

on your feet

A breath of fresh air

If you are pining for another holiday after your two weeks in the sun and can't wait until Christmas maybe a break in a country house or spa hotel is the ticket. **Haroon Ashraf** looks at luxury retreats in Scotland, England and Wales that will leave you feeling refreshed and revitalised.

ENGLAND

Ragdale Hall Health Hydro
www.ragdalehall.co.uk

Ragdale Hall combines state of the art facilities with the charm of traditional Victorian architecture to create one of the most luxurious and relaxing health spas in the country.

Ragdale Hall, set in landscaped gardens in the heart of the Leicestershire countryside, is a perfect place for day spa visits and offers plenty to do for weekend breaks or longer visits.

The resort has been voted 'Health Spa of the Year' for six years running and has received many glowing reviews for the way its 400 staff pampers its guests.

Ragdale Hall offers health and beauty advice, relaxation, beauty treatments, a state of the art gym, with prices starting from £105 for a day spa package and residential prices from £99 per person per night.

It also offers holistic therapy and beauty advice comes from leading skincare companies Clarins, Elemis and Decleor.

"A spa break is a great way to get health and beauty treatments to make you feel good about yourself", according to the brochure.

One of the main features of Ragdale Hall is its water complex, which features a 25 metre pool with an activity area, which has a waterfall and massage jets for the shoulders, back, and feet. A separate exercise pool provides a full range of programmes.

The spa, offering private male, female, or mixed facilities, has two whirlpool baths, three saunas, two steam rooms, two plunge pools and a Sanarium, which combines a sauna, tropical bath, soft steam, herbal and warm air bath in one amazing unit.

If all that exercise leaves you hungry, Ragdale Hall's restaurant offers a wide range of healthy and delicious food, which diners can enjoy in

the comfort of their robe and slippers.

If you want to give someone a special present, then a health spa voucher might be the perfect gift. Vouchers are available in £25 tickets and can be used towards any of the resort's breaks from day packages to overnight stays.

Ragdale Hall is within easy reach of the M1 and A1 and 20 minutes from East Midlands airport.

SCOTLAND

Dunalastair
www.dunalastair.co.uk

Dunalastair country house hotel promises to offer guests the "warm heart of the Scottish highlands".

The hotel prides itself on its hospitality, which it hopes will encourage you to come back and renew "auld acquaintances".

"Our team of committed professionals will



go that extra mile for you. For whom nothing is a bother and if they say they'll do something they will", says Dunalastair on its website.

Even though summer is turning to autumn, Dunalastair has lots to offer and recommends visitors come and enjoy the changing autumn colours of the surrounding Perthshire countryside.

“...wake up to the matchless panorama of the Welsh mountains...”

In fact Dunalastair's location in the central Highlands makes it ideal for exploring the scenic beauties and the great outdoors of the world famous Highlands.

The breathtaking palette of colour is also complemented by the purple peaks of the mountains and the calm serenity of the lochs.

To make life easier for guests Dunalastair boasts clearly mapped out walking routes, for example, the Pass of Killicrankie, Birnam Hill, and Schiehallion.

“This is Europe's Last Wilderness. Armed with our binoculars and telescopes search for the Famous Grouse, the Elusive mountain Hare, The Majestic Red Deer and the Soaring Golden Eagle to name but a few”, says the hotel.

Dunalastair boasts that it has something for everyone, ranging from romantic couples looking to get away from it all to families seeking an adventure break.

The hotel works closely with many activity providers in the area so visitors can enjoy outdoor activities on foot, horseback, four wheels or on water.

One highlight offered through Dunalastair is the Highland Safari where guests can tour in a Land Rover to experience the beautiful scenery of Highland Perthshire at heights of nearly 3000ft.

For the adventurous visitor, more hard knuckle activities are available such challenging hiking and climbs or kayaking.

In fact for the whitewater kayaker there is some of the finest water in Scotland – sensational local rivers and numerous tributaries of the Tay offering sections of whitewater up to Grade five.

And if that isn't reason enough to visit, guests can relive the day's activities in Dunalastair's celebrated restaurant.

Autumn Escape breaks start from £60 per person per night for a two night luxury stay in a Malt King Room (Double or twin) and includes dinner, bed and breakfast.

Dunalastair Hotel is situated in the village of Kinloch Rannoch and is about a one hour drive from Edinburgh or Glasgow Airports.

WALES
Gliffaes Country House Hotel
www.gliffaeshotel.com

Gliffaes Country House Hotel calls itself “a piece of Italy within an English garden fit for a

Greek God set in the Welsh Hills”.

The hotel occupies a commanding position above the River Usk in the heart of the Brecon Beacons National Park, midway between the Brecon Beacons and the Black Mountains in South Wales.

The grand hotel is situated in its own well-established 35 acres of gardens and mature woodland well over a mile and a half from the main road.

The Victorian country house has 22 individually styled bedrooms all kept in the finest tradition of a Victorian country home.

The Gliffaes is a perfect hotel for exploring this part of South Wales or walking in the Brecon Beacons.

The hotel staff are always on hand to help guests plan trips that are suitable for novice walkers or experienced ramblers.

Fly fishing is important business at Gliffaes and the hotel has 2.5 miles of brown trout and salmon fishing.

But many other activities are available including, clay pigeon shooting, tennis and more.

The house was built in 1885 but has been run as a hotel by the same family since 1948.

It is located near the unspoilt village of Crickhowell, midway between Brecon and Abergavenny and prides itself on its friendliness and good food.

The spirit of the hotel was summed up in a review by *Country House* magazine, who said, “if you want to go for walks in the Brecon Beacons, eat breakfasts that would challenge a rugby team and wake up to the matchless panorama of the Welsh mountains, then go to Gliffaes”.

