

HOT THE LIST 2006

classic Georgian colours. The 16 bedrooms, each unique in shape and size, have huge beds, Art Deco lamps, elegant armchairs upholstered in sage green and muted yellow, and dressers piled high with books. Delicious, traditional English food (Devon beef; sticky toffee pudding) is dished up in the ground-floor dining room, and there is also a lounge bar, several drawing rooms and a library where tea and scones are served at 4pm. Almost all the public rooms have open fireplaces and overlook expansive lawns (including one for croquet and another for archery) and the salmon-and-trout-filled river. Despite its grandeur, this is the sort of place where you can kick off your shoes and pad about in socks, in true house-party spirit.

WHEN TO GO With plenty of roaring fires, it's a winner all year round.

ROOM TO BOOK Room Eight, a huge double once slept in by Queen Victoria, with wonderful, listed, hand-painted wallpaper. *Hotel Endsleigh Milton Abbot, Tavistock, Devon (01822 870000; www.hotelendsleigh.com). Doubles from £200; suites from £360*

GREAT JOHN STREET HOTEL Manchester

UNDER £150 Steam rises from the rooftop hot tub, the red lettering of a TV studio is writ large above, and the city lights spill out beyond. With a little imagination, and a few cocktails from the bar, you could be in LA; but the studio is Granada, and the set below is *Coronation Street*: this is Manchester. While the city has developed a taste for neck-craning modernity – the 45-storey tower nearby is to house the new Hilton – its latest designer hotel occupies a red-brick school for barge children, on a quiet street two minutes' walk from Deansgate. There is a resident ghost (a former headmistress) and class photos on the walls, but little Alf, Frank and Les wouldn't recognise the place now. The ground-floor bar has just the sort of brushed-velvet decadence Dorian Gray would approve of, with Moroccan wall lights, large candelabra and a sensible 'when the last guest leaves' closing policy. The opulence continues into the 30 high-windowed bedrooms – graded from Baby Grand to

UNITED KINGDOM

HOTEL ENDSLEIGH Devon

This ornate country house on the banks of the River Tamar near Milton Abbot was built in 1812 for Georgina, Duchess of Bedford. Now owned by Olga Polizzi, it opened as a hotel last August. The building, which is set in 108 acres of landscaped gardens and forest on the edge of Dartmoor, has been immaculately restored to its Regency glory, replete with oak floors and panelled walls. Every room is a treasure trove of interesting antiques (big porcelain urns, marble busts, oriental armoires) and contemporary fabrics in



Hotel Endsleigh