



HOTEL ENDSLEIGH

Milton Abbot, Tavistock, Devon

BEST FOR... Those looking for a British hotel experience that's more boutique than Basil Fawlty.

WHY? Because, whereas most country hotels are gloomy and heavy on the chintz, this is a haven of understated details and high-end Italian style. And if anyone knows how to run a top-notch establishment, it's owner Alex Polizzi – her mother is Olga Polizzi, owner of Cornwall's cool Hotel Tresanton, and her grandfather was Lord Forte, so hotels are in the blood.

WHERE? Just five minutes away from the market town of Tavistock on the edge of unspoilt Dartmoor. The fact that, when it was built in 1812, the Duchess of Bedford and her family owned a third of Devon and chose this as the most beautiful spot to set up home gives you an idea of how amazing it is.

STAYING IN The Grade-1 listed building is perfect for indulging bodice ripping fantasies, with its rambling wings and hidden corners. The 16 rooms have been carefully restored in Regency style, but there's not an inch of eye-stinging chintz to be seen. Swags and tails have been ditched in favour of stylish Italian touches. Just beware, when wandering through the house, that you don't trip over Georgina, Alex's mini pot-bellied pig, who trots at high speed around the house.

STYLE STEAL Request room No 5, where the hand-painted bird wallpaper is a twitcher's paradise. You're bound to be inspired when you return home.

GOING OUT Head to Tavistock's historic Pannier Market and its famous cheese shop. Also Buckland Abbey, Dartmoor and National Trust properties galore are all close by. However, if you've come for peace and quiet, we'd recommend staying put. Grab some wellies from the hall and explore the grounds or get a fishing lesson on the Taymer river. If outdoors isn't your thing, pick a book from the well-stocked library and curl up with a glass of bubbly.

MORE INFO Double rooms from £210 per night. Call 01822 870000 or visit www.hotelendsleigh.co.uk.

