

**1 LOPUD 1483, CROATIA**

Francesca Thyssen-Bornemisza, one of the art world's most influential figures, has spent 20 years restoring this 15th-century monastery on sleepy Lopud island. She hasn't held back, raiding her billionaire family's stash of old masters and priceless Renaissance pieces to sit alongside her choice of contemporary art and our furniture, to exquisite effect. The medicinal gardens, now replanted by Thyssen-Bornemisza's favourite shaman, are probably Europe's most decadent yoga sala. A speedboat captain will whisk you to secret Adriatic coves.

**Details** From £7,330pp for ten, full board (scottidunn.com). Fly to Dubrovnik

**2 ISOLA SANTA CRISTINA, ITALY**

This is the summer to see Venice without a stranger's elbow in your ribs. Keep things crowd-free on this private island, anchored in the Venice lagoon, where your pink-washed mansion comes with 75 acres of orchards and vineyards, a few pheasants, a chef and a boat captain to ferry you the 30 minutes to St Mark's Square. Handmade modern furniture and neutral colours act as the perfect foil for the building's natural grandeur and Swarovski chandeliers. Your hardest choice? Where to sip your prosecco: poolside, under an apricot tree or on the rooftop deck.

**Details** From £1,065pp for 17 (mrandsmrsmith.com). Fly to Venice

**3 THE RESIDENCE AT THE LOREN, BERMUDA**

Over the top? Just a bit. This sprawling four-storey mansion has six vast balconied bedrooms (including a master suite with not one but two enormous en suite bathrooms), a 300ft-long private, pink-sand beach, rocky cliffs and 5,500 acres of prime waterfront land. Its mood board will have rattled the recaps of the island's rather conservative hospitality scene: it's high-energy South Beach, with walls of windows, white and gunmetal-grey decor and world-class art by Alan Shields, whose work also hangs in the National Gallery of Art in Washington DC. You can dip into its sister hotel next door when you tire of all that privacy.

**Details** From £4,249pp for 12, B&B (brownandhudson.com). Fly to Hamilton

**4 CONVENTO DEI CAPPUCCINI, ITALY**

The Hollywood director George Lucas owns this 16th-century monastery overlooking romantic Lake Trasimeno in Umbria. Safe to say the design is quite a step up from the Mos Eisley Cantina in Star Wars. Bedrooms have their own sitting areas accessorised with chunky wooden rafters, stone fireplaces and traditional furniture. There's an epic gallery library for celebration dinners, a frescoed chapel, a 20m pool and a seven-hole golf course between the pencil pines in 60 acres of glorious gardens. Of course, there's a plush cinema too, even if that makes for a busman's holiday for Lucas and past guests such as Robert De Niro and Steven Spielberg.

**Details** From £3,827pp for 22 (merioncharles.com). Fly to Florence

**5 ARUJU, KENYA**

Inspired by the rock-hewn churches of Ethiopia and the 12th-century Thoronet Abbey in Provence, considered the jewel



\*Prices are year-round or low season/ high season for a weekly rental, self-catering, excluding flights, unless otherwise stated



# VILLAS FIT FOR THE JET SET

Lockdown savings burning a hole in your pocket? *Susan d'Arcy* picks the best A-list rentals, from an Italian monastery to a Bermudian mansion



of Cistercian monasteries, this is probably Africa's most desirable safari lodge. Its vaulted archways, triple-height wooden doors and turf-topped roofs are complemented by exposed stone interiors in earthy tones with copper accents, bespoke furniture and tactile antiques from around the globe. There is a 2:1 staff-to-guest ratio, including rangers who'll lead horseback rides to spot the big five in the surrounding game-rich Kenyan Highlands, and a mixologist for rooftop sundowners gazing at Mount Kenya. It is a "safari" too, with complimentary massages by a Samirani healer. **Details** From £7,655pp/£8,930pp for six, all-inclusive (africatour.com). Fly to Borana via Nairobi

**6 HERDADE DA COMPORTA VILA, PORTUGAL**

Comporta is one of Europe's chicest coastal towns, a wide-sand magnet for stealth-wealth travellers, and this boho complex epitomises its carefree élan. Set in a five-acre estate, its six bungalows are decorated in a palette of Tiffany blue, white and warm woods. They sit behind

sand dunes that lead to a cappuccino-coloured beach. It's private, technically, but try telling that to the storks and flamingos. A stay is about reconnecting to simple pleasures so there's a mini football pitch, a fruit and vegetable garden, a spa yurt, a meditation tepee and, um, a helicopter pad. **Details** From £2,295pp/£3,212pp for 16 (theluxurytravelbook.com). Fly to Lisbon

**7 DOMAINE DES COTEAUX, FRANCE**

It would be a shame to be teetotal at this elegant hilltop mansion in the Luberon. It sits within the award-winning Chêne Bleu



biodynamic vineyard owned by Xavier Rolet, the former chief executive of the London Stock Exchange. Your liver may twinge at how close it is to other famous estates such as Châteaufort du Pape. Although you won't need alcohol to go misty-eyed at the beauty of its vaulted dining room and peaceful medieval cloisters. These compete with 21st-century additions, including a three-tiered swimming pool. If your thirst for oenological knowledge remains unquenched, the domaine runs five-day wine-tasting courses. **Details** From £1,525pp/£1,608pp for 17 (redsavannah.com). Fly to Marseilles

**8 NIKOLU PRIVATE RESIDENCE AT VELAA, MALDIVES**

Jennifer Lopez, Shakira and Paris Hilton are among those who have stayed at this palatial four-bedroom villa, which naturally comes with its own butler. Its double-height rooms are a lesson in "polite luxury", with added warmth from bamboo, stone and rattan. Discretion is the watchword – although the vaulted living area is hardly subtle. Then there are the circular bathtubs with mood lighting.