

# SCOTTISH SPLENDOUR

The beautiful shores of Loch Tay



Mains of Taymouth offers a selection of luxury accommodation



Smiddy Cottage at Mains of Taymouth, Perthshire



The private hot tubs are perfect for guests to sit back and relax in



## Mains of Taymouth encompasses the best Scotland has to offer – fine food, great accommodation, beautiful scenery. Amy Mackie tried it out

Imagine an idyll, where you can completely unwind and work on getting life's troubles out of your hair.

Now imagine that idyll is within driving distance, through some of the best scenery and tourist attractions Scotland has to offer.

And finally, imagine that idyll comes complete with a giftwrapped basket of goodies, and a hot tub ready for you to jump in.

This was the reality for us on arriving at Mains of Taymouth in Perthshire. The drive from Aberdeen took two hours through some truly stunning views, before we reached our destination in the picturesque village of Kenmore towards the shore of Loch Tay, by the edge of Tay Forest Park.

Mains of Taymouth offers a selection of luxury self-catering cottages, lodges and houses for short breaks and longer holidays, and being one of the few destinations which welcomes dogs – up to two per property – it's a great place for an impromptu weekend away with the pooches.

The cottage we stayed in was one of the original farm buildings, Smiddy Cottage, converted for

modern living. This meant there were loads of lovely individual touches throughout, while it comfortably accommodated the four in our party but could sleep up to five through its three bedrooms. The other properties offer accommodation for everything from a romantic couple getaway in the Bothy or Bell Tower Cottage, through to the five-bedroom Mains Park Court which can accommodate up to nine people for that special family celebration. All offer hot tubs except the Bell Tower Cottage, which offers a private sauna cabin.

Smiddy Cottage was a lovely property, comfortable and cosy with plenty of room. The lounge with its log-burning stove was ridiculously luxurious and was the perfect antidote to our respective stressful weeks before arrival.

Within half an hour of arriving, late in the evening, we were sampling the delights of the goody basket (pate and oatcakes, yum!), while testing the temperature of the hot tub. Reception had apologised for a wedding party in full swing on the estate, but we found the music added to the ambience as we unwound in the warm water, while

watching the twinkling stars overhead. Our youngsters loved singing along while trying to spot constellations, starting a new game of hot-tub karaoke in the process.

All in all, it was the perfect way to start our short break.

The next day, after a great night's sleep in the biggest, comfiest bed I've been in for a long time, we woke, and while the young ones headed back to the hot tub, I headed to the onsite Courtyard shop and deli to pick up some things for breakfast. A wonderful selection was available and a short while later I returned laden down with fresh bread, bacon and black pudding – the finest Scots produce available. Unfortunately I would have to come back to make a selection of the wide range of gins on offer, licensing laws frowning upon the purchase of such items at breakfast time!

Fed and watered, we had a morning free before trying our hand on the golf course in the afternoon, so asked for advice on what to do. A fine, sunny, dry day, we were directed towards some of the local sights, and decided on a short walk up to view a spectacular waterfall in the neighbouring village of Acharn.

On the way we got a better idea of the range of watersports available on the loch, with a sailing competition in full swing and some water trampolining just along from the Scottish Crannog Centre.

This couldn't compete with the youngsters' excitement at trying out the award-winning nine-hole course however, so we duly returned and picked up our clubs and two buggies. What ensued, bearing in mind I don't play golf and our young ones don't really either, was more akin to crazy golf crossed with bumper cars as we wound our way round the beautiful course, trying to keep out of the way of the many seasoned golfers who put up with our ineptitude with good humour. It took us three hours to complete the course, by which time we were very tired, but it was by far the most fun we'd had together as a family in a long time.

So what to do when you have four tired golfers with an hour or so before supper? Back to the hot tub!

We were booked into the Courtyard restaurant for our evening meal, and it was a wonderful experience. The staff were courteous and attentive, while not being

overbearing, and I had the chance to sample a few of the stock gins while we worked our way through a terrific selection of scallops, venison medallions, haddock fillet, macaroni and pizza.

Mains of Taymouth also offers a riding stables which caters for all standards of rider, from beginner to experienced. Trekking and hacking is available in the dramatic Perthshire scenery on myriad forest tracks.

Another interesting attraction is the Hobbit House, situated in a secluded glade at the edge of the estate, by the river, and accessible by farm road. Rustic in appearance with a central fire pit suitable for barbecuing on, it is available for private hire by the day, offering a different way to hold a family celebration or meeting. The Hobbit House offers a hexagonal barbecue cabin seating up to 24 people on surrounding benches with deer skins, three outdoor rustic picnic tables and bench-style seating outside for 24. There is also access to fishing on the riverbank, for brown trout and salmon (seasonal, with permits available from the local post office).

## HOLIDAY FACTS

- Mains of Taymouth also offers holiday homes at Balloch Park which can be purchased, offering the discerning buyer the chance to spend more time in this idyllic part of Scotland.
- Ideal for downsizers and the retired, but also offering opportunities to holiday let and local first-time buyers struggling to get on to the housing ladder, Balloch Park is situated to the east of the existing Mains of Taymouth estate. The spectacular south-facing setting has the River Tay on one side and Drummond Hill on the other. Along

with presenting a truly idyllic and proven location for a holiday or permanent home, Balloch Park offers 38 one and two-bedroom lodges only six miles from the charming market town of Aberfeldy, and just an hour and a half from Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee.

● Mains of Taymouth Country Estate and Golf Course at Kenmore is celebrating, having picked up the inaugural EmbraceScotland.co.uk "Paws for a Break Pet-Friendly Award" for 2016-17. Robin Menzies, owner of Mains of Taymouth Country Estate & Golf

Course, and himself a long-standing dog lover, presently owning two dogs, a black Lab called Surka and a pug called Bug, as the family pets, said: "We are over the moon to have been presented with the very first EmbraceScotland's Paws for a Break Pet-Friendly Award. It highlights a great many of the values we continually strive towards as a holiday establishment."

● For further details on Mains of Taymouth Country Estate & Golf Course, Kenmore, log on to [www.taymouth.co.uk](http://www.taymouth.co.uk)