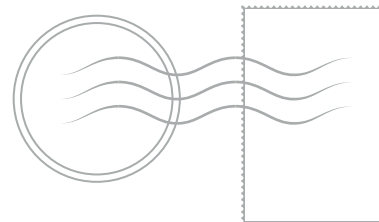


DESTINATIONS

VILLA HOLIDAYS | SICILY

POSTCARD

Sicily



Baldwin Ho connects with his base chakra at a historic villa in the spectacular Sicilian countryside

After a tumultuous 18 months or so, any invitation to a luxury holiday that promised my own *Eat, Pray, Love* moment – courtesy of in-villa yoga and wellness activities aplenty – was always going to receive an enthusiastic ‘yes’ from me.

Quicker than you can watch the film, I had packed my bags and flown off to the sunny island of Sicily. Staying at La Dimora del Santo, featured in CV Villas’ high-end Above collection – which also includes Greece, Spain, Portugal and the Caribbean – I felt like the king of the manor.

The villa comes with a concierge who can arrange activities – the sky’s the limit in terms of what they can set up for your clients – but I went for the more practical side of things with some physical and spiritual nourishment.

I dabbled in pasta making, although my mismatched cavatelli was never going to threaten the job security of our masterchef *nonna*. Instead, mine resembled a bargain-basement Play-Doh set.

The highlight was the meditative yoga, which we practised in picture-perfect locations. One moment, we were in the serene Indian pavilion, the next, the stupendous library, where I had to concentrate fully to avoid knocking over priceless ceramic pieces.

But this wasn’t a power yoga session that demanded I burn off all my pasta calories. Nor was I forced to try a handstand scorpion pose. This was about contemplation and restoration, rather than pulling my back muscles attempting an ill-fated crow pose or sweating profusely in a Lycra onesie.

Ultimately, the greatest thing about staying in a private villa is it’s a judgement-free zone. You could eat pasta every night and your private chef wouldn’t bat an eyelid. You can enjoy your yoga class by the serene swimming pool or practise in pyjamas in your bedroom.

With flights year-round, there’s no need to panic when your client asks for a winter-sun destination that is easy to fly to and has few restrictions. Send them here and they can have their *Eat, Pray, Love* experience too. **TW**



ABOVE: Indian temple at La Dimora del Santo
RIGHT: Baldwin joins a yoga lesson

PICTURE: Henry Woide

BOOK IT

CV Villas offers a week at La Dimora del Santo villa from £9,554 per week, sleeping up to 25. Use of the spa is included. A 90-minute yoga lesson for two people costs €100, and a cooking class is €200. cvinfos.com

