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51 Buckingham Gate Taj Suites

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So here you are, riding in a horse and carriage, following the exact route of the recent royal wedding with your own princess by your side. The only things missing are the crowds and the mounted guards of honour, but you can't have everything can you.

Mind you, unlike William and Kate's itinerary, you get to stop off at the Tower to have a gander at the crown jewels too, but I suppose they can have a look any time they want can't they.

The royal tour is just one of the delights available for guests at 51 Buckingham Gate, a luxury all suites hotel just yards from Buckingham Palace hidden away in St. James Court, a quiet little courtyard just off Buckingham Gate itself. It's hidden away for a reason. 51 Buckingham Gate is a little exclusive; an understated 5 star residence that has been and still is host to many a famous name the world over. Even the Queen has eaten here; after all it was once the overflow residence for Palace guests when the main house was full. As for me, I was lucky enough to stay the night before the royal wedding, and let me tell you, that was a little bit special too.

This is one of those hotels where things are done swiftly and silently, almost uncannily before you even ask. It's that kind of place. Your personal butler will take you to your suite and give you a tour around and considering some of them come in at an enormous 1,800 square feet, without his assistance you'll need a map! The suites are simply stunning. From the luxuriant sensual purple fabrics, to the state of the art giant flat screen plasma and surround sound systems (here's even a television set into the wall above the bath) you'll be cocooned in a discreet world of ultimate living, where you'll be pampered to your heart's content.

The spa at 51 is a triumph, a celebration of Anne Sémonin products combining trace elements and essential oils provided by fully qualified therapists offering made to measure treatments. You'll be quite literally, getting the royal treatment! And then later, between 6 and 8pm, relax and take some complimentary drinks and canapés in the Library before dinner. A place to talk about the day and look forward to a meal in Quilon, the simply magnificent Michelin starred Indian restaurant adjacent to the property, or some very British fare at Bank Westminster just across the courtyard.

Talking of courtyards, it is in itself a delightful garden space. Dating back to the turn of the century, the eight mansion blocks that surround the court are ringed by a frieze carved from the bricks, reputedly the longest frieze in existence anywhere in the world, whilst the elegant water fountain in the centre lends a little ornate Victoriana to the proceedings. In fact in the summer months between May and September, you can dine *al fresco* and enjoy some delightful concerts here too.

Owned by Taj Hotels, a group well accustomed to the finer things in life with a collection of luxury palaces and properties all over the world, 51 Buckingham Gate is the perfect example of how to provide 5 star luxury from start to finish. It doesn't shout about it, just goes about offering the very best hospitality in a fantastic understated way.

51 Buckingham Gate is a hotel that I would highly recommend. End of story.

Buckingham Gate 51, Buckingham Gate, UK

Contact tel: +4420 7769 7766, fax: +4420 7828 5909, e-mail:

reservations@51-buckinghamgate.com

Cost suite: £££££+

Services spa, fitness equipment, parking, hotel restaurant, hotel bar, room service, business services, internet access, wheelchair accessible, concierge, air-conditioning

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51 Buckingham Gate

Quilon Indian Restaurant

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