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Top 10 group getaways

Mr & Mrs Smith



Enjoy bird's eye views from your private peninsula at Eagles Nest at New Zealand's Bay of Islands.

Got a big birthday, anniversary or party in the offing and fancy celebrating somewhere stylish? For inspiring holiday houses, service-savvy exclusive-hire hotels and sexy self-catering villas from Bali to Barcelona, check out **boutique hotel experts Mr & Mrs Smith's** top spots for a glam group getaway.

Best for beachside bliss: YL Residence No.17, Koh Samui, Thailand



Possibly the ultimate party house, exclusive-hire Thai villa **YL Residence No.17** on **Koh Samui's** secluded south-east coast will spoil you rotten. Miami meets Samui at this chic 10-room beachside retreat, where up to 20 of your entourage can bed down in style.

With a staff crew of 25, including two international chefs, personal butlers and drivers, service should be lickety-split. Teaming hip modern interiors with a white palette, this is a swoon-worthy sanctuary, with cool gadgets galore, a Clubhouse, DJs on request and watersports aplenty. Heck, they even have trained monkeys to remove excess coconuts to ensure you don't get toked on your sunlounger.

Best for tropical cool: The (w)right House, Port Douglas, Australia

Take Mr, or Ms, Right away to a stylish self-catering stay at the **(w)right House** in tropical **Port Douglas**

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Sleeping six to eight, this moated modernist pad in North Queensland is perfect for intimate groups of pals, with cutting-edge design embracing the jungley outdoors.

Architecture groupies will love the eco-smart details, sybarites will go ga-ga for the lap pool. Revel in the outdoor shower, cushioned day-beds, sunloungers and barbecue, then hit Four Mile Beach or the golf course, which is a frisbee-throw away. Come evening, fold back the glass doors beside the eight-seater dining table to let fresh breezes waft in.

Best for pampering service: Villa Sungai, Bali, Indonesia



Bali's seductive at the best of times, but book exclusive-hire **Villa Sungai** in charming inland Cepaka village and you'll be pampered to the max. Combining five-star hotel levels of service — a 24-hour butler, chef, chauffeur and sussed staff team — with the privacy of an Ibiza-style villa, three-suite Villa Sungai will feel like your own home, only better.

If you're travelling in a bigger gang, book two-suite, adjacent sister property Villa Gold, too, for the ultimate Indo house party. Rates include breakfast and canapés — for other meals just request what you'd like and pay for ingredients. Seminyak's nocturnal hot spots are just a 20-minute drive away.

Best for ocean views: Eagles Nest, Bay of Islands, New Zealand



Enjoy bird's eye views of sea and islands from your super-contemporary villa at boutique retreat **Eagles Nest**, set on a private peninsula in New Zealand's northerly **Bay of Islands**.

Ranging from one to four bedrooms, the five villas work for couples or groups, but for a posse panoramic Rahimoana Villa is the business. We're talking four ensuite bedrooms, home cinema, bar, heated lap pool, Jacuzzi, sauna, gym, private beach and rides in a Porsche Cayenne Turbo. You can self-cater, but private chefs are much more fun (and there's a personal trainer to help you work off the calcs afterwards). Watersports and whale-watching beckon outdoors.

Best for hedonistic house parties: Cliff Barns, Norfolk, United Kingdom



Part psychedelic Wild West-style hacienda, part baronial hunting lodge, sassy self-catering stay **Cliff Barns** is a canny combination of ultimate party house and tranquil rural seclusion. Just two and a half hours drive from London near **Norfolk** on the East Anglian flatlands, this funky barn conversion is within easy reach of quaint beach towns.

Sleeping up to 20 in eight bedrooms and a four-bed bunkhouse, it boasts sports-quirky stags' heads, chintzy wallpaper, acid-tartan sofas and log shelving. Catering for banquets, buffets or barbecues can be arranged, as well as entertainment from bucking broncos to a casino, themed party or clay-pigeon shooting.

Best for rural relaxation: The Kilns, The High Country, Australia



Where better for a group getaway in rural Victoria than **The High Country**, a three-hour drive from Melbourne and home to heavenly prosecco vineyards? Pop the cork in style at self-catering retreat **The Kilns**, two houses set in historic, corrugated-iron tobacco-drying kilns surrounded by pretty paddocks.

Chinaman's Kilnhouse sleeps four; Cavedon's Kilnhouse six, with the option of an extra guest at each or you can take them both over. Interiors are sleek and soothing, with blonde wood and picture windows. Outdoors, watch cows graze from airy terraces (it's a working cattle farm). Gourmet haunts Beechworth, Bright and the King Valley are a hop away.



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Best for ski bunnies: Apartment Angelina, Chamonix, France



Hitting the slopes always makes for a top group getaway, and with the Euro ski season starting soon, why not slalom off to France this year? Blessed with Mont Blanc views, **Chamonix** offers serious skiing, snowboarding, off-piste powder and après-ski larks.

For a smart stay in the heart of town, **Apartment Angelina** ski lodge sleeps six in three double or twin rooms. Spacious yet cosy, it boasts warm pine interiors, leather armchairs by the fire, a slick flatscreen TV and generous dining table. Self-cater in the well equipped kitchen or request a fully catered package with a chef. You've earned that hearty mountain food.

Best for harbourside glamour: Tivoli Villa, Sydney, Australia



You've always dreamed of living harbourside in **Sydney** — now you can, if you book a stay in elegant **Tivoli Villa** in Rose Bay, a 1915 manor house that's a must for stylish self-catering.

When you're not swooning over the Sydney Opera House and Harbour Bridge views, playing the piano or bouncing on the garden trampoline, ogle the charming chandeliers, French love seats and bold mod Oz art. With five bedrooms (sleeping 10), a spacious living and dining room, two barbecues and a poolside lounge bar, this is an entertainer's paradise. Bondi Beach is close by or treat your party to a swish seaplane flight from Rose Bay. Bubbly, anyone?

Best for a fresh take on NYC: Harlem Residence, New York, United States



Veteran visitors to **New York** can reinvent Manhattan with a sophisticated self-catering stay in on-the-up neighbourhood Harlem. Nestled in a quiet boutique brownstone at 145th Street, **Harlem Residence**, on historic Sugar Hill, sports polished dark hardwoods, thoughtful decor and mod cons at every turn.

The master bedroom sleeps two in a king-size bed, with a gorgeous sleigh-like couch and grey-marbled bathroom; the second bedroom sleeps two to four, or can be set up as a day-bed-dotted lounge. North of Central Park, this airy apartment makes a swell base for exploring multicultural Harlem, which has inspired filmmakers, artists and musicians.

Best for urban hipsters: Destination BCN, Barcelona, Spain



With its seaside setting, gorgeous Gothic and Gaudi architecture, smart bars and swank shops, **Barcelona** is the style-hub of Spain. Live like a local at sexy self-catering getaway **Destination BCN**, a cluster of one- and two-bedroom apartments at Ronda Universitat 11 that are perfect for design aficionados.

All offer extra sofa-beds in living rooms, and spacious Principal apartment sleeps six, with two extra fold-away beds. Full kitchens and wooden dining tables make cooking a pleasure, with alfresco courtyard tables in some apartments. Stock up on tasty produce at El Corte Ingles department store at Placa de Catalunya or just sample the city's famous tapas scene.

To book a stay at any of these holiday houses or exclusive-hire hotels visit www.mrandmrsmith.com

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