

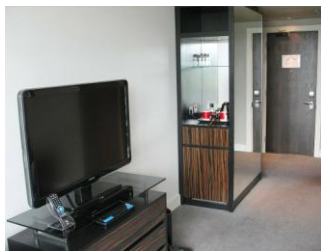
BROOKLANDS PAST & PRESENT

THE BROOKLANDS MUSEUM IN SURREY IS A DESTINATION FOR MANY ITALIAN CAR ENTHUSIASTS AT LEAST ONCE A YEAR DUE TO THEIR VERY POPULAR ITALIAN CAR DAY. WE HAVE USUALLY DONE THE TRIP THERE AND BACK IN A DAY, BUT HAVING RECENTLY HAD TO VISIT THE MUSEUM THE DAY AFTER ATTENDING ANOTHER EVENT IN THE AREA, WE FOUND THAT DECENT ACCOMMODATION IN THE VICINITY WAS STILL AS DIFFICULT TO FIND AS IT WAS BACK IN THE DAYS WHEN WHEN THE ITALIAN CAR EVENT RAN OVER A WEEKEND.

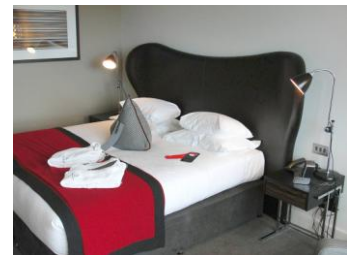
WE THEN REMEMBERED THAT THE LARGE AND IMPOSING BROOKLANDS HOTEL HAD OPENED IN THE LAST FEW YEARS, SITUATED BETWEEN THE MERCEDES-BENZ WORLD TEST TRACK ON THE SITE OF THE OLD AIRFIELD AND THE STRETCH OF THE OLD CIRCUIT THAT



(STILL!) RUNS IN PARALLEL WITH THE RAILWAY LINE, FROM THE GAP IN THE BANKING WHERE THE RIVER WEY FORMS THE BROOKLANDS MUSEUM BOUNDARY TO WHERE IT VANISHES AMONG THE SUPERSTORES.



LARGE AND IMPOSING HOTELS OFTEN BOAST LARGE AND IMPOSING RATES BUT WE FOUND THE DEALS AVAILABLE TO BE QUITE REASONABLE, GIVEN THE QUALITY OF THE



OVERALL EXPERIENCE, ESPECIALLY IF COMPARED TO WHAT ELSE IS ON OFFER LOCALLY. OUR AIR-CONDITIONED ROOM SHOWED LITTLE SIGNS OF THE USE WHICH IT MUST HAVE ALREADY HAD AND WAS EQUIPPED AND DECORATED TO A HIGH STANDARD. THE MASSIVE WINDOW LOOKED OUT OVER THE M-BW TEST TRACK, BUT WAS WELL INSULATED FROM THE TYRE AND ENGINE NOISE FOUND THERE AND SPECIAL MENTION SHOULD ALSO BE MADE OF THE STAFF, WHO WERE ALL COURTEOUS AND ATTENTIVE AND OF



THE FOOD AND DRINK WHICH -WHILE NOT CHEAP- WAS EXCEPTIONALLY ENJOYABLE AND THUS GOOD VALUE.

M-B WORLD MIGHT NOT HAVE ANY SPECIAL INTEREST FOR THE



ITALIAN CAR ENTHUSIAST, BUT FOR ANYONE INTERESTED IN CARS IN A WIDER CONTEXT IT IS WELL WORTH A VISIT IF STAYING AT THE HOTEL, AS IT IS ONLY A FEW MINUTES WALK AWAY. WHILE YOU CAN VIEW AND BUY THE CURRENT M-B AND SMART RANGES OR HAVE

YOUR EXISTING MODEL SERVICED THERE, THE BUILDING ALSO HAS VARIOUS HISTORICAL DISPLAYS, RECENT F1 CARS AND VARIOUS OLD M-B MODELS IN A1 CONDITION. EVERYTHING IS VERY WELL PRESENTED AND INCLUDES A FILM THEATRE, A CAFÉ AND A RESTAURANT AND WE FOUND OURSELVES SPENDING FAR LONGER THERE THAN INTENDED, SUCH WAS ITS INTEREST. THE STAFF ARE ALL VERY PLEASANT TOO.



ON OUR WAY BACK TO THE MAIN ROAD WE BEGAN THINKING ABOUT



ANOTHER EVENT WHICH WE USED TO ATTEND WHEN THE AIRFIELD STILL EXISTED (ALTHOUGH IF YOU LOOK OUT FOR IT, THE CAMPBELL CIRCUIT WHICH WAS ALSO THERE HAS BEEN PRESERVED WITHIN THE M-BW COMPLEX). FOR THIS WE USED TO PARK ON

ANOTHER LONG SECTION OF THE DISUSED BANKING, SO WE RESOLVED TO SEE IF IT STILL EXISTED AND FOUND IT QUITE EASILY. IT RUNS FROM THE END OF THE ONLY REMAINING BIT OF THE RUNWAY TO WHERE THE FORMER VICKERS FACTORY HAS BECOME A HOUSING ESTATE AND IN THE YEARS SINCE WE LAST VISITED THE CONCRETE HAD BECOME RATHER OVERGROWN. INDEED, WHEN WE WERE LAST THERE THE YELLOW BROKEN LINE WHICH WARNED DRIVERS THAT THEY WERE NEARING THE TOP OF THE TRACK WAS STILL VISIBLE, BUT SADLY THIS IS NO LONGER THE CASE.





THE MUSEUM, THE HOTEL AND THE M-B COMPLEX COULD ALL HAVE BEEN CREATED WITHIN THE COMPLETE CIRCUIT -THE FIRST PURPOSE-BUILT TRACK IN THE WORLD!- HAD THOSE WHO SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER HAD SOME FORESIGHT. AS IT IS, THERE SEEMS SOMETHING STRANGELY SYMBOLIC ABOUT THIS BROOKLANDS RACER ADORNING A BIN IN THE BROOKLANDS COUNTRY PARK, WHERE THE ABOVE SECTION OF THE COURSE IS NOW LOCATED.

MJB

PS. I SHOULD POINT OUT THAT -AMAZINGLY- THE HOTEL AND M-B WORLD ARE BARELY SIGNPOSTED FROM THE FINAL ROUNDABOUT!