



BOHÈME VILLA IN SOMERSET

Self Catering Country Retreat

There's little outside Bohème – with its working farm buildings and agricultural machinery – to indicate how cool it is inside. But open the vast barn doors – the keypad is a clue that this is no normal farm building, Sherlock – and suddenly you're in a wonder world near Stawley, Somerset.

It's a blend of 16th century former dairy farm turned cider press that is now an exclusive self-catering rental property. A sanctuary where original features (says my mum) stand alongside stylish contemporary touches. And where you can have fun, fun, fun – even with your parents there.

The first thing we – my sister, I and friends; 18 years old (her) and older (me) – do, is explore the house. It is on two floors; formed of old barns nestled around a courtyard with 10-year old olive trees and water feature. The former shippon parlour where cows were tended is now a 25-metre ('Well-equipped,' says Mum) kitchen/living/dining space. (Perfect for cooking while watching toddlers, she says.)

Another barn has been converted into a games room – complete with a snooker table, zillions of squishy sofas and a massive wall onto which films are projected. (Brilliant for teens, I say.) Best of all is the almost-bath-heat, big indoor swimming pool. (1.2 metres deep everywhere. 'No diving,' says Mum. 'Just dive-bombing,' replies Me.)

There's a bedroom – known as the 'love nest' – up a hidden staircase. (Excellent for...Oh, age to be discussed with parents.) And nine other double bedrooms with wooden floors, wooden headboards and mostly with en suites. ('Grandparents in the downstairs rooms,' suggests Mum, helpfully.)

Most importantly there's Wi-Fi – I can give you the code, if you want to hit the ground running – and a great sound system. Plus there are boules, badminton, table tennis, croquet and skittles. Oh and, sensibly, a TV for the old fogies to watch in the shippon parlour and a projector that does wall-size images for us to lounge in front of in the games room.

Outside my sister reckons is one big rural adventure playground. Down the drive there's the River Tone – apparently great for Pooh Sticks over the bridge. Plus the owners say if you go up the property to the cedar trees, you will reach an old highway where the trees create a tunnel. Reportedly fairies live there I have it on good authority. Maybe the owners' children told my sister. They're four knee-high beatific looking folk. The kids, not the fairies, that is.

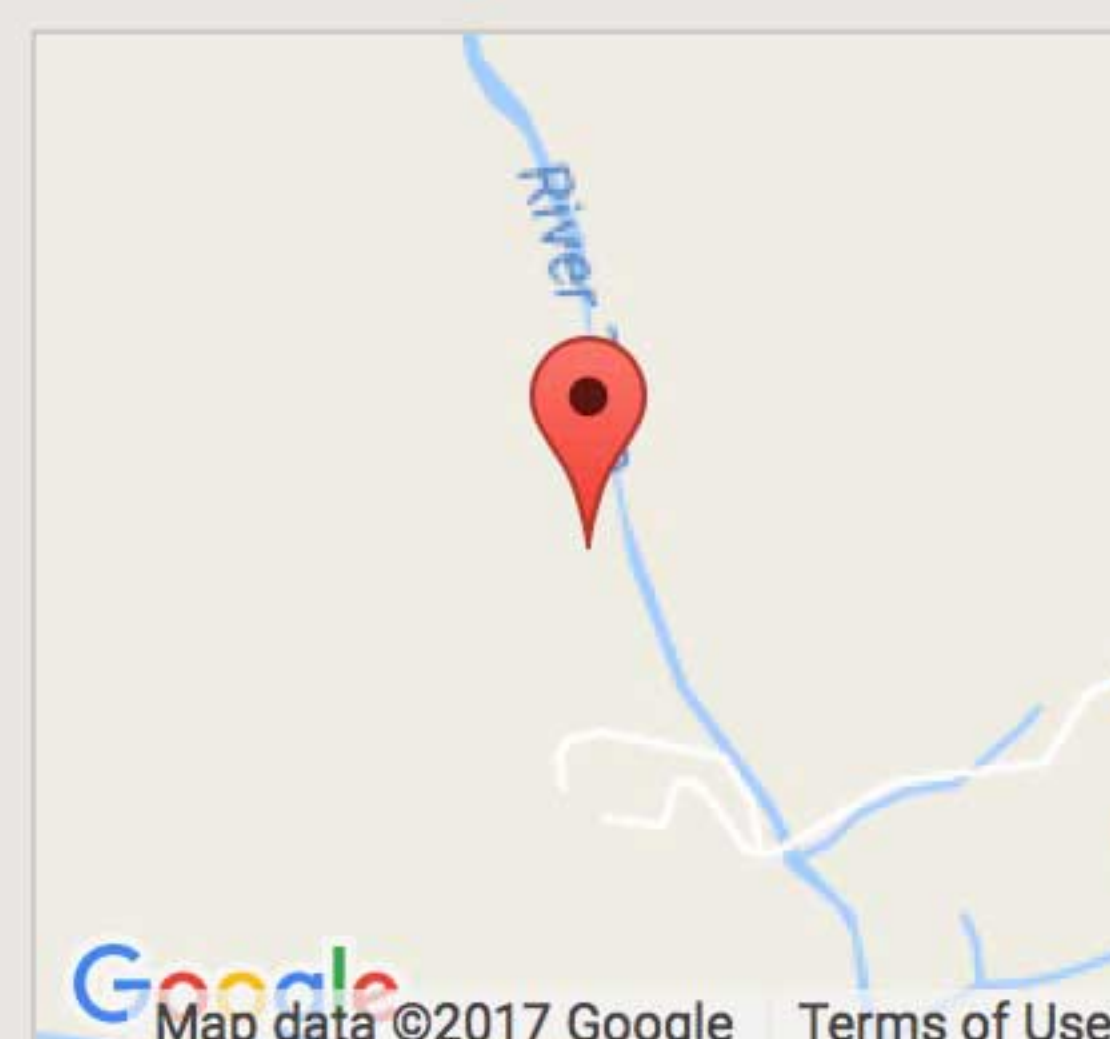
My mother books us all spa treatments with My Personal Sanctuary, to celebrate my sister's 18th birthday and her fiftysomething (she'll kill me if I get the decade wrong). They're a mobile spa company with therapists from Scotland to Cornwall. And Somerset, obviously. Therapists Karen Scott and Vicky Wright arrive with masses of fluffy white towels, heated massage beds and tons of lovely scented Neal's Yard goodies. They give us brilliant back massages, hand and feet treats.

Afterwards the parents have dinner cooked by chef Sam Rom. Squirrels on toast. No comment. Baked beans on toast, on the other hand is eaten nationwide. I rest my case. (Another thing about toast, the house is warm as toast. There's under-floor heating and a log fire that my sister lights by pouring vodka on it. As one does. Anyway, the house is not cold like most country piles.

In the morning (well, it's afternoon by the time some of us make it downstairs) there's a visit to a farmers' market. My father comes back laden with bottles of local apple juice, sour dough bread and also (delicious) Stawley goats' cheese (which he says he actually got from the Post Office. As one does.)

What else? There's Scarletts Garden White Post Nursery, a log cabin serving yummy wood-fired pizzas. The Globe Inn in Appley for Dad to get his fix of local beers. And we spend a lot of time in Waitrose in Wellington – a mere seven miles away, even with our Sat Nav which is stuck on, 'Perform a U turn when possible' – just to make Mum feel at home.

We're coming back to Bohème. Definitely. Just three miles away there's a place where you can do archery, fencing, CO2 pistol shooting and clay shooting. And there's a riding school locally from which you can go horse riding in the Quantock Hills, one of the most beautiful areas of Somerset. Not far away, there are beaches too – so it'll be brilliant in the summer. Not to mention perfect in



BOHÈME

Stawley, Nr Taunton, Somerset, United Kingdom

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[Visit villa's website](#)

HOW TO GET THERE

Bohème is located in the village of Stawley in Somerset in between Exmoor National Park and the Quantock Hills. It will take you about 3 hours to drive from London, depending on the traffic and Taunton Railway Station is half an hour away. If flying, Exeter Airport is 45 minutes away.

INSIDER TIP

It's a huge house, so it is most fun if you book it for 20 people.

OUR MAN ON THE GROUND:



[Anya Braimer Jones](#)
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winter. So then there's next Christmas to book too...


Anya Braimer Jones is a London based writer and daughter of a travel writer

Photographs courtesy of Unique Home Stays

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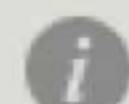



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	Reviewer's Rating	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
	Ambience	Quiet
	Services	Free High Speed Internet, Free Parking, Swimming Pool, Wedding/Personal/Corporate Event
	Cost	Medium
	Number of Rooms	10 doubles rooms with either twin or double beds.
	Related Activity	Relaxation

Additional Ambience Information

Cool and chic-rustic.