



BERKELEY CASTLE
WEDNESDAY 3 TO FRIDAY 5 MAY

INSCAPE RETREAT

For the greater part of nine centuries the Berkeley family have lived in Berkeley Castle. Few great houses anywhere in Europe have been inhabited by the same family for as long a period of time. The oldest building in the country to be inhabited by the same family who built it, its place in history is significant, not just because it is still intact, but because for centuries the Berkeley family and their home have played important roles in key events; English history has been lived out within these walls and by this family. The Berkeley family are the only English family still in existence in England that can trace its male ancestors, that is, from father to son, back to Saxon times. As part of a series of unique in-depth private visits to British Great Houses, Inscape has arranged with the Berkeley family a bespoke visit to Berkeley Castle. Hosted by Charles Berkeley, the present owner, and his staff - David Smith, the Castle Archivist, Joshua Nash, the Castle Custodian and Chris Gill, the head gardener- this promises to be another up close experience of the challenges and achievement of curating and preserving these testaments to English history.

We compare the grandeur of Berkeley Castle to the intimacy of Gatcombe Court, to which we have also arranged a private visit. Gatcombe has been lived in since the 13c when John de Gatcombe built the original solar before 1254, using the stone from the Roman settlement upon which the house is built. As Simon Jenkins says of Gatcombe in his book *Thousand Best Houses* 'nothing is regular, nothing the same period, yet everything is pleasing.'

Berkeley town itself goes back in time as far as the Castle, and evidence suggests that there was once a large Saxon settlement and possibly, a Roman Temple there. It is full of distinguished buildings, including the house of Edward Jenner, who in 1796 carried out his famous experiment injecting the arm of eight-year-old James Phipps with cowpox; this was the world's first vaccine.

WEDNESDAY 3 MAY

- 10.00 Suggested train leaves Paddington
- 11.44 Arrive Bristol Temple Meads Railway Station for minibus
- 12.30 Arrive Gatcombe Court
- 4.00 Leave Gatcombe Court
- 4.45 Arrive Thornbury Castle Hotel. Check-in and rest
- 6.00 Drinks and Nicholas Friend Lecture 'The Berkeley Family'
- 7.30 Private opening group dinner at Thornbury Castle in Barons Room

THURSDAY 4 MAY

- 10.00 Leave for Berkeley Castle
- 10.30 Coffee in Long Drawing Room
- 11.00 Guided Tour of the Castle with Charles Berkeley
- 1.00 2 Course Lunch in The Great Hall with Charles Berkeley
- 2.30 Presentation by David Smith (Castle Archivist) with documents from The Muniment Room
- 4.00 Tea and Cake
- 4.30 Leave Berkeley Castle
- 5.00 Arrive Thornbury Castle Hotel
- 7.30 Group Dinner in Hotel

FRIDAY 5 MAY

- 10.00 Leave for Berkeley Castle
- 10.30 Coffee in Long Drawing Room
- 11.00 Tour of the Castle Gardens with Head Gardener, Chris Gill
- 12.30 2 Course Lunch in The Long Drawing Room
- 2.00 Walk through time with Joshua Nash, Castle Custodian
- 3.30 Tea and Cake before departure

IF GOING ON TO HELLENS MUSIC FESTIVAL

- 3.45 Minibus leaves for Feathers Ledbury
- 4.45 Arrive Feathers Ledbury

IF RETURNING TO LONDON

- 4.00 Minibus leaves for Bristol station
- 5.00 Train leaves Bristol Temple Meads
- 6.44 Train arrives London Paddington



THORNBURY CASTLE HOTEL & RESTAURANT

Castle Street
Thornbury, Gloucestershire
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Thornbury Castle was built in 1511 as a home for Edward Stafford, 3rd Duke of Buckingham. It is not a true castle, that is designed to serve as a fortress, but rather an early example of a Tudor country house, with minimal defensive attributes. It is now a grade I building. The site was occupied by a manor house in 930. Part of the original plans for a very grand residence were "well advanced" before the duke was beheaded, in 1521, on the orders of his distant cousin Henry VIII, for alleged treason.

Following the Duke's death, Thornbury was confiscated by King Henry VIII of England, who stayed at the castle for ten days in August 1535 with his queen, Anne Boleyn. Following the English Civil War, the castle fell into disrepair, but was renovated in 1824 by the Howard family. St Mary's Church, in front of the castle, is Norman. Between 1966 and 1986 the castle was operated as one of the UK's top restaurants by Kenneth Bell MBE with staff including food writer Nigel Slater and MasterChef New Zealand judge Simon Gault early in their culinary careers. The castle is now a 26-room luxury hotel with each of its 27 rooms uniquely furnished. The hallways positively clank with suits of armour and meals are taken in the octagonal Tower Dining Room, the newly refurbished long Tudor Dining Room or, in the Baron's Sitting Room in front of an open fire.

COST £1095 Members, £1145 non-Members, £195 single room supplement, £250 deposit, includes two nights accommodation with breakfast, two lunches with wine, two dinners with wine, tea, tours by Charles Berkeley and Berkeley castle curators, private visit and lunch at Gatcombe Court, all travel during the tour, VAT, tips and service. Excludes travel to and from Bristol Temple Meads, includes travel to Ledbury for Hellens Much Marcle tour.