

WHERE DOGS ARE WELCOME

A selection of hotels where your dogs will get the VIP treatment. By Martin Puddifer



THE HERO North Norfolk

B&B from £105 per night plus £10 per dog

This wonderful "laid back, lively and dog-friendly pub" in Burnham-Overy-Staithe, just five minutes from Burnham Market, has been welcoming shooting parties through its doors for a number of seasons. It came recommended by a Gun who shoots plenty of days in and around this area of North Norfolk, including Holkham Hall and Walsingham Estate. The Hero's three en-suite rooms - Gun Hill, Cocklestrand and Pollard - have a personality all of their own and are just metres away from the main pub, ensuring a peaceful night after a few hours of good cheer at the day's end. There is plenty of local-sourced and seasonal fare to be enjoyed in the bar and dogs needn't feel overlooked, with staff happy to dole out the odd treat here and there. If handlers are up early enough they should feel free to stretch their legs along the Norfolk Coastal Path, just a dummy's throw away. →



HIGHBULLEN HOTEL GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB

Devon

From £189 plus £10 per dog per night

If handlers can find a hotel with more resplendent views of the North Devon landscape, especially on an autumn morning, they will have done very well indeed. Highbullen, situated near the village of Chittlehamholt, between Exmoor and Dartmoor National Parks, and just under an hour to the north west of Exeter, has welcomed the fieldsports community for decades, so expect to see many a gundog at tweeded heel before the off. Up to two dogs are welcome in some rooms, including in each of the hotel's four holiday cottages, which can sleep between six and eight guests. It is important to note that Highbullen has exacting standards about dogs in its cottages and offers an on-site kennels as an option. There are umpteen quality shoots close to the hotel, including Hall, Heanton Satchville and Portledge, a fitting complement to this resplendent 19th century gem, which is as good as the shooting that surrounds it.

STAYCATION

CROFT KINCARDINE

Invernesshire

From £1,640 (for seven nights, shorter stays available)

Large parties are welcome at this secluded log cabin, which sits astride the River Spey in Boat of Garten, a village six-and-a-half miles to the north east of Aviemore. Up to three dogs can join them, although the owners can be flexible. That's great news for the eight guests who can fit comfortably into a floor plan that includes three bathrooms, four bedrooms, spacious living and dining areas, with a fire pit and hot tub outside; the perfect place to unwind after a long and arduous day in the field. Two of the cabin's bedrooms have separate outdoor entrances, ideal if gundogs need to answer the call of nature in the dead of night and their handlers would rather others weren't woken up by whining or frantic pawsteps. Handlers staying for a few nights should make use of the domesticated nature of the cabin to wash and dry any muddy clothing, too.



THE CASTLE HOTEL

Shropshire

B&B from £125 per night

Dogs stay free of charge at this 12-bedroom coaching inn, which has offered sanctuary to shooting parties for hundreds of years. A Welcome Box, complete with everything from a feeding mat and food bowl to drying towel and treats, can be found in rooms upon arrival, and that's just the start: dogs are also welcome at their handler's table during meal times in the bar, can stretch their legs in the garden and can stay unattended in the handler's room should they wish. With all of this on offer, it's not surprising that The Castle Hotel has received plaudits from Shropshire Tourism for its dog friendly ways; the owners just ask that dogs are on their best behaviour. The hotel's position on the A488, and therefore its close proximity to the border with Wales, means many impressive Welsh shoots are not too far away, while the likes of The Ridgeway and Kempton are virtually on its doorstep.

RAVENSTONE MANOR

Keswick

B&B from £99 plus £10 per dog per night
(Dog charge is only applicable when booking via a third party)

Nestling beside Bassenthwaite Lake and in the shadows of Skiddaw Mountain sits Ravenstone Manor, a welcoming family-run hotel with a big heart. Dog owners have a choice of recently refurbished rooms of varying sizes, all with plenty of space to move around in. The manor bills itself as "probably the most dog friendly hotel in the Lakes", and while that's up against some stiff competition, bear in mind that dogs are allowed to stay with their handlers at all times and in all rooms except the kitchens and on the sofas in the sitting room. A leg stretch before the off can be taken in the garden and muddy paws can be cleansed and dried in a temperature controlled washing station. Dogs can stay free of charge when booking directly through the Ravenstone Manor website, though there's a charge if handlers book via another avenue. *GJ*

