



## Rudding Park Harrogate

Rudding Park is set in the scenic, sprawling countryside of Harrogate, North Yorkshire. In 2007 it hosted 1,292 events with a total revenue of £2.9m, and growth in spend per head increased from £77.10 to £78.94. Its conference and banqueting team includes head judge for the World Skills competition, Noel Dobbin, and Roux scholarship finalist chefs.

In 2007 the hotel won Best Hotel in the Northern Hospitality Awards, with a judge commenting: "It's a perfect example of a hotel that is beautifully and consistently run. It does the things that others do but much, much better." A glowing report indeed, and one echoed this year by the Hotel Catey judges, who felt that Rudding Park "embodies the essence of banqueting".

Banqueting head chef Steve Ashburn's motto is "food for 800 should be as good as food for two" and he ensures that all conference and banqueting food served is freshly cooked, rather than reheated, seasonal and locally sourced when possible, even when catering at maximum capacity of 800. In his time at Rudding Park, Ashburn has transformed the food from classic silver service to a plated style, improving the quality of the food with a resoundingly positive response from customers.

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The event co-ordination sits alongside bedroom reservations in order to provide cohesive events. The team includes a specialised wedding co-ordinator and golf events co-ordinator, although all co-ordinators are cross-trained to organise every type of event. This kind of bespoke service and flexibility is reflected in the fact that, much to the judges' delight, all the hotel's supervisors have been trained as toast masters.

As last year's winner for this category, Fiona Macfarlane, conference and banqueting manager at Royal Garden Hotel said, "Rudding Park is a clear winner. They made huge improvements across the department throughout the year. All areas were covered in their entry, including revenue, profitability, service and standards. Their level of innovation and the value they placed on the relationships they have within the hotel are outstanding."

### THE SHORTLIST

**Celtic Manor Resort**  
Newport  
**De Vere Whites**  
Bolton  
**Four Seasons hotel**  
Hampshire  
**The Landmark hotel**  
London  
**Rudding Park**  
Harrogate