



Pictures: Supplied

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Travelling southwest from London, the roads quickly transition into country lanes that meandered through the quaint Dorset, where a quintessentially English landscape unfolds with iconic thatched cottages, stone bridges, and manicured farmlands.

My destination would soon arrive where the last lane met the ocean – at what is arguably England's most dramatic stretch of coastline. The Jurassic Coast features a series of startling geographical formations so impressive that I felt as though I was back exploring South Africa's Wild Coast.

A double gift from Mother Nature, clocking in at around 1 800 hours of sunshine per year, the region is the UK's tenth sunniest location. Not only have the Instagrammers been captivated by the landscape – the “original influencers” JM Barrie (author of *Peter Pan*), Thomas Hardy, and William Wordsworth all spent time writing in the region.

This popularity, much like iconic European sites, can lead to crowds so we were visiting in the quieter shoulder period.

Walking along the coast, you're rewarded with a string of natural discoveries, including caves, blowholes, arches, rock stacks, and stumps. Embedded in the rock cliffs are 85-million-year-old fossil forests, adding to the region's geographical and historical significance. We eagerly set off from the Lulworth Cove Car Park, taking the short walk to the iconic Durdle Door stone arch – every step offering breathtaking views of cliffs and peninsulas jutting into the ocean.

The nearby Lulworth Estate presents an impressive array of accommodation options throughout the village and surrounding countryside, with their handful of traditional cottages being the crown jewels in the collection. The six-sleeper Cove Cottage was my first choice, and upon arriving, I felt like a kid in a candy store with its maze of discoveries.

Downstairs, a dining room and two lounges provide ample communal space, along with three bedrooms upstairs. Spanning off the staircases are two bathrooms

Gift from Mother Nature

England's most dramatic stretch of coastline



SIGHTSEEING. Tourists walk along the stone bridge to the gate of the Old City, Pile Gate, Dubrovnik, Croatia.

and a large kitchen. Understated luxury permeates the cottage, offering a welcome retreat after exploring the local sights.

The cove is surrounded by lush gardens, featuring two outdoor dining areas – one overlooking the adjacent stream with its clear babbling waters. Plus, it's merely a one-minute walk to the ocean (the convenience of living in one of the closest homes to the cove) – and likewise, all the tiny village's attractions are just steps away.

Renting the cottage provides free parking both at the property and at other local lots, as well as

access to Lulworth Castle – a 17th-century masterpiece nestled in 1 000 acres of deer park.

Here, visitors can explore exhibits, enjoy the playground, and sample light refreshments from the Tearoom.

While Cove Cottage's fully stocked kitchen and dining area offer an idyllic self-catering experience, if you're seeking a break from cooking, the adjacent Lulworth Lodge is the village's top-rated restaurant; their signature G&Ts and gourmet burgers alone are worth the trip. Set right on the cove itself, The Boat Shed Café



ADVENTURERS. People At Trevi Fountain. Pictures: AFP

serves hot drinks along with a selection of cakes and light bites.

On the first morning of our visit, I climbed a nearby cliff for better views of the village, and from a distance, I spotted a group of brave individuals approaching the winter waters for a swim. As I made my way down, they emerged from the water and proudly introduced themselves as the “Lulworth Chilly Swimmers”, sharing that they entered the water daily, come sunshine or rain. I boldly announced that I



would join them the next morning for a bracing swim.

True to my word, I donned a gown from the cottage, trotted down the lane to the cove, and, along with a motley crew of fellow swimmers, enjoyed a refreshing morning swim.

Of course, I had the distinct advantage of only a two-minute walk back through the village, where a warm bath, roaring fire, and a pot of coffee awaited in the cottage I had always dreamed of visiting lulworth.com.

