

Grab your share

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VICKY DAVIDSON finds Scots resorts are leading the timeshare resolution.

Once considered a shady world of dodgy deals and Costa crooks, the timeshare holiday industry has made great strides to turn around its image both internationally and at home.

Scotland boasts some of the most spectacular timeshare properties in the UK. Visiting just four gives a flavour of the great variety of options available within easy striking distance of Glasgow.

Each has its own character, with acres of countryside on their doorsteps and heaps of outdoors activities, from quad-biking to clay pigeon shooting, to rambling and mountain biking, on offer.

At the top-end, where luxury is paramount, resorts such as the Hilton Dunkeld and De Vere Cameron House offer the ultimate in prestige Scottish timeshare property.

The five-star properties are equipped to the highest standards, from flat-screen TVs in each bedroom and state-of-the-art sound systems to the gorgeously finished kitchens, which, at Cameron House, you don't need to use – a chef will come and cook for you if you desire. And if the luxury doesn't stun you into silence, the spectacular scenery will.

Cameron House, whose £50 million Carrick resort and spa with the stunning eight-apartment Colquhoun Mansion House as its crowning glory, is an ideal base for a golfing holiday.

There are 86 lodges in the main development and 15 lodges and 10 Mansion House apartments in phase one of the new Carrick development.

The apartments make for comfortable bolt holes, ideal for young professionals, while the self-contained lodges are bright and family-friendly.

Further north, the beautifully designed and spacious properties at Hilton Dunkeld are dotted about the sprawling hotel estate which is fringed by attractive, bustling little towns and villages set amongst spectacular Perthshire scenery.

The 22 two- and three-bedroomed lodges, which are sheltered beneath swaying pines, are a stone's throw from the hotel with all its facilities.

Weeks are fixed and timeshare owners stay in the same property each time, but if they fancy a change of scene they can swap properties with owners in Hilton Grand Vacations' 34 affiliated resorts.

Many of the Hilton resorts are in North America, but there are a further three in Scotland with a stunning new resort in Vilamoura on the Algarve due to open in the Spring of next year.

Dunkeld is ideal if you love the great outdoors, with the resort offering a shooting range while the terrain is dotted with golf courses and ideal for hillwalking or cycling.

More leisurely pursuits at the spa include exclusive Karin Herzog treatments.

Interestingly, 80% of the 7000 owners at Hilton's Scottish resorts are Scots themselves, so they must be doing something right. Timeshare apartments at the more affordable end of the scale pursue an equally impressive standard of maintenance and offer great, relaxed accommodation and plenty of fun stuff to keep kids and adults occupied.

The Brunston Castle resort, near Dailly in Ayrshire, has a cluster of bright, immaculately presented lodges nestling at the head of a valley with a golf course, forest and gentle hill walks.

Just six miles from Girvan and the lovely Ayrshire beaches, with Burns' Country nearby, Brunston Castle has 85 two-, three- and four-bedroomed cottages sleeping up to eight.

A major advantage of owning property at Brunston Castle is that it's so handy for Glasgow; you can be in your apartment or on the golf course within a couple of hours of finishing work on a Friday night.

Stuart Smith, the golf professional at the resort, is an old master when it comes to getting novices into the swing of things while for those that run a mile at the thought of playing golf, there is also paintballing, quad biking, a farm park and a riding school less than half an hour away.

The leisure club at Brunston Castle is modest, with a small selection of gym equipment and a fun pool, but it's the location and views, as well as the superbly presented lodges and sense of tranquillity, that are the main attraction.

Owners at Brunston Castle have their holiday guaranteed until 2069, and you can exchange with other Seasons properties in the Lake District, Ireland, Wales and Cornwall, or 70 affiliated resorts overseas.

Club La Costa at Duchally is another family resort, set in a pleasant forest setting with loads of wildlife bustling between the lodges, and a compact but well-equipped leisure centre with a good pool and café.

Situated just a stone's throw from Gleneagles, it's ideally located for country walks and bike rides, outdoor activities and very handy for the Tullibardine whisky distillery, a must see for fans of Scotland's national drink.

Lodges are comfortable and of a high standard. They vary in style and design, and although they unfortunately aren't yet non-smoking, they're very spacious with great interiors and each has a balcony or patio for al fresco dining or drinking.

At the heart of the resort Duchally Country Hotel offers great value meals, has a cosy bar and large lawn, and there's a handy take-away menu.

There are Club La Costa resorts as far afield as Bali and Hawaii, and their packages are very flexible offering great opportunities for swaps.

Travel file

- 500,000 British families own timeshare, 80,000 of whom own in the UK
- Timeshare operators who are members of the OTE (Organisation for Timeshare in Europe) adhere to strict regulations and guidelines, which were introduced to protect buyers. To find out more, check the OTE's website: www.ote-info.com
- HILTON DUNKELD, above: Prices from £7750 for a low-season week for a two-bedroom apartment to £25,950 for the most expensive week in a three-bedroom property. Owners can exchange at 38 Hilton Grand Vacation resorts worldwide, over 2200 Hilton hotels or over 3800 RCI affiliated resorts. Call 01350 727243
- CLUB LA COSTA DUCHALLY: Membership packages start at £3595. There are 55 one to three-bedroom lodges with total flexibility to swap weeks and to exchange with Club La Costa's 159 other resorts, nine of which are in the UK. Tel: 01764 662579
- SEASONS BRUNSTON CASTLE: Membership starts at £2950 for one bedroom cottage sleeping four in low season to £15000 for a peak week in a two-bedroomed unit. It is possible to upgrade or exchange. Seasons has 70 affiliated destinations worldwide including Australia, Hawaii and the Caribbean. Tel: 0800 448 448 or www.seasonsholidays.com
- DE VERE CAMERON HOUSE/THE CARRICK: Prices range from £8,500 to £39,550 depending on timeband and size of property. Weeks are fixed in the band, but you can exchange or upgrade. Weeks can be exchanged with two other De Vere timeshare resorts in the UK, and two hotels, in London and Brighton. Tel: 01389 755625 Or www.devere-resorts.co.uk

Travel

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VICKY DAVIDSON finds Scots resorts are leading the timeshare revolution

■ Cameron House Hotel overlooks the benny, bonny banks of Loch Lomond

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And if the luxury doesn't stun you into silence, the spectacular scenery will.

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■ The lodges at Cameron House come complete with hi-tech, flatscreen TVs, hi-fi systems and even your own personal chef

tained lodges are bright and family-friendly. Further north, the beautifully-designed and spacious properties at Hilton Dunkeld are dotted about the sprawling hotel estate which is fringed by attractive, bustling little towns and villages set amongst spectacular Perthshire scenery.

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Another bonus is the on-site beauty therapist, who comes to your lodge to do treatments without stepping over your front door.

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