

Gazette TRAVEL

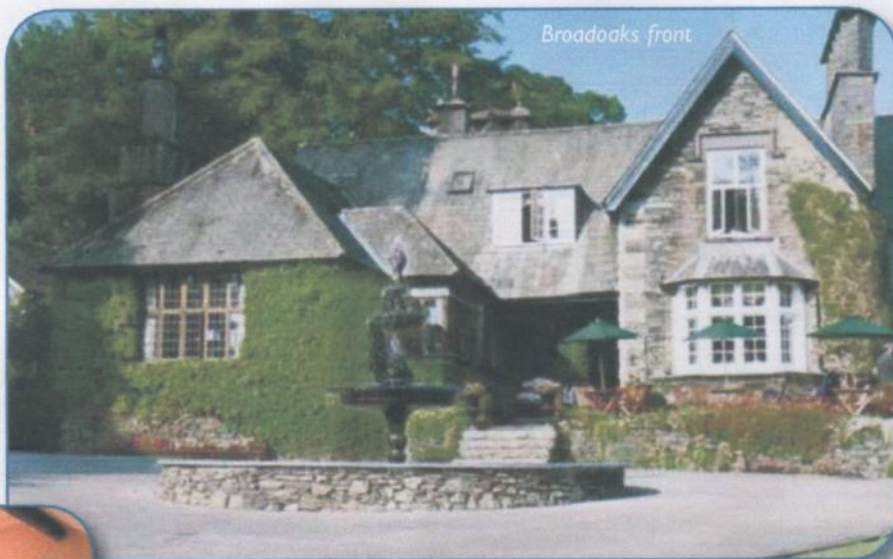
Broadoaks boutique country house Windermere, Cumbria

by Sue Cooke



While I like going on holiday, I also like coming back to my cosy home full of warm familiarities and snug relaxed informalities. Staying at a luxury country house hotel doesn't usually offer the latter, but my stay at Broadoaks in the Lake District, near Windermere, was just like coming home.

A long drive leads up to a circular fountain, which despite the wet day was still emitting cascades of water. The grey stone ivy covered walls give a pleasant welcoming feel and on stepping inside the latched oak door into a panelled room with thick carpeting I wondered if I'd made a mistake and stepped inside someone's house. The welcome is as warming as the log fires which burn in most of the rooms.



Broadoaks front



Broadoaks boudoir room

Broadoaks country house is set in seven acres of grounds and is owned by two business partners, Joanne Harbottle and Tracey Robinson. Originally built in 1836 as a home, Broadoaks was turned into a hotel in the 1990s. Joanne and Tracey bought the hotel in 1997 and have added the designer boutique look to the 16 rooms. One of the world's leading names in fabric and wallpaper design, Osborne and Little, adorn the bedrooms, many of which have hand carved four poster beds and jacuzzi, whirlpool or roll top baths in the luxurious open plan bathrooms.

This month (October) a luxurious colonial style lodge is the first of three to open in the beautiful grounds and there are views over the Rover Troutbeck. The king sized bed uses a memory foam mattress and a sofa bed can be adapted for children. Riverhaven Lodge offers exclusivity but with all the hotel room services.

My room was in the coach house across from the main house which is also where dog owners are accommodated. "It's nice for dogs to stay somewhere luxurious as well," said recently joined general manager Andrea Carter. Dogs are also allowed in the bar.

Which is where diners can have an early evening drink, or in the William Morris music

room added to the house in the early 1900s, where canapés are served before joining other guests in the Oak Restaurant. The music room is also used for traditional afternoon tea and has a selection of daily newspapers and games. A huge Bechstein grand piano sits in one corner and musical guests are invited to entertain.

Broadoaks has a 5 star accredited Michelin guide recommendation and the Oaks

Restaurant provides a dining experience which captures modern cuisine with classic Cumbrian cooking. Chef Gareth Owen is a local lad and says he likes to support local suppliers. From Keswick organic vegetables to Kendal cheeses, the food is exquisitely presented with a selection of flavours which stimulate the tastebuds. Savouring one succulent aroma after another delicious essence it was difficult not to enjoy three courses, including the Broadoaks sorbet intermediate.

Okay I have to admit it, the only similarity to my home are the cosy intimate interior spaces but with the added Broadoaks secluded ingle nook fireplaces, warm and inviting period furniture, views across Windermere and Langdale Pikes and exquisite cuisine and service, it made it harder for me to return home.

For more information on Broadoaks Boutique country house see www.broadoakscountryhouse.co.uk



Guest, Joanne Cooke in the music room

READER OFFER

Broadoaks is offering a winter warmer deal for readers. Book two nights dinner bed and breakfast and get the third night bed and breakfast free, paying only for dinner on the third night. For two people staying in a classic room the total cost is £444.

The offer is available from Sunday to Thursday from 7 November to 16 December 2011.