

# COUNTRY & TOWN HOUSE

THE BEST OF  
BOTH WORLDS

MAY 2016 £3



## A ROYAL SALUTE





# The Princess and the Pea

From Indian palaces to hotels with Royal Warrants, **Daisy Finer** picks four places where luxury reigns supreme



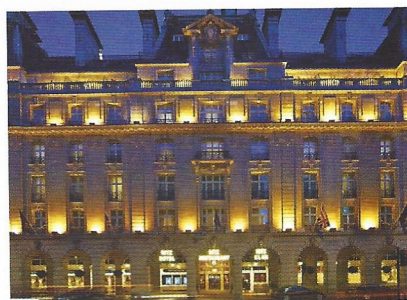
LORD OF THE MANOR

## 1 LOUGH ESKE CASTLE, DONEGAL

Few can resist the charms of a four-poster, cast iron tub and crenelated battlements, especially those housed in a castle with a history as turbulent as that of Lough Eske. Though the site dates back to the middle ages, the current Victorian building was ravaged by fire in 1939, when a curtain caught fire in the ballroom and it was left derelict. Until an unlikely knight in shining armour – Harcourt Development – restored it to its former glory in 2007 as a Solis hotel. You might expect a castle to feel haughty and draughty, but Lough Eske is anything but. Rooms manage to feel both lavish and homey, with restful views of the surrounding woodlands. If you can tear yourself away from your suite, the spa will make it worth your while. Housed in a large glass atrium, surrounded by pretty gardens on both

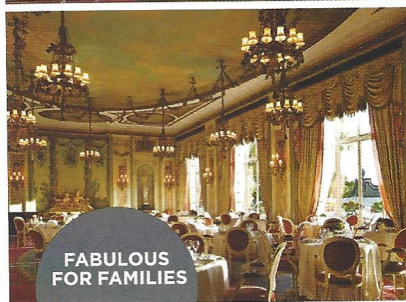
sides, the pool is ideal for basking in the late afternoon sun. Whatever you do, make time to admire the bronze sculptures in the garden.

**BOOK IT:** Doubles from €220 B&B.  
[solislougheskecastle.com](http://solislougheskecastle.com)



## 2 THE RITZ, LONDON

Glitteringly gorgeous, not even seasoned five-star travellers can fail to be seduced by The Ritz's considerable charms (and only one of two hotels ever granted a Royal Warrant). Yes, there are dress codes but this art deco gem is far from stuffy – and it's the staff who make it particularly spoiling, especially if you happen to be pint-sized. They actively seem to like having children around; smiling at, chatting



FABULOUS FOR FAMILIES

with and cajoling your offspring, making them feel as important as an Egyptian sheikh who has taken over the entire top floor. Bedrooms – endless mirrors and gilt, marble bathrooms, views over Piccadilly – come fully prepped with teddy bears, mini robes, nappies and a VIK (Very Important Kid) card, entitling the bearer to ice-cream. Tea in the Palm Court is a rite of passage at any age but most fun when you can get away with diving face first into freshly baked scones. Luckily, parents can kick back after lights out upstairs (with babysitter) in the bijou Rivoli Bar over a Hendrick's martini and smoked almonds before dining on executive chef John Williams' classic, beautifully presented fare (two priests next door were tucking happily into beef Wellington followed by crêpes Suzette made flamboyantly at the table) in what must be the most sumptuous dining room in Europe. Get thee to the Ritz once in your lifetime at least – children or not; it's pure hotel theatre.

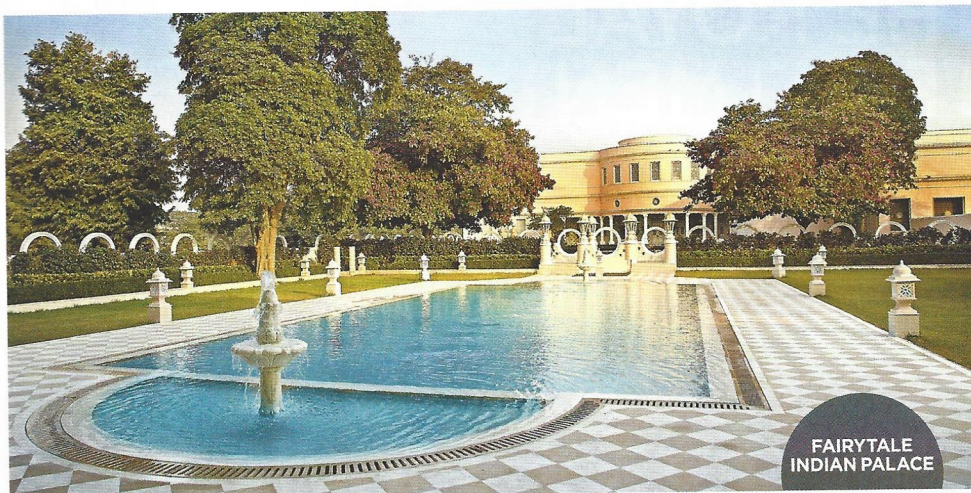
**BOOK IT:** Doubles from £395. [theritzlondon.com](http://theritzlondon.com)



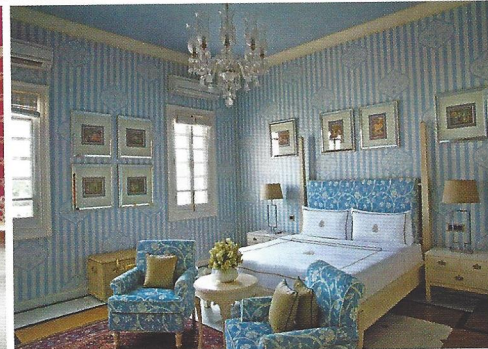
### 3 SUJÁN RAJMAHAL PALACE, JAIPUR

Originally built by the Maharaja of Jaipur as a garden retreat for his wife, the SUJÁN Rajmahal Palace is a fresh new arrival to the Rajasthan hotel scene. Each of the 14 apartments, rooms and suites – designed by Adil Ahmad – is unique (and then some!), with bespoke wallpaper and fabrics, and named after one of the illustrious guests who have previously been entertained by the royal family of Jaipur (think Jackie Kennedy or the Princess of Wales). Breakfast on lush food in eye-poppingly bright 51 Shades of Pink; swim in the beautiful art deco pool before sipping a lassi in the Polo Bar and sitting down for a thali in the formal Orient Occident dining room. Nothing is too much trouble for the turban-wearing staff, there are fresh flowers dotted about the place and the location is spot on: a few minutes' walk from the bustling bazaars of the old town and a short drive from the magnificent, must-see Amber Fort.

**BOOK IT:** Greaves India offers a four-night stay from £1,799pp, including BA flights, internal flights and sightseeing. [greavesindia.com](http://greavesindia.com)



FAIRYTALE INDIAN PALACE



YOUNG (BLUE) BLOOD

### 4 SOHO HOUSE ISTANBUL

An Italian-style, 19th-century mansion in the hip Beyoğlu district has been restored to its former glory and sprinkled with Soho House magic. There are original frescos, polished marble floors and rosewood doors, plus all the added signature touches you'd expect: a rooftop pool with yellow candy-stripe sun loungers and picture-postcard views of the Bosphorus (the only place to hang out in the summer); a Cecconi's restaurant, a Cowshed spa and hammam, and the Embassy Club, for late night live music and DJs. The 87 rooms – kingsize beds with Egyptian cotton sheets, walk-in rainwater showers, parquet floors, kilims decorating the walls and retro record players in the living area – are set apart from the social spaces in a new, adjacent glass building and annex. Drag yourself out to explore the surrounding narrow cobbled streets, haggle for spices and carpets in the Grand Bazaar and listen to the call to prayer at the famous blue mosque. After you've worked up an appetite, escape the fray on the Mandolin terrace, where you can sit at wooden tables, tucking into small plates (spicy chicken wings, falafel, steak tartare) as lanterns and rows of twinkly bare-bulbs light up the inky night sky.

**BOOK IT:** Doubles from €185.

[sohohouseistanbul.com](http://sohohouseistanbul.com)

