

Boutique hotel the perfect base for exploring Cornwall

Lisa Bingham

visits CORNWALL

Primrose Valley Hotel is perched on a hill just yards from the sandy award-winning Porthminster beach in picturesque St Ives.

Rarely do hotels live up to the glossy pictures in their brochure, but this one is actually better.

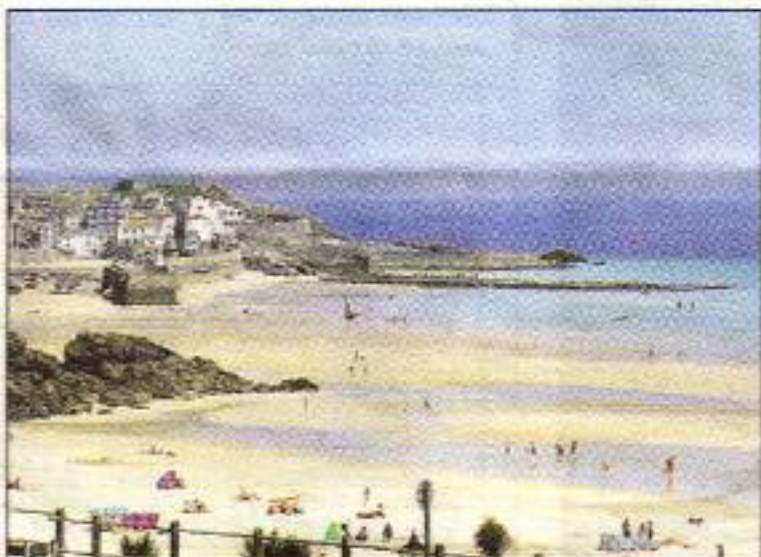
The Edwardian seaside villa has been recently refurbished, and is as stylish as any boutique hotel which can be found in the capital.

But unlike many London hotels, there is no trace of the snootiness that can come when an owner knows how good their establishment is.

From the minute we arrived at this Cornish hideaway we received a warm welcome from owners Sue and Andrew Biss, and freshly-made coffee and delicious biscuits were happily received after the six-hour drive.

On looking around the comfortable and modern lounge, where guests can sit and enjoy a glass of wine before an evening out, we knew this would be a holiday and a hotel to remember.

The nine individually decorated bedrooms have handmade furniture, sumptuous bed linen and powerful showers in en-suites, while two of the rooms have balconies which overlook the Atlantic Ocean.



Sweeping: The view from the bedroom window, at Primrose Valley Hotel, Porthminster beach, St Ives

From the well-stocked bar with an impressively fat wine list, through to the slap-up English breakfasts, we could not have faulted the service. The hotel is also very family-friendly, as push chairs by the bar and a potty in the toilet demonstrated.

The beach is pleasingly close by, you can be there within two minutes. And what a beach. Miles of white sand stretch as far as you can see, and unlike the Costas of Spain, there are few holidaymakers to vie for space with.

St Ives itself is a tourist's dream, with boutique shops, pubs, stylish bars, and a mix of inexpensive and gourmet restaurants.

Whatever your budget, there is a place to suit.

I particularly recommend the Porthminster Cafe, on the beach, which is open all day and night, and serves fabulous dishes such as Cornish crab fritters and West Country prime fillet.

There are dozens of shops, selling everything from surf and beach wear, to handmade jewellery, to stunning artwork of the area.

So, if like me you are not keen on jetting abroad for your summer holiday, why not hop in the car and take advantage of this home-grown treasure?

Visit Cornwall

Primrose Valley Hotel: Primrose Valley, Porthminster Beach, St Ives, Cornwall. Call (01736) 794939 or visit www.primroseonline.co.uk