

Little odcorns

Robin Searle recalls outdoor adventures in Darwin Forest on a back-to-nature family break

@robinsearle

Since my first visit to the Peak District on a school outward bound trip, the country's original national park has had a special place in my heart. So when I had the chance to revisit those old haunts and introduce my brood to a beautiful part of the world, I leapt at it.

Landal Darwin Forest, near Matlock in Derbyshire, is one of three Landal GreenParks – the outdoorsy holiday parks sold through Hoseasons – in the UK, alongside sites in Cornwall and Northumberland, with another to come in Wales in 2020.

Darwin Forest is ideally placed on the edge of the park, and boasts an array of upscale facilities including a health centre and a range of well-appointed cabins, some with hot tubs.

From the moment you check

in, it's clear that Darwin Forest is a cut above your bog-standard lodge park, and you can easily while away the hours enjoying on-site activities or wandering through the forest.

But it is also designed to act as a gateway to the surrounding area, encouraging guests to explore farther afield on foot or on the bikes available for hire.

ON-SITE

The lodge was an immediate home from home, despite a sweaty arrival – leaving heated towel rails on is no doubt a welcome gesture most of the time, but not on one of the hottest days of the year.

Our stylish lodge consisted of two bedrooms, both en suite, and a central lounge and dining area that was spacious and spotless. Outside, a secluded decking area featured the



→ all-important hot tub, which was roomy enough for all four of us and was a particular treat as the sun set and the stars came out.

The park's highlights included an indoor pool, which was a favourite with the children, in addition to a large play centre with soft-play facilities, and a cool Activity Den for older children. However, ensure that your customers are aware that most activities beyond a simple swim come with an extra charge.

One of the few negatives was the quality of the evening meal in the Foresters Bar and Restaurant, though the team had been left short-staffed on the occasion we visited, so we put it down to a glitch rather than the norm.

OUT AND ABOUT

Darwin Forest has a fantastic location, just a five-minute drive from historic Matlock for your self-catering needs, and not



LEFT:
Elite
Vogue
lodge

RIGHT:
Robin's
children,
Bronwen
and Evan



much farther in the opposite direction to the glorious Chatsworth House.

Despite a relatively short stay, we were able to take in Dovedale and Ilam Park on an afternoon out, and venture farther north to revisit my old school trip stomping ground of Castleton and the Hope Valley on another.



What better way to unwind than with an alfresco glass of wine and the whirlpool jets turned up to the max?

And after energetic days out exploring the peaks that give the region its name, what better way to unwind than with an alfresco glass of wine and your whirlpool jets turned up to the max?

Book it: A three-night weekend lodge break starting on July 30 costs from £839 for a family of four, or from £1,229 for a week.

hoseasons.co.uk/agents 

TRAVEL THE WORLD WITH EMA THE ELEPHANT

With over 80 destinations to choose from at East Midlands Airport this summer, where will Ema visit next?

Follow us on Facebook and see where Ema is holidaying this week, if you guess correctly you could be in with a chance to win one of our fabulous prizes.



Group: EM Airport Agents

#EmaTheElephant

Contact: rachel.briody@eastmidlandsairport.com

