

owning luxury

THE WORLD'S BEST VACATION HOMES

WHETHER YOU WANT TO SAIL THE AMALFI COAST ABOARD YOUR OWN PRIVATE YACHT, TEAR UP THE SLOPES IN THE MOUNTAINS OF COLORADO, OR RELAX ON A SECLUDED BEACH IN THE MALDIVES, **LISA SMYTH** DISCOVERS THAT THERE ARE LUXURY HOLIDAY HOMES JUST WAITING TO BE SNAPPED UP.



As featured in
The CEO Magazine
For more info visit
theceomagazine.com

Richard Branson has Necker Island, where he regularly holds tennis tournaments (the Necker Cup) and plays host to former US presidents (the Obamas visited in February last year). Bill Gates owns Rancho Paseana in Santa Fe, New Mexico, a working horse farm with a racetrack, five barns, and an olive orchard. And Jeff Bezos bought his US\$24.5 million, seven-bedroom Beverly Hills holiday home on the lot behind Tom Cruise's compound where, presumably, movie nights are anything but ordinary.

"Fate led me to The Pinelli Estate," says Nigel Carley, a business developer from the UK who, together with his wife Dawn, renovated the crumbling farmhouse they found on the property in southern Italy two years ago. The result: a private, luxury villa called Il Rifugio that sits on an untouched, verdant green hillside overlooking the Cilento Coast. "I was meant to meet the realtor at a different address, but I got lost, and

I wound up at the estate by accident, but I knew I had to have it. It wasn't even for sale."

Even though Nigel and Dawn had plans to retire, they realised they couldn't keep this spectacular and hidden part of Italy to themselves. "There's really no point creating something like this if you can't share it."

Although not everyone can buy an island or a slice of Italian paradise, the benefits of owning your own holiday home – either outright or through fractional ownership – are many. You can make the place your own, personalising it to your tastes, but it can also generate income when you aren't using it. A vacation home can further save you money, as you won't be paying premium rates for hotels and rentals, and, importantly, you can enjoy a place you love again and again.

Check out some of the world's most exclusive holiday homes on the following pages. »



Soneva Jani, Maldives



Coastal retreat

THE PINELLI ESTATE, ITALY

Investment: £125,000 for 10 per cent share

The Cilento Coast in Italy's Campania region is not nearly as well-known as its famous Amalfi neighbour, but what it lacks in foreign tourists and hiked-up prices, it makes up for with working farms, stunning coastal views, and plenty of authentic charm. Only a 90-minute drive from Naples International Airport, The Pinelli Estate sits on a hillside overlooking vineyards and the lush, green valley of Cilento National Park in this hidden part of Italy.

"It's like God has shifted the mountains to make way for this incredible valley," says Carley. "This area is the 'garden of Italy' – there are artichoke and tomato farms everywhere, and it's the home of buffalo mozzarella. Mozzarella doesn't travel well, so eating it fresh from the farms here is an experience you can't get anywhere else in the world."

Italians have been holidaying in Cilento for decades, but, except for the daytrippers who visit the nearby UNESCO World Heritage Site of Paestum, foreigners rarely make the journey past Salerno. In Cilento, waiters seldom speak English, nonnas sit and chat outside local vegetable markets, and, although the beaches may be busy, it's unusual to hear anything but the romantic melody of the Italian language floating through the air. Visitors to The Pinelli Estate are left with the delightful feeling that they have this pristine part of Italy all to themselves.

The retreat

Il Rifugio means 'the retreat' in Italian, and the history of this lovingly restored, 300-year-old farmhouse is easy to spot. From walls built of local stone to terracotta roof tiles, this magnificent four-bedroom villa is a getaway with character.

Although regular guests can rent the estate for weeks at a time, Carley is looking to share Il Rifugio on a more permanent basis. "We've decided to offer fractional ownership of the property, with 10 per cent shares in the company that owns Il Rifugio," he says. "One share buys you a slice of paradise for five weeks a year, and you can use a two-week continuous block and three separate weeks when you like."

The owners have made every effort to blend the rustic charm of the farmhouse with luxurious decor and modern amenities. Beautiful, uneven stone floors and exposed bedrock sit alongside ornate gold-framed mirrors and crystal chandeliers. Each bedroom has an en suite and iPads with Spotify that are set up to a Sonos sound system.



One of the retreat's most enchanting touches is the Pinelli Estate logo – a golden, upside-down pineapple – which you can find on everything from bathrobes to pillowcases. Golden pineapples are also used as lamps and light fixtures. But that's not to say that those who buy shares in the estate can't add their own touch.

"You can personalise the property as much as you like," says Carley. "Before your arrival, we will remove your personal possessions – family pictures, artwork, ornaments – from local storage and place them exactly where they were when you were last at Il Rifugio."

The Pinelli Motor Yacht

A highlight of the property is its large, open terrace with breathtaking views of the valley and ancient villages below. It overlooks an infinity pool and jacuzzi, and to the right, you can glimpse the azure waters of the ocean.

This is where fractional ownership in the property really starts to pay off. A mere 15-minute drive from the estate is the Agropoli marina, where the Pinelli Motor Yacht, a stunning Rizzardi 50 Top Line charter, is moored. Fully captained and crewed, the luxury yacht is complimentary for owners during their stay.

"There is no better way to see the Amalfi Coast than from the water, and going out on the yacht is a fantastic way to explore southern Italy and the surrounding islands," says Carley. "We always recommend that guests don't just head north, but go south along the Cilento Coast and discover its hidden gems. Santa Maria di Castellabate is one of our favourite villages. We got married at Palazzo Belmonte there – the Prince of Belmonte, Angelo, was very accommodating," he adds with a cheeky grin.

Royalty, lavish yachts, and deliciously fresh buffalo mozzarella ... paradise awaits. »

