

Strategies



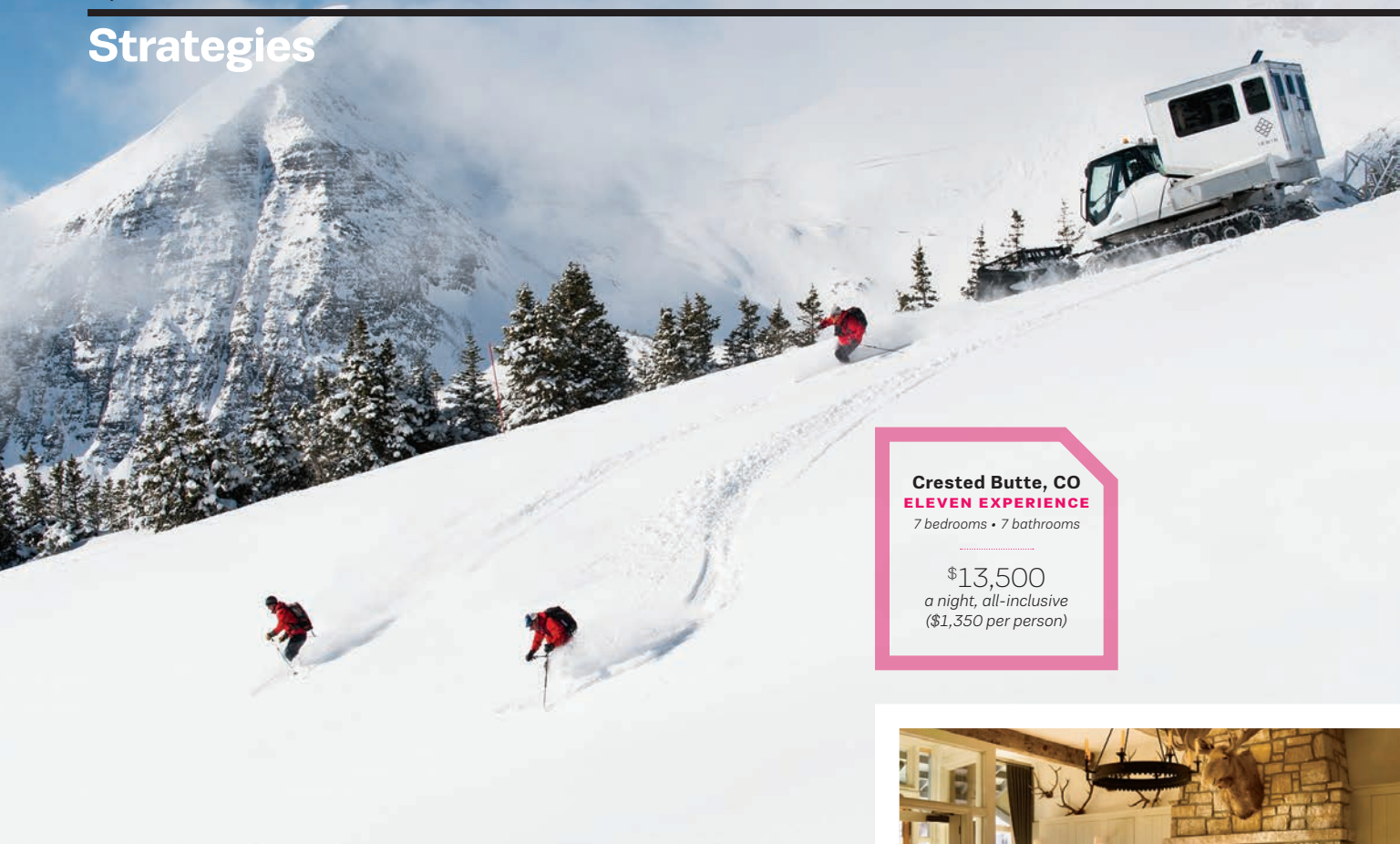
**Kjósarhreppur,
Iceland**
AIRBNB
3 bedrooms • 1 bathroom
\$235 a night
(\$78 per room)

T+L'S GUIDE TO **VILLA RENTALS**

Whether it's a Tuscan farmhouse, a loft in L.A., or a modern Icelandic retreat, the right vacation rental lets you live like a local—if only temporarily. Here, the tools you'll need to find the place that suits you best, from the top agencies for experiential travel to tips on avoiding online scams.

Reported and written by Brooke Porter Katz, Bree Sposato, and Henley Vasquez.

Strategies



Crested Butte, CO
ELEVEN EXPERIENCE

7 bedrooms • 7 bathrooms

\$13,500
a night, all-inclusive
(\$1,350 per person)

EXPERIENTIAL RENTALS

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



Outdoor Enthusiast

ABERCROMBIE & KENT VILLAS The veteran tour operator also has a collection of villas with local managers who plan excursions ranging from sailing the Balearic Islands to spotting wild howler monkeys in Panama's jungle terrain. akvillas.com.

HAWAII HIDEAWAYS

Hike Hana's Seven Sacred Pools, take a private whale-watching tour, or explore a black-sand beach—all care of a company that specializes in beachfront properties in Maui, Kauai, Oahu, and the Big Island. hawaiihideaways.com.

HOMEBASE ABROAD

Want an immersive getaway in the Italian countryside? This agency can take you fishing off Amalfi, biking

through Chianti, or walking in the Apuan Alps. homebaseabroad.com.



Thrill Seeker

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. elevenexperience.com.

MEAD BROWN COSTA RICA VACATION RENTALS

Each of the company's 52 villas is set on Costa Rica's Pacific coast—the ideal location for those who prefer surfing, ziplining, and sportfishing to sunbathing. meadbrown.com.

COURTESY OF ELEVEN EXPERIENCE. ILLUSTRATIONS BY RADIO

SICILY, ITALY
4 bedrooms • 3 bathrooms
thinksicily.com



\$143

PALM SPRINGS, CA
5 bedrooms • 5 bathrooms
luxuryretreats.com



\$300

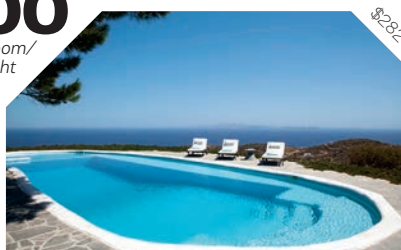
WHAT YOU'LL GET

\$300
per room/
night



\$216

LAMU, KENYA
3 bedrooms • 3 bathrooms
exploreafrika.net



\$282

SÍFNOS, GREECE
7 bedrooms • 8 bathrooms
whitekeyvillas.com



SPOTLIGHT HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF WHEN RENTING

1. DO A BACKGROUND CHECK
Speak to someone (other than the owner) who has seen the villa. Some agencies let you connect with past guests on Facebook; if not, ask for references—and follow up with the owner to address any red flags. And make sure to request the safety audit (smoke alarms; balcony heights), which should be recent and readily available.

2. KNOW THE LAW
For overviews of rental regulations in many U.S. cities, check the Short Term Rental Advocacy Center website (stradvocacy.org). Some rentals may not be legal; walk away if the host asks you to disguise your presence in any way.

3. READ THE FINE PRINT
The contract should address the location, size, and amenities; cancellation policy; and cleanliness. If your credit card doesn't offer coverage for vacation rentals, consider buying travel insurance.

4. BOOK SECURE
Most sites are middlemen, so they can't control for double bookings, phishing, and Web scams. Always use a secure payment system—never wire money. And if a deal seems too good to be true, it probably is.



Foodie

IC BELLAGIO With 83 listings across Italy, owner Andrea Grisdale is both villa specialist and travel advisor. She can arrange private truffle hunts on a Tuscan farm and gelato tastings. icbellagio.com.

RED SAVANNAH Fancy a croissant-making lesson from a French baker in St.-Rémy? The bespoke tour outfitter and rental company with listings in Europe and the Caribbean gets you supremely local access. redsavannah.com.

UNIQUE PROPERTIES & EVENTS This agency specializes in high-design European villas. Guests at new additions in Cap Ferret, France, can tour Bordeaux vineyards usually closed to the public. uniquepropertiesandevents.com.



Culture Buff

THE BEST IN ITALY The 80-villa agency (with recent ones in Positano and near Lake Como) can organize off-hours visits to the Sistine Chapel and Uffizi Gallery. thebestinitaly.com.

LOYD & TOWNSEND ROSE Thirty fully staffed mansions and castles in England, Scotland, and Ireland set the stage for mini-operas on the lawn, cabaret acts, and other performances. ltr.co.uk.

TIME & PLACE A private tour of Versailles; red-carpet access at Cannes—the concierges at this 200-property agency can make it happen. timeandplace.com.

VILLAS & APARTMENTS ABROAD This global agency with 500 properties always delivers, whether it's VIP seats to a concert in Florence or a surprise show by Shaggy in Jamaica. vaanyc.com.

For more of our favorite villa-rental agencies, visit travelandleisure.com/articles/best-villa-rental-agencies.

ROOMS FOR RENT

See how the leaders in short-term apartments stack up.

	Who they are	Inventory	Best in	Stay here	
Airbnb airbnb.com	This pioneer of the sharing economy lets owners rent everything from tree houses to castles, but apartments are still its mainstay.	500,000 houses and apartments	Barcelona, New York City, Paris.	A sunset-facing loft in Los Angeles's hip Downtown arts district, with pool and gym access (\$188).	
FlipKey flipkey.com	On this TripAdvisor-owned peer-to-peer site, renters can post photos and link to Facebook to see if any friends have added reviews.	240,000 houses and apartments	Barcelona, Paris, Rome.	A two-bedroom in Barcelona's Sants area, with a well-stocked kitchen and washer/dryer (\$214).	
Guest Apartment Services Paris guestapartment.com	This Paris-only site offers a luxury-hotel experience: concierge, maid service, and limo pickups upon arrival.	60 apartments	Île St.-Louis and the Notre Dame district.	A two-bedroom flat in the Fifth with a terrace overlooking the river, walking distance from the Louvre (\$570).	
HomeAway homeaway.com	The company has been buying up rental sites in Australia, New Zealand, and Asia. It also has a new luxury-rental micro-site.	545,000 houses and apartments	Barcelona, Florence, New York City, Paris.	A three-bedroom loft in downtown Manhattan, set right above Great Jones Spa (\$750).	
Italy Perfect italyperfect.com	A family business whose owners—a pair of sisters—personally inspect each listing.	120 houses and apartments	Florence, Rome, Venice.	A terraced, one-bedroom penthouse in Rome's Prati neighborhood (\$214).	
9Flats 9flats.com	Europe's answer to Airbnb, this German company has instant, last-minute booking (up to 8 p.m. the night before).	104,135 nearly all apartments	Barcelona, Berlin, London, Rome.	A three-level, four-bedroom apartment in Amsterdam, near the central Leidseplein (\$615).	
Oasis Collections oasiscollections.com	A South America-focused group that handpicks its properties and is known for nightlife perks such as entry to private clubs.	700 mostly urban apartments	Bogotá, Colombia; Buenos Aires; São Paulo.	A stylish one-bedroom with an outdoor deck in B.A.'s leafy Palermo Hollywood (\$102).	
Onefinestay onefinestay.com	Its curated selection of high-end apartments all come with an iPhone full of insider tips on where to shop, eat, and drink.	1,500 about half apartments	London, Los Angeles, New York City, Paris.	An antique-filled, three-bedroom Georgian home in the hip Shoreditch area of London (\$377).	

FROM TOP: COURTESY OF AIRBNB; COURTESY OF FLIPKEY; COURTESY OF GUEST APARTMENT SERVICES PARIS; COURTESY OF HOMEAWAY; COURTESY OF ITALY PERFECT; COURTESY OF 9FLATS; COURTESY OF OASIS COLLECTIONS; COURTESY OF ONEFINESTAY

Strategies

DALMATIA, CROATIA

5 bedrooms • 5 bathrooms
hostedvillas.com



\$435

LONDON

1 bedroom • 1 bathroom
londonperfect.com



\$456

WHAT YOU'LL GET

\$500
per room/
night



\$350

VIRGIN GORDA

4 bedrooms • 4 bathrooms
beautiful-places.com



\$456

KANGAROO ISLAND, AUSTRALIA

3 bedrooms • 2 bathrooms
carpediempluxury.co.uk

USA & CANADA TOURS

More of the World for Less



More of the World for Less
GATE 1
TRAVEL

United States

Southern Florida with Key West
New Orleans & Cajun Country
National Parks, Mt. Rushmore,
Yellowstone & Grand Teton
Grand Canyon, Bryce Canyon &
Zion National Parks
New England Fall Foliage
Classic Alaska

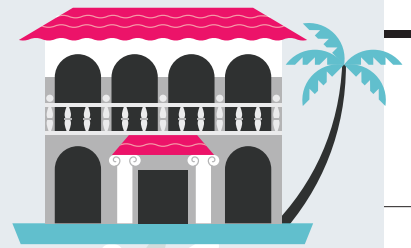
Canada

Nova Scotia &
Prince Edward Island
Canadian Rockies

Book By Mar 31 & **SAVE \$200 pp.**
Use Promo **TLNA200**

888-812-1590 • gate1travel.com

*Offer of \$200 per person valid on any 2014 USA or Canada Escorted Tour or Tour & Cruise vacation. Promotion is not valid on existing reservations.



SPOTLIGHT 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. Four we love:

PORTICO

Launched by Exclusive Resorts (see below) in 2012, Portico **leases more than 250 residences, most in North America and the Caribbean**; nearly half are affiliated with resort partners. A \$5,000 initiation fee and annual dues of \$2,500 grant members access to an unlimited number of days across all properties, with discounted rates ranging from \$300 to \$5,000 a night. porticoclub.com.

INSPIRATO WITH AMERICAN EXPRESS

Newly partnered with T+L's former parent company, this club provides **luxury-hotel amenities in more than 150 estates around the world**. For \$7,500 up front (plus \$3,000 annual dues), members get 42 weeks of travel without blackout dates at nightly rates from \$295 to \$6,350. inspirato.com.

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. g2gcollection.com.

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. exclusiveresorts.com.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY OF HOSTED VILLAS; COURTESY OF LONDON PERFECT; COURTESY OF CARPE DIEM LUXURY TRAVEL; DON HEBERT/COURTESY OF BEAUTIFUL PLACES; ILLUSTRATION BY RADIO

Get advice on the best vacation rentals in our Twitter chat on Tuesday, February 11, at 2 p.m. EST. Follow @travandleisure and #TL_Chat.



MODERN FAMILY

Brooklyn, NY

KID & COE

2 bedrooms • 2 bathrooms

\$330 a night
(\$165 per room)

With curated rentals perfect for toddlers to teens, Kid & Coe (*kidandcoe.com*) is the new go-to site for jet-setting parents. We caught up with founder—and mom of two—Zoie Coe.

INSPIRATION

When my son was one, we took a long trip to Sydney. I realized a hotel wouldn't do, but after finding an apartment, I still had to locate rental baby gear, toys, everything a family home would have.

WHAT TO ASK

Parents should find out what floor the apartment is on and if there's an elevator. Ask about pool gates, and location. A house full of toys in London is less crucial than proximity to attractions.

THE IDEAL FAMILY RENTAL

A cozy and clean place with an open kitchen, a garden, and an extra bedroom to accommodate either the babysitter or grandparents. And no white leather sofas!

NEW FAVORITES

There's a flat in London that has a sandbox in the yard. We recently added some houses in Trancoso, Brazil. As a New York City mom, I want my children to experience big open spaces.

MANY LUXURIES. ONE LOVE.

If your dream vacation for two includes pristine beaches, indulgent spa treatments, the finest island cuisine and endless world-class activities — then let us welcome you to Couples Resorts, the highest rated all-inclusive resorts in the Caribbean.



COUPLES RESORTS®

COUPLES.COM

