



Welcome to
HELMSLEY
Please drive carefully

BUSTLING
Helmsley is a
marvellous
market town.
Right, living
area in The
Pheasant



UPDATE

Wild for Michaela

Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines will welcome Michela Strachan on board Borealis for four nights in August to join the Exploring Rugged and Remote Greenland and Iceland cruise. She will deliver a talk on British wildlife, revealing what goes on behind the camera. OWE (Ocean Wildlife Encounters) will also help guests spot marine life from whales and dolphins to seals and seabirds. The 14-night cruise departs Liverpool August 4, 2023 and costs from £1499pp (www.fredolsencruises.com).

Breaks point

If Wimbledon is inspiring you to take a tennis-themed break, Jet2holidays has the perfect match. Choose from specialist hotels in Portugal, Greece, the Balearics, Canary Islands or Malta with courts, coaching opportunities and world-class tennis centres nearby. Packages include the usual aces of an ATOL protected holiday, return flights with Jet2.com, 22kg baggage allowance, VIP customer service and in-resort helpers. Visit www.jet2.com or www.jet2holidays.com

Adventure time

Keen to embark on a wilderness adventure holiday? Then take up an Early Bird Promotion before July 17 and you'll not only secure your 2024 trip at its 2023 price, but you'll also receive a Haglöfs backpack worth £130. Holidays include walking the West Highland Way, cycling the North Coast 500 or exploring St Kilda and the Outer Hebrides. Visit wildernessscotland.com, wildernessireland.com or wildernessengland.com or tel 01479 420020.

Go on a troll hunt

Visitors to Norway can now meet and even camp alongside trolls at the world's only research station for the shy species. At Home of the Trolls in Trollheimen, a two-hour drive from Trondheim, guests can borrow a troll detector for 500 NOK (£37) and go in search of the elusive creatures on a short walk for small children or longer family-friendly hiking trail. Camping options also available from 300 NOK (£22) in a troll cave, a bird's nest or hammock, while activities include canoeing to cooking over a campfire. Visit www.homeofthetrolls.no

ESCAPE ROOMS

The Great Escape

If you're looking for an idyllic bolthole to celebrate a special occasion, Beautiful Escapes is a hand-picked collection of stunning self-catering properties, all based in Yorkshire, often referred to as God's Own Country. No wonder, as whether in Sandsend or Robin Hood's Bay by the seaside or in the market towns and villages of the Dales or North York Moors National Parks, you'd be hard pressed to find a more perfect location. And no matter if you're looking for a romantic cottage for a special anniversary or a pet-friendly pad for a family get-together, this friendly and helpful accommodation provider is sure to come up trumps.

Bank on this

On the eve of a special birthday, I was looking for a generous getaway to invite a group of friends to relax in comfort and style, whilst also not leaving my much-loved dog behind. Beautiful Escapes suggested a stunning Georgian home in Helmsley, a pretty market town close to the countryside, coast and city of York and ideal for guests travelling by train to nearby Northallerton from both north and south. The Old Bank was once used to stash the cash but has now been transformed into two adjoining luxury apartments that sleep up to 10, along with two pets. In addition, two well-equipped dining kitchens mean there is oodles of room for entertaining, plus a sunny private garden with hot tub.

A real page turner

Although the Pheasant and Partridge apartments can be let individually, we required both for our party of eight. The flexibility allowed us to turn the four en suite double rooms into twins, while two extra guests could have stayed on the mezzanine. The house, renovated by owners Jill and Henry, has the wow factor and is like strolling through the pages of an interiors magazine.

Beautiful accommodation in the heart of Yorkshire, from romantic rural retreats to big family gatherings



RICH HERITAGE Former bank is now two stunning holiday apartments



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Feast for the eyes

Walk-in showers suited the less mobile amongst us, padded low beams prevented sore heads (at least none self-induced), while chilled bottles of fizz were a nice touch. Laid-back lounge areas included window seats to watch all the activity in Helmsley's bustling square. We didn't need to go far with delis, cafés and takeaways on the doorstep but I recommend pre-booking restaurants, even out of season midweek. I thoroughly recommend the aromatic curries at Helmsley Spice, the hearty gastropub meals at next door's Black Swan and breakfast or afternoon tea at Cornercopia Café.

View to a thrill

Seven miles away, Sutton Bank National Park is a fun day out, where vet and author James Herriot described the panoramic outlook from the escarpment over the Vales of Mowbray and York as the "finest in England". Many walks and cycle paths lead to beauty spots such as the Kilburn White Horse, outlined on a hillside. Bikes can be hired, wheelchairs are on loan while there is also an adventure play area, café

and shop. It's an official Dark Sky Discovery Site, one of three in the area (www.northyorkmoors.org.uk).

The History Joys

The Norman Helmsley Castle dates back over 900 years and is open all year. Other attractions include the ruins of Rievaulx Abbey, Castle Howard in the Howardian Hills, as well as Helmsley's Duncombe Park and its National Centre for Birds of Prey. In summer, head to the beaches of Scarborough and Whitby. When showery, browse boutiques and galleries, tour Helmsley's micro-brewery, enjoy the hot tub or visit the spa and open-air heated pool at the neighbouring FEVERSHAM ARMS HOTEL. York is 20 miles away with its Minster, city walls, museums and Chocolate Story.

Ya beauty!

Beautiful Escapes offers a personal concierge service. This includes a website detailing what's on, such as this week's Great Yorkshire Show and Yorkshire Day on July 28. Plan a holiday to one of the many self-catering properties offered during July, August or September and you could enjoy up to a 20 per cent discount. Visit www.beautiful-escapes.co.uk or tel 01642 711165.

Last-minute choice

The 56-roomed boutique residence The Sarojin in Khao Lak has 15 per cent early bird savings for late summer and early autumn escapes. The discounted prices are available with specialist tour operator Best At Travel starting from £1495pp for seven nights and £1700pp for 10 nights for stays between Sept 1 and 24 Oct 24, 2023 and include flights with Emirates. Prices are based on two adults sharing a luxurious Garden Residence and inclusive of all-day à la carte breakfast with sparkling wine (served until 6pm) as well as return airport transfers in Thailand. Visit bestattravel.co.uk or tel 0203 5532447.