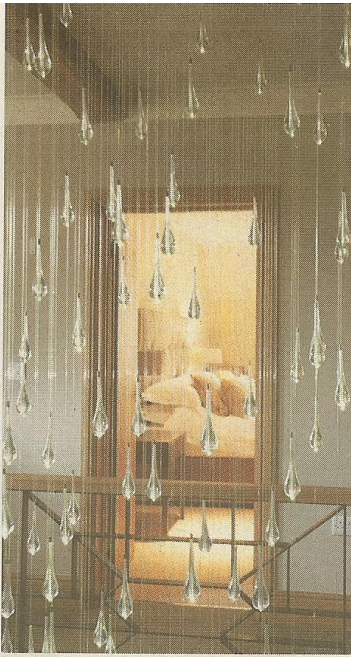


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# Baby, it's cold outside

No need to fly south for the winter – Britain has plenty of stylish options for warming retreats. Get cosy and embrace the season with crackling fires, thick duvets, hearty meals and bracing walks



Great indoors:  
clockwise  
from top left:  
Elkstones in  
the Cotswolds;  
The Olde Bell,  
Berkshire;  
Knightsfield,  
Brecon  
Beacons;  
Woodlands  
Sleep, North  
Yorkshire;  
Natural  
Retreats, Llyn  
Peninsula



### Elkstones Cotswolds

Simon Nixon is an extremely successful serial entrepreneur. He established moneysupermarket.com and travelsupermarket.com. He then dreamt up the travel-advice site, simonseeks.com.

Simon's latest project is an up-market rental property business: SimonEscapes. Each property boasts a level of hi-tech design and opulent service rarely seen in the UK. "I have a passion for sleek, cool, contemporary design and for travel. SimonEscapes is the perfect way to combine the two."

Borth Cottage in North Wales opened last year. A glass-fronted beach house in Cornwall is scheduled for next year. And the 2010 offering is Elkstones in the Cotswolds. Ten people can sleep deep on Hypnos beds, and awaken to flat-screen TVs, free-standing baths, "double drench" showers, a sauna, a baby grand piano and a ridiculously sparkly chandelier. A concierge service can organise anything from polo lessons, theatre trips and restaurant bookings to massage therapists, yoga les-

complement the property's own sauna and indoor heated pool. Elkstones, near Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire GL55 6EF (01244 784152; simonescapes.com). Rental starts at £2,250 for three nights.

### The Spoons Skye

"A collection of family heirlooms, original artworks, flotsam and jetsam from beaches we love and found objects and treasures collected over the years," is how owner Marie Lewis describes The Spoons. "Even though the building is newly constructed, when you walk in, it is filled with memories and has a sense of history".

Marie and her husband Ian are practised at their craft, having previously run Vanessa Branson's luxury Ardnamurchan retreat, Eilean Shona. "Ian and I met in London 17 years ago," explains Marie. "He was a supermarket manager, I was a teacher. Three months later we got married opposite Eilean Shona and six months later we were sitting on the island's pontoon having been