

Hotel Review: The Royal Crescent Hotel & Spa, Bath in Somerset

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By [LLM Reporters](#) on 1st March 2019

Words by Irene Caswell

The Royal Crescent Hotel & Spa in the historic city of Bath is the perfect excuse to take a winter short break. The buildings in Bath have a luminescence that positively glows on a dark winter's day. Anne Elliott, heroine of Jane Austen's *Persuasion* did not care for the 'white glare' but, happily, she was in the minority. The distinctive stone has stood the test of time and the city today is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

In an uncertain world, it is comforting to re-discover the centuries-old Roman Baths, Assembly Rooms and majestic Royal Crescent. The Crescent, a Landmark terrace completed in 1775 (a few years prior to the terrors of the French Revolution), comprises 30 houses. Designed by John Wood the Younger, the Grade I Listed building is among the greatest examples of Georgian architecture in the UK.



Bath boasts stunning Georgian architecture. Image credit – Beata Cosgrove Photography

Right in the centre of this magnificent row of Palladian beauties is Nos. 15 and 16, otherwise known as The Royal Crescent Hotel & Spa. External signage is discreet due to Landmark compliance and you feel as though you are entering an elegant private residence.

Room with a view

The luxury hotel features 45 guest rooms, including eight Deluxe Suites and three Master Suites, all named after memorable 18th century personages. I stayed in the Sir Percy Blakeney (author Baroness Orczy's *The Scarlet Pimpernel*) Master Suite which offers a dramatic dual aspect. To the front are uninterrupted views of the River Avon and, of course, the splendid Crescent extending on either side. The views alone allow a tiny glimpse into the world of Jane Austen. Bath has changed little since the English novelist's time.



The Sir Percy Blakeney Master Suite offers luxurious comfort

To the rear is an acre of glorious gardens featuring a walled garden and the Taittinger Spa Garden. The Dower House Restaurant and The Montague Bar & Champagne Lounge, where the menus are French influenced and the service is surely worthy of a Michelin star, are located here. The elegant Spa & Bath House, where I enjoyed a relaxing Hot Stone Massage, is also accessed through the garden. Thoughtfully, there is a stash of hotel umbrellas placed at all exits for guests' use in inclement weather.

Your very own country house

"Nowhere else in the world are you able to stay in a Landmark building", Johnathan Stapleton, General Manager tells me. "There is no need to own a country house in Bath, you can simply stay with us and enjoy all the comforts".



The hotel has delightful gardens for guests to enjoy

On arrival the concierge whisks away your car for safekeeping and transfers your luggage to your suite. Bowls of informally arranged fresh flowers adorn the furniture and the latest glossy magazines are laid out on coffee tables. There is always someone discreetly on hand to anticipate guests' every need. Beautiful artworks from the RCH's curated collection are part of the hotel decoration, including a stunning copper sculpture by South African artist Stephen Myburgh, suspended from a tree in the garden.

After exploring the city centre, on a cold and windy day, I spent a cosy hour or so relaxing on the sofa in my own private living room with an old black and white movie playing in the background, a pot of Earl Grey tea and freshly-baked biscuits, while the rain lashed against the windowpanes. It felt luxurious in every sense of the word.



The Drawing Room is the perfect spot for afternoon tea

The suite's furniture and paintings compliment the history and spectacular architecture of the house and the living room ceiling is opulently decorated in swirls of pale pink and cream 'icing' plaster. Every comfort is provided including a sumptuous three-poster bed, lavish soft furnishings and a contemporary bathroom stocked with Floris' toiletries, fluffy white towels, bathrobe and slippers. The latest technology featured faultless Wi-Fi connection, two large plasma televisions and an excellent sound system for music on the nightstand.

Stylish Dining

While I did not dine at the hotel, more on my evening later, there is always time for lunch. I chose a healthy option of Superfood Salad with Beetroot Quinoa, Tenderstem Broccoli, Nasturtium and Orange which was sublime. The accompanying soda bread, with a crusty exterior and soft, sweet dough inside, was served with creamy yellow Jersey butter. For dessert I ordered Amaretto Affogato. This was both delicious and a delightful piece of theatre with two tiny scoops of vanilla ice cream served in a tall glass, sprinkled with crushed amaretto, over which hot espresso is poured at the table.



The Dower House Restaurant serves a French inspired menu

A night on the tiles

Around & About Bath offers guests 'extraordinary experiences... for the curious and inquisitive'. Tours in the historic city and surrounding area aim to introduce visitors to the local places and experiences that make Bath so special. Groups are intentionally small to create the feel of a group of friends on a 'mystery tour' rather than part of a large group on the 'typical tourist treadmill'.

I joined the Historic Pubs, Mining & Dining tour and met Jules Mittra, Founder, and our guide for the evening, in the hotel reception. Jules has recently partnered with The Royal Crescent Hotel & Spa to offer a bespoke service. We drive out into the magnificent countryside.

First stop is The Quarrymans Arms in Box Hill for a flight of local Butcombe Brewery beers. This is the location of the 19th century Bath Stone quarries and Jules relates the story of engineering giant, Isambard Kingdom Brunel, and the historic Box Tunnel. He is a former history teacher and passionate about his subject. Tales of WWII secret underground bunkers are undertaken with relish.



Around & About Bath offer bespoke small group tours of Bath and the local area

By now we are feeling hungry and move on to dine at The Methuen Arms in Corsham where the award-winning menu is created by Head Chef Leigh Evans, previously of The Royal Crescent Hotel & Spa. The pub menu includes; Salt + Pepper Squid with garlic mayonnaise and lime; Butcombe Beer Battered Haddock; Methuen Beef Burger; and Mushroom Arancini.

It is a Friday night and the pub is busy but the food and service are excellent. Dining with people you have only just met is a little like being on a blind date, and everyone shares travel and food experiences.

A short stroll brings us to our final stop for a nightcap at the 17th century Flemish Weaver. The alehouse, a filming location for TV series, Poldark, gets its name from the Flemish silk weavers who migrated to England from Flanders. Quirky does not even begin to describe the interior, reminiscent of Dickens's 'The Old Curiosity Shop'. Everywhere you look, including the gardens, is divided into 'rooms' crammed with extraordinary objects.

The night we visited there was a jamming session with acoustic guitarists. The evening finished late and it was good to be driven back to the hotel in comfort. It was an interesting and very enjoyable way to delve briefly into the local community in an unfamiliar city and Jules is good company.



The Roman Baths are just one of many attractions in the city. Image credit – Visit Bath

What else to see and do

The best way to enjoy the remarkable architecture, the alleyways, and mews streets in Bath is to walk. The Royal Crescent Hotel & Spa is perfectly situated to explore the Assembly Rooms, the Roman Baths and The Pump Room, Bath Abbey and Coliseum-shaped Circus. The many museums include The Holburne Museum, The Victoria Art Gallery and The Herschel Museum of astronomy. For details of more local attractions go to visitbath.co.uk

Rooms at The Royal Crescent Hotel and Spa are from £330, double room on a B&B basis.

Address: 16 Royal Crescent, Bath, BA1 2LS

Phone: 01225 339401

Website: royalcrescent.co.uk

Around & About Bath Tours offers half day, full date and evening tours, as well VIP & Custom Tours depending upon your interests and requirements. Visit aroundandaboutbath.com for details.

Main image credit: Visit Bath

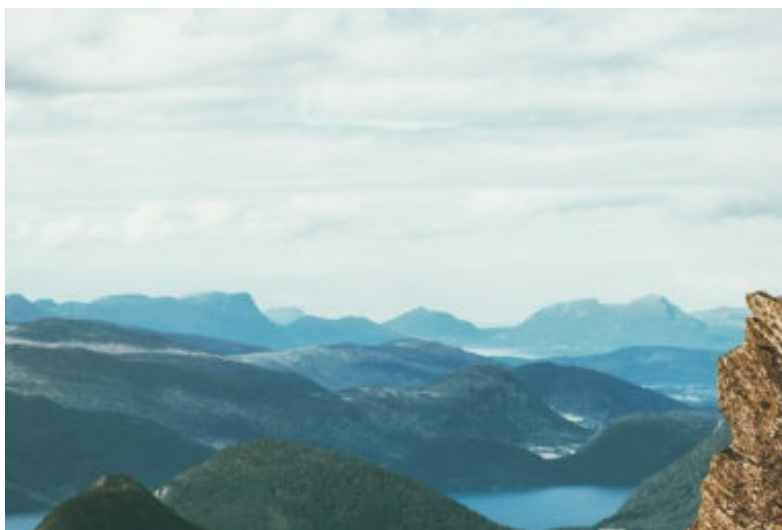
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