

THE CORNWALL HOTEL SPA AND ESTATE

The cream of the county: Cornwall's most exclusive retreat offers the perfect lifestyle/investment balance *Words: Anna Zeuner*

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raditionally loved for its warmer climate, magical coastline and beautiful scenery, Cornwall is a firm favourite with second homeowners and holidaymakers alike. Indeed, after a challenging couple of years and with summer well underway, what better time to indulge that dream of owning a second home, and look to Britain's best loved county for inspiration.

When it comes to buying a holiday home, established regions in the UK such as Cornwall now offer a more stable alternative to most overseas destinations. With the recession still fresh in everyone's mind, owners of property here not only benefit from keeping their own costs low by buying in the UK, but can also take advantage of potentially attractive rental yields. These are a result of an increased level of domestic tourism, and a burgeoning interest from European tourists who have been attracted to the UK by the weak sterling.

This Summer, Cornwall boasts a new treat for those looking for the perfect lifestyle/investment balance, in the form of The Cornwall Hotel Spa & Estate. This £30million development of a 43-acre Victorian wooded estate opened in February. The official unveiling took place in early March by HRH The Countess of Wessex. The Cornwall not only includes a restored 19th Century manor house now operational as a 4* destination hotel & spa run by Bespoke Hotels, but also accommodates 60 architect-designed detached woodland holiday homes in the grounds. The first phase of these has been completed, with 22 homes available to purchase on a freehold basis.

These stylish homes offer an appealing slate and cedar clad exterior and are for sale fully furnished and equipped, with prices starting from £299,950 freehold. Carefully designed by an award-winning team to reflect the surroundings, the two-bedroom and three-bedroom homes have been created using natural materials, with features such as large French windows in the living area which allow plenty of





Above: The restored 18th Century
'White House'

Left: Woodland homes nestle within the 43-acre Victorian parkland estate;
Below: The Clearing Spa pool which benefits from retracting windows



natural light in. The interesting layout, which sees the bedrooms and bathrooms on the lower floor; and the open plan living space on the upper floor; ensures that the views across the estate are enjoyed to the full. A large balcony off the living room is the perfect space for breakfast or for relaxing over dinner and a glass of wine.

What makes The Cornwall's offering so appealing is the fact that residents have total freedom to design a tailor-made 'package' that suits their lifestyle and investment needs. Sam Weller, Sales Director at The Cornwall, says: "Under the 'Stay & Let' scheme, our buyers will enjoy a wide choice of options. They will be able to choose how many weeks of the year they wish to make use of the property themselves, and for how many they wish to rent it out."

There is also the opportunity to buy for pure investment, or, under the 'Buy to Stay' scheme, you can opt out of letting out the property altogether. For those that limit their own occupancy to six weeks, The Cornwall can guarantee a minimum rental return of 3%. Buyers can also decide whether they will manage the lettings themselves or allow The Cornwall to take care of this for them. It's the ideal low-maintenance investment for those that want it. "We are very confident," says Weller, "that there is keen demand for what we are offering, both in terms of the holiday lets and the hotel, all year round."

South West Tourism states that Cornwall not only has the highest overall occupancy in serviced accommodation of any other UK county,

but that it also has the highest winter occupancy levels. This is good news for those owners of the woodland homes who wish to let out their property. The increase in the amount of 'staycationers' in the UK as a result of the recession, also points to this being a timely investment.

Tom Hudson, partner at country buying agents Middleton Advisors, says "Historically Cornwall has had a good second home market – although last year the market was less predictable, the increase in domestic tourism has provided a welcome boost. It's of course important when considering the type of home to buy, that the

whole package is correct – as long as the location is desirable, the price is fair, and the demand for holiday rentals is consistent, then chances are you will achieve a good return."

Near to St Austell, in the hamlet of Tregorrick, The Cornwall offers an ideal location for a second home, both for personal enjoyment and as an appealing holiday let. It's proximity to some of the county's prime attractions - The Lost Gardens of Heligan, The Eden Project, the traditional fishing port of Mevagissey, the tall ships of Charlestown, and the spectacular south Cornish coast – means that there is no shortage of

local excursions.

The established parkland and woodland setting of the estate offers a peaceful haven in which to escape from the pressures of daily life, and owners of the homes can effectively use the land as their back garden. They also have access to the hotel's state-of-the-art facilities - a brasserie and fine dining restaurant headed by chef Tom Bradbury, the Clearing Spa, run by Aromatherapy Associates and The Refinery, an infinity pool, tennis courts and a traditional walled garden.

The Cornwall is also a nature-lover's paradise - home to woodpeckers, swifts and swallows,

owls, bats, herons and badgers, and a variety of ancient trees and wild flowers. For beach-lovers, one of the 300 that the county has to offer is the lovely beach of Porthpean, just a couple of miles away from The Estate.

Access to Cornwall is surprisingly easy as local airline Air Southwest flies four times a day, seven days a week, into Newquay airport from London Gatwick, as well as a whole host of other UK and Ireland destinations. Mike Coombes, Commercial Director of Air Southwest says: "Cornwall remains one of the UK's most popular destinations for short breaks and with up to thirteen flights a day to Newquay Cornwall Airport, Air Southwest brings Cornwall within easy reach of eight airports across the UK and Ireland year-round. Our London route gives customers travelling from the capital great access to the county. With a journey time of little more than an hour, passengers are able to travel from city to coast in a fraction of the time of the road and rail alternatives."

There has at times been some angst amongst locals on the subject of out of county buyers purchasing property in the region that they then rarely use, thereby reducing the demand for local schools and services whilst also reducing the availability of stock for

local residents hoping to purchase their primary home. Schemes such as The Cornwall address this problem by effectively offering purpose built holiday homes. Far from affecting the local community in a negative way, The Cornwall has won significant support from local people, who see the project as a welcome boost for the local economy, providing local jobs, attracting tourism, and building the profile of the St Austell area. What's more, The Cornwall is committed to using local produce in the two restaurants in the hotel, which supports local farmers and suppliers.

"There has been universal support for the restoration of the old White House and for the creation of The Cornwall," says Weller. "Local people are very excited about what we are doing, not only because they were sad to see the estate fall into such a state of neglect, but because they now want to be part of our future - as a diner in our restaurants, as a member of our spa, as a supplier, or as an employee. They are pleased to see something happening to the 'old place'."

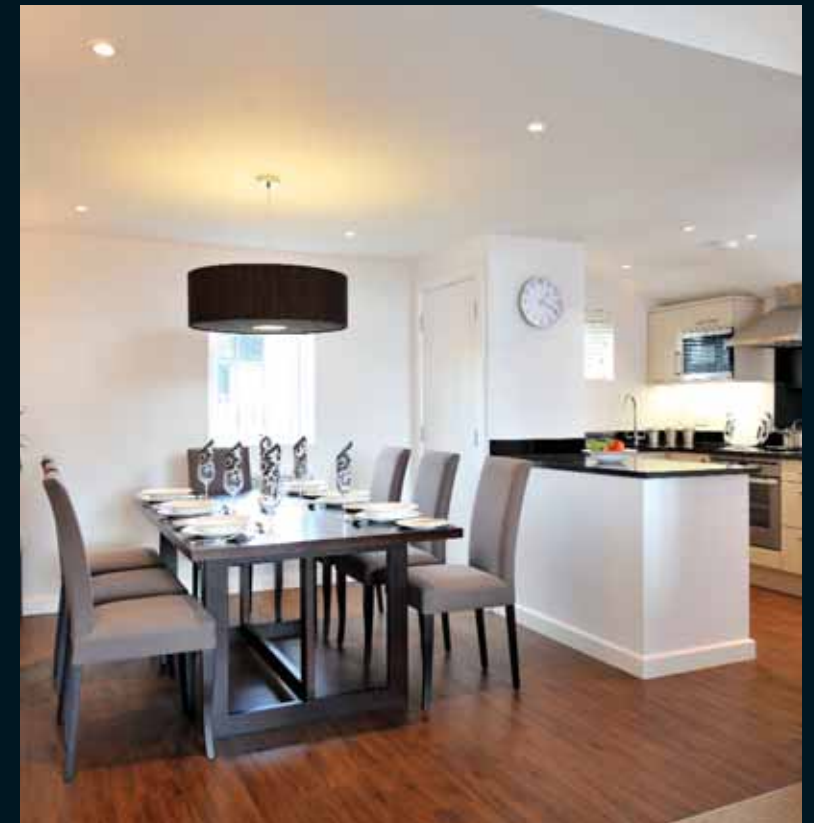
The Estate is an integral part of the local history, dating back to Anglo Saxon times when The Trewiddle Hoard, a hoard of gold, coins and religious icons, was

hidden in the grounds to safeguard it from overseas invaders. In the 19th Century it passed into the hands of the Coode Family, and Edward Coode, the successful banker, built what is now known as the White House in 1834. Abandoned for some time, the locally significant Estate has been given a new lease of life by developer CMR Leisure, who has successfully preserved the sense of grandeur that it always had.

"We have worked hard to strike a balance between preserving our history and heritage and moving the estate into the 21st century," Weller explains. "Visiting The Cornwall is a very special experience from the moment you drive into the Estate – 43 acres of

Victorian parkland, a host of majestic trees and a handsome house nestling in its surroundings. The style and decor of the hotel, spa and woodland homes is very special."

Over the last decade, Cornwall has become increasingly high profile, with celebrated chefs such as Rick Stein and Jamie Oliver endorsing the region. Agencies such as Visit Cornwall continue to work tirelessly to promote the county and to maintain very high standards within the hospitality and tourism industries. Across the board there has been recent investment in major regeneration schemes, such as in Newquay in 2008, and currently in St Austell, where a £75million project to redevelop →



Interiors of the woodland homes feature natural materials and colours



Picture courtesy of Ian Lewis www.cornwall-pictures.com

Local attractions Clockwise from left: **Charlestown Harbour, The Lost Gardens of Heligan and the South West Coastal Path**



Picture courtesy of Julian Stephens, The Lost Gardens of Heligan



Picture courtesy of Sarah Smith SCMP Team

the shopping centre was completed in late 2009, to include a fine, state of the art multi-screen cinema. Marina developments including an upgrade at Falmouth, are also driving a different audience to the Cornish shores.

Major attractions such as The Eden Project, The Lost Gardens of Heligan, The National Maritime Museum and The Tate St Ives have all boosted the profile of the area. Richard Whitehouse, Managing Director of developer CMR Leisure, and the inspiration behind The Cornwall, says: "Attractions such as these have created a new niche market for more discerning visitors, who are demanding a higher standard of accommodation and facilities than the existing infrastructure offers. There is currently a surprising lack of high quality serviced accommodation in Cornwall, and owners of the woodland homes will be able to take advantage of this fact."

Weller agrees: "Here in Cornwall, quality is now "king" – quality accommodation, quality locally sourced food and quality service. The bar has been raised in recent years and we are taking it higher again with our offering at The Cornwall."

The Cornwall is by any standards a rare find. It offers a real retreat from the bustle of modern day living, whether you want to spend a weekend in the hotel or invest in one of the woodland homes. The developers made a huge commitment to reviving this previously neglected estate, with magnificent results, and The Cornwall looks set to become one of the county's most exclusive retreats.

www.thecornwall.com

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