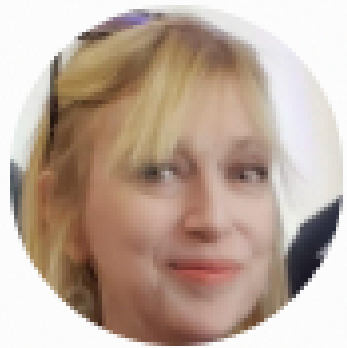


Feb 26, 2021, 10:31am EST | 6,538 views

Revitalized And Expanded, This Virginia Retreat Reopens This Summer

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The new T-shaped infinity pool at Keswick Hall KESWICK HALL

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“When I first saw it, I thought it was amazing,” says Molly Hardie about [Keswick Hall](#), the countryside resort outside of Charlottesville, Virginia that she and husband Robert bought in 2017. They first saw the estate in the early 1990s, an imposing property centered around a 1912 Italianate mansion and run as an English country house/club. The owner was Bernard Ashley, widower of designer/chintz specialist [Laura Ashley](#), and the house’s interiors were practically a showroom of Ashley design—with mixed results. “It had 48 rooms, each with different wallpaper and paint,” recalls Hardie. “It was, actually, a little over the top crazy.”



A newly designed estate room at Keswick Hall GREG POWERS PHOTOGRAPHY

When the resort reopens this summer after a two year renovation, it’s doubtful that any guest will offer a sentiment like that. The Hardies, who bought the property from interim owner Orient Express Hotels,

who bought the property from interim owner Orient Express Hotels, want guests to see it as a true retreat so they decided on overall tones of serenity, openness and light in soothing color schemes of blues and creamy whites. The rooms in the mansion were reduced to 38 to enlarge them, including four signature suites, with an additional 42 added in a new wing constructed to match in Italianate style with a terracotta roof and the mansion's new exterior of creamy white stucco. The furniture will be a mix: some original furniture that Hardie couldn't bear to part with brought back to life by a local restorer and art collected by Ashley from estate sales blended with more contemporary furnishings and local photography celebrating the setting. "We're connecting with the past but looking forward to the future," she explains.



The new restaurant Marigold by Jean-Georges Vongerichten KESWICK HALL

A significant part of this future is a new stone structure outside of the main house that will contain Marigold, a new restaurant from superstar chef [Jean-Georges Vongerichten](#) that will incorporate ingredients from local purveyors as well as fruits and vegetables from the resort's new five acre farm. The menu won't be Southern, according to Hardie, but will feature some new dishes that “echo a Southern feel” from the chef known for his global flavors accented with vegetable and fruit essences and herbs. Plant based dishes will also be on the menu, a request from the owners. And there will be a substantial outdoor dining terrace for guests who, especially with the pandemic, would prefer to dine in the open air along with other private dining options.

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Other parts of the new construction include seven red clay tennis courts with tennis pros available for instruction and a new 80 foot T-shaped infinity pool for adults only (another pool for families is available near the tennis courts.) The popular Pete Dye designed 18 hole golf course Full Cry which is open to both Keswick Club members and hotel guests remained open during the renovation. The owners are currently breaking ground for a spa set to open next year.



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There are a number of other choices for guests to spend time outdoors on the 600 acre estate such as walking and biking paths but



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There are a number of other choices for guests to spend time outdoors on the 600 acre estate such as walking and biking paths but hotel staff will also contact guests before arrival to customize their stays including trips in the surrounding area. This section of the Piedmont Region at the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains is particularly scenic for countryside drives. There are also historic monuments such as Thomas Jefferson's home [Monticello](#) and James Madison's [Montpelier](#) plantation nearby. Virginia is also known for its winemaking and there are 30 vineyards in the area. For this outing, hotel concierges can not only make the arrangements to visit, they can also arrange transportation, a choice more in line with a