



RENTALS

A DOG’S LIFE

Caroline Phillips and **Daisy Finer** find four places for the perfect canine staycation

HALES HALL, *Norfolk*

It’s a haunting place, if not haunted. You can almost hear the Tudor hounds and patter of paws past. This is Hales Hall near Norwich, Norfolk, a drop-dead gorgeous medieval estate in formal gardens of topiary, box hedging and lavender avenues. It boasts nine acres of moated meadowland and buttercups with fairytale cottages and a Great Barn (perfect for parties) – offering overall accommodation for 25. The hall itself is a Grade I-listed masterpiece built by Sir James Hobart in the 1470s. Inside it’s all impeccably tasteful and modern luxury – perfect for posh pets – with three reception rooms and seven double bedrooms, plus Vispring mattresses, piping hot rainfall showers and strong WiFi. It’s so big – think 40-foot kitchen – that your hound can exercise inside, so forget putting him on a lead, take a SatNav and set off on a walk around the 8,267 sq/ft house to admire its mullion windows, copper pans and antiques. And roll-top baths, beams and flagstone floors. Then curl up on a sofa piled high with velvet cushions and watch man’s best friend snooze by a crackling fire. It’s tranquil enough to hear a doggie choc drop.

BOOK IT: Three nights exclusive hire, from £4,125. norfolkcottages.co.uk



DOGA BUNNIES



excellent for bonding and downward-facing dogs. Finish with a tail-wagging party: up to three hounds are permitted to kip with you.

BOOK IT: Doubles from £209 B&B. The pet package is £50 per pet per stay and includes housekeeping services, dog bed, dog bowl, treats and a soft toy. radissoncollection.com/en/royalmile-hotel-edinburgh

RADISSON COLLECTION ROYAL MILE EDINBURGH, *Scotland*

This Scottish boutique hotel has decor so daring – restaurant with fuchsia tables and zany rainbow columns – that you’ll want to wear shades. The hotel has contemporary suites, mixologists and staff in kilt, plus a dogs-OK-in-the restaurant policy and handmade edible pooch treats in the bedroom. It’s set in Edinburgh’s Old Town with The Writers’ Museum a few strides away, and just seconds from the café where JK Rowling penned her early Potter. (Staff turn a blind eye to Fido being left behind in your room, unless he’s howling.) Bag the Strathmore suite with its wraparound views of Arthur’s Seat – a steep and dog-friendly hill best enjoyed at sunset – then chill while a walker runs your four-legged darling around the nearby Meadows for £25 per hour. You can even do Doga here – a yoga class to enjoy with your pooch,



MONDAINE MUTT



THE GALLIVANT, *East Sussex*

Great for a houndmoon, The Gallivant is a hip motel across the road from Camber Sands beach. ‘Eat, sleep, beach’, as the brochure puts it. The rooms have a homely coastal vibe with muted colours and bathtubs (but no mutt washing, please, requests a sign) in the bedroom. There are goose down pillows and a king-size bed for master, and doggie shampoo and a takeaway drinking bowl for Lassie. Plus five miles of sandy beach and dunes for exercising furry creatures (although only in designated zones between 1 May and 30 September). The restaurant serves modern British food – such as pork cheek croquettes – while smiley reception staff take care of your pampered pet. A range of relaxing treatments – using natural, ethical products – is on offer in their Beach Hut, but no doggy grooming. The hotel – blissfully near Rye with its cobbled streets, antique shops and Tudor houses – is a magnet for birthday celebrants, anniversary couples and dogs.

BOOK IT: Doubles from £95. thegallivant.co.uk



BEACH BITCHES



HOUNDS FOR HIRE

If you don’t have a dog to take on a staycation, sign up for Borrowmydoggy.com. It’s the ultimate site for borrowing – and lending – urban pooches. Premium membership (£44.99 a year) costs less than a sack of dog food and gives access to a wagtastic community and veterinary advice. Or you can join for free, with fewer benefits. Its staff offer a helping paw to potential borrowers and also give tips to owners on marketing their hound to wannabe walkers.