

# Condé Nast Traveller



This historic UK landmark has had a makeover – and it's a food and interiors lover's paradise

*The American-based interior design house RH has taken up residence in the English countryside – its arrival brings with it a buffet of distinctive dining spots and one-of-a-kind experiences*

In its illustrious heyday, Aynhoe Park in **Oxfordshire** hosted extravagant parties and even more eclectic after-parties, courtesy of its former owners. Now a new resident has taken over, giving the property a tip-to-toe redesign and inviting the public to revel in its splendour for the first time.





Said resident, American-based upmarket furniture brand RH (formerly Restoration Hardware), recently ventured across the pond and moved into the 73-acre Grade 1 listed landmark (a category which includes [Buckingham Palace](#)). Those familiar with RH will know it's built quite the reputation among A-listers and interior lovers, especially in the [USA](#). Known for its well-crafted furniture and home decor, it came as no surprise why its launch party in June 2023 counted *White Lotus*' Sydney Sweeney, *Bridgerton*'s Regé-Jean Page, and British model Jourdan Dunn among its attendees – rumour has it that even Idris Elba and Ellen DeGeneres took to the DJ booth.

[RH England, The Gallery at Aynho Park](#) is an entirely new set of keys to the brand's portfolio. In the past, each gallery has embodied the brand's ethos, a tasteful culmination of RH's love for exquisite design, historic architecture and good food. RH Boston, for example, took over the Museum of Natural History and turned a historic post office in Connecticut into RH Greenwich. Its first outpost outside of North America is no different. It's even more extravagant, complete with a state-of-the-art design studio, gallery, [library](#) and several dining spots across 55,000 square feet.





Following a three-year makeover, Aynho Park remains true to its rich historical roots, albeit with a subtle alteration by bidding farewell to the trailing 'e'. The brand paid homage to Sir John Soane, who embellished the house in the 19th century, with a private exhibition curated by the namesake's [museum in London](#). His neo-classicism work is proudly displayed throughout, especially in The Architecture & Design Library. Take your time to admire the collection of vintage and contemporary books and artefacts, including a first edition *De Architectura libri Dece* (*The Ten Books on Architecture*) by Roman architect Vitruvius, and a replica of Leonardo da Vinci's Vitruvian Man, to name a few.

Ascend the staircase and past the Farnese Hercules replica for the Pinterest-worthy showrooms. An interior lover's paradise, on display are manicured splashings of neutral tones where chic-contemporary style marries modernism.

RH England is also a dining destination in its own right, outfitted with five eateries (with a sixth on its way) peppered throughout.

On the ground floor is the Tea Salon, which offers an afternoon tea service. Artisanal teas are handpicked from gardens in [Japan to England](#) and beyond, accompanied by freshly baked scones and house-made preserves.



The centuries-old kitchen with its exposed brick and original limestone floor is reimaged into a made-to-order juice bar and coffee house in the west wing. Fresh fruits and vegetables adorn one side while a cosy farmhouse-style lounge awaits on the other. Try the “Pink” drink, a refreshing concoction of watermelon, cantaloupe, coconut water, and mint, or the kale, ginger, celery, and apple juice for a pick-me-up. There’s also a hardy-looking La Marzocco espresso machine brewing the finest roasts. And because balance is critical in life, buttery pastries and baked goods (think croissants, pain au chocolat and baguettes) are ready to grab.



Just outside is The Loggia, a charming al-fresco pizza spot and wine bar where choreographed chefs dish up around the wood-fired oven. The menu is compact and includes down-home **Italian pizzas** – from the classic marinara and margherita featuring DOP-certified San Marzano tomatoes and locally sourced cheese to the fresh truffles carefully handpicked from **Provence** for the truffle pizza, every slice is crafted atop a 72-hour fermented dough. Plus, there are charcuterie boards and small bites.



Within the east wing lies The Orangery, a live-fire fine dining restaurant that strikingly contrasts the traditional neo-classical aesthetic. Towering arched windows on one side welcomes an ocean of natural light, while arched mirrors on the other make the already 22-foot ceiling feel bigger. Come sundown, 567 raindrop-esque light pendants (a coincidental nod to the rainy English weather) dim to accentuate the Calacatta gold marble tables and Italian merino wool velvet seats.

The food is a reflection of the restaurant, epicurean yet unpretentious. The grilled avocado with creme fraiche and Imperial Kaluga caviar is smokey, salty and a burst of umami; the 28-day aged **Australian** wagyu ribeye is indulgently fork-tender, and the charred peppers come in a tangy balsamic drizzle.

The Orangery also serves chicken and fish – but not just any chicken or fish. It's a herb-garlic seasoned chicken cooked on a custom Molteni rotisserie and a delicate whole branzino from **Greece** is grilled over Japanese Binchotan charcoal. There are also salads and sandwiches for a light supper. But for pudding, order the butterscotch crème brûlée. There's a good reason why the description says “no words”.





The wine and Champagne list is equally impressive. Bottles originate from English-grown vintners in **Oxford** and **Kent** to further in **Puglia** and closer to the brand's home in the Santa Ynez Valley in **California**.

Speaking of wine, the dedicated wine lounge sits adjacent to The Orangery. With over 80 bottles from around the world, it's the ideal pit stop before roaming the showrooms or settling down by the expansive southern-side terrace overlooking Europe's largest herd of white deers (yes, they exist). Stay for sunset when reindeer come closer to the estate to show off – a border ensures they are always at a safe distance.

Naturally, for its sixth dining destination, a bistro-style restaurant with American cuisine is set to open in autumn 2023.

**RH England, The Gallery at Aynho Park** transcends the boundaries of a conventional furniture store, offering an immersive experience that engages all the senses and beyond **interior inspiration**. Its addition brings a new, exciting buzz to Oxfordshire – and, quite honestly, the whole of **Britain**.