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A place OF YOUR OWN

From idyllic island hideaway to restored farmhouse set among orchards and olive groves, the perfect villa is out there waiting for you **WORDS SOPHIE BUTLER**

Privacy, peace and a pool to splash about in: there are plenty of reasons for choosing a villa holiday. However, finding a place that ticks all the boxes can be a challenge. Whether you want a romantic bolt-hole, a designer pad, or a catered manor house to fill with friends and family, here are eight of the best.

BEST FOR FOODIES

Chic, modern villa in Sicily

Book a local chef to prepare you a Sicilian feast and have it served under the shady veranda at newly built Villa Kalia in Mondello, near Palermo. Sleeping up to eight people in four stylish bedrooms, the boxy, contemporary architecture contrasts nicely with the backdrop of distant hills. A large pool and outdoor Jacuzzi – from where you can watch films on a large screen – will keep you entertained outside, but if it's indoor entertainment you're after, you can play the arcade machines or pool in the games room.

PLUS POINT: There's a beach nearby, and Palermo street-food tours, private cookery classes and wine tasting are all available.

PRICE: £3,925–£4,710 per week through Solo Sicily. solosicily.com

BEST FOR ONSITE PAMPERING

Country club villa in Crete

Indulge in a rejuvenating body or head massage while staying in one of the 10 stone-built cottages clustered in communal gardens at Arosmary Village near Chania, on the island's south-west coast. Sleeping two, Thyme cottage has pale blue shutters, an open-plan kitchen and an antique-furnished bedroom, with views of the White Mountains from its terrace.

PLUS POINT: Breakfast is included in the rate and light lunches are available by a shared pool.

PRICE: From £824 per person, per week, including flights and car hire through Simpson Travel. simpsontravel.com

BEST FOR COASTAL VIEWS

Stone-built hideaway in St Lucia

Relish the grandstand views of the famous cone-shaped Piton mountains on this exotic island's western shores from the windows of bougainvillea-covered Tamarind House. Five minutes from the



CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT: TAMARIND HOUSE IN ST LUCIA; VILLA LE PARADIS IN PROVENCE; VILLA ALKHOZAMA IN MARRAKESH; THE EDGE IN CORNWALL; VILLA KALIA IN SICILY



long, sandy beach of Anse Chastanet and close to the lively town of Soufrière, the 8,850sq ft villa sleeps up to six and has a tennis court and private pool from which you have uninterrupted views of the Pitons. The stylish interiors are furnished with West Indian antiques and decorated with work by local artists.

PLUS POINT: A vast tamarind tree provides all-day shade on the spacious, panoramic terrace.

PRICE: £3,023-£4,837 per week through Oliver's Travels. oliverstravels.com

BEST FOR A ROMANTIC BREAK

Cliff-top cabin in Cornwall

Watch out for dolphins, peregrine falcons and kestrels from this stunning coast-hugging residence called The Edge, which overlooks Whitsand Bay in the West Country. It's a modern take on a traditional Cornish beach hut, with open-plan living for two people and fabulous views. Go hiking straight from your doorstep, or take a dip in the sea via a cliff track to the beach. As the sun

sets, a soak in the outdoor hot tub on the decked veranda is a must.

PLUS POINT: If the weather turns chilly, close the floor-to-ceiling windows and get cosy in front of the wood-burning stove.

PRICE: £1,695-£3,595 per week through Unique Home Stays. uniquehomestays.com

BEST FOR A LARGE GROUP

17th-century farmhouse in Puglia

Gather a group of your favourite friends for a stay at the beautifully restored Masseria Petrarolo. This large 17th-century farmhouse has refined interiors created by British designer Alexander Waterworth, plus lavender-filled terraced gardens, olive groves and orchards. Accommodating up to 18 adults plus two children, facilities at the villa include a tennis court, play area, hammam, swimming pool and spacious terrace.

PLUS POINT: In addition to daily maid service, a housekeeper and cook can be provided, and there's nanny accommodation if needed.

PRICE: £9,916-£25,437 per week through SJ Villas. sjvillas.co.uk



CLOCKWISE FROM THIS PICTURE: SUNSET HOUSE IN KEFALONIA; AROS MARI VILLAGE IN CRETE; MASSERIA PETRAROLO IN PUGLIA



BEST FOR RURAL CHARM

Stylish mansion in Provence

Relax among the mature olive trees and cypress spires in the large, stately gardens of aptly named Villa Le Paradis, near Aix-en-Provence in southern France. The handsome villa sleeps up to eight (including two children), and has separate staircases to access the bedrooms in the left and right wings, making this a particularly good choice for a family travelling with grandparents.

PLUS POINT: The cinema room with large red-velvet sofas and a playroom will keep children happy.

PRICE: £3,075-£4,800 per week through CV Villas. cvvillas.com

BEST FOR ESCAPISTS

Hillside retreat in Kefalonia

Fall in love with Sunset House, a whitewashed hideaway near Fiscardo in the secluded north-west corner of this lush Greek island. Sleeping up to six, the villa has superb views over the Ionian Sea and a pool terrace planted with jasmine, oleander, bougainvillea and rosemary. The flagstoned, open-plan interior offers a cosy mezzanine bedroom and additional twin bedroom under the eaves.

PLUS POINT: It's only a 10-minute walk to the beach below the house, where there is also a small taverna.

PRICE: £891-£1,399 per person, per week, including flights and car hire through GIC The Villa Collection. gicthevillacollection.com

BEST FOR COSSETING

Fully staffed villa in Marrakesh

Relax in the spa or on your large daybed and enjoy the inclusive Dermalogica products and Moroccan argan oil beauty treatments as you unwind at the elegantly conceived Villa Alkhosama. Set on a private estate and only a 15-minute drive from Marrakesh's Medina, this two-bedroomed villa sleeps four people. The interiors are decorated in bold Moroccan colours and furnished with traditional, handmade furniture. Outside there is a 39ft pool, hammam and beautiful gardens with an olive grove.

PLUS POINT: Enjoy a meal of tajines, pastillas and kefta dishes prepared by the skilled local chef, or have your private chauffeur take you to the tourist sights, which is included in the price.

PRICE: From £1,500 per day based on four people sharing through Ezzahra. ezzahra-morocco.com