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THERE'S A FORBES QUOTE that says, "Luxury is the freedom of choice." While browsing through The Hideaways Club portfolio of exquisite properties – ranging from tropical island villas, to sumptuous ski chalets and penthouse city centre apartments, this has never seemed more apt. For a moment I was lost, romanticising myself in the glossy pictures of an exotic Moorish palace, replete with palm tree-fringed swimming pool and mountain views. After that, I began admiring the Thanksgiving Parade from my Broadway penthouse, all hardwood floors and panoramic windows, in the heart of New York City. I returned to my own apartment with a bump and after readjusting agreed that such decisions would be a headache worth suffering for. ▶

## KEYS TO THE KINGDOM

*Debonair* sat down with George Gibb, Head of Member Engagement at The Hideaways Club to find out more about the award-winning Property Investment Fund and exclusive Members' club





► Founded in 2006, The Hideaways Club was the idea of three entrepreneurs - Mike Balfour, of Fitness First fame, Stephen Wise, a former Bain & Company Senior Management Consultant and Helmut Schön, ex-Corporate Financier with Merrill Lynch and UBS. Each was looking for a holiday home but had become disenchanted by having to pick just one place and the thought of maintaining it from afar. "Why would you purchase a second home in one fixed location when you can have access to many more around the globe for a fraction of the cost of one comparable property?" George asked, and he had a point.

As a fractional ownership fund, members pay an annual fee to invest in, and stay at, their equity investment in a diversified portfolio of luxury properties in some of the world's most desirable locations. They are then free to access them all year round as part of this exclusive members club, along with the services of a five star private concierge team who can tailor each holiday to suit their individual needs. "As soon as you become a member of the Club you are allocated a dedicated Personal Concierge who works with you on all your travel planning, (or as much as members want them to.) They are on hand to help organise everything including airport transfers, car hire, childcare, tours and excursions, in-house chef/catering, restaurant reservations, spa and massage treatments, ski passes and equipment hire or booking tee times for a round of golf" he added. Properties also come with their own local agent to

【 CAPTION 】

above: The Hideaways Club CEO, Poonam Dhawan-Leach.  
opposite top: a villa in Puglia, Italy forms part of the Hideaways Club Classic Collection.  
opposite bottom: Broadway views offered by an apartment in the City Collection.

ensure help is always at hand and guarantee a pampered stay for every guest.

Since its inception, The Hideaways Club has grown steadily, largely through the recommendation of existing members from the worlds of business, finance, sport, media and fashion - all of whom expect high standards and discretion when it comes to their leisure time. Tim Henman is one of the more high-profile travellers, "with The Hideaways Club I have a wide variety of beautiful properties in stunning locations that I can use year round, plus the potential growth of my investment. I already have and will continue to enjoy the variety of choice the Club offers," he said.

Investment in The Hideaways Club comes in the form of two funds - the Classic Collection, and the City Collection. The ►



above: the spectacular infinity pool of a select property in Portugal. below: the cosy sitting room of Chalet Lumiere in Morzine, France. Each of the villas and chalets is hand picked for unique 'wow factors' such as designer kitchens, al fresco dining areas or panoramic views.

[ CAPTION ]

► Classic Collection includes a portfolio of 40 luxury villas and chalets spread throughout Europe, Africa, Mauritius and South-East Asia. These range from chalets in the Swiss and French Alps and Japan's premier ski region of Niseko, to luxurious villas in the South of France, Italy, Morocco, Thailand, South Africa and Bali. "As a member you can plan year-round trips according to the season and the things you love to do from skiing to golf, and diving to simply soaking up the sun." George added. These high-end retreats have been carefully selected with the area's natural beauty and ease of access in mind. Furnished with great care and attention, all villas are family-friendly and have four or five bedrooms, private swimming pools and gardens.

The City Collection by contrast, provides members who prefer the excitement of urban living an opportunity to enjoy high-end apartments in some of the most vibrant, culture-rich cities in the world. With a choice of 14 stylish properties these sought-after locations include New York, London, Dubai, Paris, Rome and Prague. Interiors are spacious and impeccably furnished, and feature two to three bedrooms. "All properties are jewels in their

own right - it really depends on the audience and their travel lifestyle which properties stand out most."

"We currently have over 500 members in total and aim to reach 600 members in the Classic Fund with 100 properties and 1200 members in the City Fund with 100 properties. Our focus is very much on continuing to invest in properties which add value to the Funds whilst offering cherished holidays for our members and their guests," said George.

Given the unpredictable nature of the international property market, buying a second home abroad can be a risky investment. The attraction in destination clubs such as The Hideaways Club is that it provides the benefits of ownership across an entire portfolio of properties while being managed and maintained by experts. This is achieved through paying an annual ►

above: villas and chalets in the Classic Collection tend to accommodate up to 10 guests, such as this property in Bangkok. overleaf: Villa Hibiscus in Mauritius





[ QUOTE ]

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► membership fee, thus freeing up members from the stresses of time, effort and costs that are associated with owning a property overseas. This leaves investors both the freedom of choice to enjoy luxury travel in locations around the world without the hassles of sole responsibility and the safety cushion the portfolios numbers provide against individual market property slumps.

“Best of all there’s nothing to do – the Club will purchase, develop and furnish the properties, maintain them to the highest standards then ensure they are perfectly prepared for your stay – right down to organising childcare and having your favourite groceries stocked away in the larder or fridge,” said George. And with that, I was back in my New York City apartment, wondering what to make for dinner. ■

<http://www.thehideawaysclub.com/>