



# A Five-Star Retreat in the Latvian Countryside

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The 19th-century Rūmene Manor House is the country residence of five-star Hotel Bergs. The estate offers an experience that you'll never forget—a taste of local history with a touch of modern elegance and class.



In days of yore, Baltic noblemen enjoyed the summers at their country estates. Afternoons were spent hunting and fishing, while evenings were passed before the fire, engaged in lively conversation. Meals were prepared by the finest chefs, and served in a dining room amidst flickering candles. Needs were attended to by resident butlers, and all you had to do was sit back and relax, breath the fresh air, and enjoy the finer things in life. However, this idyll of 19th-century elegance and refinement is in fact very attainable today, and it can be enjoyed a mere 90 minutes from the Latvian capital, at the Rumene Manor, the country residence of Riga's five-star Hotel Bergs.

Visitors to Rumene Manor are spirited away to the estate in a chauffeured car that departs directly from Hotel Bergs in Riga. The ride takes you through the gently rolling hills of Courland (Kurzeme) to the charming old village of Kandava. The manor house is located just outside of town, ensconced in seven hectares of land and nestled beside a sparkling lake, which glitters in the sun and reflects the beauty of the surrounding landscape, filled with a stunning variety of flora and fauna.

Construction on the neo-Gothic Rumene Manor was begun in 1876 by a wealthy Baltic nobleman, Baron



Viktor von Düsterlohe, and completed sixteen years later. The building was subsequently inhabited by several generations of German Baltic Nobility until the land reforms of the 1920s, when it was passed into the hands of a circle of Latvian artists and musicians. After World War Two, the manor was nationalized and transformed into a school, serving the local children of the nearby towns and villages. After the regaining of independence, in 1991, the manor house stood empty for many years, until it was

spotted by the owners of Hotel Bergs, who decided to transform the estate into their hotel's country residence. The reconstruction of the building began in 2004 and lasted four years. The project was undertaken by architect Zaiga Gaile, who also designed the five-star Hotel Bergs. In order to achieve a complete reconstruction of the building—and to adapt the structure to the needs of Hotel Bergs—Gaile had to transform the ancient two-story structure into a three-story building, which entailed raising the second story and inserting a new level of rooms, as well as constructing a finished basement. After much painstaking work, the Rumene Manor was finally completed in 2008, and immediately won the title of Best Reconstruction of the Year in the annual Latvian Architecture Competition. In the process of reconstruction, the architects used as many original materials as possible, such as authentic plaster walls, original oak parquet, and handcrafted dolomite floors. But the renovation of the interior is filled with objects that make it comfortable for 21st-century residents, though the aura of noble refinement has been faithfully preserved. The décor is thus understated but grand—light, open, and airy, while also showcasing stunning pieces of period furniture, antique porcelain stoves, and rich oil paintings. The first floor of the estate is the common area, with rooms intended for eating, drinking, and relaxing. Here you'll find the dining room, where meals are served at a long oak table; the sitting room, with a grand piano in one corner; the library, filled with comfortable couches facing a grand fireplace; and the two splendid salons.

All the rooms are filled with antique furniture carefully selected and assembled over the course of several years at auctions all over Europe. Many of the objects are also authentic period pieces from 19th-century Courland (Kurzeme), like a magnificent wooden dowry chest that dates back to 1825.

The sunny veranda, on the far end of the building, is perhaps the most stunning room in the entire ensemble. With its white chaise lounges and sofas, high arched windows, and cool tiled floor, the room is the perfect spot for escaping from a hot summer day. And if the mood strikes you, the estate's lake is just a short sprint away from the large French doors, which open onto the outdoor neo-Renaissance summer terrace, where meals are served on warm afternoons and evenings beneath vine-covered trellises.



While the first floor is designed for large parties to mingle and enjoy a relaxing evening or two, the upstairs hides five duplex apartments, each of which is like a small home unto itself, with a private staircase leading up to the top floor. The upstairs rooms are fully adapted to suit modern comforts, and therefore feature only the most exclusive appliances, bed linens and towels, and bathroom fixtures. However, these modern touches have been included in a design that radiates taste and elegance—Oriental rugs, modern lighting fixtures, exposed beams, richly upholstered couches, and handsome wooden desks. The walls of the rooms are dotted with old maps of the region, which only add to the rich sense of history that permeates the countryside unfolding beyond the tall casement windows, framed by silk curtains.

The landscaped park around the estate also provides

a wealth of opportunities for enjoyment. Some will appreciate a leisurely stroll among the trees or a dip in the lake. Others will like an afternoon of horseback riding through the surrounding hills, or a few hours of hunting deer and wild boar in the untouched forests around the property. When it gets too hot outside, the perfect place to seek shelter is the cavernous wine cellar in the basement, which hides row upon row of wines collected from all over the world.

**The Rumene Manor is available to rent for a range of different events—corporate meetings, group retreats, or family gatherings. Upon the customer's request, the award-winning chefs and sommeliers from Bergs Restaurant and the staff from Hotel Bergs will accompany guests to the estate, to prepare gourmet meals and guarantee total comfort for visitors, fulfilling any wish they desire.**

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