



TTKS VISITS LODGE ON LOCH LOMOND

Extensively revamped suites, fresh local produce and a front-row seat for one of Scotland's most famous sights – it's safe to say *Rosie Patrick* was won over by this spot on the bonnie, bonnie banks

I've always been a water baby. Chalk it up to being a Pisces – there's just something about a wave lapping on a shore that I can't resist. As a child, going away with my parents, my only request was that the hotel had a pool. It was there that I'd spend my *entire* holiday, until I'd shrivel up like a prune and have to be dragged out, kicking and screaming, by my armbands.

Driving through lush forestry to the Lodge on Loch Lomond on a blazing hot Friday afternoon in May, the thought of loch-plus-spa was enough to equal those five-year-old levels of excitement. Who knows – maybe I was a fish in a past life, or I'm about to be told I'm actually a mermaid (please!)? Either way, my visit to the Lodge felt like a homecoming.

SUITE LIFE

Loch Lomond was shimmering in the sunshine as my husband and I checked in and tracked down our home for the night, the plush new Cuillin suite. One of three refurbished over Christmas, there isn't a corner of the Cuillin that hasn't been refreshed and painstakingly renovated with what must have been an unrelenting perfectionist's eye for detail. Although there's no dedicated honeymoon suite at the Lodge *per se* (couples can choose which of the six types of room they'd like to spend their first night as newlyweds in – a complimentary perk that comes as standard with the venue's wedding packages), I can't imagine brides and grooms electing to stay anywhere but the Cuillin. Between the double balcony, generous living room (complete



NEED TO KNOW

The sumptuous, spacious Lodge on Loch Lomond has superlative views, dedicated staff and truly impressive food

► THE NUMBERS

There are two main spaces indoors at your disposal: Glen Luss, which can seat up to 80 for the wedding breakfast or, more often, act as your ceremony venue; and McMillan, which can be divided up into two smaller rooms, defining different areas for the service and reception, and catering for up to 150 guests during the day and a further 50 at night.

► THE ACCOMMODATION

The hotel can sleep up to 98 people in a range of rooms across its three separate buildings. From a comfortable Classic Graham in the original lodge from £80 per night, to the lush Cuillin suite which we enjoyed, there's a bed for all tastes and budgets.

► THE PACKAGES

Marrying here is surprisingly affordable. Couples typically go for the Glen Luss & McMillan Suite package, which rings in at £65pp for remaining dates in 2018 and 2019 and covers bed and breakfast for you both, a three-course wedding meal, drinks and stationery. If you opt for a date later in the year, the Winter Wonderland package comes into its own: for £65pp, you'll also bag yourself additional décor, such as ceiling draping in the McMillan suite, and an evening buffet.

► THE FOOD AND DRINK

Given the quality of the dinner we devoured, the w-day spread will surely be second to none at the Lodge. The mains – Ayrshire pork belly, North Atlantic cod, sea bream fillet and roast rump of Argyll venison – sound particularly mouth-watering. **Lodge on Loch Lomond, Luss**
www.loch-lomond.co.uk



[Far left] Weather permitting, ceremonies can be held outside on the patio, overlooking the loch. The Lodge's team will wait until the morning to make the call [Above] You don't have to venture far for a mantelpiece-worthy shot [Left] The venue's luxury accommodation has been completely transformed this year: now choose between the lavish Carter, Travis and Cuillin suites, and enjoy freestanding baths, four-posters and panoramic vistas

with Sky TV and Netflix, and bath as big as a boat, we were utterly spoiled. And that was before dinner.

FOOD, GLORIOUS FOOD

If anything convinces you to marry at the Lodge on Loch Lomond, it'll be the food. Colquhoun's is the venue's exceptional restaurant, serving up top-notch local cuisine – and by local, I really do mean local. As I tucked into my starter of potted hot-smoked salmon, the waitress informed me that if I liked it (spoiler alert: it was out of this world), I could hop along a couple of miles to the nearby Luss Smokehouse to pick up my very own jar to take home.

And the treats kept coming to our lochside table: over the course of the evening, we demolished a series of canapés, including moreish haggis bonbons and mini fish and chips, a pumpkin curry, battered North Sea

haddock, feather-light white chocolate mousse and refreshing sorbet.

Blissfully full, we managed a slow waddle back to the suite, where my husband collapsed instantly on the bed and I took to the tub to watch dusk descend over the loch.

THE GRAND TOUR

Next morning, my first stop was, naturally, the spa. To my absolute delight, I was the only person in the pool. An enthusiastic swim later, I investigated the sauna, steam room and laconium one after the other, where I left all my cares behind.

Post-breakfast buffet (a life-affirming spread), co-ordinator Carla Gannon met me on the terrace for a walk around the venue. Beginning at the intimate Glen Luss suite, she led me out on to an adjoining balcony and patio (where you can tie the knot on sunny days) and, finally,

across to the largest space, the McMillan suite. I got a sense of the lengths Carla and her team will go to – as it turns out, nothing defeats them, not even a sheep as a guest or a gunge tank prank. They take it in their stride. All you need to do is dive into your day. ♥

