



THE
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THE DOWNTON SHOOT

A day's shooting at Downton is a day to remember, the shooting is challenging even for the most experienced gun. The central feature of the Shoot is the classical Downton Gorge, where guns stand on the banks of the rushing River Teme, below sheer 30m high cliffs with woods above over which the pheasants fly.

A feature of the Downton Shoot is the consistently high quality throughout the day's shooting. The high fast birds presenting a challenge even for the most experienced guns. It is this challenge set in spectacular countryside that keeps many parties of guns returning year after year.

From being greeted at the Shooting Lodge at the beginning of the day to the presentation of oven ready birds at the end of the shoot, the quality remains the same with attention to detail to ensure that all guns are in the shooting on every drive.

The day's shooting is complemented by the standard of the lunch and the comfort of the Shooting Lodge with a huge open fire and attractive surroundings and many have commented on the friendliness of the shooting staff and how welcome they were made during the Shoot.



THE DOWNTON ESTATE

The Downton Estate extends to about 5,000 acres and is located in the spectacular, wooded and hilly countryside of the Shropshire, Herefordshire borders, close to the Welsh Marches.

Ludlow, with its splendid castle, notable restaurants, ancient buildings and celebrated Broad Street is nearby and the motorway network gives convenient access to Birmingham Airport, London and European destinations.

THE DOWNTON LEGACY

Originally, Downton formed part of Bringewood Forest and was owned by the de Mortimer family. They had a considerable impact on the history of the Marches. In the early 1700s, Richard Payne Knight took a lease on the Estate to provide charcoal for his fast expanding iron smelting business. With the discovery of coal smelting at Iron Bridge and the Industrial Revolution that followed, Downton was no longer a viable enterprise.

However, Richard Payne Knight's fortune was preserved and he made the 'grand tour' including Italy, where his interest in architecture and landscape were developed. He built Downton Castle in 1780 and became a leading figure in the 'Picturesque Movement', which was popular at the time, furthering interest in ruins, castles and unpretentious natural beauty. He developed his ideas throughout the spectacular landscape of Downton Gorge where much evidence of his achievements can still be seen.





AN INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION

As long as anyone can remember there have been pheasants at Downton.

However, it was not until 1988 that the current shoot was developed and the international reputation for some of the finest, high pheasants in the country, followed.

A traditional set of farm buildings on the Downton Estate have been converted to a Shoot Lodge providing comfortable accommodation for Shooting Parties close to the Downton Shoot.



OLD DOWNTON LODGE

Parts of Old Downton are so ancient that history merges with legend: its renovation so sympathetic and creative that you may confuse fact with fiction. A mixture of buildings – medieval, half timbered and Georgian surround a herb and flower bedecked courtyard that looks out towards Welsh Mountains. This is pure escapism – a chance to immerse yourself in history and enjoy an experience that will live long in the memory.

The sitting room is reminiscent of its previous incarnation – there is no hiding the fact that this was once an impressive stable. Mighty timbers that once fronted stalls now provide seating from which to watch the roaring log burner, socialise and enjoy a drink from the bar – or in summer to contemplate the spectacular sunsets over the Shropshire hills.

The museum is the most mysterious room of all – for a start no one knows the origins of its name. Its huge cider press can still trundle powerfully around its stone trough (with no drain to let the cider out!) and provides a dramatic focal point to a room which is ideal for small conferences and receptions.



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