

english country garden

FANCY A WEEKEND BREAK IN THE GREEN AND PLEASANT LAND?
TRY THESE TWO TOP HOTELS

LANGSHOTT MANOR
Surrey, 01293 786680 www.langshottmanor.com

WHAT IS IT?

An exquisite, chocolate-box-perfect 16th-century manor house, set in its own award-winning gardens.

Tucked away at the end of a very posh secluded private lane, the whole thing feels like a Merchant Ivory film set: green leafy trees, a crunchy gravel drive and a sleepy Elizabethan hotel hidden away like a secret castle.



AND THE ROOMS?

Think elegance, relaxed charm and an air of history ... couple all that with four-poster beds, oak panelling and mullioned windows and it's a romantic haven. Each room is individually decorated, and one or two of the suites have private decks and balconies that overlook the moat, with its giant willow tree and family of swans. This really is like stepping back in time (but with added luxury), so don't expect sleek minimalism or space-age trickery, but the sheer opulence and beauty more than make up for it.

SPECIAL TOUCHES

Egyptian cotton high thread count bedlinen, luxurious marble and granite bathrooms, deep roll-top baths, log fires in



the suites, and the food in the restaurants is largely grown in the grounds, which brings us on to...

FOOD & DRINK?

The Mulberry Restaurant is perfect for a special occasion or intimate

supper à deux, with its crisp white linens, crystal and fine china. It boasts an extensive wine list, and has been awarded two AA rosettes each year for the past four. But also, try the less formal St Peter's Brasserie, which has a terrace that slopes right down to the moat, for waterside dining.

ANYTHING ELSE?

Langshott Manor may be deeply embedded in the Surrey countryside, but Gatwick Airport is only ten minutes away, making it the perfect pre- or post-holiday stopover.

Rates: From £190 per person per night for a standard room, with full English breakfast, but from November there will be special winter break rates of £115 per person per night, including breakfast and dinner.

HARTWELL HOUSE
Near Aylesbury, Bucks
01296 747444 www.hartwell-house.com

WHAT IS IT?

One of England's grandest and most heartbreakingly beautiful honey-stone stately homes, standing in ninety acres of landscaped parkland. It has an impressive history: for five years from 1809 it was home to Louis XVIII, exiled King of France (you can now stay in his suite!). Lord Byron once wrote of it: 'Why wouldst thou leave calm Hartwell's green abode?'



AND THE ROOMS?

Hartwell House makes you feel comfortably at home in the most sumptuous surroundings. Suites are enormous, with panoramic views of the endless grounds, and the Jane Austen-style window seats will instantly put you in a dreamy mood. The smaller Hartwell Court, set in the gardens, offers a secluded choice of rooms, each with the feel of a private retreat.

SPECIAL TOUCHES

The Hartwell Spa has the best pool WM's ever seen in a country hotel (Romanesque, calm and opulent), and a full range of treatments. There are also tennis courts, a delightful



chapel and more country walks than you can shake a welly at. Best of all? The public rooms, where one grand age after another (Gothic, Jacobean, Georgian) is reflected in the decor.

FOOD & DRINK?

Top notch with a clutch of awards to prove it. Starting with elegant cocktails and delicate canapés in one of the cavernous lounges, four memorable courses will surpass anything you'll find in a swish London eatery. Take a stroll in the torch-lit grounds afterwards.

ANYTHING ELSE?

The air of quiet dignity (mobile phones are frowned upon and a pianist accompanies dinner in the Grand Hall) manages never to tip over into stuffiness or snobbery, thanks to the fantastic attitude of its staff.

Rates: From £290 for a double or twin-bedded room per night, but there are special packages available now, including spa weekends and Christmas and New Year deals.

