



# Retreat to the Laid-back Luxury of a Cotswolds Home

Why owning a holiday home at The Lakes by Yoo adds up to a sound investment, both for your lifestyle and your finances.

Designer Manuela Hamilford from West London was an early adopter to the luxury lifestyle of The Lakes by Yoo. She and her husband Mark bought a house on the secure Cotswold estate in 2008 at the very start of its development, intent on finding a rural escape from their full-throttle London life. Thirteen years on, the family relish every moment of their time at The Lakes.

“Mark had worked in Moscow and loved their dachas, weekend houses in the woods where families would escape from the city,” says Manuela. “The Lakes encapsulates that spirit, an informal place in beautiful nature with wonderful space for children and a great place for us to have friends and family over.”

The Hamilford’s bought a five-bedroom house directly on one of the larger lakes – there are ten in total. Theirs was just the sixth to be built and has now been joined by a further 170 homes along with extensive sports and leisure facilities, a vibrant Kids Club, a spa and gym and an on-site team that take care of every aspect of second home ownership. For Manuela, Mark and their sons Theo and Lucca, 10 and 12, the house remains their family hub, a regular weekend home where they spend every Christmas and all Bank Holidays.

“The more people on the estate the better the sense of belonging,” she says. “We have a great network of friends here, the children too. There’s so much to do and the freedom of a safe community, no main roads just the chance to immerse yourself in nature, all luxuries you don’t get in the city. We rarely plan anything, we just arrive, open the car doors and the boys charge off to find their friends.”

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The Lakes is an exclusive water wonderland 90 minutes from West London, 850 acres of woodland and flower-filled meadows where bespoke, contemporary houses, cabins and apartments provide a front row seat on country living.

As we’ve recalibrated our lives over recent months, the essentials of clean air and outdoor space have become ever-more important. Figures from estate agency Knight Frank reveal the soaring demand for homes offering this magical combination with lakefront properties carrying a 68% premium. The value that affluent buyers place on wild nature and open space – something The Lakes offer in abundance – is clear.

Properties currently for sale at The Lakes include the final seven plots for detached homes, one newly approved for a contemporary beach house in a spectacular setting. New this year are the two-bedroom cabins and three-bedroom apartments on Marley Lake, all artfully furnished by Yoo Studios and with a concierge service. The apartments, six in each low-level building covering a generous 1,300 square feet, have air conditioning, log burners, terraces or gardens and private lake access. Owners can choose from three design styles with Yoo Studios adding carefully curated individual pieces to make each home unique.



Many owners choose to make their homes available for rental when not using them and receive healthy returns. “Our owners buy their homes mainly as a lifestyle investment but are increasingly interested in rental potential,” says Giles Baker, Sales Director. “And the strong rental demand at The Lakes means that net yields of 5-7% are achievable on the apartments, that’s after all costs. Our fully managed lettings service handles all aspects of rentals. It’s a hassle-free solution.”

Why have the properties proved so popular? “Accessibility, security, aesthetics, nature and community,” lists Giles. “We have a fantastic community where adults know they’ll meet friends running on the trail paths or in the spa. Because it’s so safe parents are relaxed about their children playing together in the woods or cycling. There’s as much to do or as much peace as you want.”

Is now the time to escape to your own waterfront home?

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