

# Lovely getaways

If you're planning a romantic break with a difference this Valentine's Day, but need some last-minute inspiration, then look no further. Sussex is brimming with imaginative and off-beat destinations to share with your loved one, from luxury tree houses and shepherds' huts to historic getaways where you can reinvent yourself as an aristocrat. Angela Wintle goes in search of the perfect love nest



## Eco-Lodge tree houses, near Mayfield, East Sussex

If you've always fancied unleashing your inner Tarzan and treating the Jane in your life to a spot of leafy luxury, then Fair Oak Farm near Mayfield, East Sussex has just the thing.

Tucked away among Scots pines and other mature woodland on an idyllic farm in the heart of the Wealden Valley nestle two luxury sustainable tree houses, complete with a queen-size double bed, en-suite wet room, fully-equipped kitchen and sheltered balcony.

The tree houses, which each sleep two people, are the brainchild of Ian and Penny Ledger who, despite no previous experience in the hospitality industry,

gambled their life savings to convert the farm buildings on their 12-acre estate into off-beat self-catering accommodation.

"We knew that we didn't want to be your average holiday cottage where you turn up and find the key under the door mat," says Ian, who completed the tree houses with the help of a local carpenter last autumn.

"I had the design and layout in my head long before we had even moved in and the method of construction was actually no different to a normal timber-framed structure, though, of course, they're raised off the ground."

These tree houses, however, come equipped with a flat-screen LED digital television with built-in DVD, wireless broadband, heating and hot water, a

dishwasher, washing machine and cooker. And when you've tired of the delights indoors, you can try your hand at archery or falconry on site, or treat yourself to a delicious meal rustled up by the farm's home chef.

"It's the ultimate hotel room, but in the trees and on a country estate boasting glorious uninterrupted views," says Ian. "Just perfect for grown-ups wishing to fulfil their innermost childish dreams."

■ The eco-lodge tree houses are available from £340 per week for two people sharing in low season. At the time of printing, both were still available around February 14. To book or for further information, visit: [www.fairoakfarm.co.uk](http://www.fairoakfarm.co.uk) or ring 01435 884122.