

Privacy is the new luxury

Boutique hotels are doing better than ever but the rental revolution is taking off. We find out why holiday homes and villas are so popular

Text Michelle Snaddon



ABOVE The magnificent views across Walker Bay from Khumbula, which has to be the most luxurious and private whale watching spot in the world. LEFT AND OPPOSITE Another hidden gem: Base2stay in London offers a stylish synthesis of boutique and budget hotel accommodation, and serviced apartments.

Photographs Michelle Snaddon, courtesy of Holiday Homes Africa, Base2stay, Eleven Sedgemoor Road



HOME FROM HOME

Renting a home away from home is no longer about arriving to find a beach cottage filled with hand-me-downs. Times have changed. We're now talking designer five-star luxury, from the quality of bed linen to kitchens fit for a team of chefs. And with all the tempting choices out there, it's not surprising that travellers who frequent hotels on work trips, are wanting something different (but no less luxurious) for their own holidays.

For years, many South Africans have tried international home exchanges or rented cottages, villas or farmhouses in Ireland, Tuscany and Provence, but now they're bringing the trend home. SA currently has some of the most exciting new properties on offer in the world. Priced to appeal to both local and international markets, they are also good news for anyone who has ever had to book a holiday for demanding relatives or schlepped from one guesthouse to another checking out accommodation for friends flying south for weddings, holidays and city stopovers.

The trick is to enlist the help of a reputable local company such as **Holiday Homes Africa**, www.holidayhomesafrica.com. With over 300 hand-picked and individually inspected properties countrywide, they owe their success to their impeccable personal service. You can expect to pay anything from R3 100 to R10 300 per week for an apartment that sleeps four people, while luxury beach homes range from R5 500 to R29 500 per week.

Holiday Homes Africa recently secured a spectacular property called **Khumbula**, www.khumbula.co.uk, at De Kelders (40 minutes from Hermanus), where you can literally lie in bed and watch the whales frolicking in the sea just off the rocks below the house. The ultimate in private luxury, Khumbula has spectacular views across Walker Bay to Hermanus and the Overberg mountains in the distance. Its UK-based owners are passionate about their holiday home but have chosen to rent it out because they only visit a few times a year. The house is built on two levels, each of which can be rented separately. Each has its own designer kitchen and spacious living area, so that you never feel cramped even when the house is booked to capacity – it sleeps 12 in six luxurious double rooms with five *en-suite* bathrooms. Every bedroom has a view (essential for whale watching) and leads onto a balcony or the huge deck with its rim-flow pool – the perfect place to chill out with friends after a wedding or to escape to for a week's holiday.

The rental trend has even created a demand for business accommodation, especially in the cities. New properties such as the privately owned **Eleven Sedgemoor Road** in Camps Bay allow business and pleasure to mix in style. It offers four suites set on two levels, with a gourmet kitchen and two stunning living areas leading to a deck and pool with glorious views of the mountains. Rates: R2 500 per suite per night; Penthouse Suite R4 000 per night, including breakfast. For complete privacy, the entire villa can be hired for R10 000 per night, www.11sedgemoor.co.za.

Some properties such as **Bishop's View** in Kalk Bay go the extra mile, offering a gym, sauna, yoga room and a full-time housekeeper. There are business facilities so busy execs can keep in touch, and families can enjoy the beach and village >

HOME FROM HOME

just two minutes' walk away. Rates: R2 000 to R2 500 per night, www.capevillarental.com.

Many top-end hotels such as the Cellars-Hohenort in Constantia and The Plettenberg in Plettenberg Bay have also recognised the trend and have responded by building private villas on their grounds, giving guests access to all hotel amenities (although self-catering is also an option).

Rates for the **Lookout** three-bedroom *en-suite* villa at The Plettenberg, www.plettenberg.com, come in at a cool R12 600 in the summer months, while the two-bedroomed **Beach House** costs R10 500 per night in high season. **The Madiba Villa** at the Cellars-Hohenort, www.cellars-hohenort.com, is a three-bedroom home from home that'll set you back R12 000 per night in high season.

Responding to the gap in the market, London has produced a new breed of reasonably priced 'apartment

Book an aristocratic villa or a private Greek island

hotels' such as **Base2stay** (www.base2stay.com), which was spotted by Gary Searle of St Leger & Viney as the doors opened (and just in time for the *HL* team to stay there during 100% Design). It combines the ease of booking into a hotel with the individuality of a serviced apartment, whether you're staying for a day or a month. It's a smart concept at a smart price. At between £80 and £175 per night, it's great value for a convenient location and decor that far exceeds the cost.

So whether your dream holiday takes you to an aristocratic villa on the Italian lakes or a country farmhouse in Argentina, you're in luck. You can book (see 'Rental resources' on the right) a cave house in Cappadocia, a glamorous, Hollywood-style home in Sicily complete with helipads and butlers or a great self-catering location in Croatia at a reasonable rate (especially if you're booking for a large group).

Many owners or agencies will also organise additional activities from cookery courses to olive picking, cycling and even hot-air ballooning.

Once you've decided whether it's a city apartment, country farmhouse or beach cottage you fancy, you need to find a reliable agent and consider the location carefully. Remote may sound romantic at the time, but it can lead to cabin fever if you can't just slip out for dinner because you have to drive back up a dark, twisting mountain road afterwards. Likewise, a riad in Marrakech with its own chef, masseuse and hammam may sound like heaven but it's really worth checking that it is a peaceful sanctuary despite its proximity to bustling markets. But chances are that you'll find a hidden gem and be planning your next villa-rental holiday before the first one is over. ☐

FROM THE TOP Mix business with pleasure at Eleven Sedgemoor Road in Camps Bay; Bishop's View in Kalk Bay, where contemporary architecture meets old-world charm.



RENTAL RESOURCES

Looking for a glam villa, alpine chalet or farmhouse

overseas? Holiday Homes Africa is linked to 52 000 properties. Call 0861-333-456 or email info@holidayhomesafrica.com. These websites also list some fabulous options: www.cottagetcastles.com, www.scottdunn.com, www.globalartichoke.com, www.wimco.co.uk, www.base2stay.com, www.croatianvillas.com, www.indiv-travellers.com, www.thinksicily.com, www.corsicanplaces.co.uk, www.greekislandsclub.com, www.hiddenturkey.com, www.fivestargreece.com, www.thevillabook.com. Many sites focus on France, Italy and the Mediterranean but some do have worldwide listings.

Want to register your holiday home? Costs vary but Holiday Homes Africa charges an annual fee of R500 that is deducted from the first rental week sold for your holiday home each year, plus commission on bookings. An extra fee is payable if you want your home managed and maintained by the company. This is a great service if you live far away and one of the main benefits of listing with a reputable company. Visit www.holidayhomesafrica.com for more info.