



AllWays Traveller

Warwick, Warwickshire, UK

www.allwaystraveller.com

History comes to life within these castle walls

Warwick, the historic county town of Warwickshire, sits on the River Avon, just west of Royal Leamington Spa and a short drive to Stratford-upon-Avon and Coventry.

The area has been settled since the 6th Century and a thriving Saxon community existed at Warwick during the 9th Century.

It is the Castle, however, which was first built in 1068 as part of the Norman fortification of the country, that provides the town with its major visitor attraction.

Stratford-upon-Avon, and the Shakespeare 'experience', is nine miles away and the Cotswolds area of outstanding natural beauty are within an easy day trip.

While in the Warwick area, trips to the National Trust's Upton House and Gardens is also to be recommended.

A place to stay

Mallory Court is a wonderful country manor house hotel in 10 acres of lawns and gardens on the outskirts of Warwick.

Ashley Gibbins

Managing editor
AllWays traveller



A personal view of Warwick

Keeping people out is the last thing on anyone's mind



By Ashley Gibbins

Warwick Castle has dominated the town of Warwick for centuries.

In days gone by it was a fortification that bestowed power upon those who commanded and protection from those marauding hords looking to force a way inside.

Today, keeping people out - all be it the pleasure seeking, peaceful kind. - is the last thing on anyone's mind.

Warwick Castle, now run by *Merlin Entertainment*, is unashamedly geared to meeting the demand from those who want their history themed and as much fun as possible.

The balance is right

When first walking into Warwick Castle one has to be to be impressed by the overall scale of the castle complete with its towers, turrets and ramparts.



It is how I believed a castle to be when, as a young child, I was Sir somebody or other, bravest knight in the realm and slayer of any number of dragons and black knights.

But making a visit to Warwick Castle worth a day out not to mention the price of admission, there does need to be more.

Merlin Entertainment, know a thing or two about visitor attractions and how to keep families happy.



And so there are archers demonstrating bow skills and giving a history lessons to boot; Knights fighting in the courtyard arena with swords, pole arms and axe and a daily 'medieval' birds of prey show.

While in Warwick

A brief history of Warwick Castle



A wooden motte-and-bailey fortification, which was first built on the site in 1068, on the orders of William the Conqueror, remained in place until it was replaced by a stone castle in the 12th century.

There was ongoing refortification during the 13th and 14th Centuries.

In 1604, King James I granted the castle to Sir Fulke Greville who, with times being less violent, converted it into a country house.

The Castle remained in the Greville family - who became Earls of Warwick - until 1978 when it was bought by the Tussauds Group, who opened the Castle to the public.

www.warwick-castle.com

The Lord Leycester Hospital



The Lord Leycester Hospital is an historic group of timber-framed buildings dating mainly from the late 14th Century clustered round the Norman gateway into Warwick.

Despite its name the hospital was never a medical establishment. It was, and still is, a charitable institution for the 'needy, infirm and aged' ex-servicemen and their wives.

Open to the public, the Hospital provides for a fascinating 45 minute visit.

www.lordleycester.com

The Warwick trebuchet



The trebuchet at Warwick Castle is the world's largest catapult.

It takes a team of eight a half an hour to load and 'shoot' stones or fireballs up to 240 metres at a speed of 160 miles per hour.



Throughout the year there is a programme of special events including jousting tournaments, open air cinema, country, medieval and Christmas fairs and a season of live classical and pop concerts.



The castle dungeon

When touring the castle itself, a first trip should be the dungeon, which dates back to 1345.

Passing through its 10 underground rooms one comes across poor (waxwork) souls braving the torturer, or hearing a judge sentencing those accused of all manner of crimes to a lifetime in this dark and dank surroundings.



Into the house

Above ground and going into the house at Warwick Castle, one can see a collection of armoury that is second only to that on display in the Tower of London.

And, again, stunningly lifelike wax models are used to create a lavish, turn of the century, weekend party hosted by Daisy, Countess of Warwick.



Frances Evelyn 'Daisy' Greville, Countess of Warwick, was a British socialite and long-time mistress to Albert, Prince of Wales, who later became King Edward VII.

She was also the inspiration for the popular music hall song Daisy, Daisy.

This mix of history and theme park entertainment makes a day out at Warwick Castle a really enjoyable experience and provides the flow of income needed to ensure it will welcome visitors for many years to come.

www.warwick-castle.com

Upton House and Gardens



Upton House, a National Trust property, is a late 17th century house which was completely remodelled between 1927 and 1929 for the 2nd Viscount Bearsted.

This well respected and much loved oil millionaire, whose father founded Shell Oil, used Upton as his family's country residence and as a walk through art gallery for his astounding art collection.



With admirable foresight, the then Lord Bearsted bequeathed the house, gardens and art collection to the National Trust in 1948.

But the understanding that his collection of paintings remained completely intact and on display as he had done.

As a result, visitors today can enjoy Bearsted's outstanding collection of Old Masters, including include works by Stubbs, Hogarth, Canaletto, Bosch and Bruegel.

The gardens



If that were not enough, the stunning gardens at Upton contain wide lawns and terraced herbaceous borders leading down to ornamental pools.

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/upton-house

A place to stay : Mallory Court



Don't you just hate it when you love a place too much?

Choosing somewhere to stay when visiting a new destination means finding accommodation that serves as a base camp from which to explore. It's often a case of up and out, back and to bed.



It is therefore be more than a little disconcerting to find somewhere so pleasant one is reluctant to go anywhere else.

With this to mind let me tell you about Mallory Court, a 31 bed manor house in its own splendid grounds on the outskirts of Warwick and Royal Leamington Spa.



This is one of the finest country house hotels you will come across.

This is why Mallory is equally as popular with lunching and dining locals as it is with visitors enjoying a relaxing night two.



Sitting on the sun bathed patio, I listened to blackbirds singing and doves and pigeons cooing.

Bunnies were hopping and a neighbourhood fox prowled along the bottom edge of the lawn.

And if the weather deters this alfresco pleasure there is the lure of a pot of tea or glass of sparkling and a newspaper in the plush lounge areas.

A wonderful array of freshly cut flowers (courtesy of Annie) is just one of a number of personal touches that help make a visit here special.



So not exactly geared to getting one up and out.

The bedrooms at Mallory Court are delightfully comfortable and all come with those little afore-mentioned personal touches and with views over the grounds and herb garden.

Charlecote



Charlecote, now a National Trust property, has been home to the Lucy family since the 12th century.

The house itself, which is furnished as it would have been in Victorian times, contains family portraits, and artefacts collected from around the world.

The gardens include a formal parterre, colourful herbaceous planting and a woodland walk.

The wider parkland (inspired by 'Capability Brown'), which offers miles of walks and views across the River Avon.

A herd of fallow deer has been in the park since Tudor times.

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/charlecote-park

Compton Verney, Warwickshire



Compton Verney House is a Grade 1 listed country mansion, which was built by the 12th Baron Willoughby de Broke in the early 18th-Century.

The gardens were laid out by Capability Brown for the 14th Baron.

The house and gardens now belong to the Compton Verney House Trust who run it as an art gallery.

www.comptonverney.org.uk

Dining at Mallory Court



The dining experience at some country house hotels does not always match the splendour of the surroundings writes Ann Melaor.

This is certainly not the case at Mallory Court where the cuisine meets and matches the stately home standards.

The hotel enjoys 3 AAA red star *Inspectors Choice* status with the oak panelled *Dining Room* providing formal dining and the art deco *Brasserie* a more relaxed experience.

Under the command of Head Chef John Footman (the *Dining Room*); Jim Russell (the *Brasserie*) and award winning Food and Beverage Director Simon Haigh, Mallory Court will delight even the most discerning diner.



The Brasserie

The Brasserie (two AA Rosettes) has a 1930s glamour with art deco style and décor.

It is light and airy, with a conservatory feel and a patio area that makes for delightful dining on sunny days or balmy evenings.

Although there is an interesting and very reasonably priced a la carte menu, we decided to go for the Daily Menu and Dish of the Day, both around £14 for two courses including a glass of wine or prosecco.

My starter of smoked haddock risotto and poached quail egg was delicious as was Ashley's celeriac and apple soup.

The main courses of pan fried fillet of bream and sea bass and chorizo were perfectly cooked, beautifully presented and simply mouthwatering.



The Dining Room

However, the best was yet to come the next evening with the six course tasting menu and wine pairing in the Dining Room (three AA Rosettes).

With its deep red carpet, tapestry curtains, rich oak panelling and subtle lighting, the restaurant makes a perfect fine dining experience.

Ragley Hall



Ragley Hall, which is the family home of the 9th Marquess and Marchioness of Hertford, dates back to 1680.

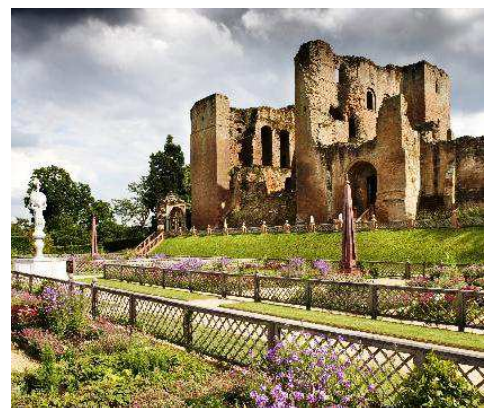


The house is filled with fine paintings, ceramics and antique furniture.

Ragley Gardens comprises 10 hectares of 'Capability' Brown gardens.

www.ragley.co.uk

Kenilworth Castle and Elizabethan Garden



Kenilworth Castle and Elizabethan Garden is managed by English Heritage,

The castle ruins are best known as the home of Robert Dudley, which he built in 1575 to impress Queen Elizabeth I.

The Elizabethan Garden, which is now open to visitors, offers a stroll through carved arbours and a bejewelled aviary and past a marble fountain.

www.english-heritage.org.uk

A dinner to remember

The canapés were mouth watering morsels beautifully presented on a black slate platter – almost too good to eat, but not quite!



Next was perfect pink roundels of salmon *mi cuit* accompanied by the most delicious Chilean chardonnay.

More delightfully formed courses followed, each as excellent as the previous.



Quail and foie gras sandwich; Cornish dressed crab; roast venison with peppery port sauce; walnut cake with candied celery and goats cheese mousse; lemon curd, blueberries and yogurt snow and finally the coffee and petit fours.

The opportunity to experience a selection of 'never before tasted' wines such as "Regaleali, Le Rose" from Sicily, Italy 2011 and Sauvignon Blanc "Featherdrop Hill" from New Zealand 2011 was a treat.

With the friendly and knowledgeable service from Dominique, Corinne and Laura, this was one of my best dining experiences in a long time.

Finally, breakfast did not let the side down. Poached eggs done just as they should be, creamy scrambled eggs, full flavoured tomatoes and fresh field mushrooms were delightful.

With Mallory Court delivering in every way on the dining front, it is no wonder the hotel draws guests from miles around – I cannot wait to go back!



Mallory Court
Harbury Lane, Leamington Spa
Warwickshire CV33 9QB

01926 330 214

www.Mallory.co.uk

Royal Leamington Spa

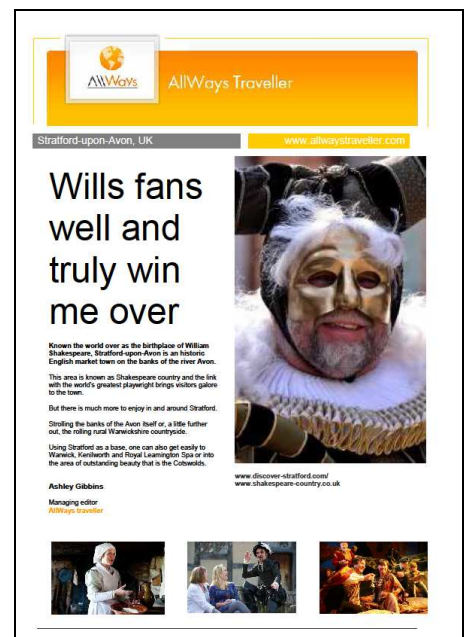
Royal Leamington Spa is an elegant town known for its fine Georgian and Victorian architecture, tree-lined avenues and public squares and gardens.

The Royal Pump Rooms have been developed as a cultural and tourism hub with museum, art gallery, library, tourist information centre and the Regency-style Assembly Rooms.

www.royal-leamington-spa.co.uk

Stratford-upon-Avon

Stratford-upon-Avon, which is known the world over as the birthplace of William Shakespeare, is nine miles from Warwick.



For the **AllWays traveller to Stratford-upon-Avon** : www.allwaystraveller.com.

More information on Warwick:
www.visitwarwick.co.uk

AllWays traveller and the International Travel Writers Alliance



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www.itwalliance.com

The International Travel Writers Alliance is the world's largest association of professional travel journalists.



Ashley Gibbins



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