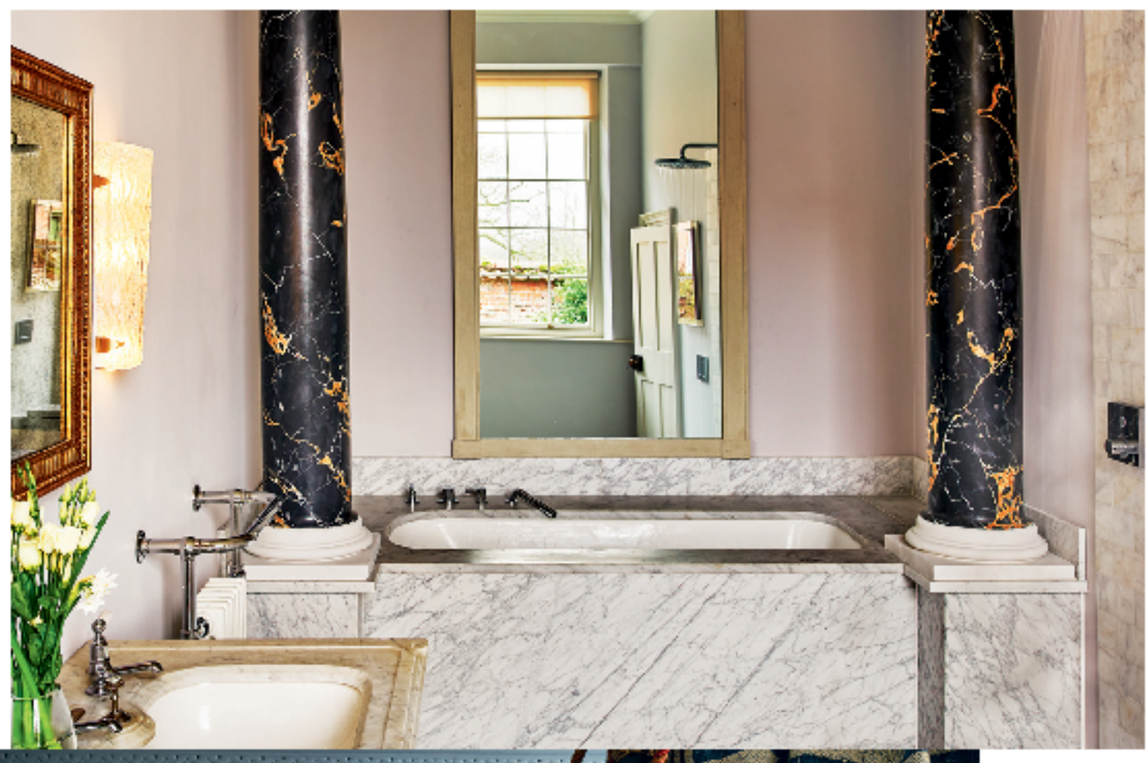






BEST FOR HOLDING COURT

WOLTERTON HALL, NORFOLK

A long, looping driveway through a Charles Bridgeman-designed landscape leads to this Palladian-inspired stately. When the Walpole family handed it over in 2016, after almost three centuries in residence, it was time for a facelift. It's impossible not to be drawn in by the stories of the charismatic new owners, Peter Sheppard and Keith Day. 'This 18th-century Chinese goldfish bowl was probably used to christen Nelson,' says Sheppard as he wanders past a chair used in Prince Charles's investiture, which sits beneath a Chris Levine holographic portrait of the Queen. These pieces are in the crimson royal room, the damask wallpaper of which was so lusted after by Sheppard that he sourced, bought and used the last rolls ever made. The renovation of the mansion has been a huge success – a clever mix of textiles, styles and eras has created unstuffy, liveable spaces. The main part of the house, available to settle into this summer, takes centre stage. Walpole family paintings and intricate tapestries gifted by Cardinal Fleury lord over rooms illuminated by chandeliers and antique Venetian lampposts. Sheppard and Day's additions soften the historic edges: hot-pink Gio Ponti chairs, contemporary English roll-arm sofas, Persian rugs curiously purchased from a Dutch Buddhist monk, and a healthy dose of up-to-speed engineering. One bathroom has a hidden Champagne fridge, and there's a rain shower which cascades from the full-height Georgian ceiling. Of the four apartments to rent, the East Wing is the largest. Selwyn Leamy artworks line the staircase to the loft, a triple-aspect zone of tranquillity, while the other bedrooms have period furniture pieces, Howard-style chairs and Colefax and Fowler fabrics. And for privacy, the Garden House, set away from the main building, has a walled garden for summer barbecues. A heritage hit with a grounded type of grandeur – modern yet still very much fit for a duke. PAULA MAYNARD

BOOK IT From £2,630 for three nights in the East Wing (sleeps 14). *+44 1263 76896; woltertonpark.co.uk*



PHOTOGRAPHS: JAKE EASTHAM; CHRIS HORWOOD