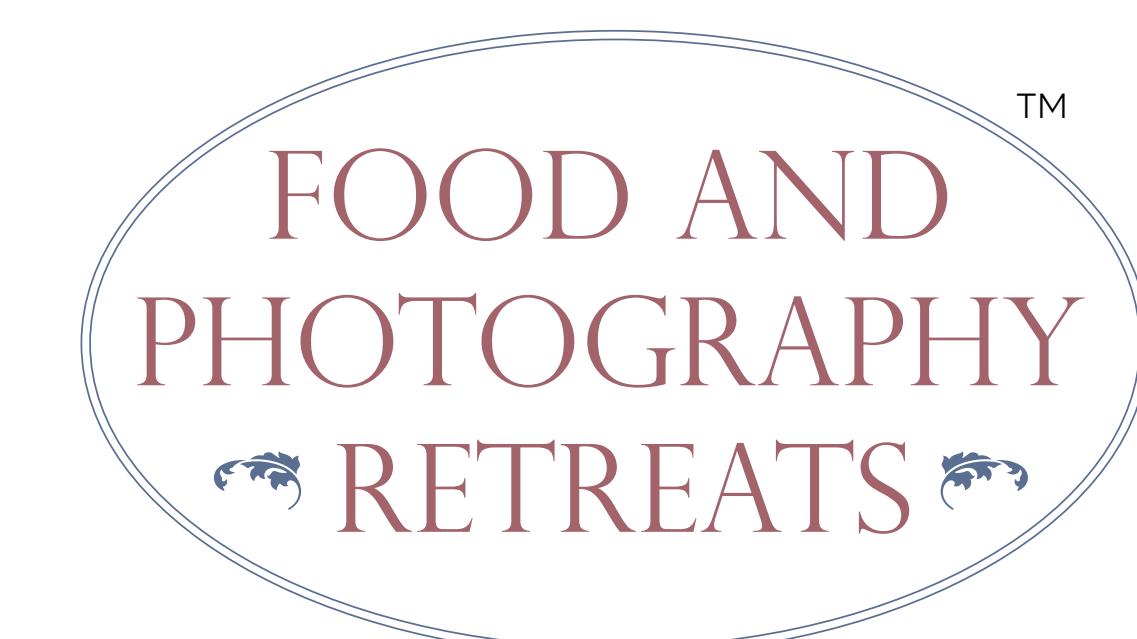




CONCEPTS FOR  
OUTDOOR  
PHOTOGRAPHERS

a photographic retreat in  
rural Burgundy  
25th May - 1st June, 2020

WILLI ROLFES • NIALL BENVIE  
HOSTED BY  
CHARLOTTE BENVIE



*with the Benvies*

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Food and Photography Retreats/Niall and Charlotte Benvie 2019

and Willi Rolfs

## The Retreat

**F**ood and Photography Retreats are for people who enjoy a house party-style holiday in a lovely setting where they can immerse themselves totally in photography. We help you to acquire new skills and deepen your knowledge of photography while enjoying fine hospitality at the Château de Magny en Morvan Estate.



emphasis is put on creating a convivial atmosphere in which conversation can flow and ideas emerge. Most of the tuition and some of the photography takes place within the Estate itself, with excursions to the villages, woods and fields of the Morvan Natural Regional Park (MNRP) to carry out specific projects. There is a wonderful large studio space available for our exclusive use during the Retreat.

The concept of a Photo Retreat is a little different from a tour or workshop. The Retreat has elements of both but the tuition is more structured, the outcomes are clearer and a lot of



## What's on offer

Willi and Niall all are not only experienced leaders but widely acknowledged innovators and teachers - with a willingness to share many years professional experience so that you can advance your own work.

During the Retreat, you will learn how to:

- create Colour Transects
- shoot and assemble "chocolate bar" collages
- photograph, process and composite field studio pictures

We teach beginners as well as advanced photographers - together. We've evolved a method that works by adopting a two-tier approach that reflects the needs of each group.

While advanced photographers don't always welcome a tutor breaking their concentration in the field by offering advice on basic technicalities, they often want artistic or practical guidance at the production stage in the studio. Less experienced photographers, however, tend to need more help in the field with essential techniques to get the photos they want and might not yet be ready for complex production processes. If they want to try it, however, we have a range of Photoshop templates they can use without needing an in-depth knowledge. More advanced photographers can use these templates to fast-track their own creativity.

We understand the importance to many photographers of in-depth reviews of their work and we do this by taking just two images from each guest at a time and analysing their technical, aesthetic and narrative qualities in turn. This is done on a stunning 55 inch Sony AF8 UHD OLED TV screen to show the pictures at their best and we often refer to the small library of photography titles that travel with us on Retreat.

If you'd like to travel with your partner / spouse / friend but they are not interested in photography, we can offer an alternative, food-centred programme focused on chocolate making, vegetarian food and a workshop at the famous [Cook's Atelier](#) in Beaune.



## Skills

### Colour Transects

Niall started to create this style of image in 2017 and they have been widely published and emulated since. The object is to present the pure colours present in the scene to the viewer by sampling systematically from lines across the picture, clarifying the diversity of colours present.

Colour is often treated as an incidental element in a photograph. Creating Colour Transects deepens our appreciation of the true colour of things.

If your Photoshop skills are rudimentary, don't worry: we provide you with a set of templates to make the creation of both Colour Transects and Chocolate Bar collages a breeze. For those of you already familiar with Photoshop, these templates will expand your exploration of these fascinating techniques.



46.883° N  
colour transect #43

## Skills

### "Chocolate bar" collages

These images are all about diversity where people expect there to be uniformity. It's a highly versatile technique that is effective in holding the viewer's attention and encouraging closer examination of the subject, whether natural or man-made.

With the application of your choice we show you how to assemble a collage - but we can make the job easy for you with our Photoshop templates!



## Skills

### Field studio photography.

What started in 2009 with two flash guns and two pieces of plastic has evolved into a worldwide photographic initiative: Meet Your Neighbours, now with several hundred participants. Niall has been instrumental in describing and sharing the technique.

You will learn how to make these striking, backlit images, on location with wild subjects; the specific way to process these photos; and how to assemble arresting composites. It is a really great way to illustrate biodiversity.



## Our venue and the region

The owners of Château de Magny en Morvan have made a large investment in converting a spacious historic barn adjacent to the Château into very comfortable modern accommodation with eight en-suite rooms and a large upstairs studio space. It also houses a professional kitchen as well as dining room and other meeting spaces. Within the grounds there is another studio space attached to the walled garden and we have access to various areas within the Château itself for photography.

The Château is in the Nièvre, a Department whose historical backwardness has allowed the preservation of extensive forests, small hedged fields and plentiful wildlife. It's often described as "the countryside as it used to be." In the Morvan, the hills rise a little higher, the forest is denser and the population even sparser. The large range of butterflies, amphibians and birds is a testament to the low levels of agro-chemicals in the environment here. The landscape, while lacking the drama of the Alps or the Pyrenees, is lush and attractive and prompts a more introspective approach appropriate to this Retreat.

Unusually for France, much of the MRNP is founded on granite rock rather than lime, producing a flora more typical of Scotland, especially in those parts of the park where

Douglas fir has been planted. The centre of the mediaeval town of Beaune, with its UNESCO World Heritage Site status, is about one and a quarter hour's drive away and marks the furthest point that any of our excursions take us. This is wine country and home to several Grands Crus. There are other mediaeval towns a little closer, include Bourbon Lancy (40 minutes) and Autun (30 minutes). These, and local villages, are rich hunting grounds for details photography.

The climate is very agreeable, with summer temperatures typically in the upper 20's (sometimes higher), vibrant springs and cool autumn mornings with mist in the beech and sweet chestnut forests. We use organic fruit and vegetables from local suppliers and the Estate



has an arrangement with its neighbours for the supply of free-range eggs, game and meat (this is Charolais country) for our house parties.

### A word about the food Charlotte prepares.

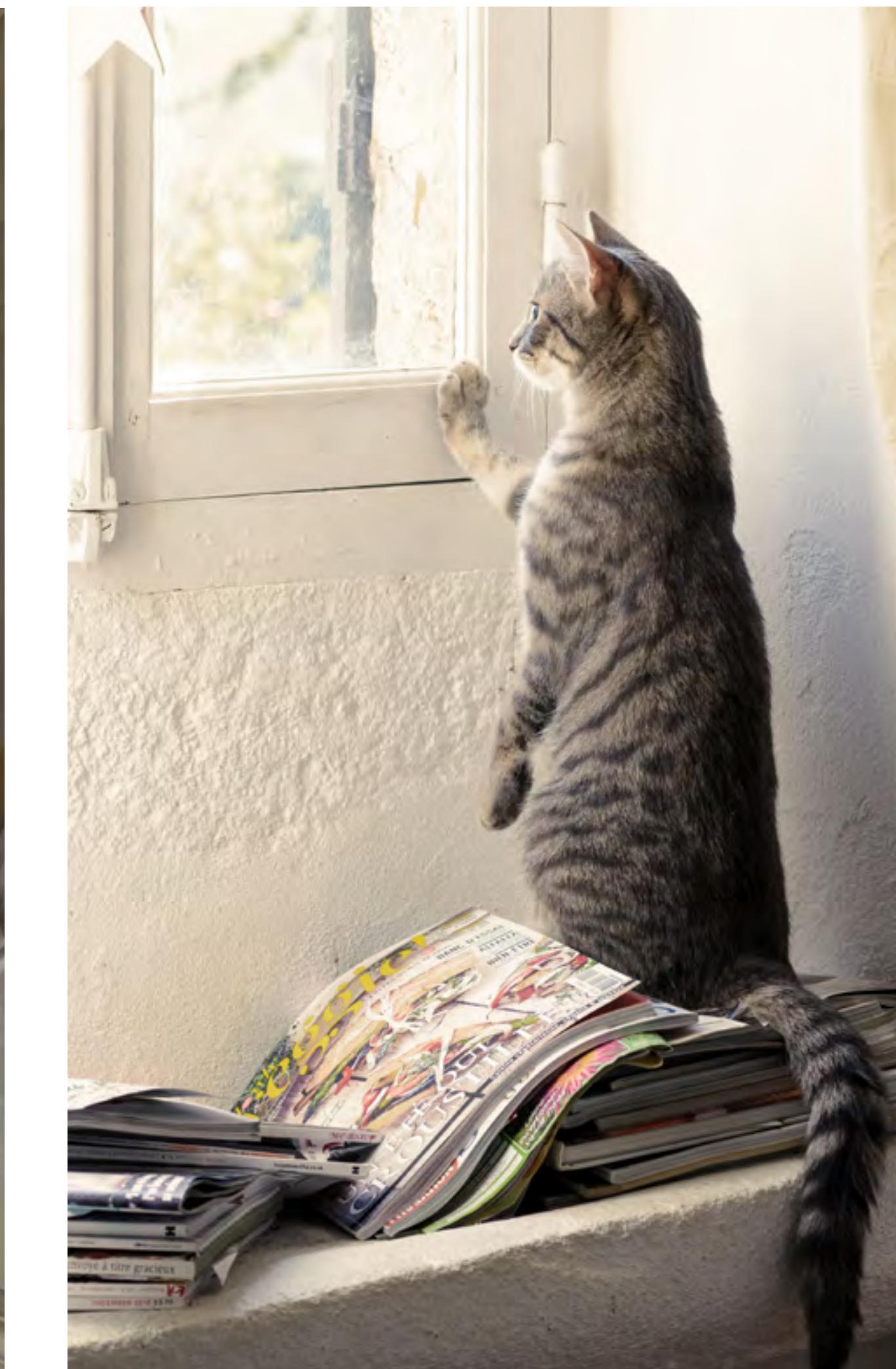
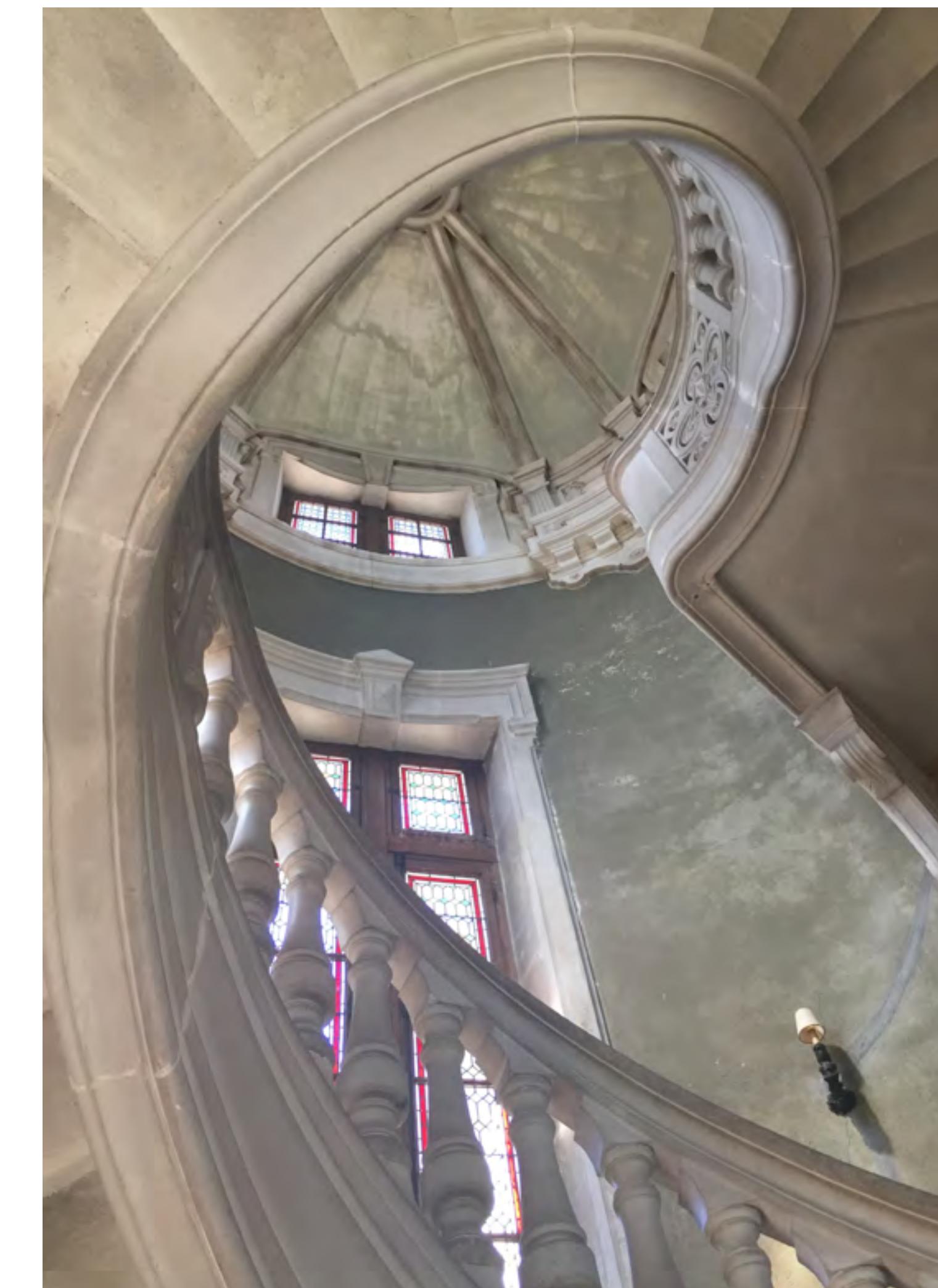
Each main meal, Charlotte serves a "plat du jour" but she also caters imaginatively for those with allergies or intolerances. She makes extensive use of local produce to prepare dishes that are both creative and satisfying. Charlotte's chocolate work often finds its way into picnic lunches and at the end of an evening. Whenever possible, we will take our evening meals outside in a covered dining area to enjoy the natural soundscape. The house party style offers a degree of flexibility unmatched by hotels when it comes to planning our days and when to eat.





CHATEAU DE MAGNY EN MORVAN

# CHATEAU DE MAGNY EN MORVAN



# General information about the Retreat

Price: £2450

## What's included

- 7 nights' accommodation in the barn conversion at the Château de Magny en Morvan.
- All meals.
- Transport to and from Le Creusot/Montchanin TGV station where the Retreat begins and ends.
- Transportation during the Retreat.
- Materials for field studio photography and use of flash equipment and modifiers

## What's not included

- Travel to and from Le Creusot-Montchanin from your home.
- Alcoholic drinks.
- Travel insurance.
- Admissions to any attractions we may visit.
- (See the Terms and Conditions for more information)

## Travel

Our pick up point for guests who are not driving is the TGV station at Le Creusot/Montchanin, 45 minutes from the Château. There we collect guests in a minibus.

## Spending money

You can use your credit card to withdraw €'s in the local towns should you need to buy extra props, pay for admissions - or even to buy wine.

## Insurance

It is a requirement of booking that guests provide evidence of personal travel insurance to cover cancellation and curtailment, medical and emergency expenses (including repatriation), personal accident, injury and death in addition to loss of/damage to luggage and possessions, personal possessions and flight cancellations/ delays. Bookings are accepted on completion of our Insurance Indemnity form.

## Passport and visa requirements

A passport valid for at least six months beyond length of stay is required. No visa necessary for EEA/Swiss citizens.

## Language

The French owners of the Château speak flawless English, although it is not so widely spoken in this rural area. Niall and Charlotte can assist you with French language to some extent.

## Climate

The climate here is continental so days can be warm - into the mid-20's - and nights cool. Regardless of the weather we will be busy, in or outdoors - even if it is wet.

## Clothing

Generally we would hope that the weather will be warm and sunny, but in early morning and in the woods it can be cooler so bring an extra layer in addition to your normal casual clothes.

- Lightweight trousers.
- Long sleeved shirt/tee-shirt.
- Light wool jumper.
- Lightweight waterproof jacket and trousers.
- Walking boots in addition to street shoes.
- Sun hat.
- Light warm hat.
- Pair of light gloves.
- Light scarf to protect your neck from the sun.
- Slippers for the studio - it has a wooden floor and we can't wear shoes.
- You might like to pack something a little smarter to wear in the evenings but no tiaras, please!

## Photographic equipment

Bring as much of your photographic equipment as practical. You could end up using any of it, although realistically, a macro lens and mid-range zoom will receive most use.

In addition, you will need:

- A laptop with Adobe Lightroom/ACR, CaptureOne or Alienskin Exposure software.
- A tripod: there's no avoiding it this time.
- An electronic release.
- A remote trigger, if you bring your own flash.
- Reflectors and diffusers, but only if you already have them.
- A means of backing up your images, such as a large capacity memory stick.

## Partners

Non-photographer partners are welcome. He or she can accompany you on our days out or, if they prefer, we can create an alternative, food-themed programme for them. The cost is the same for photographers as non-photographers.

## Daily routine

Each evening at dinner we outline the goals for the next day and where we plan to take you. But sometimes, if the weather is changeable, we may alter those plans so that we always make the most of whatever conditions we find. We use the best parts of the day to photograph the "raw materials", sometimes eating a picnic lunch in the field. You can participate in as much or as little of the teaching and tutorials as you like - and that goes for a travel partner too. We realise first and foremost that you're on holiday.

## Your safety during the Retreat

We treat your safety seriously on our Retreats. While most of the locations we visit present few difficulties to those with even average fitness, where particular hazards are present, we will draw these to your attention beforehand and you can judge if you want to proceed.

## About us

After many years leading tours and workshops for other companies at home and abroad we established Food and Photography Retreats in 2018. Our offer combines the teaching of particular skills in attractive locations with great hospitality, conversation and food. On some number of Retreats, we cooperate with other,

renowned, photographers to offer their guests a more rounded experience.

Niall has been a professional photographer, writer designer and guide for over 25 years with a massive publication record including six books and hundreds of articles. He has been involved in founding and running several of the biggest outdoor photographic initiatives of the last decade, including Meet Your Neighbours, Wild Wonders of Europe and 2020VISION.

For 28 years, Charlotte combined a career in the Civil Service with freelance catering and hosting roles before coming to work with husband, Niall. Guests value not only her expertise in the kitchen and dining room but her attention to detail and her warmth. She has a keen eye for a picture too and can also assist with Lightroom processing. She is a trained chocolatier.

Willi is a professional educator and MD of the Catholic University, Stapelfield. He is a acknowledged leader in the field of nature photography workshops and has developed a successful method for teaching photography. He has published 14 books to date, his work is widely published in the photographic press and beyond and he is founder of Inspiration Natur.

Contact Niall and Charlotte:

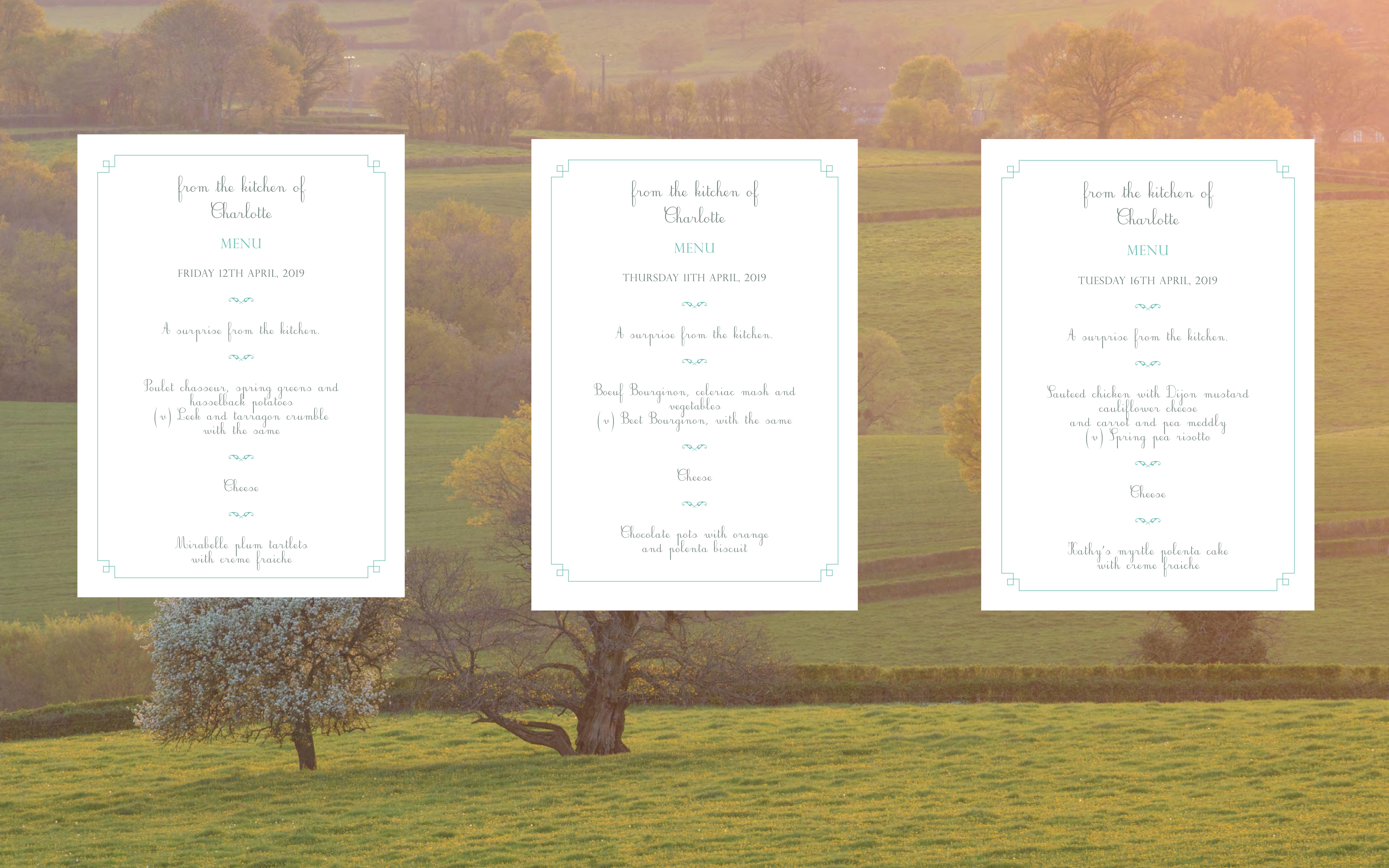
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from the kitchen of  
Charlotte

MENU

FRIDAY 12TH APRIL, 2019



A surprise from the kitchen.



Poulet chasseur, spring greens and  
hasselback potatoes

(v) Leek and tarragon crumble  
with the same



Cheese



Mirabelle plum tartlets  
with creme fraiche

from the kitchen of  
Charlotte

MENU

THURSDAY 11TH APRIL, 2019



A surprise from the kitchen.



Boeuf Bourguignon, celeriac mash and  
vegetables

(v) Beet Bourguignon, with the same



Cheese



Chocolate pots with orange  
and polenta biscuit

from the kitchen of  
Charlotte

MENU

TUESDAY 16TH APRIL, 2019



A surprise from the kitchen.



Sautéed chicken with Dijon mustard  
cauliflower cheese  
and carrot and pea medley  
(v) Spring pea risotto



Cheese



Kathy's myrtle polenta cake  
with creme fraiche