



Build your own tree house

Enjoy the great outdoors this month with one of the highly renowned gardening short courses at West Dean College in West Sussex. Courses range from one-day lectures to a week-long summer school and new subjects on offer this year include: Build a tree house at West Dean (left), Creative container gardening, Care of summer flowering shrubs and roses, Water gardens – planning planting and management, Propagation – plants for free, and Getting the best out of your allotment. There are also one-day courses on bee-keeping and keeping chickens. For more information, call 0844 499 4408 or visit westdean.org.uk/college.



Cotswolds crafts trail

Make your way down to the Stroud Valley Decorative Trail and visit the wealth of interiors companies, including Woodchester Cabinet Makers, Scumble Goosie, and Bailey Paints. 'This area of the Cotswolds is packed with craftspeople and shops that are making and supplying beautiful furnishings, from curtains to handcrafted kitchens,' says Stephen Lewis (above) of Lewis & Wood, who created the trail for people to find items for their homes. Visit strouddecorativetrail.co.uk to download your map; there are also suggestions for places to eat along the route.

WEBSITE OF THE MONTH

victoriansceramics.com

This website has recently been relaunched and now includes many new William Morris and William De Morgan tile designs and installation photos. Its 'creator' tool section is particularly useful as it allows customers to create their own tile solutions in a setting and visualise their own tiling scheme.



Win a luxury break

The Black Swan Hotel has dominated the market square of Helmsley in Yorkshire for centuries and is a local landmark as well as a relaxing luxury retreat. Originally a coaching inn, it thrived throughout the 20th century and became a well-known refuge for guests seeking a restful and indulgent break. Today, it is the ideal location from which to walk in the North York Moors National Park, discover Helmsley's shops and galleries, visit historic buildings like York Minster, Castle Howard and Rievaulx Abbey, and explore Whitby and the coast. Hospitality is at the heart of The Black Swan Hotel, which is proud of its reputation for superb, locally sourced food. Treat yourself in the award-winning tea room and patisserie or make a night of it in the restaurant. Sunday lunch is a particular attraction with locals and visitors alike. To book your stay, call 01439 770466, or visit blackswan-helmsley.co.uk.

READER OFFER We have a two-night break for two to give away with dinner, bed and breakfast in a twin or double feature room and afternoon tea, worth £640*. For your chance to win, send your details on a postcard marked 'PL Black Swan offer' to the address on page 7.

* Valid until 20 December 2010. Subject to availability.