

WINTER 2022

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# TRAVEL

SETTING THE SCENE



Preparing a feast  
in Saltham's  
bountiful garden

DEPARTURES

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**All's Good in Gotland** Pristine nature, fascinating personalities and rare delicacies: the tranquil Swedish island is a Nordic wonderland that lives according to its own rhythms. *by Ann Abel*





*Clockwise from top:* a greenhouse doubles as a dining room at Lilla Bjers; alfresco dining at Salthamn; oceanfront lunch at Surflogiet

**GOTLAND HAS AN** unlikely reason for some of its successes: pessimism. The Baltic Sea island has long drawn Swedes for their summer holidays with its long bike trails, medieval streets and sandy beaches. But now, it's becoming even more interesting, thanks to the arrival of new residents who came north because they're worried about climate change in their native countries. Along the way, they discovered that it's a terrific place in its own right.

"I chose not to establish a vineyard in southern Europe because, with wine, you have to see 50 years into the future," says Italian winemaker Andrea Guerra, who planted the Långmyre vineyard with his Swedish partner, Emma Serner, in 2018. "I've made wine in many places, but this will be some of the best. It's more work than other places, but a higher payoff."

British-born, South Africa-raised journalist-turned-hotelier Jerry McLean, who runs the Three Pheasants bed-and-breakfast with his Swedish partner, Josefina Bergsten, had a similar idea. "It's a good spot in

terms of climate change resilience, away from cities, with a good kind of tourism," he says, referring to the small footprint that most visitors leave. In the meantime, their farm is producing magnificent vegetables – there's a cathedral of tomatoes, made out of upcycled window frames – which go into the lavish breakfast.

But don't get the wrong idea. The vibe on the island isn't doom and gloom, nor is it sanctimonious. If you ask people why they're there, they'll give you honest answers, but mostly the mood in Gotland is welcoming (by Swedish standards), cheerful and hopeful. Swedish and German climate scientists Magnus and Annelie Wendeberg became so concerned by their professional findings that

they moved to Gotland and started a regenerative goat farm: "We don't need machines to solve the problem; we just need to use plants and animals intelligently," she says. In the meantime, their artisan cheese is one of many delicious things to eat and drink on an island with some lovely little places to stay in the summer.

### Where to Eat

A former mink farm-turned-outdoor restaurant and hotel, **Salthamn** ([salthamn.se](http://salthamn.se)) spotlights just-picked (or foraged) vegetables and fresh-caught fish cooked in a fire kitchen and sometimes served in the middle of the growing fields, where food always seems to taste best. Following a similar concept, **Lilla Bjers** ([lillabjers.se](http://lillabjers.se)), which

## Gotland is an island of small, independent hotels – with an emphasis on local food, of course

just won an EU Organic Award, serves its just-plucked fare in a pretty, plant-filled greenhouse, and **Stelor** ([stelor.se](#)), where the chef's motto is "Don't buy food from strangers", presents its bounty in an 1820s stone house overlooking the gardens.

Although there is no farm on the grounds, the seaside **Majstre** ([majstre.se](#)) takes a similar tack and is especially known for its summer barbecue evenings. And **Krakas Krog** ([krakas.se](#)) likewise pays attention to its producers, with a particular emphasis on wine – the owner is one of Sweden's best sommeliers – and a handful of beautifully designed rooms upstairs and in the garden.

In the island's one real city, Visby, there's a like-minded emphasis on product. At **Vår Fru** ([vaarfru.se](#)), the focus is on craft cocktails, small sharable plates of mostly vegetables and an outstanding snack of popcorn with brown butter and gruyère. **Volare** ([volarevisby.se](#)) is primarily a spot for "beautifully produced" wines but also serves beautiful cheese and

charcuterie boards to go with them. And **Lindgarden** ([lindgarden.com](#)) takes its au courant local ingredients and presents them with 1960s-style flourishes, from the classically styled dining room to the calligraphy menu.

### Where to Stay

Gotland is an island of small, independent hotels – with an emphasis on local food, of course – and hands-on hospitality. A prime example is **Grå Gåsen** ([gragasen.se](#)), whose co-owner, a former fintech exec, acquired the villa with his wife when he "wanted to retire from Nasdaq life" and transformed it into a boutique hotel with 12 individually, stylishly designed rooms. **Three Pheasants** ([threepheasants.se](#)) has a similar second-act story, reflected in the collection of African and Asian art – acquired during the owners' globetrotting life – and owner Jerry McLean enthusiastically setting out the breakfast spread.

Design takes centre stage at several of the island's coastal hotels. Featured

in many photoshoots, **Fabriken Furillen** ([furillen.com](#)) was one of the first in Gotland to play up the island's magnificent nature, with a cosy design that's full of weathered wood and sheepskin-covered chairs. The newly built **Djupvik Hotel** ([djupvikhotel.com](#)) is a bit more sleek and modern, with a fully serviced sundeck and swimming pool. And the one-of-a-kind **Surflogiet** ([surflogiet.com](#)) offers glamping beside a surf-friendly beach, in 11 tents with boho-chic furnishings and Håstens beds.

### Island Sampler

Of the island's wineries, **Långmyre** ([langmyre.se](#)) is the best known, producing just 26,000 bottles – white, red, rosé and sparkling – which generally sell out at Sweden's state-run liquor stores and the island's restaurants. **Hellström Gin** ([hellstromgin.com](#)) is distilled with the island's wild juniper to make something that, as the producer says, "tastes like Gotland". If beer is more your thing, **Snausarve** ([snausarve.nu](#)) is the tap room and beer garden to visit, and the creamy goat's cheese from **Gotland Creamery** ([gotlandcreamery.com](#)) pairs well with any of them.



Clockwise from top: hyper-local ingredients are the stars at Stelor; Snausarve founders Nina Schultes and Kalle Andersson; the sun sets over Långmyre's vines