



## Down by the riverside

Paul and Becky Johnson have started as they mean to go on – furnishing a holiday apartment in a style to match the stunning location.

**Nicola Jolly** reports

**T**he new holiday apartment's enviable riverside location and great Kendal views demanded an equally impressive interior.

So Paul and Becky Johnson invested thousands of pounds to ensure the fixtures, fittings and furnishings provided superior holiday accommodation.

The town-centre self-catering apartment – the first property in the couple's Kendal Cottages holiday business – has Laura Ashley sofas, solid oak furniture, Villeroy & Boch bathrooms, flatscreen TVs, Myers Ultimate Luxury mattresses, a Bose sound system and granite worktops in the kitchen.

There are two bedrooms: the master bedroom is equipped with a superking-size bed and the second bedroom has twin beds that can become a superking through a zip-link system.

There is secure parking in the basement but the key feature is the balcony with that view: down the River Kent towards Stramongate Bridge and Kendal Castle. The balcony has seating and a coffee table for guests to relax and soak up the atmosphere. They can also pick the fresh herbs growing there and use them for cooking.

Paul says: "It's all about the location, with the great views and being within walking



distance of all the amenities. You couldn't ask for more. We live in Kendal so we are on hand to help our guests.

"Many of our guests are happy to stay within Kendal, discover the town, enjoy the entertainment at the Brewery Arts Centre. Others want to explore the Lakes more – just a 10-minute drive away – or visit the Yorkshire Dales."

Paul and Becky bought the new apartment in January this year and opened it for holiday lets at Easter. Already it has attracted guests from throughout the UK and as far as Germany, Morocco and America.

It helps immensely that the couple's main business is in internet marketing: The Dedicated Partnership promotes hotels, holiday cottages and tourist attractions. In the mid-Nineties Paul was responsible for the then Cumbria Tourist Board's (now Cumbria Tourism) first website, and he has also worked for the Furness Tourism Partnership.

Originally from Manchester, Paul moved to Cumbria with his family when he was aged 15. His parents were seeking a change of

lifestyle and became involved in providing self-catering holidays. Paul eventually became a partner in the business which won an England for Excellence Award for the best self-catering accommodation in the country in 1993.

Paul met Becky, who's from near Leeds, while they were at university in Keele. Between them they have almost 40 years' experience in the tourism industry. They have two sons, aged six and four.

Paul was keen to get back into the holiday accommodation business and finding the Kendal apartment was the perfect catalyst, with other properties hopefully following in the future.

He adds: "We don't do things by halves. We haven't scrimped on anything, not just for our own pride and satisfaction but for peace of mind too. We want a guest to be thrilled when they walk in so it makes life easier if you make that sound investment at the start."

■ See [www.kendalcottages.com](http://www.kendalcottages.com) or tel: 01539 736611 for more information.