



HISTORIC: Salford Hall was owned by Henry VIII.

HISTORIC HALL

Nobody does country and woodland walks like we do in Britain, says **David Mackay** who found out more...



Salford Hall has access to many country walks.

Hotels can be so similar these days. No matter where you go, whether you go budget or luxury, so much is the same.

It can be difficult to find something that stands out as somewhere different, somewhere unique.

And where better than a country home that once belonged to King Henry VIII? Warrens of corridors and spiral staircases, a grand hall reception and large fireplaces to stay warm after woodland walks in the Cotswolds – it's easy to imagine Salford Hall in Tudor times.

King Henry VIII seized the grounds from monks during his war with the Catholic church before selling it to a friend.

While the surrounding abbeys were plundered and practically demolished, Salford Hall was fortunately spared.

Today it is a 32-room hotel, which joined the dozens of worldwide destinations owned by the Karma Group in 2021, providing a country retreat from city life.

Walking through the heavy wooden double doors, you instantly feel your weekend break beginning. The firewood stacked at the entrance and the high roof and fireplace in the grand hall reception mean this is not like any other sterile hotel welcome.

It feels like stepping into a place more homely, where you are a lot more comfortable. Like any other building that is centuries old, it can be slightly tricky to navigate initially.

Don't expect a lift taking you to every floor. There are a few spiral staircases taking you to different wings of the hall – make sure you get a tour. Some of the steps creak slightly, the floor has little dips in it, but then whose home isn't like that?

And it means you can feel the history the building is steeped in at every turn. The stone walls are thick, providing plenty protection from an chill outdoors.

And closing the door feels like shutting out the world, just like turning in for the night when you're at home.

When I go away for a weekend break in the UK, I like to head to the great outdoors.

“THE STONE WALLS ARE THICK, PROVIDING PLENTY PROTECTION FROM ANY CHILL OUTDOORS”



The high roof and fireplace in the grand hall reception mean this is not like any other sterile hotel.



Bedrooms are full of character.



The Sunday roast hit the mark.

City breaks are great for going overseas, but I don't think anyone does countryside and woodland walks like we do in this country.

And the Cotswolds isn't designated as an "area of outstanding beauty" for nothing.

"Traditional thatched roofs seem to be round every corner in the Vale of Evesham; it's easy to imagine it during the period of Henry VIII. It was my first time visiting the area and it lived up to its billing with huge skies lighting the scenery by day and giving stunning nightscapes after dark.

Staff at Salford Hall supplied us with enough woodland walk routes across fields, through woods, over burns and down lanes to keep us busy for our two nights.

And when the rain drew in, because it's still the UK, we took to exploring the quiet market town of Alcester with its high street of independent traders and the busier Stratford-upon-Avon, birthplace of Shakespeare. Both offer opportunities to pack your bags with unique gifts, whether inspired by the Bard himself or some unique handcrafted products.

Returning to the hotel room after a day in town and on walks through the Cotswolds, the first thing I immediately noticed was the daily Salford Hall bulletin.

It might seem a small thing to drop a printed note telling you the theme in the hotel's Tempest Restaurant and what the

weather's going to be so you can make plans. But if I don't know it's going to be pie night, then I'm not going to get excited about pie night – and I did get excited about it.

The pies themselves did not disappoint, with the Sunday roast specials during our stay also hitting the mark. Dinner itself was served in one of the oldest rooms in the building in what could have been one of the grand halls.

Diagonal muntin windows provide a glimpse of the grounds outside while still maintaining the historic atmosphere.

And when it comes to retire for the night, you need only take a few steps across the grand hall reception to get a seat at the dog-friendly bar – whether it is a wooden stool, a high armchair or a sofa.

Life's problems seem a world away when you are by the fire with a glass of something nice in hand.

And for when the weather improves there is a range of outdoor games in the garden. I don't know if I'm any good at croquet or boules, but I was eager to find out until the weather ended my dreams.

Instead, we ended the evening enjoying some of the board game options on offer from the games room before navigating ourselves back to our room through the warren of staircases and corridors.

TRAVEL FACTS

Accommodation: Karma Salford Hall, Abbott's Salford, Warwickshire, WR11 8UT
Karma Group also owns Lake of Monteth near Stirling.
Telephone: 01386 571300
E-Mail: reception@karmasalfordhall.com
Website: www.karmagroup.com

Pet Package at Salford Hall: One night bed and breakfast for two people in a dedicated pet room including a walking guide and special, doggy hamper for four-legged guests.
Classic room: £170
Superior room: £220

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