

escapes

COOL Class

Get a taste of tradition on your next self-catering holiday

The Cotswold town
of Malmesbury

Quintessentially English

Bruern Cottages, near Chipping Norton in the Cotswolds, are about as posh as they come. Indeed, they're owned by the Hon Judy Astor, whose late husband was the son of Waldorf and Nancy Astor and brought up at Cliveden!

All the rooms look like something from the pages of *Country Living* – traditionally English but not overly twee.

Smart they may be, but all 12 cottages (sleeping from two to 10 people) are also superbly comfortable and family friendly.

They're built in and around the former stables and outbuildings of nearby Bruern Abbey – Judy restored them with help from her sister, the interior designer Jocasta Innes.

The courtyard has become a lawned play area, complete

with outdoor games and pedal cars, the cutest two-storey Wendy house and a playroom with sofa, where parents can keep an eye on their offspring while enjoying the Sunday papers. Everyone can enjoy the lovely indoor pool and adults can sneak off to the small spa for a massage.

Who'd want to shift? If you do, the gentle countryside and golden-hued villages of the Cotswolds are yours to explore.

● Prices start from around £710 a week for Cope cottage, which sleeps two people. The largest cottage, Weir, sleeps 10 people and costs from

£2836 per week. Short breaks are also available at a reduced price. Ready-made home-cooked meals can be booked ahead, to reheat in your oven. Visit bruern-holiday-cottages.co.uk.



Cope
cottage

The modern gîte

Anyone with experience of staying in French gîtes will know that they can be a hit and miss affair. The four at Le Logis du Pressoir are very much a hit.

Originally an old wine pressing domain, the gîtes have been sympathetically renovated, keeping old beams, rough hewn walls and terracotta floors and adding in a few mod cons – including satellite TV.

Kiddies love the outdoor space. There are five acres to run around in, a heated pool to wallow in and a five-a-side football pitch, table tennis and boules to wear them out.

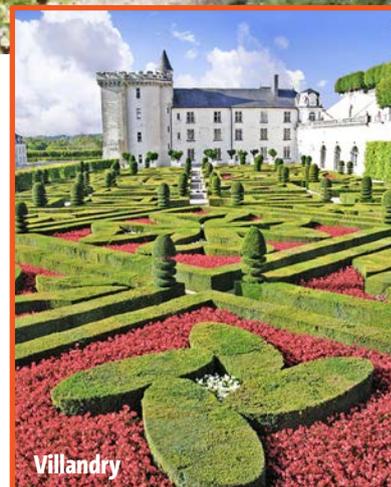
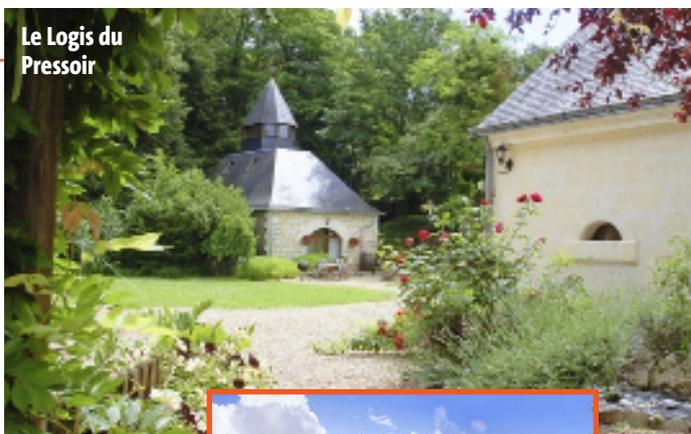
The local boulangerie can deliver daily bread – as well as croissants – and there are food markets locally to help you cook up your own feasts. This area is renowned for its gastronomy and wines, so you'll also want to get out and about to sample

some local restaurants and wineries.

The chateaux and gardens of the Loire Valley make for great days out – Saumur, Chinon and Villandry are all nearby. If your children get castled out, other options include the nearby treetops obstacle course and the popular Bioparc zoo at Doué la Fontaine.

- Prices start from around £355 for one week in Le Petit Logis, which sleeps two people, from £435 for a week in Les Rosiers, which sleeps four, from £490 in Les Lauriers, which also sleeps four and from £530 in Le Pressoir (the original wine press building) which sleeps six. Visit logisdupressoir.com.

Le Logis du Pressoir



Spanish charm

Gaucin is perched high in the gentle wooded mountains of Andalucia, and yet only about half an hour from the beach.

There's a bohemian vibe, shops to potter around and excellent bars and restaurants. Sitting outside on a balmy evening feasting on tapas with a glass of chilled rosé is tough to beat!

This place is full of character, as is Molino del Carmen, an old olive mill in the centre, converted into seven self-catering apartments.

The apartments are homely with lots of whitewash and Moorish arches. All but one have terraces – Casa Carmen's is particularly attractive, with cushions to sprawl

on as you gaze at the phenomenal views. There's also a shady shared pool, perfect for cooling off.

Beyond the village, with its Roman fort and interesting church and convent, you can take guided walks and go horse riding. Andalucia's famous 'white villages' can be explored, as can the town of Ronda, dramatically situated either side of a deep ravine and home to Spain's oldest bull ring.

- Prices at the Molina del Carmen apartments start from around £335 per week for an apartment sleeping two people, £435 per week for an apartment sleeping four, £700 for an apartment sleeping six and £950 for an apartment sleeping eight. For further details visit molinodelcarmen.com.