

Seven Deadly Sins at Mountain Cottage

Message Sent to a Regional UK Tourist Board, Summer 2013

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Subject: Review of "Mountain Cottage"

Message: Dear Sirs,

We recently rented the above property through your Website. You asked for feedback on our stay. Here it is.

Mountain Cottage has an excellent location. It is a spacious and well-appointed property with great Internet and peaceful surroundings. We hoped to recuperate after a strenuous international work trip. But our stay was marred by the seven deadly sins of proprietor Joseph Williams.

As you will see from the story below, your failure to send us complete directions for getting to the property was the starting point for our host's road to perdition. Please pray for Mr Williams' soul!

The Seven Deadly Sins of Mountain Cottage

1) **LUST...**

Well actually not lust, but LOST. The name of the property was nowhere to be seen at any of the gates, as we drove up and down on a country road for almost two hours. As darkness approached, we resorted to knocking on doors. But no one in the area recognised the name. Finally someone at the local rugby club suggested it was "Joe Williams' place", and shakily drew a wobbly map for us (well it was late Saturday night, and the bar had been busy). But we still couldn't find Mountain Cottage. Finally another neighbour – who also knew of "Joe Williams" – kindly led us there in his car. It wasn't far away, and we had passed it several times! Why didn't the Internet booking agent give us full directions, or at least the property name? Why didn't we know that the name on the gate was completely different to the name of the property we had booked? Why couldn't we use telepathy to know what to look for? Why would we expect the proprietor to arrange for someone to meet and guide us? Thanks Joe!

2) **WRATH...**

Having found Mountain Cottage, we were more than ready to drive in. We located the key and pressed the button to open the electric gates. Only one side opened. Repeated use of the button just opened and shut that one side, which seemed far too narrow for the car. Marks on the gate (and no doubt also on other cars) testified to regular problems of this nature. Leaving the car outside the "gates of wrath" until morning, we grumpily humped our luggage up the drive and into the cottage in the dark. Once we got the lights on, the welcome sign "Enter as Strangers – Leave as Friends" seemed ironic. But the letters "ANGER" buried within that motto were spot on...

3) **GREED...**

It was now very late, and we hoped to have a welcome cup of tea, if not something stronger. But there was no tea, no milk and certainly nothing stronger. In fact even the routine items like soap and washing-up liquid were absent. Fortunately Joe had somehow overlooked half a toilet roll, or we really might have been in trouble. Thanks for the "unwelcome pack" Joe!

4) **PRIDE...**

Joe did turn up eventually, three days later. Some proprietors would have weakened, regretting or even apologising for earlier omissions. Some might even have brought a small gift - after all, we were paying guests at a "5-star" property. But not Joe – imperiously dismissing our politely expressed criticisms, he was impressively proud....

5) **SLOTH...**

One of the more interesting features of Mountain Cottage was its multiple time zones. By the appliance clocks, it could be 7.35 am in the laundry when it was 1.04 p m in the kitchen next door, and neither was within hours of the actual time. Don't trouble yourself to put the clocks right Joe – it's such fun the way it is...

6) **ENVY...**

Sadly, we fell victim to envy. Many guests in 5-star country cottages enjoy extra amenities like good local maps, a range of interesting music to listen to, and a selection of books to read. But we only had Swansea Summer Festival Programme 2007, a single CD of Tesco's Special Giveaway Greatest Hits, and back editions of Home and Garden magazine.

7) **GLUTTONY...**

Despite enjoying our time at Mountain View, we did get "fed up" with some of these minor annoyances. But we decided to pack up and leave quietly. That is, until cleaners arrived at 10.15 am as we were packing and peremptorily told us – the guests - to leave NOW. We told them where to go, and they left, soon returning with Joe. The ensuing stoush stopped short of fisticuffs with Joe, but not far short. He wisely declined our invitation to call the police, and we set out just after 11 with an unhealthy adrenaline rush to undo any relaxation our "holiday" might have achieved. As requested in the handbook, we "left the property as we found it", with nothing but half a toilet roll to welcome the next unlucky guest with 5-star expectations. Your UK region won't see us again, or see any other tourists we can convince to stay away...

IN CONCLUSION.....

Hope you liked our feedback, Joe! Please sign up for a "Service in Hospitality" course. And until you graduate, please change your sign to "Enter as str**ANGERS** – Leave as **FRIENDS**".