

24-hour room service

# Old meets new in this Cornish retreat

**The Cornwall Hotel, Spa and Estate**  
St Austell, Cornwall

Let's start with the name. It's a lot to live up to, that name. "The Cornwall" it says in big letters on the logo, with "Hotel, Spa & Estate" rendered in smaller type just below. Note the use of the definite article, and the implied annexation of an entire county's accommodation options. A Cornwall would probably be underplaying things somewhat, but *The Cornwall*? That's a big ask.

The Cornwall of Cornwall officially opened on 8 March, when The Countess of Wessex (someone who presumably knows a thing or two about definite articles) did the ribbon-cutting honours. A plaque commemorates the occasion in the slim foyer, which also marks the physical boundary between The Cornwall's past life as a grand manor house and the contemporary architecture of much of its current incarnation.

You see, the "hotel" part of The Cornwall is divided in two. At the front, lordling it over the "estate" part, is an impressive Victorian building, crisp white, rising from the Parkland Terrace, where visitors devour cream teas. Nine bedrooms and suites lie in the upper storey, making good use of period features such as sash windows and vintage fireplaces, while spoiling guests with neat contemporary touches including modern wrought-iron four-poster beds and lime-green bathrooms.

Behind the main structure, a long corridor provides a slightly awkward link between the new-build foyer (where a curving staircase dominates) and a set of pod-like two-storey units set up on the hillside behind. Contained within these are a total of 56 "Woodland Rooms", with balcony views of the

grounds. The juxtaposition is careful: from the front the reassuring gravitas of the main building draws the eye, while the modern annexe does its best to blend into the scenery, with curving roofs and plenty of wood and glass in evidence.

Then there's the Clearing Spa, artfully crafted from a 19th-century stable block beyond the main building. The centrepiece here is a stunning infinity pool with double doors opening on to a walled garden. There's also a gym and, above, five treatment rooms where candles flicker, music tinkles and essential oils are massaged purposefully into surprised limbs.

**Location**

The hotel is south of St Austell, just off the B3273, a picturesque route which runs past caravan parks and campsites to the fishing village of Mevagissey. In comparison to the accommodation provided by its neighbours, The Cornwall offers high-end glitter – an attempt to combat the comparatively staid (as opposed to surfy) ambience of south Cornwall and, in the words of general manager James Harding, "bring the north coast market here".

Cornwall's grandest outdoor attractions should help pull in the punters he's after: the big-hitting Eden Project and Lost Gardens of Heligan are within easy reach. However, the outdoor attraction of The Cornwall itself is still a work in progress. If you squint a bit you'll get a sense of Harding's goal: 43 acres of woodland walks, areas for children to play and picnic grounds. Just at the moment, though, the estate is in a state – the harsh winter put paid to much of the new planting.

However, once Mother Nature has done her work the complex of 22 two- and three-bedroom holiday homes that are being offered for rental or sale



To infinity and beyond: the Clearing Spa's pool, the Parkland Terrace, the bar; a bedroom in the main building (below)



**The Cornwall Hotel, Spa & Estate**  
Pentewan Road,  
Tregorrick,  
St Austell,  
Cornwall PL26 7AA  
(01726 874050;  
thecornwall.com).  
**Rooms**  
★★★★★  
**Value**  
★★★★★  
**Service**  
★★★★★  
Doubles from £129 including breakfast

(from £318,500 each) alongside the hotel should get the views their neat slate-and-shingle exteriors deserve.

**Comfort**

My Woodland Room scored highly for comfort: Egyptian cotton sheets covered the pleasantly firm bed, Aromatherapy Associates unguents loitered in the bathroom and sliding glass doors opened on to a

private balcony. But aside from its vivid wallpaper, the furnishings were too plain to be memorable: more office-space chic than boutique.

If it's quirky you're after, book yourself one of those rooms in the main building. Here, the public spaces are full of neutral tones and tasteful experiments in texture: walls are clad in leather or woven fabric,

cross-cut logs of wood are stacked into pillars, and exposed stone roughs it alongside high-gloss finishes. The lampshades are large, the bar back-lit, the armchairs velvety – but there's still enough period charm to mean that a meal in the fine-dining Arboretum Restaurant is a comforting treat. The £50-a-head menu is described in refreshingly non-sensense terms: "scallops,

celeriac, truffle" was my starter, followed by "duck breast, fondant potatoes, Swiss chard, sauce soubise"; all tasted exquisite.

For relaxed family dining there's the Acorns brasserie, a smartly functional room set around a small chef's kitchen. In culinary terms, it's less successful than the Arboretum: the DIY pizzas for children (£5) are a great idea, but my grilled leg of lamb steak (£14.50) was seriously overcooked.

Nevertheless, The Cornwall certainly has the potential to be the definite article one day. A fellow guest said while checking out that "we booked because of the spa, but the weather was so nice we didn't bother with it in the end". A good point, but it's also worth remembering that there's nothing like a nice warm infinity pool when it's chucking it down outside. This is – definitely – Cornwall, after all.

**BEN ROSS**

**WIN A BREAK**  
IN A MULTI-ACTIVITY HOLIDAY RESORT IN FRANCE OR SPAIN\*



For more details and to enter visit:  
[WWW.INDEPENDENT.CO.UK/PVHOLIDAYS](http://WWW.INDEPENDENT.CO.UK/PVHOLIDAYS)

\*Terms and conditions apply

Pierre & Vacances

THE INDEPENDENT

**Cornwall's**  
most exclusive  
holiday home?



**Belvedere House** Carlyon Bay

Exquisite Coastal Holiday Accommodation

Available from 28th May

Part of the Cornish Cottage Holidays Portfolio.

01226 573808

[www.exclusive-cornwall.co.uk](http://www.exclusive-cornwall.co.uk)