



Location

Less than a three-hour drive from Cheshire, Hartwell House is a stunning stately home in rural Buckinghamshire, situated in a tranquil setting of more than 90 acres of English countryside. Those who wish to make a grand arrival can do so by arriving by helicopter, as the House has its own helipad. Although it's a rural idyll, it's easily accessible too – it's a 40-minute drive to Oxford and an hour-and-a-half drive from Central London, thus making it ideal if you're looking for a twin city and country break.

History

Hartwell House was originally built as a family home in 1699, but in 1809 was the palatial refuge to the exiled King Louis XVIII of France and his court. Today, it still feels like a regal residence thanks to the restoration work of many of its Jacobean and Georgian features such as the ornate Rococo ceilings, original oil paintings and the impressive hand-carved statue staircase. Every nook and corner of the House has a story to tell; a tour is a must-do for understanding more about the history of the property and something that its owners, the National Trust, are keen for visitors to experience.

Gardens

Being city dwellers, as soon as my husband and I arrive at the House, we're keen to get out in the great outdoors. We decide to take a stroll in the grounds, which was originally landscaped in a formal style but was re-imagined by a follower of the "Capability" Brown movement, Richard Woods. The serpentine lakes are teeming with wildlife, the eighteenth century features such as the pavilion, temples and towers hark back to its past and the spring garden planted with snowdrops, daffodils, erantis, primroses and anemones is a gardener's dream while the fruit



weekend away

Hartwell House

Buckinghamshire

Nothing quite beats a country manor weekend break, writes
Francesca Lee-Rogers

trees and herbs in the orchard provide an abundant kitchen garden for the House's resident chefs. It's no surprise that plenty of brides and grooms choose the House and its grounds for their wedding day.

Accommodation

Hartwell House has 48 individually-designed bedrooms to choose from, and my husband and I stay in a Luxury Royal Room in the Main House. From the moment we walk in, it has the wow-factor. Huge windows frame the picture-perfect parkland views, high ceilings give a sense of space that one would expect from a 17th century home while antiques dotted around the room fit well with the period features and style of the House. That afternoon, we kick back and relax with tea and homemade biscuits before making our way downstairs for dinner...

Restaurants

Hartwell House's rooms are there to be enjoyed so what better excuse than a pre-dinner drink in the drawing room? I opt for a glass of Champagne





cooked steak, with accompanying vegetables which have clearly been sourced from the estate's veg patch.



Known for using local produce, dishes are made with the freshest ingredients and with Daniel using county produce such as Aylesbury Duck, farm-to-table dining is certainly the basis of the menus.

Spa

No trip is complete without a visit to the spa. Set in an orangery, in the style of a regency building, Hartwell's has a generous-sized swimming pool, spa bath, steam room, saunas and treatment rooms. I decide to pamper myself and opt for a BIOEFFECT facial which begins with a thorough cleansing, clearing and exfoliation of the skin, followed by a massage using long, deep strokes to de-stress and create the perfect surface for the skin to absorb the vital anti-aging ingredient of BIOEFFECT EGF serum. It's applied to the face and décolleté with a warming face mask to gently open the pores, allowing the serum to penetrate into the skin cells. Another mask is then applied, followed by a second application of the serum which is given ample relaxing time to work its magic. My skin is left feeling thoroughly hydrated, refreshed and rejuvenated, and younger-looking.



Overall

If you're looking for a break to 'get away from it all', Hartwell House offers something for everyone – whether it's a country break, foodie trip or spa weekend, there's plenty to keep you occupied for a weekend away or longer. Also, don't miss many of the events happening this September; from a local producers luncheon (Saturday 7 September, 12-3pm) to a private tour and afternoon tea (Wednesday 25 September, 4-6.30pm). 

B&B is priced from £240 per room, per night, including use of the spa. To book, visit www.hartwell-house.com

while my husband has a pale ale, and we enjoy canapés prepared by the kitchen. They're quickly devoured and give us a taste for what's to come at Head Chef Daniel Richardson's 2 AA Rosette restaurant. Located in the principal Dining Room, designed in 1988 in the style of the eminent early nineteenth century architect, Sir John Soane, is the setting for our meal, which includes a perfectly-

