

escape to... ST MAWES

ENJOY A LUXURIOUS HOME FROM HOME
WITH FABULOUS SEA VIEWS AND YOUR
OWN PERSONAL CONCIERGE SERVICE

Words and photographs by **Viki Wilson**

Stargazers. The name of the property where we are to spend the weekend suggests space and peace, and as we arrive in the tranquil, warmly lit house overlooking the sea, we're not disappointed. It is a welcoming retreat, imaginatively and thoughtfully furnished by owner Amanda Selby.

I leave our bags in a large, plush bedroom - with heaps of colourful cushions, huge flatscreen TV and en-suite bathroom - as we explore the rest of the house. The children are bouncing with excitement when they come down from the 'pirates den' they have discovered upstairs, complete with jolly roger cushions, sparkling black curtains and their own balcony and bathroom.

The kitchen is state-of-the-art, with up-to-the-minute appliances, and plenty of space to sit and talk as food is prepared. It opens out onto the dining area, and it is at this point that the wide, beautiful vista, which the house overlooks can be enjoyed in all its glory. The dining room stretches into a cosy but stylish and contemporary living room with an enormous TV, and beyond this is another



lounge area. All of this is edged by floor-to-ceiling windows which overlook the mouth of St Mawes Harbour, with the famous St Antony lighthouse winking on and off on the opposing headland, and the lights of Falmouth glimmering across the estuary.

Beyond is the sea, which stretches out into the darkness of the night sky. Already, the stars are appearing over the water, as if to add a little magic to the welcome.

Then my husband, Adam, comes in grinning. "I think you put the bags in the wrong room," he says, cryptically. Sure enough, beyond the second lounge area, the door opens onto a beautiful master bedroom. The vista continues here, with the windows opening out onto that glorious view of the water, and the sweeping lawn of Stargazers gardens which frame it. The bathroom boasts a double sink and a large square rainfall style showerhead.

As if this wasn't enough, more squeals of excitement greeted the children's discovery of a large games room in the garage area, with a pool table, table tennis, and a fabulous array of equipment - everything from ▶



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crabbing buckets and wetsuits, to a croquet set and little electric-powered cars.

Along with the wonderful view of the ocean which can be enjoyed from most parts of the house and gardens, there is the care and attention to detail in the house which comes from the fact that Amanda, who has two young children herself, has taken care to make it feel like a home from home.

There are two different kinds of game consoles and Blu-Ray as well as DVD players. The kitchen is equipped with everything you could need, whether you're warming a pizza or baking a cake.

Not that you need exert yourself with domestic chores, because Amanda also offers a fabulous concierge service, which ranges from organising a private chef to cook for you, to on-site spa treatments, organised boat trips and a laundry service.

To make the most of our trip, we take advantage of Amanda's concierge service. Mark from Sit On Kayaks can usually be found opposite the St Mawes Hotel on the quay in the village, but Amanda contacted him to help us organise a boat trip the next morning around the Fal estuary. There is so much to do in this area of the beautiful Roseland Peninsula, whether you want to sail across to Falmouth or the Helford River, or take a trip up river to Tregothnan or Trelassick Gardens.

After a morning exploring the river, the children were very happy to return 'home' to Stargazers. We enjoyed an evening stroll along the harbour and a meal at The Rising Sun, and then returned to play table tennis and to snuggle up for a movie. Later that night, Adam and I enjoyed a glass of wine while watching the moon sail over the St Antony headland as the leisure boats, ferries and fishing boats made their way back into the harbour.

The next day, Amanda had organised a fabulous Sunday morning treat for me. Sarah Greenhalgh is a professional beauty therapist used to pampering the discerning clients of the Tresanton Hotel in St Mawes. She has created a special menu of holistic treatments for visitors to Amanda's portfolio of St Mawes properties, which also includes Dreamcatchers, Moonrakers and Shellseekers - all of which come under the remit of St Mawes Retreats.

Sarah's packages include 'Moon' clarity, a sweeping

massage followed by a facial; and 'Star' luxury, which consists of an exfoliating face mask, a reflexology treatment and crystal therapy.

I opt for an Inlight Organic Facial, 75 minutes of delicate facial massage and reflexology, and focus on traditional Ayurvedic points and lymphatic drainage techniques helping me to release tensions and regain balance.

This is no simple facial; it is a holistic ritual, and the treatment involves balancing chakras and whispered affirmations, to breathe in light and invite clarity. Afterwards, I feel refreshed and relaxed as I emerge from blissful pampering.

The rest of the rainy day is spent happily playing games. There is croquet and hide and seek in the garden, and then pool and table tennis and football. We're all so happily ensconced in the house, we hardly notice the weather, other than to enjoy snuggling up on the window seats and watching the light play over the sea below.

Later, as we put the children to bed, it is time for another holiday treat which Amanda has organised. William Marsden from Pencoose Pantry is our private chef for the evening. He's wonderful company as well as a fabulous cook, and we're soon chatting and sharing a bottle of Prosecco over some delicious canapés which include smoked salmon and caviar and miniature Yorkshire puddings with rare beef and horseradish.

As he cooks, William shares stories of his travels around the world, to small islands off Kenya, cooking on private yachts in the Mediterranean and around the South Seas. To start there are deliciously tender scallops, followed by fresh seabass with greens; concluding with a wonderful blackberry tart, made with berries William picked himself that morning, and served with a delicious custard, which contains his own home-made honey. It is a wonderful evening of interesting stories and absolutely fabulous food.

As we set off early the next morning, for work and school, it's wonderful to imagine living in such a fabulous place - where we could enjoy a morning routine of rainfall powershowers and coffee enjoyed while watching the soft morning sunshine shimmering over the bay below 🌊

For more information, call 08000 886622 or visit www.stmawesretreats.co.uk

