

It's time to ride the Cornish new wave

Surfing is just one of the treats at Three Mile Beach – close, but not too close, to buzzing St Ives. Penny Walker checks in

St Ives. In summer. And not just any summer – a summer when travel options overseas have been somewhat limited. I almost lamented my choice of Cornwall for a long weekend away as I started to hear horror stories of just how rammed the A30 has been ever since schools broke up. But I was so desperate for a break – to anywhere – that I persevered.

I was also sorely tempted by the hype that Three Mile Beach has enjoyed. Owned by [Craig Burkinshaw](#), who founded globe-trotting Audley Travel, and his partner Joanne Le Bon, the 15 funky beach houses have been lauded as leading the way in a new wave of British holiday parks.

The trick, it seems, to travelling to Cornwall in late July without getting stuck in hours of queues is to go mid-week. Punching the location into Google Maps, I breathed a sigh of relief. Not only did our drive time come up in glorious green, but it was apparent that while Gwithian beach, which the resort sits beside, may have a St Ives address, it is not really St Ives. Instead, it gazes across the bay to the twinkling lights of one of Britain's most popular holiday spots. A 25-minute drive away, St Ives is close enough to appreciate, but not too close.

The opening of Three Mile Beach had been delayed – like everything – from April to early June, and as we advanced down the winding road (beware the speed bumps), it was apparent that things were still being finished around the site.

However, once inside Rock the Casbah (each house is named after one of Jo's favourite songs), it became clear the properties themselves are more complete than any I have ever stayed in. As you might expect, the feel is light and bright, with white shiplap walls and marble surfaces peppered with pops of colour (predominantly duck-egg blue, in our case). But it's the additional touches that really make this the perfect home for a holiday, and deserving of the high price tag.

There was more kitchenware to choose from than in my own home;

from an electric whisk to ProCook pots and a lemon juicer. We're still trying to work out what the thing that looked like a spherical colander with a handle in it (duck-egg blue, of course) actually did. The Yeti wine thermos mugs were a huge hit – and the perfect receptacles for the bottle of Camel Valley (Cornish sparkling) that we found in our wine fridge. The house also had everything you always intend to take on a self-catering holiday but never do; tomato ketchup, mayonnaise, oil, salt, pepper, butter – all of it locally sourced.

It took precisely 10 seconds for the three-year-old in our group to demand that we remove the child-proof panels on the ladders and allow him access to the mezzanine. Of these nooks, there were three – one in the lounge and one in two of the three bedrooms.

It took even less time to coax him down when we discovered the chest full of games stacked with everything from PopUp Pirate and Twister to Risk and Jenga. There were yet more childish delights to be found in the cupboard of the master bedroom – a cricket set, a bucket and spade, a volleyball and a fishing rod – as well as a wind-break and a beautiful beach blanket from Yvonne Ellen.

The walls of all houses are adorned with travel-inspired artworks sourced by Barbara Hepworth's granddaughter, Felix, and the whole place has an airy California-bohemian vibe with



▲ Another fine mezze: shared plates prepared by a private chef didn't disappoint

decorations ranging from huge dream catchers to ceramic cactus centre-pieces.

Then there are the additions for grownups – the hygge-style log burner, the sauna (the proper Swedish kind, with rocks on which you can pour water), the plunging wooden barrel hot tub with jets, and the glorious Fatboy hammock you could read in for days.

It was enough to make us want to while away the day in the privacy of our own little paradise. But the beach beckoned – and it was worth venturing out. The sands stretch for miles, allowing you to be as far from other people as you wish. There are rockpools for exploring, waves to frolic in and the walk around the coastline of Godrevy to Mutton Cove offers rewards that include seal-sighting opportunities – not to mention cocktails, pizza and dirty fries along the



THE DETAILS

Three-bedroom beach houses cost from £1,150 per week in low season and from £3,100 per week in high season, including a welcome hamper ([threemilebeach.co.uk](#))

Private chef experience from £75pp; pizza oven £100 per day; wetsuit hire £30 adult, £25 child, per stay

Two-hour private surf lesson from £90 ([globalboarders.com](#))

▲▲ Surf's up: Three Mile Beach is perfectly placed if you want to hit the waves

◀ Full board: 'The whole place has an airy California-bohemian vibe'

way at the Rockpool ([therockpoolbeachcafe.co.uk](#)). We also tried a surf lesson with Global Boarders (the wetsuits were waiting for us at the house when we arrived, of course) and spent a fun hour in the company of Jamie, our 17-year-old instructor, trying not to wipe out.

Having worked up an appetite, we returned to find our private chef, Rob Michael of Flavour & Wine, cooking up a storm. On the menu were mezze-style sharing delights including seared scallops, local mussels and wonderfully sticky pork belly. These savoury treats were followed by orange mousse with the most sublime white chocolate Cornish fudge.

It was the first of three indulgent evening meals during our stay – the next night we had a covetable Ooni



pizza oven delivered to our garden along with a DIY pizza kit which (though rather pricey) wasn't just great fun to do, but nicer than any chain-bought pizza you can order to be delivered to your door.

On the final night, we sampled the offerings from the on-site food truck – sadly the cocktail truck hadn't yet opened, but it looked full of promise. The menu, while sadly rather unappealing to most children, was packed with flavour and featured the likes of halloumi fries, nduja Scotch quail eggs and mackerel tacos.

Unlike Center Parcs or Butlins, Three Mile Beach seems to have been designed with adults in mind, and appeasements for children – rather than the other way round. And boy, have they got it figured out.