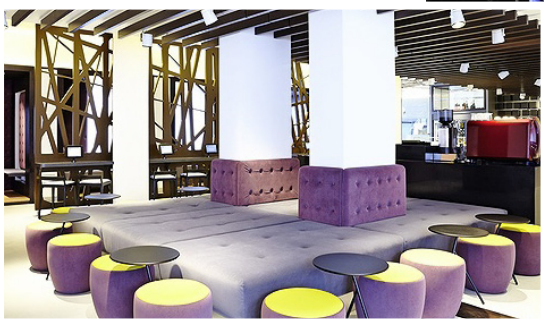
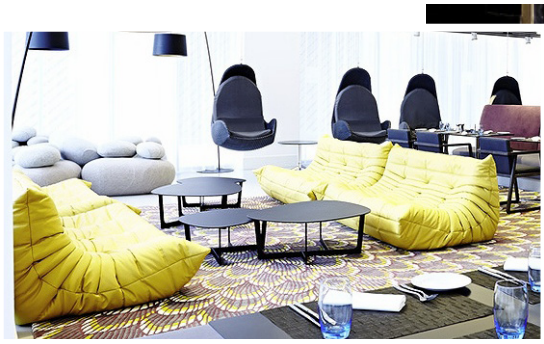


GETAWAY



ADRIAN CAFFERY discovers a handy family hotel if you want to go green at Britain's most famous gardens



Beat the Kews!

KEW Gardens is so vast that it's difficult to see everything in one visit. You really need to get there for when the gates open at 10am, but getting to the capital that early is never easy, especially with kids in tow.

So why not make a weekend of it by staying nearby on a Saturday night (perhaps visiting Richmond Park during the day) and heading to Kew on the Sunday?

We found the perfect place to do just that – the family-friendly and rather funky Novotel London Brentford, which is just a five-minute drive from the botanical gardens.

Not only is the hotel convenient for Kew, but it's also very easy to get to, being just off junction 2 of the M4, and with plenty of parking (chargeable)

Our incredibly spacious room had a double bed, sofa bed and small single bed, and despite being very close to the motorway we couldn't hear the traffic at all.

Contemporary in design, the room had a useful mini-fridge and a stylish bathroom – our kids loved the 'magical' privacy glass which frosted at the touch

of a button.

The leisure suite includes a gym, sauna and a rather swish swimming pool, open 6am to 10pm, where children are welcome at all times.

Our kids loved the pool, with its reef wall, and they burned off some more energy before bedtime at Carville Hall Park, a five-minute walk away.

The lobby, bar and restaurant are very trendy, with low-level seating and tables, hanging egg chairs, a virtual concierge and iMacs available 24 hours a day.

There was also a large sofa made from fabric rocks of various sizes which reminded us of Makka Pakka's house in In The Night Garden!

The restaurant is open all day until 11pm and has a tailored menu for children aged 3-12, and if it's snacks you're after there's a Sainsbury's across

the car park.

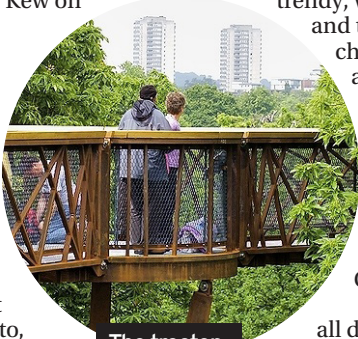
After a delicious buffet breakfast, and slightly regretting we couldn't make full use of the generous 12 noon check out, we set off to Kew at 9.45am.

However, if you can't force yourself out of the comfy beds quite so early there's the option to order a breakfast box to take away and eat in the gardens.

Planning to park at Kew's limited pay and display car park (£7 a day), we actually grabbed the last free space by Elizabeth Gate, one of four entrances.

The highlights for our children were the treetop walk, the indoor play area, the remarkably long log trail and the chance to become both badgers – there's a human-sized sett – and bees.

We managed to tick off everything on our to-do list, except the Temperate House. Sadly we visited a week before its reopening after a five-year project.



The treetop walk at Kew

NEED TO KNOW

■ Adrian and family were guests of Novotel London Brentford, Great West Road, Brentford, TW8 OGP. There are 202 rooms and rates start at £104 per night, and there's complimentary wifi throughout.

■ Call 0207 660 2230, email H6995@accor.com or visit accorhotels.com