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coast

JUNE 2022

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COAST CHARACTER

Artist Ellie Verrecchia finds constant inspiration along the South West Coast Path in Devon, to sketch, paint and recharge her energy

WORDS CAROLINE WHEATER PHOTOGRAPH GEORGE WAKELIN

We live between the Avon and Kingsbridge Estuaries, with Dartmoor one way and the sea in the other. I've known the South Hams since childhood holidays and five years ago my husband and I bought a house here with a long-term plan of spending more time on the coast. We commuted from Wiltshire to renovate it and became very attached, so much so that during lockdown we re-evaluated our lives and decided that it would be possible to work remotely and to go part-time. We moved in last summer, in time for our two

teenagers to start the new school term.

My family surf, but I prefer paddleboarding on the estuaries. They are full of wildlife, including herons and cormorants. Once a seal popped up right in front of me! I love close encounters with nature. I go out walking every day for health reasons but also to sketch and paint, carrying my kit in a backpack. Typically, I park up in Thurlestone, a traditional village of thatched cottages, and go towards Hope Cove or Bantham Beach. Even in the height of the tourist season you'll always find secret places if you're prepared to do a walk.

The South Hams is a very sociable place where you make your own low-cost fun. When we get together with friends it's usually down on the beach over a bottle of wine and toasted marshmallows. We light a driftwood fire then watch the sun go down behind Burgh Island while our children play. Living here is all about how to make the most of every day. Browse Ellie's art at ellieverrecchia.co.uk or on Instagram at [@EVpaintsthesea](https://www.instagram.com/EVpaintsthesea). You can also find it at the Brownston Gallery in Modbury (brownstonart.com) and Gallery Tresco in the Scilly Isles (tresco.co.uk).

