



Picture: www.visitscotland.com

**BY THE WATER'S EDGE** Looking across the River Tummel to the Festival Theatre at Pitlochry, a popular resort north west of Dunkeld, Perth and Kinross

# Perfect break in Perthshire

**M**Y love affair with Scotland began last year. My mum had spent her teenage years living in Kingussie at the foothills of the Cairngorm and Monadhliath mountain ranges and hadn't been back for over 50 years.

I'm ashamed to say I hadn't been further north than Glasgow, so for a surprise we went back to her old stomping ground.

Having never even had a desire to visit the area, I was a true convert after mum's pilgrimage, and wondered why I hadn't been that way before.

Think Scotland and you tend to think rain. Assuming we'd be dodging the showers, I wanted a

**Situated in the very heart of Scotland, Perthshire represents the perfect place to find all that you expect of a great family break as ANGELA UPEX discovered**

hotel where we'd be warm, cosy and well-fed and have nearby attractions for the children.

So when I got the chance to explore Perth for a family break, I jumped at the chance.

Most of Perthshire is little more than one hour by road or rail from Glasgow or Edinburgh, but a world apart.

We boarded an East Coast train from Newcastle and with a quick change to a First ScotRail train at Edinburgh station we were on our

way to Perth. It is a magnificent journey and we were lucky enough to have clear blue skies to see the wonderful rolling hills.

Our hotel for our two-night stay was very welcoming. Arriving at the New County Hotel with two children and a tired mother, I was a bit flustered but everyone was brilliant.

A fairly modest exterior reveals a smart entrance with a spacious lounge in which to enjoy pre-dinner drinks, as well as a cosy bar, packed with character.

Luggage was scooped up by a beaming receptionist and delivered to our rooms and we were offered tea in the lounge.

Our rooms in the three-star hotel were immaculate.

We had all the mod cons and the hotel proved an excellent base to explore Perth and further afield.

After dumping our suitcases we headed straight into Perth. Perth enjoys a beautiful position on the banks of Scotland's longest river - the Tay (at 119 miles).

With a rich and influential history that stretches back over 800 years, Perth has served as its country's capital and has always been one of the most important political, judicial and commercial centres in Scotland.

It also has a name for being a particularly good shopping destination, cultural centre and a base for gourmet exploration.

We enjoyed an afternoon of shopping and as it has all the major department stores and arguably the best range of speciality shops in Scotland, we were very happy and with an array of toy shops, the children were amused too.

That night, it was back to the main bar area, Gavin's Bistro, for dinner.