

ASK THE experts



Villa holidays are booming with clients in search of space and seclusion, reports **Natalie Marsh**



PICTURES: Shutterstock; Alex Pullin

1 “Villa holidays have needed to change less than other holidays”

CV Villas features 225 villas in Greece among a portfolio of 900 properties that also spans Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, Croatia, Morocco, Sri Lanka, the US and the Caribbean. Many of the villas are exclusive to the operator, and can be packaged up with flights, car hire or other transport.



Tristan Symondson,
managing director, CV Villas

After the events of the past year, customers are understandably cautious about contact with others. A villa holiday offers privacy and seclusion to enjoy some quality time with family and friends in your own space. By their nature, villa holidays have needed to change far less than other holiday types to adapt to coronavirus guidelines and we have implemented measures to ensure that our villa holidays are as safe as possible, including offering a no-contact rep service and food deliveries in many of our destinations.

The Greek islands in particular are an excellent choice for a villa holiday as the beaches are stunning, there are lots of options to get off the beaten track, and families and couples alike love the choice of activities such as sailing, stand-up paddleboarding and horse riding. We have seen increased demand for our waterside villas in Greece as we have a large number of villas with direct access to the water, private jetties or those right on the beach.

For families, I’d recommend Kalokairi Beach House (pictured) in Corfu which has direct access to a sandy beach, table tennis and restaurants you can walk to. Alternatively, Iviscus in Paxos is a lovely family villa with a large pool and table tennis and just a 200m walk from Gaios for restaurants and watersports, plus a great ice cream place! For couples, I’d recommend Villa Glaros in Paxos.

2 “We have seen more demand for seaside and secluded villas”

Oliver’s Travels has offered luxury villa and chateaux holidays with concierge service for the past 16 years. Its portfolio includes 637 properties across Greece and Cyprus and also stretches across the UK, Europe, the Caribbean, Bali, South Africa, Mexico, the Maldives and beyond.



Ravi Sabharwal,
co-founder, Oliver’s Travels

We have seen more demand for seaside and secluded villas, multigenerational holidays, and a lot more enquiries from those looking to rent a villa with working space and excellent Wi-Fi so they can work while abroad. Greece remains a popular destination for 2021.

The main advantage of a villa is the privacy – having your own pool and facilities – along with limited contact with other people. We have provided our homeowners with enhanced cleaning guides and also encourage contactless check-in where possible.

Mainland Greece is great for clients wanting to stay in a villa, as there are plenty of locations that are just as beautiful and have the same atmosphere as the islands. Sivota, for example, has a pretty harbour with restaurants, lots of watersports and beaches.

I would recommend Villa Honeycomb in Halkidiki for families. It has large gardens, cot beds and stair gates can be provided, and its sheltered Blue Flag beaches are safe for swimming and snorkelling.

For couples, I’d recommend Villa Cerulean in Sivota (pictured), as it’s set in a romantic spot and has a luxurious indoor hot tub as well as a private pool, which is the perfect place to admire beach views.

3 “You can have the holiday you want but stay in control”

Biblio Travel is a Cyprus-specialist tour operator launching this month in the UK market, with charter flights from Gatwick, Manchester, Birmingham and Heathrow. The company, led by former Olympic Holidays chief executive Clare Tobin, has pledged price parity for agents and expects 90% of sales to come via trade.



Tina Hodge,
sales director, Biblio Travel

We need to build customers’ travel confidence back up again and a villa means they can have the holiday experience they want but maintain control over their own environment. Villas offer more space than your typical hotel room, so whether it’s just the two of you travelling or an extended family group or party of friends, you have the room to relax around the pool, dine alfresco or enjoy a movie together in the living room. There are also benefits for families: if children need a nap or go to bed earlier than the adults, you are not all in one room trying to stay quiet.

One of the joys of renting a villa is that everything can happen at your own pace. If you want to enjoy some nights cooking in the villa or firing up the barbecue, you can, but you also have the choice to head out to nearby restaurants or tavernas to enjoy everything Cyprus has to offer. Restaurants in Cyprus are usually excellent quality; you get a lot for your money and we find that the Cypriots are very welcoming with kids.

We work with a number of fantastic villas and villa complexes in Cyprus, so it’s hard to pick favourites, but some of the ones we recommend are Green Valley Villas, Coral Bay Villas and Coralina Dream Villas. These are luxurious, modern and very spacious, with private pools and barbecue areas, and come well-equipped with everything you need to make the perfect holiday.