

ARABIAN NIGHTS

Enchanting interiors by Philip Hooper from Sybil Colefax & John Fowler, incorporating Berber furniture and motifs and art by modern Moroccan artists, are a highlight of the new Villa Azzaytouna in Marrakech. The three-bedroom property sleeps six, is set in gardens and olive groves and comes complete with Berber tent, spa and hammam, From £10,500 per week, with meals, transfers, chauffeur in Marrakech and unlimited beauty treatments. 00-212-661 221 714; ezzahra-morocco.com





SAIL AND STAY

Transform your holiday into a unique twin-centre escape with an itinerary combining a European villa stay with time on a fully staffed yacht. Villa specialist Scott Williams is the first to offer flexible itineraries incorporating yacht charter. Co-founder Victoria Hooberman says, 'We're encouraging guests to think of them as villas that float.' From £6,380 for 14 nights, based on four sharing a villa in Paxos and yacht Icarus, includes villa maid service and an inclusive holiday at sea. 01749-812721; scottwilliams.co.uk

Hidden in a discreet resort high above the Cote d'Azur, La Bergerie offers a tranquil stay for family and friends but with added wow factor. With its own cinema and wine cellar, an 18-metre pool and shaded outdoor living area, its added extras offer real finesse. Sleeping up to 12 in six spacious suites, each is decorated in exquisite detail while a superb chef and other welcoming staff are on site to ensure you're completely cared for. The nearby spa, golf course and kids' club provide relaxation and entertainment for everyone and, with views out over the mountains, you cannot help but switch off. From £19,500 per week including staff. 020-8878 5333; bergerieterreblanche.com

HOW TO...

PICK THE RIGHT VILLA

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

'Without exception, villas within walking distance of beaches sell out first; so if this is on your list of non-negotiables, book early.' Graham Simpson, chairman of Simpson Travel

CHECK THE FAMILY-FRIENDLINESS

'If you are travelling with family, understand the child friendliness of the property. Many villas offer everything from baby monitors to games rooms for teens. A gated or secure pool may also be a consideration if you're travelling with small children.' Adam Coates, general manager, Abercrombie & Kent Villas

DON'T SCRIMP ON STAFF

'Staff can make or break a holiday. A lovely, friendly and efficient housekeeper, cook or villa manager can make a less sophisticated house seem like a palace.' Judy Menier, co-founder, SJ Villas

PLAN YOUR ACTIVITIES

'Think about the day-to-day; the places you would like to visit, what you are expecting from the food and local markets and what entertainment is essential to your enjoyment.' Simon Ball, founder, Tuscany Now & More

APPRECIATE THE VALUE

'The luxury that villas offer, combined with high-quality facilities, can make them seem more expensive than a hotel. But as most accommodate more than two adults, you'll pay the same or less than in a hotel of a similar class.' Sarah Morgan, Elegant Resorts Villa Resorts and Private Islands