



1

Family favourites

1. THE OLIVE GROVE, near Málaga, Spain

It's perfect if... you're a glam lot, with affable teenagers. This is a 'wow' house, with Wild West views over the cactus-strewn mountains of the Sierra Tejeda National Park; a designer interior dotted with art, mosaics and the odd antique; even an outside wood-fired oven, for pizza nights under starry skies. Choose to have your fridge stocked with local cheeses, hams and organic veg, or enlist the help of a private chef, who'll use ingredients picked

from your grounds. Then there's the pool, perched at the edge of the property, with a tumbling landscape below. It's all so cool that it's begging to be Facebooked.

The downside is... the immediate area's loveliest activities may not tickle your kids' fancy. There are Moorish relics, private cookery courses and winding walking paths through the mountains; plus delicious Moscatel from the on-site vineyard.

From £4,186 a week for up to eight guests, excluding flights, with Unique Home Stays (01637 881942,

www.uniquehomestays.com). The company has a considered collection of stylish villas across the world.

EasyJet (www.easyjet.com) flies to Málaga from eight UK airports.

2. PODERE COLOMBAIO, Tuscany, Italy

It's perfect if... you're after the quintessential Tuscan villa. From its crumbling stone walls, beamed ceilings and open fires, to the rambling garden with its pergola and pool, this place embraces every one of the region's best clichés. But it's the surprisingly

modern touches that propel it to prizewinner – including an outdoor shower and super-cool bathrooms with butler sinks and muted marble tiles. A mile away, Pienza is an exquisite Renaissance town with palazzos aplenty.

The downside is... there'll be arguments over the rooms if you have more than two kids. The three doubles are great, but after that there's only a sofa bed and mezzanine left.

From £2,639 a week for a family of six, including flights from Gatwick, with Meon Villas (0844 415 1990, >