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REGAL
Queen Victoria's bedroom

Jason Cranwell lives it up in a magnificent Perthshire country pile

Staycations in Perthshire have held a familiar inevitability for me since childhood. Crieff Hydro resort, once an omnipresent school holiday memory, is now the go-to mini-break for my own tween terror. So how do other hotels in the region end the stranglehold of this perennially popular resort? For the Murrayshall Country Estate, 20 miles away in Scone, the first step is to throw money at the problem.

The precursor to a £30million spa and leisure club expansion, the owners have recently renovated 14 suites in an annexe about 50 yards from the main building.

A haven of spoil-yourself luxury, they are so vast that the WhatsApp video tour I did to brag to friends about my room went on for more than two minutes.

The colossal bathroom boasts a freestanding tub and walk-in shower with organic Hebridean ishga skincare; the bedroom's king-sized mattress hits that elusive sleep sweet spot of being neither too soft nor aggressively firm; while the adjoining lounge is furnished with a six-seater dining table, plush sofas and the most inviting armchair/footrest combo.

The sound of silence permeates at Murrayshall (pronounced "Murrays Hall"), a four-star retreat with five-star quality dining hidden away in a serene corner of this medieval town, secluded by swathes of evergreenery.

Perched at the top of a fair old incline, the hotel delivers a majestic panorama for those opting for table service in the gardens. This is mindfulness for suburbanites.

Breathe in that pure hinterland air. At night, the stars come out, undimmed by light pollution.

Just tilt your head up and then bask in the infinite. Hello darkness, my old friend.

Murrayshall may not be on the same scale as the sprawling Crieff



IMPRESSIVE
Murrayshall Country Estate



LUXURY
One of the bedrooms at Murrayshall

artefacts and also, one suspects, monumental winter heating bills.

I enjoyed a sumptuous afternoon tea here – well, it's pretty neat to be able to say that you've scoffed scones at Scone Palace.

This landmark has bore witness to some weighty history, being Scotland's ancient king-crowning capital and original home of the Stone of Destiny, which is returning to the region this month to coincide with the opening of the new £26.5million Perth Museum.

After heading back to

Murrayshall, it was time for laser clay shooting and axe-throwing on the lawn followed by the much less aggressive pursuit of a 30-minute back, neck and shoulder massage.



OPULENT
Stunning drawing room

The indulgence peaked at dinner in the hotel's award-winning Eolas restaurant where I was served slabs of

venison with black garlic and fermented spelt cooked to perfection, as well as a pear crumble soufflé that made an absolute mockery of my insistence that I was not a soufflé fan.

Like most things at Murrayshall, prepare to have your expectations exceeded.

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Like most things here, prepare to have your expectations exceeded



IMPOSING
Scone Palace in Perthshire

BOOK IT

Rooms at the Murrayshall Country Estate in Scone, Perthshire, start at £199 a night B&B. murrayshall.co.uk

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