

# Villas with Value



Pisa



Florence

Recessions bring lifestyle opportunities: we may have less money to spend, but some of the good things in life are available for less. Whilst some villa owners still ask for pre-crisis prices, others don't. We report on two that have become much more affordable.

**M**arbella remains one of Europe's most attractive golf and holiday destinations: sheltered from the north by a beautiful mountain range, and warmed by the Mediterranean, its microclimate provides ideal golfing weather nearly all winter, while the same sea acts as a natural cooling influence in the summer.

Overlooking Marbella Golf's newly enhanced 18 holes, with panoramic views to mountains, Mediterranean and Morocco, Villa Las Colinas sleeps up



Las Colinas - Marbella



to 16 people in stylish comfort. A large and eco-efficient house, with spacious reception rooms, 6+ bedrooms with magnificent en-suite marble bathrooms, and hi-spec facilities (including under-floor heating, air-conditioning, WiFi and Sky Sports), Colinas also sports a stunning outdoor jacuzzi deck with the same views, swimming pool and garden.

Pre-recession rents here were up to some €7,000 per week, but this year the owner took the decision to halve them – across the board: "It was clear that people were no longer prepared to pay the 2008 prices and we could see from holiday rental websites, that a large number of villas would enjoy an income free summer this year.



Il Fienile - Tuscany



Looking at the prices, we decided to under-cut everything similar, and go for turnover. Better to be busy, keeping our staff earning, than to lie empty all summer. And better for all our tenants too: they can continue to enjoy the sun and a little luxury at prices that deliver value."

Consequently, Colinas was full all summer. What's more, the owner has decided to reduce prices all year round. The rent is a low as €1,000 per week in January to mid-February 2009 – that's just €125 per head per week for a group of eight golfers, say. Can any comparable hotel match this? An absolute bargain.

The owner adds: "We concluded that it was better to adopt the 'EasyJet approach' to holiday lets, and have been delighted at the response of the market. Some people don't like the fact that we recharge all the expenses, but this way, small groups pay very little

for cleaning and laundry (which we used to include in the rent, but at a level which covered us for our average of eight people), and, whilst larger groups pay more, divided up on a per head basis it doesn't come to much. But most people happily accept this, because the incidental costs of their holiday are under their control."

The same owner offers Il Fienile, a magical and panoramic farmhouse villa in Tuscany on the same basis: "Tuscany in winter is magic: the light is often stunningly clear, and you can 'do' Florence and all the other culture destinations without suffering the huge queues of the summer.

The outdoor markets are wonderful for Christmas shopping, especially for the famous leather goods of Florence. And you can see the Leaning Tower of Pisa in the distance from our bedroom windows..."

## + Details:

**Las Colinas, Marbella** – from €1,000-3,750 p.w. + expenses

**Il Fienile, Tuscany** – from €1,000-3,750 p.w. + expenses

Tel: +44 161 702 3339  
arnie@9cp.co.uk www.stpetroc.com

Videos will shortly be posted on the C+Golf website