

JARDINS DE SAINT-BENOÎT

HOUSE & GARDEN PROMOTION

Family Section

With hotels and tour operators devising increasingly creative ways to keep little ones in their element, from off-roading with mini Land Rovers in Scotland to milking coconuts in the Seychelles, traditional kids' clubs are upping the ante. So, whether you're yearning for a luxurious escape to a far-flung exotic hideaway or prefer to stay closer to home, there are exciting trips for all the family.

EUROPE

For busy working couples, nothing compares with the ease of a quintessential English break, especially when enjoyed in five-star eco-luxury. **Brompton Lakes**, buried in the Yorkshire Dales, gives you the seclusion you require to enjoy some quality time with the family. Next to a national park and a mere stone's throw from Richmond, you can go fishing or walking or just sit back and enjoy the sheer lack of distractions.

■ **Lodges with three double bedrooms start at £629 for seven nights. Call 01748-850333, or visit www.bromptonlakes.co.uk**

At the **Alexandra Hotel** in Dorset, your nippers have direct access to Lyme's sand-and-shingle beaches via a safe footpath. Children's supper is served daily at 6pm and the hotel is happy to organise fossil-hunting expeditions along the coast and fishing trips from the harbour. What's more, the chefs are more than happy to cook the catch for supper. Other child-friendly activities include guided rock-pooling, horse-riding and a visit to Dinosaurland Fossil Museum.

■ **Family rooms start at £205. Call 01297-442010, or visit www.hotelalexandra.co.uk**

Further north, the **Gleneagles Hotel**, set in the beautiful Perthshire countryside, has recently had a face-lift, creating a dream retreat for wee bairns and teens. Small children can run amok in the supervised playground. Teenagers have their own games room with PS2s, pool, tennis and football tables. Family sessions of archery, horse riding, gundog training and falconry can be arranged. Best of all is junior off-road driving in mini Land Rovers and zooming around a track in an Argo Cat (eight-wheel-drive, tiller-controlled vehicle). Great for dads, too.

■ **Rooms from £340, with a £50 supplement for children aged 6-14 sharing. Call 0800-704705, or visit www.gleneagles.com**

Across the channel, **Les Jardins de St Benoît** is a charming rendezvous for a family get-together. In the unspoilt Corbières region in the south of France, its 171 traditional



Alexandra Hotel, Dorset. CLOCKWISE FROM BELOW RIGHT: Riding at Gleneagles. Ekies hotel in Greece – chic design with family amenities



Mediterranean houses are set within 20 acres of vineyards, olive groves and gardens. Children up to 12 stay free and there's a kids' club, an on-site farm, fishing, bicycles, horse riding, kite surfing, water rafting and trips to the local apiary to see how honey is collected.

■ **Rooms from £230 per night for the Family Prestige Suite. Call 00-33 46 723 3630, or visit www.garrigaeresorts.com**

Unlike most Greek island getaways, at **Ekies All Senses Resort in Halkidiki**, there are no ferry transfers – it's a direct flight away. Ekies is a chic design hotel with a pristine private beach. Children can amuse themselves in the treehouse loft, which is decked out with cushions and games, a shell's throw from the beach. For a mini-adventure, there are many secluded islands nearby, to which you can paddle in your own boat.

■ **Rooms from £99. Call 00-30 237 509 1000, or visit www.ekies.gr**

HUNT FOR FOSSILS WITH THE KIDS THEN TAKE THE FAMILY ON A FISHING TRIP FROM THE HARBOUR – THE CHEFS WILL BE HAPPY TO COOK YOUR CATCH FOR SUPPER