

The cool hotel guide

The Pheasant Hotel, Harome, North Yorkshire

On a cold winter's evening there can be few more comfortable spots than the bar of the Pheasant. Logs crackled on a roaring open fire in a room with a low ceiling and exposed beams. Candles flickered as couples played dominoes on coffee tables made of old trunks. Kids played board games and City types sat conspiratorially in corners (the Pheasant seems to attract well-connected well-to-dos... I noticed several Rothschilds on the checking-in list). "Those stocks look on the up," said one as we passed to the bar to pick up glasses of rioja. "X is going so well — it was a real leap of faith taking him on," the conversation continued as we passed back to a little seat in a corner.

We sat down, taking in the dimly lit, cosy scenes; the affluent at play in their corduroys and pink jumpers. Stuffed pheasants provided decoration, with pictures of the countryside, some showing hunters with guns held aloft.

After our wine, we walked across a gravel courtyard (the building used to be a blacksmith's forge, dating from the 17th century) and checked out the indoor heated swimming pool. This was in an outhouse next to a cottage with two family-sized rooms, and a small spa offering massages, manicures and facials. Inside, the steamy kidney-shaped pool surrounded by cushioned deckchairs looked invitingly warm.

We wandered on to the back of the hotel and found a lovely pond with a grass bank leading down to the water. Then we returned in the darkness, past rows of Range Rovers and lines of wellington boots outside the back door, to go to the restaurant.

The Pheasant, opened two years ago, has a well-known sister hotel near by: the Star Inn. Peter Neville, one of the co-owners of the Pheasant, was the head chef at the Star, which lives up to its name by having a Michelin star. So the food at



the Pheasant is superb. An appetiser of butternut and blue cheese soup (smooth and the colour of an egg yolk) was followed by a terrine of confit pheasant and foie gras with a lovely sharp piccalilli, and tender goose cooked in burnt hay (so said the waitress) with parsnip and apple. It was a perfect winter's meal.

Our magnolia-coloured room, with its odd beige-tartan pattern carpet and creaky four-poster bed, was stylish, if

rather bland. There was an oatmeal sofa, a good Roberts digital radio-stereo and a bathroom with a tub.

The walls were a little thin (we could hear voices) and everything was a bit dusty, but for £210 per couple, with breakfast and dinner thrown in, it felt like a good deal. For a pleasant winter warmer, look no farther than the Pheasant.

Tom Chesshyre

The Pheasant Hotel has a pond, above, stylish rooms, bottom left, and a fine dining restaurant.

Need to know

The Pheasant Hotel (01439 771241, thepheasanthotel.com), Harome, North Yorkshire YO625JG. B&B doubles from £150.

Room 6.5 out of 10

Service 9

Food 9

Value 9

Score 8.38

Do you agree? Suggest

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