



Your views

A party home from home

Monday, April 28, 2008

Are you planning to hire out a bar for that big occasion? It's so last year. Those in the know are now going the extra mile(s), hiring out a property for a couple of days and inviting friends and family along. Here are some of our favourites...



Villa Aphrodite: Chill out as the Sun sets over the Aegean in Volos, Greece

The Clubhouse

Chamonix, France

Head to the [French Alps](#) and revel in your own mini New Zealandstyle adventure at Jonathan Downey's The Clubhouse, which was opened by the Milk & Honey and Match Bar guru four years ago.

Nestling in the shadow of Mont Blanc, The Clubhouse

is shagastically Bond villainesque. The rooms (sleeping 20) are decked out in matt black, luscious reds and faux fur, while there are flat-screen TVs, CD/DVD players and a mini-bar with sex toys in each room. The DVD library is also, ahem, pretty progressive.

Rental starts from €10,000 (£7,900) a week and you get your own chef and bartender. Activities include paragliding, ice climbing, white-water rafting, canyoning and mountaineering.

www.clubhouse.fr

La Bandita

Tuscany, Italy

Owned by former US music executive John Voightman, La Bandita gives you the impression you are truly in the middle of nowhere. Between Florence and Rome and just south of Siena, this farmhouse-cum-hotel is set in a 8sq km nature reserve with 360° views of the surrounding Val d'Orcia. Neighbours are the local sheep and sheepdogs – which are, apparently, direct descendants of wolves – and all you have to

do is turn up, relax and enjoy.

The [property](#) sleeps 16 and costs around €14,000 (£11,000) a week – a price that includes maid service, breakfast, access to a gourmet private chef, wireless internet, handheld GPS devices and mountain bikes.

www.la-bandita.com

Rozalejo Andalucia, Spain

No celebrity owners but when you've a property this gorgeous, it hardly matters. Rozalejo, just 55km from Malaga airport, is, in fact, two buildings: a converted olive mill and a newer property set in half a square kilometre of private Andalucian countryside.

There are beamed ceilings and whitewashed walls (pictured above), limestone floors, huge terraces and an infinity pool that seems to cascade into the valley below. Rozalejo comfortably sleeps 20 and, for €12,500 (£10,000) a week, you also get five DVD players, six flat-screen TVs, a pool table and a superb Bose sound system to really get the party started.

www.cvtravel.co.uk

Villa Aphrodite Volos, Greece

Most sunseekers tend to head to Greece for the islands of the Aegean and Ionian – which is good news for those who prefer the mainland. The seaside city of Volos, backdropped by the imposing Mount Pelion, is a perfect example and you can hike all morning and spend the afternoon on the beach.

Aphrodite is an incredibly stylish villa 15km from the nearest village and in the midst of 60sq km of Mediterranean forest. The property has two pools, tennis courts and huge verandas, perfect for chilling out as the sun sets. For about €17,500 (£14,000) a week, the property's two houses can sleep 14 people.

www.sanctuary-villas.com

Le Couvent d'Hérépian Languedoc, France

Le Couvent d'Hérépian is a renovated 17th-century convent consisting of 13 beautifully furnished suites (each with its own kitchen), a spa, a huge communal kitchen and The Cave cellar bar.

The serene setting in the High Languedoc park offers such activities as riding, waterfall climbing, canoeing and fishing. Hiring all 13 suites (sleeping 26) costs from €1,355.75 (£1,075) per night.

www.couventherepian.com

...AND BACK IN BLIGHTY

Cliff Barns: Cunning pun on the name of the good guy from Dallas, Norfolk's Cliff Barns has been voted among the top six places to stay in the world. From £3,000 per weekend, sleeps 18. www.cliffbarns.com

Alladale: Scottish Highland wilderness lodge and spa with stupendous views and loads of outdoor activities. From £2,000 per night, sleeps 16. www.alladale.com

Swinton Park: North Yorkshire luxury castle hotel set in 80 hectares. From £7,000 per night, sleeps 30. www.swintonpark.com

Woodhall Manor: Restored Elizabethan country house in Suffolk. From £1,760 per night, sleeps 24. www.woodhallmanor.co.uk

Casa Del Rio: This pad brings a slice of Tinseltown to South Devon. From £3,120 per week, sleeps 20. www.helpfulholidays.com

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