



TRAVEL

ESCAPE *Routes*

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IN THE BEACH SUITE: A BEANBAG AND TWO SOFAS... IT'S TIME TO GET RELAXING

THE SOUTH SANDS HOTEL'S HIS AND HERS POLICY IS REASSURINGLY OVER THE TOP

Devon gets a new by-the-sea bolthole

There's nothing quite like a brand spanking new hotel - especially when it's in a postcard setting - and the South Sands hotel in Salcombe, South Devon (which opened in May this year) ticks all the boxes for a coastal UK break.

Its greatest charm? The hotel's perfect proximity to the sea. *Stylist* spent a weekend there and lost ourselves for half an hour watching sailing boats gliding across the water without moving an inch from our comfy bed. And at almost twice the width of a standard double, the beds are gargantuan (losing your partner in the middle of the night isn't inconceivable). We also loved the two freestanding bathtubs in our room and a spacious balcony that ends just feet away from the estuary (geographically speaking it's an estuary, but in *Stylist's* eyes, it's a gorgeous, if compact, sandy beach).

With just 22 rooms ranging in size (some with smaller Juliet balconies), it's worth noting that South Sands isn't massive either, but this only goes to cultivate an intimate, romantic

atmosphere. Everything about it - from the plentiful cushions to the cutlery - is elegant and understated and there's a relaxed beach house feel, with cream walls and solid oak providing canvasses for decorative sailboats and seagulls. In the lobby, a spiral staircase with nautical knots of metal creates a stunning centrepiece.

The staff are also low-key but friendly, wearing laid-back uniforms of shorts and shirts, and generally leaving you to your own devices. We retired to our balcony in the evening with glasses of prosecco and fleecy blankets to take in the moon shining on the sea, before climbing back into our giant bed for a soundless night's sleep.

Why it's hot

With the quaint village of Salcombe, South Devon, a 15-minute ferry ride away, South Sands is just moments from cosy pubs, chilled-out bars, restaurants and outdoorsy boutiques. In the

summer, wealthy families with second homes and boats populate the area, but don't dismiss doing your own sailing. *Stylist* took the high-adrenaline option with a whippy ride on a catamaran at South Sands Sailing school but there are kayaks and long boards if you just fancy a spot of paddling. For surfing and a bigger beach (there isn't one at Salcombe) head to nearby Bantham.

Eating and drinking

The hotel has a daily changing menu with fresh fish plucked from the bay

featuring heavily. We spent breakfast, tea and dinner in the beachside restaurant and on the terrace, eating our way through eggs Benedict, scones and dishes of monkfish and sea bream. In Salcombe try The Winking Prawn for seafood and in the evening, waterside brasserie Dick and Wills for pink G&Ts.

Photo opportunity

Devon really is a beautiful part of the world and the coastline is epic, with towering cliffs, secluded coves and rugged rock faces. A trip without a stroll around the headland via the National Trust coastal path is wasted. We wandered for hours just to take in the scenery but you could do a whole day's expedition - just remember your sandwiches.

Rooms start at £125 per night including breakfast (01548-859 000; southsands.com). Throughout October, the hotel is offering a sailing package from £400 for a two-night break. To book a separate watersports session contact South Sands Sailing (01548-843 451)



HMM, ADRIAN CHILES OR THIS VIEW FOR BREAKFAST?

MEGAN CONNOR