



## Just Back From: Heckfield Place



*Photo by Eliza Scott Harris, courtesy Indagare*

### **Indagare COO Eliza Scott Harris reports on her recent trip to one of Indagare's beloved English countryside escapes.**

The morning I left [Heckfield Place](#), a splendid country house hotel in Hampshire, just outside of London, I spent all morning exploring the 438-acre grounds. A moss-covered path snaked through the arboretum under old-growth oaks and cedars, by a lake, then down to the farm, past beehives and orchards and through fields of sheep. I lifted a latch and slipped into the vast vegetable and flower garden, rimmed by greenhouses. Passing through the formal herb garden, with its dainty parterres of thyme and sorrel, then along rows of kale and Brussels sprouts, I wandered among the flowers. There were thousands of them: David Austin roses in crimson, peach and shell pink, and masses of six-foot-tall dahlias with decadent blossoms the size of soccer balls. Most of the food served in the hotel's two stellar restaurants, Marle and Hearth, is grown on property. As with everything at Heckfield, even the farming is done with care and thoughtfulness. They follow biodynamic farming practices, emphasizing soil fertility through organic methods like composting; planting according to the phases of the

moon; and harvesting at times of the day when the produce contains the most nutrients.



Photo by Eliza Scott Harris, courtesy Indagare

It is so healing to be here. Having been to a dozen destination spas, what I love about them is the way they gently bring you back to a better version of yourself and a healthier frame on life. Although I didn't do any actual spa treatments, Heckfield Place had the same effect on me. The ethos here is one of wholesale beauty and purity. The setting is so grand and yet what it gives you is all these perfect, delightfully simple moments that are so easy to bring home. At breakfast at Marle, for instance, I had a poached egg on beet rosti with bread baked in the kitchen that morning (a hearty rye with pumpkin seeds and currants) and butter churned on-property. A vase on the table held three delicate orange roses picked from the garden earlier in the day. The details were approached with such precision that I was constantly present, taking note and appreciating.

Everything at Heckfield Place is done with intention; you feel it as you walk through the rooms. It's all impeccable and beautiful but also warm and cozy, which is a hard balance to strike in such a grand setting. Built in 1790, the Georgian house has all the elegance you expect, but each space feels contemporary, chic and inviting; over here is a comfortable armchair looking past the terrace towards the lake, over there a card table with a half-finished puzzle. The staff remembers your name. The 45 rooms and six

suites, done in earth tones, are full of personality. The place feels very much like a private home, complete with books by your bedside that have been carefully chosen. The walls are covered in photography from the collection of the owner, billionaire Gerald Chan. At turn down, you find a cut-out of a feather on your pillow.



Hearth. Photo by Eliza Scott Harris, courtesy Indagare

Culinary director Skye Gyngell, owner of Spring in London, is the soul behind the food. While not vegetarian, it is vegetable-forward. At Marle, you might have a plate of beets and fennel with labneh, followed by mussels with fresh pasta, a saffron sauce and fresh dill. Hearth is a charming and intimate restaurant with exposed brick walls and an open kitchen centered on a blazing hearth. Dishes are served as small plates: seared scallops, flatbread with wild mushrooms, burrata and Jerusalem artichokes. One of the best dishes I had was carrots from the garden, their freshness and sweetness highlighted by being slow-roasted over the fire with caraway seeds.

Heckfield is in the midst of adding a new spa building and pool, which will open in 2023. To round out the emphasis on wellness, they are also enlisting more master practitioners, including craniosacral therapists, a wellbeing psychologist, osteopaths and naturopaths. These additions will make an already perfect property more well-rounded.

Jack Kornfield says, “Don’t perfect yourself, perfect your love.” This is the place to reconnect with joy. Break free from the noise in your head and dive into sense perception. Step into the walled garden and let the landscape transport you.



Photo by Eliza Harris, courtesy Indagare

## Getting There

Heckfield Place is just an hour outside London. It’s easy to take the train from Paddington Station to Reading or Winchfield and then a cab to the property. A 45-minute drive from Heathrow Airport, it makes a perfect stopover for a night before a flight home.

## When to Go

It’s lovely at all times of year, but particularly magical when the flowers are in bloom. In April and May, the 52,000 tulips are in full glory. In June and September, the roses are at their peak. In August and September, the dahlias are magnificent. I was there in October and the dahlias and roses were still blooming, accompanied by native grasses.

***Contact Indagare or your Trip Designer to learn more about planning a trip to England.***

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- *Eliza Harris on November 16, 2022*

