

# Getting away from it all to The Red House Hotel

**Staycation is the word on everyone's lips this year, but it's a term I'm not fond of.**

A holiday can happen whether you're travelling for a half hour bus ride or a long haul flight. My daughter and I were rather excited to head off to Coupar Angus for a couple of nights. I'm not a fan of driving so the hour and fifteen minute journey was a breeze to end up somewhere that felt far from the city.

We received a warm greeting at the Red House Hotel. Bang in the middle of Coupar Angus. The place was abuzz with golfing couples, many of who visit every year for a mix pairs tournament. We checked in to a family room and even with three beds in it, there was plenty of space for kiddiewinks to lollop about in. My daughter was particularly fascinated by the steel framed beds and quite thrilled that you can see underneath them. What a wonder it is to see the world through the eyes of a child.

The architecture and decor of the Red House Hotel is decidedly 1980s which I loved. I do worry that someday someone will modernise it and take all the charm out of the place. Textured brickwork should be protected by the National Trust, if you ask me. Needless to say our room was spotlessly clean and the quality of bedlinen felt rather luxurious. I won't leave my fake tan imprint in any old sheets.

One of the best things about Coupar Angus is that there's lots to do nearby. On our way up we stopped off at Camperdown

Wildlife Centre where we were treated to some lovely species including a huge brown bear and adorable wildcat kittens. We also got chatted up by a blue parrot. Well worth the entirely reasonable entry fee.

On day two the weather was drizzly but that didn't dampen the golfers spirits at breakfast. As any morning chef will know, there's always some cretin who asks for poached eggs and I decided to be that person. Perfectly done I'm glad to report and the whole cooked breakfast was generous and good quality.

We decided to visit Glamis Castle, ancestral home of the dear old Queen Mum. We were greeted by the car park attendant Jim who very kindly showed us lots of pictures on his phone of the various events they hold there. Because of Covid there wasn't the usual coach loads of tourists, so wandering round the house itself we were mostly on our own. I sincerely hope they have CCTV that would make a Cabinet Minister edgy because it appeared to us that security was light. Half the fun of visiting country piles is the tour guide, amateur historian type who is more sniffy towards your peasant status than the sitting Laird. Sadly the tour was via an app, but interesting none the less. They make a big deal about how the Queen Mother's sitting room is presented exactly as she had it. I didn't see any bottles of gin, ashtrays or betting slips lying about so I gave a wry smile to that nugget.

Whilst the history is fascinating it's the more recent generations that have the juicy scandals. A quick Google search shows that the late 18th Earl of Strathmore once had a four day booze and sex orgy with three prostitutes. And they accuse the aristocracy of being lazy.

As the weather was horrid we didn't bother much with the various walks and gardens but Jim showed us some more photos of them on our way out.



Arnaud, Manager of the Dalmore Inn

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A cosy lunch was very appealing so we headed for The Dalmore Inn, part of the Red House Hotel's family business. The

setting was elegant and comfortable and the food stunning, the highlight for me being the perfectly cooked sea bass followed by a pavlova with seasonal berries. The chef here clearly knows how to treat top notch produce with great care. I was also very taken by Arnaud the manager who was straight out of central casting as a charming Italian. Enquiring as to how he came to be in Scotland he exclaimed: "A woman!" She must have been a stunner. I highly recommend you seek out the Dalmore Inn if you're in that neck of the woods. With the superb food and delightful service you will not be disappointed.

Dinner at The Red House hotel was equally enjoyable. With the portion sizes you can tell they cater a lot for male golfers. My yummy steak pie was a sight to behold. One of the things that can be difficult when travelling with young children is what to do in the evenings.



The Red House Hotel has a snooker, darts and pool room along with a gym and squash court. My nine year old and I spent our evenings playing pool and darts badly. There were plenty of lively locals in the public bar and when I came back from a trip to the powder room my daughter was receiving a darts lesson from a rather nice little boy who wanted to introduce her to his mother. You don't meet guys like that in Edinburgh.

I could easily have stayed another couple of nights in Coupar Angus. There's lots of local attractions and the Red House Hotel has a very friendly and fun atmosphere. At £100 a night for our spacious room with breakfast it was quite a bargain too.



Dalmore Inn