



FANTASY ISLANDS

EVER WONDERED WHERE THE RICH AND FAMOUS GO TO ESCAPE FROM IT ALL? WE TAKE A PEEK AT SOME LUXURY LEISURE SPOTS – AND FIND OUT WHAT IT TAKES TO HOLIDAY LIKE THE STARS



MAUI

WHERE IS IT?

Home to the world's biggest dormant volcano, Maui is Hawaii's second largest island. Its jaw-dropping clifftop views and aquamarine ocean regularly lure the rich and famous.

WHICH CELEBS GO THERE?

Oprah Winfrey and Woody Harrelson both own Maui property. Helen Hunt is such a devotee that she christened her daughter with a Maui placename, *Makani'lei*, while other movie stars head to the island in droves for the annual Maui Film Festival.

WHERE DO THEY STAY?

■ The **Hotel Hana-Maui** has been hosting politicians, rock stars and the Hollywood elite since 1946. Today's regulars include Leonardo DiCaprio, Keanu Reeves and Hillary and Chelsea Clinton, who no doubt make use of the hotel's famous Honua Spa. Nightly rates start at \$515 for a garden suite and \$3260 for the Plantation Guest House. For details, visit www.hotelhanamaui.com.

■ The favourite haunt of Pammy and Tommy Lee, among others, is the **Four Seasons Resort Maui at Wailea**, which boasts Wolfgang Puck's Spago restaurant and

private poolside gazebos. The standard room rate is \$475, but a night in the Deluxe Ocean Front Suite will cost at least \$5215. Visit www.fourseasons.com.

WHERE DO THEY HANG OUT?

■ Food and wine snobs head to **Vino**, drawn by the reputations of Italian-influenced chef D.K. Kodama and master sommelier Chuck Furuya. Call 0011 1 808 661 8466.

■ Foodie film stars flock to either of the two **Roy's** restaurants, home to Tokyo-born chef Roy Yamaguchi's "Hawaiian fusion" cuisine and his legendary Canoe Appetiser. Visit www.roysrestaurant.com.

CAN I AFFORD TO VISIT?

The **Hawaii Tourism Office** (www.hawaii-tourism.com/au) is happy to help out those celebrities-in-training with more conservative tastes (and wallets). Otherwise, try:

■ One of the four **Outrigger** resorts on Maui – these are pure celebrity without the price tag. Visit www.outrigger.com.

■ **Hana Accommodations**, which has plantation houses close to the beach from \$88 per night. Visit www.hana-maui.com. ▶



GETCHI



Lovers of luxurious island life include (from top) Richard Branson, Michael Douglas and Catherine Zeta-Jones, Brad Pitt, Gwyneth Paltrow and Kate Moss.



Guests at the Four Seasons Resort Maui at Wailea can lounge in poolside cabanas while staff spritz them with cooling Evian.



HVAR

WHERE IS IT?

One of the islands off Croatia's "Riviera", the Dalmatian Coast, Hvar is 68 kilometres long and 10.5 kilometres wide. The Greeks, Venetians and French have all laid claim to it at some point in history, which makes for some exotic cuisine and culture.

WHICH CELEBS GO THERE?

If it was good enough for Napoleon Bonaparte and his revolutionary friends way back when, then it's good enough for the likes of Brad Pitt, Angelina Jolie, Tom Cruise, Gwyneth Paltrow, John Malkovich, Sting, Bill Gates and Andre Agassi, who have all dropped anchor off Hvar recently. Hollywood heavyweights Clint Eastwood and Robert De Niro are also rumoured to have been scouting out local real estate.

WHERE DO THEY STAY?

Hvar is yet to develop luxury accommodation on land, so five-star visitors charter private yachts – but that's all part of the appeal.

WHERE DO THEY HANG OUT?

- Hidden in a back alley, **Macondo** restaurant offers seafood that's worth searching for. Call 0011 385 21 742 850.
- Authentic homemade fare attracts A-list types at **Meneghello Place** – just a short boat trip away on Palmizana. Call +91 478 3110.
- For local DJs and a great vibe, nightclubbers in the know flock to the **Carpe Diem** bar. Visit www.carpe-diem-hvar.com.

Hvar's harbour is an essential stop for European cruisers. Left: the island lies off Croatia's stunning Dalmatian Coast.

CAN I AFFORD TO VISIT?

Head to Hvar now, before Croatia joins the European Union and prices go up. For details on camping, homestays, villas and flats, visit www.hvar.hr or www.suncanihvar.hr. These hotels also have their charms:

- The sweet **Hotel Adriatic** overlooks the port and charges \$50–\$170 for rooms.
- **Hotel Palace** is a converted Venetian palace in the centre of Hvar town with basic three-star accommodation and rates to match, ranging from \$40–\$160 per night.
- Two-star **Hotel Sirena** sits on a secluded bay two kilometres from town and offers water views from all rooms. Rates are \$35–\$120.



WAKAYA

WHERE IS IT?

Wakaya is part of the Lomaviti Group of islands, east of Fiji's main island, Viti Levu. Guests take a 40-minute private Air Wakaya flight from Nadi airport to the island "where those who have it all go to get away from it all".

WHICH CELEBS GO THERE?

Ashton and Demi, Tom and Nicola, Pierce Brosnan, Celine Dion, Michelle Pfeiffer and Bill Gates have all popped in for a visit.

WHERE DO THEY STAY?

The only accommodation option is **The Wakaya Club**. It has eight burees (thatched cottages) with private decks, four-poster beds and open-air lava-rock showers. The Governor's Bure boasts a living room and garden with waterfall. True stars borrow the keys to the Wakaya owners' home when they're not in residence: set on 6.5 hectares overlooking the Koro Sea, Vale O is an open pavilion, furnished with gym, cliffside pool, tennis court and six staff. Prices start at \$2450 per night for a Garden View Bure and go to \$9610 for Vale O (including scuba diving, all meals, unlimited alcohol and a personal coach for golf, tennis and fitness training). Visit www.wakaya.com.

WHERE DO THEY HANG OUT?

Private courtyards, beachside settings or communal decks at The Wakaya Club are the scene of most celebrity soirees, where guests dine on delights like mahi mahi and lobster. One accessory they're never seen without is a bottle of FIJI water, brought to the world by Canadian entrepreneur David Gilmour, who founded The Wakaya.

CAN I AFFORD TO VISIT?

Start saving – you can't even set foot on the island if you're not booked in at the exclusive Wakaya resort. ▶

The pleasures of the infinity pool at Firefly resort on Mustique. Above right: views from the top-of-the-range Vale O at Fiji's Wakaya Club.

MUSTIQUE

WHERE IS IT?

Shhhh ... This is a private island, only for the select few. Part of the Caribbean island nation of the Grenadines, Mustique is 560 hectares of paradise just west of Barbados.

WHICH CELEBS GO THERE?

Bought in the 1950s by eccentric Scottish aristocrat Lord Glenconner, Mustique became a playground for his high-flying friends. Princess Margaret owned property here, Mick Jagger still does, and Tommy Hilfger refers to it as his second home. Stroll the island's isolated beaches and you might find yourself building sandcastles alongside Kate Moss, Claudia Schiffer or Calvin Klein.

WHERE DO THEY STAY?

Half of Mustique's 89 private residences (more mansions than villas) are available for rent, complete with maid, gardener, cook – and obligatory ocean views. Home-owners design their own properties, so depending on their mood, visiting celebs might go for oriental-, Balinese- or European-inspired edifices. They also take their pick from two hotels:

■ **Cotton House Resort** is renowned for its indulgent "pillow menu" (guests can choose from 11 styles of pillow to ensure the perfect night's sleep) and Gone With The Wind-style architecture. Accommodation is in separate

villas or converted sugar mills, and there's a private beach and spa. A standard cottage room costs \$695 per night, while a private villa with pool goes for \$2195 per night. Visit www.cottonhouseresort.com.

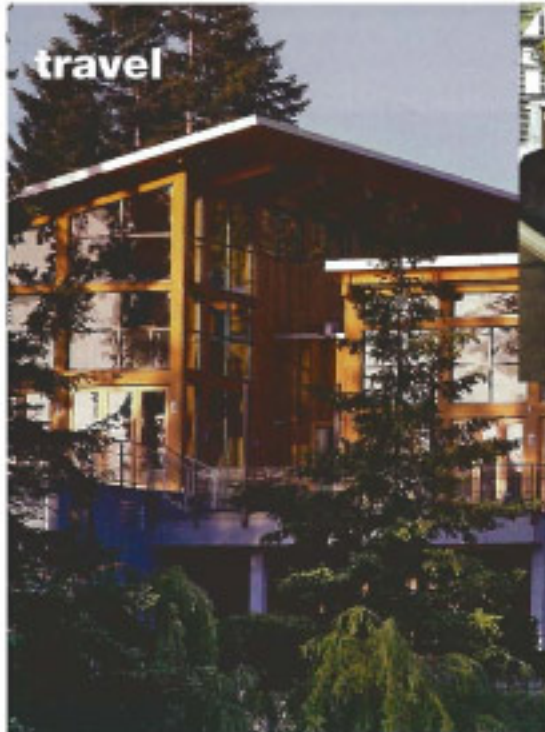
■ **Firefly** offers personalised beach baskets with snorkels, beach towels and fully loaded iPods. Guests also get their own motorised buggy to whiz around in. This resort is the best value on Mustique, starting at \$610 per night for two people (including a three-course gourmet dinner and all meals). Visit www.mustiquefirefly.com.

WHERE DO THEY HANG OUT?

Basil's Bar, an over-water restaurant, is the most popular spot on the island, with the only competition coming from the two hotels. It's all about Caribbean hospitality and freshly caught seafood. Visit www.basilbar.com.

CAN I AFFORD TO VISIT?

It depends. A week in Mr Jagger's Asian-style villa will set you back \$34,850 (although this includes six staff and a second "living pavilion" in which extra guests can sleep away from the main house). Mick personally vets every applicant, and if he doesn't like the look of you, he'll knock you back. If you're still curious, visit www.mustique-island.com.



Vancouver Island is where the stars enjoy the great outdoors. Left and far left: Brentwood Bay Lodge & Spa.

VANCOUVER ISLAND

WHERE IS IT?

Head to Canada's Vancouver, then west across the Strait of Georgia, and you'll find yourself in the 32,000 square kilometres of wilderness that is Vancouver Island.

WHICH CELEBS GO THERE?

Gillian Anderson and Elvis Costello both own property on the island, and Jason Priestley, Pamela Anderson and Kim Cattrall have family

there. Brad Pitt, Hugh Jackman and Kelsey Grammer have been spotted taking in the local sights, while Meg Ryan and Ray Liotta have both spent time on the island while shooting films.

WHERE DO THEY STAY?

■ **Brentwood Bay Lodge & Spa** is the usual celeb haunt. It sits on a pristine inlet surrounded by wine country and is a bargain for six-figure salary earners, with room rates ranging from \$130–\$810 per night. Visit www.brentwoodbaylodge.com.

■ At **The Wickaninnish Inn**, on the rugged west coast overlooking a gorgeous beach, fine dining meets rustic casual. High-powered entrepreneurs pay \$240–\$1640 per night. Visit www.wickinn.com.

WHERE DO THEY HANG OUT?

■ **Lure Seafood Restaurant and Bar** is a must for its spectacular views of the inner harbour, courtesy of floor-to-ceiling glass windows. Visit www.luretocearpointhe.com.

■ **Strathcona Hotel** is home to The Sticky Wicket Pub and Big Bad John's bluegrass and country music venue. It's a testimony to

the local obsession with all things themed. Visit www.strathconahotel.com.

CAN I AFFORD TO VISIT?

Tourism British Columbia has an extensive list of affordable accommodation, from motels to cabins and B&Bs, for those yet to reach A-list status. Visit www.helobc.com. Or try:

■ **Abigail's Hotel**, a boutique establishment known for its European decor and marble bathrooms. A night here will set you back \$185–\$490. Visit www.abigailshotel.com.



Richard Branson's own Virgin Island caters for the discerningly decadent.

NECKER ISLAND

WHERE IS IT?

Owned by Sir Richard Branson, Necker Island is, appropriately enough, part of the Virgin Islands archipelago in the West Indies.

WHICH CELEBS GO THERE?

If you're a friend of Sir Richard, then you've been a guest here. Oprah Winfrey, Steven

Spielberg and Princess Diana have all walked barefoot along Necker's pristine sands. Its Balinese temple architecture may look familiar, as Branson filmed his own *Apprentice*-style TV series on location here.

WHERE DO THEY STAY?

Necker Island is custom-built for partying with friends and family, and only one reservation can be taken at a time. In other words, movie stars in need of a romantic hideaway book the island out for themselves, or fill all 26 places with their nearest and dearest. The hedonism

starts in **The Great House**, a 10-bedroom pavilion with 360-degree views from the open-air living space. The master bedroom's private roof terrace is a great place for a soak in the jacuzzi under the stars, while a billiard table offers the chance for a little friendly celebrity competition. Three Balinese-style houses sit a discreet distance from The Great House for less social celebs.

WHERE DO THEY HANG OUT?

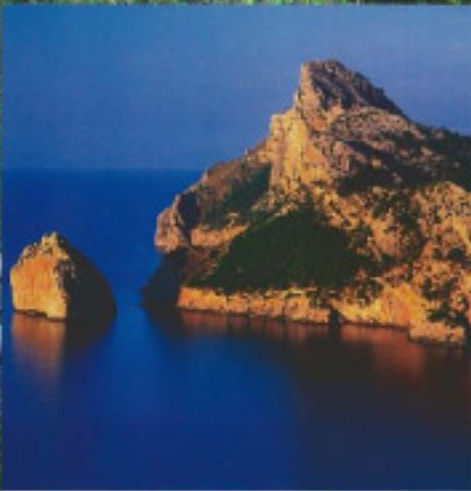
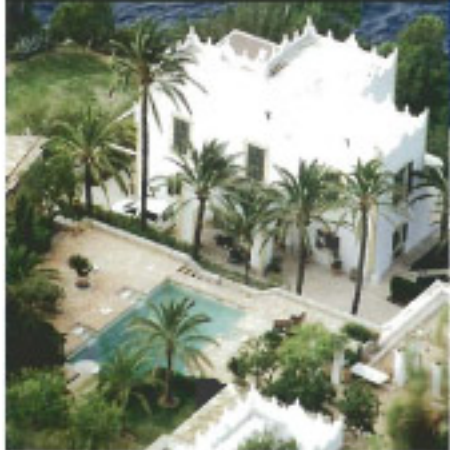
The Beach Pavilion, replete with a sushi and seafood chef, is where all the action happens. To get guests in the festive mood, Floating Shooters – fuel-injected shot glasses – are served up in the beachside infinity pool, which features a swim-up bar and waterfall. Every water sport imaginable – including waterskiing, wakeboarding and aqua-trampolining – plus a custom-designed menu of “party games” are on offer and, come sundown, the local band takes karaoke requests.

CAN I AFFORD TO VISIT?

Um, probably not. Costs start at \$26,000 per day for the lot, including meals, alcohol, staff, water sports and party games. Visit www.necker.com for a stickybeak. ▶



Catherine Zeta-Jones jets about in Majorca. Below: her palatial home there. Above: La Residencia. Right: stunning sights abound.



MAJORCA

WHERE IS IT?

A grown-up version of neighbouring Ibiza, this Balearic island has white-sand beaches, soaring mountain vistas ... and laid-back locals, who couldn't care less about celebrities. No wonder the stars keep coming back.

WHICH CELEBS GO THERE?

Sun-loving Sir Richard Branson was the first to spot Majorca's potential in the early 1990s, when he established the luxurious La Residencia hotel (www.orientexpress.com) in the hilltop village of Deià. Guests included Princess Diana and Pierce Brosnan. Now, Catherine Zeta-Jones owns a sumptuous home just 10 minutes down the road, while Claudia Schiffer settled on a villa in the sunbaked south-west of the island.

WHERE DO THEY STAY?

- The five-star **Castillo Hotel Son Vida** has welcomed stars such as John Lennon, Brigitte Bardot and Zsa Zsa Gabor, who fell for its elegant rooms and stunning outdoor terrace. It's set to be a hot spot once again when it re-opens in February after a multimillion-dollar refurbishment. Visit www.hotelesonvida.com.
- The bohemian and very hip **Puro** hotel lies in the heart of capital city Palma's old quarter and has room rates from \$335-\$640. Visit www.designhotels.com.

WHERE DO THEY HANG OUT?

- Housed in a former 17th-century monastery, the über-cool **Refectori** restaurant is famous for its fresh, inventive dishes such as foie gras with apples and scallops with truffles. Call 0011 34 971 227 347.
- Celebs who can't sit still head to Pacha, a nightclub built into the side of a cliff overlooking the yachts moored in Palma's crescent-shaped marina. Visit www.pacha.com.

CAN I AFFORD TO VISIT?

Majorca has plenty of lower priced accommodation. Contact the tourist office in Palma on 0011 34 971 724 090. Worth a look is:

- The chic yet understated **Scotts Hotel**, a quiet, boutique B&B well off the beaten track, which is run by crime novelist George Scott. Visit www.scottshotel.com. ■