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WILDLIFE SPOTTING IN AUTUMN AND WINTER

Each glorious British season brings a wealth of flora and fauna to enjoy. Sadly, in the rush of our day-to-day lives, much of this beauty can go unnoticed. With the help of Charlotte Owen, Wild Call Officer at the Sussex Wildlife Trust, we have compiled a list of the top things to see when you are out and about this season.

AUTUMN

This gentle season of nuts, berries and brilliant foliage brings many fascinating sights, including:

Deer battles

In autumn, male deer (stags and bucks) grow antlers and begin fighting it out for female mates. This process is known as rutting and can be fascinating to watch, so try to head to an area with deer to see it (although don't get too close to them when it's happening!).

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OUT AND ABOUT



A WARM WELCOME

I'm very fond of this time of year and find great enjoyment in the changing landscapes of our fantastic grounds and welcoming warmth of the properties themselves. It also provides an opportune time to reflect on past achievements whilst looking to the future.

I recently had the pleasure of presenting Long Service Awards to some 243 personnel across the group who have provided five or more years service. At The Grand Hotel we acknowledged June Pockett's 40 years service, whilst at Luton Hoo, 18 members of the opening team received milestone awards for their ten years service.

Sadly however, during the summer, after a long illness we saw the passing of Jackie Webley, much loved wife of Jonathan Webley, General Manager at The Grand Hotel and a long standing member of the hotels Sales and Marketing team. Jackie will be sadly missed, not least for her wonderful smile and ability to put anyone and everyone at ease. She will be fondly remembered.



Industry recognition has been plentiful with Ashdown Park and Tylney Hall retaining their coveted AA Red Stars. We also enjoyed success at the 2017 miaList awards – find out more on page 5!

I hope you enjoy browsing this edition of Insight in which we introduce some new faces and a taste of events planned. Whether you are visiting us for pleasure or business, we look forward to welcoming you.

Mr. Graeme Bateman FIH MI, Managing Director, Elite Hotels



WILDLIFE SPOTTING IN AUTUMN AND WINTER

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Bird migration

We all know that this is the time when our bird friends such as swallows, ducks and geese flock south for warmer climes. But did you know that some bird species actually migrate to Britain in autumn? These include winter thrushes, waders and geese, who fly to the UK every year from the Arctic, Iceland and Scandinavia. It just goes to show — one bird's chilly is another's paradise.



Forest fungi

By late autumn, fascinating mushrooms and toadstools sprout in our woodlands, pasture areas and sometimes even gardens. Of course, everyone knows the red and white fly agaric mushrooms (they're the ones that look like they're from an Enid Blyton illustration). But there are lots of other fungi to spot with poetic names like lemon disco, turkey tail, blackening brittlegill, magpie inkcap, birch knight, deer shield, giant puffballs and dead man's fingers.

Hibernation preparation

Autumn is the time when creatures such as hedgehogs, dormice, bats, frogs, toads, newts and grass snakes start preparing for their long winter rest. Hedgehogs like to prepare a nest made of leaves and hibernate in thick undergrowth, among log stacks or beneath sheds. They are also known to hibernate under bonfires, so be careful to check for hedgehogs on Bonfire Night.

Busy squirrels

Squirrels don't hibernate, but you'll be able to spot the grey variety keeping busy by burying nuts for winter. They'll also spend autumn collecting materials for their winter nests or dens, which are built of twigs, leaves and grass.

WINTER

This darkening period of frost, snow and long nights might be tough on our wildlife, but it's also a time of startling beauty. There are many natural wonders to experience in winter, including:

Starling magic

From late autumn to winter, starlings paint our evening skies with their spectacular formations. East Sussex coastal towns such as Eastbourne and Brighton are particularly famous for the thousands of starlings who swoop around their piers. The collective noun for this songbird is 'murmuration', which sounds almost as pretty as their chirruping singing.

Fantastic foxes

Have you ever heard a strange, eerie, almost childlike cry on a winter's night? Most likely it was a fox, as winter is actually their mating season. There are few more haunting scenes than a fox dashing across the snow on a moonlit night, so if you're up late and hear a piercing cry from outside, take a peek out of your window.



Super snowdrops

This deceptively delicate bell-shaped flower is actually a feisty little thing, because winter is the time when it arrives. Snowdrops are said to be the 'flower of promise', because they offer a promise that winter will eventually end.



Holly berries

Berries from holly trees are a wonderful winter bounty for birds. The reason holly leaves are traditionally turned into wreaths and brought into our homes in winter is because they're said to bring good luck.

Pine trees

Named 'the sweetest of woods', these evergreens provide much needed splashes of green in our snow-covered landscapes. As well as traditionally being used as Christmas trees, their needles are actually a great source of vitamin C and give off a lovely scent when placed in a bath. They really are a winter blessing.

Autumn and winter in the UK are full of enchanting things to see. If we can pause for a little while each day to notice the changes taking place around us, we'll have a much more vivid experience of each passing season.

For tips on how to care for wildlife this season, please visit our blog article at elitehotels.co.uk/WildlifeCare

MUSICAL EVENTS



ASHDOWN PARK HOTEL
Swing Time Sweetheart's Luncheon
Sunday 12th November



TYLNEY HALL HOTEL
Music of the Movies
Sunday 12th November



THE GRAND HOTEL
The Pasadena Roof Orchestra Weekend
24th – 26th November



LUTON HOO HOTEL
New Year's Jazz luncheon
Monday 1st January



THE GRAND HOTEL
London Mozart Players Weekend
Friday 2nd – Sunday 4th February



LUTON HOO HOTEL
Adam's Brasserie Jazz Luncheon
Sunday 11 March

LUTON HOO

THE HOUSE THAT HOSTED HISTORY

In April 2018, Luton Hoo Hotel celebrates its tenth anniversary, and we've decided to mark the occasion by taking a look back in time...

There has been a house on the estate since at least 1601, and in 1611, King James I stayed there under a royal procession. In 1767, a new mansion house was built by architect Robert Adam and it became the seat of the 3rd Earl of Bute, then Prime Minister to George III. The Earl commissioned landscape garden

visionary, Capability Brown, to redesign the surrounding parkland.

Tragically, this house was destroyed by fire in 1843 and the current mansion house was built. In 1903, Sir Julius Wernher bought Luton Hoo and hired London Ritz Hotel architects Charles Mewès and Arthur Davis to re-design the interior in a 'Belle Epoque' style.

During WWII, the house and its estate were commandeered by the military. Once the war

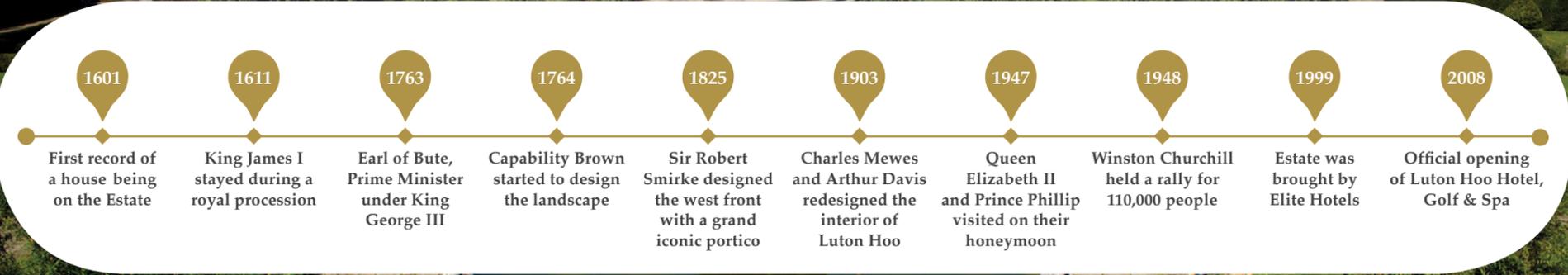
was over, Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Phillip spent part of their honeymoon in the room that is now the Queen Elizabeth Suite. In 1948, Prime Minister Winston Churchill addressed a crowd of 110,000 people.

In the 1950s, then owners, Sir Harold Wernher and Lady Zia, bred several notable racehorses, including Brown Jack. However, over subsequent decades, Luton Hoo sadly fell into disrepair.

Elite Hotels purchased the house in 1999 and more than £60 million was spent in a painstaking restoration project before its official opening in the spring of 2008.

Eighteen months later Warren Weir, the exclusive use wedding and events venue, opened its doors on the foot of the estate.

Nowadays, Luton Hoo might be filled with modern comforts but you can still feel the past everywhere.



TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF THIS WINTER

Dawn Spurgeon is our beauty industry expert with 20 years' experience, and is teaming up with us to discuss skincare and body care products....

"We all want to look and feel our best which has never been easier or more affordable with the vast selection of products and serums available in today's market, but it's also never been so difficult. People say to me all the time that it's a nightmare trying to choose a new product; whether you are looking to target a specific skin issue, or your old-favourite has stopped being made, maybe with so much choice available, you simply want to know how to choose the best option for you..."

Firstly, know your own skin type; what is a great product for one person and skin type, may not be the same for you!

Secondly, and this may sound obvious, check the ingredients and research the brand. More often than not the product packaging can be an initial draw, but it's not the colour of a label which helps our skin, it's what's inside the bottle that counts. Those impossible-to-understand lists of ingredients do need some deciphering, but each brand should be able to give a good explanation of the ingredients and their benefits. Be wary of the products containing hundreds of ingredients, sometimes less is more, even in skincare.

Did you know that the most common base ingredient in skincare and beauty products is water?

Some products use ordinary water which may contain chlorine and other impurities, while others use water from sources such as a 'natural spring'. Although this might sound like a sales-gimmick, there are benefits to using a more selective base ingredient. A product using mountain spring water will likely provide additional benefits to the overall product and if a company goes to lengths to source the water used, it's a good sign they are likely to be more selective about the rest of the ingredients too.

Water is key in beauty, from being used as a base ingredient, to ensuring we are drinking enough of it to keep the body hydrated – which helps keeps skin's elasticity, keeps your energy levels higher and internally helps keeps your organs functioning and filtering out toxins from everyday life. Water is also home to a host of super ingredients including algae, some of which is microscopic, microalgae, and some of which are not so – such as seaweed and kelp - which are macroalgae. There are various types used in the modern beauty market, each with its own properties, and are available in different products to target all areas of the body.

The overall aim of a skincare and beauty regime, head to toe, is to remove harmful toxins and free-radicals, to encourage cell repair and regeneration and find a healthy balance. If you are looking for one treatment during the wintery months to keep you feeling fantastic, I recommend an algae wrap and face mask. Algae such as Spirulina, Laminaria and Fucus algae are excellent for helping to detoxify and cleanse the system as an added bonus - help prevent cellulite. Most wraps include a form of massage to help stimulate blood flow and in order to encourage the removal of toxins, drinking water after these treatments is paramount to help achieve a positive result – providing a sense of overall wellbeing."

Top benefits of Algae:

1. High in Antioxidants
2. Stimulate the circulation to detoxify the skin and body
3. Are high in essential minerals and trace elements
4. Soften the skin
5. Are known to balance the skins oil production



Ashdown Park, Tylney Hall and The Grand, Eastbourne spas use Kerstin Florian; try the Sea Spray Detox Wrap with algae. Luton Hoo use ESPA; try the ESPA Body Wrap with algae. Both Kerstin Florian and ESPA are dedicated to total well-being of the outer and inner body, and our planet; with a strong ethos on the importance on natural environmentally sustainable ingredient sourcing, no plastic micro beads and being silicone free.



MAKE YOUR NEXT EVENT AN ELITE EVENT

What makes for a truly successful event? Whether it's a meeting, conference, training day or team building adventure, we believe that the secret is all in the venue. And where better to hold your event than a historic country house hotel set in landscaped gardens? What's more, all of our venues are within convenient reach of London, meaning it's easy to visit for a memorable day or more.



Whether it's meeting in a historic space, quad biking across rolling grounds or banqueting by chandelier light, we believe in making every gathering memorable. That's why our team of experts are always on hand from start to finish to ensure that your event runs smoothly. Because if luxury is a skill, then we are the specialists.

Our team building adventures offer everything from abseiling to canoeing to survival skills training. Of course, although they're designed to develop skills in cooperation, problem solving and leadership, they're also lots of fun and that helps to strengthen relationships. In short, people might arrive as colleagues but when they leave, they do so as a team.

Hosting a training day at an Elite Hotel is always a treat and never a chore. That's because learning takes place in total luxury, meaning that trainees leave with good memories as well as new skills. So your team can enjoy woodland or coastal rambles, afternoon tea in front of a crackling fireplace and maybe even a spa treatment or two. If that's not an incentive to learn, we don't know what is.

But what about major meetings, conferences and events? We believe that outstanding experiences need outstanding spaces. So delegates can meet in historic rooms, mingle in grand halls and explore extensive gardens, grounds and woodlands. Our philosophy is that the best meetings shouldn't feel like meetings at all, but instead, like special gatherings where bright ideas are born.

We have four Elite hotels, plus a private lakeside venue, to choose from. Each of our hotels can offer exclusive use settings, with event specialists at your beck-and-call all day. Every hotel offers sweeping grounds, luxury wellness facilities and excellent restaurants, so your only challenge will be in deciding which one is best for you.

Maybe it will be Ashdown Park Hotel and Country Club in East Sussex, a stately 19th century mansion set in the magical forest that inspired the tales of Winnie the Pooh. Ashdown Park boasts an 18-hole golf course, beautiful gardens, deer-filled lawns, tennis courts and croquet lawns, meaning your delegates will have plenty of opportunities to bond between meetings.

Or perhaps it will be Tylney Hall Hotel & Gardens in Hampshire, an early 20th century mansion that cherishes the flame of a bygone age of elegance. The hotel includes lovingly restored gardens and 66 acres of parkland with mature redwood trees. Your delegates will arrive via a tree-lined avenue and will then be ushered into a spectacular setting with a ceiling shipped from a Venetian palace. If that doesn't impress, we don't know what will.

Or if you'd prefer a coastal location, you might want to consider The Grand Hotel, the only 5-star seaside hotel in the UK. Known as "The White Palace", The Grand's elegant interiors, ocean views and closeness to the Sussex Downs made it a favourite escape for the Victorian upper classes. Nowadays, it offers generous meeting facilities in a timeless setting.

Or maybe an 18th century mansion is more your style? Nestled on the border of Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire, Luton Hoo Hotel, Golf & Spa is set within outstanding landscaped gardens designed by Capability Brown. The hotel includes an 18-hole golf course, fourteen different function spaces and the award-winning Wernher Restaurant.



ARE YOUR GOALS SMART ENOUGH?

Setting the right goals can be the difference between a successful life and a life of frustration. But that's only half the battle. You also have to set your goals in the right way, one that will allow you to define, track and assess your success. But how do you do that? By creating SMART goals, in other words, goals that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound.

Here are the Whys and Hows of SMART goals:

S: Your goals need to be **Specific** so that you can focus your efforts. Without focus, it's tough to stay motivated. For instance, if your goal is "To achieve more recognition in my field", then that's a little fuzzy. It's more specific to say "My goal is to win a major business award". Make your goal specific by applying the 5 Ws to it: What do I want to achieve? Why do I want to achieve it? Who is involved? Where do I want to do it? Which resources or limitations are involved?

M: Your goals need to be **Measurable** so that you can track your progress. For instance, rather than saying, "My goal is to increase my business profits", put a set figure on this, for instance "My goal is to increase my business profits by 25%". This makes it measurable.

A: Your goals need to be **Achievable** so that you can stay motivated, which means taking a realistic look at your constraints and limitations. For instance, if your goal is to make £1 million in six months but you have no current means of earning that amount, you may need to shift your goal to a more realistic one for now. By all means push yourself, but be pragmatic too.

R: Your goals need to be **Relevant**, otherwise you could waste your time chasing the wrong ones. Start by looking at how a new goal aligns with other ones in your life, for instance, your business goals and your own life goals. By viewing an individual goal as part of a matrix of wider corresponding ones, you'll be able to see if it fits or not.

T: Your goals need to be **Time-bound** so that you have a deadline to work towards. Otherwise, a goal could easily meander for years. For instance, if you want to increase your profits then set a firm timeline for this, for example, "My goal is to increase my profits by 15% within 12 months".

SMART goals give you a clearer picture of what you want to do, why you want to do it and when you want to do it by. Once you have a concrete idea of what you'd like to achieve, you'll be able to steer your life in the direction of your dreams.

A strategy day at Elite can help your team to define shared goals. Visit www.elitehotels.co.uk for more information.



AWARD WINNING EVENTS

Congratulations to Tylney Hall's Paul Tattersdill and Luton Hoo's Petar Soritov for being awarded 'Back of House professional' and 'Conference & Events professional' respectively at the 2017 miaList awards.

These annual awards recognise excellence within the meetings and events industry, highlighting dedicated and passionate individuals from across the country.



Also within the grounds of Luton Hoo is the exclusive-use venue, Warren Weir, a tranquil 'business bubble' on the River Lea. Situated in an arts & crafts village and boasting panoramic views, Warren Weir will ensure complete privacy for your gathering. With dedicated staff, 84 bedrooms and space for up to 400 delegates, this is the ideal bespoke space.

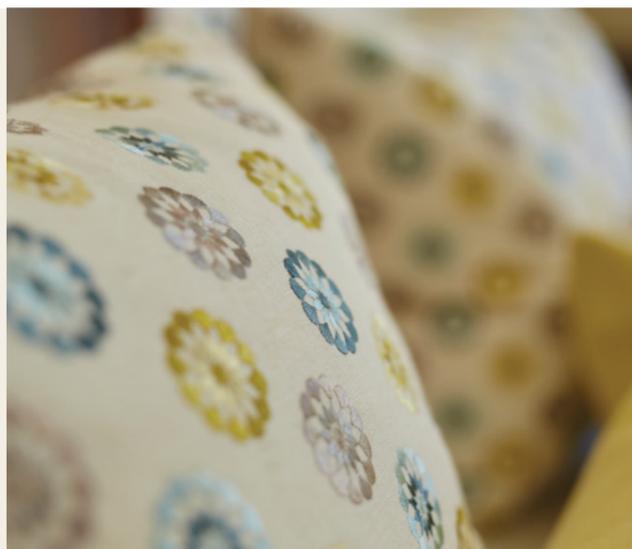
Whatever kind of event you are planning, we have the facilities to match, plus options for exclusive use. In short, Elite Hotels are the perfect settings to gather, meet, plan, train and team build, or simply to reward staff for their hard work. Most importantly, they are spaces where partnerships are forged, great ideas are born and lasting memories are made.

IN WITH THE NEW

Regular readers of *Insight* will be aware of the rolling refurbishment programme we have at each of our hotels, allowing us to update our offering with minimal impact on our customers.

This year has seen updates in fixtures, furnishings and decoration of bedroom stock across the group and 2018 promises to be another exciting year of change.

Plans to refresh some of our iconic public areas – including the Mirabelle Restaurant at The Grand Hotel, the Library Bar at Tylney Hall and Ashdown Park's Richard Towneley Suite – are underway and we look forward to sharing specific details with you in forthcoming issues of *Insight*.





NEXT SEASON'S WEDDING WOWS

We look at the top predicted wedding trends for 2018.....

LIGHTING IS KEY

Lighting adds another level of magical beauty to any location. Top table backdrops have been a common feature at weddings for years, along with LED dance floors. In more recent years giant letters have also become an almost standard feature at weddings, spelling LOVE or the new couple's initials.

Outdoor and indoor decorative LED lighting has never been easier or cheaper to come by. Available in a multitude of designs you can really illuminate key features of your venue in keeping with your theme, and turn the simplest of locations into a unique wonderland to WOW your guests.

KEEPING IT PERSONAL

Wedding packages are excellent value, offering you all the essentials required / expected – providing you a hassle free way to tick off a lot of your wedding list, including your wedding breakfast, cutlery, your wedding cake table and welcome drinks with canapes...but what about the extras?... What makes your wedding yours, and stand out from every one else's?



D.I.Y projects are very popular (there are a great number of easy follow guides online), but personalisation doesn't have to be about getting dirty and stressed out by a D.I.Y. project. Think about the greatest or funniest moments of your relationship - celebrate this about yourselves! Getting personal could be as simple as using something symbolic to your relationship as your cake topper, or calling your tables by the places that have special memories for you and bringing in your already framed home photographs to place about your venue. These are the touches guests will remember and talk about! Our experience team of wedding co-ordinators can always help you with inspiration if needed.

ALTERNATIVE PHOTOGRAPHY

Wedding photography is normally near the top of a wedding tick list; capturing your special day to be able to look at for the rest of your life. You want it to be special. As technology has developed so too have wedding photography styles. Along with the traditional group shot and couple shot, you can now add a little extra to your wedding photographs via the skilful mastership of a graphic designer or get creative at the time the photograph is taken with the help of an artistic photographer.

When choosing who is going to capture your day take a look at what style of images represent your relationship, do a Google search for different ideas and then seek out your dream photographer.



INCLUDING THE WHOLE FAMILY, ESPECIALLY THE FOUR LEGGED MEMBERS

More and more couples are involving non-human members of their family in the most important day of their lives. From dogs, to horses; being a ring bearer, bridesmaid or just being dressed up and attending the day. The only trouble is finding a venue which will allow you to include your four legged guests – we are very pleased to tell you that they are welcome at Elite Hotels, so you can have your dream venue and your whole family as guests!



WEDDING SHOWCASE EVENTS



ASHDOWN PARK HOTEL

Evening Wedding Showcase
Friday 26th January

Luxury Wedding show
Sunday 18th April

TYLNEY HALL HOTEL
Wedding Showcase
Sunday 21st January

LUTON HOO HOTEL
Wedding Showcase
Saturday 4th March

THE GRAND HOTEL
Evening Wedding Showcase
Friday 16th February



IN THE QUEST OF CALM

Perhaps one of our worst kept secrets can be found hidden away at Ashdown Park Hotel, the aptly named, Secret Garden.

The secret garden was added to Ashdown Park's glorious grounds in the 1920's; around the same time the Chapel and East Wing were built by the order of the Nuns of Notre Dame. Originally used as a contemplation garden by the nuns, it mainly consisted of shrubs, large rhododendrons and trees.

In 1974 Ashdown Park became a Barclays Bank Management Training Centre and remained as such until being sold to its present owners, Elite Hotels, in February 1993.

It was Barclays Bank who commissioned the water feature which sits proudly at the heart of this blissful garden and has since become home to a 'troubling' of Gold Fish.

In 2010, following a combination of storm damage and the great magnitude some of the shrubs and rhododendrons had grown to, the secret garden was reinvented with a more delicate appearance. New roses and small flower beds were added to create the beautiful serene space you can enjoy today.

Guests are encouraged to explore Ashdown Park's grounds during their stay, but shhh, don't tell anyone – it's our 'secret'.

5 FOODS THAT MAKE WINTER WORTHWHILE

Let's be honest, winter isn't always an enchanting frosty wonderland. But don't forget that winter has a huge bonus — the food. Whether it's a spice-packed dish, a steaming hot pudding or a festive treat, this is the time to spoil yourself.

Here are our five favourite winter foods:

1. WINTER STEW

Stews are truly good for the soul. Throw some winter vegetables, stock, herbs, spices (and maybe a dash of wine) into a pot, let it simmer until it's soft and delicious, then "hey presto" — you have the perfect cold weather meal. Make sure to mop it all up with generous chunks of warm bread.

2. CHILI

There's something about the pungent smell of Mexican spices that helps chase the winter blues away. A heaped bowl of chili at the end of the day can make all the sleet, hail and ice worthwhile. For a really hearty winter treat, serve with baked potatoes too.

3. MASHED POTATOES

Delicious mash, how shall we eat you? Let us count the ways. Maybe we'll mix you with cheddar cheese, or wholegrain mustard, or steamed cabbage. Or maybe we'll just serve you the classic way with butter, cream, salt and pepper. So many mashed potato choices, so little time...

4. SPOTTED DICK

Hero of British school dinners through the ages, you'll be glad to know that spotted dick hasn't stopped loving you now that you're all grown up. It hasn't stopped loving custard either — and thank goodness, for they're a heavenly match.

5. PORRIDGE

It's in the cold months that this humble breakfast dish really comes into its own. The best thing about porridge is that it can be all things to all people — either super-healthy and stacked with winter berries, or a pudding-like mix slathered with cream, honey and maybe even chocolate chips (well if you're going to be naughty, it might as well be in wintertime).

Why not sample one of our gourmet winter menus? Book a meal at an Elite hotel by visiting www.elitehotels.co.uk



Stephanie Malvoisin with Gerald Roser



Byron Hayter

CHEF APPOINTMENTS ON THE MENU IN SUSSEX

Elite Hotels are delighted to announce the arrivals of Byron Hayter and Stephanie Malvoisin, who both took up their posts during the summer.

Byron Hayter has been appointed Executive Head Chef at Ashdown Park Hotel & Country Club. Focussing on locally sourced ingredients, Byron favours a 'less is more' cooking approach, believing that his ingredients speak for themselves. He has already made himself popular by speaking with guests at their tables about the menu of the day.

Stephanie Malvoisin joins as the new Head Chef at the Grand Hotel's fine dining Mirabelle Restaurant,

taking over from Gerald Roser who has retired following 15 years of wonderful service. Stephanie is excited about her new challenge: "The Mirabelle Restaurant has an excellent reputation and I am really looking forward to a new challenge. I'll be bringing in some classic French flair to the restaurant's modern British menus, and I also look forward to mentoring the young chefs and apprentice chefs in the team."

WINTER WARMING DRINKS

A few ideas for keeping the winter chills at bay this season.

| | |
|--|----------------------------|
| ALCOHOLIC | NON-ALCOHOLIC |
| Orange Bourbon Tea | Non-alcoholic Eggnog |
| Hot mulled wine | Pumpkin spice latte |
| Baileys Irish Hot Chocolate | Mulled Cranberry Punch |
| Blood Orange Moscow Mule | Milk & honey |
| Hot mulled cider | Spiced syrup hot chocolate |
| Hot toddy | Hot spiced apple juice |
| Guinness, Whiskey, and Baileys Hot Chocolate | |
| Orange & pomegranate red wine sangria | |
| Eggnog | |



ROOM TO REWARD

Elite Hotels have partnered up with 'Room to Reward' to celebrate some of the unsung heroes of volunteer and charity work.

Founded in 2015 by hotelier Nicolas Roach, Room to Reward makes use of unsold hotel bedrooms to offer deserving cases the opportunity to enjoy a relaxing short break in order to acknowledge their dedication and allow them to recharge their batteries.

Beneficiaries of Room to Reward so far have included volunteers who work for Macmillan Caring Locally, National Autistic Society, Thames Valley Air Ambulance, Mencap and Hearing Dogs for Deaf People.

Graeme Bateman, Elite Hotels' managing director, commented: "The scheme offers Hoteliers the opportunity to say thank you and recognise those who help the most vulnerable in society, and we are delighted to have supported Room to Reward from its inception."

If you know of an unsung hero, or would like to find out how to become involved with the scheme, please visit www.roomtoreward.org/faqs



SIX BOOKS TO READ IN SNOWY WEATHER

Is there anything more satisfying than staying indoors with a good novel in cold weather? Here are six of our favourite books to read when it's snowing:

1. THE SNOW CHILD BY EOWYN IVEY

Jack and Mabel are a childless couple making a fresh start in the Alaskan wilderness. When Mabel encounters a strange little girl surviving alone in the snow, it's not clear whether it's all in her imagination. A poignant, mysterious and enchanting novel based on a European folktale, The Snow Child will linger in your memory long after reading it.

2. KOLYMSKY HEIGHTS BY LIONEL DAVIDSON

During the Cold War, a British scientist trapped in a Siberian research station sends out a coded SOS. But who would be daring enough to try and rescue him? This classic thriller is an icy rollercoaster that will hook you from beginning to end.

3. MISS SMILLA'S FEELING FOR SNOW BY PETER HOEG

Smilla grew up in Greenland and now, as an adult in Copenhagen, has an intuitive relationship with snow. So when a terrible death takes place on her street, the snow shows her that it wasn't an accident. This atmospheric novel is an unusual take on the typical detective story.

4. THE MISTLETOE BRIDE AND OTHER HAUNTING TALES BY KATE MOSSE

Inspired by French and English folktales, this collection is beautifully illustrated by Rohan Eason. The ghostly and gothic short stories inside will give you even more shivers than the snow, so maybe it's best not to read this after dark.

5. A CHRISTMAS CAROL BY CHARLES DICKENS

One Christmas Eve, miserly Ebenezer Scrooge is visited by three ghosts, each of whom have an important message for him. This classic Victorian tale is a year-round classic and reminds us all that Christmas is ultimately about sharing.

6. THE SNOWMAN BY RAYMOND BRIGGS

Before it was a much-loved Christmas animation, The Snowman was a magical and moving picture book. Why not introduce it to your children this year and make them part of this lovely tradition?

Whatever your winter reading choice, you could enjoy it in front of a crackling fireplace on an Elite Hotel escape. Whether you're visiting for Christmas, New Year or a winter spa break, we'll give you the warmest of welcomes. Choose a hotel by visiting www.elitehotels.co.uk



FEEL FESTIVE AT ELITE HOTELS

Sometimes the festive season is the only time in the year to meet up with old friends, and what you really want is a relaxing meal, with good company and fine wine.

At Elite Hotels whether you plan on catching up over lunch, spending some time with a loved one over dinner or to arranging an intimate get together with a few close friends in a private room, we have the perfect setting.

Throughout December, each hotel invites you to sample fine festive fayre in splendid surroundings.



WIN AN OVERNIGHT STAY WITH OUR DOG PHOTO COMPETITION

Here at Elite we pride ourselves on having four welcoming hotels for dogs, meaning no member of your family is left behind.

Whilst on your stay with us we can supply dog blankets, food bowls as well as toys, and with this in mind, we have an unmissable competition for all dog lovers. Simply take a snap with your dog at any one of our hotels - it could be stood outside one of our hotel entrances, or walking the majestic grounds with your favourite companion. The most creative will win an overnight stay for you and your dog.

Send your entries into marketing@elitehotels.co.uk or share them on social media with the hashtag #Elitedogs. The winning entry will be printed in the spring edition of Insight.

GIVE THE GIFT OF AN ELITE EXPERIENCE

Share the experience of Elite Hotels with our range of gift certificates; from afternoon tea and indulgent spa treatments to gourmet dining and luxury overnight stays; we have the perfect gift for a loved-one, friend or colleague. *Purchase online at www.elitehotels.co.uk or talk to our reception teams about your bespoke gift.*

