

Help your students be critical,
confident thinkers with our
free news literacy programme

Sign up now

THE  TIMES
THE SUNDAY TIMES

News Literacy
Programme

SOUTHEAST

Sopwell House, Hertfordshire hotel review

With its swish new spa, this hotel is a winning
pre-match base for the England football team



Share



Save



The framed football shirts that line the corridor between the lobby and the restaurants at Sopwell House may seem out of place in a country house hotel popular with couples and spa-breakers. But its proximity to London — and, crucially, Wembley — means it has emerged as the go-to pre-match base for both the England football team and other international squads.

Set in 12 acres of Hertfordshire countryside, on the fringes of St Albans, the imposing whitewashed Georgian mansion has a lobby with an open fire and a cosy bar with snug sofas.



STAYCATIONS

Best Places to Stay 2020

From great new openings to swish spas and cosy pubs with rooms, find your ideal hotel stay with our ultimate guide

[Find out more](#)

The big draw is the spa, which was given a £14 million makeover last year. There are two options: Cottonmill and the Club at Cottonmill. Everyone has access to the former with its indoor pool, hot tubs, steam room, sauna and gym. But you want to upgrade to the latter, Club at Cottonmill, a new three-storey extension with an indoor-outdoor hydropool, hot tubs, infrared loungers and a large relaxation area.

The 128 rooms have a boutique feel, with smart interiors, statement wallpapers and king-size beds, while bathrooms have rain showers and Espa products. The 16 mews suites, set in a former stable block, come with a

shared private hot tub and hydropool within the manicured garden, designed by Ann-Marie Powell, an RHS Chelsea gold medallist.



There are two dining options — a formal restaurant that's a touch austere and a more relaxed brasserie. In the restaurant you'll find well-presented dishes such as duck liver parfait with brioche croutons (£12) and Hertfordshire beef sirloin with oxtail, braised onion and globe artichoke (£29.50). Hearty mains such as burgers or Scottish salmon are served by friendly waiters in the brasserie. It's here that you might be lucky enough to catch Gareth Southgate and his boys refuelling post match.

Doubles from £154, B&B; mains in the Brasserie from £13.50; sopwellhouse.co.uk



Dolly Alderton discusses
her debut novel, *Ghosts*



ABOUT
THIS HOTEL

- Cottonmill Lane, St Albans, Hertfordshire
AL1 2HQ
- **Restaurant** Yes
- **Dogs allowed** Yes
- **Accessible** Yes
- Under-16s not allowed in the spa

For the latest on Covid-related measures and restrictions, please check directly with the hotel

Best Places to Stay: 80 top British hotels

Find your perfect place to get away with our interactive guide. Browse by region, price and type of hotel at thetimes.co.uk/bestplacestostay

Share



Save



Comments are subject to our community guidelines, which can be viewed [here](#).

Comments



tim guinness ▼



Add to the conversation...



BACK TO TOP