

# It's a dog's life

Four-legged friends need holidays too. So next time you're heading off, save on kennel costs and take your pampered pooch along with you



## Saddell Castle, Kintyre, Argyll

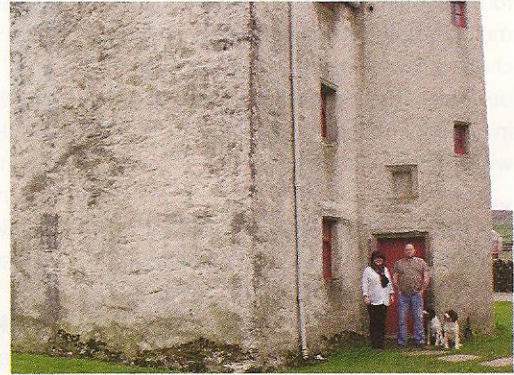
**Reviewed by Gordon and Jackie MacKay and Fingal the dog from Dunblane**

With McCartney's words echoing in our ears and Fingal our border collie on board, we set off on our weekend escape to the hauntingly beautiful Saddell Castle. A momentary flutter spruced up the journey finding ourselves at the top of the Rest and Be thankful with only a thimble of fuel but a roll down the hill into the welcome arms of the Inveraray Garage ensured we were back on the road, fuel, supplies and the obligatory fish and chips on board. As we motored down the west coast the islands of Gigha, Jura and Islay were ablaze in a stunning sunset.

Arriving in darkness, with only the moonlight as our guide, we soon found ourselves creeping along a dark, treelined drive with the looming ramparts of Saddell beckoning us. Sudden realisation – not packing a torch was in fact a big mistake. Husband was duly sent ahead to face the ghouls and find the way while I wisely chose to keep the engine running. Tellingly, Fingal chose to stay with me. Once the castle was ablaze with light, Fingal and I led the way up the spiral stone staircase, tentatively opening creaking doors over the four floors. This was exciting. Each floor delighted us more but none more so than the ramparts, the perfect setting for a sunset aperitif. Any worries we had about spending the weekend rattling around in a chilly castle soon disappeared. All rooms were warm, extremely comfortable and authentically decorated and not a ghoul in sight.

Daybreak introduced us to the full splendour of Saddell and its surroundings. Drawing back the curtains, sand, sea and herons awaited us and we recognised why McCartney had chosen this very spot for his melancholic anthem. The day filled itself – walks along the beach, a search for the grave of Somerled, the beheaded Viking amongst the ruins of Saddell Abbey, superb homebaking at the delightful Green Café in Carradale, completed with a glass of red, snuggled up by the roaring fire under the watchful eyes of Colonel Donald Campbell and his sons. Whether you are a party of eight or of three, Saddell Castle is the perfect getaway. Children will love it and dogs too. Fingal has voted to return.

*Four nights self-catering for up to eight people from £452*

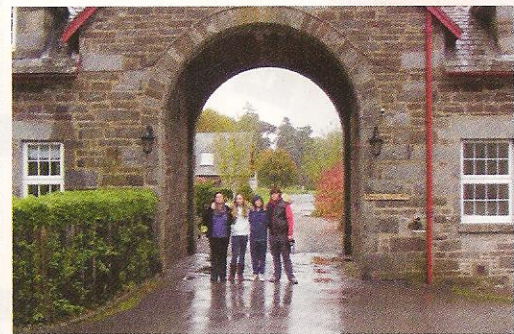


## Old Place of Monreith, Portwilliam

**Reviewed by Tracey & Robert Armstrong, Mungo & Dougie the dogs from Straiton**

Built in around 1600 this tower exudes history and character. It was restored by The Landmark Trust in the 1980s and is now fully modernised with all home comforts but retaining a rich historic charm. No television and no mobile reception made it feel even more serene. The large kitchen on the ground floor was perfect for our dogs, with stone flooring and wood burning stove. We also loved that the property was filled with pictures and books relevant to the building's past. The place was spotlessly clean, with lovely little extras, even down to the special Landmark Trust dog bowls. It really is a haven for dogs and humans alike.

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## Mains of Taymouth, Kenmore

**Reviewed by Richard Bath and family from Edinburgh, and Lola the cairn terrier**

From the sumptuous and newly renovated stable block to the deli and restaurant on site, this must be one of the best family holiday venues in Scotland. The boys played golf on the complex's surprisingly good 18-hole course, the girls went pony-trekking, and we explored Kenmore and Aberfeldy as a family. Best of all was the wonderful surrounding countryside and loch – perfect for taking Lola the overexcited terrier on long walks, followed by a beer in the Kenmore Hotel. Seriously, how can life get any better?

*Prices from £200 per night*