

Wealthy tourists from interstate and overseas converge on WA's south for a luxury summer getaway

# \$8000 a week for SW holiday

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Wealthy holidaymakers are forking out up to \$8000 a week to stay in luxury private homes in the South-West, as a thriving new tourist industry develops in the region.

Tourists from within WA, along with people from interstate and overseas, are opting to rent sprawling privately owned houses rather than the relatively cramped rooms of five-star resorts.

Secluded family homes in Eagle Bay, Prevelly, Yallingup and Dunsborough are being rented for between \$4500 and \$8000 a week as owners take advantage of the South-West's popularity.

The five-bedroom home, Jahangir, on the hill in Eagle Bay, is one of the most opulent houses available. Owned by a British-based family, it caters for 10 guests. The home's swimming pool overlooks the Indian Ocean, all bedrooms have en suites, there is a home theatre and even a sauna.

Other houses have ocean views, plunge pools, underfloor heating,



High value: Luxury private rentals in the South-West are thriving as a new tourist industry develops in the region.

open log fires and numerous living areas. Aspects, a property in Prevelly, also has an art gallery — which visitors can appreciate or buy.

Rosie Harris, who manages many of the area's top rentals through her

Cottesloe-based agency Private Properties, said demand was being driven by cashed-up overseas visitors amazed at “the extraordinary environment with its mix of beach and bush, top-class restaurants and win-

eries and fresh produce”. “Rents have risen but that also reflects the high standard of the properties and the services offered, which were not available 10 years ago,” Ms Harris said.

Most of Private Properties' clientele were families who found it more convenient to stay at private homes with the extra space, privacy and ability to self-cater.

“Staying at a private home also allows them to be part of the community,” she said. “They can shop where the locals do, buy local produce and see more of the area.”

Ms Harris said competition was fierce for the biggest, most luxurious and well-located homes and many already had waiting lists for the 2008 holiday period.

While beachfront houses are always popular, visitors from Singapore and Hong Kong loved properties surrounded by bush.

“They come from big cities so they think it is fantastic to have a drink on the balcony at sunset and watch the kangaroos,” Ms Harris said.

Seaside Holiday Home Accommodation owner Denise Sumich said while there was a growing market for people buying, building and renting out luxurious homes, it was never enough to cover the mortgage.

Rents prices up again but correction looms: analyst