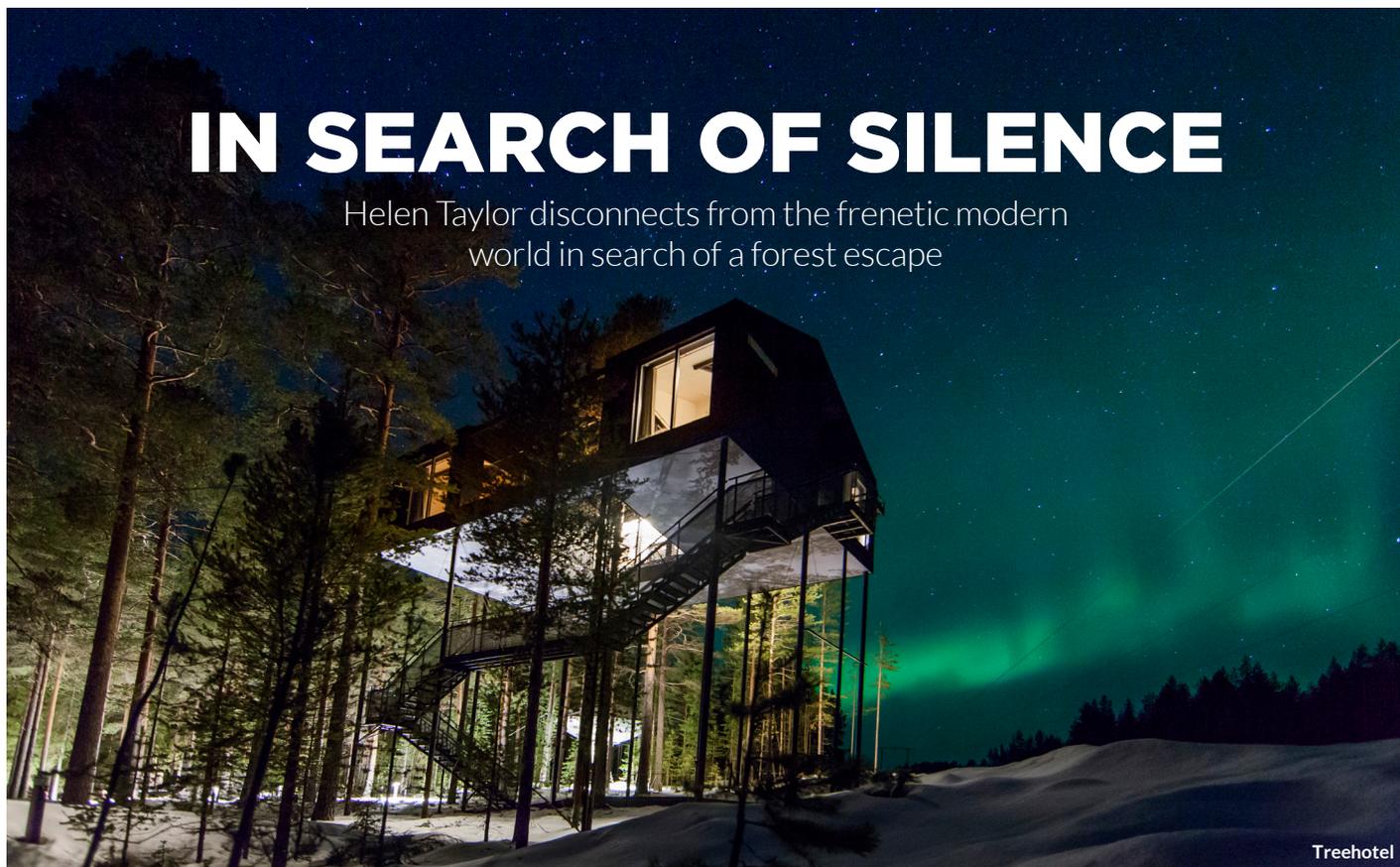


# IN SEARCH OF SILENCE

Helen Taylor disconnects from the frenetic modern world in search of a forest escape



Treehotel

**W**ith the arrival of January comes the desperate need for some organised downtime – respite from the endless socialising, shopping and eating. Our fast-paced ultra-connected modern lives can leave us feeling a little frazzled, and craving a way to disconnect from our frenetic world. Enter here the Japanese tradition of *Shinrin-yoku*, or forest bathing, which means immersing yourself in a forest setting; to calm the senses, find inner peace and relax. Research has shown that spending as little as 15 minutes among trees can lower cortisol levels, reduce anxiety and boost the immune system.

## SCANDINAVIA

Scandinavia is synonymous with happiness and wellbeing. In 2017, *The Telegraph* revealed Norway to be the world's happiest country, with Denmark a close second, and Sweden ranking tenth – the UK ranked 19.

Then Scandinavia seems an obvious destination for a spot of forest bathing, and flights from London to Stockholm only take two-and-a-half hours. Located deep in Swedish Lapland, Treehotel, in the village of Harads, offers a collection of seven treehouses – each one designed by some of Scandinavia's leading architects. Its concept is simple: to offer contemporary, luxurious accommodation high in the treetops. Treehotel also offers activities such as kayaking, dog-sledding, bear spotting and a hike to explore the forest fauna and flora.

**How to get there:** Treehotel is accessible via Luleå Airport. Flights from Stockholm to Luleå take 70 minutes. A taxi or helicopter transfer is available from Luleå to Treehotel.

■ [www.treehotel.se](http://www.treehotel.se)



Magnetic North Travel

## NORTH AMERICA

Canada, too, offers unlimited potential for escaping to a forested wilderness, especially in Nova Scotia in the east and British Columbia in the west. Magnetic North Travel runs a four-day Stargazing Wilderness Adventure at Trout Point Lodge, in the remote Tobeatic Wilderness Area of Nova Scotia, which includes a Japanese-inspired forest bathing session, surrounded by spruce, birch and maple trees, where guests can shake-off the effects of city living. The lodge is also a member of Small Luxury Hotels of the World ([www.slh.com](http://www.slh.com)), and serves locally-inspired menus, complete with vegetables, greens, herbs and edible flowers grown in the on-site garden.

**How to get there:** Trout Point Lodge is a three-hour drive from Halifax airport, or 25 miles from the Yarmouth International Ferry Terminal, which has ferries running to it from Portland, Maine (US).

■ [www.magneticnorthtravel.com](http://www.magneticnorthtravel.com) or [www.troutpoint.com](http://www.troutpoint.com)

## UNITED KINGDOM

Of course, we don't always have to travel very far to find ourselves immersed in a forested haven. The UK is home to acres of woodland and forests, and three of the largest in England are Kielder Forest in Northumberland, the New Forest in Hampshire and Thetford Forest in Norfolk.

UK Forest Holidays specialises in simple holidays in luxurious cabins amid Britain's forests and woodlands. There are nine idyllic forested locations to choose from, ranging from Cornwall all the way up to Scotland – they even have a few treehouses. In September 2017, the company introduced forest bathing at its Hampshire and Norfolk locations. For £30, guests can enjoy three hours of forest bathing with a qualified Forest Therapy guide, trained by The Association of Nature and Forest Therapy Guides. The experience ends with a shared tea ceremony using foraged plants, and a deeper, more meaningful appreciation of the forest.

■ [www.forestholidays.co.uk](http://www.forestholidays.co.uk)



UK Forest Holidays

OVERMATTER