

BLANTYRE - LENOX

Blantyre, a Tudor mansion, belongs in New England fog, snubs children, and cultivates Jamesean conversation. In fact, it was amidst these green rolling hills and country roads that Edith Wharton whirled Henry James about in her open-top car. If you've had a Jamesean fantasy or two yourself, you'll feel quite free to cultivate a poetic mood looking out your window onto a croquette field, where wild turkeys saunter in an afternoon graze.

Those strange beasts look best from far away, and a room with a view on the front of this ivy-covered-estate provides quite the right distance to render the entire experience of Blantyre more like a painting than the utility of a let room.

The lobby is rather a grand living room, arranged with conversational vignettes of French furniture, watched over by mantels stacked with blue and white Chinese vases and dangling chandeliers. In the evenings, guests, having dressed for dinner (ties strictly enforced), descend on this scene for aperitifs by the fireplace. One saucer of champagne quickly feels like three, when you realize you're one of two guests for which a live pianist plays. Aristocratic tradition reigns over a formal dinner accompanied by such wonders as homemade ramp bread with white goat butter, and most importantly a modest and brilliant sommelier, Luc. Opting for the wine pairing with dinner is not just an exercise in indulgence, but a sensory education.

Rather than a hotel, Blantyre is more like the country home of an aristocratic family who is permanently out of town. This effect comes from the feeling that—with all the coffee table books stacked in the hallways, porcelain collections, floral wallpapers, and eclectic dishes—there's an actual individual's taste governing these decisions, as opposed to simply a commercial interest. But more to the point, the subtleties of Blantyre: the current *New Yorker* next to the claw-foot tub, homemade croissants in the morning, and the repressed sexuality of English country interiors, tip this hotel into the territory of romanticism. In short, if you're not ready to fall in love with the person you bring, let Blantyre alone. ^{BC}

BLANTYRE - 16 BLANTYRE ROAD LENOX, MA 01240, WWW.BLANTYRE.COM
EIGHT GUEST ROOMS, FOUR PRIVATE COTTAGES, AND TEN CARRIAGE HOUSE ROOMS, FROM 522,-€ PER NIGHT

