

Ash-Down for a Dream

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Surrounded by acres of countryside and woodlands, Ashdown Park Hotel and its charming surroundings grabbed me in from the word go.

It's no wonder that the Hundred Acre Wood inspired the lovable stories of Winnie the Pooh: even our arrival had that fantasy feel to it. As we entered the grounds after a long journey we were welcomed by a small 'bambi-like' deer- Its this fairytale quality that makes the hotel so unique.

With a building draped in such a colourful history, Ashdown offers so much more than a weekend break, an afternoon tea or a pampered getaway. A listed 19th century mansion, the building has played host to a variety personalities: whether that be a recovery home for First World War soldiers, an international university, or a place of worship for Nuns. All around the building are grand paintings of the ancestors that once lived there. It's as though there are stories in the walls, embedded in those grand gilded canvases.

Ashdown is the perfect setting for a fairytale wedding, especially for those who like that sense of history and tradition. In the renovated Convent is a Chapel, and still remaining a grand Church organ. The windows of stained glass are encrypted with colourful angelic creatures and cherubs.

The main lobby and lounge has a royal but homely feel about it. My afternoon tea was made all the more special when coalesced with the warmth of a traditional log fireplace, music from a self-playing grand piano, and the stunning views of the gardens and lakes surrounding.

With all these luxuries, it's easy to presume that Ashdown is only open to the select few, so I was delighted to discover that the lounge and surrounding gardens are open to anyone for lunch, tea, coffee or a quiet stroll. This is what makes Ashdown so different, is it is enriched with romance and beauty, but available to anyone and everyone.

But for those who do fancy a weekend getaway, Ashdown is the perfect place if you, (like I) believe that the little things make a big impression. Every room in the hotel is distinct and unique; individually named after natural elements and wildlife that fills the surrounding gardens. A variety of treatments are also available at the spa centre, if you fancy anything from a soothing facial, to a relaxing hot stone massage.

Just a few minutes from the hotel are a wealth of attractions and local places of interest for the whole family to enjoy from Groombridge Place, Bateman's and Bluebell Railway to Ashdown Forest Llama Park, Drusillas Zoo and the Hundred Acre Wood. So whether you're planning a weekend break, a romantic getaway or that perfect fairytale wedding, Ashdown Park Hotel really does cater for all occasions and tastes and goes beyond any expectations.