

## LandLove - Out & About - Retreat to Hartwell House



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**Step back in time at this beautiful hotel filled with elegant décor inspired by its colourful past, with views of bucolic pastures that promise a truly relaxing escape to the countryside**



Situated in the pretty Vale of Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire, the majestic Hartwell House is hidden just a stone's throw from the bustling town, nestled in a tranquil setting overlooking picturesque parkland. The imposing Grade I listed house boasts its own spa, walking trails and glorious Capability Brown landscape to explore among grand drawing rooms, an impressive library and elegant bar to relax in at any time of day. From the first step inside the breathtaking Great Hall cloaked in wood panelling, a huge stone fireplace and stunning moulded ceiling you'll be transported back to a bygone era of rich fabrics, lavish décor and afternoons spent enjoying high tea, with every room full of treasures to ponder.

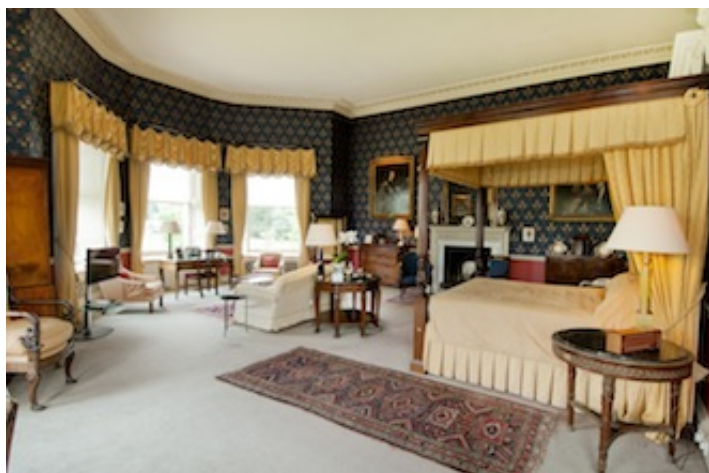
Unsurprisingly Hartwell has a remarkable history, stretching back almost 1,000 years to the reign of Edward the Confessor, though the present house was built for the Hampden family in the early 17th

Century. In 1809 the house was leased to the exiled King Louis XVIII of France and his court, who remained at Hartwell until



1814, and the house has since passed many hands. Between 1987 and 1992 Hartwell House underwent a remarkable restoration by Historic House Hotels to return the then derelict building to its former glory, and in September 2008 it was donated to the National Trust.

Today the magnificent house is run as a beautiful hotel full of its original charm and character, with 30 opulent bedrooms and suites to stay in inside the main house. Decorative ceilings, fine antique furniture, ornate paintings and stylish Jacobean and Georgian features adorn almost every room, with many even boasting four poster beds. Each room offers a glimpse into a time gone by, with many original pieces and historic artefacts on display. Huge comfy beds with fluffy pillows, walk in wardrobes, free WiFi and flat screen televisions are on offer as standard, with a full tea and coffee service on request, delicious home-made biscuits, fluffy robes left in the bathroom



and luxury toiletries to use all adding a thoughtful personal touch. If you can tear yourself away from the comfort of your room then be sure to make use of the wonderful spa facilities just a short walk from the main house. Relax and enjoy all the pleasures of the spa, from the cool water of the indoor pool to the bubbling waters of the whirlpool or why not bask in the sun from the comfort of the outdoor hot tub? The spa also offers a wide range of beauty treatments, a well-equipped gymnasium and a spa café serving scrumptious hot and cold food daily.

Back at the main house dining is a rather special affair with three dining rooms used on rotation. The

## Soane dining room is



based on a room in 11 Downing Street, designed by 19th-century architect Sir John Soane, while a second dining room occupies the site of Henry Keene's adjoining chapel, and the third, the Octagon dining room, has been given a tented ceiling, also influenced by Soane. The dining rooms each provide an elegant setting to tuck into the fine dining menu on offer, prepared by Head Chef Daniel Richardson and his team. The restaurant has been awarded three AA rosettes for its food, with dishes such as blue cheese mousse and fritter with celery and walnut, ham hock terrine with grilled sourdough bread, and fillet of red mullet with chorizo cous cous, tomato jelly and olive tapenade on offer to start, while main courses tempt



with the likes of Aylesbury duckling with roasted shallot, salt baked celeriac, confit potato, spinach and duckling jus, wild mushroom and salsify cannelloni with poached egg and herb broth, and pan-fried sea bream with cream leeks and broad beans, rosti potato and citrus sauce. Dessert is well worth saving room for too, with vanilla parfait encased in passion fruit sorbet with poached raspberries and mango, cherry and vanilla brulée with pear curd and cherry ice cream, and caramel panna cotta with crab apple jelly, cinnamon doughnuts and crab apple sorbet, just some of the sweet treats that may be on the menu.

After a restful night's sleep and scrumptious Full English, why



not take a stroll around the stunning 90-acre parkland landscaped by Capability Brown, who celebrates the 300th anniversary of his birth this year, taking time to find the lake spanned by a stone bridge, striking church ruins and many 18th-century statues. At this time of year look out for snowdrops, eranthis, primroses and anemones growing in the spring garden, whilst the orchard and former kitchen garden grows espaliered apricot, peach, pear and plum trees of the same variety as those planted in 1856, alongside fresh flowers for the house and fragrant herbs for the kitchen.

Whatever your reason for visiting, Hartwell House promises a luxurious stay with good food, stunning views and a very comfortable night's sleep that is sure to see you returning again and again.

Visit [www.hartwell-house.com](http://www.hartwell-house.com) to find out more and to book a stay. By Natalie Crofts

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