

The best... spectacular garden sheds

Home office, studio, games room, gym – a garden shed can do more than just store tools, says *The Mail on Sunday*. Make sure you check whether it will require planning permission: some here do, some don't

▼ **Writer's Hut** If you're after something with old-fashioned charm, the Writer's Hut is just the job. It's not huge – 8ft by 4.6ft – but there's enough space for a desk, chair and even a stove. They're fully customisable, so you choose how you want it painted, and what to put in it (from £8,280; www.plankbridge.com).



▼ **Orb Pod** Constructed with Canadian red cedar, the Orb Pod is a 3x2.5x2.4m room, complete with exterior and interior lighting, power sockets and a ventilation window. The relative lack of glass makes this ideal for those wanting no distractions (from £8,995; www.hudsongardenrooms.com).



▲ **Tetra Shed** It won't be to everyone's taste, but the Tetra Shed's award-winning design is certainly striking. Made from plywood, it's a truncated tetrahedron with about 8m² of space inside. The odd shape creates some fun features – a six-sided window, for example – and should you want more space, you can fit several together in a Tetra "cluster" (from £15,000; www.tetra-shed.co.uk).



▲ **IQ Garden Room** If you're worried that a more traditional-looking shed will dominate your garden, a glass room could be the answer. They can be built either as an extension or as a stand-alone structure, and are obviously much lighter than the others here (from £2,100/sq ft; www.iqglassrooms.com).

▼ **The Deluxe Summerhouse**

This rotating pod can be spun around to catch the light. Its two built-in sofas comfortably seat ten, and interior lights can be added if required. When it gets cold, you can simply pull down the sliding door (£16,995; www.rotatingpod.com).



▼ **Elegans Studio** Garden Spaces is a company that specialises in bespoke luxury sheds. Made from western red cedar, and solid wooden flooring, the Elegans Studio (pictured) has been fitted with TV/satellite connections and a shower room (from £12,600; www.gardenspaces.co.uk).



Tips of the week... how to buy vintage clothes

- Always try before you buy. Today's clothes are designed to have "hanger appeal", whereas garments used to be designed for the body.
- If you're a first-time vintage buyer, start small. A coat is ideal, because you can throw it on over almost anything and it won't affect the rest of your look.
- Fabrics that hold their colour well, are tightly woven, or are made of a "good-quality knit" tend to last longer.
- Check garments for missing buttons, beads or broken zips. Look out for damage to the underarm – "some vintage pieces predate antiperspirants".
- Don't be put off by a "vintage smell" – it'll come off with "one really decent dry-clean".
- Old iconic labels are usually good, because so much work went into them. "Look out for Dior, Norman Hartnell and Hardy Amies from the 1950s, Mary Quant from the 1960s, and Halston, Gucci and Yves Saint Laurent from the 1970s."

SOURCE: THE SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

And for those who have everything...



Lugging everything down to "that perfect spot" on the beach can be a real hassle – but not if you have a Humpalumpa Big Beach Cart. Its low-pressure tyres won't get stuck in the sand, and it can carry as much as 75kg of gear.

£126; www.humpalumpa.co.uk

SOURCE: THE SUNDAY TIMES

Where to stay... when driving through France

Hôtel Château Tilques is equidistant from Dunkirk and Calais. A typical French château, it has an upmarket restaurant, cycle hire and tennis courts (doubles from €130; www.tilques.najeti.fr).

Manoir de la Fieffe, a beautifully restored manor house near Cherbourg, was voted one of this year's top hotels by *Le Figaro*. It has just two rooms, one suite, and a cottage (€110; www.manoirdelafieffe.com).

La Ferme du Vert is in the Caps et Marais d'Opale park, near Calais and Boulogne. An old farmhouse, it has 16 individually decorated rooms – and a superb *fromagerie* next door (€100; www.fermeduvert.com).

Domaine Le Sablon, a short drive from Le Mans on the A28, is a "gorgeous" farmhouse with a terrace and pool (€65; www.chambresdhotelslesablon.com).

Demeure de Loisy is a five-bedroom b&b in a vineyard in Nuits-Saint-Georges, just off the A31 near Dijon (€110; www.demeuredeloisy.com).

SOURCE: THE TIMES