

WHERE TO STAY

NEAR CHATSWORTH

RY INN

PEACOCK AT ROWSLEY

At the heart of costume-drama country Bakewell and Matlock, where the rivers Derwent converge, Sir Joseph Paxton, designed the Crystal Palace and was also the architect for the gardens at nearby Chatsworth, the village's Italianate station.

Once the dower house for Haddon, the ancestral home of the Dukes of Rutland, it's understated chic, with a cosy fire in the parlour and lilies in the corridors: contemporary decor pleasingly mixed with heirlooms. Old-time travellers amble back from the river (fly fishing offered by the Hadden Estate fisheries) to watch Colin Firth, Keira Knightley, or even the film *Jane Eyre*, *Pride & Prejudice* or *The Boleyn Girl*.

lovely en-suite bedrooms (pictured) with flat-screen TVs and DVD players. Zany decor is mixed with Colefax fabrics. Crisp linen and plenty of hot water for long, luxurious showers. Room 5 has a romantic four-poster and overlooking the garden are quieter; all you can hear is the river and bleat of sheep. Delicious buffet breakfast with autumnal kippers, homemade waffles and maple syrup. Piles of newspapers. Dinner in the dark restaurant dining room is a treat: duck liver with hazel nuts and figs, followed by bouillabaisse.

Wonderful service – nothing is too much. Eccentricities are encouraged: dogs in the parlour (our small son on a camp bed), and flowers were brought up to us on a tray so we could watch the World Cup rugby in our room.

The A6 goes smack through the village. No doubt Sir Joseph would be buried underground.

01629 733518; www.thepeacock.com. Doubles from £145.



DERBYSHIRE'S DE

The three hotels reviewed here are excellent bases for many of Derbyshire's main stately homes and gardens, in particular Haddon Hall, Hardwyt, Tissington, Sudbury, Eyam Hall. Of course, Chatsworth, where Sotheby's sculpture exhibition, "Beyond the Garden," runs until November 4, is also convenient for many of the county's pretty villages and market towns. Ashborne, Matlock Bath and Buxton. In Castleton there are caverns and mines to explore. For walkers, the Peak District offers a host of meandering rivers, rolling limestone dales or rough moorland up on the purple moors and the flat tops of the Peaks.