



6 of the best BRITISH WEEKENDS

Rolling green countryside, spacious spas, seaside walks and food fit for a queen... the best of Blighty is there for the taking



1 *Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons* Foodie heaven

Why here? Raymond Blanc's two Michelin-star restaurant and hotel is the iconic escape for food-lovers. Come for the red mullet with bonito and tapioca broth. Between meals take a boat along the River Cherwell or play croquet on the lawns.

The experience The 32 guest rooms and suites are entirely individual, and the gardens are bursting with wild flowers and scented lavender. Explore the two-acre kitchen garden, where the restaurant grows 90 varieties of veg and more than 70 types of herbs.

Luxx loves The new wine and dine experience is lavish (from £2,000 for eight) – enjoy a private cooking demo and tasting session in the wine cellar, before feasting on a four-course dinner.

Get me there Le Manoir is part of the Relais & Chateaux portfolio. Doubles from £515, including French breakfast. *Great Milton, Oxford (00800 2000 0002; relaischateaux.com).*

2 *Lime Wood* Fashion-crowd favourite

Why here? Luxuriate in country-house charm without the chintz. At the end of a sweeping driveway in the New Forest, the Regency house is decorated by interior designer *du jour*, David Collins. Only 90 minutes from London, fashion editors use it as a home-from-home.

The experience Loll about on plump couches and outdoor daybeds, gad about on a hotel bicycle or take a horse for a canter from the nearby stables. Welly up for a foraging expedition where you gather seasonal produce for your chef's dinner.

Luxx loves The Herb House spa is dreamy. Steam and swim indoors and

out overlooking the forest, then doze on the rooftop sundeck planted with camomile, bergamot and white lavender.

Get me there Doubles from £245, room only. *Beaulieu Road, Lyndhurst, Hampshire (023-8028 7177; limewoodhotel.co.uk).*

3 *Fletcher's Cottage Spa* Pamper yourself

Why here? A favourite of Mary Queen of Scots, the Grade I-listed Archerfield House has a rustic-chic spa on its 550-acre estate. Amid pine forests, with epic sea views and plenty of fresh Scottish air, it is the ultimate spa retreat north of the border.

The experience Go horse riding, fishing, walking or play golf on one of two 18-hole courses, before heading to the spa to relax in the Himalayan Salt





Room or have a treatment in the Rasul Mud Cure Room.

Luxx loves Facials from Spieza Organics are reviving, then wrap up in handmade Kenyan kikoi robes and dry off by the roaring fire.

Get me there Doubles from £325, including breakfast and two treatments. *Archerfield House, near North Berwick, East Lothian, Scotland* (01620 897050; archerfieldhouse.com).



4 Lower Mill Estate Eco-luxe

Why here? Lower Mill Estate is a collection of private villages with sustainable houses, vast lakes and an award-winning spa, set in more than 550 acres of a private nature reserve. Homes are also for sale.

The experience Bird hides dot the reserve and it's an idyllic place for families to check out the resident beavers, otters and swans. Then return to your lakeside home and indulge in a dinner party cooked by a personal chef. Cycling, fishing, sailing, running – you name it, it's here, and the kids have acres of secure space to play in.

Luxx loves The outdoor eco-pool is purified by plants, complete with floating lilies.

Get me there Self-catering homes from £371 for a three-night stay. *Somerford Keynes, Nr Cirencester, Gloucestershire* (01285 869489; lowermillestate.com).

5 Hotel Tresanton Coastal cool

Why here? The village of St Mawes on the wild Roseland peninsula is quintessential Cornwall – pretty whitewashed cottages nestle alongside this waterfront hotel. Renowned hotelier Olga Polizzi (sister of Rocco

Forte) has created a comfy retreat – all nautical fabrics, sea views, al fresco dining and strolls on the beach.

The experience Did we mention the art? Cornwall's impressive family of artists is well represented – originals by Patrick Heron, Barbara Hepworth and Stanhope Forbes give you reason to linger. And the all-white restaurant has creations of its own – fresh fish and organic, seasonal veg are menu staples. **Luxx loves** *Pinuccia* is the hotel's 15-metre classic racing yacht. Ask the skipper for a tour of Falmouth Bay and a cruise along the picturesque Helford River (from £330).

Get me there Doubles from £190, including breakfast. *St Mawes, Cornwall* (01326 270055; tresanton.com).

6 Bulgari Hotel London glam

Why here? Another jewel in designer Antonio Citterio's crown, the Bulgari Hotel and Residences is situated in London's luxury heartland – opposite One Hyde Park and seconds from Harrods. Low-key and subtle this hotel is not – silver and marble provide the aesthetic theme – but if you want a seriously glamorous retreat from the

bustle, this is the place. The vibe is serene, with not a siren nor car horn to be heard.

The experience Even the smallest bedrooms are large, with high ceilings, full-length windows and sizeable bathrooms – creating a wonderful feeling of space in the midst of people-packed Knightsbridge. Make sure you try the restaurant, Il Ristorante, serving refreshingly unpretentious, five-star Italian fare.

Luxx loves The attention to detail is everywhere. Plug sockets are tucked away in bedside-table drawers, huge jars of sweets sit in the lobby with take-away bags, and your minibar is in the form of a leather travel trunk. **Get me there** Doubles from £500 plus VAT, room only. *171 Knightsbridge SW7* (020-7151 1010; bulgarihotels.com). **LX**