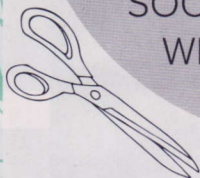


Knit Retreat Relax

SOOTHE YOUR SOUL
WITH A KNITTING
GETAWAY



Rural retreats offer inspiring landscapes

Gosia Dzik-Holden has been knitting since childhood and launched as a freelance designer in 2005. She is now an established knitting teacher and runs bespoke, 'women-centric' knitting retreats, which also focus on relaxation and wellbeing. We caught up with Gosia to find out how a crafty break can help beat the stresses of modern life...

"In 2010, I had a number of conversations with my girlfriends, all from various backgrounds and at various stages of life; some single, some in relationships, some with children, some in very successful and glamorous careers. We discovered that we all had one problem in common; we tended to be at the bottom of our priority lists. And so we started dreaming, 'What if we put ourselves first every now and then?' The idea for the retreats was born.

The groups are small and intimate, and all women are welcome, including beginner knitters. You work at your own pace and can bring as many

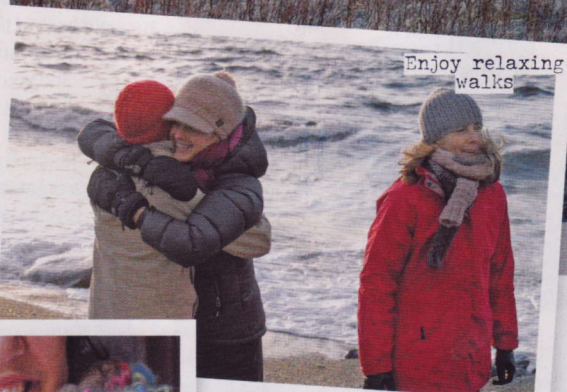
"Being a part of a wonderful female company is very inspiring and supportive"



Gosia with retreat regular Stephanie

projects as you like. We've had some serious 'marathon' knitters with big and challenging objectives, and those who preferred to go on long walks then work on their garter stitch scarves in front of the fire in the afternoon and evening. There is no pressure to perform. We knit for pleasure.

Being a part of a wonderful female company is very inspiring and supportive. This project started with women in mind and we have chosen to keep the retreats women-centric. Firstly, it allows us to have conversations we wouldn't necessarily be able to have should men be present. On an energetic level, I find that mixed groups are very different to same sex groups. Practically, it gives us a space of ease where we can forget about things like makeup and not worry about bringing a



Enjoy relaxing walks



Bring your own project

dressing gown. However, there is always one very important man on the premises and that's the chef. We've enjoyed macrobiotic food at most retreats, it's vegan-friendly, detoxifying and delicious!

At each of our venues, there is stunning countryside all around. Environment is incredibly important; it should inspire! I want the women who come to have a beautiful space to reconnect with themselves, to go about their days in a rhythm with their natural inner pace. I want the space to inspire a meditative mode of being. Our first holiday was at the gorgeous medieval Saddell Castle on the Kintyre Peninsula - it even had a moat!

"Looking after ourselves is not selfish but a sign of applied wisdom!"

For me, the most magical venue was The Old Place of Monreith in Galloway. It was like being in Narnia!

What I love most about knitting is how meditative it is. I've studied holistic medicine since the age of 16 and am a qualified life coach and facilitator, as well as a knitter. Whether we are well or not, have energy or not, are able to feel joy - not as a result of things in life going 'our way', but simply because we are alive - makes all the difference. Having space to reconnect with oneself and to remember that looking after ourselves is not selfish but a sign of applied wisdom is very freeing. There's no need to feel guilty about taking time out. Recharging our batteries will allow us to better care for others in our lives."

Find out more about Gosia's retreats at stitchville.co.uk

WHERE TO NEXT?

The next Stitchville knitting retreat will be held at a medieval castle in Northumberland. There are two slots: 25th-29th November or 29th-2nd December, or you can combine them for a full week's stay. £100 deposit secures a place and the balance of £395 is due no later than 25th August 2019. stitchville.co.uk