

NATIONAL EDITION

# Los Angeles Times

## You can stay where Incan nobles went on vacation

By Catharine Hamm  
LOS ANGELES TIMES

URUBAMBA, Peru — Down a rutted, twisting road, where dogs bark and children play in the dirt, lies an enclave apart from world-weary Peru.

Beyond a set of gates are two homes reminiscent of the U.S. Southwest — rich, warm earth colors, adobe-style construction, casual and slightly rustic furnishings — but with a difference: They are set in Peru's fertile Sacred Valley, where Incan nobles are said to have built their vacation homes.

Urubamba is at about 9,000 feet, about 3,000 feet lower than Cuzco, 45 miles away. It is not only easier to breathe here, but it also is easier to think in the quiet of this agricultural area, which some people say is as spiritual as Machu Picchu.

The Inkaterra company, which recently began offering these properties for visitors, calls them villas, a term that's a



INKATERRA

**The two-bedroom Villa Sonia in Peru's Sacred Valley can be rented for \$150 per night.**

bit grand for what they are: comfortable, well-designed and set amid stunning gardens with the Andes as a backdrop. The company suggests that travelers view Villa Sonia and Villa Berta — named for the women who

are their caretakers, maids and cooks — as dwellings owned by good, but absent, friends who have left you the keys to the house.

Sonia, the smaller of the two houses, has two bedrooms;

Berta has three, including one sleeping space upstairs with two sets of bunk beds but no upstairs bath. Each is decorated with native crafts and textiles.

Breakfast and dinner are included (lunches can be sent with you on excursion), and a minibar is available. The houses can be rented just as they are for \$150 per person per night. Or a comprehensive package is available that includes the villa, plus a driver and guide for transfers to the villas and excursions into the valley (including the nearby town of Pisac, known for its Indian market and ruins, and Ollantaytambo, said to be the best-preserved ruins after Machu Picchu). Prices for the all-inclusive package begin at \$390 per person per night, based on double-occupancy.

Inkaterra hopes to add at least three more villas to this group by the end of 2007.

For more information, call (800) 442-5042 or visit the Web site [www.inkaterra.com](http://www.inkaterra.com).