



HISTORIC HOTEL IS A WOLD AWAY

TWESKESBURY PARK HOTEL, COTSWOLDS

WHAT'S IT LIKE? If you're looking for a relaxing weekend in the country, Tewkesbury Park Hotel on the cusp of the Cotswolds is a great place to head. The hotel has just undergone a £4million restoration. Tewkesbury itself is a 15-minute walk away while Gloucester is only a 15-minute drive.

ROOMS ANY GOOD? There are 93 rooms, with nine historic suites – one of which King Richard III stayed in. This room had that wow factor you don't often get in countryside hotels. A huge space with a giant bed, beautiful views and comfy furniture. There is also a large TV in the bedroom and bathroom.

EAT THERE OR GRAB A PIZZA? We enjoyed a wonderful three-course meal in the hotel. Staff are fantastic and we were lucky enough to be served by Joyce, 81, who has worked at Tewkesbury Park for 27 years.

I started with goats cheese, had a main of roast lamb and finished with a sticky toffee pudding. Every course was delicious and the South African house red was also very good.

WHAT ELSE? Set in 163 acres of parkland, the hotel has an 18-hole par 73 golf course, academy course, practice range, putting green, pro shop and squash and tennis courts. The spa is small and tranquil and the Leisure Club has a sauna, steam room and indoor swimming pool.

SO YOU'D GO BACK? Absolutely. Not only is the location beautiful, but the new renovation makes it high-end, cosy living in the countryside.

WHAT'S THE DAMAGE? Rooms start from £134 with breakfast. Suites are from £230 to £350.

Call 01684 295 405. See tewkesburypark.co.uk

JENNY FRANCIS

hot spot IT'S 24C in Tenerife – seven nights' self-catering at the 3*

NaturSun Hotel is from £329pp including flights from Leeds Bradford on November 20. See jet2holidays.com or call 0800 408 1350.

hot spot MALAYSIA is 30C – five nights' B&B at the 4* Le Furama Bukit

Bintang Hotel Kuala Lumpur is from £645pp with flights from Manchester on November 21. See southalltravel.co.uk.

DON BLUE SLEIGH SHOES THIS XMAS

ELVIS Presley fans can have a Christmas to remember at the Guest House hotel at Graceland. The resort reflects Elvis's style and the Southern hospitality. The King, below, was famous for...

During the festive season, the house and grounds are decked out with decorations including hundreds of blue lights along the drive, a life-size Nativity scene and Santa and his sleigh – all things originally displayed by Elvis.

The interior of Graceland is also dressed in its Christmas best and includes the traditional Presley red velvet drapes along with treasured family Christmas baubles and ornaments.

Bon Voyage has a five-night Festive Graceland Getaway from £1,395pp with return flights to Memphis. It includes five nights in a luxury double room at the Guest House, a VIP tour of Graceland – with front-of-line access, special all-day ticket and keepsake backstage pass to Elvis in Hollywood exhibition and entrance to the new Elvis Presley's Memphis interactive Elvis experience.

You also get admission to Sun Studios, Stax Museum and the Rock 'n' Soul Museum, plus live music and entertainment in the Lobby Lounge with complimentary complimentary cocktail and an Elvis Christmas CD and commemorative ornament.

Call 0800 316 0194 or visit bon-voyage.co.uk.



news TAKING the children on a theme park holiday to Florida is many things – but cheap it is not. So the fact that Universal Studios is building two new budget resort hotels close to their parks, with rooms starting at £76 a night, will be welcome news for young families.

Opening in the summer of 2019, Universal Orlando Resort's latest hotels will allow its guests to enjoy all the perks of staying at a theme park hotel – but without the huge price tag.

The hotels will feature a combined 2,800 guest rooms, including 1,450 two-bedroom suites designed to accommodate families of all sizes.

Both options will be mainly focused on value at Universal's Cabana Bay Beach Resort and Universal's Aventura Hotel. But guests also get the advantages that make visitors choose a pricey resort hotel in the first place.

They get Early Park Admission to Universal Studios Florida, Universal's Islands of Adventure and Universal's Volcano Bay, as well as complimentary transportation across the destination and resort-wide charging privileges.

The 750-room and 2,050-room hotels will be located minutes away from Universal Orlando's three theme parks and Universal CityWalk's dining and entertainment options – on the old Wet 'N' Wild water park site.

While the hotels are not opening until 2019, they will be taking reservations from next year.

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news WOW Air is offering fares from London to New York for £99. That's less than the cost of the taxes.

The low-cost carrier has introduced the fares to celebrate its new route from Stansted via Iceland to the Big Apple.

With the competition between low-cost long-haul airlines heating up, WOW Air's sub-£100 offering is less than the cost of the Air Passenger Duty – which means they are essentially paying for passengers to fly.

The air fares are now on sale for the new route from Stansted to JFK via Reykjavik in Iceland, beginning in April 2018. It is worth bearing in mind although you can still get fares for £99 one way,



news when you add in a return most flights are over £200 but still offer great value.

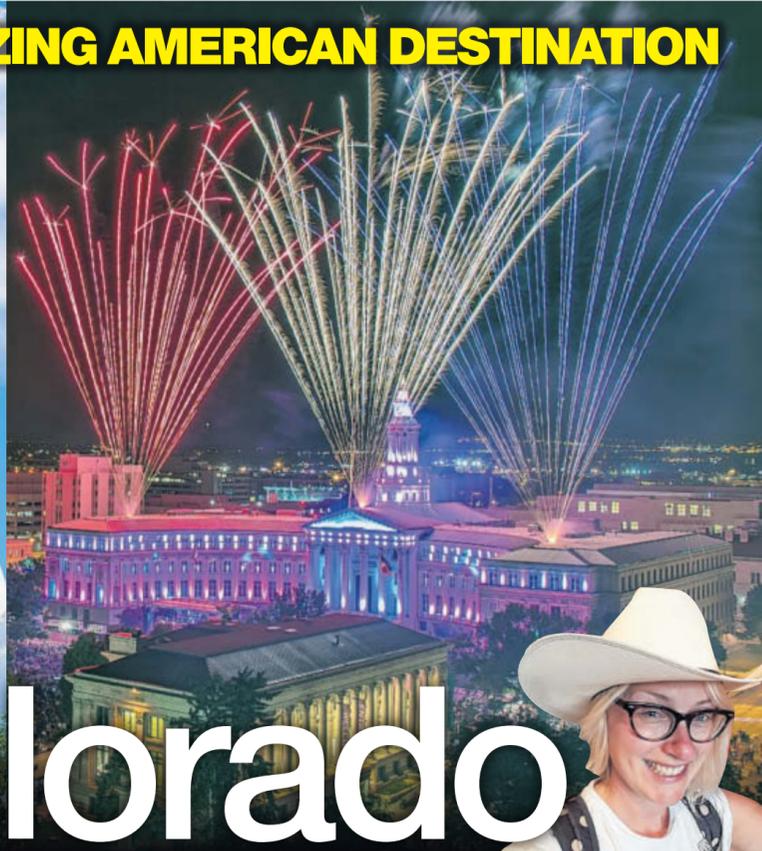
Already operating a route to Newark Liberty International Airport, the airline also has routes to Chicago, Pittsburgh, Toronto, Boston, Montreal, Washington DC, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Miami.

Skull Mogensen, chief executive and founder of WOW air, said: "The UK's Air Passenger Duty is one of the highest in the world and we would love to change this."

"These low fares make a statement and allow our passengers to fly affordably."

YOU'VE STRUCK GOLD WHEN YOU VISIT

BY ELK . . . from left, Estes Park deer, statues at Sculpture Park, and fireworks over the Civic Center. Rockmount Ranch Wear and Jenny tries Stetson, both inset



Rush to Colorado

SOME places are cool while others are dead cool. A bit like Linger.

The restaurant, in Denver, Colorado, is housed in a former mortuary and the conveyer belts that once used to carry coffins now have hipsters hunched over them, tucking in to designer dishes such as Wagyu sliders and waffle fries.

"The family that used to own the mortuary were the Olingers so when it became a restaurant, the new owners just tweaked the name. Now it works on two levels," my guide Jared said, as we whizzed past the neon funeral parlour sign on the restaurant patio.

Linger was just one stop on my city tour of Denver with a difference – in a zero-emission electric tuk-tuk.

The zippy eTuks have been designed and built in Denver itself and after starting as a taxi service, guides are now on hand to show you the city sights or act as designated driver on a brewery tour.

Jared took me everywhere from LoDo (Lower Downtown) to RiNo (River North) and the must-sees include the historic brick buildings of Larimer Square, the

GO: COLORADO

GETTING THERE: Norwegian flights from London Gatwick to Denver are from £179 one way in economy, £599 premium (with all taxes and charges). See norwegian.com/uk or call 0330 828 0854.

STAYING THERE: Rooms at Hotel Born in Denver start from £175. See hotelborn.com. Rooms at Ridgeline Hotel in Estes Park are from £75. See ridgelinehotel.com.

MORE INFO: eTuk tours start from around £40 per person, based on six sharing. See etukride.com. Two-hour horseriding tours in Rocky Mountain National Park start from £50. See sombbrero.com. For more about Denver, check out visitdenver.com. Or visit the Colorado Tourism Board at colorado.com.

single-site brewery in the world – is just 15 miles away in Golden and tours are free.

Denver, the "Mile High City", is quite literally on a high, being one mile above sea level. The altitude can come as a bit of a shock to the system so it's vital to drink plenty of water to counteract all those ales.

My trip had started with champagne, however, to celebrate Norwegian's first direct flight from Gatwick.

With a seat in the Premium cabin, I was treated to complimentary food and drink, movies on demand and a reclining seat with more than a metre of legroom.

When it comes to Colorado, many of us associate the state with either the gold rush or posh ski resorts such as Vail and Aspen.

But there's a lot more to it than just winter sports. It's the perfect year-round destination and dog lovers will be thrilled to know it's incredibly pet-friendly.

The newly opened Hotel Born is perfectly placed to explore Denver.

It's certainly less creepy than The Stanley Hotel up the road, which inspired Stephen King to write The Shining.

Estes Park is an authentic slice of small-town America but if the weather's fine, there is no better way to explore the Rockies than on horseback.

I'm a novice when it comes to riding but Bertha, my steed, was a complete

to the original snap-front western shirts. It has dressed more celebrities than you can shake a stick at.

And although it's not quite as impressive as gold, you can check out silver, bronze and a whole load more metals at the US Mint, which produces more than 50million coins every day.

From Denver, it would be a crime not to visit Rocky Mountain National Park, a 90-minute drive away.

Elk can be spotted grazing on golf courses

The touristy town of Estes Park is one of the main gateways to the Rockies and the revamped Ridgeline Hotel makes a great base.

With amazing mountain views, a great onsite restaurant, heated pool and hot tub, the clean, green hotel is like a breath of fresh air.

Elk are also a common sight and, at certain times of year, can be spotted grazing on golf courses, ambling across roads and even wandering into shops.

"They are such beautiful animals, so majestic," gasped one of my companions the first time we saw one in the wild.

Later that night, he had no qualms about ordering elk for dinner in a local restaurant. So much for sentimentality.



ROCK 'N' ROLL . . . amphitheatre

professional on our two-hour trail ride. She navigated the 265,000-acre park's steep slopes with ease, allowing me to look out for local residents such as bears, bighorn sheep and mountain lions.

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The Rockies have more than 4.5million tourists a year, many of whom are keen to tackle one of the "fourteeners", or mountains over 14,000ft. But the park isn't the only big draw in the area.

The all-natural Red Rocks Park & Amphitheatre, just outside Denver, also attracts people from around the world.

"That's where us locals go to worship," Jared told me.

Since 1941, the iconic music venue has hosted thousands of acts, including The Beatles, U2 and John Denver. Two giant sandstone rocks provide perfect acoustics and the only modifications in "the bowl" are simple wooden benches that seat just under 10,000 people.

I was lucky enough to see Brit band Muse, supported by US rockers 30 Seconds To Mars.

The latter's frontman, Oscar-winning actor Jared Leto, is a showman through and through. But the moment he unfurled an American flag and started waving it around was the moment I lost interest in his OTT performance.

When he told the crowd they lived in "the most beautiful state in America", however, I couldn't argue at all.

Come to Colorado and you'll have struck gold.

JENNY GREEN

CROWN THE PLACE FOR PERFECT FIT

WE knew we were in for a long weekend of gastronomic delights from the very moment we checked in to The Crown.

Each of the hotel's ten room keys is attached to a kitchen utensil. We had an 8in spaghetti measurer, which makes it impossible to lose.

Woodbridge, a historic Suffolk market town, is perfect for a relaxed, easy break. The high street features a host of charming boutiques, antique shops and cafes.

You definitely won't go thirsty with eight lovely pubs, some of which overlook the River Deben that runs through the town.

Each offers different local breweries' ales and stouts, and plenty of Suffolk's famous Aspal cider.

And best of all they were all within walking distance from our base.

But we could happily have spent our entire two-day break at The Crown.

The dishes on offer in the smart dining room for breakfast, lunch and dinner change with the season and the daily catch.

Luxury day

We were given the pick of lobsters and crab from nearby Cromer, as well as grouse and local fruit and vegetables.

Though you don't need to stay at The Crown to enjoy the Cumberland Fish Bar serves up huge portions of cod and chips that show why it's still such a classic.

Eating and drinking isn't the only way to while away the hours, with luxury day retreat at the Bathsheba Spa just a short walk up the road.

Using Ren products – which also feature in The Crown's en suites – a facial and a massage proved so relaxing we had to go back to bed.

Again, The Crown proved to be a perfect fit. The 16th century hotel has recently undergone a major makeover – including goose-down pillows, crisp cotton bed linen, underfloor heating, waterfall showers and

roll-top baths. But away from the bedroom – and the bars – there was a cultural side to Woodbridge that the locals were only too eager to tell us all about.

A visit to the Tide Mill, which is the only surviving and working mill of its kind in the UK, proved a fascinating glimpse in to how people used to work alongside nature and use incredible feats of engineering to harness its power.

You can buy bread made from the flour that the ancient structure still grinds, and a stroll around the museum gave a great glimpse into the past.

Further out of town, National Heritage site Sutton Hoo provided a snapshot of life in Anglo-Saxon times.

The most significant hoard ever discovered included armour, weapons and even an entire ship from the sixth and seventh centuries.

While most of the priceless finds are now safely ensconced in the British Museum, you can still tour the undisturbed burial mounds as well as an exhibition charting the archaeological dig. The Suffolk Punch Trust, where you can meet the heavy horses synonymous with the area, is also well worth a visit.

GO: WOODBRIDGE

STAYING THERE: Double rooms from £110 per night B&B or dinner. See thecrownwoodbridge.co.uk or call 01394 384 242.

OUT & ABOUT: Bathsheba Spa, REN full body massage from £55. Call 01394 388 813 or see bathshebaspa.co.uk. Woodbridgidemill.org.uk and nationaltrust.org.uk/sutton-hoo.

MORE INFO: visitsuffolk.com.

EMMA GRITT

