



SPRING FEVER

Kiss goodbye to lacklustre breaks and enjoy something a little more special. **Tracey Davies** hand picks some spring delights to give you a flavour of what's on offer.

While winter frosts give way to warm wafts of spring, there's a lusty anticipation that summer is just round the corner. So shrug off your warm cloak of hibernation and rediscover the glorious outdoors at some of the UK's most ecologically sustainable holiday retreats.

Outdoor holiday specialist, Canopy & Stars embraces our love of the British countryside and offers

eco-happy campers a whole host of quirky places to stay. Launched early last year this unique company was the brainchild of Alastair Sawday and started out with just nine properties on offer. His dedicated team member, Tom Dixon, then spent months driving around Britain inviting owners and craftsmen to get involved with this unusual yet interesting, environmentally sound idea. To fit with Alastair's vision, only places bursting with eco-character were

approached and now Canopy & Stars proudly offers 51 unique eco-hideouts ranging from treehouses, yurt camps, gypsy caravans and shepherd's huts.

For the full display of colourful spring breaks, log on to www.canopyandstars.co.uk and take your pick!

Tracey Davies is a freelance travel, parenting and lifestyle writer: www.traceydavies.co.uk.

Best for blue bells

The Wood Life, Devon: Nothing screams spring like a soft, cerulean carpet of bluebells, Britain's quintessential wild flower. Each May, near the beautiful Devonshire village of Kenn, bluebell woods explode with colour, exposing Mother Nature's wares at their very best. Sleeping six in eight acres of lush private woodland, this spacious safari tent is completely off-grid. It has a wood-burning shower and heater and offers an ideal spring retreat to families who really want to get away from it all. While the bluebell wood is perfect for a stroll, the more adventurous might want to check out the nearby river for canoeing and kayaking.



Sensational for spring lambs

The Cabin, Cambrian Mountains, Dyfed: Although open all year this hand-built cabin really comes into its own during the spring when it's surrounded by fields and fields of cloud-like sheep in the heart of the Cambrian Mountains. Built by local tradesmen, this fantastic octagonal wooden structure blends in with the lush green countryside. It's cosy and warm in the cooler months but, during spring and summer, the hand-built decking overlooking the hills warms up and is perfect for lounging with a glass of local wine making it an idyllic rural Welsh retreat for couples.



Good for pub gardens

The Wagon, Puckshiption, Wiltshire: Supping the first pint of spring in a country pub garden is what makes a winter worthwhile, especially here in Puckshiption, just one of Wiltshire's hundreds of picture-perfect villages. Forester-turned-furniture maker James hand-built the Wagon from finest Sussex oak. Inside, his clever use of hinges and shelves means it happily sleeps four and has a snug kitchen complete with a wood-burning stove. Outside there's a clay pizza oven for alfresco dining. The Wagon is ideal for fun loving self-caterers and offers the perfect family spring adventure. Located in a glorious green glade close to a village, it's ideal for flying kites and, of course, long lazy rambles to the pub.



Fabulous for food

Sam the Shepherd's Hut, The Old Forge, Shropshire: Sam the Shepherds Hut is a new addition to the family here at The Old Forge in Shropshire. Also home to Rosie the Gypsy Caravan, and Lucy and Tim's homely old B&B. For those after a little more seclusion, Tim has recently revamped Sam the Shepherd's Hut making it an idyllic escape for couples. Decked out with gorgeous vintage knick-knacks housed in every nook and cranny, this old tin hut is the epitome of sheep chic. Lucy is renowned for her fantastic cooking with fresh organic and free range produce. While her farmhouse breakfasts are legendary (and come as part of the package) she also offers excellent home-baked picnics hoof-delivered by Scrumpy Jack the donkey.



Romantic for two

Devanna Roulotte, Scottish Borders: For the ultimate romantic retreat, Avril and Alan's gorgeously quirky roulotte, a gypsy caravan originating from France, Devanna offers a cosy break à deux. Decorated in heavenly blues and greens, it has carved wooden shutters and an ornate Indian divan to lounge on. At night, with the glow of original brass lamps throughout the caravan, you really couldn't get more romantic. Now homed in a glorious meadow in the Scottish Borders, a spring break here is perfect for enjoying quiet leisurely walks, practising yoga or painting.



Spring on the water

Secret Cloud Yurts, Peak District, Derbyshire: Catherine and Craig's trio of Secret Cloud Yurts overlook the

vast expanse of Carsington Water and the glorious bosomy hills of the Peak District. Named Rosehip, Blackberry and Elderflower, the yurts are beautifully handmade and offer the epitome of eco-friendly glamping. Inside, keep the spring chills at bay with warm sheepskins and thick blankets draped over the handmade, locally sourced furniture, while outdoors the wood-fired hot tub could be just what you need after a hard day's walking. While the yurts are within strolling distance of a tangle of walking paths, if your adventurous side gets the better of you Carsington Water has sailing, kayaking, canoeing and other watersports on offer. Back home the small honesty shop will keep you in the basics plus some fine local ales to kick back with and enjoy while the low spring sun sets over the hills.