

# ENGLISH RIVIERA



**GIVE US A WAVE**  
The beach at Paignton

September 10, 2017



**WHERE YOU STAY**

**The 25**, in Torquay, is a high-spec, adults-only B&B with wacky decor and a resident miniature schnauzer called Patsy. Guests are greeted on arrival with a glass of something strong (doubles from £110, B&B; [the25.uk](http://the25.uk)). Georgian **Orestone Manor**, in Maidencombe, just north of Torquay, has a fireside lounge, an award-winning restaurant and classic rooms, some with four-posters and views out to sea (doubles from £110, B&B; [orestonemanoir.com](http://orestonemanoir.com)).

**WHERE YOU EAT**

The Michelin-starred **Elephant**, in Torquay, serves high-class British classics such as scallops with black pudding, made with produce from its own farm (mains from £16; [elephantrestaurant.co.uk](http://elephantrestaurant.co.uk)). In Brixham, the **Lythouse** wine bar has a French-Italian menu, including pan-fried gnocchi with walnut pesto (mains from £13; [lythousebrixham.co.uk](http://lythousebrixham.co.uk)).

*Jill Starley-Grainger was a guest of [englishriviera.co.uk](http://englishriviera.co.uk), [visitengland.com](http://visitengland.com) and South Western Railway ([southwesternrailway.com](http://southwesternrailway.com))*

“You can see Christie’s dresses in the bedroom wardrobe”

*Jill Starley-Grainger*  
travels back in time  
on a tour of the  
south Devon coast

**WHY?**

This 22-mile stretch of seaside was once a Victorian pleasure spot. Now, after a brief fall from favour, it has a new lease of life thanks to vintage steam trains, wide sandy beaches, artisan craft fairs, cracking fish and chips, and Agatha Christie.

**WHAT YOU DO**

Base yourself in **Torquay**, Christie’s birthplace. The mile-long Literary Trail dedicated to the novelist takes you from the 1890 **Princess Pier**, along the coast past the Torquay Pavilion, where her first husband, Archibald, proposed, to **Torre Abbey**, a medieval monastery with a Christie-themed garden featuring plants used to murder victims in her books (£8; [torre-abbey.org.uk](http://torre-abbey.org.uk)).

Walk or take a bus three miles to **Paignton** station to ride the Orient Express-era **Dartmouth Steam Railway**. You’ll trundle by beach huts along **Tor Bay** before turning inland and passing the sailing boats of the River Dart, all while steam billows above your 1920s carriage (from £17 return; [dartmouthrailriver.co.uk](http://dartmouthrailriver.co.uk)). On the way back, stop at **Greenway** to see Agatha’s summer home, a Georgian mansion overlooking the River Dart. The ground floor is packed with antiques, while upstairs you can see her dresses in the bedroom wardrobe (£11; [nationaltrust.org.uk/greenway](http://nationaltrust.org.uk/greenway)).

Too much Christie? Disembark instead at **Churston** for a glorious two-hour walk along the South West Coast Path. There’s swimming at **Elberry Cove**, a secluded shingle beach, on the way. Dry off on the path north onto **Broadsands**, a long arc of red sand flanked with white beach huts, then buy cherry and custard ice cream (£2) from the stall on **Goodrington Sands** to see you through the final 15-minute clifftop walk back to Paignton.

Need a wet-weather escape? At the **Bygones** museum, in Torquay, they’ve recreated a Victorian street, complete with newspaper boys shouting, an apothecary’s shop with jars of leeches and period stamps at the post office. Upstairs, you can try vintage amusements, from fortune-telling machines to classic pinball (£9.50; [bygones.co.uk](http://bygones.co.uk)).

Now walk 15 minutes for a pint of Bays Gold bitter at the **Cary Arms** gastropub, whose terrace overlooks Babbacombe Beach ([caryarms.co.uk](http://caryarms.co.uk)), and traditional fish and chips from the feted **Hanbury’s** (from £11; [www.hanburys.net](http://www.hanburys.net)).

**Cockington Court**, on the edge of Torquay, is home to an excellent artisan craft market where you can pick up local gifts. In the barns of a former manor house, you’ll find about 20 vendors: buy a squirrel-shaped door wedge from the blacksmith (£8.50; [rexlathambblacksmith.co.uk](http://rexlathambblacksmith.co.uk)), tutti-frutti cocoa bars at the chocolate shop (£3.85; [cockingtonchocolate.co.uk](http://cockingtonchocolate.co.uk)) and pewter earrings from an award-winning jeweller (£12; [trishwoodsdesignmetals.com](http://trishwoodsdesignmetals.com)).