

# Greek getaway

A diverse selection of new properties makes Greece even more attractive for a villa holiday, finds **Alice Barnes-Brown**



Waking up with the Aegean breeze drifting through the bedroom window, a breakfast of fresh Greek yoghurt and a choir of cicadas in the garden – holidaying in a self-catered villa is an easy way to experience the glories of Greece.

And villa companies are responding to record demand for Greece this year – CV Villas has seen a 35% surge in bookings for the Greek islands. *Travel Weekly* gets the lowdown on what's new in the world of Greek villa holidays.

## WHERE TO GO?

Some areas are welcoming a particularly exciting crop of new properties. Solmar Villa Holidays' 18-villa Greek expansion this year focuses on the coasts around Thessaloniki – specifically, pristine Halkidiki and the lengthy shores at the foot of Mount Olympus. Both have easy flight access, but the latter remains largely undiscovered by British travellers.

Crete is Greece's second-largest island and a perennially popular option, with its spectacular mountains, delectable ➤

PICTURE: Stephen Hughes



FROM TOP: Traditional street in Paros; Assos village in Kefalonia PICTURES: Shutterstock/Altug Galip, Izabela23

cuisine, warm hospitality and world-class beaches.

Pete Brudenell, managing director at CV Villas, says: "Crete is our biggest growth area – it's doing particularly well with the trade, up 120% this year."

Villa Select is adding Crete as a destination this year, with a collection of nine villas, dotted along its northern coast.

The Ionian region – which includes Corfu, Kefalonia and Lefkada (Lefkas) – is also seeing an uptick in interest. Simpson Travel, for example, has introduced 26 glitzy villas in Greece this year, including a handful in the Lefkada area, within easy reach of Preveza airport.

Hannah Naylor-Vane, Simpson Travel's head of trade sales, says: "Lefkada has become an increasingly popular destination due to the variety of accommodation within walking distance of the beaches and restaurants, which we know are popular with Simpson clients."

## WHY VILLAS?

In Greece, the brilliant blue sea is never too far away – and many of the new villas are close to the beach. Julie Blake, chief executive of Solmar Villas, says: "Beachside villas are sought after and we even have a dedicated landing page just for these, as they are frequently searched for."

# SIX of the BEST

## NEW VILLAS



### Rising Sun, Paxos

A boat hop from Corfu is petite Paxos and its picturesque, pine-covered landscapes. The

newly renovated Rising Sun villa is at the heart of the island, so clients will be able to go for leisurely wanders in the forest whenever they choose – or simply admire it from the infinity pool.

**Book it:** CV Villas offers a seven-night stay starting from £796 per person, based on six people sharing three bedrooms, including flights and transfers. [cvvillas.com](http://cvvillas.com)

### Ariadne, Lefkada

This villa offers a sociable holiday in lovely Lefkada, featuring a welcoming open-plan layout, two alfresco dining areas plus an outdoor barbecue. A modern Scandi-chic vibe reigns indoors, and for the rare rainy days, there's even a sauna.

**Book it:** Simpson Travel offers a seven-night stay in June from £889 per person, based on eight sharing. The price includes flights and car hire. [simpsontravel.com](http://simpsontravel.com)



### Joy of the Sea, Crete

Overlooking Crete's dazzlingly blue Mirabello Bay and the islet of Spinalonga – setting of Victoria

Hislop's *The Island* – this new offering from Villa Select offers panoramic views of both from the comfort of the huge living room.

**Book it:** Villa Select sells a seven-night stay from £3,498, for a party of six. The price includes flights on May 17 and luggage. [villaselect.com](http://villaselect.com)



### Bianco Boutique Villa Adam, Rhodes

A two-minute walk from the crystal waters of Pefki Beach is

this sleek three-bedroom villa. Inside, it's cool and modern, while outside is a large L-shaped pool and terrace – complete with stepping stones, outdoor barbecue and even a hammock – which makes for an Insta-friendly hangout.

**Book it:** SPL Villas sells a seven-night stay for a family of four from £7,553, including flights on August 10. [splvillas.com](http://splvillas.com)

### Villa Hades, Paros

Hades might be the god of the underworld, but this holiday home is a Parian paradise. Wood, rattan and whitewashed walls keep the place looking Cycladic, as does the wavy-edged infinity pool, which comes with whirlpool jets.

**Book it:** From £10,395 for a seven-night holiday (for a party of 12), for stays in the shoulder seasons – April-May and September-October. [oliverstravels.com](http://oliverstravels.com)



### Villa Melite, Olympus Riviera

Next to a sandy beach and with views across the garden to

the imposing Platamon Castle, this compact pink house is ideal for a family of four looking for an easy-breezy holiday.

**Book it:** Solmar Villa Holidays offers a seven-night stay from £706 per person (based on four sharing), including flights on May 7. [solmarvillas.com](http://solmarvillas.com)

As Greece’s potential for hiking and nature-based holidays becomes better known, suggest clients stay in traditional villages, which are rarely far from the beach. The Greek mainland excels at this: two of Solmar Villas’ new properties are in the rustic village of Litochoro, featuring chalet-style buildings and quaint fountains, within a 10-minute drive of the beach and a short walk to Mount Olympus National Park.

**WHO TO SELL TO?**

If you pitch it right, a villa holiday in Greece can appeal to anyone. Families will love the space and creature comforts, couples will enjoy the privacy, while groups of travellers are a growing demographic, especially older adults travelling together. CV Villas’ Brudenell says: “It’s such good value, as you split everything between so many people.”

The cost-of-living crisis has seen value become an increasingly important USP for villa holidays.

**WHAT’S NEXT?**

Many Greek destinations are served by direct flights from the UK, but as the high season sees seats booked up well in advance, harder-to-reach islands could soon have their moment in the sun.

More and more British travellers are interested in places such as Paros, Paxos and Skopelos, which are typically reached via a flight to a nearby island, then a ferry.

However (and wherever) your clients like to holiday, rest assured there’ll be a home-from-home waiting for them.



**TW** FROM ABOVE: Bianco Boutique Villa Adam, Rhodes; Villa Hades, Paros PICTURES: Harry Zampetoulas

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