

travel

Cornish 007th heaven at Moonrakers



MICHAEL BOOKER finds adventure for all the family in pretty St Mawes

THERE'S something about standing precariously on top of a paddleboard in an unflattering cold surrounded by freezing cold Cornish water that focuses one's mind.

The need to focus is more acute for me, with the balance of a newborn Barnie, not wishing to appear too daft in front of my two children and wife by being the first to crash headfirst into the drink.

We'd fancied having a go at paddleboarding – for the uninitiated that's surfing with a paddle – after seeing Steve McGarrett make it look easy on the new series of Hawaii Five-0. But any idea that we were ready-made experts, thanks to watching hunky Steve in action were soon dismissed when one by one we all fell in trying to stay upright.

Saying that, there's nothing quite so bonding for a family as group humiliation and once you get over the initial balance problems paddleboarding becomes great fun.

It's particularly good with an instructor as patient as Maria with whom we'd arranged a lesson after being put in touch by the owner of our holiday home for the week, Amanda Selby at Cornwall's St Mawes Retreats.

The paddleboarding took place at Roseland Boat and Sail situated in Percell Quay, a few miles from our amazing five-bedroomed holiday home base in the beautiful village of St Mawes on the south Cornish coast and where Amanda's company has five luxury properties available for rent all year around.

We stayed at the largest property, Moonrakers, the name of which conjured up ideas of a place James Bond would relax in between missions and might even entertain Pussy Galore.

Suitably, on entering the house that comes complete with its own games room, en-suite bathrooms, the comfort beds you can ever imagine, and huge garden with trampolines and table tennis table, I felt my emotions nicely shaken and stirred.

Despite the obvious luxury Moonrakers is not intimidating as a family holiday rental. The place has retained a relaxed, homely feel that means you aren't too scared to touch anything for scared of making a mess or breaking something valuable.

And that's a good job for my lot who tend to charge around like a herd of spatially unaware buffalo.

Funnily enough, the huge TV screen in front of the leather armchair in the enormous front room was the thing that immediately caught my attention.

Weirdly, and I'm not just saying this because I'm a sexist slob, it was the kitchen fitted with all the mod cons for a perfect self-catering

CORNISH CREAM: St Mawes. Inset, the Bookers, and left, Moonrakers.

break that was the biggest "wow" for my wife.

Upstairs the views from the master bedroom balcony onto the estuary and the sea beyond were worth the price of the stay alone and, though we visited in the cooler autumn months, we still were able to spend many a happy hour relaxing with a book on a lounger.

The dramatic sight of the Fal

estuary that stretches around from St Mawes to Falmouth must have stirred a bit more adventure in our holiday joints.

So, after we had ticked off paddleboarding on our list of adventures, we took the five-minute walk down the steep hill into St Mawes to take up the chance of a whizz round in a rib motorboat.

The rib is skippered by Mark Bower, who runs a sight-seeing-

cum-taxi service from the harbour. As Mark strapped us into our lifejackets there were a few second thoughts from the less-than-hercic Booker family. But there was no time left to chicken out after he started the engine and took us for an exhilarating hour's blast around the estuary, taking in Falmouth's harbour along the way.

St Mawes, an increasingly popular holiday spot popular with



HOMELY FEEL: A stylish bedroom of Moonrakers in St Mawes



STUNNING VIEW: The Moonrakers balcony overlooks estuary

Moonrakers



members of the Royal family, big business and the showbiz elite, is part of the Roseland peninsula designated Area of Natural Beauty that also includes the villages of St Just in Roseland, Portcatho and Gornans, Portloe and Verrin.

The pebble beaches and the area around the harbour, from where there's a regular ferry service to Falmouth, are popular spots for crabbing.

Not being a fisherman I baked our crab-catching hook with cooked chicken bought from the nearby Co-op.

Within minutes I'd absconded myself with my crabbing equipment, proudly showing off my bucket teeming with the little bighters.

Saddy it was only once I looked all along the quay and saw a string of successful yet boozed dads showing off a similar haul that I realised that I wasn't the crab equivalent of the Pied Piper.

I reckon the crabs get a slice of the local business profits from

celebrity traveller Alexandra Burke

Singer ALEXANDRA BURKE, 25, lives in north London. She has just taken over the lead role from Beverley Knight in the hit West End musical *The Bodyguard*.

pretty to look at and each one is unique.

BEST HOLIDAY BOOK?
Need on my list is Sir Alex Ferguson's autobiography as I am a big Manchester United fan.

HOW DO YOU SPEND YOUR TIME ON HOLIDAY?

I start the day with a workout. After breakfast I chill out on a beach, go to the local market and eat in a local restaurant.

WHERE WOULD YOU REVISIT?
Mauritius. I went there after winning X Factor and it's breathtaking.

WHERE TO NEXT?
After finishing in *The Bodyguard* in August, I am planning to visit Bora Bora for my 26th birthday.

● *The Bodyguard* is at the Adelphi Theatre (0844 579 0004 / thebodyguardmusical.com)



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Leger

Rorke's Drift remembered

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

deafening centre on the heroic deeds of the Victorian age. What a privilege.

THE KNOWLEDGE
Africa Travel (020 7843 3500 / africa@travel.co.uk) offers a nine-night trip to South Africa from £1,750pp (two sharing). Price includes return British Airways flights from Heathrow to Johannesburg, airport transfers in Johannesburg, two nights at the Mowlof Hotel, four nights at Fairmont Zimbal Resort, three nights at Fugitives' Drift Lodge (full board) including battlefields tours and car hire. South African tourists: southafrica.net

GALA NIGHT BONUS

TICKETS OFFER FOR THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF ZULU
Although our Zulu50 competition is now closed, and the four lucky winners have their tickets, we have managed to negotiate an extra bonus.

Anyone who entered the competition but did not win is eligible to buy two £75 tickets for half price to attend the red carpet Gala Evening that will be attended by Prince Harry at the Colson, Leicester Square, on Tuesday. The programme includes a talk by TV historian Dan Snow and a performance by the Welsh Guards Choir.

To take up this offer: call the Working with Wounded office on 01293 893990. Please specify you are buying two tickets for the price of one, as per the Daily Express offer. Confirmation will be sent by e-mail. Photo ID needed for collection at box office.

get packing

By CHARLOTTE CIVIL

HOT HOTEL
This week's hot new London Hotel opening is Ham Yard (020 3642 2000 / hamyard.hotel.com)

Another excellent in quality chic from the Fimaldia Hotel stable, owner Kit Kemp has once again managed to blend her distinctive style as a kaleidoscope of patterns, textures and furniture all harmoniously together in this gorgeous uplifting space.

Check into one of the 91 individually-decorated and beautifully appointed rooms, each looking out over a relaxing, leafy courtyard – a rarity in bustling Soho.

Food is typically British; beans on toast, Dorset crab, house glazed Ham Yard ham.

Doubles from £310 per night (two sharing), room only.

BARMY FOR BRAZIL
By next week we'll be in a football frenzy but look past the goalposts and Brazil scores in so many ways.

Brazilian Style features everything from Rio's iconic Christ the Redeemer Statue to Copacabana beach, and may just inspire you to visit for the next big event – the Olympics in 2016.

Brazilian Style, published by Assouline Boutiques (assouline.com), \$40.

Spectacular Corsica

Escorted Holiday by Rail
2 Sept 2014 - Quote: CR9-DEXP

Corsica's landscape can change dramatically from glittering bays and fabulous beaches to jagged peaks and breathtaking valleys, dense forests and enigmatic hilltop villages. We travel to Corsica by rail from London St Pancras (from £840pp on request) to Nice where we stay overnight. We continue by ferry to Bastia, then to our 3-star hotel, overlooking the sea in Calvi. Included excursions take in the best of Corsica. We return by ferry to Sardinia, continuing to Nice for an overnight stay, then to London by rail.

Braemar Gathering & Highland Steam

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4 Sept 2014 - Quote: BG9-DEXP

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Note: Attendance by the Queen and Prince Charles not guaranteed.

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