



# 6 gorgeous woodland escapes in Suffolk

Escape the hustle and bustle of the coast, and retreat inland this summer to one of these luxurious hotels, glamping sites or camping pitches. By Danielle Lett

**T**his summer, many of us (including myself) are still eyeing up a potential staycation. And where better to holiday than right here?

Suffolk is beautiful, there's no denying that, but there's more to our county during the summer than its wonderful beaches. Why not opt to head inland and have yourselves a tranquil woodland getaway?

The county is home to acres upon acres of wonderful forests, and they'll certainly make a nice respite from the coastal regions which are usually heaving with tourists throughout the spring and summer months.

Whether you're looking to go away with your family, friends, or even on your own for some much-needed R&R, escaping into the woods could be the best thing you do this year.

**Worlington Hall, Worlington**  
Perched on the Suffolk-Cambridgeshire border, in the heart of the East Anglian countryside, is Worlington Hall - a majestic manor soaked in history that dates all the way back to 1570.

It's under the care of new owners Michael Platten and Louis Walters, who have managed to restore the property back to its former glory - giving visitors the choice of eight recently-decorated, lavish boutique rooms to stay in.

**ABOVE:** Thetford Forest, which is just up the road from Worlington Hall

**RIGHT:** One of the glamping tents at Boundary Farm

Pictures: ARCHANT/BOUNDARY FARM

"Michael and I bought it just over a year ago. I'm from a farming background, and Mike was a dentist. We decided that we'd do something different, and it was either this or build a house together, so we went for the hotel," explains Louis.

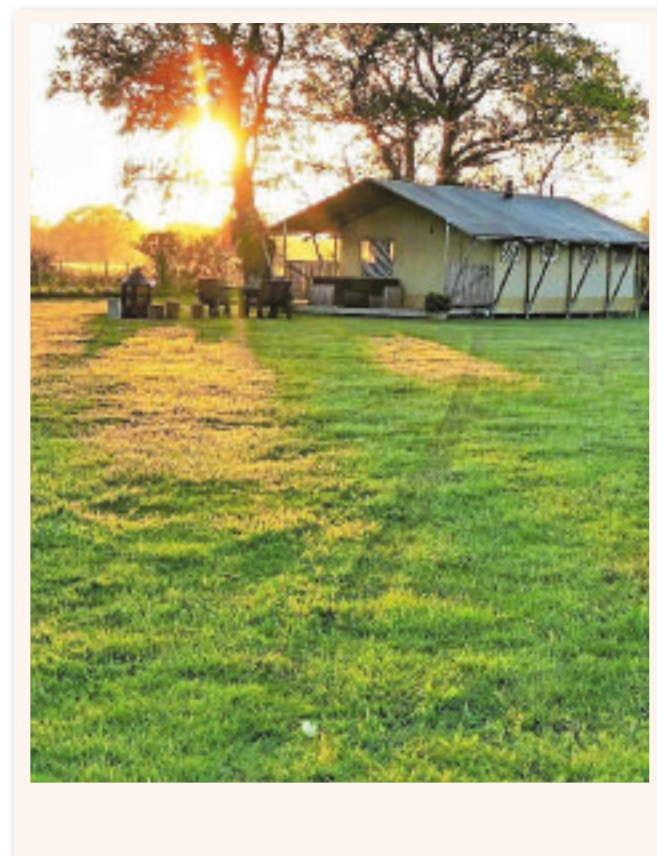
"The hall is really nice - when we first went past it, we had a look around it and fell in love with. We had to buy it."

The two, with the help of their families and professionals, spent lockdown restoring it, transforming it into the idyllic countryside escape it's since flourished into.

Its exterior is just as immaculate as its interior - and as you step outside the back, you're surrounded by lush, rolling greenery, and towering trees and woodland. Head down towards the bottom of the grounds and you'll find yourself upon the south bank of the River Lark, which gently flows past the hotel's river bar.

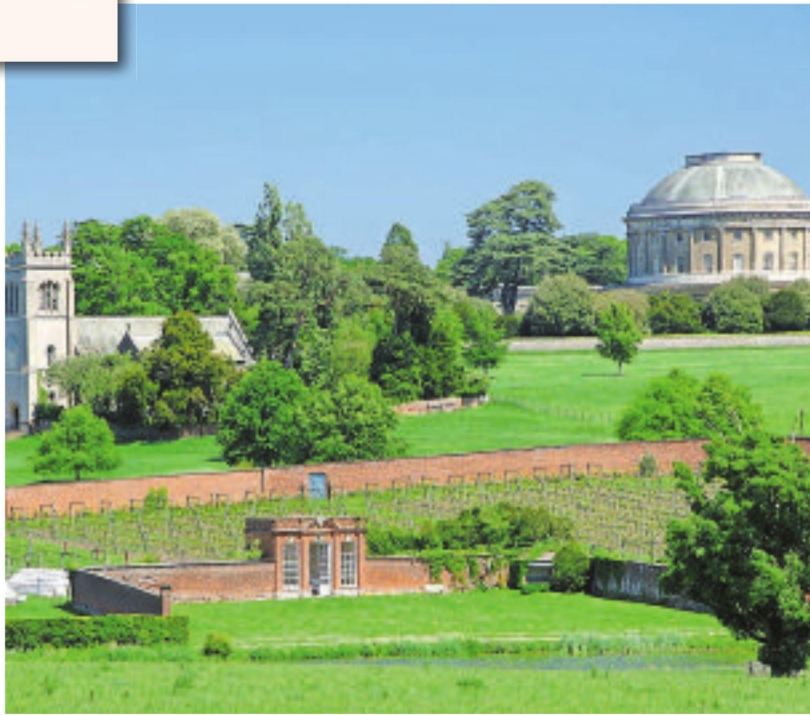
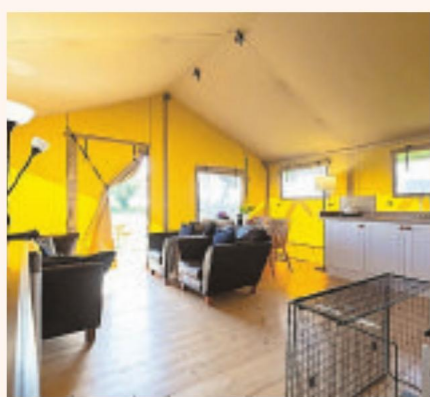
"There's a two-bedroom cottage that we've just finished too, which will have a hot tub in the garden. And once the hotel is complete, we want to put some hot tubs in nooks down by the river."

The ultimate countryside escape, this hotel has two bars, and a restaurant serving seasonal where locally reared meats, coastal catches and hand-picked produce





Inside one of the glamping tents at Boundary Farm, also below



all take centre stage. If you're looking to venture out, Royal Worlington and Newmarket Golf Club is just across the road, and both Thetford Forest Park and Cavenham Heath National Nature Reserve are just a short car journey away. [worlingtonhall.com](http://worlingtonhall.com)

**Boundary Farm Glamping, Kelsale**

Fancy going camping, but with a few more home comforts? That's where glamping comes in. Boundary Farm Glamping, in Kelsale, is a small, independently-run site that really puts the 'glam' in 'glamping'. Run by John and Josie Easy, the site - set in the heart of the Suffolk countryside on their working, arable farm - is perfect for families, friends, and couples who want to get away from it all.

Nestled within a two-acre meadow, it's unique due to its exclusivity as it's comprised of two large self-catering wooden framed canvas safari tents, meaning if you and your party book both tents, you'll be able to have the entire site to yourselves.

The tents are spacious and consist of two bedrooms, sleeping up to five guests each - and are kitted out with everything you could need. Think framed beds with mattresses, bedding and pillows, a private en-suite shower and separate toilet, a fire pit with cooking grill, sofas, a dining room table and chairs, and a kitchen equipped with a small fridge and ice box, as well as a two-ring gas hob. It really will be your home

away from home. "It's the perfect place to make memories and catch up around the firepit while roasting marshmallows and enjoying a few drinks under the dark Suffolk sky as there's no light pollution," says Josie. "And don't forget to bring your telescope so you can spot the Milky Way!" Situated down a quiet, country lane, Boundary Farm is just a short drive to some of the county's popular beauty spots including Aldeburgh, Thorpeness,

**TOP:** Worlington Hall

**TOP INSET:** Michael Platten and Louis Walters, owners of Worlington Hall

**ABOVE:** Ickworth Estate

**INSET:** Why not enjoy a bike ride through the grounds of Ickworth?

Pictures: THE ICKWORTH/PHIL MORLEY/ SARAH LUCY BROWN

Orford, Framlingham, Walberswick, and Southwold. If you fancy yourself a bit of a foodie, there are a handful of pubs and restaurants in the nearby area, including The King's Head in Yoxford, The Bell Inn in Middleton, and The Westleton Crown. [boundaryfarm.co.uk](http://boundaryfarm.co.uk)

**Ickworth Hotel, Ickworth** This fascinating and beautiful historic property is located amid over 1,800 acres of National Trust parkland and woodland, offers

guests the chance to truly immerse themselves in the beauty of nature. With 27 rooms to choose from - ranging from family suites and interconnecting bedrooms, to private apartments in The Lodge - not only is the Ickworth family-friendly, but it's dog-friendly too, meaning the entire family can enjoy a relaxing break away this season. The hotel offers free childcare and children's activities for those

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aged up to eight-years-old, meaning parents can relax at the spa, enjoy some food, or kick back and do some reading. Alternatively, this summer there are a number of woodland-based activities that the whole family can get involved in. During the May half-term week, families can have a go at geocaching, fire lighting and campfire cooking, campfire breadmaking, archery, and even a scavenger hunt. Other activities include tours of the Italian-inspired stately home, bike rides, and walks around the

sprawling grounds. Maps are available from reception, and the National Trust has constructed an all-weather six-mile walk (that's split into sections if you want to take it easy) that takes you on a tour of woodland scenery, water features, and a beautiful walled garden. [ickworthhotel.co.uk](http://ickworthhotel.co.uk)

**Forest Camping, Rendlesham Forest**

The family-run campsite has been welcoming guests for 41 years, and provides visitors with wide open spaces to pitch up their tents, caravans, motorhomes and

**ABOVE:** Inside one of the tents at Alde Garden

**INSET FROM TOP:** The Gypsy caravan at Alde Garden

The Hideout at Alde Garden

Sunlight streaming into Rendlesham Forest

Pictures: ALDE GARDEN/TIM DENNY/CITIZENSIDE.COM

campervans.

Open between April and October, campers can fully immerse themselves in the wonder and beauty that comes with staying in Rendlesham Forest, including exploring miles of woodland trails, spotting wildlife, or stargazing at night. Perfect for both adults and children, it's the ideal place to escape and really get back to nature.

The campsite is a stone's throw away from the three-mile marked circular UFO walk. Starting at the Forestry England Rendlesham Forest Centre, you can take in the

beauty and wonder of some of the areas connected to the infamous 1980 extra-terrestrial sighting.

The Tangham campsite has 90 pitches, and most have free-to-use electric hook-ups. Other on-site facilities include toilets, coin-operated showers, a laundry room with coin-operated washers and dryers, and a freezer hut. [forestcamping.co.uk](http://forestcamping.co.uk)

**Alde Garden, Sweffling**

'Eclectic', 'quirky', and 'relaxed' are just some of the words that would best describe Alde Garden - a tiny and welcoming campsite in East Suffolk.

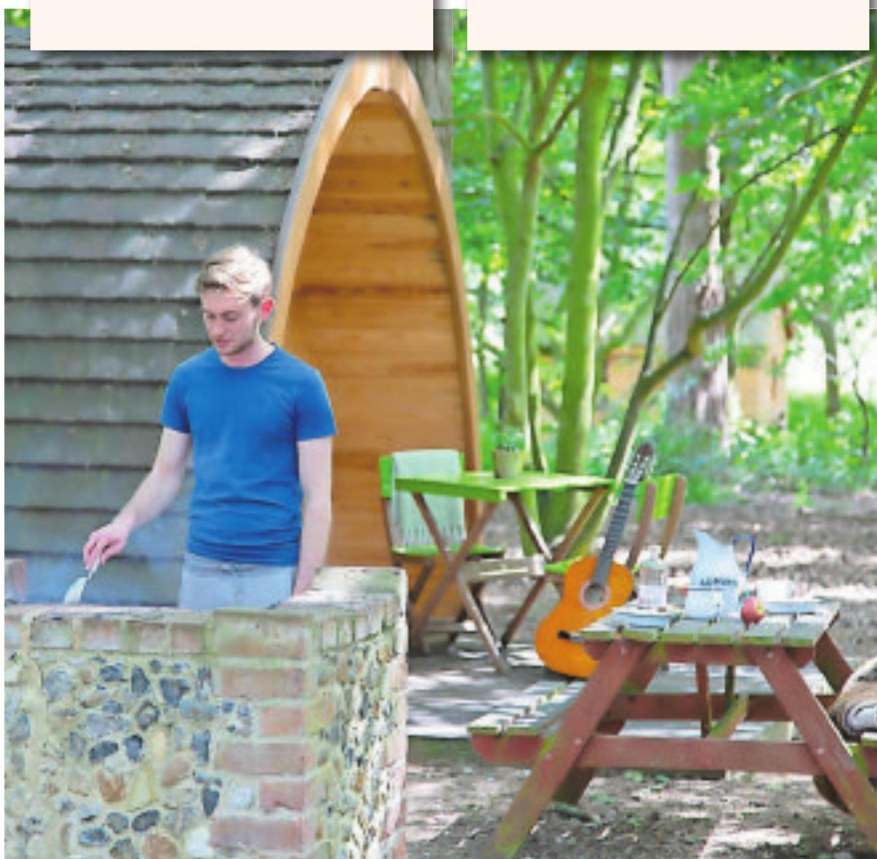
## Pod Hollow

**BELOW LEFT**  
One of the camping pitches at Alde Garden

**BELOW RIGHT:**  
One of the huts at West Stow Pods

**BOTTOM:**  
One of the pods at West Stow Pods

Pictures: WEST STOW PODS.



Run by the owners of award-winning real ale pub The Sweffling White Horse, this campsite features a number of accommodation options, as well as a handful of small tent pitches.

From bell tents to yurts, and even a 100-year-old Gypsy caravan - there really is something for everyone. Each accommodation is set in a secluded clearing in the garden, ensuring guests have privacy. For anyone looking for a few more mod cons though, there is a holiday cottage available that provides year-round accommodation.

A particular highlight though has to be 'The Hideout' - a cosy retreat tucked away in a small clearing among the trees and shrubs, totally hidden from the rest of the garden. Perfect for two, it has a double mattress, two bedside tables, carpeted floor, and two glass panels in the roof that allow you to look at the nature that surrounds you.

There are also a number of on-site communal facilities for visitors to use, including a campfire, a covered field kitchen, a compost loo, and a jungle shower - ensuring you can enjoy the full camping experience with everything you could need. And if you fancy a tipple (or few), the pub is just a few steps away.

The site itself is filled with trees, shrubs, and flowers galore - and be sure to keep an eye out for the friendly ducks and chickens roaming around the garden. And at night, the campsite is lit by solar lights, meaning it's as eco-friendly as it gets, and the clear, open skies are perfect for stargazing on a clear summer's night. And for anyone who's a fan of foraging, there's a few herb gardens dotted around that visitors are allowed to help themselves from.

"This little part of Suffolk is teeming with wildlife, and birds in particular because of our

proximity to Minsmere," explains owner Marie Smith.

"The local river, woodlands and coast provide an abundance of wild nature to explore. It's also a great area for cycling - being mostly flat - and we are situated on one of the major cycle routes."

[aldegarden.co.uk](http://aldegarden.co.uk)

#### West Stow Pods, West Stow

Have you ever fancied living like a mythical woodland creature, submerged deep in the forest? If you have, then West Stow is calling your name.

Located just four miles away from Bury St Edmunds, this glamping site offers guests a number of accommodation pods surrounded by woodland and wildlife. What more could you want?

Visitors can choose from one of four MegaPods, one of two Woodland Lodges, or the site's star attraction, Pod Hollow. The latter looks like it's come straight from a J.R.R. Tolkien book, and is best described as a 'homunculus-inspired subterranean dwelling nestled in the side of a grassy knoll'.

Glamping at its finest, all of the accommodation options are equipped with beds, tables and chairs, private bathrooms, kitchenettes, heating, lighting, and electrical outlets as well as WiFi. All of the pods are dog-friendly too, meaning your pooch doesn't have to miss out on any woodland adventures you may find yourself on.

While it might be tempting to never leave your pod (they are incredibly cosy, after all), there's plenty worth seeing in the nearby vicinity, including a number of walks created by the owners that follow the famous Lark Valley Path and the St Edmunds Way, and the West Stoe Anglo-Saxon village - an open-air archaeological museum just 1.5 miles away.

[weststowpods.co.uk](http://weststowpods.co.uk)