



By Jane Knight

**I**F YOU hanker after somewhere that's more home than hotel on a city break but still want luxury touches, these family-run B&Bs offer everything from in-room massages and airport transfers to private city tours and opera tickets.

### FROM GRAND INTERIORS TO A GRAND TOUR OF ROME

INTERIOR designer Alessandra Taravacci runs a two-bedroom B&B in her striking workshop in Rome. 'We let guests snoop around the workshop and perhaps get some inspiration,' says husband Massimo.

Their Design aTA Experience B&B offers more inspiration in the contemporary rooms, one based on the Victorian tradition of the Grand Tour, with atlas-themed wallpaper, antique prints and large tapestry, the other in restful shades of green.

Both have parquet floors, a welcome tray with fruit, mineral water, coffee and tea, a safe and hair dryer.

At breakfast in the workshop, which holds frequent art exhibitions, Massimo regales guests with stories that might reveal the history of cappuccino or the pastries he gets fresh from a local bakery.

He says: 'We give guests ideas of itineraries they can do for free and we're also linked to important organisations, so for instance we can arrange for guests to accompany archaeologists on underground tours of Rome.'

Guests can book everything from a tour of Rome by night in a Fiat 500 to a pasta-making session to prepare dinner.

Massimo adds: 'We used to love staying in B&Bs to appreciate the cultural aspects of a country, and now want to travel through the eyes of our guests.'

B&B costs from about £110 per night ([www.design-ata.com/en-GB](http://www.design-ata.com/en-GB)).

It also feels as if you're walking through the pages of an interior design magazine at Residenza B. Camillo and Veronica Barluzzi's four-bedroom B&B is less than ten minutes from the Trevi Fountain and just along from Quirinal Palace, where the Italian president resides.

The building has been renovated by architect Stefano Dorata, along with individually crafted furniture. Rooms have a chic boutique look in a muted palette, with travertine floors as well as underfloor heating and air conditioning.

Breakfast is served until 10.30am, airport transfers and chauffeur-driven trips can be arranged, private tour guides sourced and restaurant reservations made. 'Because we have only four rooms, we have a lot of direct contact with our guests,' says Camillo.

B&B costs from about £175 per night ([residenzab.com](http://residenzab.com)).

### LET INSPIRATION FLOW IN LISBON WITH AN ARTIST TO GUIDE YOU

ART is everywhere in Carlos Nen's home in Lisbon, which he opens to guests under the name Whatever Art Bed and Breakfast.



**EN VOGUE:** Inside Alessandra and Massimo Taravacci's stylish B&B in Rome and, top left, Villa Nicola Amsterdam

You can even get a private tour of his onsite studio, as part of the highly personalised service he offers.

Fancy a massage or reflexology? Carlos can book it for you in your room. Feel like wine and tapas? He can organise that too.

'If people ask for a dinner, I can do that on the garden terrace,' he says. 'I try to

## Now owners lure guests with in-room massages, private sightseeing tours ...and even opera tickets

make people comfortable and help them.' That means making restaurant reservations, creating brilliant sightseeing itineraries and being available on WhatsApp in case guests need help when they are out and about.

Although his home is just outside the city centre, it can be reached in 20 minutes from the airport and is a two-minute walk from the subway.

The room to pick if you want a private bathroom is number 6, which overlooks the garden and terrace. Otherwise the other two rooms that are currently available share a bathroom.

Carlos stopped cooking his renowned breakfasts during the pandemic and now has light offerings throughout the day, including muffins, fruit juice, coffee and tea. Soon, his wife is due to open a restaurant just next door.

Room 6 costs from about £130 per night, other rooms from around £75 per night ([whateverabb.com](http://whateverabb.com)).

### WORK HARD IN BERLIN OFFICE, RELAX IN ITS PRIVATE POOL

EVERYTHING you need for a working trip is included in one of the two guest bedrooms at Olaf Kellerhoff's Berlin home in the south-west of the city.

The Work & Wellness room has a fully equipped office, with webcam, monitor, printer, laminator and all you need from pens and papers to a shredder and cutting machine. There's a microwave, fridge and kettle too, so it's no wonder there's only room for a single bed – the bathroom is shared.

His other room, Free & Relaxed, is more for taking it easy, with hand-carved wood furniture, a free-standing tub and separate shower plus a private loo.

Olaf, who spent years living and travelling in Asia, greets guests with scented hot or cold towels depending on the season. 'I used to travel a lot,' he says. 'Now, instead of travelling the world, the world is my guest.' And





**TASTEFUL:** Jean Etienne Rousseau's B&B in Paris, above, and his breakfast offering, below. Left: One of Lisbon's funiculars

### THE BOLTHOLE IN AMSTERDAM THAT IS BANG ON TREND

IT'S no surprise to hear that Dutch Vogue and other magazines have used Werner Nijenhuis's 1895 canal-side home in Amsterdam in fashion shoots – it's beautiful.

But Werner strives to make guests feel at ease amid the elegance. 'I want everyone to feel comfortable here – to think of it as homely and familiar,' he says. 'I have a springer spaniel and she welcomes guests too. I think they come more for her than for me.'

There are just two suites, one done out in 1960s vintage style, the other mixing period pieces, art and modernity.

B&B costs from about £295 per night (villanicolaamsterdam.com).

### HOMES FROM HOME IN ALL CORNERS OF BRITAIN

BOOK the Lower Studio at Vicky and Edmund Sixsmith's wisteria-clad home in Hammersmith, West London, and it comes with its own entrance and kitchen. 'You can have a cocktail party and we'll lend you the wine glasses – provided you invite us,' says Edmund, who goes out each morning to buy fresh croissants from a local baker as part of the breakfast offering.

The four-storey 1870s house at 31 Rowan Road also has an Upper Studio with kitchenette occupying the whole of the top floor, and a separate comfortable room.

You can pay £20 a day to park there, but as you're so close to good transport links at Hammersmith, it seems better to rely on the Tube.

B&B costs from £100 per night, studios from £125 to £145 (abetterwaytostay.co.uk).

They take breakfast seriously at Edinburgh's 23 Mayfield. Expect everything from haggis, cloutie dumplings and tattie scones to slow-cooked porridge, kipper or Loch Fyne smoked salmon. In winter you can eat it by candlelight by the fire in the elegant dining room.

Ross and Kathleen Birnie have been running the B&B in their Victorian home for 20 years. The seven elegant rooms are pretty swish, some with four-poster beds. It's a 20-minute walk to the city centre.

B&B costs from £145 per night (23mayfield.co.uk).

In Cardiff, Number One Hundred has seven spacious contemporary rooms just outside the city centre. Owners Charlie and Abi Prothero don't live on site, but are there daily to set up the continental breakfast.

'We keep it quite simple,' says Charlie. 'But people can contact me for restaurant recommendations and so on.' B&B costs from £58 per night (icardiff.co.uk).

# city & B

what lucky guests – they can use the small pool and gym, laundry room and bikes with no additional charges. The house is 25 minutes by car from the airport and roughly 30 minutes by train to central Berlin.

The single room costs from about £53 per night, the double from around £60, with a choice of breakfasts (berlin-entspannt-genießen.com).



### A PARIS PROFESSIONAL WITH THE BEST TICKETS IN TOWN

CULTURE vultures return year after year to Jean Etienne Rousseau's B&B in Paris's 9th arrondissement.

Passionate about art, theatre, music and travel, he spent a decade in the luxury hotel industry, preceded by a decade working at Paris's tourist office, which means he knows his stuff and has the contacts to make your trip a breeze when it comes to getting the best tickets.

His home, opposite Le Grand Rex Cinema, epitomises Parisian chic, and though breakfasts are continental, don't just imagine croissants and pastries – Jean Etienne provides plates of cheese, meat, fresh fruit, yogurt and much more.

B&B costs from about £160 per night (my-home-for-you.paris).

# Feast on mountain views and Michelin-class meals



THERE'S a feast in store on the Italian slopes of Courmayeur, with top chefs rolling into town to host the 2023 Mountain Gourmet Ski Experience.

On March 16, guests will meet Jean Philippe Blondet, the three-Michelin-starred head chef of restaurant Alain Ducasse At The Dorchester, and Jonny Lake, the one-Michelin-starred co-owner of Trivet restaurant in London.

After skiing on March 17, the duo will serve up a six-course tasting menu featuring signature dishes from their restaurants.

A four-course affair on March 18 will showcase their skills with local produce.

Three nights' B&B in the charming Hotel Bouton d'Or, departing March 16, costs £1,625pp based on



**HIGH LIVING:** The terrace at Meribel's Maya Altitude

two sharing. Price includes the three evening meals, evening access to cable cars, flights and transfers (momentumski.com).

Skiing foodies will also find Meribel in the Three Valleys area of France a perfect spot for spring sport combined with excellent restaurants.

At 7,546ft, the 360-degree terrace of Maya Altitude enjoys stunning views over Belleville Valley and Mont Blanc.

Or venture to Alpen Ruitor chalet in the centre

of Meribel-Mottaret for a post-ski, calorie-replacing sweet crepe. Their signature delight is the Paris-Meribel, a crepe filled with white chocolate and red fruit coulis.

Seven nights' half-board in the three-star Hotel Les Grangettes from March 25 costs £903pp, based on two sharing. Price includes flights and transfers (inghams.co.uk).

For a low-cost change of food culture at Easter, head for the Dinaric Alps in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which hosted the 1984 Winter Olympics. The largest resort is Jahorina, which suits beginners and intermediates, and where the sustenance is hearty stews. A six-day bundle of ski pass, ski school and rental gear costs £315.

Seven nights' half-board, leaving on March 26, in the four-star Hotel Termag is £710pp, based on two sharing and including flights (igluski.com).

Neil English

## Travel insurance ...with more packed in

With Avanti Travel Insurance, you get belt & braces protection for both you and your holiday. Good to know, especially if you're travelling with pre-existing health conditions.

**That's Travel Reassurance!**



Call us **FREE** 7 days a week  
**0800 043 3452**  
avanti.co.uk

For COVID-19 cover, customers should be fully vaccinated. Terms, conditions and exclusions apply. Trustpilot rating correct at time of print.



**avanti**  
Travel Insurance

## Over 50s Travel Insurance with no upper age limits

- ✓ Unlimited emergency medical expenses<sup>1</sup>
- ✓ Superior rated Covid cover<sup>2</sup>
- ✓ Covered 27 million+ travellers
- ✓ Trusted for 20+ years



**20% OFF**<sup>3</sup>  
BASE PRICES  
CODE: MOS20

**INSUREANDGO**  
GO without the doubt

Call our UK Call Centre **FREE**  
**0800 640 4813**  
InsureandGo.com

<sup>1</sup> Unlimited emergency medical expenses available on Black policies. <sup>2</sup> Covid cover rated Superior by a leading independent UK Consumer Champion in 2022. <sup>3</sup> Discount applies to base premium of policies only and expires at 23:59 on 07/03/23. See website T&Cs for more details.

SHUTTERSTOCK / JAD VALIENNE / FRANK BRANDWIJK