



A WEEKEND IN THE NEW FOREST

by Travel Correspondent *Tim Saunders*

We are now allowed to travel to places a little further afield and the New Forest is an ideal distance. Although we can't yet stay over in accommodation as our travel correspondent did before the lock down, hopefully it will not be too long before we can do this too, particularly if we keep in our family units. See how Tim got on....

During A-level studies my sociology lecturer recommended I take up yoga as a good way of relaxing. I bought a book and became quite enthusiastic about it. This distant memory is rekindled on stepping inside the Zen lodge at Sandy Balls holiday resort in the New Forest.

It is certainly a tranquil location underneath the tall trees. The accommodation itself is very comfortable with a calming interior that incorporates quite a few images of trees; bringing the outside in.



Added parents such as my wife and I embrace this self-catering experience as a way of temporarily restoring ourselves. For me the outdoor hot tub is another useful way of winding down and all the well placed jets are good for my bad back too, I tell Caroline after she has settled the little urchins for a long sleep. The setting is really quite magical, sitting outside in the pitch black looking up at the tall looming trees overhead I savour the warm water pumped out at a constant 39 degrees Celsius. Regardless of how the weather is behaving this is a year round experience. It's fortunate though that it isn't raining during our visit.

Back inside the lodge there are two bedrooms. One is



equipped with three beds including a top bunk, which Harriett (8) sleeps in. It takes Henry (3) until the second night to properly settle in and go to bed at a sensible hour. They all have a good night's sleep, though.

Our master bedroom includes an en-suite shower room with two washbasins and two showers.

The kitchen diner provides everything you need and I enjoy a spot of birdwatching while washing up.



Caroline and I relax and watch Love Actually on the 55-inch flat screen television and an interesting documentary about Michael Hutchence. The television is so large that although we thought we knew Love Actually pretty well it feels like we're watching a completely different film. The children watch a good choice of their programmes, too. In the mornings they all enjoy watching television in their bedroom (there's a separate one for the top bunk). Before you think we're telly addicts, we don't have a television at home, out of choice, so it's a luxury when we have four at our fingertips.

There's an indoor heated pool at Sandy Balls and we make sure that we spend as much time in it as possible, visiting every day of our stay. This commitment ensures that both Harriett and Heidi (6) improve their swimming skills and by the time we leave, Harriett swims many widths competently on her back unaided while Heidi is able to swim some widths on her back without float or armbands. They're now at the point where we need to work on the front strokes. Henry, with his arm bands, is showing promise of becoming a fine swimmer, too.

We visit one of the onsite parks with various rope bridges, swings, a slide and a zip wire that all the children love using.



For more information visit:

<https://www.awayresorts.co.uk/ways-to-stay/indulgent/zen/>

Watch the video at www.travelwriter.biz