

altitude

WINTER 2007/08

XU

Fantasy island

Fabulous holiday homes to rent whatever your budget

Sour grapes?

Buy the right wine every time with *Oz Clarke*

Board stupid

Alternative activities in the Alps

Dare to bare all

With *Gok Wan*

Young at heart

Harrison Ford on why life at 65 has never been better

WIN!

Your own French vineyard for a year

WIN!

A load of great digital camera gear, including a Canon camera worth

£680



PLUS

35 worldwide destinations, gadgets, music, books, films and culture

The green issue: how we can all make a difference

king of the castle

If you're after a holiday home with a difference check out these luxury pads, which are less gaudy and more Gaudi.



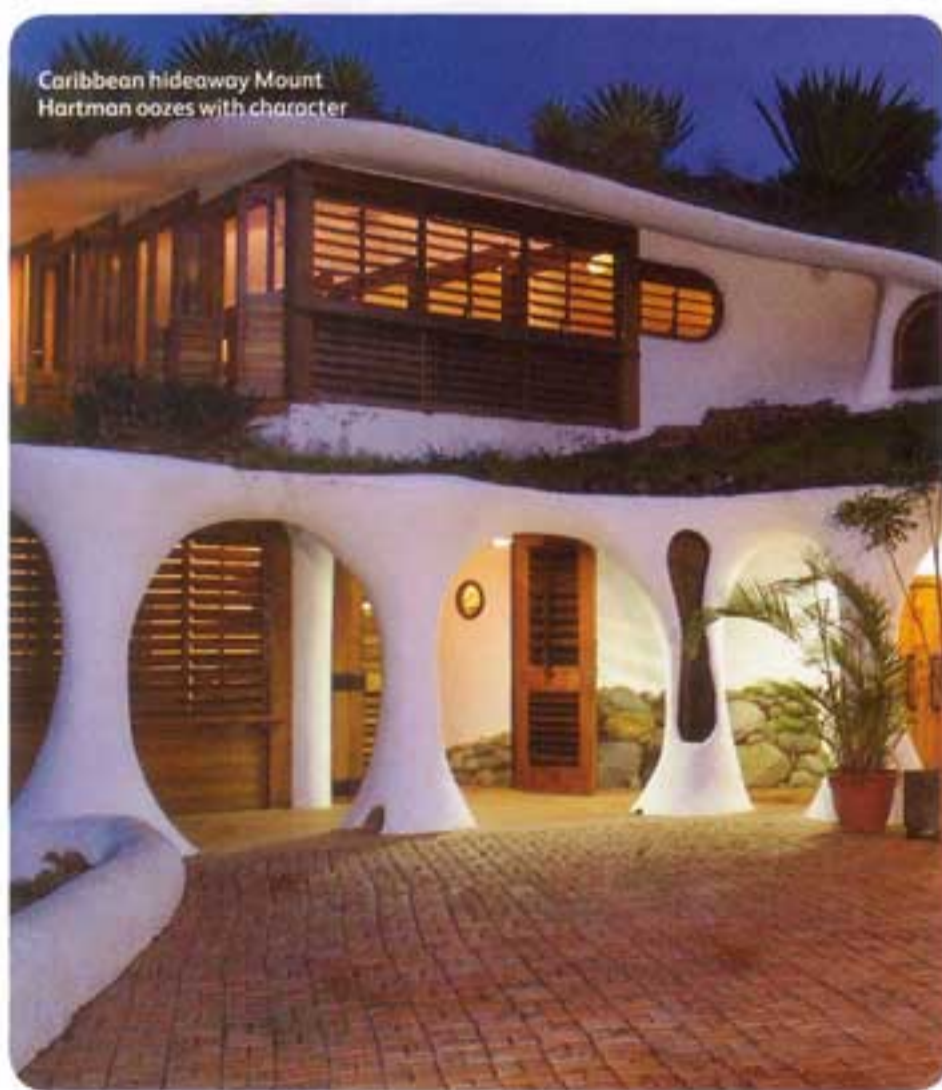
Enjoy your own private Caribbean beach at Mount Har...



Become one with nature at the cunningly camouflaged Casa Furna



Take refuge in your own beachside bunker at luxurious Villa Sardinia



Caribbean hideaway Mount Hartman oozes with character

Self-catered accommodation has long been the preferred option for those looking for a 'home from home' holiday experience. If you would rather sleep in till noon and eat a fry-up in the comfort of your pyjamas, then renting a house is the perfect solution. The trouble is, many rental properties are lacking in the personality department. Often the only difference between a holiday home and a Holiday Inn is that you have to make your own bed. If you want to stay somewhere more inspiring, check out these gems, which can be all yours for a week or two.

Casa Furna, Algarve

We all know that the Algarve is populated with fancy hotels and golf courses, but this is something you certainly wouldn't expect to find off the 18th fairway. Casa Furna – which means cave house – has been cleverly designed to emulate the rolling hills of the surrounding nature reserve. With no proper access road you'll need to hire a 4x4, but once you've found this Portuguese hideaway you won't ever want to leave. And with a whopping

“Once you've found this Portuguese hideaway you won't ever want to leave”

2,000 square feet of living space and easy access to the sea, you won't have to. The house is rooted in nature both outside and in, as when constructing the villa it seems they gathered up the necessary building materials they could find around the site to build the floors and pillars, making it very eco-friendly. With three bedrooms, this would make a perfect choice for a family or a group of friends who wanted to really get away from it all.



Way to go: For details on renting Casa Furna, go to www.casafurna.de. XL frequently flies to the Algarve from all around the UK. Go to www.xl.com for more info.

Mount Hartman

Set on its own private peninsula on the west coast of Grenada in the Caribbean, Mount Hartman Bay is a 2.5-acre estate built ingeniously into the hillside. It is packed with quirky features, such as an internal waterfall that cascades down the staircase to the reception room and a dining table so huge it had to be constructed on site by 11 carpenters! If relaxation is your thing, you can choose between chilling by the infinity pool or strolling along the private beach. Those after a bit more action can explore the local coves on the 43-foot motor cruiser, go wakeboarding or take the underwater scooter for a spin. You have the choice of renting the estate house, which sleeps up to 16 people, or the slightly more modest beach house, which can accommodate eight guests. Or why not take all your mates and hire the whole thing? At £3,000 per head, based

on 22 sharing, this is not a holiday for those on a budget, but it does include all drinks and gourmet food, prepared by the in-house chef and use of those fabulous boys' toys. And there's no denying it would be the holiday of a lifetime.



Way to go: For details on staying at Mount Hartman, go to www.mounthartmanbay.com. XL frequently flies to Grenada. Go to www.xl.com for more info.