

The Ultimate Escape

Searching for a slice of heavenly home comfort with all the luxuries of a world-class resort? Look no further than a vacation villa.



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VILLA CORTEZ, LOS CABOS

Idyllic Oasis

On the southern tip of Mexico's Baja California Peninsula sits Los Cabos; a tropical slice of sheer heaven that is also home to a retreat of gracious splendour: Villa Cortez. Embracing the serenity and refinement of a privately owned hacienda, with all the high-end luxury and amenities of the world-famous resort One&Only Palmilla, this exclusive hideaway is as magnificent as it is elegant. Enjoy the expansive living space and four bedrooms each with its own ensuite, along with an office, private spa, 12-seat cinema and a fully equipped gymnasium, made complete with your dedicated fitness trainer, of course. Making panoramic use of the idyllic location, the living room wall retracts to connect the vast interior space to a long beachfront verandah where you can enjoy pre-dinner cocktails before dining in your own private space or visiting one of the hotel's award-winning restaurants – either way you'll be treated to a gourmet's paradise. There's an infinity-edge pool, whirlpool, fire pits, shower, day beds and lounge, a 24-hour butler service, a garment-pressing service, menus for linen, pillows, robes and aromatherapy, and a private villa cellar. And just in case you need a change of scenery (and perhaps a lobotomy), then you can hop on the One&Only Palmilla Catari Yacht, just waiting to whisk you away to wherever your heart desires. Sigh.

Villa Cortez sleeps up to 10 people, from \$13,859 per night, oneandonlyresorts.com »



VILLA JANE, ASPEN

Mountain Hideaway

Within easy reach of top-class skiing, this spectacular property is as impressive as the breathtaking snow-covered Aspen landscape. Covering 1,390 square metres, the incredible sense of space is taken to the next level by the vast windows letting in expansive views of the Colorado Rockies. As tempting as it might be to simply sit and stare, the luxury amenities will provide ample distraction.

As well as the spacious fireside lounges and dining areas, there is a bar, billiard room, cinema, gymnasium, and an outdoor Jacuzzi, as well as an indoor swimming pool with steam room, sauna and an indoor Jacuzzi for those not brave enough to take a dip in the great outdoors. Evenings are spent around the enormous fire pit, after which guests can retire to one of six ensuite bedrooms to dream about all of the skiing they would be doing if they could bear to tear themselves away from the cosy comfort of the modern luxury chalet. Villa Jane can sleep up to 12 guests, with prices varying greatly depending on the level of staff and services required. From \$13,325 per night. alpineguru.com



Room with a view | INDULGE

ANDARA VILLA, PHUKET

Island Paradise

Discover your own personal paradise at Andara Resort and Villas, nestled on a lush tropical hillside above Kamala Beach in Phuket, Thailand. Overlooking the endless blue of the Andaman Sea, this boutique hotel offers the pinnacle of tropical living with private infinity pools, world-class service, and exclusive, modern villa residences touched with Thai influence. Conceived to exist in perfect harmony with its breathtaking natural surroundings, Andara creates a seamless marriage between indoor and outdoor living while maintaining complete privacy through dramatic landscaping. This six-bedroom Ocean View Pool Villa enjoys beautiful vistas all day long, with plenty of space for a large family or to find your own quiet corner. The full-time housekeeping service takes care of everything during your stay, while the private villa chef will cook up sublime Thai and international meals as per your requirements. You're quite right; it really doesn't get much better than this.

The Ocean View Pool Villa, from \$5,235 per night, preferredhotels.com »



WOLGAN VILLA, NEW SOUTH WALES

Rural Retreat

Nestled beneath soaring sandstone cliffs that seem to change colour by the hour, Emirates One&Only Wolgan Valley resort offers the quintessential Australian bush experience, with a heavy dose of luxe alongside the abundant natural wonders. Located within a 7,000-acre conservation and wildlife reserve, guests share the space with free-roaming wallabies and kangaroos, and are woken each morning to the soft sounds of birdsong. Exploring the many nearby ancient trails through pristine bushland, whether on foot, horseback or as part of a 4WD safari, is encouraged to help guests fully immerse in nature and let the city pressures slip away. Of course, there's always the One&Only Spa wellness centre to help you out with that, too. Its six double treatment rooms all have majestic valley views to let in the tranquility of the bush. Accommodation at the resort consists of 40 private villas constructed from local timbers and stone, each with a private pool and spacious verandah. The jewel in the crown is the Wolgan Villa; a three-bedroom self-contained lodge for group getaways. From \$7,500 per night. oneandonlyresorts.com



VILLA LA CASSINELLA, LAKE COMO

Lakeside Dream

An online search for this property nets thousands of results that claim it is owned by Sir Richard Branson. The Virgin CEO himself was surprised when on a tour of Lake Como the guide pointed out the luxury property and announced it was his. "George Clooney is reputedly my next-door neighbour," Branson says bemusedly. "My wife Joan is very sad to report that this is untrue." There is still a chance that you could bump into Clooney during your stay at Villa la Cassinella, or Madonna, or Donatella Versace, or any number of celebrities who flock to picturesque Lake Como just an hour north of Milan. Accessible only by boat, the nineteenth century mansion has seven ensuite bedrooms, with a further two in the Terrace House, all decorated with antique Italian furniture and fine art. The villa also boasts a floodlit tennis court, heated infinity pool with reflective 22-carat gold tiles, a cinema, gymnasium, 30,000 square metres of gardens and full staff.

Available for up to 17 guests for a week. From \$197,500. myprivatevillas.com »

CASONA DON CARLOS,
EMERALD COAST

Seaside Sanctuary

The Emerald Coast, a land of lakes and volcanoes that stretches down the coastline of Nicaragua, is a rare unspoiled patch of paradise.

Wanting very much to keep it that way, Don Carlos Pellas, Nicaragua's first billionaire, set out to build the most private beach enclave in the country, even naming it after the Mayan word for 'secret', Mukul. He transformed a beachfront 48-kilometre stretch of land into a 38-room destination resort where artisanal craftsmanship,

luxury, and sustainability intertwine to form a utopian compound. Oh and there's also lots of local rum, cigars and art on hand to add some true local flavour. Casona Don Carlos is the

Pellas family's private retreat at Mukul and although they are often in residence, the lavish resort is also available to rent. Offering four bedrooms and an incredible 1,850-square-metre indoor/outdoor living space with soaring seven-metre-high ceilings, the property also boasts a private pool and direct beach access.

From \$4,025 per night. mukulresort.com ■

