



No better
place to be

Whatever the weather, the Lodore Falls Hotel is an outstanding destination with a stunning new state-of-the-art spa. SUZANNE ELSWORTH reports

As I swam to the edge of The Falls Spa's infinity pool, it took a few moments for my eyes to adjust. The contrast of the vivid colours of the pool's lighting against the blackness of a stormy Lakeland sky brought out the true meaning of its design. I couldn't work out where the pool was going to end.

It was a rather magical experience – particularly as, just for a while, I had the pool to

myself. Most of the other guests had headed inside for dinner, away from the wet and windy winter night.

This new spa – the final stage of a £10 million redevelopment and renovation of the historic Lodore Falls hotel – is an experience that even the Lake District weather cannot spoil. In fact, as the rain beat on the huge picture window of the Finnish sauna, where the temperature sits around 85 degrees Celsius, there was no

better place to be. We'd worked our way up to the hottest of the heat, from the balmy warmth of the laconium, based on a traditional Roman bath, through the aroma steam room, to the salt steam room and herbal sauna, with plenty of misty tropical rain showers and dips into the ice fountain along the way.

Then it was out to the vitality pool and its infinity edge for some gentle pummelling from the underwater jets.

But the serious therapy was still to come. We'd booked the venue's signature shea butter full body massage where Emily in The Falls Spa team had instructions to be brutal and, thanks to generous use of her elbows and forearms, I was definitely walking taller at the end of the treatment before she settled me into the cosy relaxation area with its faux fur throws and the living flame fire.

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Relaxation had now really started to kick in. We'd started our break with lunch in Mizu – the hotel's new pan Asian restaurant. It's a sleek modern space with lots of wood, stone and natural finishes. I half expected it to jar with the older traditional hotel, but it flows



nicely thanks to a very natural colour palette, helped by the fact the landscaping has opened up the beautiful views to those eponymous Falls and along the Borrowdale valley.

And then there was the food. Fresh and very tasty, cooked at the open kitchen pass by chefs who know what they are doing. The design of the menu was inspired. The images of the super-colourful dishes guaranteed we couldn't make a decision and ordered far too much – salads, Ramen noodles, sushi and skewers of meat and seafood. Try the pork belly – it's possibly the best I've tasted.

Dinner was a traditional affair. We dined in the Lake View restaurant and the five-course tasting menu. Salmon and pigeon

were followed by slow-cooked short rib beef and guinea fowl, but our full bellies meant we chose to share a dessert, the BFG, the hotel's deconstructed Black Forest Gateau.

And so to bed in one of the new Falls Spa suites. A giant bed, Elemis toiletries, and a relaxing lounge with big sofas perfect for sprawling on after the laziest or most active of days. There's a massive balcony outside with a view to Catbells and beyond. Lolling against the soft pillows, with a glass of fizz and a late film, while the wind howled outside, life was good. ♦

Suzanne Elsworth was a guest of The Lodore Falls Hotel & Spa, Borrowdale, Keswick, CA12 5UX. www.lakedistricthotels.net/lodorefalls.

