

Travel

The UK is already popular for next year so secure a break pronto. By *Richard Mellor*

1 LITTLE NUT, LAKE DISTRICT

Originally a slate quarryman's home, Little Nut has recently been redone by the interior designer Katharine Pooley. Both airy bedrooms (one with an en suite) now have earthy wallpapers to accentuate the woodland views, while outside laurel and lilac trees line a two-level rear garden, with hot tub, barbecue and dining area. The cottage is in the village of Elterwater, below the magnificent Langdale Pikes and close to gentle hill or waterfall walks. The World of Beatrix Potter is also within easy reach.

Details Seven nights' self-catering for four from £2,800 (littlenutcottage.co.uk)

2 DUTCH BARN, CORNWALL

This former hay store in northern Cornwall has undergone a modern facelift. It's a spacious retreat with an L-shaped lounge and large

patio doors that open on to a sofa-lined garden deck. You'll find a hot tub and barbecue there, plus sunloungers and lawn. Crackington Haven's shingle beach is two miles away, while Tintagel Castle and the award-winning Peckish Fish & Chips takeaway are also near by. Your children's favourite activity, however, might be meeting the alpacas on surrounding Pencuke Farm – or collecting eggs from its chickens.

Details Seven nights' self-catering for eight from £3,425 (independent cottages.co.uk). Dogs allowed

3 1 QUAYSIDE, NORTH DEVON

A blend of whitewashed stone and chic charcoal hues, 1 Quayside extends across three floors. Its former attic is now a plush master suite, while below are another two capacious bedrooms and open-plan living areas. You're



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GREECE

UNIQUE HOMESTAYS: PHIL JACKSON; MARK WATTS

Fjall, Dorset, left; Argentor Cottage in Hampshire, right; a room at Broomhill Cottage, Pembrokeshire, far right; the living room at 1 Quayside, north Devon, below; Little Nut, Lake District, below inset



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30m from the seafront in Appledore, an estuary village where hanging baskets decorate pastel-shade houses. Tales of Victorian smugglers await in the North Devon Maritime Museum, and there's great rock-pooling on Westward Ho!'s blue-flag beach, just along the coast path.

Details Seven nights' self-catering for six from £2,363 (luxurycoastal.co.uk)

4 FJALL, DORSET

Wabi-sabi principles accept the world as imperfect. This Japanese philosophy inspires the design of three-bedroom Fjall, a peaceful escape overlooking wooded hills to the Jurassic Coast. You'll find faded-pink plaster walls beside knotted timbers; antique Indian furniture here, and a mid-century Ercol table there. There's plenty of space – from the first-floor master suite to an outdoor sundeck. There are cycle routes from the doorstep, while nearby Lyme Regis is great for dips in the sea and fossil hunting.

Details Seven nights' self-catering for six from £4,395 (fjall.uniquehomestays.com).

5 ARGENTOR COTTAGE, HAMPSHIRE

The New Forest's free-roaming ponies and donkeys have a tendency to pop into this 18th-century thatched cottage's large garden, which gives a sense of the three-bedroom property's location, surrounded by woodland. Days will be spent pedalling among the trees, visiting nearby Peppa Pig World, or



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catering for ten from £10,333 (boutique-retreats.co.uk). Two dogs allowed

7 HAYLOFT, NORFOLK

On a working farm, this 18th-century barn conversion is perfect for exploring north Norfolk. It's two miles from the historic market town of Fakenham, with its fantastic pubs, and just over ten miles from Wells-next-the-Sea's sandy beach and candy-coloured huts. The house is open plan with old red-brick walls and three bedrooms, one of which is downstairs for those with limited mobility. You will have access to a shared,

making sandcastles and spying seals in the Solent from Tanners Lane Beach, before returning to Argentor's smart Scandi interiors. Cook dinner in a classic farmhouse kitchen before retreating to the beamed living room.

Details Seven nights' self-catering for six from £2,374 (newforestcottages.co.uk)

6 SPELLBOUND, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

This golden-stone property is perfect for big groups – it sleeps ten and is close to Cirencester and the Cotswolds. Spellbound's garden has a large heated pool, eight-person hot tub, sunloungers, and even a resident red squirrel. Inside there's a cinema room and games den, while the five bedrooms are decorated in soothing shades. The Cotswold Water Park, with its sailing and swimming opportunities, is near by.

Details Seven nights' self-

heated indoor pool and a games room.

Details Seven nights' self-catering for six from £1,599 (holidaycottages.co.uk). Two dogs allowed

8 ARGATY COTTAGE, STIRLINGSHIRE

Here's one for nature-loving families keen on conservation. Opened in July, Argaty Cottage is part of an eponymous, 1,400-acre estate working to reintroduce red kites to central Scotland. Guests of all sizes can join ranger-led visits to watch the birds of prey, plus red squirrels and dragonflies, as well as sign up for educational pond-dipping

sessions around meadows and woodland. The simply furnished three-bedroom property borders a lawned garden. Should you fancy shops and museums, Edinburgh is an hour away. **Details** Seven nights' self-catering for six from £660, including a 10 per cent discount on estate activities (argatycottage.com)

9 BROOMHILL COTTAGE, PEMBROKESHIRE

So secluded is Broomhill Cottage, you won't worry about being disturbed. Newly renovated, the three-bedroom home blends slate floors with whitewashed woods and intriguing vintage finds. There's a galley kitchen, lounge and separate dining area. Two enclosed gardens offer play-area potential, as does the shed's ping-pong table. Beyond the nearby market town Narberth, Pembrokeshire beckons – sandy Saundersfoot Beach, dolphin-spotting boat trips and paddleboarding on Llys-y-Fran Lake are all accessible.

Details Seven nights' self-catering for six from £2,278 (qualitycottages.co.uk). Two dogs allowed

10 ROSIES COTTAGE, CO ANTRIM

The amalgamation of an old farmhouse, barn and milking parlour, this period property is spacious as well as intriguing. Inside is original stonework

and a stellar kitchen; outside is a patio for alfresco meals. Most impressive is the location, south of the whiskey-making village Bushmills. That puts you within 15 minutes' drive of Giant's Causeway, and similarly close to seaside Dunseverick Falls, the bouncy Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge, *Game of Thrones* filming territory and Portrush's two blue-flag beaches.

Details Seven nights' self-catering for six from £1,061 (sykescottages.co.uk)

11 SOUTH LODGE, NORTHUMBERLAND

This refurbished 19th-century lodge forms part of the leafy Twizell Estate, once owned by the Victorian bird illustrator Prideaux John Selby. Expect a homely mix of Mulberry wallpapers, ornate chests, chandeliers and an Aga. Two of the four bedrooms have window seats from which you can watch for Wilma, a peacock that is a regular visitor. The sunny garden has hide-and-seek potential, but your charges might prefer to roam Bamburgh Castle and its beach, or to undertake Harry Potter-inspired dragon quests and wobbly rope bridges at Alnwick Castle.

Details Seven nights' self-catering for six from £1,650 (crabtreeandcrabtree.com)

12 THE OUTBUILDING, APPLIEDORE, KENT

The owner of this converted workshop is an interiors consultant, which helps to explain the homely, colourful layout and vintage touches such as rocking chairs. In addition to a king-size master bedroom (with cast-iron bathtub) is an area with bunk beds sleeping two children. All the baby paraphernalia (buggy, changing mat, travel cot) is provided, as are a trampoline, swings and football goals in the garden. You're close to the beach at Camber Sands and medieval Rye's tearooms, as well as the Rare Breeds Centre's petting farm.

Details Seven nights' self-catering for four from £1,540 (theoutbuildingappledore.com). Dogs allowed



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The pool and hot tub at Spellbound, in Gloucestershire