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Latitudes at Sandals South Coast, Jamaica

COVER STORY



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

Sea, followed by a movie night in the cinema room or a few games of pool, is just the ticket. *Emma Love*
 Three night weekends from £5,450 (thewowhousecompany.com). Sleeps 22-24

RHAPSODY, SURREY

This quirky six-bedroom Tudor house in the Surrey countryside offers treats around every corner, not least the sculptures dotted around the house and its 20-acre gardens. Aside from and its gorgeous bedrooms (the master suite with a terrace and a working fireplace), there's a rustic beamed fireplace, a drawing room with two open fires, a glass-encased dining room and a cinema room with a cocktail corner. Party highlights are the vinyl room, full of records and a record player, and a music room with a piano, bongos, a guitar and saxophone. While the outdoor pool isn't open in winter, there's a barbecue hut with a central fireplace, alongside blankets and cushions to snuggle up in, a yoga hut, a sunken hot tub and a glass reading hut with a log burner. *Francesca Sze*
 From £11,995 a week (uniquehomestays.com). Sleeps 12

WALLED GARDEN AT WILDERNESS RESERVE, SUFFOLK

Wilderness Reserve is a collection of self-catered houses on a 5,000-acre estate, which features Capability Brown designed parkland and has at its centre the exclusive-use and handsome Sibton Park manor house. The Walled Garden house has been restored in what was the estate's walled garden - the redesign even followed original planting schemes. The Victorian-inspired half-glass, half-brick house comes with eight bedrooms, roll top baths and a kitchen and dining area fit for



gatherings of bacchanalian proportions. There's a private sauna at the bottom of the garden; guests can also use the estate's communal sunken pool and hot tub. There's a separate lounge and games room, the latter with table tennis and table football. The style is glossy country living without the twee-ness, cable-knit rugs, bright Anthropologie parlour chairs, velvet cushions and auction-house finds. All but two of the comfy double bedrooms have roll top baths.
Jade Conroy
 From £16,228 a night (wildernessreserve.com). Sleeps 16 (plus 12 more if you book Garden Cottage too)

Most sensational are the two living rooms: velvet sofas, chinoiserie, vivid botanical prints, working fireplaces and a curious, enamelled, free-standing bar. In the dining room, a lacquered table seats 22 for any new friends you make at the local, walls emblazoned with a monochrome graphic print, enlivened by pops of fluoro pink; and there's a sound system and iPod dock. The kitchen is lovely: big, homely and well-equipped. The party trump card? The disco cellar: a soundproofed subterranean party level, hidden behind a red velvet curtain, with plenty of space for dancing, record decks (bring your own vinyl), a karaoke system loaded with enough power ballads and Eighties hits to keep the cheesiest of vocalists happy, plus a Holly wood-themed dressing up box. An adjoining cottage house a snug lounge with a projector screen for watching films (bring your own DVDs) and three bedrooms, with six more upstairs in the main house. Oh, and a hot tub in the coach house. Perfect for a lively, memorable weekend.
Natalie Paris
 From £3,689 a week (thebigdomain.com/large-houses/kaleidoscope-house). Sleeps 20

THORPE MANOR, OXFORDSHIRE

Before opening their doors to guests in 2018, husband and wife owners Henry and Natasha Teare spent three years giving this Grade II listed Georgian manor house, set on a 200-acre estate near Banbury, a top-to-toe overhaul. And the result is a gloriously unstuffy pile, made for hunkering down. The 14 rooms are all named after horses (Henry's stepfather Derek Ancil was a jockey and horse trainer who once won the Hennessy Gold Cup); Merryman has velvet mustard headboards and lemon and white stripe curtains while Knucklecracker comes with a Roman-style avocado mosaic-tiled tub in the bathroom. Butlers are on hand to serve morning lattes and early evening gin and tonics in the cosy, wood-pannelled bar before



WHERE'S THE PARTY? Colourful Kaleidoscope House and the games room at Marsden Manor, above; a bonfire at Wilderness Reserve, below left

a dining room supper (gilt-framed mirrors, from eBay) whipped up by a local chef. The kitchen is the most heavenly lunch spot. There's also a games room and projector screen cinema for winding down. *Emma Love*
 From £16,800 for a three-night weekend stay (thorpemanorhouse.co.uk). Sleeps 28

DINHAM WEIR HOUSE, SHROPSHIRE

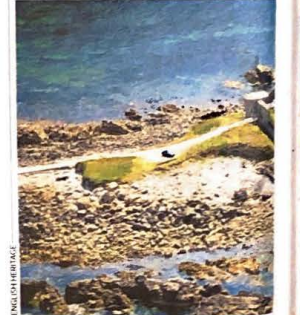
The perfect choice for a food-lover's family gathering, Dinham Weir House sits in the shadow of medieval Ludlow Castle, a five-minute stroll from the centre of town. Once a Michelin-starred restaurant with rooms, Mr Underhill's, it's now a stylish, loungey six-bedroom holiday rental, filled with an eclectic mix of contemporary and vintage art and furniture. So close to the edge of the River Teme that the sound of the water crashing past is a thrilling constant, the L-shaped house wraps around a large terraced garden with comfy outdoor sofas off the living room, right on the water's edge - the perfect spot for after-dinner hot chocolate. With its brilliantly-equipped professional kitchen, it's a hoot to cook in, or, owner Jude can arrange for a local chef - we had the talented Warwick Kidd - come in and rustle up



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Jade Conroy
 From £16,228 a night (wildernessreserve.com). Sleeps 16 (plus 12 more if you book Garden Cottage too)

KALEIDOSCOPE HOUSE, NORFOLK

With statement wallpaper, contrasting colours and eclectic, Oriental-style



FINCH PHOTOGRAPHY