

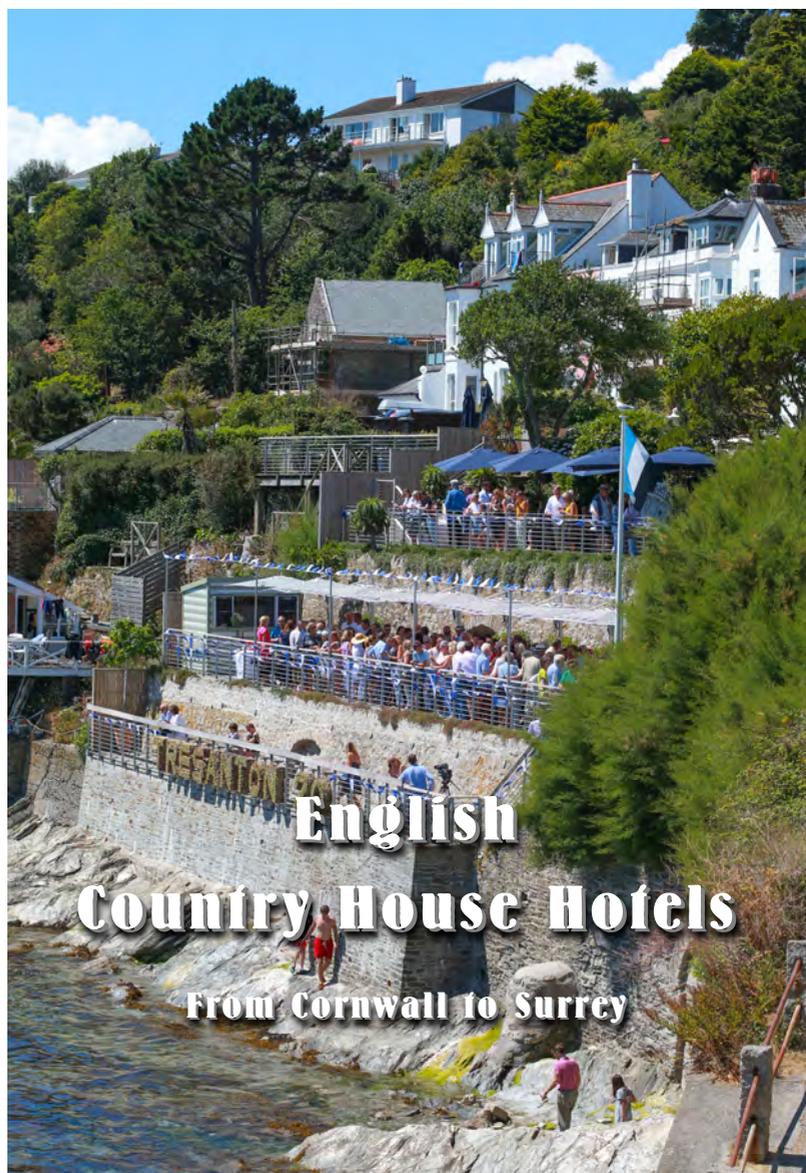


# The Gallivanter's Guide

# 100 CLUB

HONEST ADVICE FOR THE WORLD'S TOP TRAVELLERS

I used to dread reviewing English country house hotels because, apart from a couple of exceptions, they tended to be frosty abodes with a cast of grumpy guests whispering behind newspapers. If I had the temerity to complain about anything, I would receive even frostier looks from my fellow guests; most of whom were there to celebrate a special occasion; and there lies the rub. Even today, country house hotels appear to attract a predominance of 'once in a lifetime' people who have no points of reference when it comes to standards of hospitality. This reminds me of those sickeningly popular TV shows that explore the world's so-called famous hotels. Reviewers stand in awe at the sight of a four-poster, or gingerly caress the marble in their bathroom as though it were 24 carat gold. Unlike them, you are not overly impressed, which makes recommending good English country house hotels somewhat of a dilemma. The UK tends not to have any real equivalent to France's 'restaurants with rooms', which are popular diversions for the locals, who frequent good restaurants on a regular basis, simply for the joy of it, rather than for an anniversary or birthday. This means that standards remain very high, with a healthy mutual respect between owner and guest. The restaurant and room concept was attempted here in England at Raymond Blanc's Le Manoir au Quat'Saisons near Oxford, and at the Roux brothers' 12-room Waterside Inn, at Bray. The Michelin-starred cuisine at both is pretty good,



*The terraced Beach Club, sited across the road from Tresanton in Cornwall.*

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*The inviting Sitting Room at Tresanton, which has a real log fire in the colder months.*

but the rooms at The Waterside Inn are barely tempting, and although I love the gardens at the now-Belmond-owned Manoir, you need to take one of the Garden Suites to feel vaguely cherished; and even then, I find the atmosphere of the hotel strangely stultified. That said, the Manoir has moved with the times somewhat, with the addition of excellent vegan and vegetarian tasting menus. I am, however, being somewhat generous in my praise. In truth, there are only around two or three country house hotels in the whole of England that bring a smile to my face. Over the years, I have also noticed that fewer English hotels are owned and managed by passionate people, such as Martin Skan; the once creator and owner of Chewton Glen. These days, I rarely get to meet a General Manager in an English country house hotel or, in many cases, even know their names. Do not expect, therefore, any world-beating experiences; but do expect tons of historic charm and those simple pleasures that we oft forget. Follow me, from Cornwall in the far south-west, through Devon and Somerset, and thence to Hampshire, Berkshire and Surrey.

### **Tresanton, St. Mawes, Cornwall.**

Tresanton has been my choice for two big birthdays; the first in 1998, when the hotel first opened. I could have gone anywhere, but there is something magical about St. Mawes; nothing flashy, but a simple seaside charm that insinuates itself into the tight muscles of your neck and brings a con-

tented sigh to the lips, as you gaze down at Tavern Beach; the sun-dappled bay protected by a headland where St Anthony's lighthouse provides an apt logo for the hotel.

Back in 1998, I remember sitting in the restaurant with David and listening to the inebriated ramblings of a journalist seated behind us, as owner, Olga Polizzi smiled diplomatically. The following week, I read the man's review in one of the posher newspapers and realised that his Champagne induced haze had led him to describe something that I completely failed to recognise. The moral to this story is, do not believe everything you read.

Since then, I have stayed twice in Room

#1, which is not the largest of accommodations here, but its roomy terrace is right on the front and allows me to watch the world go by.

The hotel climbs precipitously up the hill; a collection of five white houses; simply but cleverly furnished with a pot pourri of rustic antiques and Olga Polizzi's carefree seaside colour palette.

This part of England is blessed with the best weather, so the gardens blush with palm trees and candy-coloured mesembryanthemum daisies that you rarely see outside of South Africa.

There are just 30 rooms and suites here; all quite different, yet the look manages to



*Seaside colours in Master Suite, #33, at Tresanton, Cornwall.*



*View of the bay and headland, from Tresanton's restaurant terrace, in St Mawes, Cornwall.*

be wholly cohesive, from the cosy ground-floor fireplaced sitting room, to the balconied rooms and suites of the upper levels. Personally, I prefer to be near to the restaurant, as if it rains, the steps to the upper levels can be a tad hazardous. However, I would avoid the rooms in the main house as they have no balconies. Rather better are those in The Nook or Rock Cottages.

There is no airconditioning, no mini-bars and most of the bathrooms have in-tub

showers; so apart from the excellence of the design and the addition of Wifi, you could be back in the 1950s.

The hotel started life in the late 1940s, when keen yachtsman, Jack Silley created a private club for his friends. It morphed into an aristocratic hideaway in the 1950s and 60s, when the likes of the late Princess Margaret thoroughly approved of St. Mawes' mild climate and yachting fraternity.

Harking back to those heady times, is

the hotel's 48-foot racing yacht, Pinuccia, which was built in 1939 and today can sail you around Falmouth Bay under its trusty Skipper and Mate. Take a headscarf, though, as the breezes can be a challenge.

In the restaurant, Chef, Paul Wadham celebrates Cornwall's unrivalled fresh fish and vegetables in a series of elegantly styled dishes that brim with flavour. When the sun shines, take a table on the terrace and sip a glass of rosé with a plate of fresh



*Harking back to simpler times, the main road of St. Mawes in Cornwall leads to Tresanton.*



Arriving at The Pig at Combe; an Elizabethan Manor dating from 1572, yet full of 21st Century joie de vivre.

crab. It is the simple pleasures that delight me here.

The latest addition to the hotel is a terraced Beach Club across the road that dives down to the pebbly shore and allows you to soak up the Cornish sun. You will probably never meet the General Manager, but you will discover an age when life was kinder.

[tresanton.com](http://tresanton.com)

**Gallivanter's Rating:** ★★★★★

### The Pig at Combe, Devon.

Scattered across England is a positive lit-

ter of Pig Hotels; the brainchild of visionary hotelier Robin Hutson and his designer wife, Judy. Frankly, I am happy to stay at any of them, but my favourite is The Pig at Combe.

Rather than restaurants with rooms, I would say that Pig Hotels are rooms with brasseries. They supported sustainability and locally sourced produce long before it was media savvy; the countryside hotels employing not merely a Chef, but a Kitchen Gardener and Forager; so that most of the produce is grown on site or sourced from a 25-mile radius. The result is simple, fresh

and delicious cuisine, served within charming dining rooms filled with young, enthusiastic staff.

The word bucolic best describes The Pig at Combe, which inhabits 3,500 acres of Devon countryside, in the unsullied Otter Valley. It feels a world away from anywhere; yet it is surprisingly close to the buzzy city of Exeter, Honiton and the sleek sandy stretch of the Jurassic Coast.

Stately homes abound in this part of England, so if you are an history buff, then this is the place to be. Indeed, The Pig at Combe has a remarkably illustrious history; rising from the site of Combe House, which dates from 1086, when it was owned by Bishop Odo, the half brother of William the Conqueror.

The current Elizabethan manor house dates from 1572, when Henry Beaumont lived there. It eventually became an hotel in 1968, and was transformed by the Hutsons in 2015, offering just 27 rooms and cottages of varying sizes, that reminds me somewhat of an Aman, as there is so much space for so few people; a plethora of striking salons, including a Drawing Room, Library and oak-panelled Bar with a real log fire.

Such is the commitment to local produce that even the cocktails are concocted from fresh herbs and fruits from the gardens. Wander the endless grounds and you discover quails, busily producing eggs for dinner; a smoking house for local salmon and



The Pig at Combe's cosy fireplaced Bar is a lovely place to start the evening.



*The Pig at Combe's quirky, unpretentious Restaurant, with its mix of rustic antique tables and chairs.*

trout, and bed upon bed of vegetables and herbs; at the centre of which lie two modest potting sheds reserved for Spa treatments.

A lovely venue for lunch is The Folly; a short stroll from the main house. Here, in a greenhouse setting of lemon trees, potted plants and herbs, the wood-fired oven brings forth marvellous, pizza-like flat breads and various simple salads and accompaniments;

and if the sun shines, you can sit outside and gaze upon the rolling lawns and fields of the Otter Valley, feeling for all the world as if you have stepped into a Beatrix Potter book.

The wood-panelled main Restaurant, with its summer terrace, is a sprawl of rustic wooden tables beneath a moulded ceiling and chandelier; the cuisine served on an eclectic mix of grandma plates, and the

locally sourced fare aptly named, the 25-Mile Menu.

Of course, the menu changes daily, according to what is fresh that day; but generally you can expect the excellent James Golding's Oak Smoked Salmon most of the time and Combe Smoked Organic Sausage, either as a starter or as a main, according to your appetite. Marvellous fish from the nearby coast sits alongside the best local



*The romantic Hideaway Room, The Hayloft, in the Stable yard, at The Pig at Combe, Devon.*



*One of the rustic Spa rooms at The Pig at Combe.*

meats, from beef to Organic Texel Lamb Leg.

Each room is individually decorated, but opt at least for a Big Comfy Luxe Room, such as #1, or, in the stable yard, the romantic Hideaway Room, The Hayloft. Later additions include three charming Cottages; Chicken Run, Stream and Old Thatch Cottage, which are 3/4 of a mile away from the main hotel, so may not suit everyone.

Perfect for a weekend away, The Pig at Combe is a generous and hospitable place

in which to unwind.

[thepighotel.com](http://thepighotel.com)

**Gallivanter's Rating: ★★★★★**

### **Hotel Endsleigh, Devon.**

If total silence is something you only vaguely remember, then head to the Tamar Valley, on the edge of Dartmoor and sit by the rushing Tamar River, which runs in an exclusive 8-mile stretch through the verdant grounds of Hotel Endsleigh.

Sister hotel to Tresanton in Cornwall, Endsleigh is set in an 1814 'cottage orné' pile, where the Duke of Bedford attempted to create a little corner of perfection; stocking the river with salmon and bringing in the renowned landscape gardener, Humphrey Repton, to design the gardens. You can follow in the Duke's footsteps by opting for a ghillie-accompanied fishing trip, or simply marvel at the garden's Long Border that, in the summer months, is the noisiest thing here.



*Hotel Endsleigh's rolling lawns, which feature the Long Border; originally designed by famed landscape gardener, Humphrey Repton.*



*The wood-paneled Restaurant at Hotel Endsleigh in Devon, with its seasonal, nostalgic menus.*

The views are pristine. No telegraph poles, no ambient light, no cars and no aircraft make for a positively Victorian stillness. No wonder Queen Victoria graced it with her presence.

The rooms and bathrooms in the main house tend towards the snug, so best take one of the three newer suites in the Stable Wing, such as the bi-level Stable Suite, #18, with its log-burning stove, mini kitchen area and roomy 1930's style bathroom. It is designed with a Master Bedroom and a child-style twin-bunk-bed second bedroom; but you can simply ignore this, as we did, and relax in the Master Suite.

Frankly, this hotel is more of an adult escape, given its emphasis on cuisine, gardens and fishing, so unless you have mature children with rather good palates (as I know some of you do), then this is not a family choice.

The second suite here, #19, is a little smaller, and for me, awkward in that the bedroom is accessed via a short flight of stairs. Equally, although beautifully designed, #20 has loft-style sloping ceilings, so if you are tall, this could be awkward, although it does have a stunning bathroom.

Do not expect airconditioning or minibars in the main house, which is one of the reasons I like the Stables, with their little

kitchen cupboards.

With just 19 rooms and suites, hidden away in 100 acres of unspoilt forest, Endsleigh's warm heart is its cosy wood-paneled Restaurant, adorned with the crests of the Duke of Bedford's friends.

The culinary theme here is thoroughly English nostalgia, with fresh seasonal asparagus from the Wye Valley, West Country Venison Shepherd's Pie and the desserts of childhood, such as Rhubarb Jelly and custard, and Lemon Posset.

You can really relax and put your feet up

at Endsleigh, which feels very much like a home-from-home, right down to the delicious help-yourself High Tea in one of the lounges, replete with scones and proper cakes to cut. However, this is not somewhere I would spend more than one night, unless you were here for the fishing (there is no Spa). However, it makes for a very good stopping-off point between Cornwall and Somerset, if only for the jelly and custard!

[hotelendsleigh.com](http://hotelendsleigh.com)

**Gallivanter's Rating: ✓✓✓+**



*The fireplaced Sitting Room, at Hotel Endsleigh.*



*The Drawing Room in Hadspen House, at The Newt in Somerset.*

### **The Newt in Somerset.**

I would normally drive straight from Devon through Somerset and on to new pastures; but since The Newt opened in 2019, Somerset has emerged as a bit of an hotel magnet.

You may know South Africans, Koos Bekker and Karen Roos from their delightful hotel, Babylonstorm, in the Cape Wine-lands. Very cleverly, they brought all the

good things to bear from their first hotel to The Newt, including a great respect for the land and its produce.

This 800-acre 17th Century estate includes 30 acres of formal gardens. At its centre is the Georgian mansion, Hadspen House, which conceals 13 individually decorated rooms. There are another 10 rooms in the quirky Stable Yard, and more recently, a further 17 rooms in the Farmyard. However, the Farmyard rooms are around half a mile from Hadspen House, beyond the

cyder orchards, and with their own pool, Garner Bar, snug and all-day kitchen; perfect if you crave isolation, but less so if you do not.

Personally, I prefer to stay in Hadspen House, as when it rains, scurrying to and fro across the estate can be a nuisance, and I suspect that the Farmyard Rooms are better suited to corporate groups.

The hotel is called The Newt because when the estate was purchased, there were around 2,000 or more rare, protected newts in residence, so the estate's structure had



*The swimming pool, at The Newt in Somerset.*

to work around them.

This being Somerset, there is a big focus here on apples and cyder-making and you will discover around 4,000 apple trees and over 500 varieties throughout the estate,



*Garden View Room, #3, with a roomy side terrace, at the Newt in Somerset.*



*The bathroom of Garden View Room, #3, at The Newt in Somerset.*

which produces its own cyder and apple juice; cold pressed to retain all the nutrients; and yes, it is delicious.

There is also a croquet lawn, deer park and a proper working farm on the estate, growing over 350 types of organic vegetables, which, happily, end up on your table in the hotel's restaurants.

There is also an open-sided Cyder Press café, with drinks and snacks, and a fabulous Farm Shop that is replete with estate produce, including freshly baked bread from the hotel's own bakery.

Our arrival was via a long driveway which led to a quirky Shepherd's Hut, where we were met by a staff member, who piled our luggage into a rustic cart. We followed her through what resembled a 17th Century film-set of stone cottages, interspersed with harmonious glass structures, such as the gym. Here, you will also discover an indoor-outdoor swimming pool and a handful of treatment rooms within a nicely designed Spa, which includes an airy pedicure/manicure station that looks out onto the estate.

As you know, I like rooms with terraces, so the Garden View Room, #3, in Hadspen House remains my favourite. It is accessed via a private staircase from the Conservatory-style Croquet Room and is very private and viewsome. However, if terraces are not on your agenda, then opt for the slightly larger Garden View Room, #1.

The beds here are super comfortable, with down and feather bedding, and although the TV was small, the views certainly compensated, along with a thoughtfully stocked mini-bar and a roomy bathroom.

Many hotels in England have offensively

chlorinated water, but here at The Newt, the tap water is pure and the bed linens do not reek of cheap washing powder.

As is the norm in the English countryside, there is no airconditioning here, but they do provide Dyson fans for the occasional warm night, and even Dyson hair-dryers in the closets.

Lunch in the contemporary Garden Café is highly recommended; a pleasantly unstuffy venue that attracts the many visitors to the gardens, but also provides a bounty of home-grown delights, from cured meats and pickles, to an unusually good choice of vegan options; simple fare, but very well executed.

Within Hadspen House, you will find a cosy Bar, which spills out onto a broad ter-

race and is a real delight on a warm evening.

Then there is the elegant Drawing Room, with its walls of ancestral paintings, and the meandering Botanical Rooms, which take you past a big open-kitchen to a very large glass-roofed dining conservatory, where a good breakfast and a seasonal all-day menu is served.

My favourite place, though, is the low-lit wood-panelled, Restaurant, with its roaring fire, as it is such an elegant place in which to savour Somerset's fine, organic fare.

Service, from a keen young staff, is surprisingly professional and warm and, although there are no proper suites here, I would not hesitate to recommend The Newt for a couple of days of pure, unadulterated relaxation.

[thenewtinsomerset.com](http://thenewtinsomerset.com)

**Gallivanter's Rating: ✓✓✓✓+**

### **Limewood, Hampshire.**

I have written about Limewood many times and I know that numerous Members have stayed there since; but it would be remiss of me not to include it here, as it remains one of England's best country house hotels.

Hampshire has more than its fair share of high-end choices, including Four Seasons, and Chewton Glen, with its exquisite Treehouses.

However, for me, Four Seasons is simply



*The low-lit wood-panelled Restaurant, at The Newt in Somerset.*



*A more quirky room option at The Neut is Llamrei's Stable.*

too large and appears, consequently, to have embraced the corporate market.

Chewton Glen's Treehouses are, without doubt, the best suites in the English countryside; but there is a growing schizophrenia between these and the main house and spa, and many Members have pointed this out.

A great hotel needs to be cohesive, so that the experience is seamless, and in this respect, Limewood ticks all the boxes. Overseen by Robin Hutson's hospitality company, but not part of The Pig Hotels, Limewood manages to combine high-end expectations with charming informality, and it never ceases to amaze me how every member of staff appears to be genuinely motivated, which is no easy task in these times.

The accommodation to go for here is the delightful selection of cottages, which cater admirably for couples and families alike. The Forest Cottages and Cabin are perfect for a family getaway, whilst The Lake Cabin is my personal favourite for a relaxing escape à deux.

Thankfully, now that the restrictions have been lifted in England, Limewood is just about back to normal, so you no longer have to wrap up in blankets on the outside terrace to enjoy Hartnett Holder & Co's delicious Italian-inspired cuisine.

Set in the midst of Hampshire's idyllic

New Forest; the grounds speckled with whimsical sculptures and tree-hung swings, Limewood is a masterclass in great bistro-style cuisine.

At the restaurant, Hartnett Holder & Co, famed Chef, Angela Hartnett brings a touch of her Italian heritage to super-fresh locally sourced produce. Portland Crab Tart gives way to a perfect White Onion Risotto; then Cornish Cod, seasonal game, and a raft of moreish desserts, from Rhubarb Custard and Trifle, to Tiramisu; and if you have any dietary requirements, this is handled brilliantly and without an ounce of fuss.



*Looking back to the main house, at Limewood in Hampshire.*

Refreshingly different snacks are served in the Bar and on its terrace, with great Italian flare, whilst elsewhere, there is a very good Cookery School and, as part of The Herb House Spa, the excellent café, Raw & Cured, where I particularly love the dairy-free desserts.

The Spa itself, which is set on three levels, is rather more holistic than 90% of those in English Country Houses these days; the indoor ozone-treated lap pool devoid of chlorine. There is also a very large sauna and indoor hydropool overlooking the forest; a Mud House and a popular outdoor Hot Pool, where you can see the steam rising into the often less than balmy air.

This is the sort of hotel that lures me back time after time and, it seems, you tend to share my enthusiasm.

[limewoodhotel.co.uk](http://limewoodhotel.co.uk)

**Gallivanter's Rating: ★★★★★**

### **Coworth Park, Ascot, Berkshire.**

The Dorchester Collection branched out into country house hotels back in 2010, when it opened Coworth Park, and due to its proximity to London (50 minute's drive) and a fast 20 minutes from Heathrow Airport, it was an instant hit with locals and International travellers.

Given its nearness to the Capital, it comes as somewhat of a surprise to discover such a rural setting; close to Ascot's racing fraternity and right on the edge of Windsor Great Park's rolling 40,000 acres.

The Coworth estate comprises 240 private acres, which incorporates three Polo



*Peace and tranquility in the midst of Hampshire's New Forest, at Limewood.*

fields and a serious Equestrian Centre, which is beautifully housed in an American-style barn.

However, there are plenty more activi-

ties on offer here for non-equestrians, such as croquet, tennis, pitch & putt, bicycling, garden tours and a rather beautiful Spa, which is set on two floors and was design-

ed by Fox Linton, who created all the interiors here.

The Spa, which is housed in a standalone half-circle, employs a raft of English oak



*At Limewood, the restaurant, Hartnett Holder & Co, is a very successful collaboration between Angela Hartnett and resident Chef, Luke Holder.*



*At Limewood, the cosy, rustic interior of The Lake Cabin, with its large terrace overlooking a small duck-filled lake.*

and maple and is filled with natural light; a white-on-white escape built from cedar, limestone and hemp. With its turf-topped roof, it appears to be part of the landscape; in summer merging with the wildflower meadows.

The lure here is the splendid 59-foot indoor pool, which, happily, is treated with UVA rather than the usual chlorine and is a true haven of relaxation, edged by 15 enormous amethyst geodes. In the summer, the

doors open out onto a solarium terrace and if you feel like spending the day here, then the airy spa café, Spatisserie, has a range of healthy yet tasty options.

Unusually for English hotels these days, there is a chemical-free option in the form of Ishga Organic products. The well-equipped gym is small yet viewsome and there is also a good nail salon.

This is a very flexible hotel that manages to work equally well for couples and fam-

ilies alike. The bi-level Kids at Coworth supervised children's club caters to 4+ years on the lower floor, and on the upper floor, the Chill Den provides all the latest gizmos for children over 8.

The main accommodation comprises 30 rooms and suites set in the central Mansion House, dating from 1776. Here, I would opt for The Derby Suite, #34, which is a haven of light and space, overlooking the grounds. However, if you like the idea of staying in a proper half-timbered house of your own, then opt for the 3-bedroom The Dower House, with its own swan lake, minstrel gallery and big farmhouse kitchen. The standalone, 3-bedroom North Lodge is the latest addition; probably because The Dower House was always fully occupied! Both are true homes-from-home with their own English gardens and clean modern interiors that blend beautifully with the oak beams.

If you do not require quite so much space, then take one of the two Gardener's Cottage Suites; East, with one bedroom, and West with two.

There are also a further 40 rooms and junior suites in the old Stables; all named after Derby winners; but frankly, I prefer the quiet, space and privacy of the cottages.

On the culinary front, one of my fav-



*Whimsical sculptures dot the grounds, at Limewood in Hampshire.*



*The marvellous approach to The Barn restaurant, at Coworth Park, in Ascot, Berkshire.*

ourite spots for lunch is the freestanding, bi-level, The Barn, with its rustic wooden tables and heart-warming brasserie fare, including proper fish and chips. Upstairs, there is a cosy Bar, so you can spend a couple of very contented hours here.

The Drawing Room is the place for High Tea, with brews poured from Georgian silver, homemade preserves and rather good scones.

Executive Chef, Adam Smith celebrates all things local and English, and in his 1-Michelin starred Restaurant Coworth Park, the modern British fare is scrumptious, from a Caviar Tart, to Cornish Turbot, and Yorkshire Duck. There are also some excellent vegetarian menus and a genuine desire to cater to all tastes and dietary requirements.



*Spatisserie; the airy Spa café, at Coworth Park, in Berkshire.*



*The half-circle Spa at Coworth Park, with its planted roof that, in the summer, merges with the wild flowers in the meadows.*



*The Derby Suite, #34, in the main Mansion House, at Coworth Park in Berkshire..*

Coworth Park has really matured over the past 12 years, with a warmth of welcome that encourages you to return.

[dorchestercollection.com](http://dorchestercollection.com)

**Gallivanter's Rating: ✓✓✓✓+**

**Beaverbrook Hotel & Spa,  
Surrey.**

Opened in 2017, Beaverbrook was the

first serious high-end option in Surrey; the Victorian estate set in 470 green acres of the Surrey Hills.

It took a year or two more for the owners to open The Coach House Spa, but it was well worth the wait, as, apart from a spectacular 65-foot indoor pool for adults, there is also an outdoor pool for families, a Thermal Spa with jacuzzi, steam and ice fountain, 6 treatment rooms, including a

couple's suite, a Beauty Room and Barber's Salon, gym, Reformer Pilates, a delightful boutique and a light, airy Deli serving morish, yet healthy dishes.

This Spa aims to provide a truly holistic experience, although I am not a fan of Vitamin and Mineral intravenous infusions being performed in a spa. I also question the wisdom of Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy, as it is contraindicated in so many cases.



*The original Library, at Beaverbrook Hotel & Spa, in Surrey.*



*A newer, airier look in the Coach House, with Garden Suite, #3, at Beaverbrook Hotel & Spa, in Surrey.*

Personally, I would opt for a more traditional massage, using A.S. Apothecary products; or a facial, using Therapi skincare. The therapists here are extremely well trained, so all should be well. The facility also offers Naturopathic advice from Camilla dos Santos, which is carefully tailored to your needs.

Within the Coach House, there are now three extra rooms and three suites, and of these, the Ash and Beech Garden Suites are particularly covetable, as they are much

lighter, larger and airier than those in the 18-room House, or the rustic, 11-room Garden House; the decor more contemporary and the bathrooms, with their lavish copper tubs, really splendid.

That said, if you prefer a more traditional style and therefore opt to stay in the main House, then The Kennedy Suite or The Dowager Master Suite are the ones to go for, although they are really just large junior suites.

More rustic are the delightful cottagey

rooms in The Garden House, such as 'Bay'. This building also houses the bistro-style Garden House Restaurant, which has excellent homemade pasta, and views onto the hotel's bountiful kitchen garden.

For me, the *raison d'être* for staying at Beaverbrook is, surprisingly, its Japanese Grill in The Dining Room, situated in a very English salon within The House.

Sadly, its opening Chef, Taji Maruyama is no longer there, but it seems that Polish sushi-chef, Wojciech Popov, who honed his craft at Noma, is decidedly up to the task; although I do miss the extraordinary basil sorbet, rather than the current rather creamy desserts on offer.

However, the sushi, sashimi et al are all very impressive, particularly the famed Popcorn Shrimp, and the service is easily Michelin-star level; professional yet not overbearing.

Sir Frank's Bar, named for ex-advertising guru and owner, Sir Frank Lowe, is a delight, with its countryside vistas. Indeed, it seems that this hotel does little by halves and, as it is only 20 miles from London, it provides a great escape from 21st Century urbanity.

[beaverbrook.co.uk](http://beaverbrook.co.uk)

**Gallivanter's Rating: ★★★★★+**



*The outdoor pool, which is open to adults and children alike, awaits the summer, at Beaverbrook Hotel & Spa, in Surrey.*



Gallivanter's

# Gossip

**ON THE SHORES OF LAKE ORTA**, which is one of the lesser known Italian Lakes, is the Piero Lissoni designed **Casa Fantini**, owned by Daniela Fantini. Reopening this month and only an hour away from Milan, this is an unusually contemporary escape; an ancient terracotta house complemented by the clean lines of a 21st Century construct, hiding just nine rooms and two suites (see right). Designed to be a real home from home; the cuisine is simple and delicious and the service warm hearted. [casafantinilaketime.com](http://casafantinilaketime.com)



**THE NEW MANAGING DIRECTOR** of **The Beverly Hills Hotel**, replacing the irreplaceable Ed Mady, is John Scanlon, who has been with Dorchester's 45 Park Lane for the past seven years. A very tough act to follow.

**IN LONDON**, as if it needed more hotels, The Westbury Hotel in Mayfair is to become the 196-room **St Regis London**, opening 2023, after a US\$122 million refurbishment.

**LOOKING AHEAD** I see that **Mandarin Oriental** are finally planning a resort in the **Maldives**, scheduled for 2025, with 120 standalone Villas. Spanning three private islands on the Bolidhuffaru Reef in the South Malé Atoll, the resort will comprise 56 overwater villas and 64 beachfronts, complemented by six dining outlets, including three speciality restaurants. A large spa will complete the picture.

**OPENING THIS MONTH** is the highly anticipated Californian hideaway, **The Stanly Ranch**, by Auberge Resorts, in Napa. Set in 700 acres of vineyards and farmland, the resort has just 78 standalone cottages, with 1-3 bedroom suites; a perfect escape for a long weekend. [aubergeresorts.com](http://aubergeresorts.com)

**WATCH OUT FOR THE OPENING ON 6TH JUNE** of **&Beyond**'s spectacular revamp of the **Grumeti Serengeti River Lodge**, Tanzania. Originally dating from the 1990s, the lodge was submerged by the Grumeti River in 2020, so the renowned safari company, &Beyond took over and transformed it into a truly exclusive hideaway in this remote part of the western Serengeti. With just nine airy, riverview suites and one 2-bedroom suite for families (all with private plunge pools), the property also offers a gym, in-room spa treatments and simple, wholesome cuisine. You can plan your menus for the day alongside the chefs in the interactive kitchen. It goes without saying that the opportunities for viewing wildlife here are exceptional, with &Beyond's highly experienced guides on hand. [andbeyond.com](http://andbeyond.com)

**OPENING IN JUNE** is the elegant pared-back resort of **Cali**, on the Greek island of **Mykonos**; a high-end 40-villa resort on its own private beach in Kalafatis; all the villas with private saltwater pools, plus a 360-foot infinity main pool. As well as a serious Spa, the resort will feature a Mediterranean restaurant. Website in progress at [calimykonos.com](http://calimykonos.com)

**IF YOU LIKE FERRAGAMO'S LUNGARNO COLLECTION** of hotels, you will be pleased to hear that they are branching out from Florence and Rome to Milan, opening **Portrait Milano** this coming summer in Europe's oldest (1564) seminary, with its colonnaded courtyard. [lungarnocollection.com](http://lungarnocollection.com)

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