

Countryside seclusion

by **MICHELLE NORRIS**

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HIDDEN in 2,000 acres of naturally beautiful National Trust Countryside, Soar Mill Cove Hotel is the perfect destination for anyone who's really looking to get away from it all.

Overlooking breathtaking views across the cove and Devonshire countryside, this four-star hotel offers pure escapism, allowing guests to disconnect from the stresses and strains of the outside world and simply relax.

Even driving along the narrow country roads of Devon, you'll feel as though you've slipped into a completely different world, filled with spectacular views and fresh country air.

I had a fantastic time when I stayed at the family-owned hotel recently, which boasts 22 newly refurbished bedrooms and suites, a two AA Rosette Restaurant, two pools and a spa.

After being greeted by incredibly friendly staff on reception, I was shown to my spacious sea view room, which came complete with a luxurious bathroom, flat screen TV and semi-private patio area - perfect for soaking up the afternoon sun and enjoying the gorgeous views across the cove. I was even able to enjoy a complimentary Cream tea, which is available to every guest on arrival - definitely not to be missed!

Staying as traditional as possible, there weren't any temperamental swipe cards to access the room but a much more basic lock and key - which means there was no embarrassment of accidentally locking myself out of the room when I took a quick trip to the pool!

And in case the weather isn't on your side, the hotel offers a beautifully secluded outdoor pool but also an indoor pool facility, as well as a sauna plus a resident beautician at the holistic Ocean Spa



■ Stunning views, inside and out.



with a range of treatments at reasonable prices. But be warned - there is no phone reception in this area, so be prepared to really detach yourself from the outside world!

Although the hotel offers a variety of activities for adults and children, including play areas and organised country walks, if you're looking to explore the area, I'd definitely recommend taking a trip to Salcombe. Just a 20-minute drive away from the hotel, Salcombe offers an amazing variety of quirky boutiques and eateries as well as the chance to take Ferry rides or even hire a boat!

And, after a long day of exploring, the real treat comes when the hotel's award winning restaurant 'Serendipity' opens its doors. Every guest is given the option of eating at Serendipity with a menu delivered to each room prior to the evening's dining. But make sure you've decided what you'd like by 7pm as

the chef likes to have the food orders in before guests come to dine in the evening. And with a daily changing menu, which boasts local ingredients and flavours, you're sure to be offered a mouth-watering selection.

During my stay, I opted for a deliciously creamy carrot soup to start, with a hint of green cardamom which really whet my appetite. For mains I decided on the beautifully presented garden vegetable and herb risotto with mature parmesan. And although I was convinced that I couldn't manage another bite, I couldn't resist trying the profiteroles, which came with a trio of homemade ice creams, including Baileys, honey and white chocolate. Simply delicious!

Truly worn out from all the pampering and feasting, I couldn't wait to wrap myself up in the Egyptian Cotton sheets and sink into my spacious soft Hypnos mattress, which are designed for the most peaceful night's sleep!

The following morning I enjoyed a tasty full English breakfast and left the hotel feeling relaxed, rejuvenated and ready to face the world again.

For more information, and rates at Soar Mill Cove, visit www.soarmillcove.co.uk.

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