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Nobility of toga and sword

Once the home of an illustrious provost and then of baronets and noble Scottish families, today Prestonfield House is a romantic five-star hotel surrounded by the Edinburgh countryside.

By Danilo Ascani PUBLISHED: 12/11/2024

David Cheskin

An eight-hectare park, a garden with flowerbeds, trees in full foliage, hedges, stone seats and a small sandstone sphinx that seems to scan the landscape. In the background the imposing Arthur's Seat - the Seat of Arthur - that hilly massif in Holyrood Park, on the outskirts of **Edinburgh** , and not far from the royal palace of the same name that, for centuries, has hosted the English kings when they are in Scotland. This is the superb setting that seems to surround a place full of charm where you can still breathe the history of nobles and baronets who passed through these parts. We are at **Prestonfield House** , a unique five-star hotel housed in a finely decorated aristocratic country house, where portraits of ladies, tapestries, boiserie and leather upholstery with gold motifs give character to the spaces.

Courtesy of Press Office

The bedroom in the Winston Churchill Suite at Prestonfield House, Edinburgh.

With its eighteen rooms and five **suites** , all different from each other, here you can spend time in a pleasant rarefied atmosphere. Just take a break next to the wood-burning fireplace in the entrance hall or in front of the even more welcoming one in the lounge where afternoon *tea* is served . Which for the upcoming **Christmas holidays** promises to transform every afternoon into a unique experience. With a glass of Billecart-Salmon champagne you can spend two hours enjoying *coronation chicken* sandwiches , with cucumber, with salmon and dill and soft *scones* filled with *clotted cream* and **strawberry jam** , to finish with small pastry masterpieces.

Courtesy of Press Office

The living room of one of the suites at Prestonfield House, Edinburgh.

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But the real surprise is the one hidden in the two opulent mirrored rooms, divided by a beautiful corridor, of the **Rhubarb** restaurant : an authentic *fil rouge* (…rhubarb shade) makes the curtains, brocades and even the calla lilies and other flowers of the same shade as the upholstery duet. Here the menu will leave you speechless. If among the appetizers the honey-glazed pork terrine **accompanied** by **apple** jelly and crunchy bacon crumbs stands out, the cod in citrus butter served with potato tart, kohlrabi and breadcrumbs is the best way to try the local cuisine. A worthy conclusion to the meal is the Pink Lady *tarte tatin with* **Calvados** caramel and vanilla ice cream.

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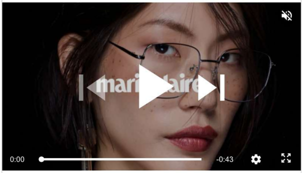

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The hall of Prestonfield House, Edinburgh.

A break at Rhubarb is also a dive into the history and spirit of the place. It is no coincidence that in the mid-18th century Prestonfield House was the residence of **Alexandre Cunyngham** : president of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, he was also a passionate scholar of horticulture and it is to him that we owe the credit for having introduced the cultivation of rhubarb to Scotland (hence the name of the restaurant). And after spending the night in one of the suites, in the morning the *à la carte* breakfast is a real luxury: poached eggs on wholemeal toast, with smoked salmon and hollandaise sauce or **pancakes** covered with berries, maple syrup and lemon mascarpone will put you in the right frame of mind to start the day. But not before having sipped the " *rhubarb boost health shot* ", a **rhubarb** extract with watercress, pineapple, spinach, celery and avocado.

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The bedroom in the Benjamin Franklin Suite at Prestonfield House, Edinburgh.

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For an unforgettable stay, book a suite and if you don't know which one to choose, opt for the **Benjamin Franklin** : if on the sides of the sumptuous bed there are even two platforms to climb on, in front of the window a comfortable *day bed* is proudly displayed for lingering over reading. While in the living room a sofa, comfortable armchairs and a table flooded with natural light - which filters through a pair of corner windows - create the perfect environment to spend the evening sipping a Scotch whisky. Because Prestonfield House, with its green park, peacocks **with** iridescent plumage and Highland cows grazing in the fields, is the corner of paradise for staying in **Edinburgh** in a natural setting that fears no equal.

David Cheskin

Prestonfield House in Edinburgh.

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A room at the Rhubarb Resturant at Prestonfield House.