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 awardwinning 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 rolltop 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.



milk in the fridge is a welcoming touch.

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,

Landlubber has its own tropical garden,

while Lookout has perfect sea views;

bread with hand-churned butter and

What's the food like?

both have outdoor hot tubs. Bedrooms

are in cool blues. Still-warm sourdough

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 wheelchairaccessible rooms or single-occupancy discount; five dog-friendly rooms

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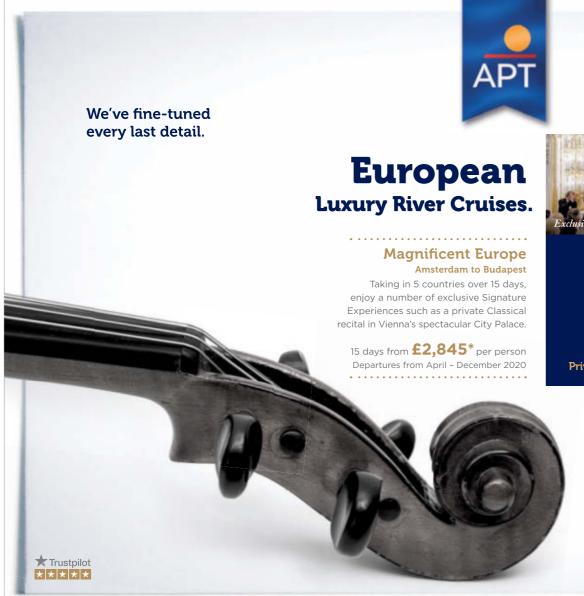
'The hotel is great for the active, with a nine-hole golf course, pool and a well-run spa"

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

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