



Go West

Mark Keble enjoys a trip back in time at Hadley Wood's West Lodge Park

The Hotel

West Lodge Park oozes history. A pleasant drive through the picturesque grounds leads you up to the imposing white building that was first bought by Edward Beale in 1945. The Beale family have, since then, developed it into the local getaway haunt it is today. Andrew Beale is the third generation of the family to work here. Historical documents are dotted around the hotel that help to press home the feeling of stepping into another age.

The Room

There are 59 bedrooms at West Lodge Park, all individually decorated. Ours was comfort personified, from the proper lined curtains to the furniture that encouraged a lazy read (although the lure of Sky Sports banished that). The bathroom had all the mod cons, including a toy duck for the bath that brought out the child in us. There were no problems with the heating or air con, lucky really considering the dreadful weather that was raining down outside. The view in the morning of the Beale Arboretum was breathtaking.

Restaurant

Living North has interviewed West Lodge Park's executive chef, Wayne Turner, before and we found what he had to say particularly appealing. Time, therefore, to test the confidence in his cooking out. First things first, there was the piano player. Matthew, our wonderful maitre d',

insisted we should request a song and maybe even sing. Hmm, maybe not yet. Named after Britain's first professional painter, the Mary Beale Restaurant features some of her stunning artwork. To the food and the 'Dinner - Naturally' menu. The starters - lightly spiced parsnip soup and grilled sardines - were good, but the mains were even better. The lamb came as a shank AND an individual shepherd's pie, two for the price of one that was immensely satisfying. The fillet of bream with new potatoes, cherry tomato, rocket and saffron butter sauce was incredibly fresh and tasted all the

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better for it. After a bottle of wine, it was back to that piano player...

Guests

Similar to The Grove on the next page, well-to-do ladies and their husbands, although dinner seemed popular with non-residents of West Lodge Park.

The Extras

If you time your visit right, you may just catch one of West Lodge Park's concerts, which features high quality music in these wonderful surroundings. Make sure you have time to walk around the Beale Arboretum - even though the weather wasn't great, it was still an uplifting experience.

Upside

The grounds, clearly, but also the food and service in the restaurant was first class. All the staff we encountered were very good humoured and excellent at their job.

Downside

Don't spend just one evening there - it is nowhere near enough!

The Details

Prices per night from £95 for a single bed & breakfast, up to £290 for rose four poster bedroom, dinner, bed & breakfast.

West Lodge Park, 4 Ferry Hill,
Hadley Wood, EN4 0PZ;
020 8216 3900