



### A MODERN TAKE ON A BOATHOUSE THE O'SULLIVAN HOUSE, SALCOMBE, DEVON

**WHY HERE?** To savour the joys of award-winning, contemporary architecture. This crisply designed, spacious house (above), created by local architect Stan Bolt to form part of the sea wall, shimmers with reflected light from the Kingsbridge Estuary. Two balconies and a terrace hang over the water and one room even has a glass floor through which the sea can be seen flowing below.

**LOCAL ATTRACTIONS?** Keep the waterside theme going with a trip to Dick and Wills ([dickandwills.co.uk](http://dickandwills.co.uk)), a brasserie with views of the Salcombe Estuary.

**WHAT ELSE?** The house has two moorings.

**SLEEPS** Ten.

**HOW MUCH?** From £1,538 per week (low season); Christmas (23 December-3 January), £4,308 per week.

**BOOK IT** [helpfulholidays.com](http://helpfulholidays.com).

### A BARONIAL CASTLE ACKERGILL TOWER, CAITHNESS

**WHY HERE?** To enjoy a *Monarch of the Glen* moment. This 15th-century castle (right), on one of Scotland's most northerly shores, is a place to indulge any delusions of grandeur. Its many rooms are furnished comfortably with substantial pieces of furniture and thickly draped soft furnishings, and dinner is served in a wood-panelled room (below) festooned with flags. The price may look steep but includes all meals, the attentions of the household staff and transfers from/to Wick Airport.

**LOCAL ATTRACTIONS?** The largely undiscovered Caithness shoreline makes great walking and birdwatching territory.

**WHAT ELSE?** Clay pigeon shooting, fishing, riding and archery, among other activities, can be included as part of your stay at an extra cost.

**SLEEPS** There are 27 bedrooms (all with bathrooms).

**HOW MUCH?** 4 January-31 March: groups of 15 or less, £5,600 per day; 1 April-23 December: groups of 15 or less, £7,200 per day.

**BOOK IT** [ackergilltower.co.uk](http://ackergilltower.co.uk).



# HAVING A PARTY?

Are you planning a big family CELEBRATION, perhaps for New Year, or a WEEKEND AWAY with a group of friends? Then you need to rent *a handsome house by the sea*. And we've found the best...

WORDS *Clare Gogerty*





## A BOUTIQUE HOLIDAY HOME SEA VIEW HOUSE, ST IVES, CORNWALL

**WHY HERE?** For the swank factor. From its location near the centre of St Ives and its views – the town and harbour stretch out before you – to its furnishings (think rock 'n' roll style with all the trimmings), everything about Sea View (left and above) says you've arrived. Decoration is high spec, furniture top-notch and audio/visual equipment state of the art. It's hard not to leave the house without strutting.

**LOCAL ATTRACTIONS?** St Ives: the ideal seaside town.

**WHAT ELSE?** A games room – perfect for rainy days – and a terrace at the front of the house on which to drink chilled wine ostentatiously.

**SLEEPS** Ten (five bedrooms, all en suite).

**HOW MUCH?** From £949 per week (low season). Christmas/New Year: £2,399 (21-28 Dec); £2,712 (30 Dec-6 Jan).

**BOOK IT** [cornishcribs.com](http://cornishcribs.com).

## A CORRUGATED-IRON MISSION HALL THE MISSION, CHALE, ISLE OF WIGHT

**WHY HERE?** To enjoy vernacular architecture up close: the 1895 building (left and far left) was a mission meeting hall until bought and restored by Helen and Frazer from Vintage Vacations, whose holiday business includes several properties alongside their Airstream caravan site. The Mission is a temple to midcentury style, fitted out with classic pieces of furniture and embellished with kitsch flourishes and period crockery.

**LOCAL ATTRACTIONS?** Blackgang Chine and its eccentric amusement park is just down the road, as is the charming town of Ventnor.

**WHAT ELSE?** Pre-order a food hamper and be rewarded with local bacon and sausages, and home-made jam for breakfast.

**SLEEPS** Eight (four bedrooms).

**HOW MUCH?** From £750 per week (low season); Christmas period (17 December-3 January): £1,575.

**BOOK IT** [vintagevacations.co.uk](http://vintagevacations.co.uk).





## A SECRET ISLAND RETREAT

### OSEA ISLAND, ESSEX

**WHY HERE?** To experience a real sense of escape: the approach to the island (left) is via a causeway over the Blackwater Estuary, which is only navigable four hours out of every 12. Owner Nigel Frieda bought the 350-hectare island in 2000 and, until recently, it was an upmarket rehab centre (Amy Winehouse was here). Now restyled as a resort, the collection of buildings in the village (some are 17th-century farm buildings) can be hired depending on your needs, whether you are after a two-person retreat (try The Sweet Shop) or something for the whole gang (try the ten-bedroom Manor House, left). You can even hire the entire island (including 14 cottages and seven apartments).

**LOCAL ATTRACTIONS?** Maldon with its sailing barges is close but much better to peacefully mooch around Osea's beaches and absorb its wistful atmosphere.

**WHAT ELSE?** There is a well-equipped gym and a games room with old vinyl and vintage games. Art, yoga and writing retreats are now offered, too.

**SLEEPS** Manor House: up to 20; beach house: up to seven; eight cottages: up to six; six courtyard apartments: up to eight.

**HOW MUCH?** From £263 to £6,547 per week, depending on the property.

**BOOK IT** 07810 753226, [oseaisland.co.uk](http://oseaisland.co.uk).

## ALSO CONSIDER

### BEADNELL BEACH HOUSE, NORTHUMBERLAND

A modern house with epic coastal views smack on the beach. Sleeps ten. Low season: £1,810 per week. Christmas period: £2,728 ([coastalretreats.co.uk](http://coastalretreats.co.uk)).

### THE BEACH HAUS, BURTON BRADSTOCK, DORSET

The only Huf Haus available to rent has walls of glass through which you can see Chesil Beach and the Dorset coastline. Sleeps eight. Low season, £1,200 for four nights ([uniquehomestays.com](http://uniquehomestays.com)).

### THE GRANGE, RAMSGATE, KENT

Built by Augustus Pugin in 1843 in mock-Gothic style and restored by The Landmark Trust to its original splendour. Sleeps eight. Low season: £1,192 per week ([landmarktrust.org.uk](http://landmarktrust.org.uk)).

### THE BEACH HOUSE, PAIGNTON, SOUTH DEVON

Yards from Preston beach, this holiday home has a sun deck and a terrace with wraparound sea views. Sleeps ten. Low season: £689 per week ([bluechipholidays.co.uk](http://bluechipholidays.co.uk)).

## A BIG HOUSE ON THE BAY

### MARVER HOUSE, MAWGAN PORTH, CORNWALL

**WHY HERE?** Because the house (below) cleverly caters for every holiday whim: there is a hot tub on the deck, which looks over the sandy beach at Mawgan Porth; there are post-surfing outdoor showers in a shepherd's hut; there is even a kennel so you can take your mutt (Mawgan Porth is a dog-friendly beach). Inside, rooms are decorated by interior stylist Kerry Skinner in a traditional style that doesn't feel stuffy. Plenty of bathrooms ensure no early-morning squabbles and most bedrooms have beach views.

**LOCAL ATTRACTIONS?** King Surf surfing school ([kingsurf.co.uk](http://kingsurf.co.uk)) at Mawgan Porth is perfect for holiday surfers; the Scarlet ([scarlethotel.co.uk](http://scarlethotel.co.uk)) is the place for a destination lunch or a sundowner.

**WHAT ELSE?** Hunker down by the firepit at sunset and watch the ocean turn pink as your marshmallows toast and the stars come out.

**SLEEPS** Up to 12 (six bedrooms, five en suite).

**HOW MUCH?** From £2,000 per weekend; £2,500 per week (low season). New Year: £6,500 per week.

**BOOK IT** 01637 860322, [marverhouse.co.uk](http://marverhouse.co.uk).

