

# The royal treatment

An elegant and stunning country house, with first-class treatments in a first-class spa

## HARTWELL HOUSE AND SPA

**Oxford Road  
Aylesbury  
Buckinghamshire  
HP17 8NR  
01296 746500  
www.hartwell-house.com  
££**

**Spa type:** hotel

### They say

'Swim in the warm clear water of the inviting pool, relax in the steam room, saunas and the bubbling waters of the whirlpool bath.'

### We say

'This historical country hotel offers the complete regal stay with equivalent style of service, complete with a relaxing spa set in beautiful surroundings.'

Classic English country house splendour, just off the motorway, Hartwell House is jaw-droppingly gorgeous. Set in a squillion acres

(approximately) of country estate, it is grand in a beautifully English way.

### Facilities

The spa is a short walk from the main house, located in a charming orangery-style building. Entering the pool area, we were spirited away to yet another era. The décor is Romanesque, with deep red walls offset by cool alabaster statues. We enjoyed an extremely relaxing 10 minutes in the whirlpool, followed by a gloriously hot steam room.

Go for a walk and you can take in the delights of lakes, weirs, 18th-century icehouses, pavilions, ornamental arches, gothic towers, statues and avenues with every angle a different view on a more gracious age.

### Treatments

I had an E'spa Life Saving Back treatment. First of all, the therapist cleansed my back with a gel, then rubbed it with a skin brush. This was followed by exfoliation with a tailor-made polish, cleansing with hydrating



milk and a toner spritz. Next, my back was massaged with the chosen oil; my favourite part, it was just heavenly. And there's more ... while a mud mask did its stuff, I was treated to a leg massage. I felt deeply cleansed and thoroughly relaxed. A great way to kickstart a hectic

weekend, or soothe yourself into an easy one.

The hotel spa offers a range of E'spa and Clarins treatments, as well as a full complement of manicures, pedicures and St Tropez tanning.

### Food

Delicious appetisers raised our expectations and we were not disappointed. Dinner was excellent; however, you should bear in mind that if you fancy a light detoxing supper, you may struggle to find an option on a menu that is dominated by traditional English country fare.

### Who would like it?

The atmosphere is essentially formal, which for some could be a little stifling and not conducive to a relaxing break.

### Special features

The house and grounds. It is stunningly beautiful — and the nearest you can get to being treated like royalty.

# Let off some steam

A Spy and her teenage daughter visit the only authentic hammam in a London hotel

## LE KALON

**The Bentley Hotel  
Harrington Gardens  
London SW7 4JX  
020 7244 5371  
www.thebentley-hotel.com  
££**

**Spa type:** hotel

### They say

'Le Kalon spa is our oasis of serenity and rejuvenation.'

### We say

'An authentic traditional spa experience that leaves you thoroughly clean and relaxed.'

This spa is within the Bentley Hotel, just a short walk from Gloucester Road tube station. It's an upmarket hotel with a white Victorian façade, and an imposing white and gold lobby. The spa has a reception area with a water feature to one side — the soothing sound of trickling water permeates the place.



### Facilities

Leaving the water feature, there is a long corridor with the gym, changing rooms and a treatment room off to one side. At the end is a relaxation area, a curtained-off treatment area and the hammam [Moroccan steam bath]. We'd been told it was a proper hammam, but that doesn't give you a feel for the size of the

place. I'm sure we've all sat in a cupboard and slathered ourselves in mud in what is little more than a glorified shower before. If so, this place will confound your expectations. It is a large room, all in white marble. There are benches to sit on around the edge, with taps that run cold water you pour into metal bowls. It was a fantastically soothing experience.

### Treatments

We both spent some time in the hammam then had an exfoliation and massage, followed by a facial. The steam in the hammam softens your skin in preparation for the exfoliation and massage. Once the therapist judged us suitably softened, she laid towels over the marble slab, and first daughter and then myself had the exfoliation and massage. The exfoliation uses Turkish black olive soap and is carried out with a traditional goat's hair hammam glove. I also had a CO-CO2 facial and daughter had a Pore Draw facial. You could also have manicures and pedicures.

### Who would like it?

There's no pool, so it won't suit you if you need to get your laps in for a spa experience. If you don't like or can't have heat treatments, this is not the spa for you. But connoisseurs of a good massage will want to keep the place to themselves.

### Special features

The hammam is the star.