

This break is all about relaxing for us; we have such a fast paced life that there is generally very little time to do mundane things like curling up and watching television of an afternoon. We actually manage to do this and it is thoroughly enjoyable. But we also go for a swim and relax in the sauna.

A real luxury is to have a meal out and The Forest Table restaurant is a fabulous place in which to treat yourself. It offers surprisingly good value for money, too. Thumbing through the menu with my chilled Peroni in hand I notice that a coffee and a slice of cake is under £4; you'd be lucky to get a slice of cake for that on Britain's high streets. Convivial surroundings, friendly and attentive staff and a really buzzing atmosphere with numerous families eating provides a really memorable occasion. For me the haddock, mozzarella and spring onion fishcake is a must. This is followed by duck breast and chocolate pudding. Presentation is high, service is unhurried and the experience is fantastic with plenty of choice.

Sandy Balls, which has been a holiday village for over 90 years, provides everything for the holidaymaker. From The Forest Table restaurant to The Woodside Inn pub and takeaway there is something for every budget. There's even a good value onsite supermarket, The Village Store, so there really is no need to venture into the outside world. And there is plenty to entertain the children too from the Toddlers' Wood and two indoor play areas through to the outdoor play areas and swimming pool. There are even craft activities laid on throughout the year and this is particularly enjoyed by Harriett and Heidi. It is so nice to be able to spend time with your children seeing them be creative. Sandy Balls runs a programme of weekly activities, including biscuit decorating, fabric painting, working with wood, woodland walks, collage making and bug hunting. Parents wishing to pamper themselves can do just this at the Retreat where they can book a haircut or a massage.



Kitchen Diner in the Premium Lodge at Sandy Balls

Back at the ranch or the premium lodge as it is referred to in the Sandy Balls literature it is an idyllic setting where unlike many holiday parks there is privacy and the lodges are not overlooked. They fit in extremely well with their surroundings and it is just a pleasure to sit and watch the world outside through the large expanses of glass. You really do get a chance to explore the inner oasis of the forest and it is lovely to watch the birds.

Stay at Sandy Balls for a week and you will feel rejuvenated.

Watch the videos at www.travelwriter.biz

Claire Wiltsher's book Journeys from the forest to the sea published by Creative Coverage is available for £9.50 from May 2015.



New Forest ponies