

Rural bliss

A restorative spa break at The Retreat, Elcot Park

Tucked into the rolling Berkshire countryside between Newbury and Hungerford, The Retreat at Elcot Park is a Georgian country house hotel and spa where the welcome is warm, the treatments are restorative and the food alone is worth the trip.

The Retreat at Elcot Park strikes that perfect balance between relaxed country house and polished spa hotel. My friend and I had come for a proper girls' spa day – the sort you keep promising each other but never quite book – and it delivered exactly what we wanted: treatments, good food,

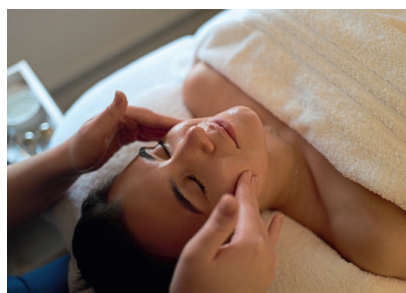
time to talk and absolutely no pressure to do anything else.

THE SPA EXPERIENCE

The Signet Spa has everything you'd hope for from a restorative countryside escape. There's an outdoor heated pool, indoor Jacuzzi, sauna and steam

room, plus a softly lit relaxation room designed for drifting in and out of post-treatment calm.

We also booked a slot in one of the outdoor hot tubs overlooking the fields. Sitting in warm water while rain drifted across the countryside turned out to be unexpectedly blissful.



THE TREATMENT

I opted for the Bramley Rose Quartz Radiance facial – an hour of deeply relaxing massage using the British brand's plant-based formulas and essential oils. Bramley's products draw on natural botanicals and an antioxidant-rich apple complex, designed to nourish and restore the skin.

The treatment was gentle, soothing and left my skin noticeably brighter – exactly what I was looking for from this spa facial.

FOODIE RATING

Lunch is served in the relaxed 1772 Brasserie. We shared onion and garlic soup and cauliflower popcorn with teriyaki before moving on to a soy and chilli main. The menu is comforting but well executed – the kind of food that is the perfect indulgence between spa treatments.

Later, our partners joined us for drinks in the lounge. A passionfruit martini for me and an espresso martini for my friend – both were perfectly made.

Dinner followed in Yü, the hotel's Pan-Asian restaurant, which proved to be a highlight of the stay. The standout dish was the black cod – delicate, rich and beautifully cooked – and the menu overall is inventive without being fussy.

From the relaxed brasserie to the standout dinner at Yü, food is a genuine strength here. If you're planning a spa break where dining matters as much as the treatments, Elcot Park delivers.

THE BEDROOMS

If you decide to turn a spa day into a weekend escape, the rooms are a major part of the appeal. There are 55 bedrooms and suites, spread across the original Georgian house and a newer wing.

Interiors, designed by Taylor and Turner, mix vintage wallpapers, bold fabrics and playful colour palettes with antiques and comfortable modern touches. Expect striped headboards, botanical prints and block-print fabrics alongside large bathrooms and generous beds.

Suites such as the Shelley and Sutton feature freestanding baths, while even the entry-level rooms are spacious and thoughtfully designed. Instead of minibars, there are honesty bars on the landings, stocked with wine, snacks and treats.

ACCESSIBILITY

The hotel and spa are designed to be welcoming and accessible, and the team are helpful in accommodating individual needs. It's always worth contacting the hotel directly to discuss any specific requirements before arrival.

HOW MUCH?

Rooms start from £252 per night, bed and breakfast, with spa access included when booking direct. Spa days start from £40. The Bramley Rose Quartz Radiance facial costs £115 for 60 minutes.

BOOK NOW

To book a stay or spa treatment at The Retreat at Elcot Park, visit retreatelcotpark.com or call 01635 800520.