

ISSUE 100 MADE BY YOU

STYLIST

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YASMEEN ISMAIL



DIDMARTON HOUSE, COTSWOLDS



STYLIST READER VICTORIA ILLUSTRATES THE SIZE OF THE HOUSE: IE HUGE

Reader: Victoria Ray, TV producer

Location: Didmarton House in the Cotswolds

Sleeps: 8 to 10

Perfect for: Pure countryside luxury



When your directions say "turn left at the duck pond" you know you've well and truly left the city behind. Arriving in inky darkness, two hours after anticipated – thanks Friday night M4 – the lights of Didmarton House were glowing as warmly as the welcome from Carole, our 'across the field contact'. It's only in the light of day, however, that you truly appreciate Didmarton House, built from creamy Cotswold limestone with two acres of landscaped garden and a tennis court. Throwing open the French shutters, our only neighbours were three grey ponies, tossing their manes in the breeze. I felt like skipping out there to join them, mane tossing included. If all this sounds a bit Enid Blyton twee, don't be deceived, because the house is much cooler than your average country cottage.

Every room has been

designed with one goal in mind: indulgence. We spent two very lazy evenings in the Snug basking on the velvety forest-green sofa among tactile cushions and throws. A majestic stone fireplace is perfectly at home alongside slick acid brights and a surprising crystal-encrusted stag's head bringing a bit of bling to the traditional proceedings.

Taking the Goldilocks approach, I worked my way methodically around The Beaufort Suite; The Dorothy room; and Toad. But a huge bath and chandeliered boudoir meant La Reine won hands down.

The kitchen was stocked with local produce. The only thing missing was eggs because windy weather had put Branston and Pickle (next door's chickens) off their laying that week. A six-mile drive to Tetbury took us to jovial butchers Jesse Smiths to stock up on sausages and pies, and we stopped off for a horse ride at Badminton's world-famous cross-country course on the way back.

An entry in the guest book confirms the spell Didmarton has cast. "Thanks I'm moving to the countryside now." Me too.

From £1,480 to £3,265 for seven nights dependent on season. To book, visit mr.andmrsmith.com or call 0845-034 0700



ALL THE TOAD ROOM NEEDED WAS A SILVER ROCKING HORSE. OH THERE IT IS

THE ATTIC BOUDOIR WITH A ROLL-TOP BATH: NATURALLY



THE COTTAGE'S LIVING ROOM ONLY BECOMES MORE INVITING THE MORE YOU HIKE

TAILOR'S COTTAGE, SNOWDONIA

Reader: Sarah Jones, solicitor

Location: Tailor's Cottage near Betws-y-Coed, Snowdonia

Sleeps: 2 to 4

Perfect for: A romantic break



Only two hours' drive from Manchester, our stay at Tailor's Cottage redefined escapism: no phone signal; no internet; no traffic; no neighbours (sheep don't count) and certainly no noise. All stressors evaporated into bucolic bliss.

This detached cottage overlooks the peaceful village of Ysbyty Ifan. Inside, the gentle grey decor subtly blends old and new. The period property is filled with ultramodern appliances: powerful rain shower, iPod stereo and a fully equipped kitchen with everything a country feast would need.

We were welcomed by a jute bag, chock-full of local produce such as bara brith, Henllan bread and Purple Moose beers. Stock up on supplies in nearby Llanrwst's welcoming Welsh deli, Plas ar Fwyd. And for a sweet treat, visit the Riverside Chocolate House in Pentrefoelas.

The heart of the home is the snug living room with knitted cushions, big blankets and a huge hearth. While upstairs, two double bedrooms contain antique furnishings and country-style detailing. The feather-soft beds have marshmallow pillows and crisp white cotton sheets. Fortunately, there was fresh coffee to cure my morning laziness or I'd still be tucked up now.

The bijou bathroom is minimal but stylish with Kiehl's toiletries, thick towelling robes and a deep bathtub. This abode has everything except a hairdryer, probably deemed far too noisy in such a silent sanctuary.

Tailor's Cottage is perfectly placed for idyllic strolls or outdoor pursuits. Snowdonia is on the doorstep and the mysterious moonscape of the Migneint moorland is also nearby. If you wish to work off all the delicious local produce, there are walks to waterfalls and gorges in your personalised welcome guide. For the serious orienteers, Ordnance Survey maps are provided. I wish I could report some exhilarating explorations, but I won't lie: I took to the hassle-free life with remarkable ease as I usually multi-task in my sleep.

Without the onslaught of social media and the availability of round-the-clock shopping, this stripped-back lifestyle let me appreciate the natural things in life. In a heartbeat, I changed from a bustling urbanite to a domestic shepherdess. This was the ultimate antidote to a hectic existence. Thank you Stylist.



STYLIST READER SARAH TAKES IN THE NOISELESS TRANQUILITY OF WALES

Tailor's Cottage is £1,065 for seven nights. To book, visit sheepskinlife.com or call 01865-764 087