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# Staycation renovation

Adventurous post-lockdown Brits are taking on UK holiday home projects from Cornwall to the Cairngorms. By *Cathy Hawker*

**D**URING lockdown our thoughts turned to DIY — and the To Do list just kept growing, from painting the kitchen to converting space into home offices and re-tiling the bathroom. Online sales at home improvement retailer B&Q shot up by 200 per cent. Vicky Martin, 48, from Cheltenham went even further in lockdown, buying a second home to renovate. Heron Cottage in Ipplepen, Devon, which cost £230,000, is a three-bedroom barn conversion, one of nine that share a swimming pool and games room. Vicky plans to add a new kitchen and bathroom, replace windows and doors and totally redecorate.

“I wanted a renovation project and I was looking in Devon and Wales. I even considered buying a camper van,” says Vicky, a single mother of three children aged 16 to 28. “My sensible son talked me out of the camper van, and being all together at home over lockdown showed me that family was what mattered the most to me. I wanted a house as our family bolt hole.” Vicky spotted Heron Cottage online over lockdown and visited when restrictions eased. “I didn’t even have to go inside to know it was for me. It had sheep in the garden, wonderful, wide views of rolling hills and a lovely local community...it’s a little slice of heaven in the countryside.”

She hopes to start renovations in October. But so as not to lose valuable renting opportunities she set the cottage up on Airbnb and it is fully booked all this month. “I need to rent it to cover the

upkeep when we are not using it,” she says.  
● [airbnb.co.uk](https://www.airbnb.co.uk)



#### Fully booked:

Vicky Martin, right with daughter Chloe, invested in Heron Cottage in Ipplepen, Devon, a barn conversion which she has managed to rent out all this month, bringing in valuable income before she starts her planned renovations to the property next month. Vicky intends to turn Heron Cottage into her perfect family retreat



## CORNWALL

BUYING agent Clare Coode of Stacks Property Search specialises in finding larger homes across Cornwall. “Lockdown was a spur because people worked on their own property, enjoyed it and thought about taking on a bigger project,” she says. “And Cornwall is an excellent place to work from home, as the first UK county to have superfast fibre broadband coverage.”

However, bigger homes in Cornwall can carry a hefty premium. “People are always surprised to learn that handsome, unrefurbished homes, especially ones with a sea view, are not significantly

cheaper than completed homes,” adds Coode. “A better solution can be a house that’s already been upgraded where you can change the design.”

Estate agent John Bray has two Cornish projects for sale on the north coast near Port Isaac — which doubles as Portwenn in TV’s Doc Martin. A plot of land in St Kew, £195,000, has planning permission for a four-bedroom house. And a nine-acre plot with two rundown stone cottages and planning permission to turn them both into two-bedroom homes, is £500,000.

- [stacks.co.uk](https://stacks.co.uk)
- [johnbraysales.co.uk](https://johnbraysales.co.uk)



**£795,000:** in Crediton, Devon, a listed six-bedroom thatch in five acres. Through Knight Frank

## SCOTLAND

BETWEEN historic Braemar and Ballater in the Cairngorms National Park, an 11-bedroom house currently run as hotel is for sale for over £585,000 through Savills. Fishing, hiking, stalking, birdwatching spotting Atlantic seals the harbour or watching golden eagles: the surroundings are idyllic

On the west coast north of Oban, The Ferret Cottage is a Seventies bungalow in an exceptionally beautiful waterfront location. It sits on a private peninsula with two acres of woodland and 435ft of foreshore on Loch Etive. Beautiful Oban is known as the Gateway to the Isles and is the seafood capital of Scotland. Offers over £325,000 with Knight Frank.

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## HEADING WEST

A FARMHOUSE that needs a facelift in the Gloucestershire village of Purton, 28 miles from Cirencester and five miles from Junction 13 of the M4, is on the market for £700,000 through Savills. The 4,800sqft Cotswolds home has four double bedrooms, four receptions and a half-acre of garden.

But if a thatched house is your dream, then a Grade II-listed 16th-century home in Crediton, Devon, could be the one. The six-bedroom house has beautiful period features, huge windows, beamed ceilings and five acres of grounds as well as all-important fast fibre broadband. For sale through Knight Frank, priced £795,000.

- [savills.com](https://www.savills.com)
- [knightfrank.com](https://www.knightfrank.com)



**£700,000:** a Cotswolds farmhouse ripe for renovation (Savills)