

## 24 hours in... CASTLE LESLIE ESTATE

A get-away-from-it-all Sunday spent in the heavenly surroundings of Castle Leslie Estate, the jewel in the crown of the sleepy little village of Glaslough, Co Monaghan



Castle Leslie Estate is synonymous with luxury, privacy and pampering but one thing that really shines about this place is its unreserved authenticity. This exquisite retreat, nestled in 1,000 acres of countryside transcends the luxury hotel experience, thanks to its character and inimitable style. Just 60 minutes from Belfast and 80 minutes from Dublin airport, Castle Leslie Estate is unrivalled in its uniqueness, scale and captivating fairytale appeal.

One of the many endearing elements of this magical escape is the fact that it's been home to the Leslie family for over 300 years. No big company buy-outs, no dilution or loss of original character, this place is truly unique. Adding another layer of intrigue, each Castle Leslie Estate experience is as individual as the surroundings. As well as the Castle with its 20 individually furnished and themed bedrooms, there's The Lodge (29 bedrooms), Old Stable Mews and self-catering Village Cottages so the options are varied. From the opulence and more formal ambience of the castle to the laid-back, cosy Lodge with stone-cut stable yard, Conor's bar and Snaffles 2 AA Rosette award-winning restaurant, The Lodge is the social hub of the estate. We stayed in Pluto, a Superior Double in The Lodge. Each of these gorgeous stable rooms has been named after much-loved estate horses, which only enhances the character and personality of each room. Tongue 'n' groove panelling, chalky paint finishes and tweed and velvet soft furnishings give this room its hugely inviting charm. Complete with a spacious balcony overlooking the stables, we also had the privilege of an equine alarm call from one of our four-legged friends in the stable block below! It goes without saying that the estate is a hugely popular playground for riding enthusiasts and lovers of the

great outdoors. You could spend hours trekking the woodland paths circling Glaslough Lake, taking detours down by the boathouse and along past the Gothic Lodge.

Checking in to The Lodge feels more like a warm welcome at a rich relative's rambling country pile. We instantly felt right at home and, first things first, a drink or bar snack in Conor's Bar was the perfect way to get things started. Traditional décor, an informal vibe and great Guinness (I'm told!), Sundays don't just don't get any better. There was a lovely relaxed vibe here with lots of families enjoying leisurely lunches and quality time. That evening, we were treated to the Snaffles experience – the estate's fine dining restaurant on the first floor serving a divine 6-course tasting menu with local seasonal produce and creative flair with a sense of fun. My crab cocktail starter arrived with Heston Blumenthal-style bubbling seaweed and mussel shells for added theatre! Mixed fish fritters appetizers followed by a pear sorbet palette cleanser were presented before the starters. Rabbit terrine and crab cocktail starters were followed by fillet of beef with Madeira cream and roast chicken with ginger jus – amazing flavour combinations and cooked to perfection. The raspberry plate and poached plums were delicious dessert selections but the extensive menu made it a difficult decision (first-world problems!)

Had we stayed longer, we would've checked out the organic spa experience of the Victorian Treatment rooms and next time, we'll have a leisurely row around the lake. Having said that, we did make time for a Monday morning post breakfast outdoor hot tub indulgence – not a bad way to start the week! It goes without saying – we're already planning our next visit... [castleleslie.com](http://castleleslie.com)