

Inspiring Retreats of Famous Authors

Article By: Annie Krug

Have you ever wondered where the greatest writers of our time got their inspiration? These are the picturesque retreats that brought your most cherished classics to your nightstand. Follow along as we tour the wondrous landscapes of a few of our favorite storytellers, and see how their homes, retreats and surroundings were surely inspiring!



Jane Austen House in Chawton garden,
Photo credit: Pierre Terre

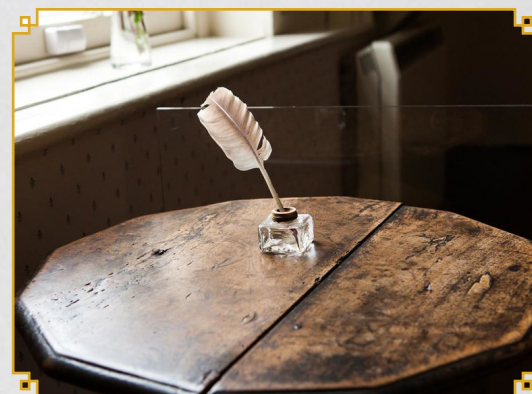


Jane Austen portrait

JANE AUSTEN, CHAWTON, HAMPSHIRE

It was in this picturesque English cottage that Jane Austen wrote some of her most beloved novels, including *Pride and Prejudice* and *Sense and Sensibility*. Now a museum, the 17th-century house was originally owned by Austen's brother, Edward, where she lived with her mother, sister Cassandra, and friend Martha Lloyd from 1809 until 1817. According to historical accounts, Jane's writing table sat next to a window that overlooked the village road. It's possible that this bird's eye view of the bustling village is where she found inspiration for Mr. Darcy, Emma, and other popular characters. And between her morning piano practice and afternoon of writing, Jane could be found in the dining parlor, putting the kettle on their grate stove during a tea break.

Jane Austen House in Chawton Jane's writing table 2, Photo credit: Holly Hayes



Eilean Shona landscape
Photo credit: Eilean Shona/J. Bedford

J.M. BARRIE, EILEAN SHONA, SCOTLAND

The writer that gave us Peter Pan likely found his childlike sense of adventure stoked by the Scottish island Eilean Shona. J.M. Barrie leased the island for his summer holiday along with some close friends and their young sons (who were said to have influenced the characters Peter Pan and the Lost Boys). Though Barrie had already written his famous novel by this time in 1920, it was here on the west coast of Scotland where he worked on the screenplay for the book. Barrie described Eilean Shona as a "wild rocky romantic island," and the rugged coastline and vibrant greenery must've let his writer's imagination roam free. The island is now a remote getaway for artists and wanderers of all kinds, where guests can stay in the same houses (since refurbished) as Barrie and his guests. The Old Schoolhouse even features its original wood- and coal-burning stoves.



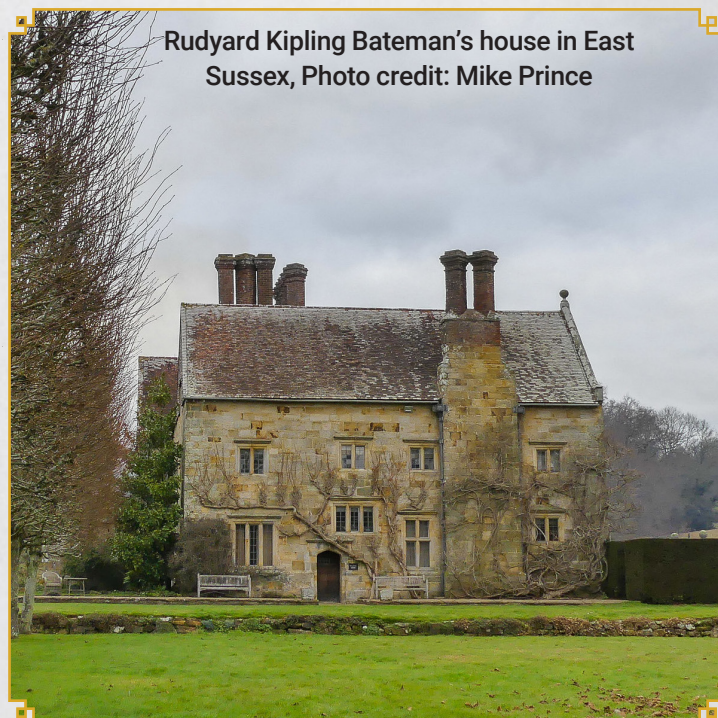
J.M. Barrie portrait



Eilean Shona Old Schoolhouse interior and fireplace
Photo credit: Eilean Shona/ J. Bedford



Rudyard Kipling
portrait



Rudyard Kipling Bateman's house in East
Sussex, Photo credit: Mike Prince



Rudyard Kipling Bateman's house in East Sussex Kipling's study and desk , Photo credit: Mike Prince

RUDYARD KIPLING, BATEMAN'S HOUSE, EAST SUSSEX

The Jungle Book author Rudyard Kipling wrote some of his later work at Bateman's House, a 17th-century mansion in East Sussex, England. Kipling lived here from 1902 until his death in 1936, and the sprawling 33-acre estate was said to have inspired many of the books, short stories, and poems. Originally from India, a land that inspired his famous tale of Mowgli and his animal friends, Kipling was enamored with Bateman's house. He described it as a "good and peaceable place" that he fell in love with at first sight.

Now a museum open to the public, Bateman's house contains most of its original décor. In the study, you can even find Kipling's original 17th-century walnut refectory writing table, where he wrote many of his now-beloved works.



Dylan Thomas Boathouse, Photo credit: GerritR



Dylan Thomas Writing Shed at Laugharne,
Wales interior, Photo credit: Bryan Ledgard

DYLAN THOMAS, THE BOATHOUSE, LAUGHARNE, WALES

Welsh poet Dylan Thomas, of "Do not go gentle into that good night" fame, spent his last years in the estuary town of Laugharne, Wales. It was here in 1949 where Thomas moved into the now-famous Boathouse with his wife, author Caitlin Macnamara, and their three children. The cliffside home overlooked the Tâf estuary, and was down the road from a small writing shed, where Thomas spent many hours crafting prose while surrounded by nature. Thomas called the Boathouse a "place I love and where I want to work," adding that he found solace writing in his "water and tree room on the cliff."

Restored in 2003, but its interior kept intact, Thomas's writing shed still contains original furnishing, including an old stove and kitchen chairs and a simple writing desk where Thomas worked.



Dylan Thomas portrait,
Photo credit: Jim Forest

Just as their surroundings inspired the greatest writers of our time, our surroundings can inspire us every day. Think of how your favorite antique or primitive piece takes you back to the days when things were much simpler. Picture the original owner and how they used the piece in their daily life. It's fun to imagine the stories these pieces could tell, and the secrets they hold!