



Luxury glamping at Longlands

# Luxury under canvas

Getting away from it all has never been so glamorous. **CHRISSY HARRIS** and family enjoyed a stay at a luxurious award-winning glampsite

Here we are, sitting on the deck with a glass of chilled rose listening to the local wildlife make their distinctive twilight calls as the sun slowly sinks.

We could be in some exotic, far-flung destination but we're actually sat outside a safari tent near a sheep field in North Devon – and it's sheer bliss.

Longlands has built up a solid reputation as one of the most

exquisitely indulgent glampsites in the region, with five fully-equipped, beautifully furnished safari lodges, carved into the hillside.

They are described a 'boutique hotels' with canvas sides, which suits us all just fine.

Our multi-generational group of six contains two hardcore campers, who love nothing more than sleeping out under the stars with just a tarpaulin for cover.

But the other members of the team are complete canvas cowards, who value locally-produced beauty products and duvets whenever they leave the comfort of home.

We are all catered for here. Longlands specialises in luxury and each lodge is kitted out with comfy beds, gorgeous bathrooms and plenty of essentials, such as magazines, body lotion and scented oil diffusers.

Photo: GUY HARROP

But you still have to stoke the wood burner for heat and hot water, while relying on cool blocks to chill your champers. We are sort of roughing it...

"I'll light the fire," says my survival savvy husband, the only one paying proper attention when the lovely Bella showed us around our lodge and told us how to use it. The kids and I were too busy clocking the board games and hammock stand.

After an hour or so (and three glasses of wine or so) we were ready to heat up our dinner and watch the sunset.

Food and sunsets feature heavily here. We spent hours eating and gazing out over the fields, down the secluded valley, towards the sparkling sea and that stunning North Devon coast.

Longlands, near Combe Martin, is set in 17 acres of countryside and woodland, just 12 miles from Woolacombe Beach.

We took a trip there one morning so the kids could bodyboard and the grownups could sit, eat and gaze out to sea before heading back to our lodge to do the same again.

Relaxing is the top priority here and everyone managed it just fine. Jake, 10, and Alice,

eight, had a great screen break and spent ages playing *Star Wars* Top Trumps in their 'cupboard bedroom' and catching tadpoles in the stream.

Jake managed to practise his rowing skills by taking the little Longlands boat out onto the lake, like a scene from *Swallows and Amazons*.

Both kids also enjoyed the chance to exercise a bit of freedom and headed over to the football pitch *on their own* (we

kept a close eye from the comfort of the lodge deck).

Meanwhile, the grandparents, who I think have camped maybe twice in their lives, seemed quite at home under this particular canvas roof.

We kept them warm, well fed and watered and even did them a hot water bottle each when it was time for bed.

Strict site rules means that noise has to be kept to a minimum, so there is no loud music or partying after 10.30pm allowed – fine by us.

It's just a shame that no one told the nearby sheep, who bleat till late and are up very early the next day to do the same. Still, that's countryside living. Plus they do make very comfy rugs, as demonstrated in the bedrooms here. No one had to trek to a toilet block or wash in a bucket but we ate toast cooked by the fire and left for home smelling of wood smoke. Now that's hardcore glamping. ♦



Photo: GUY HARROP

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## Those little extras:

A hot tub, bubbly, hammock hire, fishing and home-cooked food: it's the details at Longlands that make it special.

Can't be bothered to cook? At all? You can order from the menu, which features a range of local products and family-friendly meals. Picnics and breakfast are catered for and an incredibly well-stocked larder means you won't miss out on those essentials and not-so-essentials.



Photo: GUY HARROP



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## Bella Given

Garden designer Bella Given moved from London and opened Longlands in 2011.

Bella, husband Richard and their two children live on site in the nearby farmhouse.

Longlands has picked up many awards, including best glamping site in the South West at the Tourism Excellence Awards 2018.

Bella runs one-day courses on how to set up and run a glamping business, and a marketing course for owners, as well as providing consultancy to businesses internationally.