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Sleepy seaside town, check. Quirky, period building, check. Ideal English retreat for a seasonal stroll? Swain House has it all. Lying in a quiet, unhurried corner of the Watchet, one of the few coastal towns to still have local people living year round with tea shops and junk stores to loiter in, is the surprisingly design-conscious Swain House.

Owners Jason and Annie, London Design types, married in the area, and over time, made the move from big smoke to rural retreat. A chance to buy the Victorian shop and townhouse spurred them on to create this small, considered B&B. With only 4 snug rooms in this long lean building, these are not suites for lounging.

But as a base for exploring the area, they make an ideal choice. Designer Jason has created arresting features such as classical portraits writ large, lending old fashioned richness to these modern rooms. Freestanding baths, REN products and exceptional breakfasts lift this property out of the realm of your standard B&B.

Although there isn't a restaurant, the long table in the dining room makes for a convivial breakfast with other guests as you gaze out on passers by, and the couple are happy to organise little extras such as champagne, strawberries or flowers in the room.

With civilised breakfast times from 8.30 to 10, sleepy Watchet with its welcome absence of gastro pubs (though great

country pub food is a short cab ride away) is a real retreat. Add in the plush beds of Swain House and you have permission to spend your weekend doing absolutely nothing at all. Bliss.

Highs:

- The attention to detail in this small find
- The sea is but a short walk, with junk stores to raid along the way

Lows:

- You can't walk to a good pub for food. But a short taxi ride will give you lots of options

Inside Track:

Best room:

All four are beautiful, but the street-facing rooms at the front are a little larger. We love Room 1, with digital wallpaper showing off a dramatic image of Charlotte Sophia of Mecklenburg-Strelitz.

Best dish:

Herby mushrooms and poached egg on toast, or the delicious savoury pancakes cooked by Jason.

Insider fact:

Moody, atmospheric Watchet was striking enough to inspire poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner". Enough said.

www.redonline.co.uk/travel/book-places-to-stay/swain-house-review

