



MARY ANNE SALES'S writing focuses on upscale companies and individuals. She has worked with the NFL and other organizations, marketing their products and services with great success. She currently lives in Los Angeles with her cat Dizzy.

Be a Local in a *Foreign Country.* Rent a Private Home from Villa Vacations Doorways Ltd. BY MARY ANNE SALES

Villa Vacations offers beautiful private villas and apartments in Spain, Italy, France, and now Costa Rica. Before renting one of Villa Vacations' many beautiful properties, the staff, headed by owner Kit Burns, interviews every prospective client. This approach ensures the best possible fit between customer and location. Burns and her



staff travel to each potential location before putting it on their roster. "We want only positive experiences. No surprises," Burns says.

Upon arrival, customers can call on local hosts who provide concierge service and work with them should problems arise. The hosts can coordinate special events, such as wine tours or cooking classes in the villa. Some villas come fully staffed. For those who prefer a limited amount of help, chefs and staff are on call for parties and events. Baby sitters also are available.

perfect base from which to explore nearby tourist destinations.

A section on the company's website available only to guests provides travel tips, restaurant guides, information on traveling with kids, and day-trip itineraries. Booking early is key, and trip-cancellation insurance is offered.

Renting a villa can be a life-changing experience. How else can you meet the butcher, the baker, and everyone else in nearby towns and villages?

Each vacation is customized; there are no packages. Whether it's a romantic getaway for two, a group of friends interested in culture and art, or a long-planned, multi-generational family trip, everything is planned with the guests' needs, wants, and desires in mind: hiking, bicycle trips, museums, galleries, wine tasting, or just relaxing at the villa's pool.

Villas are a perfect home away from home for families because they are much more affordable than hotels. One of the many reasons people rent villas is privacy. In addition to the entire house, there is a yard and a kitchen, even if there are no plans to cook. Large villas are perfect for family reunions. Relatives gather in large, comfortable, inviting homes—the

Renting a villa can be a life-changing experience. It allows guests and their families to experience each country's culture from the inside. How else can you meet the butcher, the baker, and everyone else in nearby towns and villages? Villa Vacations provides a sense of community in a foreign location for the whole family.

Burns and Villa Vacations have been renting homes for 14 years. "We pride ourselves on knowing the villas and the areas," Burns says. "We don't rent what we haven't seen."

For more information contact 800-261-4460 or visit their website at www.villavacations.com.



Villa Buonvisi balances luxury with history. This classic medieval villa in Lucca, Tuscany, sleeps up to 24 guests and is fully staffed.