



For Laura Mills' travel review – Fistral Beach Surf School

Where summer comes early

Laura Mills discovers summer has arrived - at least it has in Cornwall

WHILE rain fell over the rest of the UK, I left Newquay this May wanting to quit my job, convert an old transit van into a mobile home and move to the Cornish coastal town.

Visit Cornwall and its members have launched a campaign officially calling summer from May 1, and I can see why.

A typical day on the Cornish coast is already packed with beach fun, coastal walks and time in the swell, long before the rest of the country has even got a glimpse of sun.

Despite being the party capital of Cornwall, renowned for attracting stags and hens en masse, Newquay also radiates the laid back atmosphere you would expect from a town bordered by miles of sandy beaches.

From Bournemouth the drive was seamless. However, after sitting for more than three hours, it was nice to park up, stretch our legs and start exploring. We decided to take the coastal path to Fistral Beach.

This stretch of sand is on the north coast of Cornwall, where waves from the Atlantic Ocean create world-class surf. We could have sat gazing in awe at the view until dark, but all the walking across the steep sand dunes had made us thirsty for a beer.

Luckily The Fort Inn was on hand, and we didn't even have to turn our backs on the scenery – the pub boasts panoramic views across Newquay harbour. And after a swift half it was time to find our holiday resort and check-in.

Take one indoor heated swimming pool, add another heated outdoor pool for good measure, an adventure playground and a packed entertainment programme for the kids. Add a splash of bingo, stir in a generous helping of karaoke, a surf

school, nightly pantomimes, a bar and a beer garden and you have the perfect recipe for a holiday that has something for everyone.

Situated a few minutes from Porth Beach, Peter Bull's Newquay View Resort is nestled in a quiet valley, with stunning rural views so you can escape from the hustle and bustle of life, despite being only a short drive from Newquay.

New for 2017, Newquay View Resort has opened up two luxury self-contained glamping pods complete with shower-room and kitchenette which allows guests to experience the outdoors without having to sacrifice the luxury.

And luckily for us, one of these was going to be our home for the next two nights. This was my kind of camping.

The following morning with happy tums, thanks to the tasty continental breakfast spread laid on, we drove into town for a surf lesson with Fistral Beach Surf School, the only surf school located on the famous Fistral Beach.

I am a complete surfing novice, so was pleasantly surprised when instructors Ollie and Ben took our group of ten back to basics. A quick demo on the sand and it was straight into the sea.

There I wait, waist deep, looking for the right wave. I spot it, slide on to my board and start paddling. The wave lifts me up. The feeling was like no other. The rush was incredible and I couldn't wait to get back out and catch my next wave.

Once everyone had mastered the art of waiting for the right wave, it was back on to the sand to learn the more advanced skill of actually try-

ing to stand. Eek.

Back in the sea, the instructors spent one on one time with everyone, refining the students' technique and guiding them through the process. Their patience and teaching approach was admirable, catering for each individual's ability. After about five failed attempts with limbs flying everywhere I finally manage to stay standing on the board and ride the wave all the way until it fell flat at the shore line. Success!

For dinner that evening we headed to Gilmore's, which serves up an array of delicious, fresh, Mexican food and has its own crazy golf course. After a competitive 18 holes, our stomachs grumbled with hunger, so we headed to our table.

We both opted for the pulled beef burrito with a side of skin-on fries and house slaw. My partner washed his down with a pint of Estrella while I chose the passion fruit mojito. It was quite possibly the best Mexican food I've ever had, and the service was second to none.

I woke in the morning to the discovery of muscles I never knew I had. It's fair to say I'm not as athletic as I thought and surfing had taken its toll. A trip to Ooh La La Spa at Hotel Victoria was needed – fast.

The spa has a beautiful treatment room and we couldn't wait for our back, neck and shoulder massages. It was 45 minutes of pure relaxation. The friendly and experienced therapist catered for the tightness in our backs and altered the pressure to suit and ease any tension.

Back in the hotel's beautiful sun lounge we indulged in afternoon tea with homemade scones, Cornish

clotted cream and, to top it all off, a stunning view of the bay.

It was a damp, drizzly day but, with the lounge's cosy atmosphere and large windows, we watched the surfers in comfort whilst tucking into the vast array of finger sandwiches and sweet treats – the perfect way to spend a drizzly Sunday.

Sadly, it was then time to go home. It was our first visit to the Cornish town but it definitely won't be our last. Newquay, see you soon.

FACTFILE

■ For everything that's happening in Newquay go to: visitnewquay.org

■ Peter Bull, Newquay View Resort
Website: peterbullresorts.co.uk
Call: 01637 851851 Rates to stay at Peter Bull, Newquay View Resort are £130 for a three-night break in a static caravan. Prices for the luxury glamping pods start from £79 per night and the pod is completely self-contained including shower room, kitchenette with fridge, microwave, hot plate and grill and sleep two people.

■ Fistral Beach Surf School
Address: Fistral Beach Complex, Headland Road, Newquay TR7 1EW
Website: fistralbeachsurfschool.co.uk Call: 01637 850 737

■ Gilmore's, 11 Tower Road, Newquay TR7 1LS
Website: gilmoresnewquay.co.uk
Call: 01637 872995

■ Ooh La La Spa
Address: Hotel Victoria, East Street, Newquay TR7 1BH Website: hotel-victoria.co.uk Call: 01637 872255



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