

## Q&A with Hosted Villas President Peter Stock

### 1. **Villa rentals in Europe and elsewhere are a fast-growing trend in vacation experiences. How does Hosted Villas fit into that trend?**

Hosted Villas isn't only part of this trend; we pioneered the high-end European villa rental market almost two decades ago (1990, to be precise). It was just the way we liked to travel. Right off the bat, we recognized what many in our industry still haven't figured out: it takes a lot more than handing over the keys to great bricks and mortar to give people that rich transforming experience of stepping into the local rhythm of life.

### 2. **So what makes Hosted Villas unique in the villa market?**

We are so much more than a typical villa rental company. We consider exquisite properties, unmatched regional knowledge and superb client service as table stakes. What really sets Hosted Villas apart is our Local Hosts — gracious, intelligent, steeped in the local scene, they help our clients step effortlessly into the local rhythm of life and they customize each stay to the individual preferences and passions of each group.

### 3. **Some other villa rental companies offer concierge services. What makes your Local Hosts any different?**

Yes, our Local Hosts handle little details and requests that help make a stay run smoothly, but that's just the beginning. They also serve as translator, companion, guide, coordinator and insider. Our Local Hosts not only understand the sensibility of our sophisticated clientele, they can interact with them as peers to truly understand what they may need or enjoy. This kind of insight is unique to Hosted Villas. And, because they also live in the regions in which we travel, their local knowledge and connections provide clients an *entrée* to the very best of each region (and often, unique access to places unavailable to the public). We like to say that it's really like having a great friend who lives abroad in the region, and can lead you to the hidden gems.

### 4. **What about more seasoned travelers who don't want a great deal of assistance?**

Again, our Local Hosts are very perceptive and practiced at quickly reading the unique needs of each guest. While some guests appreciate guided tours and a more defined itinerary, many are very comfortable exploring on their own and we encourage that (often, the best adventures are unplanned). Our Local Hosts often just provide the insights and local contacts that our guests could never find on their own with any amount of research — the sorts of things you have to live there to know (even the most seasoned traveler will take a few days to find the best *boulangerie* for croissants). Think of having a *Year in Provence* or *Under the Tuscan Sun* experience all in a week or two.

**5. Describe the typical Hosted Villas client.**

We attract a wide range of sophisticated travelers from the comfortably affluent to billionaires and luxury travel insiders. Some are families, others groups of adults gathering for a special occasion. Most know their travel options well. For certain, our clients appreciate the finer things, but would choose savoring local flavor over excessive pampering or ostentatious luxury every time. They know that over-the-top-luxury is easy to find. What's rare is the opportunity to experience a truly authentic, intimate sense of place and chance to *live* a region. That's what they trust us to provide.

**6. Exquisite properties may be given with Hosted Villas, but what are your criteria for "exquisite"?**

Every Hosted Villas property must meet our uncompromising standards for luxury, comfort and local charm. They range in character from chic city apartments to grand *châteaux* to charming farmhouses, each with swimming pools, beautiful fully equipped kitchens and modern conveniences like laundry, home entertainment systems and high-speed internet. We also look for properties in lovely culturally rich regions that offer a wide range of attractions and activities nearby. In turn, our owners, who've often lovingly restored these exceptional properties as occasional second homes, choose to work with Hosted Villas in particular. They trust us to bring intelligent, appreciative clients. They also feel secure knowing our Local Hosts are there to ensure a wonderful stay for all involved.

Perhaps most importantly, we look for properties with a "Wow Factor", be it spectacular views, historic local character, to-die-for décor... and most often, it's a combination thereof. No one property is the same, just as no one stay at any given property is the same.

**7. With each property so different, how do you match the right property to the right client?**

Making this match is the first step to ensuring an excellent client experience and our travel advisors at our Toronto headquarters are the best in the industry at it. In fact, *Condé Nast Traveler* magazine has dubbed our Travel Advisors the best villa specialists four years in a row.

Here's the difference with Hosted Villas: our advisors have seen all the properties personally, tested the softness of the beds, inspected the linens. All are seasoned travelers with exceptional regional knowledge. They work closely with clients from the very first phone call to understand each client's circumstances. For example, do they have children coming along? Would they prefer country casual over opulent? Are they hiking enthusiasts, fine art buffs or perhaps both? With a good picture of who the client is and what they envision for their vacation, our Travel Advisors then explain all the options, and guide clients to the right property and experience.

## 8. What about the Hosted Villas concept beyond the Continent?

Obviously, the Hosted Villas concept is tried and true in Europe, but we see it working brilliantly in other regions of the world too, particularly those that are less culturally accessible. We now have some wonderfully diverse – but still exceptional – properties in Argentina and the Turks & Caicos. Plans are also underway to expand our offerings both in existing regions and new destinations such as Brazil and Asia.

## 9 What do you say to those who are daunted by the sticker price of a high-end villa experience?

Very simply, compare Hosted Villas on price per person to the cost of other luxury hotel or high-end tour-based European vacations. You will pay more for these other options (in some cases a lot), but again, you just won't find a better way to travel than a Hosted Villas villa vacation.

## 10. You have a few competitors that offer equally beautiful villas for a marginally lower cost? Why would your clients want to pay more for Hosted Villas?

Our competitors are villa brokers, and the comparison is just not 'apples to apples' as they say. Unlike brokers and standard villa rental companies, we focus on the total vacation experience, and exquisite properties are just a starting point. It starts with our Travel Advisors. The best in the industry, they've seen each villa personally — no one knows better how to match each unique client to the right property and experience. We also have full-time Regional Directors who live in the regions, know the owners personally, and continually inspect the properties and work with the owners to ensure every thing meets our exacting standards. These Directors write our coveted 100-page guidebooks for *each* house – a great complement to well-known commercial guidebooks, but far more in depth with intimate, thoughtful details on how to get the most out of the surrounding regions. And it's all rounded out by our Local Hosts... there to greet our guests, and spend as much or as little hands-on time as clients wish during their stay. They look after any and all details while providing that inimitable insider's experience.

Everything we do at Hosted Villas focuses on giving clients a truly authentic, deeply intimate sense of place for an exceptional holiday that relaxes, restores and inspires. That's what makes Hosted Villas completely unique and our discerning clientele, very loyal. In the words of one of our clients this year: "We couldn't repeat this most rewarding family time in this beautiful comfortable environment again, it truly was a once in a life time for us all."

*For more information or further press requests, please contact:*

*Peter Stock, President*  
[peter@hostedvillas.com](mailto:peter@hostedvillas.com)  
416 920-1873