



# A long weekend in... Falmouth Bay

Awash with creative talent, Falmouth, Truro, Penryn and the Roseland peninsula make for a charming Cornish getaway

FEATURE EMILY BROOKS

**C**ornwall has long been a favourite summer escape, and Falmouth Bay has all the elements you'd associate with the south-west: a sub-tropical climate, rollicking seafaring history, and a palpable creative vibe from its many local artists. So bring a bucket and spade by all means – but leave time to explore the area's castles, gardens and great independent shops and galleries.

## Falmouth

Falmouth is one of those seaside towns that easily combines the twin roles of both port and resort. The town's busy harbour and boatyards demonstrate that nautical interests are still very much alive here, while a life of leisure can be had with its beaches, hotels and restaurants. On the headland, **Pendennis Castle** (Castle Close, 01326 316594; english-heritage.org.uk) is a good place to get your bearings. One of the fortresses built by Henry VIII to defend England, it saw action until after World War II, and has some stunning views across the bay.

Partly because of the town's arts-based



Facing page **Falmouth's thriving marina** This page, clockwise from top left **Pendennis Castle, which was built by Henry VIII; the Victorian Penmorvah Manor Hotel; looking down towards Falmouth's picturesque seafront; Camellia Interiors is the place to go for coastal-style furnishings; Kit Home is full of tempting kitchenalia**

## MECHANICAL WONDERS

Falmouth is world-renowned for its automata – mechanical tableaux that come to life when you turn a handle or press a button. Historically, these were not toys but were intended to astound and entertain the wealthy and show off the skills of their creator (usually a clockmaker). Even in the digital age, they can still delight.

Falmouth's connection to the tradition began in the late 1970s, when an eccentric little craft shop opened, selling automata by local teacher and artist Peter Markey. Wildly popular, the shop eventually moved to London's Covent Garden, while Peter passed on his skills to other local talent. Falmouth Art Gallery (The Moor, 01326 313863; falmouthartgallery.com) has amassed a charming collection of automata, including work by Markey and other locals such as Anthony Crosby and Paul Spooner (who was featured in the January 2009 issue of *H&A*).

university, and partly because of its inspiring natural beauty, Falmouth is a creative hotbed. A high density of artists and craftspeople live here, with lots of galleries to support them. **The Great Atlantic** (48 Arwenack Street, 01326 318452) is one of the largest in the area. You can pick up a print for £20 or splash out on a painting or piece of sculpture by an artist of international renown. Just along the road is **Willow & Stone** (42 Arwenack Street, 01326 311388), a nostalgic reminder of the way shopping used to be. It specialises in traditional ironmongery, from boot-scrappers to brass fingerplates, beautifully displayed on vintage shop fittings.

The steep High Street that leads north out of town is one of Falmouth's oldest roads, and is now home to a cluster of stylish independent shops. **Camellia Interiors** (38 High Street, 01326 311193) furnishes chic local properties in its signature coastal style – think shells, seaweed and nautical motifs in sea greens and blues. But the showroom's Fiona Osman says plenty of weekenders come in 'just to get ideas – people need that breathing space.' The shop also runs

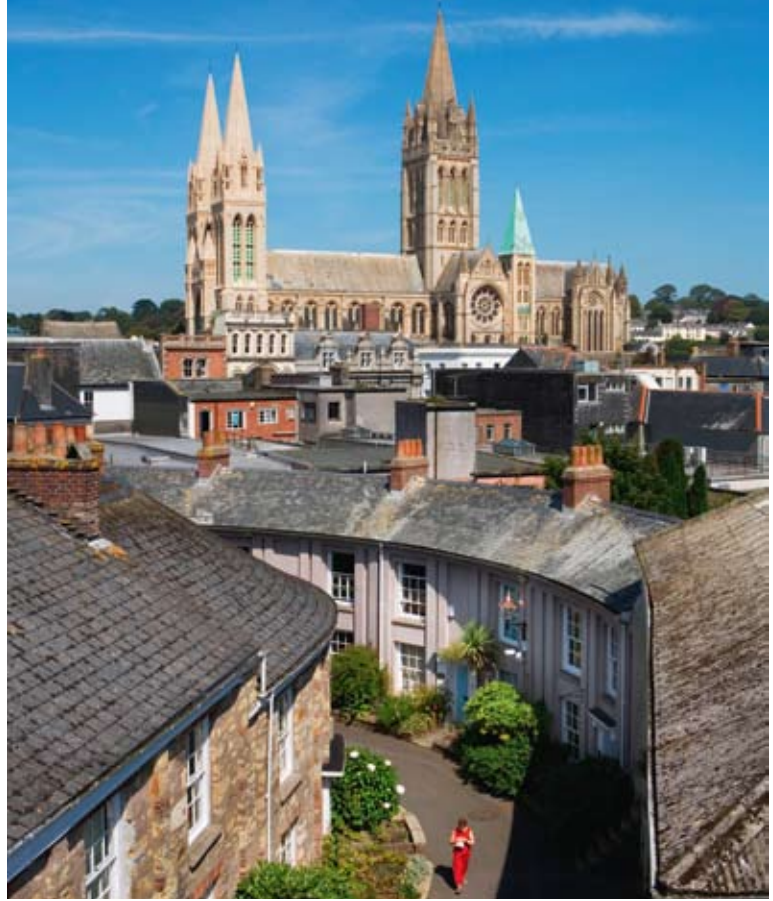
masterclasses in sewing and decorating, aimed at holidaymakers. For something fun and youthful, head to **Kit Home** (18 High Street, 01326 218778). Like so many Falmouth residents, owner Paddy Butler came here as a student and never left. He now sells colourful kitchenware, blankets, flasks and reproduction 1950s kitchen cabinets.

The High Street is also Falmouth's antiques hub, with a good selection of shops to browse. **High Street Bazaar** (7 High Street) blends the tastes of brother and sister Dene Berryman and Jeremy Smith. 'He's good on traditional furniture, whereas I find things that might appeal to a more bohemian crowd,' says Dene. At the top of the hill, **Old Town Hall Antiques** (3 High Street, 01326 319437) offers two floors of English furniture at very reasonable prices, with many pieces restored on site.

Fans of mid-century design will love **Elephant & Monkey** (35 Killigrew Street, 01326 218881), just a couple of minutes' walk away. Its owner, 25-year-old Rowena Turner, has been buying furniture since she was 16 and has an infectious passion for British brands such as G Plan and ]

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Meredew. 'I think of it as "friendly minimalism"', she says. 'The size of the furniture is perfect for modern houses and the quality far surpasses contemporary equivalents.'

### Penryn

Penryn's steep cobbled streets include Tudor, Jacobean and Georgian buildings, and intriguing shops and galleries. Glassmaker **Malcolm Sutcliffe** is a firm fixture: he's been blowing glass in Penryn's former bakehouse for 10 years, and shows his work in a whitewashed gallery at the top of town (2 West Street, 01326 377020). **The Little Yellow House** is just that, a dose of sunshine right in the middle of Penryn that's a cafe, interiors shop and florist in one (70 Lower Market Street, 01326 377622). Penryn also hosts the area's largest antiques emporium, **The Old School Antiques** (Church Road, 01326 375092). Housed in an early Victorian school, it specialises in larger pieces of furniture, from humble pine benches to opulent Victorian camphorwood chests.

### Feock

This village is the crossing point for the King Harry chain ferry – not simply a picturesque way

to cross the estuary but a useful shortcut to the Roseland Peninsula. The chocolate-box parish church, partly dating from the 13th century, is worth a visit, while **Trelissick Garden** (01872 862090; nationaltrust.org.uk) offers panoramic views and brims with the lush planting for which Cornish gardens are so well known.

### Truro

Cornwall's only city is no fast-paced metropolis, and is all the better for it. Sitting at the head of the Fal Estuary, it's dominated by its Victorian gothic cathedral. Away from the main shopping areas, Truro's narrow winding streets support plenty of independent traders, so it's worth a wander to discover them.

Tucked behind the Georgian Lemon Street (named after local baronet William Lemon), Lemon Street Market has a cluster of appealing shops. **Illustrated Living** (Lemon Street Market, 01872 273631) grew out of Chris and Rosie Houghton's love of vintage typography. Now they sell 'anything with surface pattern or illustration,' according to Rosie, and the shop is a riotous mix of graphic home accessories from Scandinavian design houses, as well as British brands such as »

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Previous page, clockwise from top left **Home accessories at Illustrated Living; Truro's Count House Antiques; Truro Cathedral; furniture and more in Look Again** This page, clockwise from top left **A statue on the King Harry chain ferry; The Sea Garden; work by local artists in The Square Gallery; the view in Portscatho; Trellisick Garden**

Lush Designs. Upstairs, the **Lander Gallery** (Lemon Street Market, 01872 275578) sells 'fine art from four centuries, with a rich Cornish flavour.' Here, you can see exactly how Cornwall's unique quality of light has inspired painters past and present.

For antiques, head to the imposing Coinage Hall, where local tin was once quality assayed before export. It houses a good second-hand bookshop, as well as **Count House Antiques** (1 Princes Street, 01872 264269), where you can pick up a Regency rosewood table or browse through paintings, lighting and ceramics.

### The Roseland Peninsula

Bordering the eastern side of the Fal Estuary, the Roseland Peninsula is yet more tranquil than its western neighbour. At its southern tip, pretty **St Mawes** is a popular destination for a day trip from Falmouth via passenger ferry (three times an hour in summer), and has its own magnificent **Tudor castle** (Castle Drive, 01326 270526; english-heritage.org.uk), which is contemporary with Falmouth's. Stroll the narrow streets and you'll find shops, galleries and a tiny quayside bakery that serves a mean Cornish pasty.

**The Square Gallery** (5 The Arcade, 01326 270720), run by sculptor Mark Talbot and his wife Catherine, a painter, has a reputation for picking up the best local artistic talent, sometimes straight from Falmouth's art college. Paintings, ceramics, textiles and jewellery are displayed cheek by jowl. 'We didn't want a quiet, formal gallery – this space has always been small, so we might as well pack it in,' says Mark, who is happy to help guide you towards something to your taste. Next door is **Look Again** (4 The Arcade, 01326 270288), an antiques and interiors shop selling painted furniture in seaside-inspired greens, greys and blues, as well as china, textiles and gift ideas.

The rest of the peninsula is a place of secret coves, secluded beaches and lush farmland. Particularly recommended is the village of **Portscatho** and **The Sea Garden** (3 River Street, 01872 580847), a shop run by a cooperative of local women who not only make their own items to sell, but also source vintage goodies such as sewing boxes, pastel tea sets and jaunty linens – the perfect memento of a summer escape by the sea.



## TRAVELLER'S NOTES

### EAT AND STAY

✿ A couple of miles outside Falmouth, **Penmorvah Manor Hotel** (Budock Water, 01326 250277) is a grand dame of a place – a Victorian gothic manor house with many original features, plus a bar, restaurant and six acres of gardens and woodland.

✿ The bright, modern and always-buzzing **Gylly Beach Cafe** (Cliff Road, Falmouth, 01326 312884) overlooks the town's Gyllyngvase beach. It's open all day and has an evening menu that includes locally caught fish, Cornish lamb ragout and slow-braised Cornish pork belly.

✿ On the top floor of Lemon Street Market, the **Gallery Cafe** (Lemon Street Market, Truro, 01872 271733) sells homemade sandwiches and soups, with a view of the Lander Gallery's collection of Cornish art across the way.

✿ For more information, see [visitcornwall.com](http://visitcornwall.com).