

the glamping orchard

Longney, Gloucester GL2 3SW 07974 174534 www.glampingorchard.co.uk

They may have been on television but there's nothing too Hollywood about The Glamping Orchard on the banks of the River Severn, where a night beneath the stars is as British as they come.

Set within a three-mile wide meander in the River Severn, the countryside around Longney could well be considered a hidden treasure. After all, when you're just two crow-flown miles from the M5, you wouldn't expect to find such perfectly peaceful pastures as these. In summer swathes of golden wheat fields shimmer in a breeze that funnels up the Bristol Channel, while green squares of land sit like oddly shaped patches sewn into an old pair of khaki kecks. These, of course, are the orchard – relics of an era when apples were the county's main trade. Today they make the perfect setting for a campsite.

Nestled among trees still bristling with beautifully ripe Russets during summer, The Glamping Orchard offers a peaceful retreat in the form of two luxury abodes. There's a charming bell tent (sleeping up to five) that includes a wood-burning stove and plush double bed with foldout options for an additional three guests, and comes accompanied by a beautiful bathroom on wheels and a private kitchen hut. Bunting festoons the bell tent's central pole and the hand-painted coffee table has an almost Moroccan feel, while small touches like the wicker basket of extra blankets go the extra mile attention to make you feel at home. The second and newest addition to The Glamping Orchard is the spectacular fully

restored 1950s Warwick Knight caravan. Believed to be one of only three left in the world, this 'Rolls Royce of caravans' has been renovated from a relic of the road to a staggering luxury caravan was featured on *George Clarke's Amazing Spaces*. Finished to the highest standard throughout, this unique caravan offers glampers a luxury stay with ample room for a family of four. Inside there's a large, cosy seating area, complete with a wood-burning stove, while the kitchen offers plenty of cooking space. The sleeping area is separated by sliding doors so that you can enjoy a drink by the fire when the kids are slumbering. It includes snug bunk pods for the kids and a comfy double bed for two adults. A charmingly rustic shower-on-wheels is adjacent, as is a compost loo. It's stand-out feature, though, is the elaborate roof garden where guests can stretch their legs or sink into a beanbag, while enjoying views of the River Severn or the starry skies above.

The Glamping Orchard exudes a perfect sense of countrified relaxation. If you're hungry, you're welcome to pick apples from the trees, or to collect their fresh eggs for breakfast. Finally, is there a more quintessentially rural experience than a horse and cart ride down to the local pub for a pint of cider? After all, when you're glamping in an orchard it would be rude not to, right?





WHO'S IN Glamping only, so no campervans, tents and caravans. Up to 2 dogs welcome in the bell tent only.

ON SITE The Warwick Knight Caravan sleeps 4, with 1 double and 2 bunk beds (all bedding included). The fully stocked kitchen includes gas cooker, hob and grill, fridge and all utensils. An outside firepit doubles up as a barbecue (utensils provided). An initial stock of firewood is provided and more is available from the honesty hut. The private wood-fired shower and sink cabin on wheels is 25m away. There's a private compost loo adjacent to the caravan. The bell tent features a double bed with bedding, 2 single futons and the option of adding an extra camp bed or cot, plus lighting, extra blankets and rugs, a wood-burning stove. Outside, beneath an awning, are a table and chairs and a firepit which doubles up as a barbecue. The private kitchen hut is fully-equipped with a double burner gas stove and grill and all the cooking utensils and crockery you could need. They even supply essential condiments (coffee, tea, sugar, oil, salt and pepper) along with a cool box with ice packs that you can replenish from their freezer at any time. Private bathroom adjacent to your tent comprises a wood-fired shower and sink, plus separate compost toilet. Pet the small farm animals, groom the ponies and collect fresh eggs from the chickens. Horse and cart rides organised by request.

OFF SITE The site is just 5 miles from Gloucester and a lovely short walk from the River Severn. It's also just as nice to walk east to the Sharpness Canal, while the Severn is excellent for bird- and wildlife-watching, with The Slimbridge Wetland Reserve (01453 891900) particularly close at hand. On the canal you can watch the boaters to-ing and fro-ing, usually

from a good pub (see below), and you can hire your own boat with Glevum Boat Hire (01453 899190). If you'd prefer to stay on land, you can rent a bike (01453 899190) to take on the quiet country lanes. Popular nearby attractions include the excellent Cotswold Wildlife Park (01993 823006) and Cotswold Farm Park (01451 850307) – better known as 'Adam's Farm' from the BBC's *Countryfile*. For a little culture, try the gardens and country houses of nearby Painswick Rococo (01452 813204), Batsford Arboretum (01386 701441) and Sudeley Castle and Gardens (01242 602308).

FOOD & DRINK The Anchor (01452 740433) in Epney is a great local pub situated on the banks of the River Severn, with beautiful views and serving typical pub grub in large portions. The Ship Inn (01452 740260), located on the canalside in Framilode, has a decked seating area and garden for the children. For the best views, though, try The Pilot (01452 690807) in Hardwicke. Elevated to overlook a long stretch of the Sharpness Canal, it has a great play area for little ones and the service and food are always good. For fabulous cooked breakfasts, light lunches and tea and cake (along with more lovely canal views), The Stables Café (01452 741965) in Saul is another great choice.

GETTING THERE Detailed directions are sent with your booking confirmation. Satnav will get you to the village and if the postcode isn't recognised type in 'Longney'.

OPEN Warwick Knight Caravan open all year; bell tent April October only.

THE DAMAGE Caravan prices £95–£145 a night. Bell Tent: 3-night stays from £225 (up to 5 people), 4-night midweek stays from £175.