

Aboode 2

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THE GREAT ESCAPE

Steeped in Celtic tradition, the Highland Club is the perfect choice for property buyers with a passion for outdoor pursuits, says Stevie King



At The Glenlivet distillery in Speyside, the single malt port of call along the celebrated Highland Whisky Trail; visitors can follow the legendary smugglers' route of the 1500s where illicit stills were set up in the glens to outsmart the excise men. Just one of many historic highlights that define this culturally rich region, for Marc Crothall of The Scottish Tourism Alliance, the breadth of leisure activities across the Highlands makes for a vibrant community: "The region is open for business all year-round. The spring and summer seasons embrace shooting, boating, kayaking and fishing, alongside falconry and golf. Plus we're also ideally located for hiking and mountaineering with the famous Great Glen Way trail (from Fort William to Inverness) on the doorstep. Munro-bagging (climbing peaks which stand over 3,000 feet above sea level) is an increasingly popular pastime now too. Come winter – Ben Nevis and Aviemore (part of the Cairngorms National Park and home to three of

Scotland's five ski centres) offer skiing and snowboarding for all abilities. With spin-off activities such as dog sledding and ice climbing, there's always something for visitors to try."

One residential development homing in on this great outdoors buzz, is The Highland Club. Set in 20 acres of mature landscaped grounds at the southernmost tip of Loch Ness, this former Benedictine monastery was bought by the Santon Development Group in 2003. Now, fourteen years on following an extensive £30m renovation, the estate is finally complete - the austerity of monastic life having given way to the warmth of luxury living.

A sympathetic conversion of the abbey has delivered a bespoke collection of 99 residences, but the community also extends to the provision of twelve luxury cottages within the grounds. These traditional-style two-bedroom homes, mostly self-catering, are beautifully sited near the riverbank of the River Tarff. "Water features heavily in the mix," explains



estate Development Director Humphrey Kelsey. “The site is surrounded on three sides by the loch, two rivers and the picturesque Caledonian Canal.” Preserving the special character of the abbey; sympathetic renovations have also ensured that original features such as the cloisters and great towers remain in tact. Inside, meanwhile a programme of discreet building has transformed the once spartan accommodation into distinctive one, two and three bedroom apartments. “Wherever possible period features have been retained,” adds Kelsey. “It’s not unusual for residents to find a gargoyle or two gazing down on them. Or a stained-glass window in their living room.”

Owners also have a wealth of on-site amenities at their disposal. Transformed into the Club Lounge and the social heart of the resort, is the former Monks’ Refectory. Part of the original chapel meanwhile, incorporates an indoor swimming pool, steam room and sauna where residents can enjoy the privacy of their own spa - literally on their doorstep. Additional sports facilities include tennis, snooker, croquet, boules, and a 9-hole putting green. “A whole host of country pursuits are also on hand and, in season,” adds Kelsey. “We can organise a choice of field sports including rough (walked-up) game shooting, clay pigeon shooting, river or loch fishing and stalking, all under the expert guidance of local ghillies and stalkers. For families on-the-go – it’s the perfect base for getting out and about.”

FAST FACTS THE HIGHLAND CLUB

- Two-bed apartments start from £195,000 rising to £395,000 for a three-bed residence.
- Annual maintenance fees range from £2,500 to £3,600.
- Two-bed apartments for rental currently net in the region of £500 per week shoulder season rising to £1,000 peak season. A comprehensive lettings package (including full property management services) is available.
- The Santon Group is currently offering a bespoke finance package to prospective purchasers comprising a 75% fixed three-year loan, tracking base rate thereafter.



THE HIGHLAND CLUB
FORT AUGUSTUS * LOCH NESS

The award winning Highland Club is your opportunity to buy a home in one of Scotland’s most beautiful lochside settings. This magnificent Grade A listed monastery has been transformed combining the architecture of the original abbey with the comforts of modern day living.

**For sales and lettings contact Nicky Steele on
0203 478 3900**

www.thehighlandclub.co.uk

