

# THE CARNOLISTIE HOTEL

by RACHEL McCONACHIE

## The Carnoustie Hotel

Links Parade, Carnoustie

**A**LTHOUGH I'm not a golfer, I do like a golf links hotel. The sea air, the sculpted greenery and there's usually a spa. Now that's what I'm really after!

The Carnoustie Hotel in Angus is in prime location for access to a gorgeous sandy beach, the iconic Carnoustie Golf Links course, which has hosted many top championships – including this year's Dunhill Cup – and also many restaurants, pubs and shops in the nearby town.

The hotel is ideal for a weekend break or a longer stay exploring the scenic area.

We spent a thoroughly relaxing couple of nights in their superior golf view double room which looks directly out on to the Championship Golf Course through huge French windows.

The spacious ensuite bathroom offers a lovely rainfall shower and the room itself is huge with a living area, sofa, desk and wall-mounted flatscreen television. The room is tastefully decorated along the theme of golfing greats with Scottish fabrics and natural colours.

Historic golf course with relaxing spa and coastal views



The hotel looks on to the championship golf course

After dropping our luggage in the room, we went down to the bar for a drink in the autumn sun with our two dogs. The hotel offers a fairly large dog-friendly area near the bar where you can arrange to have your meals if you want to keep your pets with you. There's also an outdoor terrace which faces west so has a great view of the sunset over the golf course.

We settled outside and enjoyed a glass of wine while the staff and other customers fussed

over our two labradoodles – who loved the attention.

Some hotels claim to be dog friendly but you feel it's a tad begrudging, but here they really enjoy hosting your pets. The bar staff made sure we always had a fresh water bowl for them and paid them attention whenever they had the chance. What a difference that makes to a dog-owner's stay to feel truly welcome.

After a relaxing glass of wine we took a stroll down to the beach to let the dogs stretch their legs

before we headed to the spa. The sandy beach is a decent size and gave us a refreshing blast of North Sea air.

In the spa there's a medium-sized heated swimming pool, sunbeds by the floor-to-ceiling windows, which I had a snooze on with the warm sun blazing through the glass, a jacuzzi, sauna and steam room. It lacks a plunge pool or very cold shower for after the sauna but the facilities were nice. The spa is used by golfers, hotel guests and

locals who can pay for membership so it can get a bit busy. The views from the pool, over the putting green were stunning in late afternoon to early evening as the sun slowly set – a very relaxing and pleasant place to spend some time.

In the evening we ate at the hotel's Calders Bistro and found they had a varied and thoughtful menu with plenty of vegetarian and gluten free options. After all the sea air and swimming I had the

gluten-free fish and chips which was perfectly light and crispy with a risotto to start. My husband enjoyed the japanese-style salmon with noodles which was gone so fast it must've been good!

Breakfast is a choice of continental options and cooked choices with something for everyone.

Despite it being a busy weekend, with a wedding and lots of golfers, the staff were always friendly and attentive. See [bespokehotels.com/carnoustiegolfhotel](http://bespokehotels.com/carnoustiegolfhotel) for prices. 



A superior golf view double room



Swimming pool with a view

## The Old Mill Inn

Pitlochry



Catriona Thomson enjoys a family meal in the Perthshire town

**FOOD:** I chose vegan Thai green curry, while my husband went for the beer-battered Buckie haddock. We also ordered steak pie and a battered haddock from the kids menu. The food was tasty and there were three clean plates – one of the children didn't like the mushrooms "hidden" in the steak pie so they had to be picked out. **8/10**

**SERVICE:** We had tried to book for the evening, but were slightly irritated to be told that there is no booking system – it's first come, first served. Luckily we were dining early with our children so we managed to get a table – I think at a busier time you might be in for a long wait. The waiting staff were attentive, pleasant and kind to our wee ones, and my last-minute change of choice didn't seem to be a problem. **9/10**

**AMBIENCE:** We visited on a sunny Friday evening so the outside seating area was extremely busy. The dining area inside was relaxed, quiet and cool, and we were glad of it! **9/10**

**VALUE FOR MONEY:** On the pricey side compared to what we'd pay for a comparable meal out at home, at £18.95 for a vegan tofu curry. The haddock was £17.95 and the kids' meals £7.95 each. The portion sizes were just enough for adults and probably a bit big for young children. However, eating out again in Pitlochry the following night, we paid similar prices somewhere else. **6/10**

**FACILITIES:** Clean and easy to access. **9/10**

[www.theoldmillpitlochry.co.uk](http://www.theoldmillpitlochry.co.uk)

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