

ROMANTIC RETREAT

Love is in the air for SU CARROLL as she heads for a special Cornwall retreat on a landmark date

For those who have memories as long as mine, the phrase 'Love is in the air' instantly conjures up the poppy 1978 disco hit of that name by Australian John Paul Young. It was a summer smash the year I got married and memories are accompanied by the song and its catchy lyrics about love being in 'the whisper of the tree' and 'the thunder of the sea'...oh, oh, oh.

I'll do the maths so you don't have to – that was 45 years ago (it's a sapphire anniversary apparently). So naturally we wanted to do something to celebrate.

But how to mark the occasion in style? Seeking a little luxury, from our home in Plymouth we skipped over the border via the Tamar Bridge and headed west to the north Cornwall coast.

Our weekend retreat was Little Portion, a quaint cottage in Cubert. Praise be for Google Maps which took us straight to the powder blue front door. It is one of the jewels in the Unique Homestays crown and is aptly named, with just one room upstairs, the bedroom. Opening the door we were greeted by a soundtrack of love songs playing, the house was warm



CLOCKWISE FROM MAIN Wood and natural materials are used in the kitchen area where plenty of green softens the hard, industrial fittings; Relax by the outdoor log burner in the evening; The outdoor space at Little Portion with pretty planting and a hot tub.

and there was fizz in the fridge. We instantly felt at home.

The wonderful thing about going away and staying in a cottage is that it is very different from our own experience of home. Yes it has all mod cons – a TV with all the usual bells and whistles, wi-fi, beautifully appointed bathrooms, comfy beds with Egyptian cotton bedsheets and all the kitchen paraphernalia we are familiar with – but it also has a quaint, otherworldliness about it that makes you think of a doll's house for grown-ups.

It stakes its claim as a holiday home. Unique Homestays don't just furnish their properties, they 'curate' them.

They upcycle, recycle and take shabby chic to a new level.

There is nothing ordinary about these homes. Everywhere you look are clever features – a trunk in the lounge becomes a bespoke table, an old mangle in the kitchen is an impressive choice for a plant shelf. Metal lampshades, exposed industrial trunking, wooden planks as 'wallpaper' and lots of natural materials are in use. But comfort is not sacrificed for style. Sofas made for reading the Sunday papers sit by the log burner and a big bed is nestled under the eaves for warmth.

It doesn't stop there. Outside is just as clever – a hot tub, an outdoor log burner, quirky corrugated iron roof and interesting planting. Simply magical.

• Unique Homestays have several cottages in this lovely part of Cornwall as well as some spectacular properties on the coast and inland all around the UK. Heartily recommended for making memories. Visit uniquehomestays.com or call 01637 881183.

