

BITS AND PEACE
Wormington Grange
in Gloucestershire



Bazaar's perfect weekend

RIDING BREAKS

Hop into the saddle to explore rolling English countryside, dramatic Spanish hills or the salt plains of France in our guide to quick horseback getaways

BY STEPHANIE THEOBALD AND CLOVER STROUD

Stately Rides ENGLAND

Cantering through the same fields that Anne Boleyn crossed on her way to the Tower, or trotting through the woody glades that Jane Austen visited on afternoon constitutions, and then ending the day with a candlelit dinner in an imposing Jacobean mansion is not what you'd expect from a riding holiday. Yet *Stately Rides* is like no other equestrian experience – it is out of this world. It reminds you that England offers some of the most unspoilt countryside in the world, and on these exclusive Cotswold-based horse safaris you won't see a car for hours on end.

It is the brainchild of Zara Colchester (sister of Julian Metcalfe of Pret A Manger) and her partner Charlotte Sainsbury-Plaice, who worked as an assistant to *Four Weddings and a Funeral* writer Richard Curtis in a former life, and their formidable connections allow you into a private universe usually open only to those families who appear in *Burke's Peerage and Gentry*. After a day in the saddle, you can stay in some of the grandest private homes in the region, including Sudeley Lodge, much favoured by George III; Eyeford Park, recently voted England's favourite country house; and Wormington Grange, the former seat of

Churchill's right-hand man, Lord Ismay. You also get to see the world as Shakespeare did (riding along common-land bridleways, drovers' routes and green lanes whose origins are catalogued in *The Domesday Book*). There's no way Sainsbury-Plaice would go back to the bright lights of the London media scene now. 'Seeing quintessential England from a creaking leather saddle, it's not just romantic – it gives you that ultimate experience of living in the moment.'

From £425 a person a day for two- to five-day holidays, including accommodation, meals and riding (www.statelyrides.co.uk).