

**My heart belongs
to the Cotswolds**
More enchanting estates

Badminton House

Famous as the birthplace of the shuttlecock sport to which it gave its name and home to the five-star Horse Trials, the 52,000-acre estate in south Gloucestershire has been the seat of the Dukes of Beaufort since the late 17th century. 01454 218203; www.badmintonestate.com

Elmore Court

Elmore Court, south-west of Gloucester, dates back to 1580, but the Guise family was granted land there by Henry III's court in 1262. Anselm Guise currently runs it as a thriving ceremony venue with sustainability at its heart. 01452 720293; www.elmorecourt.com

Rodmarton Manor

Built in 1909, this Arts-and-Crafts house near Kemble is home to fourth and fifth generations of the Biddulph family. 01285 841442; www.rodmarton-manor.co.uk

Stanway House

This Jacobean manor near Winchcombe is famous for its 300ft single-jet fountain in the 18th-century water garden. It has remained in the family of the Tracys of Stanway and their descendants, the Earls of Wemyss, since 1533. 01386 584469; www.stanwayfountain.co.uk

Stowell Park

Situated in the heart of the Cotswolds, the 5,500-acre sporting and agricultural estate and its Grade II*-listed, 16th-century house has been in the Vestey family for more than a century. 01285 720247; www.stowellpark.com

with no pewter plates.' Perhaps he uses the family silver instead? 'I was at a car-boot sale and looking at the silver when I realised that it had our family crest on it. It had obviously been taken without anyone's knowledge.' Back in his possession, the silverware takes its place alongside the portrait and table as part of the Hicks Beach past protected for the future.

Witcombe (01452 862208; www.witcombepark.com)

**'Conservation and sustainability
sit at the heart of decisions'**

Tucked into woodland beside the renowned Broad Avenue in Cirencester Park, a custom-built, interactive wooden ball run is the latest feature to attract visitors to the Bathurst estate. Although it is the 9th Earl Bathurst and his son Lord Apsley who are currently

driving the momentum, it was Sir Benjamin Bathurst who set the ball rolling for the family when he bought the estate in 1695 for his son, Allen, who became the 1st Earl Bathurst. Over the past 300 years, the 15,000-acre estate has passed through successive generations of the family, each leaving their mark and preserving the legacy entrusted to them.

The 1st Earl built what is now known as 'The Mansion' on the site of the original

Tudor-Jacobean house and set about shaping the landscape, including planting its famous 45ft-tall yew hedge. Today, Lord Bathurst and Lord Apsley balance working sympathetically for the heritage—with projects such as the restoration and conversion of a Gothic folly into a wedding venue and former farm buildings into guest accommodation—and future-proofing, with a café, playground, pizzeria, micro-brewery and Pilates studio.





'Looking after an estate such as ours has always involved adapting to changing times,' Lord Apsley remarks. 'Conservation and sustainability sit at the heart of many of the decisions we make to ensure that the estate remains environmentally responsible and economically resilient for future generations. We farm using regenerative principles, have installed solar panels on new and existing agricultural buildings, operate an

anaerobic digestion plant that converts methane into renewable electricity and find new uses for historic farm buildings so that they remain productive.

'Ultimately, our goal is a simple one,' he reflects. 'We want to hand on a thriving estate that is richer in opportunity, biodiversity and enjoyment than when we inherited it. We hope future generations will continue to act as thoughtful custodians, strengthening the

Hamish Mackie's Andalusian Stallion paws the Broad Avenue behind the 9th Earl Bathurst and his son Lord Apsley

estate's connection to the Cotswolds, protecting this remarkable landscape and ensuring it remains a welcoming, vibrant part of the local community for many years to come.' 
The Bathurst estate (01285 653135; www.bathurstestate.co.uk)