

Check in

Well Cottage, Cornwall

Sally Shalam

"Want to see heavy horses at work?" ask Peter and Jackie Taylor the second we arrive at our cottage. The horses won't be ploughing after 6pm, so there's no time for a brew.

Tim disappears up the hill with Peter followed by me and Jackie. We could do with a couple of shires to pull us up - it's like a cliff face, but we crest the hill and enter a field, where two beauties the colour of soaked sand are steadily pulling a plough followed by vegetable grower, Brian Cavendish.

The reason the Taylors are so keen for us to see Brian in action is that he supplies organic produce - and it's a big part of self-catering at Well Cottage, the barn they have converted beside their farmhouse.

The quality of food options here surpasses most I have encountered. Tea, coffee, milk are included, but you can order more provisions in advance from an online service in which Jackie is a partner (see top tip). There is also a ready-meal service, devised with local chefs, and lastly - we're trying this tonight - a chef will cook for you in situ.

First we explore our new house, hunkered into a hillside which hugs the village of Herodsfoot. A large terrace and a field are in front



(complete with goats, Blossom and Baptista). Out the back, we can see Jackie's new raised vegetable beds.

It's an upside-down cottage. Dining room, shiny new kitchen with everything we need plus a table and pine settle, and sitting room with French doors to the terrace are at entrance level; downstairs are two double bedrooms, each with a bathroom (mmm, nice handmade soap), a utility room and - get this - mini gym and sauna. It is a house for grown-ups (no under-14s) with two suites plus a sofa bed for two more in the dining room, off which is a small shower room.

"There's too much brown everywhere," reckons Tim. I must admit, I can't get my head around the

current ubiquity of dark leather seating in rental cottages. Mainly because I slide around when I'm trying to slob out on a sofa, but also it absorbs light. No matter, we're in the bright kitchen when Iain the chef arrives, armed with Brian's veg, bass landed at Looe, and new potatoes. "They're very early this year," Iain says.

Iain can be booked for a private masterclass here, or to cook a celebration six-course dinner (honeymooners last time, apparently). The dining room is aglow with candles tonight - but we stay put and watch our very own chef at work, while nibbling canapés. It's like BBC's Saturday Kitchen.

Dinner is sublime in its simplicity. Chef lets red Russian kale and tiny

leeks, pan-fried fish and boiled potatoes speak for themselves, with the merest addition of a light beurre blanc. We're so full we ask him to leave pudding - lemon tart - in the fridge.

We start next day with a sauna, followed by a woodland walk from the doorstep then reading outside in the spring sunshine, but with more time,

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we'd visit Looe's fish market and head off to explore the beaches at Lantic and Lantivet Bays.

Deal Several restaurants in Looe offer Well Cottage residents discounts - the details are in the cottage info.

Top tip Food4myholiday.com delivers organic Cornish produce and other provisions anywhere in the county.

● **Coombe Farm, Herodsfoot (01579 320147, wellcottagecornwall.co.uk).** Sleeps up to six. Nightly rates from £110-£210, minimum three nights (four nights June-Aug; short breaks bookable even in high season). Food packs from £69.95, ready-meals from £4.75. Personal chef, £100 (plus food, from £25 per head for three courses, canapés, truffles) including washing-up of course. sally.shalam@guardian.co.uk