

# sleep



**Manoir de Lébioles** SPA, NEAR BRUSSELS

Domaine de Lébioles 1/5, B-4900 Spa, +32 (0)87 79 19 00, manoirdelebioles.com

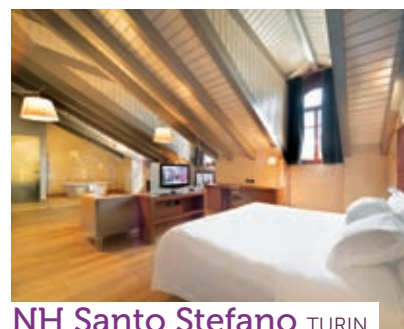
The Manoir de Lébioles is the kind of country house hotel you dream about but rarely find: breathtaking views, log fires, great food and a genuinely warm welcome. Nicknamed 'Little Versailles' and designed around 1905 by an architect rumoured to be the illegitimate son of Belgian royalty, this diminutive Ardennes chateau is tucked away at the end of a long, wooded driveway, like a beautiful, well-hidden secret.

Inside, the 16 rooms and suites pull off that tricky feat of being vast but still cosy, with a harmonious mix of warm colours, wood floors and local stone. The spacious bathrooms are beautifully designed and appointed and the forest view from my freestanding roll top bath made for an unforgettable bathing experience.

The elegant spa in the chateau grounds is pretty special too: it's all slate and glass, with quality treatments by Carita and Thalgo, sauna and steam and a decent sized hydrotherapy pool. In the peaceful rest areas, there are open fires and vast windows looking on to the surrounding countryside.

Once you've worked up an appetite, chef Olivier Tucki, formerly of The Connaught in London, prepares accomplished and exciting food in the hotel restaurant: a whole roasted onion serves as a bowl for an intense lobster bisque with juicy claw meat, whilst a truffled egg slow cooked to wobbling perfection at 63°C is gloriously soft and rich: sublime nursery food.

The lively thermal cure town of Spa with its festivals, Grand Prix circuit and vast pool complex is a five-minute drive if you can tear yourself away, but I confess I couldn't: too captivated by those views. Rooms from €199. **Emma Beddington**



**NH Santo Stefano** TURIN

19 Via Porta Palatina, +39 011 5223311, nh-hotels.com

The Santo Stefano was built in 2005 to house athletes for the 2006 Winter Olympics. The local firm of architects took their cue from the redbrick Roman Palatine Gate opposite, but instead of filling in the floors above reception, they created a void and a spiral staircase that winds gradually up towards the fifth floor and its 'Vista Panoramico'. This open-air centurion's parapet offers a splendid view across the city's exposed Roman remains, the campanile of the cathedral and the Italian Alps beyond.

Santo Stefano is very much a businessman's hotel but its designer flourishes raise it well above the norm. The bar looks like a library and its shelves offer an array of interesting reads. There are 125 rooms of which the best are on the top floor under the massive eaves. Room lighting and furniture are locally sourced from Italian designers. The beds are by Altrenotti and the armchairs and curtains by Rostagno. Bathrooms are Italian marble.

It's style on a budget but with free WiFi and a good central location, and the menu dégustation is good value at €42. The only disappointment is the restaurant itself which looks out on to an inner courtyard and is surprisingly bland in décor. The spa is Moroccan hammam-style – which is a bit of a shame, perhaps they should have taken design inspiration from the Romans again. Double rooms from €164 inclusive of taxes and breakfast. **Adrian Mourby**

**///NEWS** If a good night's sleep is something you dream of, consider a trip to West Berlin in March. The Swissôtel Berlin has enlisted sleep doctor Dr Michael Feld to develop a DeepSleep Package – with the mysterious added benefit of "possible weight reduction" – big promises indeed ([swissotel.com/berlin](http://swissotel.com/berlin)).