



ROAM

# BROUGHTON SANCTUARY

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its lakes and waterfalls. But this time we were entering a different world. Think Downton Abbey, but with a contemporary twist: grandeur meets groundedness.

Broughton Hall, built in the 16th Century, is at the heart of a 3,000-acre estate which has been owned by the Tempest family for an incredible 32 generations, stretching back nearly 1,000 years to the days of William the Conqueror. Today, it is owned by Roger Tempest and his wife, Paris Ackrill, who have transformed an aristocratic seat into a modern day temple of transformation. Over the next four days, we were to experience the full range of Broughton Sanctuary's revolutionary offerings and discover why it was named as one of the 30 most exciting destinations in the world to visit in National Geographic's Cool List 2024.

We were welcomed by our very own 'Carlson', Martin the butler, who already had a fire blazing in our private sitting room in a wing of this magnificent stately home. After settling in, we were whisked away to Avalon, Broughton's state-of-the-art Wellbeing Centre, its ultra-modern design inspired by the mathematical Fibonacci sequence. Here we enjoyed a restorative Yin Yoga session with Paris, the perfect grounding start to the retreat.

Broughton's design embraces nature at every turn. Avalon's swimming

e were there before we knew it. One moment the hustle and bustle of London, the next Skipton Station, gateway to the uber-beautiful Yorkshire Moors. The last time my husband Richard and I were here, we had been hiking around nearby Malham Tarn and

pool deserves a special mention, its floor-to-ceiling windows adjacent to a giant sculpture of a reclining woman cloaked in autumn foliage in the garden outside. As I swam back and forth watching her, I felt like I was paying homage to Mother Nature herself. This natural symmetry is woven into the architecture of Broughton with even the steam rooms having a womb-like feel.

All the yoga and Pilates classes take place in The Nest, one of my favourite spaces. Perched high among the treetops, its glass walls blur the line between the inner and the outer, like a physical manifestation of the whole Broughton experience. It was here that we joined a Pilates session with Natalie early the following morning, the views amplifying the sense of tranquillity.

The wellness offerings at Broughton go far beyond yoga and massage. There are also the more unexpected offerings. The crystal light bed was a revelation: lying under a cascade of coloured lights, I could feel my different chakra points becoming gently activated, creating a sense of peace and balance. This was followed by my first-ever flotation tank experience when I was amazed how easy it was to overcome my fear of confined spaces. Floating in complete darkness and silence, the silky water - a highly concentrated solution of Epsom Salts - seemed to cradle me, dissolving time and stress alike.

Emerging from this womb-like experience I felt a profound sense of being reborn. I was especially thrilled to discover a locked sacroiliac (SI) joint, which had caused me countless restless nights, was suddenly free of pain. As a body therapist myself, I can only assume that it must have been able to fully relax and then release when I was floating. Rosie, Avalon's manager, told me that scientific studies have shown how flotation tanks help to reset the body's nervous system and can even heal conditions such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.



The land itself is a central narrative in Broughton's story. More than 350,000 trees have been planted here, making it one of the UK's leading rewilding initiatives, a sanctuary not just for humans, but also Iron Age pigs, Riggitt Galloway cattle and, in the near future, beavers. The Iron Age pigs are a 'keystone species' - which have a disproportionately beneficial impact on their environment relative to their numbers - while the Galloways are an ancient breed of highland cattle with a distinctive white stripe running down their back.

As well as Rewilding the Land, Broughton's mission is also to Rewild the Spirit. Roger Tempest and his team recognise that to obtain peace within our 'outer nature' we must also obtain peace within our 'inner nature'. So perhaps it is no coincidence that one of the highlights of our stay was Broughton's Wild Wellbeing experience.

On a rainy Sunday afternoon high on a hillside overlooking the estate and surrounded by breathtaking moorland, our group slipped into the welcoming embrace of a wood-fired hot tub. It was only then that we discovered what it meant to Rewild the Spirit. Wim Hof-style ice baths were followed by a screaming bacchanalia of wild swimming in a nearby lake before we finally took refuge in a woodland sauna. Even the rain seemed to amplify the sense of connection with nature, transforming our initial discomfort into raucous delight.

There are many footpaths around the Broughton estate. One of these, the Odyssey Trail, meandered around what looked like an old-fashioned treasure map and one afternoon we set off on our path of discovery, allowing our bodies to guide us rather than our minds. The trail was punctuated by stone sculptures as well as memorable encounters with both the Riggitt Galloways and the Stone Age pigs. The latter perform a vital role in the rewilding project by churning up soil to allow trees to grow. On the highest part of the moor, we came across the famous Broughton Moonbaths, strategically placed for meditation under the night sky.

Even mealtimes felt like an extension of Broughton's ethos of holistic wellbeing. We ate delicious meals - winter soups and hot lion's mane tea were my favourites - in the dining hub, Utopia, designed by Sir Michael Hopkins and overlooking the walled gardens. As in other spaces around the estate, words of inspiration are etched on the menu board: "Heal" "Learn" "Thrive".







The range of transformative retreats are hosted by luminaries including Ruby Wax, Lynn McTaggart and Rupert Sheldrake. What struck me most during our four days at Broughton was the profound sense of connection—to nature, to the people around me, and to myself. The team here feel less like staff and more like a family, each of them bringing their unique talents to create this haven of healing.

On a farewell walk on our last morning, we discovered a labyrinth made with rocks in the ground which we hadn't seen before. It was next to a 'fire temple', a sheltered wooden structure with stools placed in a circle around the fire-pit at its centre. This was a place of ritual and ceremony, perfect for drumming, singing, sharing and story-telling.

I decided to walk the labyrinth to see if it would spontaneously offer me something as a final gift. What I realised was that Broughton isn't just a retreat: it's a philosophy; a way to embrace life's cycles and find strength in rest and reflection. This ethos permeates every space. Each of my unique experiences here, from chanting Kirtan to meditating in a Somadome, felt like an invitation to let go of expectation and simply be. This is not a place of rules or rigid itineraries. It's a playground for the soul, where the only guidance is your intuition.

When we first arrived, I was expecting to experience something special: a wellness retreat in the grounds of an historic country house in one of the most beautiful parts of Britain. And I was not disappointed. But as we bid Broughton a fond farewell, I realised I had experienced something much deeper. Broughton Sanctuary is not just a place to heal; it's a call to return to your essential self, a playground for the senses, a place to dream, grow, and reconnect with what truly matters.

In truth, it is the perfect example of what the transformation guru and best-selling author, Dr. Joe Dispenza, describes as the true purpose of a retreat. "It means making the time to overcome your old personality and personal reality," he writes. "To deepen your understanding of what it means to be a creator in your own life." I left with a profound sense of possibility. If you're seeking a transformative retreat then Broughton is calling. The question is, are you ready to answer?

**DISCOVER:** [broughtonsanctuary.co.uk](http://broughtonsanctuary.co.uk)