

Party time

Hen and stag weekends might not be your number-one seller yet, but there's no reason you can't get in on this lucrative game, writes Laura French

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Mention the words 'hen' or 'stag' and there's a solid cluster of resorts that would immediately balk. But while the traditional dos are still going strong, hen and stag weekends are no longer just about butlers in the buff, blow-up dolls and beefy men sporting bridal veils.

Well sometimes they are, but they're being combined with higher-brow activities - cultural weekends, spa breaks, ski trips and week-long getaways to far-flung destinations, for example - helping you bag some extra bookings. Here are some easy-to-sell ideas to suit all budgets and tastes.

► SAVE

The night out: Didn't think you could earn commission by

booking clients a night out? Think again. Super Break offers Friday Night Out packages designed exactly for this kind of thing, including a package to Leeds that combines a night staying at The Met Leeds with a welcome drink, three-course meal at ASK and entry to Pryzm nightclub. Suggest staying on the next day if they've got energy - there's plenty to see, from the Victorian, mosaic-tiled shopping arcades to the Henry Moore Institute, showcasing modern sculptures from around the world.

Book it: The Leeds package costs from £65 per person. superbreak.com/agents

The fly-and-flop: For larger hen or stag groups wanting to flit away into the sun, suggest renting a private property. CV

Villas recommends the stylish Villa Bona Estada in Majorca for a modern, good-value option sleeping up to 12. There's a garden complete with private pool, table tennis, terrace and built-in barbecue, and it's handily located a five-minute drive from Alcudia - meaning buzzing nightlife, beaches and the historic old town are within easy reach. **Book it:** A week starts at £2,315 (£192 per person for 12 sharing), including maid service. Flights are extra. cvvillas.com

► SPEND

The spa weekend: Hen groups seeking some spa time will find plenty of choice, but for a luxury escape that combines a secluded getaway with

proximity to the city, suggest the Culloden Estate & Spa in Belfast. There's a dedicated Ladies Spa Escape package - including an exfoliation treatment, Espa aromatherapy facial, personalised massage and lunch for £190 - as well as afternoon tea packages. And when they're done being pampered there's a raft of things to do beyond the estate, from *Game of Thrones* tours in the region and trips to Bushmills whiskey distillery, to walks on the North Downs Coastal Path and a night on the town. **Book it:** Rooms from £125 per person per night on a B&B basis. hastingshotels.com

The city break: No hen and stag list would be complete without mentioning the all-important city break. Tui suggests



FAR LEFT:
Culloden
Estate &
Spa, Belfast

LEFT:
Las Vegas

→ a quick hop to Dubrovnik for those after a big weekend with a cultural twist. Attractions include the Troubadour jazz cafe, where guests linger outside tapping feet to live bands; Copacabana Beach, home to jet skis, banana boats and other water sports; and the historic old town, where cocktail joints and wine bars line elegantly tiled streets.

Book it: A week's half-board at the four-star Grand Hotel Park, close to the beach and a short bus ride from the old town, costs from £706, including flights from Gatwick on June 16. tui.co.uk

The party holiday: For those seeking even more revelry, Travel 2 recommends Marbella.

Among its raft of trendy spots is the adult-only Amare Marbella Beach hotel, which boasts a private beach area with a live DJ set every afternoon. "The beach is just a short walk to Marbella's old town, and it's a short taxi or bus ride to Puerto Banús, famous for its buzzing nightlife," says Lauren Ross, product and commercial manager for Europe at Simply Luxury by Travel 2. "There's lots to do in the day too: cocktail-making classes, go-karting, catamaran cruises and exclusive pool parties."

Book it: Four nights in a 'keep the secret' room with breakfast costs from £549 per person, based on two sharing and including flights from Gatwick, return private transfers and UK lounge passes. travel2.com

“**For clients looking for a proper blowout, nothing quite beats the entertainment capital of the world**”

► SPLURGE

The ski trip: For clients with a decent budget who are looking for something a little different, suggest a jaunt over to the Alps.

There's a plethora of resorts that cater to the fun-loving après crowd, from famous spots such as Meribel, Val Thorens and Tignes – and their party-loving La Folie Douce outposts, where DJs pump the tunes and revellers dance on the tables – to lesser-known areas such as duty-free Livigno in Italy.

For one of the liveliest, Inghams recommends St Anton, party capital of Austria's Arlberg ski area. You'll find plenty of chalets to choose from – point big groups towards Chalet Alpenheim, which has 16 rooms and is in the heart of the action, with skiing literally from the doorstep.

Book it: Six nights at Chalet Alpenheim costs from £1,034 per person based on eight travelling in January 2020. The price includes flights from Gatwick, transfers and catering (buffet breakfasts, afternoon tea and evening meals with complimentary wine). agents.inghams.co.uk

The Vegas weekend: For clients really looking for a proper blowout, nothing quite beats the entertainment capital of the globe. World-class clubs, gold-splashed casinos, glittering shows and extravagant shopping make this a no-brainer. Commissionable extras such as limos, pool parties and helicopter flights are available to jazz things up that bit more.

Funway Holidays offers a package including a limo party bus and entry to pool parties

at The Venetian and Hard Rock Hotel and Casino from £35 per person, so you can boost your pockets while they empty theirs – unless they win big, of course. That's one way of seeing out singledom in style.

Book it: Funway Holidays offers three nights' room-only at the MGM Grand from £885 per person, based on two sharing, including American Airlines flights from Heathrow on June 13. funway4agents.co.uk 

Best of the rest

► **James Villas** suggests the Algarve for a sunny escape that isn't too rowdy. Recommend the seven-bedroom Villa Vieira (*below*), set in a tranquil spot in the village of Balaia, for bigger parties. Seven nights starts at £309 per person, based on 14 sharing, including flights from Gatwick on May 4.

► **Premier Holidays** recommends the five-star Grand Hotel in Jersey for a hen spa weekend close to St Aubin and its quaint old town, harbour and restaurants. A three-night break in March starts at £368 per person, including a 60-minute spa treatment, flights and breakfast.

► Prague is proper stag territory, with excellent nightlife, cheap prices and cultural sights. **Super Break** offers three nights' B&B at the three-star Beranek Hotel, right in the centre, from £143 per person, excluding flights.



PICTURES: SHUTTERSTOCK; SUPER BREAK