

# Muddy Stilettos

THE URBAN GUIDE TO THE COUNTRYSIDE - DEVON

## The 25 Boutique B&B, Torquay

Multi-award winning, five star fun? It turns out that Torquay is full of surprises and this B&B, a

trot away from town is the biggest of them all.



And the most-used phrase of this particular trip? "Oh. OH!"

No, not because of *that*, and this isn't *that* kind of feature, thank you very much. But me and Mr Muddy did find ourselves pretty wowed by **The 25**, a boutique B&B in a respectable 'burb in Torquay, the English Riviera's sparkly little jewel. And not *just* because of the decor; consider that a mere aperitif for this little adventure and saddle up for the ride.

This 6-bedroom exclusively adults-only B&B is a pretty unassuming building from the outside, with nothing but sleek signage to give anything away. Inside, however from the very get-go, is everything that the website promises you (and, how refreshing is that, by the way? Nothing worse than a bland, characterless and corporate-looking site). It's bold and yet

elegant; a dollop of fun dished up with aplomb; it's somewhere you're unlikely to forget, for all the right reasons.

Let's run through the basics.

## THE LOCATION



Torquay: what does it conjure up for you? Allow me to quash at least one possible preconception. The people of this town will yawn and roll their eyes if you utter the words 'Fawlty Towers'. They've moved on, for the better. This is a town with energy and appeal and its own microclimate to boot. You want a Michelin starred restaurant? Panoramic vistas? History and retro attractions, along with a dose of modern cool? You'll find it all here. Overlook Torquay at your peril.



The 25 is rather brilliantly located, just behind the historic Torre Abbey, which is far enough out of the hubbub to feel relaxed but only a nice ten-minute amble through gardens towards the highlights of the harbour and seafront. Easy to navigate to and with plenty of off-street parking = winning.

## THE VIBE



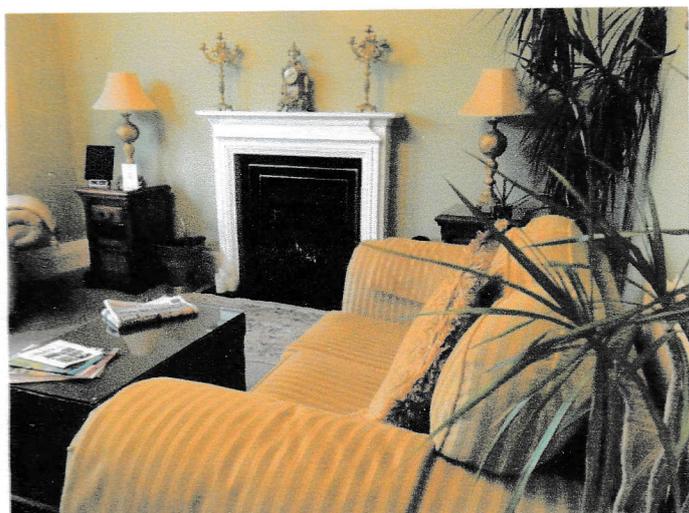
I have to say, as someone who masquerades as someone from the TV industry from time to time, I know how hard it must have been to cut the taster video you'll find on the 25's website, to that music; have you seen it?! Trust me, it's quite a feat to hit every single beat like that. But now, having met owners Andy and Julian, it makes complete sense, because that's the kind of fastidious charm of this pair. They've the perfect personalities for this business – Julian's penchant for cutting edge technology and

Andy's unwavering passion for doing hospitality right, is such a complimentary blend. What it translates into at The 25 is good news: a first-class experience and 371 – at the last count – 100% reviews on Tripadvisor. You really don't get that kind of recognition by being 'meh'.



Winning at life, Julian and Andy

The awards keep on coming for this pair including, most recently, a double win at November's Devon Tourism Awards (Gold for Best B&B and, \*drumroll\* Winner of Winners award), so clearly it wasn't just Mr and Mrs Muddy who were bowled over. And to top it off, Andy and Julian are thoroughly nice people (I know, gush gush, but it's *true*).



Anyway, back to the bricks and mortar. As soon as you're in, you get the measure of this place. There are flamboyant flourishes and injections of personality, along with a little 'pride' everywhere, with the emphasis most definitely on the quirky. The decor will tease out your sense of humour, but it'll impress you, too. Then, just to keep you on your toes, you'll discover touches of more classic, refined elegance just where it's needed, like the very peaceful guest lounge, where we inhaled Andy's freshly baked brownies on arrival (all part of the experience).

Nothing has been designed, or executed as an afterthought. Everything is in its place for a reason, whether that's to make you feel comfortable or just to raise a smile (or an occasional eyebrow).



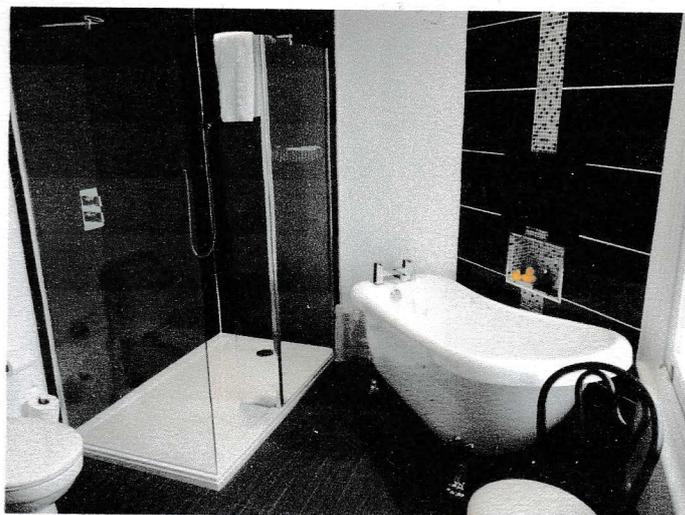
So, there are 6 rooms and they've all been on the receiving end of a mega-makeover, no expense spared. Bold shades, sparkly decor, opulent details are all in residence here. What I will say is that you should have a good look around on the website before you book, because each room is very different and you'll most probably have a favourite.



We stayed in Broadsands in all its glitzy glory and it was great fun. Mr Muddy was like a toddler with a Fisherprice toy, playing with all the techy bits like the mood lighting, while I felt inclined to start downloading disco classics on the iPad,

dig out the sequinned hot pants I'd packed and do my best Kylie impression (*pardon?! there's no need to be so rude!*).

Instead I retired to the bathroom to watch *Neighbours* in the slipper bath with my rubber duck because, well, I could.

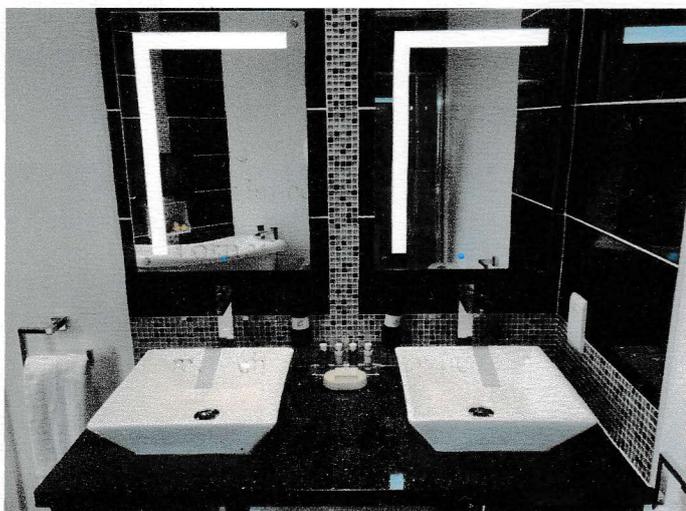


Seriously though, beneath all the drama and glamour of the rooms, all the details that matter are there – and then some.

Fluffy bathrobes and slippers, Nespresso coffee machines, fresh milk, Elemis toiletries, smart TV with Netflix, they all come as part of the experience, plus a few individual touches. You could easily pitch up for a few nights and barely feel the need to leave the room, even if you're a dummy and forget your toothbrush, like me. Turns out they've a natty little kit for that (*of course* they do).



It's super comfy, too. I had to prise Mr M off the ginormous bed and coax him out into the fresh air. And yes, we slept like logs.



Probably the biggest thing for me is that they've achieved one of those great #hotelgoals of hospitality here: you feel as though you're the first person ever to stay in the room, it's that crisp and spotless.

## SCOFF & QUAFF



It's a B&B, so you'll be looking to step out and try a restaurant or two during your stay (Andy and Julian have plenty of bang-on recommendations and we loved our dinner at the nearby [Cary Arms](#) in Babbacombe), but that doesn't stop me wittering on about what you *can* get as a guest here. It all begins with the aforementioned gooey homemade brownie on arrival, not to be missed.



Then I'll take you upstairs to more home bakes and a retro sweetie jar in your room. And let's finish with breakfast; it's the last chance to make a good impression and Andy and Julian have

naturally gone for it.



Once again, you'll be surprised at the effort and the level of detail that's gone into this humble little meal. Homemade smoothies and yoghurts, cooked options that you'd find on the menu of any five star hotel.

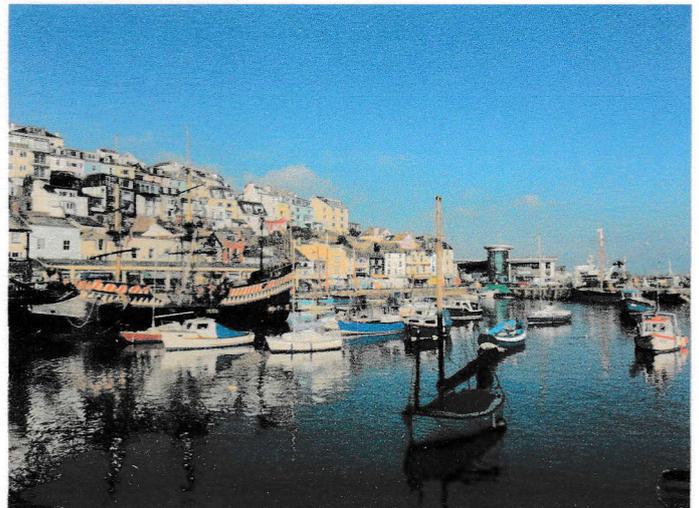


Actually, let's not finish at breakfast. It would be remiss of me not to mention the very thoughtful goodie bag gifted on departure, full of treats for the journey home.

## KID-FRIENDLY?

No – and quite right too. The only small person you may encounter is resident gorgeous miniature Schnauzer, Patsy (don't worry if you're not a fan of dogs, she'll only come through and say hi with a wag of her tail if you want to meet her). There are plenty of other places cornering the family-friendly market in Torquay so this makes for a refreshing change. Its boutique feel is what makes the 25 stand out from the crowd and you don't achieve that with small people and sticky fingers in residence (as cute as they are). This is definitely one to book the babysitter for.

## AROUND AND ABOUT



Beautiful Brixham, nearby

You're in a true tourist destination so expect all of the charm of being by the seaside. But actually you're in a cracking part of the world to get out and explore beyond the palm tree-lined promenade.

From Agatha Christie's holiday home Greenway, to the colourful fishing town of Brixham just along the coast and free-spirited vibe of Totnes less than 20 minutes' drive away, there is loads to see and do and that's before we've even listed the beaches. Even if you live in the county, Torquay makes for a fun and varied mini-break.



Beach Life, Torquay

We were completely sold on our visit and I reckon you will be, too.

### THE MUDDY VERDICT

**Good for:** Couples, fun-seekers looking for a quirky getaway, fans of anything but the bland and beige and guests who appreciate impeccable attention to detail.

**Not for:** Families (no under 18s here), anyone assuming (and hoping) that they'll find a Torquay from a bygone era. It's moved on from net curtains and chintz and there's not a whiff of Basil Fawlty anywhere at this B&B.

**The damage:** It definitely won't be the cheapest B&B you'll find in the area, but this is an award-winning five-star establishment and the price reflects that. Rooms from £120 – £168, but it's definitely worth calling direct to book – you'll often discover a cheeky offer.

**\*SPECIAL MUDDY OFFER\*:** Up for it? book online and quote **MUDDY** in the Promo Code box (next to where you input the dates on) and receive a 10% discount on your stay. Be quick though, bookings must be made before 31.12.17 and taken before 30.04.18. Usual Offer T&Cs apply.

*The 25 Boutique B&B, 25 Avenue Road, Torquay, TQ2 5LB, Tel: 01803 297517.*

[the25.uk](http://the25.uk)

