

getaway



Making the most of your time off

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The cream of Cornwall



LUGGER-LY: The Luggers Hotel in Portloe is right on the sea with stunning views from the bedrooms and dining room

KAREN NEVILLE returned to her favourite secret Cornish hideaway in Portloe. The Luggers Hotel was every bit as good as she remembered

THE pressure's always on whenever you make a return visit anywhere – will it live up to its previous expectations or were you just viewing it through very heavily tinted rose coloured spectacles before?

Well I'm very happy to tell you that I could gleefully cast aside the rose coloured specs in favour of my sunglasses as we headed down the M5 towards Cornwall and the picturesque village of Portloe.

We were revisiting The Luggers Hotel where last year we enjoyed a splendid spring weekend in the stylish, luxurious surroundings. And true to form, it was every bit as good on a sunny September weekend as it had been 18 months previously.

Having checked in and been warmly greeted like old friends we were shown to our room, a larger one than last time and with a slightly different layout but just as good – I couldn't wait to open the clapboard shutters on the French doors and gaze out at the blue-green sea. Even the view was as I'd remembered.

Living in landlocked Berkshire there really is nothing like seeing the sea and inhaling the fresh air and I couldn't wait to get out and enjoy it.

We took a stroll up the cliff path towards the headland and were passed by a group of eager children complete with basket of freshly picked blackberries, which judging by the look of them didn't all make it back.

One of my favourite things about the Luggers last time was the restaurant – and I don't just mean the food, the view itself from the light airy room is mouthwatering.



After being tempted by a large vodka and tonic we devoured the menu opting for scallops with chorizo in a balsamic dressing with vine tomatoes and mussels in a celery, shallot, cream and white wine sauce for starters.

Continuing with the fresh fish, which is undoubtedly one of the great attractions for a coastal restaurant and when in Rome... We plumped for cod on crab mash in a crayfish sauce and, controversially, lamb noisettes with a sweet potato puree and redcurrant and port jus.

The food was certainly not being enjoyed through rose tinted specs and was just as tasty and mouthwatering as on our earlier visit. And as on our earlier visit we should have remembered just how good the desserts were and tried to leave more room – we did however manage pannacotta with blueberries and a lemon tart with raspberry sorbet.

We took coffee into the lounge and with a last lingering look at the sea for the night turned in to settle into the crisp white linen on the oversized and all-too comfortable bed.

I am not one for getting up early, especially when on 'holiday', but the prospect of a cooked breakfast will always be enough to lure me out from beneath the duvet, even if then means it has to be followed by a brisk walk or in this case hopping in the car to drive to nearby St Mawes.

A typical English fishing village, there is a charming harbour from where you can catch a ferry to Truro and the half hour crossing was a very leisurely way to enjoy the coast and cliffs.

Truro offers a charming mix of individual shops and boutiques mingling with the usual High Street names – make sure you explore all the side streets where you'll find some hidden gems full of the quaint and quirky.

After a few hours we took the ferry back across intending to take the short drive up the hill from St Mawes to the castle – but we'd have to wait until September next year to tour it, it's booked for weddings every weekend until then although you still get those amazing clifftop views.

Instead we headed back to the Luggers to enjoy a cream tea (naughty, but nice) on the restaurant terrace and watched some brave (foolish?) souls take some tentative steps into the September sea – congratulations to the 10-year-old who splashed around for a good 15 minutes!

For dinner that evening we had been lured out (all of a five minute walk) up

the hill through Portloe to The Ship Inn, the only pub in the village.

In the summer I would imagine it is impossible to get a table, actually had we not booked that night we may have struggled, and it was a shame the evening had grown cooler as the pub has the most picture-postcard perfect sloped garden in which to enjoy a drink.

Food is charmingly traditional pub fare but well above the usual standard and portions are huge, in fact they are gigantic – my hake almost filled the plate and the steak and ale pie contained at least two thirds of a cow. Excellent value for money too.

As we left the Luggers on Sunday morning having opted for just boiled eggs and soldiers to send us on our way, we were bid a cheery farewell with the entreaty to "come again" and do you know, we just might...

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FACTFILE

■ Karen stayed at The Luggers Hotel, Portloe, Truro, Cornwall TR2 5RD. Call 01872 501322 or visit www.luggershotel.com for more information, the best deals and to book.