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Best Villa Rental Agencies

These days, many villa rental agencies double as personal concierges, organizing private tours of museums, hands-on cooking classes, and more. These experts have you covered.

From January 2015 By Travel + Leisure Staff

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[See Essential Tips for Villa Rentals](#)

Europe

United Kingdom

London Perfect: Most of Sarah Conway's 32 apartments and houses are exclusive, and they're located in some of the city's best neighborhoods (Kensington, Notting Hill, Chelsea, and Mayfair, among others). The company's regularly updated blog shares the team's latest finds.

Standout: The sleek, white-and-beige Hornton House is situated on a bustling Kensington street (three bedrooms; \$3,692 a week). [888/520-2087](#).

Loyd & Townsend Rose: All 62 Victorian manses, castles, and cozy cottages in England, Scotland, and Ireland are fully staffed. Agents are more than happy to help you arrange, say, a private tour of Althorp, the childhood home of Princess Diana.

Standout: Just 15 minutes north of Perth, the Scottish Tower of Lethendy, which dates back to 1570, is surrounded by 50 acres of gardens. The price includes all meals and a full bar for up to 16 people (eight bedrooms; \$39,967 a week). [44-1835/824-642](#).

Suzanne B. Cohen & Associates: The founder has personally inspected each of the company's 342 manor houses, cottages, and apartments, which are scattered throughout the British countryside. The company also has a strong portfolio in Italy.

Standout: In England's Cotswolds, the 17th-century, three-story Broadwell Farm sits on 280 working acres (five bedrooms; \$2,779 a week). [207/622-0743](#).

Ireland

Adams & Butler: Siobhan Byrne-Learat's team of 10 manages a private portfolio of 150 castles and houses owned by aristocracy throughout Ireland and has a knack for arranging excursions based on themes such as gardens or antiques. The company also has listings in Scotland, England, and Kenya.



Photo: Courtesy of Airbnb

Standout: The 1780 Shanagarry House has a large kitchen and is located next to the famed Ballymaloe Cookery School, in County Cork (six bedrooms; \$4,550 a week). 800/894-5712.

Spain

El Sol Villas: Andalusia, Catalonia, the Basque Country, the Costa Brava, and Ibiza—Mary Vaira has scoured each destination to handpick this collection of haciendas, apartments, and castles (she also has several Italy listings). Coming soon: Butler at the Door, a service that will fully staff your villa upon request.

Standout: Masía Antonio manor, just a half-hour from Barcelona in Sitges, dates back 250 years and has a 1,700-square-foot swimming pool flanked by wooden lounge chairs (10 bedrooms; \$9,000 a week). 800/474-5765.

Spain Select: More than 300 properties—chic apartments in Madrid; Mediterranean-facing villas in Ibiza—are hidden away in the country's most beautiful corners. Airport transfers and pre-arrival grocery shopping are standard, and each villa is attended by a property manager who lives nearby.

Standout: The classic Andalusian-style Carmen de los Moriscos, in Granada, looks directly on the Alhambra palace (three bedrooms; \$2,520 a week).

DON'T MISS

Essential Tips for Villa Rentals

France

Hosted Villas: Each of the 45 villas in Provence, Aquitaine, the Loire Valley, and Burgundy has a local host who will offer you insider tips on, say, the best places to eat or the ideal time to visit the local market. Agents are candid about what's not shown in photos, such as nearby church bells that chime on the hour.

Standout: In a Provençal hilltop village, the four-story stone Bastide de Ventoux has wraparound terraces and an elevator (six bedrooms; \$18,300 a week). 800/374-6637.

Guest Apartment Services Paris: This collection's 60 stylish properties (many of them affordable studios) are located in historic neighborhoods, primarily Île St.-Louis; most face courtyard gardens or shop-lined streets.

Standout: The balcony of the classically decorated Acacia overlooks the Seine with views of Notre Dame (studio; \$2,457 a week). 33-1/44-07-06-20.

Ville et Village: The majority of Carolyn Grote's 150 apartments, farmhouses, and châteaux are located in Paris, the Loire Valley, Provence, and the Riviera; she also has listings in Italy (Tuscany, Umbria, Lazio, the Veneto) and in Barcelona.

Standout: A farmhouse in St.-Rémy, France, has its own garden and is within walking distance of a charming market (four bedrooms; \$3,814 a week).

Haven in Paris: Since opening in 2006, this agency has built an archive of listings ranging from a cozy studio in Montmartre to a modern two-bedroom in St.-Germain-des-Prés to a Haussmannian four-bedroom near Canal St.-Martin.

Paris Luxury Rentals: Fashion editors stay in the Triangle d'Or during the shows. Their pick (and ours): the two-bedroom George V Suite—with crystal chandeliers and Louis XV-style furniture.

Paris Perfect: We're partial to rentals in the Seventh Arrondissement, some of which feature unobstructed views of the Eiffel Tower, original parquet floors, and spacious wraparound balconies.

Italy

Unique Properties & Events: Most of the 83 ultra-stylish properties from this London-based firm are exclusives. The portfolio concentrates on countryside estates and high-design beach villas in France, Spain, Italy, and Portugal. Special experiences—such as a visit to Empress Sissi's apartment in the Royal Palace of Venice—are the norm.

Standout: Villa Gesomino, set above Marina Piccola on Capri, has a heated pool lined with Murano-glass tiles (five bedrooms; \$34,876 a week). *44-20/7788-7815*.

The Best in Italy: Countess Simonetta Brandolini d'Adda has more than 80 Italian villas on offer—many owned by her friends and relatives. She'll also open up her little black book to guests for private experiences, such as behind-the-scenes access to the Palio di Siena horse race or a private tour of the Vatican.

Standout: The recently restored Casa Querceto, in Chianti between Florence and Siena, is surrounded by olive groves and five acres of hiking trails (four bedrooms; \$14,000 a week).

Homebase Abroad: The company's inventory of more than 65 countryside properties across Italy ranges from seaside estates to farmhouses. The concierge offers experiences such as a private dinner with Michelangelo's David at the Accademia di Belle Arti museum.

Standout: A secluded retreat on the Tuscan coast, Villa Bianca has enormous bedrooms and a staff of five, including an on-site chef (eight bedrooms; \$32,500 a week). *781/639-4040*.

Italy Perfect Vacation Rentals: The Byrne sisters have stayed in each of their collection's 130 villas and apartments in Rome, Florence, Venice, and along the Amalfi Coast; most are set in historic districts or buildings.

Standout: The Rome Flaminio apartment, located an easy walk from the Spanish Steps, has a terrace (two bedrooms; \$3,335 a week). *888/308-6123*.

Think Sicily: The London-based company's entire portfolio of more than 120 properties in Sicily and Puglia—set along the sea, in the countryside, and in town—is privately contracted. On-the-ground concierges and managers are available around the clock. The company recently expanded to the Ionian Islands, where it has 17 properties.

Standout: Baia dei Turchi, situated just north of Siracusa, has a Turkish bath and is a two-minute walk from the beach (seven bedrooms; \$9,170 a week). *800/490-1107*.

IC Bellagio: Andrea Grisdale has intimate knowledge of each of her 86 listings, and works closely with owners to maintain quality control. More than 40 staff members are at the ready to arrange activities such as an aperitivo crawl through Venice in the company of a Venetian countess.

Standout: Villa dei Sogni, near the town of Bellagio, is on a lush promontory; the furnished terrace overlooks Lake Como (four bedrooms; \$12,025 a week). *39-031/952-059*.

Croatia

Croatian Villas: U.K.-based Croatian Villas has more than 350 beautiful houses set along the water and on hilltops all over the country, from Dubrovnik to the Istrian peninsula, which many travelers call the less-touristed (and more affordable) Tuscany. It also has listings in Slovenia, Montenegro, Bosnia, and Oman.

Standout: An apartment in the Old Town of Korčula with an ancient Roman column (one bedroom; \$780 a week).

Turkey

Simpson Travel: Founder Graham Simpson's mission is to deliver an authentic Turkish experience, whether that means eating fresh fish in Akyaka or sailing off the small seaside village of Çirali. Of the company's 35 villas in Turkey, 90 percent are exclusive. Villas are also on offer in Greece, Corsica, Majorca, and Mauritius.

Standout: On the outskirts of Islamlar, the whitewashed Firefly sits on secluded Patara beach (four bedrooms; \$6,720 a week). *44-20/8392-5858.*

Greece

Elysian Holidays: Outstanding personal service is the hallmark of owner Maxine Harrison, who has been in the field for nearly 25 years. Meals are often waiting for clients upon arrival, and activities might include scuba diving off the Greek island of Sérifos, or a cooking lesson led by chef Pierluigi Gentilini of Il Mulino di San Michele, in Emilia Romagna.

Standout: In the Cyclades archipelago, the whitewashed Tzia Summer House has sea-facing balconies and an infinity pool (four bedrooms; \$12,770 a week). *44-1580/766-599.*

Five Star Greece: With more than 100 houses and estates around the country, Five Star Greece prides itself on authentic experiences, whether you want Mykonos glamour or barefoot beach luxury.

Standout: On Corfu's northeast coast, Corfu Estate House bridges the privacy of a villa (with its own jetty) and the services of a hotel (seven bedrooms; \$30,300 a week).

White Key Villas: All 130 properties—most of which are scattered throughout the Cyclades, Peloponnese, and Ionian islands—are on the beach or have views of the sea. Up next: the agency is expanding to less-visited corners of the country (Patmos, Sífnos, Attica, and the Saronic Gulf).

Standout: On Corfu, Villa Aethra has two infinity pools and outdoor showers. Daily housekeeping and a private chef are included (seven bedrooms; \$26,400 a week). *30-210/721-5530.*

Continent-Wide

Abercrombie & Kent Villas: This veteran tour operator has villas in Italy, France, the U.K., Greece, Portugal, and Spain, plus ski chalets in Switzerland, France, and Austria. Tapping into its extensive on-the-ground network, AKVillas organizes a range of activities—the most popular of which are in-villa cooking classes with notable chefs or local nonnas.

Standout: Casa Abelha, with its spacious, farmhouse-style kitchen, is set in Portugal's Algarve and is a short drive from the market town of Loule (four bedrooms; \$3,947 a week). *800/652-8413.*

Carpe Diem Luxury Travel: Marina Gratsos lists villas throughout Europe, including Croatia, the Czech Republic, Switzerland, and Austria; most interesting are the 25 properties in her private collection.

Standout: Designed by Bulgarian architect Krastan Zapryanov, the modern Villa Gella—a retreat in the Rhodope mountains of Bulgaria—has its own spa (six bedrooms; \$11,500 a week). *4-7780/700-754.*

Dream & Charme: With more than 500 listings, the Milan-based agency has a formidable presence in Greece, Italy, and Switzerland. Most villas have live-in managers to supervise staff and services. Dream & Charme doubles as a tour operator, so booking flights and rental cars is a seamless process.

Standout: A restored Tuscan mansion, built in the 1400's by the Medici family, is set on a hill covered in vineyards (six bedrooms; \$20,000 a week).

U.S. & Canada

California

Beautiful Places: The Sonoma-based agency specializes in northern California's wine country, with 35 handpicked properties that range from vineyard cottages to hilltop estates. It also has a robust

portfolio in the Caribbean and Italy and a small collection in New York's Hamptons.

Standout: Located between Napa and Sonoma, Villa nel Bosco has a working vineyard with Syrah grapes (four bedrooms; \$9,400 a week).

Hawaii

Hawaii Hideaways: About half of the 250 properties on Maui, Kauai, Oahu, and the Big Island are located on the beach. A small but dedicated staff

based in each destination can arrange activities that include private yacht charters and excursions with chefs to local farms.

Standout: Every room at the Sea Glass, in Kapalua, has a view of the mountains or the ocean (four bedrooms; \$20,750 a week). 866/962-5642.

Tropical Villa Vacations: Most of the Maui-based company's villas and homes—there are 43 in all—are within walking distance of the ocean. Owner Irene Anne Aroner personally draws up each day's housekeeping schedule, while a former head concierge of the Four Seasons Maui at Wailea is always on call.

Standout: Azure Azul at Wailea Beach Villas has direct access to the resort's two pools and eponymous beach (three bedrooms; \$9,065 a week). 888/875-2818.

British Columbia

Entrée Destinations: This Vancouver-based operator has an outstanding portfolio of villas at British Columbia's Whistler Resort that range from small châteaux to opulent ski chalets. Some properties have ski-in, ski-out access, while activities such as hikes with a helicopter drop-off can be arranged.

Standout: Massive cedar trees and fireplaces with log mantels give Whistler Private Home a secluded, mountain-home feel. Other amenities: a theater room and a spa with its own waterfall (four bedrooms; \$28,400 a week). 888/999-6556.

Mexico

Earth, Sea & Sky Vacations: Each of the 100 villas in Cabo comes with airport transfers, rental-car delivery to your door, and welcome cocktails. Hoping to book a restaurant reservation or a snorkeling excursion? Your local caretaker can arrange it all.

Standout: Villa Turquesa is on a cliff above Pedregal Beach and has a 730-square-foot infinity pool and a patio (nine bedrooms; \$35,000 a week).

Journey Mexico: This collection of more than 700 Spanish-colonial mansions, traditional haciendas, and modern beachfront retreats is spread across Mexico, with the most offerings in the Riviera Maya, Puerto Vallarta, and Los Cabos.

Standout: Set within Tulum's lush Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve, the light-filled Casa Nalum is within swimming distance of a pretty barrier reef (three bedrooms; \$22,848 a week).

Caribbean

Villas by Linda Smith: Linda Smith stays in every property she considers for her collection, and she even designed two of the 90 villas in her portfolio. Each house is staffed with a chef, butler, housekeeper, and gardener.

Standout: Teak, Italian tile, and Persian rugs decorate Fortlands Point, overlooking Jamaica's Discovery Bay, where coral reefs teem with parrot fish (seven bedrooms; \$19,000 a week).

LaCure Villas: The global brand has 250 properties throughout the Caribbean islands, along with an extensive collection in Europe, South Africa, Costa Rica, Thailand, and Bali, Indonesia. Its concierge service can arrange for private chefs, nannies, and island tours.

Standout: Divine Villa Roaring Pavilion offers every service imaginable and is on a Jamaican beach featured in the 1962 James Bond film, *Dr. No* (five bedrooms; \$33,600 a week). 800/387-2726.

McLaughlin Anderson: More than 100 listings run the gamut from cottages to estates, and are located in the U.S. Virgin Islands and the British Virgin Islands as well as Grenada.

Standout: 100 Pond Bay, on Virgin Gorda, in the British Virgin Islands, has three pools (five bedrooms; \$7,000 a week).

St. Barth Properties: Owner and part-time St. Bart's resident Peg Walsh and her staff regularly inspect the company's 160 villas, which are located either on the beach or on the hillside.

Standout: Rent Steve Martin's Villa Au Soleil, with a lily pond and a two-tiered infinity pool overlooking Baie de St. Jean (four bedrooms; \$13,570 a week).

Central & South America

Brazil

Brazilian Beach House Co.: Rio penthouses, beachfront villas, and private-island estates make up this small collection of 50 properties. Each has daily housekeeping and a concierge.

Standout: The fully staffed, palm-shaded Casa Azul feels secluded despite its location on a shared stretch of sand in Trancoso (six rooms; \$20,790 a week). 55-21/2225-9476.

Costa Rica

Mead Brown: The majority of the 45 villas, all located along Costa Rica's Pacific coast, are exclusive. Agents are locals who have tested every excursion they book, whether it's snorkeling off the white-sand

beaches of Tortuga or ziplining through the Herradura highlands rain forest.

Standout: Your only neighbors at Villa Malibu 8, in the tiny town of Bahia Herradura, are scarlet macaws and howler monkeys (four bedrooms; \$15,000 a week). 888/744-6599.

Continent-Wide

Oasis Collections: A third of the company's 1,200 properties are in Buenos Aires; the rest are beachfront retreats, chic apartments, and sprawling mansions in Punta del Este, Uruguay; Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, Brazil; and Bogotá, Cartagena, and Medellín, Colombia.

Standout: The 1860 Casa Carlos Calvo, in Buenos Aires's lively San Telmo neighborhood, has crystal chandeliers and a private rose garden (four bedrooms; \$4,000 a week). 631/731-1677.

Blue Parallel Villas: This Buenos Aires-based outfit has 20 villas and penthouses in Uruguay, Brazil, Argentina, Guatemala, and the Galápagos. Prior to guests' arrival, properties are stocked with food, champagne, and fresh flowers.

Standout: In José Ignacio, Uruguay, the El Bosque estate has handcrafted wood furnishings and a pool that faces seven manicured acres (six bedrooms; \$26,500 a week). 800/256-5307.

Beyond

Africa

Explore, Inc.: Most of the villas listed by owner Cheri Briggs, who spends half the year in Africa, partner with safari lodges to ensure the best possible service, but all come with their own staff, vehicles, and guides. Her portfolio covers South Africa, Tanzania, Kenya, Zambia, and Botswana.

Standout: Spot elephants and buffalo from the acacia-shaded Sirikoi lodge, on a northern slope of Mount Kenya (three bedrooms; \$37,800 a week). [970/871-0065](tel:9708710065).

New Zealand

Touch of Spice: Based in both Auckland and Queenstown, this team has the North and South islands covered, yet is small enough to provide one-on-one service to clients. About two dozen town houses are centrally located, while rural retreats sit on postcard-worthy pockets of land.

Standout: The Residences at Mountain Landing has an on-site staff and a private jetty facing the Bay of Islands, and it's a stone's throw from a series of secluded beaches (four bedrooms; \$13,488 a week). [64-3/450-0855](tel:6434500855).

Global

Villas & Apartments Abroad: With 500 properties around the world, the company has one of the widest ranges of listings of any we've seen. Still, it provides personalized service, setting up, say, VIP seats to a concert in Florence or a surprise show by Shaggy in Jamaica.

Standout: Terra-cotta tiles, exposed beam ceilings, and a fireplace round out Sarageto, a country house near Siena (four bedrooms; \$6,370 a week).

Red Savannah: Fancy a croissant-making lesson from a French baker in St.-Rémy? The bespoke tour outfitter and rental company—founded in 2011 by a former director at Abercrombie & Kent—has listings in Europe and the Caribbean (Mustique, Antigua, and Jamaica), and gets you supremely local access. [855/468-5555](tel:8554685555).

Time & Place: From a private tour of Versailles to red-carpet access at Cannes, the concierges at this 200-property agency can make it happen. They're also on-hand to give one-on-one advice about where to get the best local cuisine and other insider tips. New additions include villas in Vail, Colorado, and St. Barts. [866/605-3542](tel:8666053542).

Kid & Coe: With curated rentals perfect for toddlers to teens, Kid & Coe is the new go-to site for jet-setting parents. There's a flat in London that has a sandbox in the yard, and recently added houses in Trancoso, Brazil, are perfect for city kids who want to experience big, open spaces. [212/905-6065](tel:2129056065).

Eleven Experience: This growing collection has ski-focused properties in Le Miroir, France, and Crested Butte, Colorado (with Iceland on the way). Colorado's Scarp Ridge Lodge comes with a personal chef, a professional guide, and access to private backcountry terrain via a luxury snowcat. Each property is pre-stocked with top-of-the-line gear, such as custom Wagner skis, for every member of the family, and a closet stuffed with Patagonia and Marmot clothing so you can shop for an extra layer or socks from your room. [970/349-7761](tel:9703497761).

One Fine Stay: Since launching in 2009, One Fine Stay has stuck to its vision: finding only the chicest apartments and houses in the world's top cities—so far London, Paris, New York, and Los Angeles. (Expansion to two destinations each in the U.S. and Europe is in the works.) Stark white linens, Kiehl's toiletries, and an iPhone loaded with insider tips are found in every rental, delivering that luxury hotel feel.

Private Residences by SLH: The 42 private chalets, villas, estates, and yachts in this portfolio are what you'd expect from Small Luxury Hotels of the World. Currently in 15 countries, with the majority in France and New Zealand, they come fully equipped with a chef and concierge. The best part: a booking automatically makes you a highest-tiered member of the Club of SLH.

BeMate: If the idea of giving up the lobby concierge, daily housekeeping, and 24-hour luggage storage is too much for you, consider booking one of the 1,500 apartments on this new peer-to-peer site from Room Mate Hotels. Each individually owned unit is walking distance from one of the brand's hotels or partners.

Welcome Beyond: This rental company is the brainchild of two brothers from Berlin, and is a testament to their passion for architecture and design. They hand pick every property, currently available in 38 countries around the world. You can rent everything from the unusual (say, a yurt in Varen, France) to the magical (a historic castle in Portugal or a modern chalet in South Tyrol, Italy).

Spaces 42: You won't find anything rustic among the properties from this TK-based rental company—it's all contemporary, all the time. The majority of rentals are in Europe, though the inventory also includes homes in Africa (Kenya and Morocco), Asia (Goa, Bali, and Koh Samui), and the Americas (including Miami and Bahia, Brazil).

Club-Based Rentals

It takes a lot of up-front cash to join a membership-based company—but the payoff can mean a personal vacation advisor, 24/7 on-the-ground concierge service, and even savings. Three we love:

Inspirato with American Express: Two membership-based clubs—Portico and Inspirato—recently combined to form this new venture, the largest of its kind in the world. It offers luxury properties in more than 100 destinations around the world. For \$7,500–\$17,500 up front (plus \$3,100 annual dues), members get unlimited access to the club's 230 Signature Residences at nightly rates from \$295 to \$6,350, plus experiential travel opportunities and VIP treatment at celebrated events worldwide.

Getaway 2 Give Collection: These villas and yachts, spread across 30 countries, are aimed at travelers who want to give back. To join the club, there's a one-time \$15,000 fee, half of which is tax-deductible and goes to a nonprofit of your choice. Members pay reduced rates (between \$395 and \$1,195), with five percent going to charity. Over \$800,000 has already been raised.

Exclusive Resorts: If you want to invest in a second home without committing to one place, this club is for you. Memberships cost \$170,000 for 20 days of travel a year (at \$1,097 a night), which can be shared with and transferred to family. Most of the 300-plus properties have four or five bedrooms—ample space for large gatherings. In 2014, the company announced the launch of the Gateway card, which lets you purchase three to 21 days of travel at a fixed rate of \$1,550 to \$1,995 per night. The company also introduced short-term Choice memberships, ranging from three to 10 years (regular memberships are for 30 years). Depending on membership length, average nightly rates are between \$1,430 and \$1,817 per night, inclusive of initiation fees and annual dues.

A Note on Pricing: Rates given are for high season; they often drop dramatically in low season.