



# property

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The Daily Telegraph

**Ripple effect:** clockwise from main, The Lakes; Elle Macpherson who has a home at the Cotswold development; designers Jade Jagger and Kelly Hoppen

# MEET THE LODGERS

Ten or 15 years ago, the idea that a holiday lodge in Britain might cost more than £1million, would have belonged to the world of fiction. Ditto the notion that, having purchased such a home, you might have A-list celebrities for neighbours. Nothing about the word “lodge” said cool: Travelodge, Masonic Lodges or fusty Victorian hunting lodges with moth-eaten stags’ heads on the walls. Even the better new structures were only one step up from a caravan. How quickly things have changed. Lodges still have a way to go before they shed their downmarket image, but they are moving in the right direction. Nowadays you might bump

*Once a poor relation of the holiday cottage, the humble lodge has been glamorously reborn as the celebrity getaway of choice, says*  
**Max Davidson**

into Elle Macpherson at The Lakes (thelakesbyyoo.com), an exclusive lodge development in the Cotswolds where the supermodel owns a second home. She will not be heating baked beans in a billy can, but living high on the hog in a stylish, modern residence that would grace any landscape. It is as if the high priests of glamping, that neat hybrid of glamour and camping, have got together and decided to take the idea to an altogether higher level. The emphasis is now on the glamour rather than the camping. Just a passing fad? Pampered townies pretending to slum it in the country

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## Luxury lodge special

◀Continued from page 1

while not actually slumming it at all? Or a lifestyle change with lasting repercussions?

Whatever the trend turns out to be, you certainly won't find members of the I'm-all-right-with-a-rucksack-and-mug brigade at The Lakes. This is for the simple reason that they have been priced out of the market. Lodges at the 650-acre development cost between £1million and £4million for three to six-bedroom properties.

Hardly cheap, even by the standards of luxurious holiday accommodation. Why should you go for one of these hip, new buildings when you could buy a traditional Cotswold cottage for less than £500,000?

In the first place, there is the architecture, which takes your holiday hideaway off the chocolate box and into the pages of a cutting-edge design journal.

From the distance, they look like simple rectangular wooden cabins, but they are made from the finest Russian larch, and no expense has been spared on the interiors. One has been designed by Jade Jagger, others by Kelly Hoppen. An all-glass lodge designed by Philippe Starck is also promised. Lovers of traditional Cotswold villages may be sceptical, and get a whiff of preciousness, but the development has caught on. The Lakes is going places – and to prove it, prices are soaring.

"Of the lodges we have resold, all have appreciated between 25 and 30 per cent over a period of three or four years," says Giles Baker, the development director at The Lakes. "There seems to be a market for this new take on Cotswolds living." At the height of summer, a four to six-bedroom lodge lets for about £3,500 a week. Winters are more problematic. Fine if you are looking out from your log fire on snow-covered trees; less fine on a day of mist and drizzle.

Almost all the 70-odd lodges at the development are second homes owned by Londoners, whizzing down the M4 on Friday nights with their families. There is a fishing lodge in the middle of one of the lakes, a bird hide on another and, in summer, teepees in which children can have sleepovers. For some, this kind of middle-class idyll will sound like a nightmare. But for others it represents an opportunity to escape the pressures of modern life.

"Lodges of this kind are familiar in Scandinavia and North America, where modern lodge living could be said to have originated," says Baker. "But they also tap into something old-

### Reel deal

◉ Architect **Simon Gill** has designed and built a fishing lodge in Batak, Bulgaria, for his family to use.

"My wife is Bulgarian and my father-in-law worked as project manager on the lodge," says Simon. "It was an exciting challenge, professionally, and I am pleased with the result. I wanted to do a modern take on a traditional European hunting or fishing lodge, using elements of vernacular architecture with charred-pine cladding alongside modern solar panels and underfloor heating."



"We completed the lodge in three years at a total cost of £150,000. If we had tried to build the same lodge in Britain, it would probably have cost closer to £750,000."

"And would we even have got planning permission? British planning authorities tend to be suspicious of cutting-edge contemporary architecture, which is a shame."

### Modern hobbies

◉ **Tamal and Indrani Saha** have recently downsized from a large five-bedroom house in Kew to a new-build £725,000 lodge on Summer Lake at Watermark in the Cotswolds (watermarkcotswolds.com).

"We have children aged 10 and eight and wanted them to have more of an outdoor lifestyle than they can have in Kew," says Tamal. "Last year we started looking for a modern lodge-type property within a two-hour radius of the

capital. We wanted somewhere light and spacious that we could use as our weekend home, while continuing to live in a London apartment during the



week. As soon as we found Watermark, we realised it was exactly what we wanted and put in an offer. "We bought off plan, but because many of the components were pre-built, we had a four-bedroom property ready to move into within three months. Our children can roam around the lake for hours at a time. There is canoeing, fishing, waterskiing. All the leisure facilities you could ask for. After the noise of London, it just feels so peaceful."

fashioned and English. Middle-class parents like the idea of their children roaming at will and having *Swallows* and *Amazon*-style adventures."

If The Lakes feels light years away from the Cotswolds as we used to know and love them, the same could be said of Rocky Lane (rockylanecornwall.com). This is a new development of 10 lodges next to St Agnes in north Cornwall.

"Getting planning permission was an uphill battle," says Simon Blackburn, the owner of Living Structures, the company behind the project. "My wife is American, and we took our inspiration

from the kind of pre-engineered timber-framed houses that we had seen in Massachusetts. The look is modular and modernist and could hardly be more different from the pastiche miners' cottages you see in some parts of Cornwall."

Priced between £400,000 and £650,000, the properties are mainly being snapped up by young professional couples. "They don't want an exclusive gated development, London-by-the-Sea," adds Blackburn. "They want a more inclusive lifestyle, where they can feel part of the local community and enjoy the laid-back setting."

◉ **Lechlade-on-Thames, Gloucestershire**  
A five-bedroom waterfront property at The Lakes in the Cotswolds. The lodge is set within a 650-acre private park with Philippe Starck design credentials and A-list neighbours. £2.2m, Yoo (01367 250066; thelakesbyyoo.com)



### Online

Ten of the best British holiday homes [telegraph.co.uk/property](http://telegraph.co.uk/property)

Another company exploiting the growing popularity of lodges is Natural Retreats (naturalretreats.co.uk), which has 18 timber lodges in the Yorkshire Dales, as well as in John o' Groats and north Wales.

"We were wary of using the word 'lodge' at first," says chief operating officer, Ewan Kearney. "In Africa it is understood that a safari lodge will be a high-end property. Here, the word still smacks of a caravan park."

The three-bedroom structures in the Yorkshire Dales now sell for £225,000. "When we first built them, we saw lodges as holiday rental properties," adds Kearney. "We didn't anticipate the spike in demand from people wanting to buy them as second homes. The domestic holiday market has really boomed in the past few years. With budgets squeezed, more and more couples are buying into the idea of a staycation and taking holidays in places such as the Dales. Locations where they went on holiday with their parents 20 or 30 years ago. The big difference today is that they want a higher standard of accommodation."

### Join the cabin crew

◉ **Don't buy in isolation.** Make sure your new home is readily accessible and part of a community.

◉ **Shop around** – you will be surprised how many lodges there are on the market.

◉ **Buy into the slow-paced lodge lifestyle** – fishing and birdwatching, not mountain biking and paragliding.

◉ **Check out upmarket developments** with a concierge and more.

◉ **Hunt hard for a lodge with a view** – but be prepared to pay for it.

◉ **Don't neglect the environment.** Make sure your home is energy efficient and passes the sustainability test.

◉ **Don't make false economies.** Expect to pay for quality.

◉ **Don't panic if you do get Elle Macpherson for a neighbour.** Even supermodels let their hair down.

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Luxury lodge special

For sale: houses close to nature



**• Abersoch, Gwynedd**  
Overlooking the white sands of Cardigan Bay, this new eco-friendly three-bedroom luxury lodge has self-cleaning glass, freeing up more time to enjoy the golf and watersports the area has to offer. £565,000, Haulfryn (08433 092407; haulfrynholidayhomes.co.uk)



**• Cotswolds Water Park, Gloucestershire**  
A four-bedroom house at the Watermark resort includes membership to a wide range of leisure activities. £725,000, Watermark (01285 869031; watermarkcotswolds.com)



**• Looe, Cornwall**  
The defunct Millendreath Holiday Village is undergoing regeneration, to include 12 modern cabins (from £295,000) built into the hillside above a private beach. They combine historic charm with contemporary conveniences. (01503 263 404; blackrockcornwall.co.uk)



**• St Agnes, Cornwall**  
Excellent eco-credentials mean the 10 dwellings in a Unesco World Heritage Site overlooking Trevaunance Cove have minimum impact on their secluded woodland surroundings. From £499,995 (08448 85709; rockylane.cornwall.com)

**• Whitstable, Kent**  
This boldly modern six-bedroom newbuild is part of a small gated development right on the beach of this charming seaside town. Outside balconies and terraces on every level make the most of the sea views. Offers above £850,000, Fine and Country (01227 479317; fineandcountry.com)



**• Comrie, Perthshire**  
This four-bedroom lodge, built of red cedar and local stone to blend with the Perthshire landscape. Set among elegant gardens, it is little more than an hour's drive from Edinburgh or Glasgow. Offers over £795,000, Smiths Gore (0131 344 0880; smithsgore.co.uk)



The face of British holiday homes is clearly changing, with hi-tech lodges in the vanguard. Nowhere is that more evident than at The Warren (haulfrynholidayhomes.co.uk) at Abersoch in north Wales, a seaside resort dating back to the Thirties. Caravans in the dunes have been superseded by chalets, which in turn are reinventing themselves as stylish homes. They have energy-efficient heating, bio-cleaned windows and spa baths. There are now more than 500 lodges on the site, priced from £130,000. "The volume of sales has risen 10 per cent a year for the last three years," says Chris Rose, manager of The Warren.

The marquee property with its chic cubist construction and stunning sea views, would not be out of place in California. If it is a preview of the future of British seaside properties, it is an exhilarating one. Lodges will not suit everyone, and whether they are shrewd investments will depend, in part, on how long they remain fashionable. But they open up new possibilities, the chance to enjoy traditional holidays in ultra-modern surroundings.

• For a pick of the best luxury lodges overseas, see Compass Points on pages 4 and 5

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