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Beautiful Cambridge is the perfect destination for a city break (stock)

CAMBRIDGE HOTELS: 10 OF THE BEST PLACES TO STAY

11

Valerie Teh selects the best places to stay in this historic university city

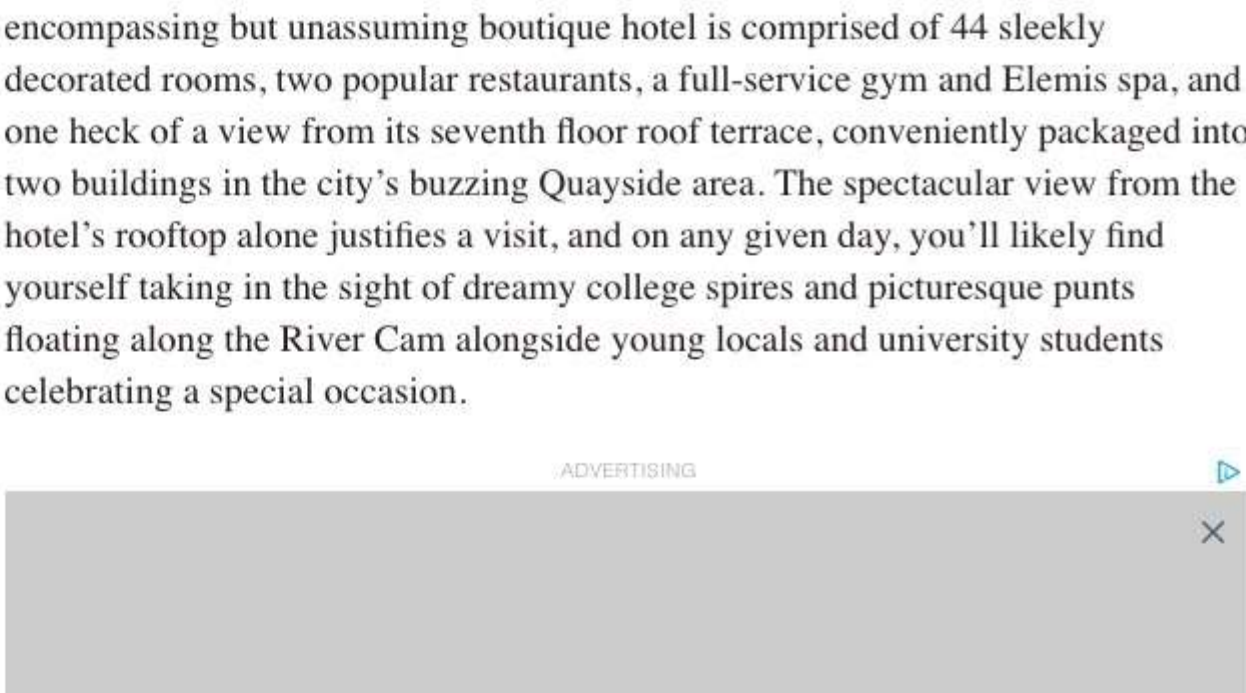
Valerie Teh | 4 hours ago | [Like](#) [Click to follow The Independent Travel](#)

I fell in love with Cambridge as a bright-eyed 17-year-old, wandering along the banks of the **River Cam**, through pastures dotted with cows casually grazing, and into revered colleges with lofty spires. Many have felt the pull of this historic city, from Nobel Prize winners to heads of state who have passed through the university, as well as the 5.3 million annual travellers eager to soak up its rich history and stunning **architecture**.

The hospitality scene has thankfully developed since my student days at the University of Cambridge. Visitors now have a wide range of options to choose from, from the hip to the high-end or homely digs – though it is worth noting that this is not the city for cheap accommodation.

The best view in town: Varsity Hotel & Spa

Neighbourhood: Quayside



Glaze over Cambridge's dreamy spires on top of the The Varsity's roof terrace (Paul Winch-Furness)

When the Varsity launched in 2011, it immediately became the place to see and be seen in Cambridge. The brainchild of a group of Cambridge graduates, the all-encompassing but unassuming boutique hotel is comprised of 44 sleekly decorated rooms, two popular restaurants, a full-service gym and Elemis spa, and one heck of a view from its seventh floor roof terrace, conveniently packaged into two buildings in the city's buzzing Quayside area. The spectacular view from the hotel's rooftop alone justifies a visit, and on any given day, you'll likely find yourself taking in the sight of dreamy college spires and picturesque punts floating along the River Cam alongside young locals and university students celebrating a special occasion.

Doubles from £155
thevarsityhotel.co.uk

Best for the college experience: University of Cambridge student rooms

Neighbourhood: Throughout the city



Sleep where the greats slept at Christ's College (Christ's College)

Cambridge is one of the oldest and most prestigious universities in the world, and no visit would be complete without exploring some of the 31 colleges that make up the city's eponymous educational establishment. Most are open to walk-in visitors, but if your trip happens to coincide with Christmas, Easter or the summer months, you can book to stay in a student room. Follow in the footsteps of Charles Darwin by spending the night at his alma mater Christ's College, or take in the Gothic architecture of King's College after hours from the dorms across the road on Bene't Street.

Singles from £70, room only
universityrooms.com/en-GB/city/cambridge/home

Best for old school glamour: University Arms

Neighbourhood: City centre



Take a soak in one of the University Arms' opulent bathtubs (University Arms)

Following an £80 million revamp led by architect John Simpson (whose previous projects include parts of Buckingham Palace and Kensington Palace) and interior designer du jour Martin Brudnizki (responsible for the refurb of restaurants including The Ivy and Annabel's), the University Arms reopened in August 2018 to great fanfare after two years of major renovation. With a grand new porte-cochère as its entrance, double-height, marble-adorned communal areas, a restaurant helmed by Gordon Ramsay protégé Tristan Welch, and 192 rooms – each filled with curated books and art – it's Cambridge accommodation shifted into a higher gear.

Doubles from £205, room only
universityarms.com



Relax in the newly refurbished Duke House B&B (Duke House)

Not all bed and breakfasts are born equal. Steeped in history and character, Duke House was formerly owned by the Duke of Gloucester when he was a student at Magdalene College, Cambridge, before its current incarnation as a luxurious B&B. Sensitively refurbished by former designers Liz and Rob Cameron, the property currently offers five en-suite double bedrooms and a self-catering apartment. Its central location next to Christ's Pieces, one of the city's oldest green spaces, means you are only ever a few minutes away from Cambridge's key attractions.

Singles from £125, bed and breakfast
dukehousecambridge.co.uk

Best for families: Gonville Hotel

Neighbourhood: Petersfield



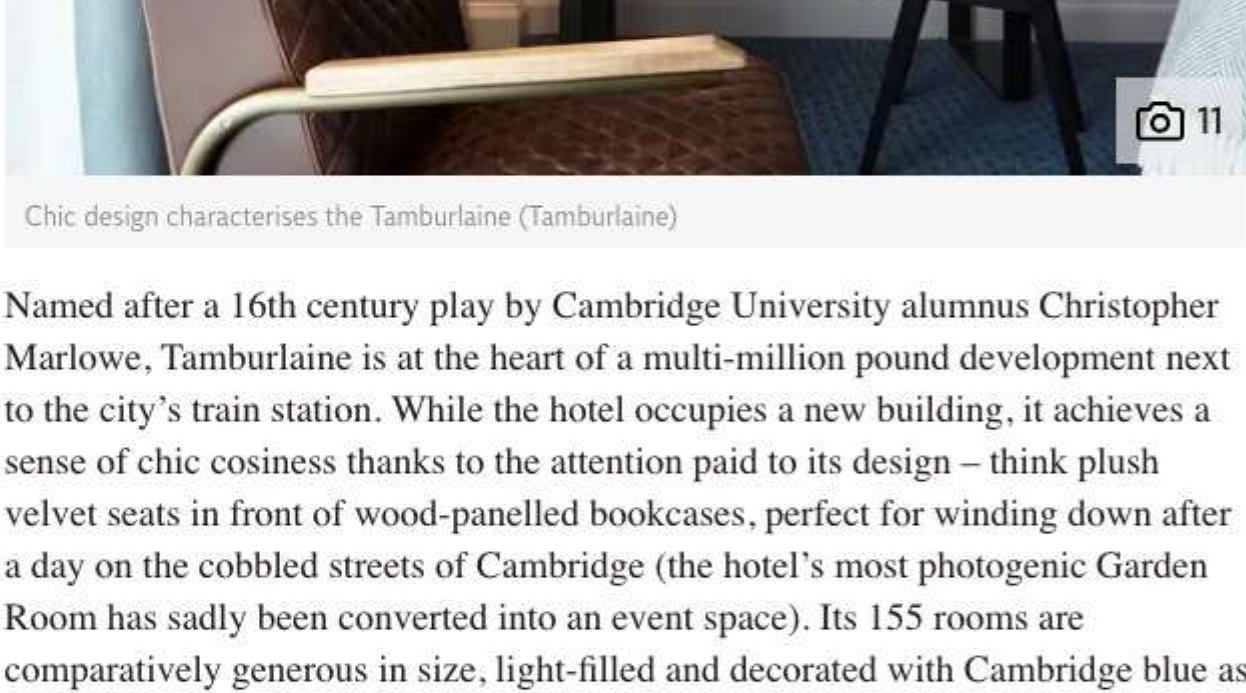
Enjoy an aperitif at The Gonville's atrium bar (The Gonville)

With complimentary tours of the city in a Bentley S1, free use of the hotel's Bobbin bikes to explore the riverside and quaint villages nearby and a calendar of outdoor cinema screenings and live jazz during the summer months, there's truly something for the whole family at The Gonville. In addition to 92 well-appointed bedrooms a few minutes' walk from the city centre, the hotel is also home to a decadent ESPA spa and two well-liked all-day fine dining restaurants. Dogs are also welcome, so your four-legged family members can join in on the fun.

Doubles from £140, room only
gonvillehotel.co.uk

Best for design: Tamburlaine

Neighbourhood: Cambridge station



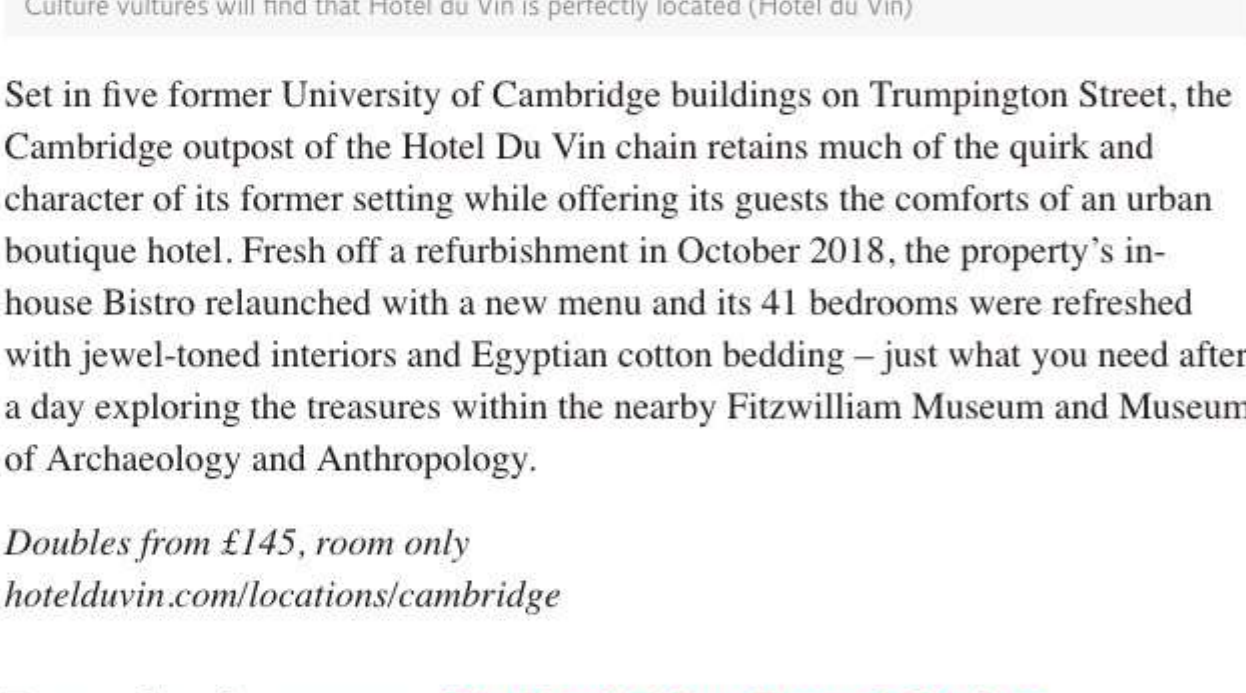
Chic design characterises the Tamburlaine (Tamburlaine)

Named after a 16th century play by Cambridge University alumnus Christopher Marlowe, Tamburlaine is at the heart of a multi-million pound development next to the city's train station. While the hotel occupies a new building, it achieves a sense of chic cosiness thanks to the attention paid to its design – think plush velvet seats in front of wood-panelled bookcases, perfect for winding down after a day on the cobbled streets of Cambridge (the hotel's most photogenic Garden Room has sadly been converted into an event space). Its 155 rooms are comparatively generous in size, light-filled and decorated with Cambridge blue as an accent colour.

Doubles from £135, room only
thetamburlaine.co.uk

Best for museum hopping: Hotel du Vin

Neighbourhood: City centre



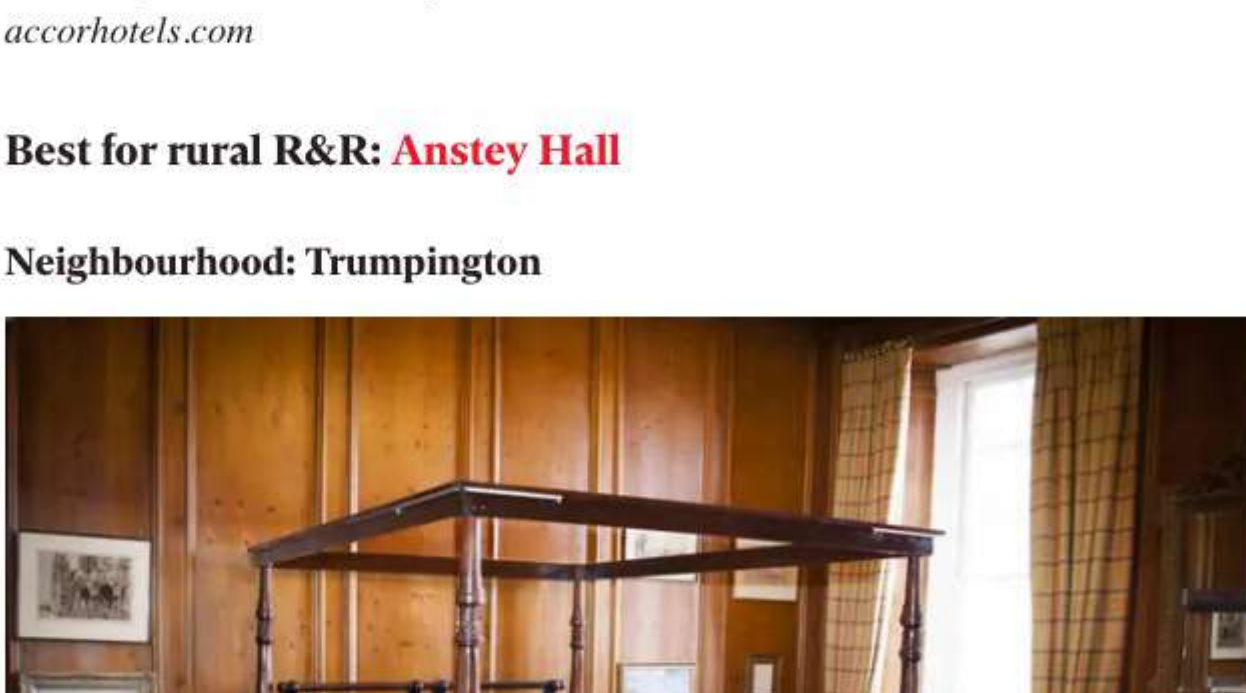
Culture vultures will find that Hotel du Vin is perfectly located (Hotel du Vin)

Set in five former University of Cambridge buildings on Trumpington Street, the Cambridge outpost of the Hotel Du Vin chain retains much of the quirk and character of its former setting while offering its guests the comforts of an urban boutique hotel. Fresh off a refurbishment in October 2018, the property's in-house Bistro relaunched with a new menu and its 41 bedrooms were refreshed with jewel-toned interiors and Egyptian cotton bedding – just what you need after a day exploring the treasures within the nearby Fitzwilliam Museum and Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.

Doubles from £145, room only
hotelduvin.com/locations/cambridge

Best value for money: ibis Cambridge Central Station

Neighbourhood: Cambridge station



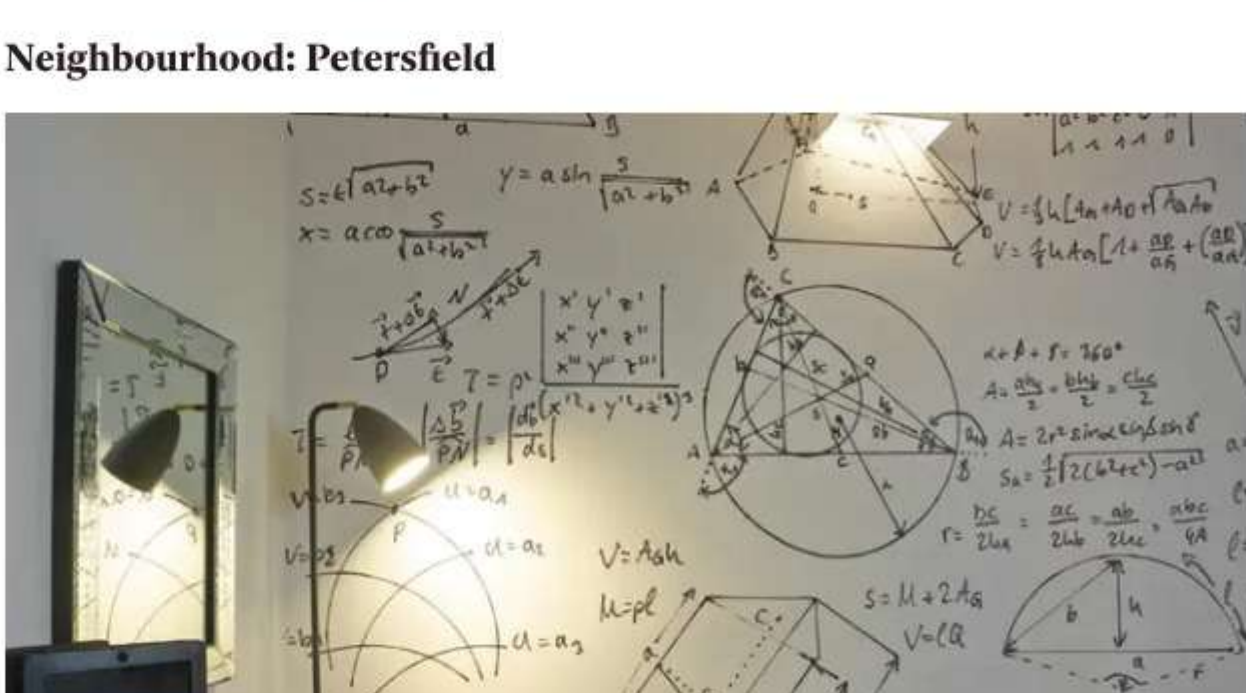
The ibis is a clean and contemporary option for those on a budget (ibis)

The largest hotel in Cambridge also happens to be one of the best if you're on a tighter budget. Just steps away from Cambridge train station, AccorHotels' first property in the city was clearly designed to meet the needs of a budget traveller without compromising on experience. Convenient location aside, the hotel's 231 rooms are contemporary, the coffee artisanal, and there are meeting rooms aplenty if you are travelling for business.

Doubles from £60, room only
accorhotels.com

Best for rural R&R: Anstey Hall

Neighbourhood: Trumpington



Get back to nature at Anstey Hall (Anstey Hall)

A Grade I listed country house a mere two miles from Cambridge city centre, Anstey Hall is the place to go for fresh country air and a quiet night's sleep. The former private home of businessman John de Bruyne, the mansion and its picturesque grounds are now a popular wedding and events venue in addition to offering 22 en-suite bedrooms in the main house and stable annexe. For the ultimate stately home experience, opt for a Superior King Room that comes complete with a four-poster bed, roll top bath and a breakfast spread worthy of royalty.

Doubles from £108, with continental breakfast
ansteyhall.com

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