

Cornwall *stays*

CAROL BURNS discovers paradise close to home on the idyllic Roseland Peninsula with a pampered-to-perfection stay at St Mawes Retreats



Good to know...

St Mawes Retreats' Moonrakers is a luxury self-catering holiday house with sea views sleeping up to twelve guests. A chef, boat charter, art teacher, outdoor activities, spa treatments and childcare can be arranged on request. Prices at Moonrakers start from £1,116 for up to six guests and £1,395 for up to 12 guests staying in low season for a three-night weekend break.

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Paradise found, says the handpainted sign over the door to Moonrakers, the five-bedroomed cottage on St Mawes which forms one of the luxury homes that make up the St Mawes Retreats. The second thing to notice is the view. Sun-kissed sparkling blue water in the harbour below is occasionally sliced by a yacht or paddle boarder. But don't take my word for it, their visitor's guestbook is filled with superlatives - and for once they don't exaggerate.

Inside, rooms thoughtfully furnished and accessorised, gave way to the next. Fresh cut flowers filled every room, detailed antique furniture and carefully chosen objects were a wonderful antidote to chain hotels' MDF monotony. The master bedroom featured an open-plan bathroom, with a deep freestanding bath positioned to make the most of the view. A wonderful place to enjoy a cleansing cocktail as the sun went down. And if you got bored by the view, the wall-hung TV swung around for the ultimate in luxury!

Unlike many holiday cottages, which squeeze in bedrooms, Moonrakers is designed for up to 12. There are five bedrooms, each with its own ensuite - even the children's bedroom which featured bunk beds. While Egyptian cotton bed linen on the kingside beds added to the sense of luxury, day beds positioned to take in the view were covered in vibrant cushions which lent it all a Bedouin feel.

Downstairs, a well-stocked kitchen with two fridges and a utility room for longer stays, leads to a games room, with large TV, Wii and DVD - and a

pool table, which proved a bigger hit with my eight-year old who immediately pronounced it his favourite room.

For the grown-ups, an open plan living area offered two distinct areas of seating, all making the most of the views, with a large dining table by the kitchen perfect for large parties.

A mature garden on several levels made a more than pleasant after-dinner walk, whatever the weather and a great place for hide and seek and an early Easter egg hunt. It came equipped with table tennis and a trampoline to wear-out the younger visitors. After a relaxing five-minute walk downhill to the harbour for ice cream, we found time to sit by the idyllic harbour to watch the world go by, including the gig club out on a practice.

Saturday night was time to dress-up as we welcomed our personal chef Haydn Treneary, better known as The Chef on the Roseland. The food was wonderful, the view incomparable and the company convivial: definitely a night to remember. His menu considered the likes and dislikes of an eight-year-old boy and a pair of

vegetarians that worked so well we were swapping forkfuls (and spoonfuls) of each course.

The starter of salad with pink grapefruit and pomegranate, was as colourful as it was tasty, while our younger diner was treated to sweet potato soup with da bara bread.

The main course of a filo basket filled with roasted tomatoes, olives, feta cheese and asparagus sitting on a purée of roasted garlic and celeriac was a delight. Again our younger diner - although expressing a desire to steal most of the adult's dinner - was enthusiastic with his tomato and basil pasta with grated Parmesan. Pudding was an assiette of mini puddings featuring creme brûlée, lemon posset and chocolate roulade.

Our stay was rounded off by the ultimate luxury: a beauty treatment in the cottage (or in the garden if the weather suited). Sarah from Pressure of Life provided a reflexology foot treatment that was more than relaxing. Paradise indeed! ■

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