



It'll be here before you know it, so head to Culzean Castle (18); Medley Court (8), top right; Rokeby Old Hall (10), bottom left; or the Workshop (9)



Alamy

castle next door, too — it was the childhood home of Anne Boleyn. Fittingly, it has tycoon prices: sleeping seven, it costs £3,178 for a Christmas week, with Rural Retreats (01386 701177, [ruralretreats.co.uk](http://ruralretreats.co.uk)).

Trendy London couples can't get enough of Suffolk, and there's nowhere trendier for them to stay than the Workshop, near Badingham (9). Converted from a farm outbuilding by the architects Pitman Tozer, it's chock-full of design classics by Eero Saarinen and Arne Jacobsen, with curved white walls and white stone surfaces. Room for a festive fire, of course — in a Dominique Imbert spherical suspended fireplace. Five nights from December 23 cost £720, with Best of Suffolk (01728 638962, [bestofsuffolk.co.uk](http://bestofsuffolk.co.uk)).

On a hillside overlooking the Wye Valley, the converted Victorian farm cottage commands a panoramic vista all the way to the Black Mountains. Inside, it's all oak beams, flagstoned floors and open fires. Sleeping nine (or more at a squeeze), it costs £1,759 for the week from December 20, with English Country Cottages (0845 268 0785, [english-country-cottages.co.uk](http://english-country-cottages.co.uk)).

You'll have a traditional Christmas at Penrhyn (12), on Strumble Head in Pembrokeshire. You won't have much choice. There's no electricity, so lighting is by oil lamps and candles, while heat comes from the Rayburn and open fire. No telly, so no watching The Great Escape again: you'll have to fall back on breezy cliff-top walks, superb sunsets and evenings round the piano. Sleeping six, it costs £568 for the



Way going right past the door, so you can be walking off dinner in no time. It costs £375 for the week from December 19, with Yorkshire Cottages (01228 406701, [www.yorkshire-cottages.info](http://www.yorkshire-cottages.info)).

For a good chance of a white Christmas, try Reservoir House (16), near Bassenthwaite, Cumbria. It's out on its own on the northern slopes of the Skiddaw range, where the fells are dusted in white for much of the winter. Isolation, splendid scenery and a wood-burning stove — what more do you need? Sleeping five, it costs £620 for a week from December 19, with Cumbrian Cottages (01228 599960, [www.cumbrian-cottages.co.uk](http://www.cumbrian-cottages.co.uk)).

Here's a yule fit for a laird. Glentruim Castle in Inverness-shire (17) was built in about 1840 on its own lovely 53-acre estate: the television series *Monarch*

Blow out the cobwebs on the breezy cliffs and beaches, then return to Christmas Day in true baronial style. It costs just £543 for the week from December 19, with the National Trust for Scotland (0131 243 9331, [www.ntsholidays.com](http://www.ntsholidays.com)).

A few miles from the Giant's Causeway, on the wild north coast of Co Antrim, the National Trust (0844 800 2070, [www.nationaltrustcottages.co.uk](http://www.nationaltrustcottages.co.uk)) has just opened Carrick-a-Rede Cottage (19). The whitewashed old building is simple but classy inside, with wood floors, smart bathrooms and an open fire in the lounge, while outside there are views to Islay and the Mull of Kintyre. The fearsome rope bridge to Carrick-a-Rede island is a few steps away — don't try it if you've indulged at one of the cosy