



The HIDEAWAY HAVEN

WHAT Four-bedroom Bay Villa at Sheen Falls Lodge **WHERE** Just outside the picture-perfect village of Kenmare, Co Kerry **USP** This place is just about the cutest two-storey thatched cottage you've ever seen. And by cute, we don't mean small – more of an oversized, über-luxe thatched house, set in a private, gated estate on the grounds of the hotel (just a five-minute skip and a jump). Big enough to fit two families, quiet enough to feel hidden away, and in the exact spot you want to be in to explore the “Rings” of Kerry and Beara **CHILD-FRIENDLY?** The electric gates into this manicured dwelling and breakable ornaments might suggest a conflict with sticky fingers and a tendency to draw on the nearest surfaces, but little hands will be too busy exploring the vastness of the house and gardens **INSIDER TIP** The hotel has trusted babysitters, even paediatric nurses to look after your kids. If ever there was an excuse to be lured to the world-renowned Kenmare restaurants

FOR THE DAY A hearty breakfast followed by an energetic morning swim or splash about in the hotel pool. Day trips might include trips to Blueberry Hill Farm in Sneem to make scones, candles, and feed the lambs; to the wooded grounds of Parknasilla Hotel for the mapped fairy trail; finishing with a trip to the ice cream parlour in Kenmare. Pretty close to perfect **FOR THE EVENING** Bottles of beer and a barbeque on the patio or a trip to the hotel, make this a foodie nirvana. Choose from fine dining or the little-people-friendly restaurant overlooking the water, where the staff treat spillages with a hearty laugh. Kenmare town-bound? Packie's or The Lime Tree are not to be missed **DETAILS** From €380 per night, low season (from October) to €750 per night, high season, sheenfallslodge.ie.

The LUXE LODGE



WHAT A two-bedroom homestead in the Old Stable Mews at Castle Leslie **WHERE** In the courtyard of the estate, just outside Glaslough, Co Monaghan **USP** It's the first choice for those who want the option to self-cater, but with luxury hotel extras on standby. Each of the mews has been lovingly restored for modern living, incorporating its original Victorian elegance, and the little extras, like the welcome and breakfast baskets, will have you feeling spoiled **CHILD-FRIENDLY?** WiFi? Check. TV and kids' channels? Check. Fully equipped playroom? Check. The team have preempted everything, so you can play happy families **INSIDER TIP**

These pads are dog-friendly – just ask when you're booking your stay **FOR THE DAY** Have a day in town. Hire a bike at Paddy McQuaid's and take off, stopping for deep-filled apple pie at Ambledown Cottages. Visit chocolatier Trish Murphy-Thom's Glaslough Chocolate shop and peruse the beautiful things at artist Neal Greig's studio and gallery **FOR THE EVENING** Work up an appetite with a stroll around the castle's sprawling grounds before feasting in the fine-dining Snaffles restaurant **DETAILS** A two-night stay for two adults and two children, welcome family basket, treats for kids and adults, breakfast both mornings in Snaffles, and a three-course family meal in Conor's Bar, from €500, castleleslie.com.

The COUNTRY REFUGE

WHAT Six self-catering spaces collectively dubbed Bothar Bui **WHERE** On the edges of the Beara Peninsula, 20 minutes from the fishing port of Castletownbere **USP** Designed by renowned Irish architect Robin Walker, this gaggle of farm buildings have been converted into cool, secluded, light-filled, open-fired country boltholes **CHILD-FRIENDLY?**

Absolutely – the folks here pride themselves on making family stays a pleasure. From the twelve acres of surrounding oak woodland to the small, nearby harbour with its own private shoreline, kids will have plenty of space to run free and explore

INSIDER TIP Bothar Bui has been favoured by countless creatives, including Seamus Heaney, who wrote several poems about the peace and beauty he found here **FOR THE DAY** Take your pick of outdoor pursuits: hill walk the Caha Mountains, pony trek across Beara with Tír na Hilán riding stables, or conquer wakeboarding, canoeing or archery at the nearby Star Outdoors Adventure Centre **FOR THE EVENING** Make your way to The High Tide Club in Castletownbere for a pint accompanied by live music and poetry **DETAILS** Available for short-term rental year-round from €100 per night, October-May, botharbui.com.

