

**WORKS OF ART**  
The drawing room, featuring a Zhang Enli painting on the ceiling and the original coat of arms of the Duke of Fife above the fireplace.



WORTH THE TRIP

## ARTISTS' RETREAT

For their first hotel, the Fife Arms, art dealers Iwan and Manuela Wirth turned to the Scottish Highlands for inspiration.

**S**INCE 2011, Swiss art dealers Iwan and Manuela Wirth have had a house in the Scottish Highlands not far from the queen's home in Balmoral. The couple behind powerhouse gallery Hauser & Wirth soon fell for the region. They took up Scottish dancing and began attending their nearest Highland Games. "We've embraced local culture; we think it's incredible" says Iwan, an avid fly fisher.

Almost four years ago, the Wirths became local innkeepers, purchasing a formerly grand Victorian hotel, the Fife Arms, in the nearby village of Braemar. Their dramatic reboot of the property, opening this month, features works from contemporary art stars, but it's not, they insist, an art hotel. Working with London designer Russell Sage, they've created a love letter to the Highlands. Most of the 12,000 objects filling public spaces and rooms have Scottish roots. "Everything has a meaning; everything has a reason to be there," says Iwan.

Rooms are dedicated to personalities who spent time in the area, including Queen Victoria's

son-in-law Kaiser Friedrich III, a king of Prussia. The Elsa Bar, named for frequent visitor Elsa Schiaparelli, features portraits of the fashion icon by Man Ray. There are scenes from Robert Burns's poetry carved into the lobby's chimney and more contemporary verse by Alec Finlay, a poet-in-residence of sorts, inscribed on headboards.

Even the hotel's edgiest art has local inspiration. The Wirths invited artist friends to create work after spending time in Braemar. "We just showed them this mad project," says Iwan, "and they all stepped forward and said they would love to do something." The results include a coat of arms by James Prosek, a Technicolor riff on a traditional stag's horn chandelier by Richard Jackson and an installation by Subodh Gupta in a private dining room.

Through the hotel's refurbished pub, the Wirths hope to make Fife Arms a magnet for the community. "I asked the [townsfolk] what it would take to bring them in," says Iwan. "They said, 'A beer and a burger for a tenner.' So that's the ambition." —Jay Cheshes



## LETTER PERFECT

Bags with logos, whether embossed or in metal, boldly announce their presence this season.

From left: Valentino Garavani; MCM; Chloé; Giorgio Armani; Jimmy Choo; Gucci; Dior. For details see Sources, page 150.