

The Lodge at Loch Goil has a treehouse with a surely unrivalled view

Branching Out!

Treehouses are popping up everywhere – book a luxury stay, or have your own retreat built

by WENDY GLASS

PERCHED in the branches of an ancient oak or sheltering under the leafy canopy of a mighty beech tree, treehouses are sprouting up all over Scotland.

Once constructed from broken pallets and old doors, today's are more likely to be the secret hideaway of grown-ups than of children!

Whether a treehouse is used as a studio, a drinks terrace, luxury accommodation or, as in the case of JK Rowling, is a £250,000 Hogwarts-inspired turret, when you step inside you'll be whisked back to childhood.

"Treehouses are magical," says Treehouse Life's Paul Cameron, who has designed and built treehouses all over the world. "Everyone remembers the one they had as a child – or the one they *wished* they had as a >>



child. My grandfather built a treehouse from branches and bits of wood lying about in his garden. I have such a strong memory of the fun we had there.

"Since I set up Treehouse Life 12 years ago, I've been involved in some fabulous projects," says Paul, who gave up a successful career as a drummer to set up his company after the treehouse he made for his two sons received rave reviews from friends and family.

"I love the different uses people have for treehouses. We built one for a man in Yorkshire who wanted one for playing pool! We had to ensure that it was very level, and manoeuvring a pool table halfway up a tree was great fun.

"Another client had become severely disabled. She had a lovely beech tree where she asked us to create an easily accessible, inspiring treehouse where she could write.

"A few years ago I received a phone call from Elton John, who wanted to give his first child a treehouse. This was about creating a fabulous space for both dads to go with their child and involved lots of discussions with Elton and his partner, David Furnish. However, we spent longer discussing the colour of the bow to be wrapped round it!"

Paul and his team also assist those who want to try DIY. "A grandfather who wanted to build a treehouse contacted us. We supplied the drawings, materials and a bit of onsite head-scratching and he built it!"

Any advice for people considering a treehouse?

"Start with a wish list – then work out how you can do everything. With treehouses there are always solutions, from a budget, construction and planning point of view. You don't need a tree – although it does help!

"Actually, a cluster of trees is best as then you can work with the structure of the trees and have the branches and trunks flowing through the treehouse, without the need to physically fix to them – this can harm a tree. They are all about connecting with our wonderful natural environment."

www.treehouselife.co.uk

It's A Very Special Place

"My husband and I decided to give our boys a treehouse because they adore making dens and climbing trees," explains artist Clare Brownlow, who lives near Kelso. Her family's home regularly hosts art fairs and exhibitions.

"Harry, who's six, and four-year-old Alfred love their treehouse, which has an upstairs and downstairs with a rope to climb up and a slide to get down from the top level. I'm an artist and the boys love taking paints and pencils to the treehouse, which has a table and chairs. They pin their work to the wall, just like a studio.

"Our treehouse is from Caledonia Play, who only took a morning to construct it. When I saw the result, I was thrilled – and the boys' faces were amazing! It's a castle, an army base, a pirate ship, a knight's tower... We're very lucky to be able to give our children such an amazing experience.

"I was an Army child and no matter where in the world we were posted to, my father built me a treehouse. My friends loved creating adventures in it. It's a very special place.

"There's space for two deckchairs so, in summer, my husband and I will be up there with gin and tonics when the boys are in bed!"

clarebrownlow.co.uk/

www.caledoniaplay.com/



Romance In The Forest

If you go down to the woods surrounding Fernie Castle, look out for a fairytale cottage nestled high in a copse of sycamore trees.

Fernie Castle near Cupar in Fife was one of the first hotels to offer luxury treehouse accommodation. The castle's stunning treehouse offers guests a secret hideaway deep in the forest – and with a luxurious bedroom, and a bathroom with fairies painted on the walls, twinkling stars decorating the ceiling and a huge slipper bath – plus three balconies for gazing at the real stars! – this is very much a treehouse for a love and romance getaway.

www.fernycastle.co.uk



A Place For Wow Moments

One of Scotland's most spectacular treehouses is situated on the Cowal Peninsula, overlooking Loch Goil.

"For over 10 years, our treehouse has been providing guests with the perfect setting for proposals, weddings, honeymoons and anniversaries," says Alice Gill, wedding and events director at The Lodge on Loch Goil.

"Recently we had a small wedding in the treehouse and, just as the couple were exchanging their vows, a seal popped out of the water. That was a 'wow' moment.

"Our treehouse is regularly used for fashion shoots for M&Co, Marks & Spencer and Macy's New York to name a few, as well as corporate meetings, press lunches and fine dining. And CBeebies have filmed there too!"



On The Beach!

Almost two years ago, Harvest Moon Holidays near North Berwick introduced a new kind of glamping to their beachside self-catering resort – treehouses.

The houses are perched two metres above the sand, with views across the dunes to the sea and a five-minute walk from beautiful Tynninghame Beach.

"Our treehouses are primarily used for family holidays but they've also been the scene of several weddings and fashion shoots," says Alex Mitchell of Harvest Moon Holidays. "They have no electricity so are lit by flickering lanterns at night, which really adds to the feeling of getting away from it all. However they are anything but basic, with log burning stoves, comfy beds, warm showers and all the utensils you could possibly need.

"When one is empty I love sitting with the stove going, watching the sun set across the white sand."

www.harvestmoonholidays.com