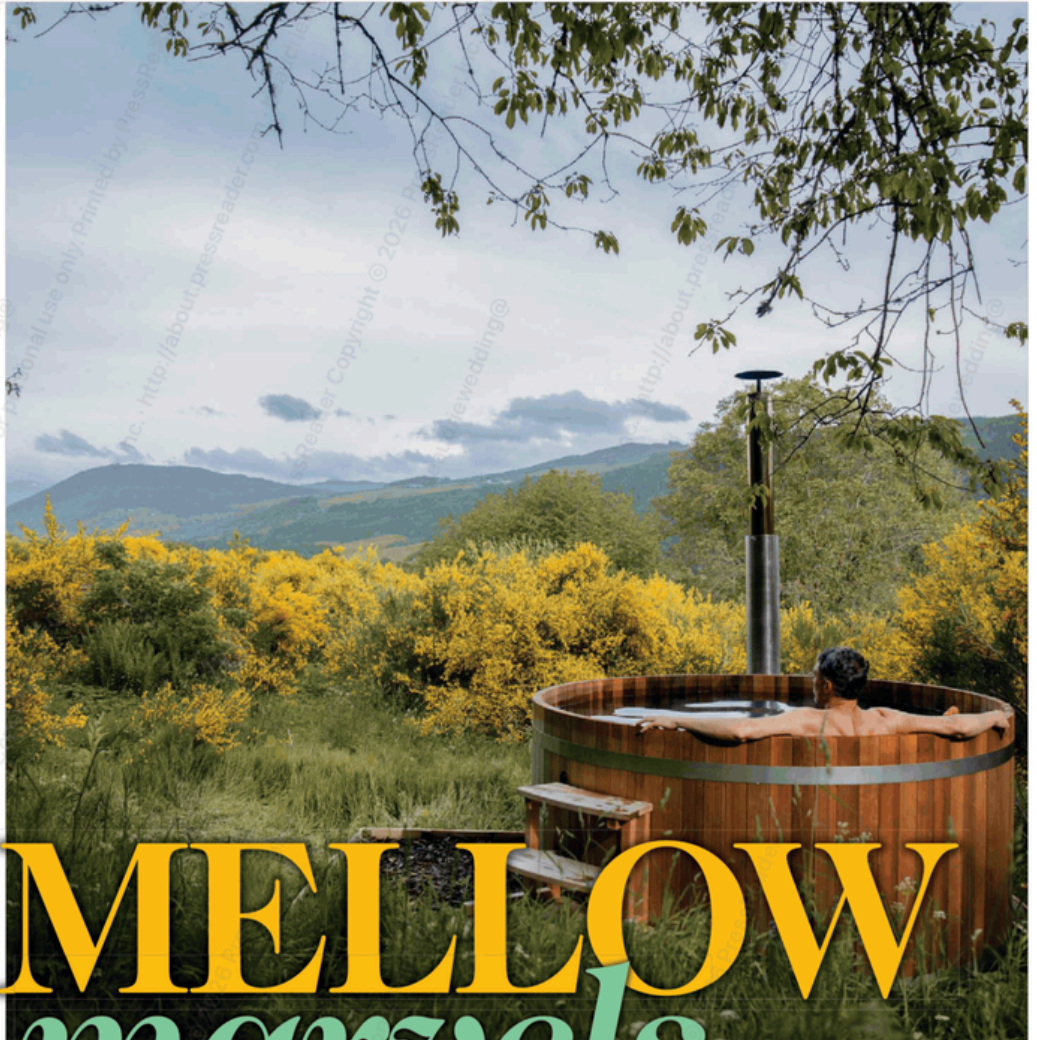


The Herald

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 26th, 2026

BOS

BEST ■ OF ■ SCOTLAND



MELLOW marvells



CHILL OUT AS WE
SHINE A LIGHT ON
THE BEST DARK
SKY DESTINATIONS
AND UNCOVER
WEEKENDS AWAY
IN THE WILDS FOR
OUR TOP AUTUMN
VACATIONS, WITH
AILSA SHELTON



October is an underrated time to get away in Scotland. The woods are turning copper and gold, red squirrels are easier to spot, stags are rutting and waterfalls are running hard after autumn rain. As the evenings draw in, the dark skies come into their own, while a good pub, a roaring fire or a hot bath feels all the more appealing afterwards. From family-friendly cabins to remote bothies and fine food-focused hotels, here are some Scottish stays worth seeking out this autumn. **By Ailsa Sheldon**

DUN ALUINN ABERFELDY

Dun Aluinn has the sort of Highland house setting that suits autumn. It's surrounded by Perthshire woodland above Aberfeldy, overlooking the Tay Valley. The nine-bedroom property reopened this year as a fully staffed hotel, with individual rooms now available rather than requiring an exclusive-use booking. Expect toasty fires, a terrace firepit, generous communal spaces and seasonal, locally sourced food – all with Perthshire's autumn colour right outside.

dunaluinn.com

ROWARDENNAN LODGE YOUTH HOSTEL

With Loch Lomond right on the doorstep, Rowardennan is a useful base for getting out into the countryside without spending a fortune. Climb Ben Lomond, walk a stretch of the West

A season not to be missed for its mellow fruitfulness



■ Enjoy views over the Tay valley from the comfort of Dun Aluinn's hot tub

Highland Way or explore Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, then come back to the hostel for dinner – evening meals are available if you'd rather not cook. Dogs are welcome with advance booking, while groups can hire the entire hostel during winter.

hostellingscotland.org.uk/hostels/rowardennan

KNOCKINAAM LODGE PORTPATRICK

On its own private cove at the end of a farm track, Knockinaam is a gorgeous place to escape the hustle and bustle for a few days. Relaxed luxury is the vibe, with guest lounges to curl up in, extra towels if you fancy a chilly sea swim, and hot drinks delivered in the

morning as a wake-up call. From here walk along the cliff path to Portpatrick for a quiet pint then return for dinner in the restaurant. Chef Tyler King has recently relocated here from Edinburgh's Michelin-starred Condita, bringing an exciting new fine dining chapter to this quiet corner of Dumfries and Galloway.

knockinaamlodge.com

THE COLL HOTEL ISLE OF COLL

For an island escape where the night sky is part of the appeal, head to Coll. The island has been an International Dark Sky Community since 2013, thanks to its exceptionally low levels of light pollution. The Coll Hotel sits on Arinagour Bay, with 10 en-suite rooms, a lounge bar and restaurant overlooking Loch Eatharna. Spend the daylight hours exploring Coll's beaches and wildlife, then make the most of the darkness after dinner.

collhotel.com

MOY LODGE LOCH LAGGAN

For a special Highland house escape, Moy Lodge sits on the western shore of



■ Rowardennan Lodge Youth Hostel is the perfect hub for exploring the countryside