

Country & Town House
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(IMAGE 2 OF 4)



HOME COMFORTS

The golden age of the traditional luxury hotel model is over. *ROSALYN WIKELEY* reports

Rent or exchange the divine Château de Vezins with ThirdHome

While the lobbies of the world's grand hotels thrum with conference delegates and wide-eyed tourists, the super wealthy are moving on. They would rather pair the finest trappings of traditional hotel service with the peace and quiet of a private residence. Ivan and Rouslan Lartisian, the brothers behind the Grand Luxury Group – Europe's leading reservations platform for luxury hotel bookings – see this type of traveller increasingly booking

hotels and rentals that 'carry the same feel, comfort and safety of home but with a different experience'.

It's no easy balancing act, but shrewd hotel groups and rental companies are moving swiftly to occupy this middle ground and, in many cases, are opening up impressive properties and off-grid destinations. From hotel receptions that mimic a toasty drawing room (with no reception desk) to secluded private islands to exchange for a week in a West London postcode, welcome to the new way to travel.

SWAP SHOP

THIRDHOME

ThirdHome operates as a luxury property and travel club, promising more variety than those with a second home can expect and, crucially, freeing up fixed assets. The company now boasts over 10,500 properties in 94 countries and is the go-to for fancy homeowners (from one million to several million dollars) wanting to leverage time in their second home to travel the world without the expense of renting. The basic premise is that ThirdHome Exchange invites second home owners to join an exclusive community of like-minded members to trade time in their home for stays in spectacular destinations. Members are rewarded in 'keys' following home exchanges, a sort of rating which guarantees that the best hosts and guests rise to the top. thirdhome.com



STAY ONE DEGREE

This rental company uniquely operates as a social network. Homeowners sign up and request to connect with other homeowners who they may know or whose places they are interested in renting. In choosing to rent within their close pool or more widely, a circle of trust emerges, absent in other models like Airbnb. Founder and CEO, Thomas Bennett observed the increasing desire for a 'home experience while giving the owner full comfort that their home is in safe hands'. stayonedegree.com



Château de Vezins has been in the same family for 900 years



CASE STUDY: BAG YOURSELF A CHÂTEAU

Château de Vezins, an 18th-century marvel found deep in the heart of the Dordogne, has been meticulously restored by its Canadian owners, protecting its original charm and entertainment purpose (once a playground for royalty and nobility). Add into the mix power showers, wifi and the modern amenities of a five-star hotel, with cooks and staff to boot, and you begin to see why families and friends would rather rent this enchanting château than play bumper cars with other hotel guests for a week. They have seven dramatic reception rooms, nine charming bedrooms, seven acres of magnificent gardens and a 40ft heated swimming pool all to themselves. thirdhome.com



Meadow Lane Estate in The Hamptons

ONEFINESTAY

Onefinestay's 10,000 homes are meticulously plucked from around the world, each offering unique experiences for guests, whipped up by a team of savvy travel advisors. Lavina Liyanage, director of Onefinestay's homes portfolio, sees home rental as being at the forefront of luxury travel's evolution: 'Travellers are looking for more destinations, more neighbourhoods, more than just a room, where they can also enjoy professional hospitality and concierge services.' onefinestay.com



Couture on Montaigne in Paris

THE PLUM GUIDE

The Plum Guide does the hard work for cash-rich, time-poor travellers facing the agony of indecision and quality control risks in the luxury rental world. Its team trawls through every major luxury booking platform to find the crème de la crème properties and then road tests them, making their selection the Michelin star of the luxury rental. This eagle-eyed property 'edit' seems a hit with luxury travellers – the company has recently expanding into Rome, Milan New York and L.A. plumguide.com

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