the Red Lion and it dates back to the early 16th century. Inside the tiny low-beamed room there is a single scruffy brown bar that looks as if it was painted before the Battle of Britain. Around the walls are a couple of tired World War Two posters including one of a Spitfire and another of a land girl in dungarees. Furthermore, the original gaslight fittings are still there – they were probably installed at the same time as, judging by the colour of the bottle, the pickled eggs. *Red Lion, Snargate, Kent (01797 344648)*

**Hunter's Lodge Inn, Somerset** At the top of the Mendip Hills on an unmarked crossroads is a pebble-dash building with Marmite-brown windows and a low porch running along its length that is reminiscent of a redneck bar in an American road movie. Inside the simple, dimly lit saloon bar is a row of seven steel barrels racked up against the wall behind the bar. Food is 'bread and cheese' – a slice of thick white bread with an inch-thick slab of local Cheddar and a home-made pickled onion. The perfect ploughman's lunch in the perfect West Country pub. *Hunter's Lodge Inn, Eastwater, Somerset (01749 672275)*