

July 2009 - Best Hotels Great Britain & Ireland

"Introducing the ONLY hotel guide wholly based on consumer feedback, from over 22,000 nominations making it a truly unique and non-biased guide to finding the best place to stay. Featuring 300 of the most fabulous hotels in Great Britain and Ireland, from boutique hotels and manor houses to 5 star accommodation. This guide shows you the best of the best. Over 6,500 hotels were nominated by consumers who took part in an online survey in conjunction with HotelClub.com, The Sunday Times Travel Magazine, Waterstone's and Ebookers. Every hotel has been independently assessed and the book is sorted alphabetically by country, destination and name for easy navigation. Over 1,000 full-colour photographs convey the look and feel of each hotel and a panel of travel experts added 30 hotels as Editor's Picks to broaden the scope of the guide - many of which are smaller, niche hotels personally inspected by the team

La Barbarie is tucked away deep in the quiet lanes of St Martin, one of the island's prettiest parishes; and although the hotel itself is not particularly elegant or imposing – and it certainly wouldn't lay any claim to be the grandest or smartest on the island –it has an intensely friendly, welcoming feel about it.

Managing Director Andy Coleman has been running the place for years, and most of his key staff also have impressively long service records.

The en suite bedrooms are pleasantly furnished, well equipped and scrupulously clean, although again they're nothing spectacular in themselves. The jewel in La Barbarie's crown is really the restaurant, which produces outstandingly good food without affectation and with complete reliability.

Rick Stein stayed there while making one of his television cookery programmes, and pronounced the lobster the best he had ever tasted – praise indeed from one of the country's most celebrated seafood chefs.

The dining room itself is so cosy and so cleverly lit that you would feel completely at peace finishing your meal there alone. The menus change daily according to what's in season and what's fresh; the wine list is decent and very fairly priced.

All in all, it would be hard to find a fault with it as a restaurant; as a hotel dining room it's quite simply an outstanding find.

Outside there are pleasant gardens, a pool, and a scattering of wooden tables and benches amongst the trees and flowering shrubs; ideal for and al fresco drink or two before dinner on a warm summer's evening.

Ambience: 9.88

Value: 9.92

Staff: 10.0

Location: 9.73

Cleanliness: 9.56

Facilities: 9.88

Restaurants: 9.98

Families: 9.41