



One hotel, one story

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Mercure Stratford-upon-Avon Shakespeare Hotel and its resident ghosts

To be or not to be, the famous Shakespearean quote defines the eponymous hotel perfectly. The Shakespeare Hotel is a flawless example of a traditional late 15th century Tudor house. It features the typical white and black timbered facade. This comfortable, pleasant 4 star hotel, which has been part of the Mercure network since 2007, is something of a curiosity. Indeed, it has several resident ghosts! Marnix Teeken, the hotel manager, confirms that many trustworthy people have reported seeing them. The most famous ghost is Lucy, a young woman who apparently hung herself in room 203 after being attacked by a man. Her ghost has haunted the room ever since. What is more, it seems the ghosts haven't been frightened off by the recent renovations...

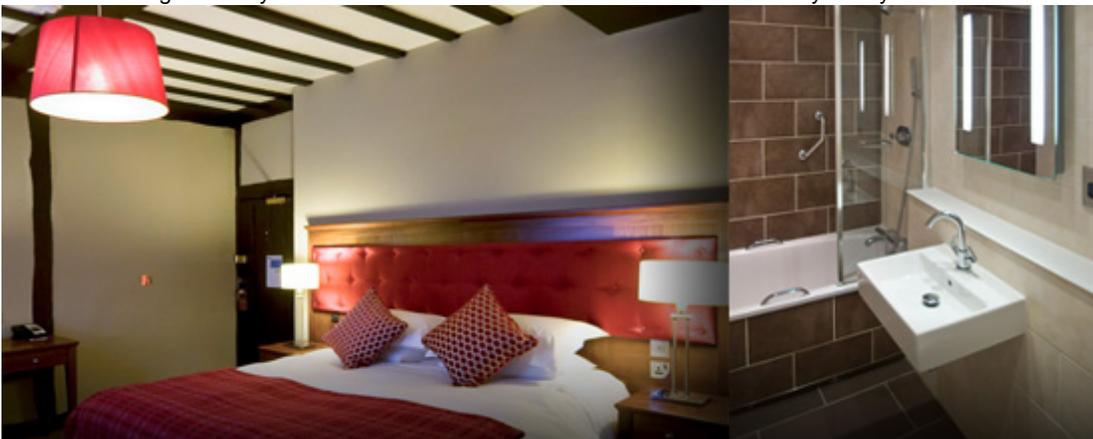
The world of Shakespeare

The 78-room hotel, which was renovated between May and December 2011, remains one of the best in its category. Recent guests have praised the quality of the new furnishings and the refurbishment in general.

This historical building has had a choppy past. In 1637, it had three separate wings and was long known as "Five Gables". It changed hands several times and was declared bankrupt in 1867. It is full of personality, complete with creaking floorboards in the corridors and to add to its charm, most of the rooms have timbered Tudor interiors with blackened beams and whitewashed walls.

The hotel was named after the famous playwright in 1782, when historians found his name mentioned in an old registry. William Shakespeare is indeed omnipresent and all the rooms are named after his characters or plays: Othello, Romeo and Juliet, Claudius, Richard II, to name but a few. According to Marnix Teeken, the general manager, "the best room is 112". This junior suite is named after Oberon, King of the Fairies, and has a superb view of the courtyard garden with guaranteed peace and quiet. It has also been completely refurbished.

Shakespeare enthusiasts will also appreciate the hotel's exceptional location right in the town center. They will be just a few minutes from Stratford-upon-Avon's two theatres, the Royal Shakespeare Theatre and the Swan Theatre. Shakespeare retired to Stratford-upon-Avon after his dazzling London years and is also buried in the town's Church of the Holy Trinity.



Attention to detail

"The team is very proud to work in this setting" explains the hotel manager. Employees are thoughtful, ever-attentive to guests and happy to cater for all their needs with non-stop, 24/7 service. Attention to quality is constant. Every day, several rooms are chosen at random and their occupants receive a call from the receptionist to see if they require anything: fresh milk, a spare bed, little extras, etc. The hotel's refined service also extends to the dishes served at its pub, The Garrick, and at the warm and welcoming Quill Bar. *"Our daily challenge is*

to provide the best possible quality” adds the general manager. “We like to boast that we offer the best breakfast in town”. The Shakespeare Hotel does indeed serve a traditional English breakfast as well as a continental breakfast and most often a well-stocked buffet and fruit juices. Famous customers who have succumbed to the hotel’s charms include former British Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, who stayed there in 2009.

A haunted hotel

Most of the employees know the hotel inside out and some have worked there for 10 to 20 years. Ghost stories invariably come up in conversations with them. Maintenance Manager Georges Missir insists “Three years ago, I saw the old soldier’s ghost running off in front of me”. He has worked here for several years, is well-regarded by everyone and is definitely not extravagant. The general manager praises his skills and “down-to-earth” attitude. The hotel’s second ghost, known as “the old soldier” or “the gentleman”, is often to be seen in the lounge and apparently can easily be mistaken for a real person.

Recently, a guest in room 110, or Bardolph, saw a cavalier from his bed. Many guests laugh at the stories. “Most of them don’t believe in these ghosts”, continues Marnix Teeken. Despite the stories, room 203, the one haunted by Lucy, hasn’t been sealed off. Less intrepid customers ask for another room when they book. The general manager believes that the explanation for the ghosts lies in the fact that the building was used as a hospital and military prison during the Second World War. He regrets that none of the ghosts have any link with William Shakespeare. So don’t go looking for his ghost here!



[Book a room at the Mercure Stratford-upon-Avon Shakespeare Hotel](#)