

IMAGINE a unique stay where you are so close to nature that you're actually sleeping within the branches of a tree? Atlantic Farm, in Stratton, just five minutes drive from the coast of Bude, offers just that.

The Ocean View Treehouse is a beautifully crafted bolthole, perched six metres up in a tree, looking out towards Widemouth Bay and miles of open country. Boasting a breathtaking 360-degree vista from the upper terrace, it's easy to see why this back-to-basics retreat holds such special memories to those who have stayed within its heights.

Peter Cobbledick bought Atlantic Farm in 1999 and hasn't looked back since. A working farm, formerly known as Westgrove Farm, it had been in the same family for generations. When it came on the market, Peter saw an opportunity to turn his vision of a unique glamping retreat into reality.

'The farm was in a poor state of repair, so I invested a large amount of time in regenerating it. The accommodation side grew organically as we started out by offering basic camping for £5 a night,' says Peter.

The 26-acre farm faces south and reaps the benefits of great weather. 'Being so sheltered means it is often much warmer and less windy than it can be on the coast,' he explains.

Atlantic Farm remains a working farm, home to sheep, pigs, chickens, alpacas, geese and turkeys and allotments grow various vegetables, rhubarb, berries and potatoes. The livestock supplies the onsite farm shop with its free-range produce - ideal for guests' barbecuing on site.

Now home to five cottages, 15 surf

# THE faraway tree

*NATALIE MILLAR-PARTRIDGE rediscovers her childhood fantasy - a treehouse with all mod-cons*

## MUST DOS DURING YOUR STAY AT OCEAN VIEW TREEHOUSE

Enjoy a barbecue on the lower terrace, while taking in the stunning views towards Widemouth Bay and the surrounding open country.

Make the most of being high in the branches of a tree with a breathtaking 360-degree vista from the balcony and enjoy some stargazing over hot chocolate.

Explore the rural farmland - visit alpacas and rare breed sheep, among pretty gardens and acres of greenery.

Take a trip to the coast for a surfing lesson and find out why Bude is one of the most talked about surf spots in the UK.

Hone your rowing skills by hiring a canoe or kayak on the historic Bude Canal.

pods, one treehouse and a camp site set apart in a neighbouring field, the farm offers the perfect back to basics getaway with a little added comfort.

The first of the cottages was completed in 2007. The surf pods were then built in one of the farm buildings to Peter's specifications; the design was unique at the time.

Peter then turned his attention to an office space that he had built on a platform in the branches of a large Macrocarpa tree at the bottom of the garden.

'I always thought this particular large tree would have the best views across the farm,' he continues. 'We spent a lot of time up there as a family, particularly watching the sunset. We would often camp up there, under the stars.'

'The first phase of the pods was nearing completion so I decided now was the time to put a simple structure on the platform, developing it into a treehouse.'

The treehouse is unique in that it is the only one of its kind, where the tree actually grows up through the middle of the house - bringing nature to the interior.

***'There is much to be said for sleeping so close to nature, especially with all mod cons to hand, it would be hard not to enjoy the exclusivity of staying in this rural Cornish hideaway.'***

It took just six weeks to complete. Made from timber with a Perspex roof that is half clear, it offers an unforgettable stay. It has been designed for couples looking for somewhere unique, the perfect hideaway for those who wish to escape the hustle and bustle of everyday life and enjoy the peace and quiet of the rural surrounds and it runs on low energy, helping to reduce its impact on the glorious surroundings.

Ocean View Treehouse is designed to offer a back-to-basics escape, though it is not without its comforts. Easily accessed by a stairway, there is a 20-square metre area equipped with a double bed, kettle, combi-microwave, electric cool box and Dyson heating. The roof is clear on the north side and shaded on the south giving a wonderful feeling of space with LED lighting adding a





cosy atmosphere to the evenings. At ground level there is a bathroom, barbecuing area and secret alfresco heated shower.

For me, the most exciting feature is the panoramic views from the upper terrace, perfect for star-gazing on a clear night. Sleeping within the heights of the tree itself was also unbeatable, listening to the rustling and swaying of the branches, with the distant sound of farm animals, emphasising the natural surroundings.

Peter's ethos behind the project was to bring an element of the outdoors inside, within the comfort of a unique space,

#### HEALTH BENEFITS OF SLEEPING CLOSE TO NATURE

Enjoy a better night's sleep! Waking up to natural light will help release the correct amount of melatonin at the end of the day, encouraging a natural sleep.

Boost your mood, lower blood pressure and reduce stress hormones - contributing to better overall mental and physical health.

A back to basics way of sleeping has proven to help with conditions such as insomnia and depression.

Spending more time in natural surrounds has been linked to improved attention spans and a boost in serotonin levels as well as helping to reset the body's natural circadian rhythm.

Trade high-pitched sirens and alarms for the natural sounds found on a farm or by the coast, to gain some balance.

where guests can feel close to nature.

'I realised that people were starting to look for more interesting holidays – they wanted to camp without all of the hassle of camping, a five-star experience without being in a hotel or a cottage. The pods proved to be popular from the outset and a few guests had mentioned a treehouse.

'My vision was to bring true glamping back to nature.'

The lake edge is home to traditional fire pits and across the garden lies an indoor barbecuing area, perfect for rainy days.

Peter has future plans for further unique accommodation in the form of a 'Sky Village' – a series of 23 pods on stilts, around 1.5 metres high. Each room will have a balcony and each pod will be accessed by a raised walkway, connecting all of the sky pods.

Peter describes a stay at Ocean View Treehouse as being very much 'an individual thing for those who crave a different contact with nature'.

It certainly offers a rare experience, where simplicity of life is celebrated with visions of the night sky and stillness of the rural surrounds - allowing guests to take a little of the simple life back home. There is much to be said for sleeping so close to nature, especially with all mod cons to hand.

It would be hard not to enjoy the exclusivity of staying in this rural Cornish hideaway. ♦



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