

The experts

Your queries answered ★ Villas with chefs ★ Turkish walking breaks ★ Provence itinerary

OUR EXPERTS THIS MONTH



PAUL SAXBY has more than 10 years' experience in the travel industry. He is CV Travel's

product head for France and the Mediterranean.



PAMELA NICHOLSON is managing director of Private Properties Abroad, which specialises in

luxury villas in France, Italy, Spain and Greece, and also the tropics.



JUDY MENIER is director of luxury villa specialist SJ Villas, which has a selection of more than 200

holiday houses around the world, many of them private homes.



NICK GIMBERT is the director of sales and marketing at Royal Villas Europe, a specialist in

luxury villa rentals.



Casale del Vino,
Tuscany

Q&A CLASSIC QUESTION

We want to book a really **special private villa** in the **South of France**, or possibly **Italy**, in July. It must have a **pool** and **sleep at least 10** and, most importantly, come with a **chef**. Any recommendations?

PAUL SAXBY

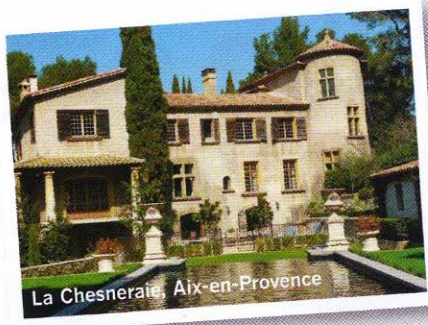
I would suggest Villa Lara on Cap Bénat peninsula, about 40km from St Tropez. On a private estate, it is surrounded by a 300-acre pine forest, with the sea and the estate's private beach 200 metres from the door. There's an inviting pool and, best of all, it comes with its own chef, Joël, who will prepare meals for guests during their stay – anything from a Continental breakfast to an haute-cuisine dining experience. Joël will also do the shopping, so guests arrive to find a well-stocked fridge rather than having to start their >

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► holiday hunting for a *supermarché*. Villa Lara has five double bedrooms, all en-suite and with air-conditioning, and costs from £6,125 a week in July, including Joël's services. For more details or to book, contact CV Travel (020 7401 1010; www.cvtravel.co.uk)

PAMELA NICHOLSON

We have several excellent choices of luxury accommodation to suit your needs, all of which have been checked out by our team. The following all come with experienced chefs and private pools. In France: Domaine St Jacques (ref no 45) in Grasse, €17,500 a week in July, including chef; La Chesneraie (no 34) in Aix-en-Provence, £7,500 a week, including part-time chef; Château des Aspras (no 38) in Brignoles, about £11,500 a week, including chef. In Italy: the coastal property of Villa di Montepergoli (no 54) near Donoratico, around £9,980 a week including chef; Casale



Santa Maria (no 51), outside Rome, €6,850 a week including part-time cook; La Civettaia (no 52), in northern Tuscany, £6,875 a week (chef charges per hour). For more details or to book, contact *Private Properties Abroad* (01423 330533; www.ppaproperties.com)

JUDY MENIER

For a special celebration or family gathering I would recommend the beautiful Les Hauts de Saint-Paul, on the outskirts of Saint-Paul de Vence on the Côte d'Azur, which has an excellent live-in gourmet cook. The house, which sleeps up to 14, is set in large gardens with an infinity-edged pool and views of the coast. It is one of our more

expensive properties: £26,000 a week in July, including chef. Rather less expensive is Villa Roccamare, right on the beach in Tuscany, which is £15,000 a week in July. The house is in the private domaine of Roccamare, just over 3km from Castiglione della Pescaia, and is surrounded by shaded terraces and a pretty garden with a large pool and a sandy lane leading to the beach. It sleeps 14 (plus another four in the annexe), and has a great housekeeper, who prepares delicious local dishes every morning and leaves them ready to be put in the oven. For more details or to book, contact *SJ Villas* (020 7801 4010; www.sjvillas.co.uk)

NICK GIMBERT

I have two suggestions from the *Royal Villas Europe* portfolio. In the South of France, set in lush gardens a short walk from charming Port Grimaud, is the newly refurbished Villa du Port. This six-bedroom house is ideal

for families or groups of friends, and is set up for summer-time outdoor living, with a swimming pool surrounded by sun terraces and dining areas. Inside, the villa is beautifully decorated in a cool, contemporary style with an open-plan kitchen/dining area. In July it costs €15,000 a week, including chef, waiter and maid. In Italy, on a hilltop surrounded by its own 70-acre vineyard and olive grove, Casale del Vino is a beautifully restored five-bedroom farmhouse with panoramic views of the Tuscan landscape, a 15-minute drive from the beaches of the Maremma Coast. The natural-toned, stone-floored interiors are superb; no expense has been spared. A chef is on hand for five hours a day, five days a week. The price in July is €12,500 a week, including the chef and a maid. For more details or to book, contact *Royal Villas Europe* (020 8133 9237; www.royalvillaseurope.com)