



The view over the harbour from Cumbrian Getaways' Whitehaven apartment and, right, one of the bedrooms



GUEST APPEARANCES

There's an art to designing b&bs, cottages and self-catering apartments to ensure visitors enjoy home comforts, a warm welcome and stylish décor

Most holiday-makers are seeking a 'home from home' when they come to Cumbria but they also expect the property they are staying in to be relaxing, spick and span, and as lovely to look at as the scenery.

So how do the owners of holiday accommodation design their properties to combine practicality and style?

Sharon Martin is the owner of Cumbrian Getaways, which offers a self-catering marina apartment in Whitehaven and a cottage at Deanscales, Cockermouth.

"The process is the same whether

you're decorating one room or a whole house. Basically, you need to come up with an idea and then make sure you stick to it," she says.

"We want the furnishings to be stylish but at the same time durable so as to withstand knocks and spills. What we didn't want was to have to think of replacing everything after just a few years."

When designing her harbourside apartment, she decided on plantation shutters which subsequently inspired her use of bright yellows, reds and blues.

"That is when the picture popped up in my head of Agatha Christie's Poirot, sailing

down the Nile with the shutters of his cabin opening up onto the wooden deck and the leather travel chests, all the lovely warm wood, rich colours and nautical paraphernalia," she says.

When she's choosing furniture for her properties, Sharon opts for a solid hardwood for its "design, warmth, quality and durability" and she uses one design to "keep the continuity and flow".

When it comes to decorating Sharon uses paint and borders "as it's easier to match with the furnishings and easier to maintain. Wallpaper isn't as easy to patch up or wash when it gets damaged," she says.

At her Cockermouth cottage she caters ➤



Boltongate Old Rectory; one of the bedrooms; David and Gill in the Boltongate garden



for walkers and cyclists so her designs need to be practical and the dining area, kitchen and entrance are all layered with slate.

The rough plaster walls in the kitchen are painted and furniture in hardwood with wrought iron adds character.

“We want people to feel really welcome and at home from the moment they arrive so they can relax and enjoy their holiday,” says Sharon.

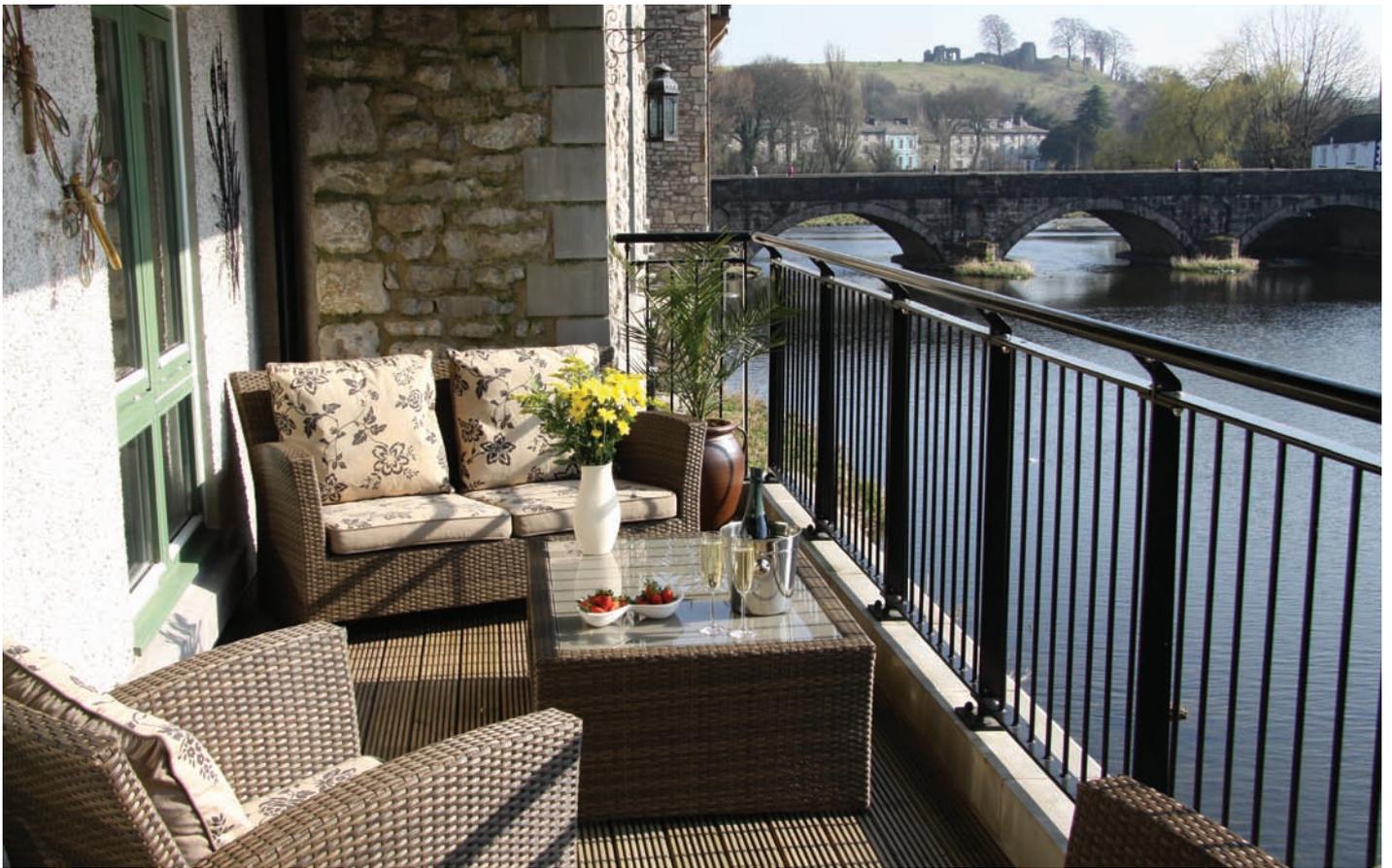
■ www.cumbriangetaways.co.uk

Gill and David Taylor own Boltongate Old Rectory bed and breakfast near Ireby. The property dates from about 1360 and they are keen recyclers. “We buy things from auction, send old sofas to a charity shop and our old towels to animal welfare charities,” says Gill.

“We also like to find new uses for old items, so an old dolly wash now makes a perfect toilet roll holder, as does an old sock darning.”

The Taylors recycle their furniture, including re-upholstering chairs, and wherever possible use local crafts people. “All of our bedside tables have been commissioned locally, as have various mirrors and handrails,” says Gill. “We have an eclectic mix of modern and old, so an 18th-century dining table sits with contemporary lights and candles.

“Our furniture is inherited, bought from auction or commissioned. So in terms of practicality it is a matter of choosing what



Paul and Becky Johnson's holiday let looks over the River Kent in Kendal and down to Stramongate Bridge



will go together.”

They use mainly Farrow & Ball eco-paint. “We have cross lined all the walls and tend to have one wall with an accent colour, preferring this to heavy patterns; so, for instance, Brinjal (deep purple) in the drawing room and Lolworth Blue (mid-tone regency blue) in one of the bedrooms.”

Guests’ comfort is, of course, a priority. “We spend a lot on beds and sofas,” says Gill. “Bed and breakfast without a comfortable bed is not offering the full provision.”

The Taylors ensure all their fabrics are new and natural; 100 per cent wool carpets, linen or silk curtains, Egyptian cotton and linen bedding, wool throws and cushions, hand-made mattresses, also made from natural fibres. “Our aim is for

everything that a guest might touch to be natural,” Gill says. “We love designing and matching colours, textures, and materials in rooms and get a real buzz when a guest says how good the rooms look.”

■ www.boltongateoldrectory.com

Paul and Becky Johnson are directors of Kendal Holiday Cottages Ltd combine practicality and style in their luxurious riverside apartment in Kendal.

“We have Karndean flooring [luxury vinyl] in the main living area,” says Paul. “It is quiet – no noisy floorboards – and won’t splinter and crack and is low maintenance. The surfaces simply wipe clean and the floor always looks its best with minimum of effort which is ideal for a holiday let.”

When it comes to colour schemes, says Paul: “We are primarily neutral but with a splash of colour here and there. Cushions and other accessories are easy and inexpensive to update.

The couple choose furniture and surfaces which are high quality and durable, such as a solid oak table and chairs, with granite worktops in the kitchen.

Paul and Becky have also introduced a number of local touches. “The hallway has a number of prints from Wainwright’s drawings of Kendal,” says Paul “and the master bedroom has a beautiful, large black and white photograph of Kendal, with the Lakeland fells beyond, taken by a local photographer.”

■ www.kendalcottages.com