

# Quick getaway

## COLL HOTEL, ARINAGOUR

If peace, quiet and an appreciation of the best from nature's larder are what you are in need of, this could be your ideal island hotel. Coll is a two-and-a-half-hour ferry trip from Oban, and is a timeless island where you can enjoy doing nothing to your heart's content. This isn't just for recharging the batteries. Throw the batteries away and surrender to the power of nature as you step off the boat. No public transport, no traffic lights, very little traffic and no mobile phone signal. Bliss.

When you reach Coll, there is only one hotel to consider staying in. No, really – there is only one hotel on the island: the Coll, run by Kevin and Julie Oliphant for the past 25 years. It is the perfect destination on this unspoiled island: welcoming to the point of picking up guests and their bags from the ferry terminal. It's also friendly and well-staffed, with comfortable rooms with views across the bay.

The jewel in the crown is the Gannet Restaurant. Seafood straight from one of two fishing boats in the bay, and at prices that would put many mainland establishments to shame. Smoked salmon or kippers for breakfast will set you up for a day in the great outdoors. The island is fairly flat and accessible on foot or by bike and there are 23 beaches to choose from.

In the evening, more of what nature has to offer is waiting, thanks to Julie's award-winning kitchen. The Hebridean shellfish platter offers the very best of what the waters gave up that day: lobster, langoustines, crab, mussels and scallops, expertly prepared and in generous supply. It is easy to see why the Coll has been named Island Hotel Of The Year and winner of the Flavour Of Scotland Thistle award.

After dinner, the small hotel bar is the centre of the Coll social scene, and locals, residents of the few holiday homes and hotel guests swap stories about their day

and, for many, tales of previous visits. One man has been coming every year since 1957, when he first came with his parents.

These days, he visits with three generations of his own family. This is the sort of place that, once it gets you, you stay got.

*Coll Hotel, Arinagour. Double room from £80 per night B&B. Single £45. Tel 01879 230 334 or visit [www.collhotel.com](http://www.collhotel.com)*

**STEWART PATERSON**

