



Best for lovers of tradition Laura Ashley The Manor

The famous textiles and interiors brand has opened a Home Counties bolthole, giving guests the opportunity to immerse themselves in quintessentially English style

When Merthyr Tydfil-born fashion designer Laura Ashley bestowed her name upon the textile company she founded with husband Bernard in 1953 she graced fabric lovers across the world with a sense of romantic English style. As the company diversified into home furnishings, so quintessential pieces from the collection have become a staple of many British guesthouses. It took until 2012 for Laura Ashley – which last year reported pre-tax profits of £20.5m – to open a hotel to showcase its designs. Having spent £5.8m

buying the former Edwarebury hotel in Elstree, Hertfordshire, the business carefully restored the Tudor-style residence and furnished it with items from the Laura Ashley collection.

Just a hair's breadth from the Greater London boundary but set among 10 acres of woodland, Laura Ashley The Manor, with its black and white timber façade, feels a million miles away from urban sprawl. Yet its close proximity to the capital is reinforced with each of the 49 uniquely decorated rooms named after different areas of London.

Our room, the Kensington, was tucked away in the corner of the second floor. Complete with a stunning view of the gardens, the room was decked out in a duck egg and white colour scheme with matching furnishings – all of which can be ordered from the Laura Ashley catalogue (conveniently placed in the room) for those wishing to take their holiday home with them.

The gardens, originally



Fine dining: the restaurant, with Tudor-style beams

developed in the early 20th century by William Innes Stuckley, have been brought back to life. Some of the shrubs are as old as the house itself.

The Tudor theme tastefully continues in the Cavendish restaurant with its dark wood ceiling beams, cosy fireplace and candles on the windowsills. The intimate space offers fine dining with a choice of a traditional, seasonal English or Malaysian menu – a nod to MUI Group, which took a controlling stake in the company in 1998.

Breakfast is served in the Regency room, which faces out onto gardens with an outdoor patio for warmer weather. The

continental breakfast offers plenty of choice from delicious fresh fruits to warm pastries and yoghurts along with freshly squeezed juices. Alternatively, guests can choose from a range of hot foods including a full English, and eggs benedict, which are available to order.

As one of the world's best-loved English brands, Laura Ashley The Manor is the perfect addition to a traveller's portfolio.

Behiyeh Hassan



Sumptuous: bedrooms are spacious and elegant



FACT FILE

Getting there Laura Ashley

The Manor is located just 13 miles from central London. Elstree and Borehamwood railway station – served by trains from London St Pancras International – is situated a mile and a half away. Alternatively, hire a car with Hertz at www.iod.com/carrental.

Accommodation Prices start from £150 for a standard room up to £500 per night for the most luxurious premium suite, based on two sharing.

www.lauraashleyhotels.com