

The cool hotel guide

Merchants Manor, Falmouth

In a nutshell
Halfway between Falmouth's beaches and its high street, this luxury spa hotel offers sea views, fabulous food and stylish decor, from its chandelier-hung entrance to its 41 comfy rooms. The original house dates from 1913, when it was home to the Carne Brewery family; traces of its brewing past are evident in the stoneware beer bottles in the award-winning restaurant. A six-year restoration has resulted in a perfect amalgamation of heritage and modernity.

What are the rooms like?
Nine classically styled bedrooms (including some with balconies and roll-top baths) are in the original house with quirks such as turret windows. There are 30 contemporary rooms in a newer wing.

Which is the best room?
Two boutique residences that opened last year, Landlubber and Lookout, each sleep four (from £250 a night). Made from reclaimed timber, they feature rustic oak floors and walls, bedrooms in cool blues and floor-to-ceiling windows.



Landlubber has its own tropical garden, while Lookout has perfect sea views; both have outdoor hot tubs. Bedrooms are in cool blues. Still-warm sourdough bread with hand-churned butter and milk in the fridge is a welcoming touch.

What's the food like?
It's done well with five starters (from £6.50) and five mains (from £17), with a meat slant and ingredients cooked in a wood-fired oven. My starter of smoked corn velouté with lobster and corn bread was delicious, and the signature dish,

Trewithick pastures — featuring the unusual combination of lamb and crab with salty samphire — tasted divine.

Who goes there?
Romantic weekenders and urbanites seeking pampering.

The highs, the lows, the verdict
Eight and a half out of ten.
Great food, health spa and service, but Lookout's private balcony is overlooked by some rooms.
Ellie Ross

Need to know

Ellie Ross was a guest of Merchants Manor (01326 312734, merchantsmanor.com). B&B doubles cost from £140; no wheelchair-accessible rooms or single-occupancy discount; five dog-friendly rooms

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Tom Chesshyre
Writer, Times Expert Traveller
Times hotel rating: 7.5/10

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