

MY WEST WALES

SARAH JANE BROWN

The dramatic shores of West Wales inspire acclaimed artist Sarah Jane Brown. Here she shares her favourite secret spots in the region

Sarah Jane Brown is an artist from Pembrokeshire who has been steadily making a name for her work. Drawing inspiration from the West Wales coast she creates atmospheric and colourful oil paintings, which are an intimate expression of her surroundings. Currently she is exhibiting with galleries in St Davids, Llanidloes, Cardiff, London and Barcelona. For more visit her website sjbfineart.com.

What do you like the most about living in West Wales?

I am totally in love with it. It is truly a special place; the light, the colours, the scenery, the wildlife and the people. I also swim in the sea all year round, which is invigorating!

Can you describe your perfect day out in the region?

That's a tough one; there are too many things to squeeze into just one day! Definitely a sea swim, a walk on the coast path, perhaps a boat trip to Ramsey Island or Skomer, a look around the art galleries, and maybe a G&T and some food somewhere as the sun goes down.

How would you describe the people of West Wales?

Friendly, resourceful, and down to earth. There is very little pretentiousness here, people generally just get on with life and with each other, and because of our remote location there's a great sense of community.

Where are your favourite places to eat and drink in West Wales?

I don't really drink much, but when I do it's usually with a meal out and I'm lucky to have lots of great places in walking distance from home in St Davids. Cwtch or St Davids Kitchen are both great for a restaurant meal,



The Bishops for pub food, and Saffron for Indian food. Occasionally I'm quite partial to a locally-made ice cream from The Bench and eating it on the steps of the Cross Square while watching the world go by.

What is special about West Wales to you?

Walking every day in this dramatic environment with its rocky shores, high cliffs, big skies and unpredictable seas can be a truly humbling experience. It reminds me of the important things in life and provides a sense of perspective. I can walk out onto St David's Head, a remote protected landscape, and know that a thousand years ago it wasn't any different. I feel less caught up with insignificant stuff.

Which view would you recommend to a visitor?

There are so many, but I always love the seeing the view of the beach and coastline as you drive over the brow of the hill and

descend into Newgale, it always lifts my spirits. Also from the top of Carn Llidi (the volcanic peak above Whitesands Beach) is really stunning; on a clear day you get an uninterrupted 360-degree view of all the offshore islands to the west, the Preseli Mountains inland and the coastline from Stumble Head to St Ann's Head.

In what way has West Wales inspired you?

Inevitably it is the surrounding area that inspires me to paint the most because I know it so well, but also because it is stunningly beautiful, rugged and remote. I walk on the coast path or the beach almost every day, sometimes I sketch or photograph something that catches my eye, but always I am observing and taking mental notes. I particularly love walking on Whitesands Beach in the winter when it is quiet; the clouds are full of colour and drama and are reflected in the wet sand. It's a subject that I love to paint over and over.

