

FOR 2017, SIMPSON TRAVEL INTRODUCES NEW ITALY PORTFOLIO, EXPANDED
FRENCH COLLECTION AND AN UNSPOILT CORNER OF EASTRN CRETE



Simpson Travel (020 8003 6557, www.simpsontravel.com), the specialist, independent, luxury villa and boutique hotel operator, has introduced a brand new collection of Italian properties to its portfolio for 2017, along with the unspoilt far east of Crete and an expanded collection of properties in France.

Villas, Apartments and Boutique Simpson Hotels in Italy

The new 2017 Italian programme* features a range of handpicked properties, including 12 villas and five apartments in Tuscany and Umbria; Casa dei Limoni, a lovely hillside villa in Liguria, and a stylish three-bedroom apartment in Venice. The Tuscan properties range from classic 'Room With a View' style apartments, such as the one-bedroom Casa dei Mandorli in Chianti and the two-bedroom 17th-century Casa Angelica, perfectly situated for exploring Florence, Siena or San Gimignano, to the more family-orientated Casa al Colle in the Garfagnana Mountains. Sleeping ten guests in five bedrooms, this fabulous villa, ideal for several families or a large group of friends, has space in abundance. The gardens alone have some 400 olive trees and there is a generous pool and a wood-fired pizza oven for fun, al fresco evenings in the garden. Perhaps the most lavish property is the majestic 17th-century La Rocca. Overlooking the beautiful medieval town of Cetona, this grand house sleeps up to 14 in seven en-suite rooms and sits in two acres of stunning formal gardens filled with amphora-lined paths, stately cypress trees and rose bushes. Interiors are grand and expansive and there is even a traditional tower at the heart of the house.

There are also two beautiful new boutique hotels in Tuscany – both of which are exclusive to Simpson Travel. The traditional, Tuscan stone-built La Madonnina – near the Tuscan/Umbrian border – has newly opened as a hotel and sleeps a maximum of ten guests in a combination of suites and a studio. Suitable for families and couples alike, it is set in glorious gardens, complete with a pool, and has breathtaking views over the surrounding landscape of vineyards, olive groves and the Val di Chio. The second hotel, Mille Desideri, not far from Arezzo, is a 17th-century Adult Only retreat that is available on an exclusive-use basis from 22 July – 31 August. This 17th-century estate has just five, one-bedroom suites, with a private pool, a small spa, extensive gardens and a spectacular outlook over tranquil wooded hillsides and valleys all around. Interiors are simple yet chic, with lovely public areas and comfy sofas to relax in, as well as plenty of terraces with different aspects from which to soak in the surrounding views.

An Unspoilt Corner of Crete

Greece is the largest destination within Simpson Travel's portfolio and, along with ten new villas in Lefkada, a handful in Paxos, Meganissi and Zakynthos, the hot new destination for 2017 is the far eastern tip of Crete within the Lassithi region. Largely undiscovered by the British market, this is the ideal destination for those looking for the unspoilt Greece of years gone by, with beautiful Blue Flag beaches, including Vai, the original setting of the iconic 1970s' Bounty advert, and a number of windsurfing hotspots. There are also rugged mountains and Minoan sites, a host of walking trails, dramatic gorges and traditional villages to be explored. Sitia – Crete's most easterly town – is the main centre here, alongside the lovely fishing villages of Palekastro, Makrigaialos and the much smaller Kato Zakros.

A total of six new villas in this region, along with some lovely new apartments, have been added to Simpson's programme. Highlights include the Apothikes Beach Suites. As their name suggests, they are located right on a beach – the secluded Ferma Bay – and consist of a cluster of traditional warehouses transformed into four one-bedroom apartments in an enviable position that allows you to step straight out of the front door and onto the soft sand with the crystal clear waters beyond. It's the perfect place for couples to enjoy a secluded break, dining on the private terrace close to the waves or taking a stroll to the owner's upmarket hotel, just five minutes away.

Another lovely property is the contemporary and stylish Villa Isidora. Perched on a hillside overlooking nearby Sitia and the sea, it comes with mesmerizing views and is just a ten-minute drive from Sitia itself. A location like this is a gift for an architect and the villa features floor-to-ceiling glass and a double-height living space making it light-filled and airy. It also has magnificent views from the terraces, gardens and swimming pool. The villa works well for a family with older children offering three en-suite bedrooms and generous living space both inside and out. The terrace is a perfect setting for relaxed family meals, but there are also plenty of tempting tavernas and *ouzeries* on Sitia's seafront.

France: Fifteen New Properties Across the Country

Simpson's French portfolio has been significantly expanded and now includes nearly 50 properties ranging from classic Provençal villas to grand country Manoirs and farmhouses, Vendée beach houses, châteaux and stylish Côte d'Azur retreats.

Fifteen new properties have been added for 2017. Highlights include the fabulous La Bastide du Paon Bleu – or 'Blue Peacock' in Provence, named after the peacock in an enclosure in its grounds. A stylish five-bedroom property set in some 20 acres of gardens, it comes complete with a pool, play area, Jacuzzi and home cinema and is within easy reach of Aix en Provence and the Luberon. Also new for 2017 is Le Manoir de St Christophe, resembling an artist's impression of a classic French manor house. Tucked away in the heart of the Dordogne countryside, in the Vézère Valley, this house sleeps up to eight guests in six bedrooms and is set in two acres of lovely gardens, with a heated pool and plenty of space for family and friends to gather together. Interiors feature Renaissance-inspired fabrics and designs, creating a sumptuous but also welcoming feel. Whilst the house has all the space you could wish for, it is also just a five-minute walk from Peyzac-Le-Moustier, where you'll find the essential *boulangerie*, shop, bar and restaurant.

For those looking for a decidedly chic Provençal retreat, look no further than the new Le Diamant Noir. This exceptional villa, sleeping up to ten people in five bedrooms, was entirely renovated in 2016 and now boasts tastefully understated 21st-century interiors to complement its stunning countryside setting and spectacular jet-black swimming pool. Tucked away at the end of a 1km, unmade road, the villa looks out over landscaped gardens to a seemingly endless vista of olive groves, forest and distant mountains. Picture windows and French doors bring the views closer still, and add to the sense of seclusion.

or bookings call 020 8003 6557 or visit www.simpsontravel.com.

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***Notes to Editors: Simpson Travel** was established in 2002, yet its heritage predates this by many years. Founder Graham Simpson, a veteran of the travel industry, built up the highly successful Simply Travel in the 1970s with his Greek wife Yianna. From humble beginnings in a flat in Chiswick, it became one of the most respected independent travel companies of its time, renowned for offering authentic rather than ‘packaged’ holiday experiences, with carefully researched programmes, exceptional product knowledge and service.*

In Simpson, he recreated the original ethos of Simply Travel, offering a very personal service, with individually-selected properties, exceptional local knowledge for each destination, a highly experienced team of staff and excellent representatives in resort. Clients booking with Simpson can be safe in the knowledge that their holiday has been created with their needs in mind and each property matched to their individual tastes and requirements. They can also rest assured that they will be really well looked after by the excellent representatives on hand in each resort.

In Greece, destinations for villas and hotels include Corfu, Paxos, Anti Paxos, Kefalonia, Ithaca, Lefkada, Meganissi, Zakynthos, Sivota Skopelos and Crete. In Turkey, there is a choice of villas and some hotels in Akakya, the Bozburun Peninsula, Dalyan, Kalkan, Islamlar, Kaş and Göcek. In Mallorca, choose from villas in Pollença, Puerto Pollença, Fornalutx and Southern Mallorca, whilst in Corsica, there are properties in Porto Vecchio, Bonifacio, The Valinco, The West Coast, Calvi & The Balagne; Central Corsica, St Florent and Cap Corse, as well as the private island of Cavallo. The French programme includes villas and châteaux across France, with a particular focus on Provence, the Côte d’Azur, the Vendée and the South West/Dordogne area, whilst the 2017 Italy programme includes villas and apartments in Liguria, Tuscany, Umbria and Venice, as well two new boutique Simpson Hotels in Tuscany.

**Whilst Italy was featured by Simpson Travel in their 2010 programme, the 2017 portfolio is a brand new collection of properties not previously offered by Simpson.*