



First class break – fab action, history and food

In recent years much has been said about the “staycation”, how people are choosing to holiday in this country rather than heading off abroad. Here’s a little tip from Ellen Cook: for a first class break for all ages, you don’t even have to leave the South West.

THE Devon-Cornwall border area was our destination of choice for a weekend break. We packed our VW campervan and set out for Woodovis Park, near Gulworthy.

What a treat this holiday park is. Whether you’re camping, glamping, touring or staying in one of the site’s static caravans, it’s got everything you’ll need – including an indoor heated swimming pool and spa pool, and a kids’ play area (in the interests of research I was keen to try the play area out, but was sadly told I was too old).

An impressive driveway led us to the park itself, where we were met with a smile by a welcoming chap called Andy,

who, considering the relative lateness of the hour of our arrival, could not have been more helpful.

Saturday morning arrived and my other half Ross went to collect the pain au chocolat we’d ordered off Andy when we checked in (yep, you can order fresh croissants or pain au chocolat from the well-stocked site shop). After breakfast watching our fellow campers taking their dogs for a walk, we made our way to the Garden House at Buckland Monachorum. A combination of stunning gardens and fascinating history make this a great place to while away some hours.

The site was first used in 1305 for the construction of a home for the parish priest. It really came to the fore in the 1940s when Lionel and Katharine Fortescue bought the land and house, and they spent the next 40 years creating the attraction as it is now.

It was packed with autumnal colours, and is clearly a place for all seasons. After a walk around the extensive grounds (the walled garden is a particular treat), we rewarded ourselves with tea and cake in the house and a nose at the history exhibition displayed there.

A hop into Cornwall saw us at the National Trust property Cotehele. Wow. I am a self-confessed history nut, so this Tu-

dor mansion with beautiful gardens and orchards ticked all the right boxes. The ancestral home of the Edgcumbe family, it is packed with gorgeously intricate tapestries and intriguing artefacts (the centuries-old prosthetic lower arm made out of armour is fascinating).

Stepping through the rooms is indeed like stepping back in time, and it was fun pretending to peer down on our guests in the hall below from a custom-built alcove in one of the bedrooms. The family chapel was especially moving, as was the informative and thought-provoking First World War exhibition.

A delicious lunch in the Barn Restaurant was followed by a stroll down the Valley Garden to the dovecote and stewpond.

Then we took our leave of Cotehele, ready for our next adventure – indoor climbing!

There is a friendly feel to the place as soon as you walk into the Barn Climbing Centre, Milton Abbot. I climbed a fair bit back in the day, and it was fun to get back on the wall. First-timer Ross also had an absolute ball, and was something of a natural. Our instructor Joe was brilliant, with helpful advice and an enthusiasm that was infectious.

The Barn caters for all abilities, so I’d highly recommend it if you want to get started

climbing or are a climber and haven’t visited before.

Back to Woodovis to shower and change (all of the facilities are top notch, and my shower was warm, powerful and refreshing). Then time for food. A very short walk from the site found us at The Copper Penny Inn. A traditional, family-run inn with a hearty and delicious menu. And an extremely drinkable line in Pinot Grigio.

Sunday morning saw more outdoor activity after reluctantly checking out of Woodovis. A 10-minute drive found us at Tree Surfers, set in the Tamar Valley. Ladders, rope bridges, zip wires and walkways awaited, in a series of three (or should that be tree?) courses. Undoubtedly a brilliant way to experience the valley, even if most of it did scare me half to death – talk about adrenalin rush!

So if you’re looking for a staycation that’s as relaxing as it is exhilarating, look no further than Woodovis Park and all the surrounding area has to offer.

What a treat this holiday park is... it’s got everything you’ll need.



Forthcoming events

- Sunday 25 October: Water walking in the swimming pool, fun for all aged 5+, cost £5
- Monday 26 October: LED and FIRE Circus Skills Show, free
- Wednesday 28 October: Hog roast; Circus Skills Workshop using LED, cost £2
- Thursday 29 October: Archery session, great for all age 8+, cost £9
- Friday 30 October: Hog roast; International Story Teller David Heathfield for Almost Halloween spooky tales, free
- A week in a luxury caravan (sleeping up to six) costs from £385 during October half term. To book call 01822 832968 or visit www.woodovis.com.

Overview

Located in 14 acres in the tranquil surrounds of the Tamar Valley, Woodovis Park offers luxury holiday homes and camping pods as well as camping pitches. Visitors can look forward to an indoor swimming pool and shop selling freshly baked bread. A touring pitch at Woodovis Park costs from £24 per night for two adults (including a 10amp power supply). A week in a luxury caravan costs from £289. Short breaks can be booked from £175. There is limited availability at half term. A short break in a luxury caravan costs from £269. www.woodovis.com