



Keep On Sewing Residential Weekend Retreats

The idea of the weekend retreat is to get away from it all and do what we'd all like to do at home (given the chance) and that's to sew. On full day or half day workshops you often don't get to finish your project, or maybe you only make a sample with the intention of making the real thing later but, as we all know, later never comes around! At a Keep on Sewing Weekend retreat you choose one subject and work closely with your tutor for the whole weekend to achieve finished (or almost finished) projects to take home. The retreats are held every January, April and July, the April one being a 'Strictly Come Quilting' weekend. Due to demand more weekends may be added in the future!

The Venue

Hillscourt Hotel and Conference Centre is set in 25 acres of beautiful grounds in the Lickey Hills at Rednal near Bromsgrove. We take over the site from Friday afternoon until Sunday afternoon. The 55 ensuite bedrooms are beautifully appointed and offer single accommodation (3 are adapted for use by persons with a disability) and all have TV, tea/coffee making facilities, fluffy towels and shower gel etc. With ample free parking, on site security and very good motorway, road and rail links this is an ideal venue.

The food is freshly cooked on the premises - using Hillscourt's own eggs and veg where possible - and there's plenty of it so forget the diet! Vegetarian, medical, low fat and special diets etc. however are all catered for. There's a buffet style breakfast (including a full English), elevenses, a buffet lunch, afternoon tea and a 3 course table d'hote dinner. Tea, coffee, etc is available anytime - especially good for those who want to sew through the night! There are also bar facilities at reasonable prices.

The Classes

We usually have 4 tutors - (renowned experts in their own field, some are international and published teachers) each teaching their own subject which can range from tailoring to crafts, from quilting to free motion embroidery, from overlocking to soft furnishings, from software to digital machine embroidery etc - something for everyone. Subjects change with each retreat but there is always dressmaking/tailoring class and a patchwork & quilting class, except in April when all the classes at 'Strictly Come Quilting' are more patchwork and quilt based.

Each tutor has their own large teaching room with plenty of space and tables for cutting out etc. and all the facilities you would expect from a good conference centre like bottled water, screen projectors etc. You bring your own sewing machine (and/or overlocker) and a basic sewing kit but irons and boards are provided. Your tutor will let you know what other equipment/fabrics etc you'll need to bring for your chosen class. Depending on your choice your tutor may need to provide specialist kits (or hard to find items) so there may be additional costs ranging from £5 - £25 but you'll be informed well in advance of any additional kit fees.

There are approximately 8 -15 students per class so there's lots of opportunity for individual learning. Bookings are on a strictly 'first come first served basis', with a deposit to secure your place. Although you're asked to give a second choice almost always you'll get your first choice. Some classes however do book very quickly so if your preferred class or indeed the retreat is fully booked you will be asked if you'd like to go on a waiting list.

There's also ample opportunity to work without a tutor - introduced in 2014 due to popular demand, maybe you want to finish off some UFOs and Hillscourt is a great place to work alongside others who just want to do their own thing - and the beauty is there's always someone there to help if you get stuck!

What else is on offer?

Therapy treatments

We have a resident therapist on hand to give some welcome 'me' time in the form of beauty or aromatherapy treatments e.g. manicure, back massage, Hopi ear candles, waxing etc. Booking and payment for treatments is direct with the therapist at Hillscourt.

Sewing Machine Servicing

We have a qualified sewing machine engineer if you would like to have your machine serviced at a very reasonable cost. N.B. all electrical equipment brought to class including sewing machines must be PAT tested so you are asked to do this prior to coming or why not have it done during the weekend.....

Charity Drive

Fund-raising for various charities takes place at every retreat. This could be in the form of a raffle or tombola and you'll always have a goody bag. we often exchange magazines and books too and have items for sale.

Costs

The current fee for the weekend is £299 which includes your accommodation, food and refreshments and of course your tuition. We can accommodate partners/daughters/friends too who may want to do their own thing whilst you're busy sewing!! They would just pay for B & B @ £42 per night or D, B & B at £67 (approx prices - subject to change), and you can even arrive on the Thursday night at the same rate.....

I hope this has whetted your appetite and that you'll join us. You'll have a great time - our students keep coming back for more (we celebrated our 30th retreat in January 2015) so we must be doing something right! It doesn't matter if you're a regular or a newbie, everyone is really friendly and welcoming.

A booking form and further information is either attached or will follow on request. If you'd like more details or to discuss anything at all please get in touch and I'll be happy to help.



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