I’ve heard the Hebrides described as ‘not islands, but an intoxication’. Reefs and lochans. Tyrian sunsets flaring behind 3,000ft peaks. Boomingly bright double rainbows and a harvest moon that drifts down like a gold doubloon. The wild creatures here have the aspect of legend. Birds of prey everywhere, feathers taut for the swoop. Once, an old stag appeared in front of me like an apparition on the road, with a ragged coat matted green as moss, and stared for long minutes with the heavy drifting silence of an owl before springing off, hotly savage as an ember.

Cast off the north-west coast of Scotland, the Hebrides comprises more than 136 islands. This time I took in three: Skye, Lewis and Harris.

Skye has long been celebrated for its drama and scale, its scoops and jagged notches, and the dark promontories of the Cuillin mountains. It is consistently named as one of the world’s most prized locations, and attracts the travellers to match. But there are still many areas where you won’t find a soul.

TAKE THE HIGH ROAD

Waternish was the last hold of wolves on Skye. ‘Turn off the road, north at the fairy bridge’ sounds like a mythic instruction, but people living along this distant peninsula talk readily about will-o’-the-wisps and moonbows (they happen over the Hebrides). By the time you reach Mint Croft, a profoundly pretty, detailed and handcrafted B&B, your eyes will be on stalks at the kaleidoscopic patterns thrown up by the light coming off the sea; as hard to explain on the page as love is. The two rooms here, created by Shaz and Ali Morton (she, an interior designer and baker, he, a furniture designer and master builder), are housed in entirely separate, very private, distinct buildings – one a converted blackhouse, the other a hayloft, which has a high glass-walled snug that noses out towards the Red Cuillins, giving the illusion of floating. mintcroftskye.co.uk. Doubles from £240