



# BEAVERBROOK

## A GLORIOUS ESTATE ON THE EDGE OF SURREY

Despite it being less than an hour outside from central London by train or car, the Beaverbrook estate feels like it's in the middle of the countryside.

Beaverbrook County House Hotel (formerly known as Cherkley Court, built in 1866) is at the extreme south-east of Leatherhead, near the pretty village of Mickleham. It's a late Victorian neo-classical wedding-cake mansion house and estate of +400 acres filled with Ash trees, magnolia trees, wild primroses, and local wildlife.

It was once home to Canadian-born media baron Lord Beaverbrook, whose empire saw him become a powerful member of the British establishment, serving in both War Cabinets. Back in the day his estate famously welcomed the likes of Winston Churchill, Rudyard Kipling and Ian Fleming. In fact, the bathroom scene in movie 'The Crown' is a re-enactment of what used to take place at Cherkley Court, with Churchill

bathing in his roll-top bath, dictating to his secretary who'd be sitting just outside the open door. What a fantastic bit of history to hang your hat on.

Now Beaverbrook is owned, in part, by Joel Cadbury (of chocolate fame) who's quietly giving the estate a £90-million facelift, turning it into a high-class design hotel. The conversion of the manor house and grounds will translate into two boutique hotels, two restaurants, a spa, herb kitchen garden and a cooking school.

The first phase, completed in recent months, has delivered 'The Garden House', a 11-roomed flint-stone boutique hotel, characterised by a whimsical eclectic mix of both old and new. It will soon be joined by the luxe 18-room hotel named 'The House', as well as a pampering beauty retreat 'The Coach House Spa' (with yoga lawns and two 20 metre swimming pools – one indoor, the other outdoor), and self-catering accommodations in 'The Glasshouse Cottages'.

'The Garden House' is hidden behind a high-walled working organic garden that feeds the English-Italian restaurant with an array of fruit, veg and herbs. The spacious interiors of 'The Garden House', expertly crafted by Nicola Harding, has a



distinctly rustic-chic feel, complete with battered Ladybird books, reassigned furniture and soothing Farrow & Ball shades. The vibe is very much that of a gently eccentric private house, cosy, with a homely feel. The snug, where you could enjoy coffee in the afternoon or a drink after dinner in front of the open fire - is an exercise in how to prettily cram in as many printed soft furnishings as possible - high back chairs, a couple of mismatched sofas, mustard curtains, mustard and pale-blue patterned wall paper, first edition books, oil paintings, mantel clocks, industrial looking occasional tables, old lamps, Havana cigars, well used board games in tatty boxes.

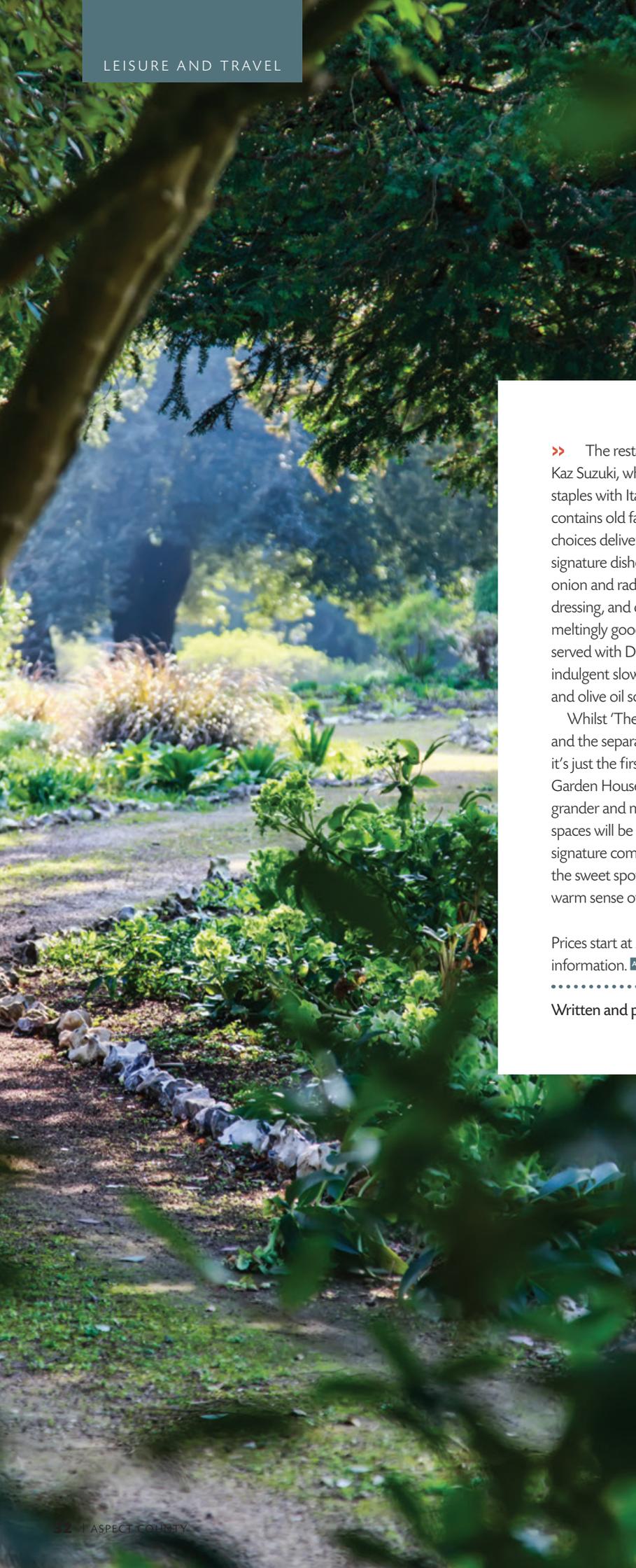
The elegant bedrooms - each named after one of the herbs grown on the estate, are plush, filled with garden flowers, throw rugs on plain floors and scuffed antique furniture. My king-size room, Hyssop, is an artful merge of soft greens and pale blues, heavy floral curtains, velvet cushions and botanical prints. Beside one of the windows, which has long views of the herb garden, two elegant pin-striped armchairs flank a small table, which is decked with a bottle of complimentary Sipsmith gin and a bowl of fruit.

In the bathroom, alongside the metal roll-topped bath (with its tray of Bamford bath products), and haphazard arrangement of emerald-green tiles, is another small table, strewn with well-thumbed Penguin books to dip into, mid-soak. There's an old-fashioned telephone to call down to reception, but also a flat-screen with Apple TV. It's just the right mix of cosy and 21st century.

The dining room is sunny, filled with plants, soft green-hued walls, lots of archways, glazed green plates in neat configurations, and a conservatory overlooking the herb garden to the side. Doors open out onto a small terrace and the cottage garden beyond, where veggies and herbs grow in square beds. The cookery school, with windows looking across the kitchen which sits a few feet below, takes bookings of up to ten and tutors in everything from veggie cuisine to cordon bleu.

Service is superb and personal. Ask for a flat white coffee and you're served the best coffee in England, with organic creamy milk. Ask for a wine pairing suggestion and you get the whole story why you should try a red burgundy with your fish dish. They've not missed a trick. >>





>> The restaurant is run by renowned Japanese chef Kaz Suzuki, who has created a menu that combines British staples with Italian inspiration, along with a wine list that contains old favourites and some interesting food pairing choices delivered by a knowledgeable sommelier. Two of his signature dishes are, for starters, pan fried crispy duck, spring onion and radishes, served with sesame and pomegranate dressing, and delivers a pleasing zing. My main course is the meltingly good Gnoccholini of goats' cheese and pumpkin served with Date puree, pistachio and sage. Dessert was an indulgent slow baked cheese cake with Surrey Hills honey and olive oil sorbet.

Whilst 'The Garden House', with its eleven bedrooms and the separate dog-friendly cottage is quite wonderful - it's just the first phase for this country estate. You see 'The Garden House' is in fact just the guest house to the far grander and more opulent 'The House', whose internal spaces will be exquisitely crafted by Suzie Atkinson with her signature combination of vintage and contemporary, hitting the sweet spot between comfort and cool, and bringing a warm sense of home to public spaces.

Prices start at £280. See [www.beaverbrook.co.uk](http://www.beaverbrook.co.uk) for further information. AC

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Written and photographed by Cindy-Lou Dale

