



A NIGHT VIEW of the Six Senses Con Dao

For those who cherish the intimacy and familiarity of their own home but are enchanted by the amenities, services and conveniences proffered by leading hostleries, a private hotel residence could be the answer. **Peter Swain** samples the *grands crus* of this new property phenomenon

## NO PLACE LIKE HOME

**T**he moment Luke Taylor and his family were greeted by their very own Friday, as Six Senses calls its major-domos, when they first set foot in their new six-bedroom “absurdly high spec-ed” barefoot paradise in Soneva Kiri a year ago, they knew they’d made the right call. The London-based global consulting firm CEO had bought the largest of the Six Senses-created private

villas in the Bay of Thailand sight unseen. He hadn’t deemed it a gamble. “We’d stayed at the spectacular Soneva Fushi in the Maldives for several years and we love the brand, so it was an easy decision.” With all the hedonistic facilities of a grand hotel, such as a private open-air cinema on the beach offering popcorn and chilled champagne, at their disposal, Taylor happily describes the lifestyle as “like Robinson Crusoe on steroids”.

This pleasing combination of private ease and hotel efficiency is one that more and more holiday-home buyers are embracing, as property-buying options proliferate at elite hotels around the world. “It’s the best of both worlds,” observes Taylor. “We love entertaining in style, so we can bring out three other families and hit the ground running – 25 for dinner every night without lifting a finger. Friday liaises with the chefs ➤



**HAYMAN ISLAND**  
on the Great Barrier Reef will  
reopen in August, following  
damages sustained during the  
recent tropical cyclones

– Japanese, Indian, French or Thai – and if I want the sommelier to kit out the wine room, he'll appear in 10 minutes."

A similar experience awaits at other newly unveiled Six Senses outposts in the Maldives and Vietnam. **Six Senses Laamu Residences** ([sixsenses.com](http://sixsenses.com)), for example, is taking advantage of a change in Maldivian law, encouraging foreign property ownership. On Olhuveli Island, towards the south of the archipelago, 15 beachfront residences, starting at \$2.5 million, tick all the tropical boxes, with spa "treatment nests" seamlessly merging into the island's natural vegetation, the standout feature. On a beach of powdery-white sand, beneath forested mountains full of chattering monkeys, arbiters of exotic taste are also lusting after the newly

opened **Six Senses Con Dao**, designed to resemble a traditional Vietnamese village, with 15 private villas currently available.

Another perfect paradigm for this new property genre is the **Rosewood at Jumby Bay** ([jumbybayrealestate.com](http://jumbybayrealestate.com)), on a private island off Antigua. Attracted by the location, Rosewood's exemplary reputation and the hawksbill turtles nesting on the beach, some travellers are so seduced by the island's green lifestyle that they decide, like lotus-eaters, to stay. The relationship of the hotel to the real estate is like that of courtship to marriage: in time, it is hoped, familiarity breeds commitment. Twelve of the 56 palatial retreats are currently for sale in the €3m-to-€20m bracket. Similarly priced, equally scenic but not yet open for opulent business, the **Aman**

**Residences at Porto Heli** ([portohelicollection.com](http://portohelicollection.com)) is rising like Venus, a secluded cove or two along from the glorious amphitheatre of Epidauros in the Peloponnese, south of Athens. The ancient Greek Sybarites, originally from Sybaris in what is now southern Italy, would surely appreciate the fleshly delights promised by the ineffably chic Edward Tuttle-designed 38-pavilion hotel in a locale that already attracts the Cap Ferrat crowd. Ensuring maximum privacy, the 30 private bougainvillea-clad villas are strung across a rolling hillside overlooking the cerulean waters off Korakia Beach.

The right choice of architect and interior designer is key for this new breed of travel abode, so for its **Private Residences in the Seychelles** ([residences.fourseasons.com](http://residences.fourseasons.com)), Four Seasons has used award-winning Singaporean architect Cheong Yew Kuan. He has artfully "wrapped" the 28 villas, priced from \$7 million, around the rocky landscape, while the Hirsch Bedner-designed interiors combine authentic Seychellois style with the likes of Bose home entertainment systems. Private dining, a sensuous hilltop spa and a helipad to whisk you over to Mahé complete this bountiful vision of 21st-century nirvana.

Paradise of another sort can be found in the vogue for sport-based vacations featuring the likes of skiing, sailing and golf. So a destination like **Club Med's La Plantation d'Albion** ([villas-chalets.clubmed.com](http://villas-chalets.clubmed.com)) in Mauritius, which has superb water sports, tennis facilities and several nearby championship golf courses, is right on trend. Blending Zen styling with typically chic French interiors, 40 two- and four-bed villas have been built, priced from €1.2 million. "This is one of ➤

**THE BAGLIONI MARRAKECH** (right)  
These four-and-five room villas were  
inspired by an ancient Moorish castle

**FOUR SEASONS PRIVATE  
RESIDENCES SEYCHELLES**  
(below right) These residences  
cover one to two hectares of land

**JUMBY BAY** (below)  
Located three kilometres from Antigua,  
this hideaway is on a 120ha private island







our elite five-trident resorts, and with a few very select private villas on the side, it's a model we'll be rolling out across the Far East over the next decade," Chairman Henri Giscard D'Estaing explains. And budding gauchos will appreciate the two polo fields and superb equestrian facilities at Grace Hotels' new development, **La Estancia de Cafayate** ([laestanciadecafayate.com](http://laestanciadecafayate.com)), set amongst the vineyards of the Calchaquí Valley in northwest Argentina. Twenty \$1.7m villas are being built around an 18-hole golf course, with a spa, clubhouse, 24-hour concierge service and majestic mountain views soothing body and spirit after a day in the saddle. Admirable nearby golfing facilities are also a draw for the 15 just-launched, Jade Jagger-designed **Residences at The Baglioni Marrakech** ([thebaglionimarrakech.com](http://thebaglionimarrakech.com)), part of the Italian hotelier's first foray outside Europe. Blending traditional courtyard design with Jagger's signature laid-back stylish aesthetic, the €1.96m-to-€2.3m villas are complemented by

#### CLUB MED'S LA PLANTATION D'ALBION (top)

The villas were designed by local Mauritian architect Jean Michel D'Unienville

#### ONE HYDE PARK (above left)

This residence is the brainchild of renowned design firm Rogers Stirk Harbour and Partners

#### AMAN RESIDENCES AT PORTO HELI (above right)

The town of Porto Heli is located near ancient Halieis, a former city now submerged beneath the sea

a Six Senses Spa, the city's unique culinary and cultural inheritance, and a dramatic Atlas Mountain backdrop.

If the aforementioned weren't proof-positive the concept has gone global, consider the exclusive **Hayman Island** ([hayman.com.au](http://hayman.com.au)) off the Queensland coast. For the very first Australian resort to add private residences to its well-appointed amenities, elite sport has again been part of the narrative. "Our marina takes super-yachts and some of the

owners wanted stylish residences here, so we're building nine of them, priced from \$16 million [Australian]," says Managing Director Lloyd Donaldson. "We're right on the Great Barrier Reef, so our diving is also exceptional, as is the cuisine from our internationally acclaimed chef, Glenn Bacon."

This new property phenomenon is also beginning to appear in city enclaves, where it appeals to passing business types as well as the leisured class. Vancouver regularly heads lists of the world's most livable cities, so it's no surprise Rosewood has built the exuberantly modernist **Private Residences at Hotel Georgia** ([residencesatgeorgia.com](http://residencesatgeorgia.com)) there next to its totally refurbished and recently reopened downtown hotel. Discerning buyers will look first at floors 30 to 48 of the gleaming tower, where the very best apartments are fetching up to \$9.5 million (Canadian).

And for those wishing to put down roots in Knightsbridge, London, the alliance between the **Mandarin Oriental** and the unapologetically extravagant Qarari-funded **Candy & Candy One Hyde Park** ([onehydepark.com](http://onehydepark.com)) project next door is perfection. Even with their own private staff, owners of the 81 apartments and penthouses, costing from £40 million to £140 million, benefit enormously from having the expertise of two Michelin three-starred chefs and Mandarin Oriental's inestimable Swiss Director of Residences, Sebastian Moritz, on tap. The McLaren showroom downstairs, residents' licensed bar, squash court and a Harrods partnered concierge service add to the allure of the whole development.

So for those who yearn for an alternative place either in the city or in the sun, without the attendant second-home-owning hassles, the hotel private residence is an idea whose time has come. Luke Taylor has no doubts as to the lifestyle advantages: "When we depart, we leave all our swimming things out by the pool and just walk out in our flip-flops. Our woman Friday packs everything away for next time. All in all, it's a very relaxing way of owning a house abroad." ●

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