

Travel



CENTER
Parcs' Whinfell
Forest resort in Cumbria
has four new luxury treehouses
that you can book now. They have en
suite bedrooms, a detached games den,
balconies overlooking the forest plus an
outdoor hot tub and sauna.



TREATMENT: Spa relaxation

Hasten to HASTINGS



Showbiz ed's lockdown love affair

by Halina Watts

LOCKDOWN was a strange time to find yourself without a home.

I was at the start of a three-month once-in-a-lifetime sabbatical in LA from my job as showbiz editor when the virus gathered speed and society began to shut down.

England called, my stressed sisters put the fear of god in me. "You will never get back in the country then what if one of us dies?" The trip came to an abrupt, tear-filled end and I returned to London.

But I'd sold my East London home before leaving, and couldn't quarantine with my parents as dad is 82. So I sought sanctuary in the seaside town of Hastings in East Sussex, a place I had learned about in history lessons.

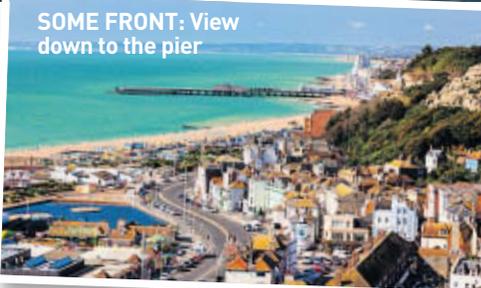
Vintage

After one previous visit I knew it was a hotbed of vintage clothes shops, music venues and quirky creative enterprises.

I booked an Airbnb for ten days but ended up staying for three months until lockdown lifted.

It was a strange time, everything was shut but I grew to love daily walks to the seafront, getting pood on by seagulls and making friends with the locals – a diverse, delightful bunch who scowled if you sometimes forgot to clap for the NHS because you'd fallen asleep.

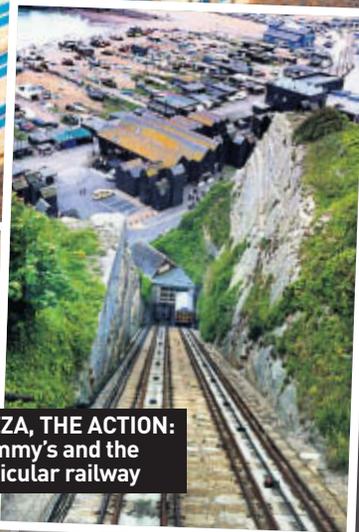
When there was nothing to do, which was most of the time, the intrepid boyfriend took me foraging for wild garlic in Brede Woods as well as picking crunchy sea kale straight from pebbled beach spaces to be baked or boiled. We



SOME FRONT: View down to the pier



PIZZA, THE ACTION: Tommy's and the funicular railway



also enjoyed the town's incredible greenery and a walk on the East and West Hills brought solace on many a confused day.

We loved the funicular railway too. But the sea was the most glorious feature. To swim in April is to bring on the feeling of a heart attack, but it is also to survive.

Now the shops and restaurants have opened I am quitting London for good to buy a property with the boyfriend in this quirky beach town. A whirlwind lockdown love affair.

And it all started a few years ago when I stayed at the Laindon's B&B, a townhouse in Hastings Old Town run by lovebirds Malcolm and Karen

– and the best place to stay. They bought the gorgeous Edwardian property on a hangover, and haven't looked back, turning it into a beautiful work of modern art.

"We didn't plan it," says Malcolm. "It all just happened so perfectly and we have fallen in love with this town... the perfect hangover cure."

Hilarious

Each room is colour themed – the red room is my favourite with writing desk, sprawling bed and cavernous leather chair.

When I first stayed I was gripped by my hosts' life stories and hilarious anecdotes. When I returned post lockdown I was delighted to see their happy, welcoming faces.

Malcolm spent lockdown revamping the communal areas which are pristine and sparkling and they have made sure that guests feel

safe amid the ongoing pandemic. It is the best place to stay. A short walk from trendy George Street, where you can get lost in bookshops that turn into restaurants at night – the Thai Restaurant is exceptional.

Or browse boutique stores brimming with 50s fashion and quirky shops overflowing with colourful feathers, candles, cards, vases and unique treasures.

Or try Hastings Contemporary museum, currently hosting an upbeat exhibition by Quentin Blake titled *We Live In Worrying Times*.

There are lots of good pubs, including The Crown, which specialises in scintillating roasts, while doughy delights can be found at Tommy's Pizza.

If you like cobbled and quirky grandeur, Hastings is for you. But it is also the perfect spot to reflect and try to make sense of the world in these, er, worrying times.

One pal lives in St Leonards, a short walk along from the golden lion-adorned Hastings Pier. They once told me never to tell anyone about this treasure town. Unfortunately, I think it's a bit late for that...

FACTFILE: Bedrooms at The Laindon's start at £140 a night. See laindons.com.

TRAVEL TIPS

- **CAR parking is dear in Hastings but is free further along the beach front at St Leonards.**
- **SWIMMING is delightful in most places but the best spot is near the Royal Victoria Hotel.**
- **AFTER a drink at St Leonards Public House, which is illuminated by neon signs and bright pop art, stumble around the corner into an independent cinema which also sells a smashing combination of antiques and beer.**



REST EASY: Laindons

Spa special for escaping Big C stress

CANCER patients will be able to enjoy spa treatments without any stress thanks to a new industry benchmark.

Massage therapy can be used to support people who have had cancer and has been proven to reduce anxiety and depression and improve sleep quality.

Yet despite this, many spas still turn away patients due to lack of knowledge and fear of liability.

But founder of skincare brand ESPA, Sue Harmsworth MBE, plans to unite the spa industry with the Standard Authority in Touch for Cancer Care. She says the new benchmark will "make massage for those touched by cancer accessible for all".

Training covers treatments for people undergoing treatment, in remission and who have had cancer in the past three years.

Sue said: "Every person diagnosed with cancer copes in their own way and our aim at the SATCC is to ensure that spas and wellness therapies remain an option for those dealing with what will possibly be one of the greatest challenges they'll face.

"Together, as the spa industry, we have a duty to embrace those living with cancer and help enhance their lives."

My PERFECT day

By CAPT GRAHAM WAYMAN of apolloairservices.com.

MORNING

An early breakfast at the Clayton Hotel Cambridge before taking off from Cambridge airport and flying the helicopter over central London to see the iconic sights.

Then fly the length of the beautiful Jurassic Coast to land for a picnic lunch in the grounds of Lulworth Castle.

AFTERNOON

Jump back into the helicopter to fly to Donington Park to watch the World Superbikes Races.

EVENING

Head to Raymond Blanc's Le Manoir aux Quat' Saisons in the beautiful Oxford countryside. Put the aircraft to bed, check in, take a tour of the Kitchen Garden then relax in the spa before dinner at the Chefs Table.



Tell us your perfect day, email: travel@people.co.uk