

Press Release

Walpole Bay Hotel announces 'novelists in residence' grants

Room 308 with proven track record in curing writers' block

The iconic Margate cliff top Walpole Bay Hotel has announced it is offering 'novelist in residence' grants, in the form of complimentary accommodation.

The hotel will offer stays of between two nights and a month from September onwards, for commissioned novelists experiencing a creative impasse.

Preference will be shown to authors whose work would particularly benefit from a context provided by the location. This could be a historic romance dating from prior to the First World War onwards; a typically British coastal setting; or a modern urban work set in a once thriving town, which has suffered urban decay but experiencing something of a economic renaissance.

Known as a "living museum" for its memorabilia and educational displays, the hotel offers tranquillity and an ambience of a bygone era with its uniformed maids, spacious lounges, flower decked veranda, Edwardian restaurant, billiards room and 1920s ballroom with its original sprung maple dance floor.

The Walpole Bay Hotel, renowned for its strong artistic connections, also features works of many international famous artists in its napery, including several from local girl Tracey Emin.

In the past, three novelists have credited room 308 on the top floor for curing their writers' block. As with all guest rooms, 308 offers an inspiring sea view.

"There's just something about the atmosphere in room 308 that inspires, relaxes, cocoons, refreshes and releases the imagination," said hotelier and museum curator Jane Bishop, who added, "It also happens to be my favourite too – a great place to unwind on a busy day – after half an hour up there I am ready to face whatever the world has to throw at me.

"Novels would not need to be set in Margate or even Thanet or Kent, but the county, area and town offer a wonderful backdrop for many fiction genres," said Jane, who hopes the move will help make more potential visitors aware of the town's many attractions.

Visiting writers are also set to be inspired by the same skies and seascapes which also attracted the artist JMW Turner to the area and after whom the town's Turner Contemporary art gallery, which opened in 2011 is dedicated.

To apply for a residential grant, commission authors should apply directly to Jane Bishop at the Walpole Bay Hotel with written confirmation from their publisher with a synopsis or opening chapter of their book.

Editors' Notes

Built just before the First World War extended in 1927, The Walpole Bay Hotel is being lovingly restored to its former glory by the Bishop family. It was built by Louisa Budge and stayed in her family until 1995, before being acquired by the Bishops. The caged 1927 Otis Trellis lift, serving all 5 floors, is the centre-piece of reception.

Sunday lunch, with musical accompaniment from Nick Capocci on a 1908 Marshall & Rose Piano costs £19.95 a head.

Cream teas are served daily priced from £5.75. The range of accommodation includes doubles, four posters and family suites ranging from £75 to £135 per night including buffet breakfast.

A special celebration package including champagne, chocolates, flowers and breakfast in bed is also available for a £95 upgrade.

The opening of the Turner Contemporary has highlighted the many attractions to area – 26 miles of golden sandy beaches, award-winning restaurants, the mysterious subterranean Shell Grotto discovered in 1835 and thought to be a pagan temple dating back to the Romans, Dickens's House Museum, 5 theatres, top international golf courses, boat trips offering seal watching and sea fishing, the 27-mile long Viking Trail for cyclists and walkers, the Powell-Cotton Museum at Quex House, to list just a few.

The hotel's dining rooms is home to a renowned 'napery' featuring original works of leading international artists, including local girl Tracey Emin. Emin's works, painted on original bed sheets with embroidered Walpole Bay Hotel logo were displayed in the London Hayward Gallery. The hotel hosted Tracey's birthday parties for 10 years, was used for launch of her book, 'Strangelands', and was the location for her film 'Top Spot' whose premier was televised by the BBC .

Tourist information: www.visitthanet.co.uk

Press Contact:

Accommodation with complimentary dining at local restaurants can be arranged for commissioned journalists. For details and photographs contact George Shaw at Avocado Media.

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