



BEST OF
BRITISH
HOUSES
BACK OF BEYOND

OLD CROFFTAU
BRECON BEACONS, WALES

According to the map, Old Crofftau is in the middle of nowhere, the nearest 'road' a farm track. What it's actually in the middle of is the greenest and most breathtakingly beautiful valley, the peaks of the Brecon Beacons rising up all around into a dramatic sky. And the feel of the house is in keeping with the soul of the place: rugged and homely. Entering into the double-height hallway feels like walking into a private home, until you notice the visitors' book on the antique table along with photo albums and maps and books, everywhere books. It's pet-friendly, mud-friendly; a dozen pairs of wellies range from tiny to galumphing; on hooks hang souwesters for those who don't want to ruin their own Barbour's out in all that Welsh weather. Cartwheel

chandeliers swing from the ancient beams; under-floor heating warms the centuries-old flagstones. Handstitched patchwork quilts are thrown over brass or carved-wood beds, and heavy curtains keep out the morning sunlight, though you might want to open them, let it in, start the day with that uplifting view. The outlook is even better from the loft – an open-plan cooking-dining-living space with long arrow-slit windows to let in the mountains and, at night, a sky streaked with the Milky Way (the Brecons national park is a Dark Sky Reserve). There's even a telescope for stargazing, and a 1960s Wurlitzer loaded with rock'n'roll 45s.

SLEEPS Eight

BOOK IT *Three-night weekend from £666; www.breconcottages.com*