*GREENWOODS SPA, STOCK ROAD, STOCK, ESSEX*

FACILITIES

Located in the rural village of Stock in Essex this 17th century Grade II listed manor house boasts a spa, boutique hotel and restaurant. With extensive manicured gardens and nearby woodlands, it’s a perfect retreat from the bustle of city life perched just on the outskirts of London.

Recently refurbished, the spa is airy and modern with a 20-metre pool and a Jacuzzi, steam room, sauna and monsoon shower. No need to wrestle your lounger into position – it comes with a button that does that for you. The new poolside café serves snacks and fresh smoothies. If you’re feeling active, there’s a well-equipped gym on site and an 18-hole Championship golf course next door.

Despite its contemporary feel, the hotel does retain its traditional features. Our comfortable corner room with its circular window, balcony and double aspect view, had dark-wood furniture, sumptious soft furnishings that were sympathetic to a former era.

TREATMENTS ON OFFER

The Voya range of seaweed-based products hails from Ireland and is used in scrubs, wraps, facials and massages. Elemis and La Sultane de Saba products are used elsewhere. A brand new nail salon offers Jessica’s GELeration range.

GOOD POINTS

The food is terrific. Local ham hock, soft-shelled crab, flaky fillet of cod and peanut parfait on caramelised banana bread were our highlights. The breakfast menu offers continental and cooked as well as multiple egg dishes and freshly-made waffles.

I saw as many men as women in the treatment rooms which makes it perfect for the male who finds spas too ‘girly’.

TREATMENTS TESTED

Herbal Lavender Repair Facial, 50 mins, £65

After close examination to determine the appropriate Elemis products to use, my skin was cleansed, toned and exfoliated. This was to draw out skin impurities, reduce shine and refine pores and my skin felt plump and soft for days. I was also treated to an out-of-this-world 30-minute neck, shoulder, face and scalp massage. The best I’ve ever had.

La Touche Verte Full Body Massage, 50 mins, £54

Greenwoods’ signature treatment uses Swedish, Thai and aromatherapy techniques that are aimed at relaxing rather than reviving. The therapist asked my other half if he had any concerns and when he pointed out some aches, strains and knots, she kneaded and noodled them until they disappeared. He then nodded off and when we were reunited in the relaxation room, we were both zen.

WHAT DOES IT COST?

Waxes starts from £10. A pamper day with full use of spa facilities, two course lunch and luxury facial or full body massage costs £130.

CONTACT

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KATE BOHDANOWICZ or

KATE MARASTON if I’m still in the doghouse.