



CLIVEDEN HOUSE

HOTEL IN BERKSHIRE

5-Star Country Hotel & Spa

WEATHER
 Broken clouds
 18 °C
 Humidity: 82%

Cliveden , the stately-home hotel is once again a top destination for the discerning traveller.

Especially since the arrival there at the end of 2013 of an excellent eponymous restaurant by André Garrett (please [click here](#) for full review). Plus the hotel has become super-appealing with its just opened, newly refurbished East Wing – the first stage of restoration of the principal bedrooms. Even the staff seem different – gone is their stiffness, replaced by making the visitor feel like a treasured house guest.

Just outside London in Berkshire, Cliveden was built in 1666 by the second Duke of Buckingham and – following an 1849 fire – rebuilt by architect Charles Barry (of Palace of Westminster fame) for its then owner, the Duke of Sutherland. It's a spectacular Italianate mansion.

Guests from Charlie Chaplin to Winston Churchill and every British monarch since George I have stayed there. Queen Victoria, a frequent visitor, was *not* amused at the house being bought by the scion of an American dynasty in 1893: but yes, it became the residence of America's then richest citizen, William Waldorf Astor. And next a wedding gift in 1906 for his son, Waldorf and daughter-in-law, Nancy – and then a hub of European political and literary life. Famously it was also where John Profumo – then secretary of state for war – met former showgirl Christine Keeler, culminating in the explosive Profumo Affair.

Arriving at Cliveden, guests pass the exuberant 19th century shell fountain, the Fountain of Love. Next in view is the stateliest of stately piles and, beside it, a 19th century clock tower (a functioning water tower) 98ft high.

The Great Hall is impressive with its 16th century stone chimneypiece, oak panelling and Belgian wall tapestries. And what of designer Mario Nicolaou's newly refurbished rooms? Inspiration was drawn from Cliveden's rich and colourful architecture, historical décor and past residents – and the suites boast an eclectic mix of paintings, details and artefacts. The design is sumptuous, with beautiful fabrics, delicate trimmings and silk walls: the works.

In 'Mountbatten' – once a billiards room – there's original oak panelling and leafy, grass and moss green colours. In the Chinese room there's Nancy Astor's (must-copy) fireplace, hand-painted silk wallpaper, every shade of sun, and a beautifully dressed four-poster. Additionally there's the airplane-hangar-sized Lady Astor suite with its original antiques and works of art. It all gets an A star.

On the riverine edge is [Spring Cottage](#), where Christine Keeler was staying when she met [John Profumo](#). Spring Cottage, built in 1853 and a favourite haunt of Queen Victoria, has been transformed by designer Martin Hulbert into an exclusive retreat for up to six guests. It has vaulted ceilings, stained-glass windows and a look that is traditional with a modern twist and a palette of sea blue, mustards, sage and beige. As for Hulbert's elegant, restful André Garrett restaurant, [see my review](#) of its food and décor.

The Pavilion Spa has an indoor and outdoor pool, the latter not helped aesthetically by the addition of two adjacent wooden hot tubs. The al fresco pool is a Grade I listed corker – Nancy Astor's divine Twenties one where Profumo allegedly first set eyes on Keeler. But the spa is in bad need of a major facelift – which is planned.

Cliveden's setting in 376 acres of National Trust gardens – Grade I-listed formal gardens and parkland with a tip-top Parterre that puts the gardens into the National Trust's Top 10 – offers oodles of places to explore, including country walks along the Thames which winds around a steep, wooded bluff. Energetic folk can play tennis, work out, play golf or archery, or go horse riding or shooting.

Those seeking Mr Toad can pop down to the Cliveden Boathouse for a champagne cruise. Think Taittinger and rosemary almonds on a former 1911 naval service boat which follows a sylvan hinterland dotted with well-mannered rows of poplar trees, weeping willows and ginormous houses. The boat wends its way to Cookham Island, past the John Lewis holiday homes, cormorants splaying their wings and 1800s cottages.

Cliveden has been handsomely spruced up. The nosh is clearly Michelin-bound. And the guests are getting smarter and smarter. Invitations were once coveted by the poshest of people – Queen Victoria visited eight times – and the same is starting to be the case again. Except you don't have to wait for an invitation. You just have to cough up a few hundred quid.



CLIVEDEN HOUSE
 Taplow, Berkshire, SL6 OJF, United Kingdom
 +44 (0)1628 668561
[Visit hotel's website](#)

HOW TO GET THERE
 Located near Taplow and Bray villages close to the M4 and a 25 minute drive from Heathrow Airport. There is plenty of free parking in the grounds. The closest mainline station is Taplow (trains from London Paddington & Reading).

**** INSIDER TIP ****
 Book a suite overlooking the Parterre. (Whilst the Chinese room is exquisite, it overlooks the car park which is noisy and not pretty.) Spring Cottage is the ideal separate residence for families.

OUR MAN ON THE GROUND:
Caroline Phillips
 London, United Kingdom

Are you local?: Visitor from this country

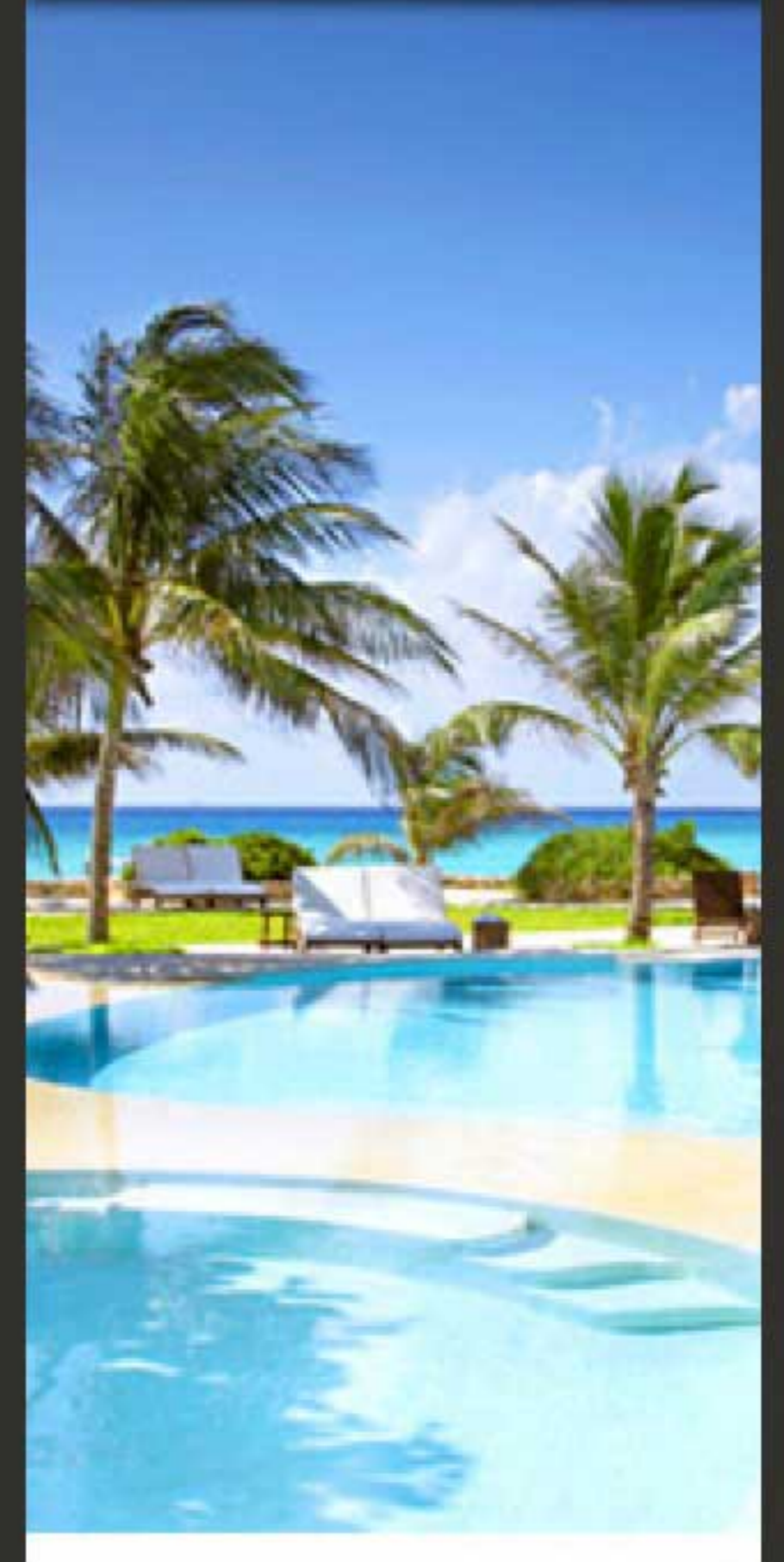
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Our globetrotting writer @helenochyra was impressed with her luxury @Silversea cruise & all the benefits it offers: [bit.ly/1wde7kb](#) about an hour ago

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Tablet.
Travel like you mean it.

Caroline Phillips is an award-winning freelance journalist based in London

Cliveden is a member of Relais & Châteaux



	Reviewer's Rating	★★★★★
	Related Activity	Relaxation
	Services	Free High Speed Internet, Free Parking, Restaurant, Room Service, Fitness Center, Swimming Pool, Health Spa, Conference Rooms, Wedding / Personal Event
	Dress Code	Smart Casual
	Cost	Expensive
	Ambience	Quiet, Elegant, Romantic
	Number of Rooms	23 bedrooms, 15 suites and one separate residence – Spring Cottage

Room and Suite Categories

Club Rooms (24.5 m²); Classic Rooms (32-35 m²); Deluxe Double Rooms (40-45 m²); Junior Suites (60 m²); Inchiquin 2 Bedroom Deluxe Suite (65 m²); Deluxe Suites (60-65 m²); Parterre Deluxe Suites (75 m²); Spring Cottage (250 m²).