

HOW IT WORKS

Trade to Travel is aimed at owners of holiday properties. You can become a member for as little as £60 a year. Upon joining, your property is valued on a points system according to its rental market value. Once someone stays in your property you earn the rental points to stay in an equivalent-valued property for the same length of time. Save points from hosting guests more than once in your property to splash out on a super-luxury holiday for yourself. Or, if you are eager to travel before your property has been rented out to members, you can still stay in most of the properties on Trade to Travel's portfolio for one fifth of their market rental cost. For more information visit www.tradetotravel.com

Your place or mine?

Offering your holiday home as a destination to Trade to Travel members is your key to over 1,200 exclusive properties across the globe

Holiday homes are a smart way to splash bonus money, rewarding a year's hard slog with a dream coastal or country retreat. But aside from two weeks of guaranteed holiday pleasure each year, holiday properties can sit unoccupied, gathering dust and housekeeping bills. And even the most sumptuous Tuscan villa can feel constricting after a few years. Holiday destinations should be a choice, not an obligation. So what if owning a holiday home could in turn pay for future holidays all around the world?

When a trio of Texan belles pondered these same quandaries 14 years ago, they struck an idea which might be called gold dust. Vaniene Hardy, Leah Powell and Betty Magee imagined the possibilities of pooling their North Carolina beachfront houses and lakeside lodges into a network where other holiday home owners could stay in their properties in exchange for a vacation in one of theirs. The beauty would be its difference from traditional home exchanges in which both parties are restricted to exchange with someone who wants to take off exactly the same two weeks as them. With luxury holiday properties, most are free most of the time.

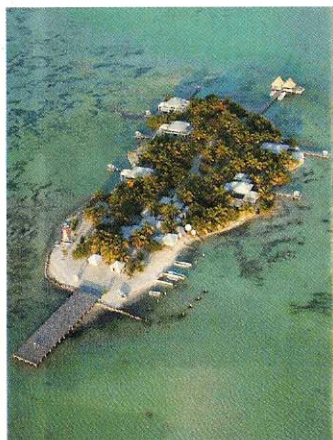
Hardy, Powell and Magee let word of their "Trade to Travel" plan slip out to a few selected friends who they thought might be interested. The idea spread like wildfire. "Within three weeks I had a call from the head of one of the biggest accountancy firms in the world

offering her private island in Bermuda to us," says Powell, who is now Trade to Travel's president. "The following week we had England's Lumley Castle on our books."

Through feminine networking skills focused on one genius concept, Trade to Travel has grown to encompass properties in 27 countries, boasting the most impressive portfolio of exceptional holiday homes, villas, chalets, yachts, boutique hotels, castles and private islands in the world. You can holiday on the USS Sequoia, the world-famous Presidential yacht on which Eisenhower planned D-Day and Kennedy celebrated his 46th birthday. You can get physical at Bon Vivant Villa in Barbados, which houses a 50-foot indoor swimming pool, indoor basketball court and floodlit tennis court. The staff ratio is one-to-one and it's just a five-minute walk to your private beach. Or for ski-slope action head to Franz Klammer Lodge in Colorado where you can also enjoy a private spa and 18-hole championship links-style golf course.

Tanner and Haley's Private Retreats properties and Boutique Hotels of the World have offered their luxury properties to the Trade to Travel members and Powell is currently putting together a new private jet programme to make use of members' favourite form of transport. With a Trade to Travel membership, buying a holiday home may well be one of the most exciting investments you ever make. ♣

WORDS MARIA PAGGETTI



Above Discover your own private island at Cayo Espanto, off Belize

Right: Explore the beautiful valley of Jackson Hole in Wyoming from the comfort of a ranch-sized spread

