

# Travel Weekly

  
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## WEDDINGS AND HONEYMOONS

# Private properties

If your clients are looking for a bit of privacy but want all the amenities offered by a hotel, suggest a villa in the resort. **Beverley Fearis** reports

Villa accommodation within hotels and resorts is proving increasingly popular for honeymoons and weddings.

Combining the privacy and extra space of a villa with all the services and facilities of a hotel is the perfect solution for couples who want the best of both worlds.

The growing demand for this type of accommodation has prompted luxury Marrakesh hotel, the Es Saadi, to open 10 villas with their own private gardens and

heated pools, alongside the existing hotel. Completed earlier this year, each villa is individually designed and comes with a personal butler, private whirlpool bath, and a buggy for guests to get around the resort.

"Current trends show that people, particularly honeymoon and wedding guests, increasingly look for independence on their holidays, and are choosing villas over standard hotel accommodation," said the Es Saadi managing director Elisabeth Bauchet-Bouhlal.

"The villas are a home away from home. Couples never need leave their villa, but also have access to the hotel's restaurants, bar, the spa and other facilities."

Shangri-La is opening an all-villa resort in the Maldives later this year. The Villingili Resort and Spa Maldives will have 142 villas, including water villas, beach villas and tree house villas with infinity pools. The 30-acre resort will have two restaurants, five bars and a spa.

Recognising the trend, ITC Classics has launched its first brochure dedicated to hotels with villas. The Resort Villas collection, the programme features 35 properties in some of the world's top resorts.

Head of marketing Jennifer Atkinson said: "These resort villas combine the facilities of a first-class hotel with the freedom and privacy offered by your own space."

Kuoni World Class senior manager Wendy Kenneally agreed. "We are finding in-hotel villa accommodation to be very popular. There are two main markets - honeymooners or a group of family or friends. Here is our selection of hotel villas:



Each of Es Saadi's 10 villas is individually decorated

## Es Saadi, Morocco

This 20-acre resort in the heart of Marrakesh now has 10 villas, each unique in style and decoration. Ideal for weddings and honeymoons is the Favorite's Villa, with a 40-metre heart-shaped pool, canopied bed, and elegant rose-coloured interiors. Each villa comes with a 24-hour butler, private Jacuzzi, separate showers and marble basins.

**Sample package:** Cadogan Holidays has seven nights' bed and breakfast in the Favorite's Villa from September 9-16, including Gatwick flights and private transfers, for £2,950 per person, twin-share.

## Banyan Tree Phuket, Thailand

This flagship Banyan Tree resort has 123 private villas in various

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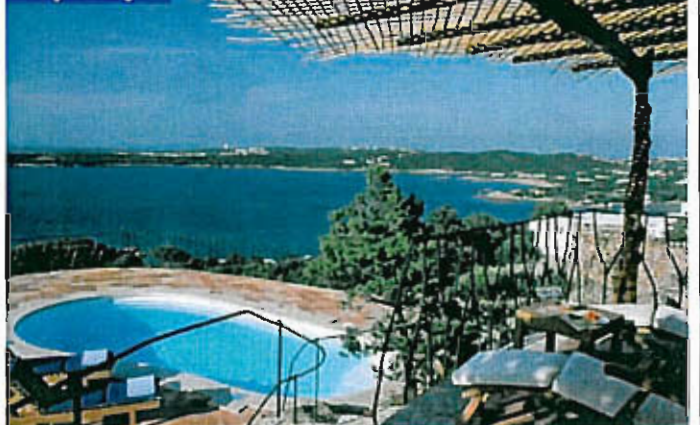


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types, including lagoon, pool, spa and two-bedroom villas. Situated on Bang Tao Bay, some have outdoor baths, private Jacuzzis or swimming pools. The Spa Pool Villa features a floating bed pavilion on a lily pond, a private pool, outdoor shower and sunken bath. Weddings can be arranged in the privacy of the villa.

**Sample package:** Kuoni Travel offers seven nights in the Spa Pool Villa with breakfast, including flights with Thai Airways from Heathrow, transfers, the use of the airport lounge in the UK and the Eternity ceremony package from £2,810 per person.

### Beau Rivage, Mauritius

At the end of last year the Beau Rivage added 12 villas, each with its own individual, heated swimming pool and wooden sunloungers, private garden in period style and an outdoor shower. Guests can dine or have a massage in their own private wooden thatched gazebo. Two Prestige Villas have two bedrooms and en suite bathrooms, suitable for a family or small group of wedding guests. The resort has four restaurants, including Le Méditerranée, a laid-back restaurant where footwear isn't a requirement. The hotel's main pool is huge and its spa has a whirlpool, a cold-plunge swimming pool and a hammam.

**Sample package:** ITC Classics offers seven nights from £6,269 per person, based on two adults and one child sharing a one-bedroom Ocean View Villa, including flights and transfers.

### The Hotel Pitrezza, Sardinia

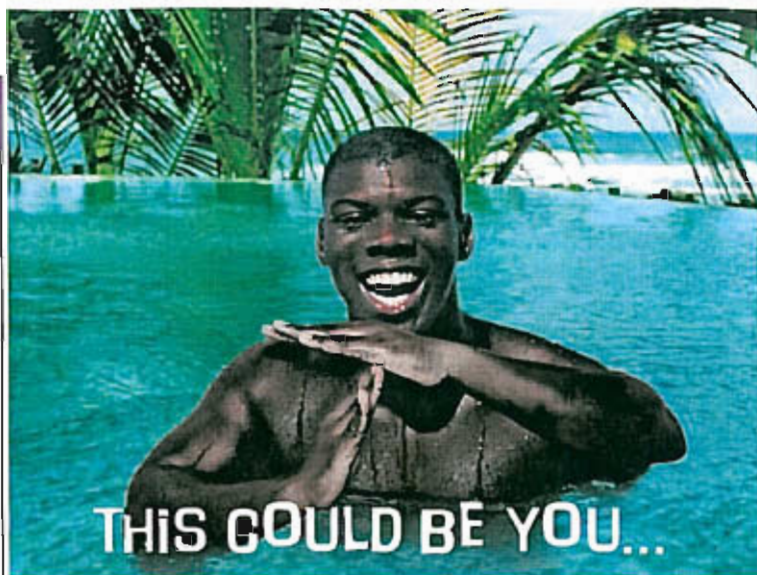
In the heart of Sardinia's Costa Smeralda, this hotel has three private villas with direct access to the beach. The Villa Il Corbezzolo has its own private beach, while the other two - the Villa La Roccia and Casa di Sopra - have private pools. Rooms are furnished in local handcrafted style and bathrooms have Sardinia-style terracotta tiles and precious local marble.

**Sample package:** Just Sardinia offers seven nights in the Villa Il Corbezzolo from £3,985 per person, half-board, in May, including flights from Gatwick to Olbia and transfers.

### Sandals Grande Riviera Beach and Villa Resort Ocho Rios, Jamaica

This is the largest resort in the Sandals chain and offers a range of villas, dotted along the foothills of the St Ann Mountains. With their own courtyard gardens, either with private or semi-private pools, the villas come in various sizes. An ocean-view Grande Luxe Plantation Villa one-bedroom suite comes with its own pool and butler service, a kitchen, and a patio or balcony overlooking the pool. All villas have four-poster beds, mahogany furnishings and 27-inch TVs.

**Sample package:** Virgin Holidays offers seven nights' all-inclusive in a Grand Luxe Plantation Villa from £2,099 per adult, twin-share. Price includes flights from Gatwick to Montego Bay and transfers in April.



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