

STAY  
CATION

## Old Oaks Cottage/Reepham Norfolk Cottages

WHEN COSY  
MEETS COOL

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A COTTAGE DEEP IN THE NORFOLK COUNTRYSIDE IS THE PERFECT WAY TO SPEND A COSY WEEKEND AWAY, SAYS EMMA OUTTEN, AFTER STAYING IN **OLD OAKS COTTAGE** NEAR REEPHAM



## Old Oaks Cottage

crisps (the bottle of Sandringham Estate apple juice would go straight in the fridge, ready for the morning). We would later discover that Crumble is rather partial to curling up in front of the fire.

It's immediately apparent that a lot of care has been taken with the interior design of the cottage – as soon as we walked in we clocked the stand out mirror behind the dining table, for example.

The next morning we were straight in the hot tub (who cares if it's raining, if it's a warm and welcoming 38 degrees in there?). The owners' Jacuzzi is located in the far corner of the courtyard garden and guests have daily access, from 9am to 1pm, say, before going out for lunch and doing something else in the afternoon. The outdoor swimming pool is heated from early to late summer and so we had just missed the boat with that one.

After lunch on the Saturday, we checked out Reepham, a small market town I've always thought has a great community spirit, ever since soaking up the atmosphere of Reepham Festival a few summers ago. The town is a mile and a half away from the cottage and we enjoyed our little walk around its independent shops and impressive Georgian buildings, before calling into the King's Arms, a popular pub in the town square known for its good food and locally brewed beers. We had a swift half of Panther Brewery's American Pale Ale (for me), and Lacons' Affinity (for him), before deciding on our next move, which was to swiftly head back to our cosy cottage and light the wood burner as the weather was utterly dire that day!

The heating and hot water in the cottage are provided via a wood chip boiler in the big barn next door, and, with plenty of wood and kindling for the wood burners (there's one in the sitting room and one in the dining area), there are plenty of ways to feel toasty warm.

There's something very relaxing about sitting in front of a log fire, so we were more than happy to be in for the



night. The sitting room was a lovely space, with a high vaulted ceiling, sumptuous furnishings and a large flat screen TV and iPod dock for entertainment.

The next day was a totally different prospect, as the sun was shining, so we headed back into Reepham, ready for a Sunday sharing roast at The Dial House, owned by executive chef Andrew Jones and his wife Hannah Springham (who also own Farmyard in Norwich). Just as we arrived, runners were reaching the finishing line of the Marriott's Way 10k (the cottage happens to be 500m from this public bridleway). We watched as some popped into The Dial House for a celebratory glass of bubbly – how very civilised, I thought.

If eating in is more your thing, then you could stock up at Bakers and Larners in Holt, which isn't too far away, or you could make a special trip to Back To The Garden in Letheringsett or Walsingham Farm Shop. We had stocked up in Norwich beforehand and had come armed with a keg of Adnams Broadside.

What we really enjoyed about our stay at Old

Oaks Cottage was the 48 hours or more of peace and tranquility it afforded. Thanks to its countryside setting, it would work well for a couple or a small family, as it sleeps three, with a double bedroom and a cosy single bedroom (my teenage daughter coveted all the cushions adorning her bed). It was really a welcome break from the norm, before the school run – and work - beckoned on Monday morning. 🍳

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**YOU DON'T ALWAYS** have to stay in a top hotel to grab a bit of five-star luxury in your life. Less than half an hour from Norwich is Old Oaks Cottage, near Reepham, a five star Norfolk Cottage.

After work one Friday, we left the bright lights of the city and headed into the deepest, darkest depths of Norfolk; turned down a blink-and-you'll-miss-it byway, and reached the beautifully renovated Victorian farm cottage.

The owners happen to live next door, so we were immediately greeted by Crumble, one of their two family dogs, a cheeky little chap who helped us settle in. He was particularly interested in the complimentary welcome pack, whereas I was more interested in the small decanter of gin and hand-cooked



**OLD OAKS COTTAGE** is available to book from Norfolk Cottages, tel. 01263 715778 or visit [www.norfolkcottages.co.uk](http://www.norfolkcottages.co.uk) and costs from £409 for a three night short break or from £481 for a week.