



IDYLLIC RETREAT:

Swaledale House in Angram, Swaledale, is the perfect place to get away from everyday life. Inset, one of the apartments.

break away

If Yorkshire is God's Own Country – and I, for one, wouldn't argue with that – then Swaledale is my idea of Heaven.

Less accessible to large numbers of tourists than, say, Wharfedale and without the obvious tourist "hooks" of Wensleydale, there is breathtaking beauty around every corner and a sense of tranquility that you could cut with a knife.

This is a place to visit to get off the treadmill of life and drink in the sheer beauty of its wild and secluded countryside. And if you go in the spring or early summer and take your walking boots, you will be in for a real treat as you discover proper hay meadows as if you're in a timewarp – the explosion of colour from wildflowers in their natural setting.

This is farming as it used to be –



RELAX: In the hot tub with great views.

ROY WOODCOCK puts on his walking boots to enjoy the great outdoors of Swaledale – with a hefty slice of luxury thrown in for good measure

the wildflowers thrive because of an encouraged return to ancient husbandry practices that leave the cutting of grass for hay or silage until wild plants have had a chance to seed.

Suzanne and Chris Mitchell are an East Yorkshire couple who, having fallen in love with Swaledale, decided to create one of the most idyllic holiday retreats it has ever been my pleasure to experience. This is top-end stuff, aimed at couples only.

Located in the hamlet of Angram, between the villages of Thwaite and Keld, Swaledale House offers two superbly-equipped apartments (one, pet friendly) that each sleep two people. A bonus is they each share the luxury of an outdoor hot tub with probably the best view in the whole of the Dales.

Believe me, laying back in its

therapeutic waters, glass of wine in hand, gazing out and up to the soaring peaks that surround you, there is no better place I'd rather be.

A few steps from the hot tub, for instance, and you can get more stress relief in the indoor sauna. Retire to your accommodation and there's the very best in flat panel televisions and a cosy, wood-burning, stove to cuddle up to.

Nearby you are spoilt for choice with friendly pubs offering food and sustenance after a hard day's walking – one must is a walk or drive to Tan Hill, the highest pub in England.

It was hard to drag ourselves away . . . and I'm already dreaming of a return visit.

contacts

Where: Swaledale House, Angram, Swaledale, North Yorkshire. Call (01430) 871400 or 07952 024630. Visit www.swaledalecountryholidays.co.uk

Bookings: By the week, or longer as required. Short breaks of three to six nights are available at any time during off-peak periods

Travel: About 120 miles from Hull. Allow three hours