



**Buy a B&B:** Norfolk's best-known tearoom/B&B, the Church Gate, is in Castle Acre, left, £620,000; five-bedroom Bealach House, Argyll, £495,000, with eight acres ([homesandproperty.co.uk/bandb](http://homesandproperty.co.uk/bandb))

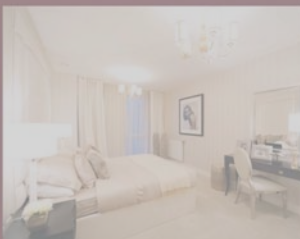


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Train based on quickest journeys from Godalming to Waterloo. Source: [nationalrail.co.uk](http://nationalrail.co.uk). Distance to Guildford sourced from Google Maps. Exterior shot is a CGI and interior photography is from a previous Prime Place development.

## Make it work

Take bed and breakfast upmarket and make a profit, says **Cathy Hawker**



**Prepared:** Julian and Katy, and Callater Lodge, inset

**R**UNNING a bed and breakfast is one way to profit from property. Using your home to provide an income could be a way to jack in the day job, say goodbye to the commute and make a new move.

Of course, welcoming strangers into your home is not straightforward. There are regulations to observe and new skills to perfect, from marketing to cooking the Full English. Anyone who runs a successful B&B will tell you that it involves hard graft and anti-social hours, all while being endlessly welcoming and keeping one eye on the latest TripAdvisor write-up.

Julian and Katy Fennema were well prepared when they took on Callater Lodge, an established B&B with six bedrooms in Braemar in Cairngorms National Park.

Years of careful planning, including work experience in hospitality and, sensibly, a thorough business plan, meant that the main surprise for them has been the kindness of their guests.

### MAKING IT A SUCCESS

With design-savvy customers fully clued up about thread-count, B&B owners need to aim high. The best B&Bs have been steadily upping their game, becoming more like boutique hotels than the soulless boarding houses of yesteryear.

Location remains vital. "It is crucial to consider year-round income and not just rely on summer tourism," advises David King of Winkworth.

"For example, we are selling a successful B&B in Wiltshire. Tourists come because it is close to Stonehenge and Salisbury; but nearby Porton Down means that it also has a regular Ministry of Defence clientele."

Knight Frank also reports more buyers looking for homes with an income stream around Oxford, a city with good potential for B&B operators.

"Science parks, teaching hospitals and the university provide plenty of weekday visitors as well as weekend tourists to the city," says Damian Gray of Knight Frank Oxford.

## 'DO YOUR HOMEWORK AND MITIGATE RISKS'

JULIAN and Katy, 39 and 37, were living outside Edinburgh, but both eager for a lifestyle change. He was a consultant in energy economics while she was a professional musician with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra.

"We saw the opportunity to run a small guesthouse as a way to live among the hills and mountains we love," says Katy.

They considered more than 100 properties, visited 40, and had meetings with architects and surveyors before they found 150-year-old Callater Lodge.

"Some options wouldn't support our business model and others had no room for us," says Katy.

The day before they married in June 2014, they signed on Callater Lodge and plunged into their new life. Not afraid to increase their workload, in November they closed to

renovate, re-opening for New Year's Eve.

Leaving secure jobs and investing all their money in the business meant there was much at stake.

"Any change of job is a step into the unknown," says Julian, who has a PhD in economics. "You mitigate the risks and do your homework. After detailed planning, it's great to embark on second careers."

The couple haven't had a holiday yet, but however busy they are, Katy tries to escape for a daily run in the hills with Mac and Finnian, her springer spaniels.

"We are shattered, but couldn't be happier," she concludes.

"We're where we want to be, working together and hosting wonderful guests."

■ [callaterlodge.co.uk](http://callaterlodge.co.uk); 013397 41275. Rates from £40 per person per night

## B&B MEANS BIG BUSINESS

■ There are 25,000 B&Bs and guesthouses in the UK with typically between one and 10 bedrooms.

■ The UK's B&B industry turns more than £2 billion each year and Barclays Bank predicts spending will increase by 25 per cent by 2017. The recession and changing holiday trends have helped many well-located B&Bs to thrive as more of us take short breaks and opt for a

'staycation' holiday closer to home.

■ Practicalities include informing your local council, mortgage lender and insurance provider of the change of use of your home. Also, register with the Environmental Health Department and arrange a fire risk assessment.

■ More information from Bed and Breakfast Academy at [bedandbreakfastacademy.co.uk](http://bedandbreakfastacademy.co.uk).