

Sebay Mill in the Press

The Sunday Times - Rhiannon Batten

Discover the rich history and ancient mythology of Orkney in five-star luxury, writes Rhiannon Batten

There is one very persuasive reason for coming here: Orkney's only five-star self-catering property is close by.

Set roughly halfway between the airport and the Gloup, Sebay Mill looks out over picturesque march and farmland towards the Bay of Suckquoy. Originally built around 1860 to grind corn but abandoned in 1953, it was bought by the farmers Bill & Sheena McEwen in 2000. Over the following three years, they carefully restored and upgraded it, transforming the mill into a collection of Orkney's poshest self-catering apartments.

The millstone at Sebay Mill Orkney Sebay Mill Orkney Self Catering - spiral staircase Surrounded by landscaped garden and the cleared mill burn, the inside is a triumph of cosy, modern comfort. A touch Scandinavian in style, everything has been designed to suit the environment. The chill is kept out with doors that fit snugly, big strong windows and powerful central heating. Like other five-star properties, there isn't much you won't find here, from dishwashers to cafeterias. In fact Sebay Mill is run so precisely that all the clocks in the building, even on the microwaves, tell the right time.

But the real selling point is the light, the quality is one of the first things you notice on Orkney. Much of the local accommodation shuts you away in small, dark rooms, but here light is the main feature. Pale wood, glass block walls and vast windows looking out over sky and fields really make the most of the long summer days and high-tech mood lighting eases the winter gloom.

There's no forgetting where you are, though. When guests arrive, it is to the sound of a local band drifting out from the CD. You are also presented with a hamper of Orkney goodies, from fresh milk and Orkney oatcakes to a mini bottle of Highland Park whisky.

Tucked among the apartment's small library was a copy of the Orkeyinga Saga. As I climbed onto the bath to start the most mammoth of the island's stories after my walk, there was no casting off of seal skins Just one of Sebay Mill's smart white dressing gowns.

