

TRAVEL

Discover the delights of Palermo, plus six of the best tidal pools. Review of *Myrtle Cottage* by **Katie Pike**, travel stories by **Rhiannon Batten**



H&A
Review



TOP Fresh flowers, local produce and rustic touches in the kitchen; **one of the two cosy double bedrooms.** **ABOVE** The charming cottage overlooks Blagdon Lake.

Myrtle Cottage, Chew Stoke, Somerset

With its sweeping views across to Blagdon Lake and the Mendip hills beyond, and only the sound of the neighbouring cockerel, the occasional clip-clopping of hooves along the lane or the low rumble of a tractor, Myrtle Cottage's location is spectacularly bucolic. In fact, such is its charm that it's easy to imagine that you've stepped into the pages of an E M Forster novel.

Tucked around the corner of the cottage is a wood-fired hot tub, BBQ and dining table (one of the cottage's three outdoor seating areas). It's a garden designed for summer – in the day you can follow the sun, or shade, around the extensive grounds while in the evening, you can light the outdoor log burner, cosy up with blankets on the rattan sofa and gaze across the wildflowers to the shimmering lake.

Inside, things are just as dreamy. In the kitchen/diner – which opens to the garden, its voile curtains blowing in the breeze – a terracotta tiled floor, blush pink Shaker units and plenty of wicker accessories create a stylish, rustic feel. Meanwhile, the Smeg cooker, De'Longhi espresso machine and excellently stocked cupboards mean that getting away from it all doesn't equate to foregoing modern luxuries. A hamper bursting with local produce is a lovely touch, too.

Long, lazy lunches can be walked off with a five-mile hike around the lake and then rewarded back in the cottage's spa-like bathroom, complete with freestanding bath and waterfall shower, as well as cosy bathrobes, oversized jars filled with bath salts, and candles waiting to be lit. boutique-retreats.co.uk

M J Heritage; Anna Batchelor; Tom Dixon; Sean Strange Photography; Jill Tate

Peak season

Planning a weekend in the Peak District? Consider a stay at The Cavendish Hotel in Baslow. Part of the Chatsworth Estate, this 28-bedroom hotel has just been overhauled by interior designer Nicola Harding, in collaboration with the Countess of Burlington. Expect rooms in deep-plum and duck-egg hues, pretty wallpapers and antique furniture, plus art from the family's collection.

devonshirehotels.co.uk



CLOSING ACT

The HandleBards – a troupe of Shakespearean players wending their way across the UK each summer by pedal power – play their final shows of the 2024 season this month. There's just time to catch *The Comedy of Errors* at a string of historic venues, from Hatton Castle near Dundee to Dulwich Picture Gallery in London.

handlebards.com



BAG OF TRICKS

One of the highlights of this year's Jane Austen Festival in Bath, 'Rummaging Through The Reticule' is an afternoon talk on 22nd September, delving into these late-18th-century and early-19th-century drawstring bags, and the treasures kept in them by Austen and her characters. The 90-minute talk will be followed by a cream tea. janeausten.co.uk



Big Mack

Designed by Charles Rennie Mackintosh, *The Mackintosh Building* in Comrie, Perthshire, was built in 1903–1904 as a draper's shop and flat. Restored by the Landmark Trust, it is now open for overnight stays. It will also open to the public on 14th and 15th September this year, as part of the Doors Open Day weekend.

landmarktrust.org.uk