

- IN CLOVER -

"In a condition of prosperity; happy & contented"



CHAPEL HOUSE

Penzance, Cornwall, United Kingdom

"People always say it's surprising to have somewhere like this in Penzance, but I always wonder why not?"

A place like Penzance needs people like Susan. Having lived in London for many years, a previous visit to Penzance stuck with her. When the time was right, she packed up her city life to create a hotel which has been two years in the making. The town is often looked over for more tourist based spots such as St Ives and Mousehole. Susan wanted to base her business in Penzance, where she believes it to be an unspoilt working town. Her incredible restoration of the old Arts Club into an award-winning bed and breakfast was no small feat. The vast red brick building at the bottom of Chapel Street had been a landmark slowly slipping into decline for many years. Chapel House now sits prominently with a beautiful facade and facing out to the working harbour and St Michaels Mount.

Walking in to the vast reception I'm greeted by an undeniable sense of elegance. The stripped wooden floors and grand furniture mixed with local art work tie together the old and new seamlessly. The house is now a true spectacle. Susan is the perfect host and greets me like an old friend before giving me a tour of the building. The last time I was in her now elegant drawing room was years before for a raucous salsa night. Back then the building appeared to be falling apart and it was difficult to see the beauty of it. Not so now, the beauty is obvious as we head up the double winder stairs to have a peak at the rooms. The sense of space created by the high ceilings and arched window on the half landing only add to the spectacle. As I comment how the soft grey walls are a far cry from what used to be here Susan laughs, "When I moved in I went straight to B&Q and got paint for the walls. I was up on the scaffolding for two days at least".

Chapel House dates back to 1790 and has been home to Admiral Samuel Hood Linzee, of HMS Temeraire, the ship made famous by JMW Turner's iconic painting, *The Fighting Temeraire*. The Carne family who, in the 19th century, were an influential mining and banking dynasty instrumental in the development of Penzance were also one time residents. In its later years it has been used as a shelter for evacuees and was the home of Penzance Arts Club.

Susan has made the house a welcoming home to all that enter. In the evening she cooks a beautiful meal for us and we sit with her at the island in her basement kitchen chit chatting and sipping wine. She's undeniably passionate about using local produce and

everything in her kitchen is bought as close to Chapel House as possible, from Lintern's butchers at the top of Chapel Street to Polgoon Vineyard which sits a mile away. It's a testament to Susan's hosting skills that we feel comfortable sat with her in the open plan kitchen and dining area, nothing is too much trouble and our glasses are always suspiciously full.

It's a fine line to tread when Chapel House is more like an open home rather than a hotel. Susan confesses that she never dines with guests to the house. She's quite clear that when people come to stay she's here to serve them although she's always happy for a chat in her kitchen while she prepares meals. Our tapas starter is sumptuous and vegetarian lasagne with butternut squash is mouth-wateringly good. Dessert is just as generous and once again our wine glasses always seem full. Our table is situated in front of the bespoke log burner and regardless of rain or shine, this is an inviting room to be in. The bedrooms are just as wonderful, the house contains six ensuite rooms and each have their own character. Mine sits on the front of the house facing out to sea and adjacent to the church. The super kingsize bed has crisp white sheets and the free standing bath in the corner is a work of art itself. The attic rooms have been skilfully converted and a unique glass window allows for light to flood in and for views back over to Penzance and the harbour.

I've rarely slept so well anywhere. The entire building is peaceful and falling asleep to the crackling of the log burner in my bedroom while hearing the waves in the distance was bliss. Chapel House feels so much like a home that it was tempting, after restful nights sleep, to go down to breakfast in my slippers and dressing gown. The reception rooms are designed for use and enjoyment and guests are encouraged to make the most of them and the sea views they offer.

For a night alone, family gathering, wedding, business or pleasure, Chapel House has a lot to offer. Everything is well thought out and over breakfast as it drizzles outside, Susan tells a family of guests that there are coats and wellies in the boot room and they can help themselves. The boot room is larger than most people's kitchens and Susan has it well stocked with everything from spare coats to shaving kits and tooth brushes. "You wouldn't believe the amount of people that come to visit and don't bring waterproof anything". Cornwall does have a knack for catching you out with rain from nowhere but as a county has a lot to offer visiting guests and locals alike.

www.chapelhousepz.co.uk

