

TRAVEL

CASTLE LESLIE, CO MONAGHAN

BEST FOR Families and group parties of all descriptions up for some old-world charm, country air and long walks, just over an hour's drive from Dublin **WHAT YOU GET** Homely hospitality and outdoor life. The vast estate is delightfully unspoiled, but sensitively updated for today's guest. Spend your lazy days exploring the estate and the ancient woodland by foot, or horse, as the estate is also home to a world-class equestrian centre. Snuggle up indoors with big fires and comfy armchairs, or catch a movie in the private cinema **THE FOOD** Dining will depend on your accommodation choice, though options include the castle's dining room, Snaffles restaurant and Conor's bar, both at The Lodge **MAKE SURE TO** Recharge the batteries with a spa treatment at the Victorian Treatment Rooms **BOTTOM LINE** Various accommodation options are available, from the splendid bedrooms of the castle and the understated comforts of the Hunting Lodge to the homely self-catering mews and cottages **CONTACT** Castle Leslie, Glaslough, Co Monaghan, 047 88100; www.castleleslie.com. **AC**



THE CAPITAL HOTEL, LONDON

BEST FOR Those with a little space left on the credit card and in need of a final blast of retail therapy before the ideoes (and bills) of the new year beckon. The Capital Hotel in Knightsbridge is one of London's best kept secrets among Ireland's smart set, who've been using the bijou, Basil Street five-star as their London address for over 25 years. Small, and perfectly formed, the hotel is ideally located, just 125 (I've counted them) steps from Harrods' side door **WHAT YOU GET** Between now and the New Year, The Capital's "Shop 'til You Drop" package offers an overnight in one of their pretty, Nina Campbell-designed bedrooms (complete with generous Kiehl's bathroom goodies), continental breakfast, a £50 voucher for Harrods, afternoon tea, and a reviving Cosmopolitan cocktail to boost flagging spirits before you turn the other direction and head to equally handy Harvey Nichols, and the flagship designer stores of Sloane Street **THOSE LITTLE EXTRAS** As one of those long-standing guests at The Capital, I've benefited from the concierges' endless goodwill, their knack at getting last-minute tables in the hardest-to-bag restaurants, their parcel-fetching kindness (just leave with Harrods, they'll do the rest), and the ongoing extra treats - mini cupcakes at reception, plenty of Hildon water in the bedroom, free WiFi and candlelit baths - superb attention to detail that's hard to beat **MAKE SURE TO** This is the perfect place to round off a season of celebration ... with a little more of the *dolce vita*. And a stroll around the opulent Christmas windows for added atmosphere **BOTTOM LINE** The Shop 'til You Drop package costs £150 per person **CONTACT** www.capitalhotel.co.uk **MM**



CASTILLO HOTEL SON VIDA, MALLORCA

BEST FOR The multi-demanding family, this one ticks nearly every box, and with the mild weather and short flight times to Mallorca, it makes it a particularly appealing choice **WHAT YOU GET** The hotel has every amenity you could wish for; enjoy the tennis courts, indoor and outdoor swimming pools, kids' club, spa and great dining. And for the fanatic golfer, the hotel is located on the doorstep of four golf courses **THE FOOD** With eight different restaurants to choose from, formal and traditional Mallorcan to casual and pool snacks, you will never be short on choice. Only a short distance from the hotel is the charming old town of Palma, the island's capital, and just a few minutes further, the chic marina Puerto Portals is busy with restaurants and bars **MAKE SURE TO** Explore this beautiful island, particularly lovely are the fishing village of Puerto de Andratx and the mountainous village of Deià **BOTTOM LINE** Rooms start from €300 per night, though contact hotel reservations directly for seasonal offers **CONTACT** Castillo Hotel Son Vida, Mallorca, 0034 971 606 136; www.castillosonvidamallorca.com. **AC**