

BOLTHOLE BY THE SEA

Oh we do like to be beside the
seaside, in a cosy coastal retreat.





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Many of us who live and work in the north east often fail to appreciate the stunning scenery and natural beauty that surrounds us and are all too quick to jet off to foreign destinations for a holiday or short break. Ironically, more and more visitors from as far afield as the Seychelles and Australia are discovering the delights we have on our doorstep and are taking holidays in the self catering properties along the Northumberland coast. In addition to the regular weekend visitors from London, the second home market near the coast has never been busier.



For Fiona McKeith and her family, owning a cottage by the sea began as a means of escaping a busy city life in Newcastle at the weekend and during the school holidays. Five years on, Fiona still owns the original cottage plus another which lay derelict and has since been gutted and renovated to the same high standard. Realizing that the cottages lay empty for many weeks of the year, Fiona decided to start renting them out and so Coastal Retreats was born. Having seen a gap in the market for high quality, stylishly decorated self catering properties, Fiona soon found that she was in demand locally to pass on her expertise and began to act as a consultant to friends and neighbours who also wanted to tap into this potentially lucrative lettings market. Since its inception several years ago, Coastal Retreats has grown from two properties to thirteen (Fiona acting as letting agent for twelve locally owned properties), adding new properties each year providing they meet Fiona's exacting high standards and are capable of achieving a 5 star 'Visit Britain' rating.

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get
the
look



Most of Fiona's marketing is done via the internet which means that she welcomes an ever-increasing market from overseas and from other parts of the UK. That is not to say that she does not relish welcoming people from closer to home. "I want people to have a great holiday and I want them to come back. I know it sounds altruistic, but I really like the idea that I'm bringing people to the North East. I get a buzz out of it."

Coastal Retreat properties can be rented by visiting www.coastalretreats.co.uk 0191 285 1272

1 Star quilt, £125 and cushion, £20 The White Company 3 Winchester chair, £1495 in Mulberry fabric (7m required) Mulberry Home 4 Sailing boats, £4.95 Gisela Graham at Cameo Fine Arts 5 Set of two trunks, £20 Matalan Home



In contrast, the adjoining property known as The Granary is furnished and decorated in a more contemporary style. Ceramic tiles and a neutral scheme mean this house appeals to style conscious couples and families. The children's dormitory is sweetly decked out in red and white gingham and patchwork. The master bedroom is all about simple glamour. A modern four poster bed and state of the art modern bathrooms complete the uncluttered look. By using classic, seaside colours and accessories, Fiona has succeeded in creating a stylish home away from home.



