

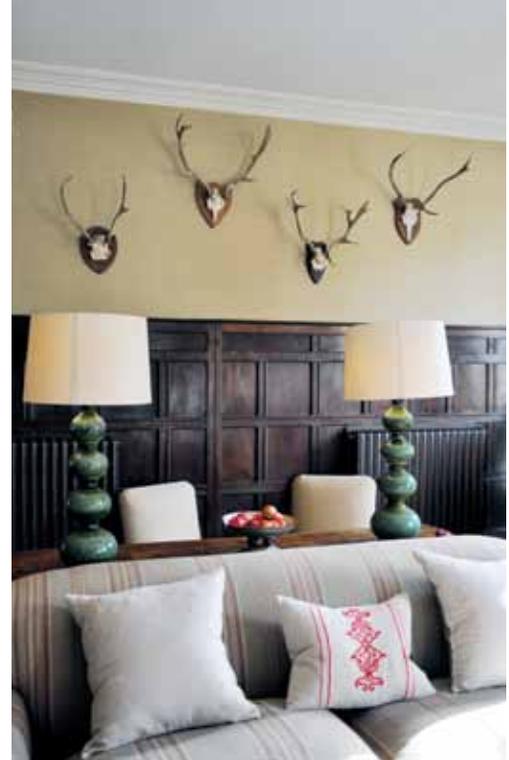
Welcome to Babington House, in the heart of Somerset, near Bath. The hotel is ready and waiting for families, even large families, and offers a host of activities for children.





Babington House

CLASSIC ENGLISH ARCHITECTURE REVAMPED TO SUIT MODERN TASTES, FOR FAMILY HOLIDAYS IN THE COUNTRY. A GREAT WAY TO CELEBRATE HALLOWEEN IN STYLE THIS YEAR.



Artistic director Jonathan Yeo put the focus on contemporary luxury and rustic chic.

Babington House is really different from other hotels, or rather from those listed as “family hotels” to which we are accustomed. Once inside its traditional stone walls, visitors discover an interior design with a subtle mix of styles. The house is a priori reserved for a clientele from the music and film world, who must show their credentials to become members of this very select club. But the hotel is open to everyone: even large families are given a warm welcome. The service they offer children and parents alike makes for a very enjoyable stay.

Located just a couple of hours from London, not far from the beautiful town of Bath, famed for its Roman spa, the hotel nestles in the verdant Somerset countryside. Set in eighteen acres of grounds, the typically Georgian manor house was passed down from hand to hand until 1998, when it was purchased by Nick Jones, the charismatic founder of the Soho House Group, which also has private clubs in Miami, Berlin and Los Angeles.

Approaching along the drive lined with plane trees was enough to generate a chorus of “wows!” as the four different buildings came into view. One of them, formerly the stable, is reserved for families. Each of its five, suites on two levels has a separate bedroom for the children, an outside terrace on the upper floor in the parents’ room, and two bathrooms. Light and spacious, they can accommodate a family of five comfortably.

The hotel has just been renovated and so in the family suites with beautiful modern interiors, there are all sorts of carefully concealed gadgets. Nothing is exactly as it seems at Babington House. And therein lies its charm. Wii, comfort blankets, DVDs for children and even a

microwave are just some of the practical extras provided. It is indeed a hotel for adults, but it also caters for children, and each detail is very well thought out. Kids from age one upwards can go to the Teeny House, run by a specially trained team who organize games and activities throughout the day. Don’t miss the giant pumpkin sculpture or face-painting workshops in the run-up to Halloween! Otherwise, there’s a large indoor pool with vast windows overlooking the grounds and trees hundreds of years old, and the cinema, where films for children are regularly screened, popcorn included.

At Babington House, the atmosphere is a mix of traditional Englishness and contemporary art. The British artist Jonathan Yeo (famed for his iconic portraits of celebrities, notably the one of George W Bush, created from cuttings from pornographic magazines) was the man behind the interior design, which only adds to the hip, offbeat ambience. He chose paintings by other British artists such as Tracey Emin and Peter Blake, the man who designed the cover of the Beatles’ *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band*. At weekends, people slump into huge bottle-green leather Chesterton armchairs to read *The Times*. The ground-floor kitchen opens onto an excellent restaurant with a sweeping view of the grounds. Everyone relaxes in this superb, out-of-the-way manor house, which seems suspended in time and where it is so good to just chill out, even on rainy days.

Vanessa Boz



Far left, one youngster ready for Halloween after a face-painting session. Left, one of the hotel's 32 rooms, all decorated in a different style.





The hotel's large indoor pool looks out onto trees hundreds of years old. Babington House also has a spa, a sauna and a steam bath. More than enough to relax in while the kids have fun in Teeny House..



VISITOR INFO

ACCOMMODATION

Number of rooms

Thirty-two rooms in all, divided between the manor, the attic and the different buildings. Five family suites are available in the former stables.

Private cottage

Located at the entrance to the estate, it has a pretty private garden, a fully-equipped kitchen and three bedrooms. All the hotel services are available, including delivery of the full English breakfast in the morning. Please note: the cottage is a good ten minutes' walk from the hotel. It is due for renovation in early 2013.

Rates

From £480 (approx. €610) for a family suite for non-members (-25% for members).

Babington House

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GETTING THERE

Location

Babington House is situated in south-west England in the heart of the county of Somerset.

Paris-London

– By train: 2h 15 via Eurostar, from the Gare du Nord to St Pancras station, then take the underground to Paddington (about 30 mins).
– By plane: about an hour's flight to Heathrow Airport, then take the underground to Paddington (15 minutes).

London-Babington

– By car: two and a half hours' drive.
– By train: direct from Paddington to Bath (90 mins), then take a taxi to the hotel (expect to pay £33 -£44, i.e. €40-55).

On site

The hotel is in the midst of the countryside. But you don't need a car because there are plenty of things on offer for the space of a long weekend.

ACTIVITIES

Leisure

– Swimming pool: special times for children. Swimming lessons available.
– Cricket, football, tennis, croquet, yoga.
Bicycles available for all the family.

Teeny House

– For children from age one upwards.
– Opening times: 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday, 9am-6pm at the weekend.

Don't forget

Wellington boots and raincoat, because in England after the rain, there may be sun, then more rain.

THE COWSHED SPA

The Cowshed Spa concept began at Babington House before spreading to other luxury establishments across Britain. The focus is on organic, natural, plant-based products and the treatments for pregnant women are especially recommended.

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