

# RETREAT YOURSELF: The best spa locations for a pre-party-season pamper sesh revealed and what not to miss out on

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**As party-season approaches, we reveal the top three spa locations for a pamper session and what not to miss out on while you unwind there.**

## Sopwell House, Hertfordshire

Writer Emma Ledger learns how to switch off at this tranquil spa in St Albans.

**THE PAD:** Sopwell House is a vast villa set in 12 acres of beautiful, landscaped gardens.



Sopwell House is a vast villa set in 12 acres in St Albans

Credit: Getty Images





Experience laid-back indulgence designed to shed all thoughts of your to-do list at the Club at Cottonmill

Credit: Getty Images

The main house dates back to 1603, though today, classic Georgian elements combine with refined contemporary design – think statement flock wallpaper and deep, luxe sofas. The 128 bedrooms are thoughtfully designed, generously sized and spotlessly clean.

**THE SPA:** There are two on-site spas: Cottonmill and The Club at Cottonmill. The former is a great retreat in its own right, or upgrade to the latter to experience laid-back indulgence designed to shed all thoughts of your to-do list.

As well as the state-of-the-art gym, there are saunas, steam rooms, a whisper room (a serene chill-out zone set around a fireplace) and a hydro-pool with plenty of comfy places to curl up with a book. The Japandi-style spa garden – designed by RHS Chelsea Flower Show gold-medal-winner Ann-Marie Powell – has hot tubs, water features and a Love-Island-worthy fire pit.

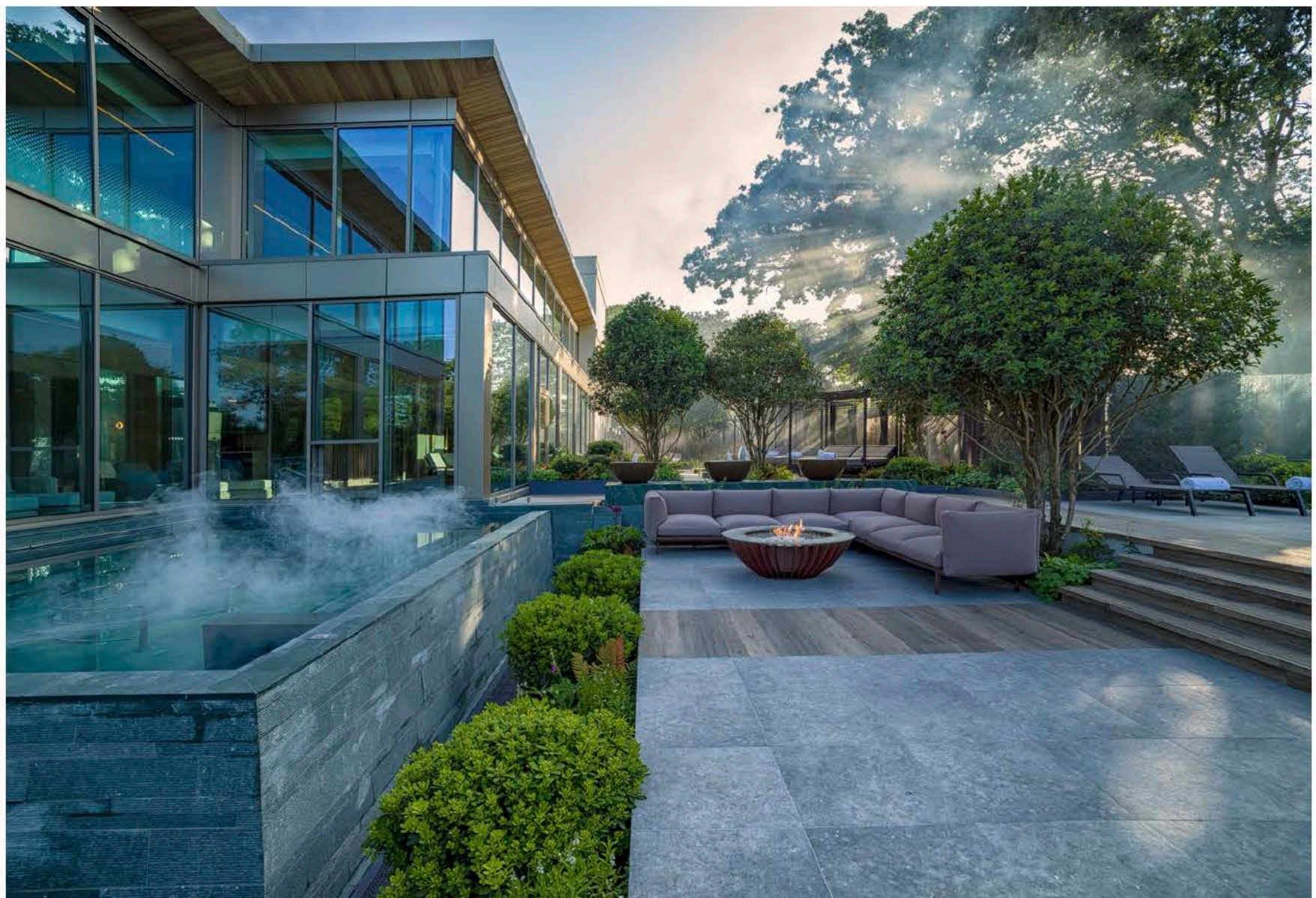
There are loungers galore, each with a QR code to order drinks directly to you, but if you manage to nab a four-poster day bed, you may never leave.



**REFUEL:** With a menu that fuses British and Mediterranean cuisine, The Brasserie serves all day, and it's so relaxed there's no need to change out of your dressing gown. I opted for the three-course menu, great value at £24.99, starting with gravlax, followed by a legendary burger.

I then headed back to the hot tub for a few hours, before returning to the sun-dappled courtyard for dessert. For fine Asian dining, book into the newly opened Omboo for sushi, sashimi, rice dishes, meat skewers and possibly the world's best-tasting broccoli, cooked in ginger and Japanese wine.

**DON'T MISS:** The innovative loungers in the Deep Relaxation Room, which cocoon you in their softly vibrating, womb-like surface.



Cottonmill is a great retreat in its own right  
Credit: Getty Images