



Article

A Luxury Tourist Destination in Housing for Tourist Purposes: A Study of the New Airbnb Luxe Platform in the Case of Marbella

María Jesús Carrasco-Santos ^{1,*} , Andrea Peña-Romero ² and Daniel Guerrero-Navarro ³

¹ Department of Business Management, Marketing Area, University Institute for Research on Tourism Intelligence and Innovation i3t, University of Malaga, 29016 Málaga, Spain

² Faculty of Tourism, University of Malaga, 29016 Málaga, Spain

³ Department of Audiovisual Communication and Advertising, University of Malaga, 29016 Málaga, Spain; dguerrero@uma.es

* Correspondence: mjcarasco@uma.es

Abstract: Marbella has a wide range of luxury property rentals, which are the subject of study within the framework of the collaborative economy, where the Airbnb platform stands out as the most used channel. This research focuses on the analysis of the total number of luxury villas offered in Marbella by Airbnb Luxe and Luxury Retreats. The methodology was carried out in four phases: the first phase involved a review of the literature on tourism and luxury and a study of Marbella as a luxury destination. The second phase focused on the analysis of the types of accommodation that Marbella offers. The third phase focused on the collection of data from the analyzed platform: Airbnb Luxe and Luxury Retreats. Finally, qualitative research consisting of in-depth interviews with owners and real estate agents focused on the luxury sector in Marbella was carried out. The results obtained yield relevant conclusions: Marbella is one of the main luxury holiday destinations in Spain, and the most demanded type of luxe accommodation in Marbella is large luxury villas. The term 'luxury' can be subjective, referring to such things as the visible and non-visible aspects that determine the category of a luxury property, hence the need to carry out a study on the luxury segment to establish a precise definition.

Keywords: luxury accommodation; tourism; Airbnb; sharing economy; Marbella



Citation: Carrasco-Santos, M.J.; Peña-Romero, A.; Guerrero-Navarro, D. A Luxury Tourist Destination in Housing for Tourist Purposes: A Study of the New Airbnb Luxe Platform in the Case of Marbella. *J. Theor. Appl. Electron. Commer. Res.* **2023**, *18*, 1020–1040. <https://doi.org/10.3390/jtaer18020052>

Academic Editor: Peter O'Connor

Received: 17 March 2023

Revised: 23 April 2023

Accepted: 16 May 2023

Published: 19 May 2023



Copyright: © 2023 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

The present study focuses on examining the term 'luxury' in the tourism and lodging sectors from a supply perspective, using the Airbnb Luxe and Luxury Retreats platform as a reference. The research was conducted in four phases, with the first phase consisting of a literature review on luxury, overview of luxury in tourism, and analysis of Marbella as a luxury tourist destination. The second phase examined the different types of accommodation available in Marbella, revealing that most of the accommodation offered is utilized for tourist purposes. In the third phase, the study focuses on the analysis of the supply of housing for tourist use in Marbella from the perspective of the collaborative economy, with Airbnb being the first platform in the supply of this type of housing. Specifically, the study analyzed the case of the luxury segment in Marbella through the analysis of Airbnb Luxe and its total offer of luxury villas. Finally, in the fourth phase, the study conducted 13 qualitative interviews to gather information about various aspects of tourist housing and luxury in Marbella.

The research aims to identify the availability of luxury tourist homes in Marbella through Airbnb Luxe and Luxury Retreats and the characteristics that make these villas of high quality. The study also seeks to define luxury in the context of housing for tourist purposes (HTPs) in Marbella and identify the factors that contribute to tourists' perceptions of luxury. The research objectives are to develop a comprehensive definition of luxury in

the context of these accommodations and identify the importance of luxury HTP offerings in Marbella.

One of the research gaps is whether Marbella can be considered a luxury destination; another is the definition of the term 'luxury', which, although it is a commonly used term in the tourism industry, is often unclear and subjective. Furthermore, the characteristics of luxury are constantly evolving, and it can be a challenge to keep up with the latest trends and preferences of luxury travelers. Therefore, research is needed to define luxury in the context of HTPs (housing for tourist purposes) in Marbella and to identify the factors that contribute to tourists' perceptions of luxury.

The study addresses several research questions, such as the supply of accommodation in Marbella, the factors that contribute to the perception of luxury in HTPs, the sharing economy platform that offers the most HTPs in Marbella, and Marbella's level of HTP revenue compared to Andalusia. The study also investigates the implications of the findings for owners and managers of HTPs in Marbella and how they can improve the luxury experience for their guests.

In order to answer the research questions, the first hypothesis posed in this article is: HTP has the greatest presence in the market for tourist establishments in Marbella. For this purpose, an observation and data analysis of the market and the supply of different types of accommodation in Marbella have been carried out, using statistics, information, and programs to obtain this information. The supply of HTP is analyzed and compared with other types of housing, and the geographical areas where the supply is concentrated are identified. The following hypothesis is then formulated: HTPs constitute the accommodation with the greatest presence in the tourist establishment supply market in Marbella compared to other types of tourist establishments such as hotels, tourist flats, and tourist camps. To verify this hypothesis, an analysis of the supply of tourist establishments in Marbella is carried out, examining the number of hotels, tourist flats, rural houses, and campsites, among other types of establishments.

The second hypothesis is that the luxury tourism industry in Marbella has a significant positive impact on the local economy due to the high prices generated by the supply of luxury villas. Luxury tourism attracts visitors with high purchasing power, which generates a demand for high-quality and high-priced accommodation, which in turn benefits the local economy as significant income is generated for the owners of these villas and, therefore, also for the community in general. To verify this hypothesis, the Airbnb Luxe platform is analyzed through market price analysis as well as interviews with tourism industry experts and luxury villa owners to gain a more in-depth understanding of the factors contributing to the positive economic impact. If it is found that luxury tourism has a significant and positive effect on the local economy, it could be concluded that the hypothesis is true. This could have important implications for the tourism industry and the local economy, as these findings could be used to improve tourism policies and encourage further development of the luxury tourism offerings in Marbella.

The third hypothesis is that the concept of luxury in tourism is complex and goes beyond the visible aspects that are already known, including non-visible aspects as well. Luxury in tourism has traditionally been related to aspects such as high-quality facilities, personalized service, and exclusivity, but there are other factors that contribute to the concept of luxury in tourism, such as sustainability, authenticity, and social responsibility, among others. To verify this hypothesis, interviews with experts in the sector have been carried out, as well as a literature review to identify the aspects that are promoted as luxurious and compare them with other factors that are considered important for tourists. If the concept of luxury is found to relate to tangible and intangible aspects, it could be concluded that the hypothesis is true. This could have important implications for the tourism industry and for tourism research, as these results could be used to improve the understanding of the concept of luxury tourism and to develop new marketing and promotion strategies for high-end tourism products.

In the analysis of Airbnb Luxe and Luxury Retreats, it is possible to observe the size of the house, the number of rooms and bathrooms, the maximum capacity of guests, the design of the facilities, the style of decoration, the approximation of the price per night, the possibility of requiring a security deposit, and which districts or neighborhoods are the most common locations for the villas.

In addition to the data collection in Airbnb Luxe, a bibliographic review in multiple international scientific journals was carried out, and an analysis of databases provided by Marbella City Council and the Andalusian Government was necessary to learn more about the accommodation in the deluxe sector. Similarly, 13 qualitative interviews were conducted: two with superhosts on the Airbnb platform to learn about their expectations for luxury in accommodation and the remaining 11 with luxury real estate agencies in Marbella that are not on the Airbnb Luxe platform.

The data on luxury homes presented by one of the most prestigious international real estate agencies in Marbella, Engel and Völkers, which had record sales in the municipality in 2021, show the importance of this segment [1,2]. The luxury segment is one of the few that has barely suffered from the pandemic crisis. According to a report by Diana Morales Properties, another of the most important agencies dedicated to luxury in Marbella, there is a lack of luxury homes for sale, that is, the demand is greater than the supply. This has triggered increased promotion of the luxury real estate sector, whether for second homes or tourist rentals [3]. There are numerous investors buying homes for the purpose of renting them out for tourism purposes around the world [4].

High-quality homes have generated around EUR 500 million on the Costa del Sol in addition to creating more than 3500 jobs. The Association of Entrepreneurs for High-Quality Housing appreciates the so-called golden triangle formed by Estepona, Marbella, and Benahavís, since they enjoy some 120 luxurious villas plus those that are yet to be built [5].

Likewise, according to a study carried out by the Malaga Tourism Observatory in 2021, Marbella is the municipality with the largest number of tourist establishments and places in the entire province of Malaga, among which housing for tourism purposes stands out.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Luxury Definition

The concept of luxury is indeed highly subjective and dependent on individual perceptions. It is a term that has both positive and negative connotations, as it is associated with both high profitability and excess, waste, and ostentation [6]. This complexity makes it difficult to define and study the luxury sector, as it varies greatly depending on different factors such as consumer preferences, culture, and context. Moreover, luxury can be characterized by intangible elements such as authenticity, uniqueness, and personalized experiences, in addition to the traditional markers of high quality and price. As a result, it is important for researchers and businesses to continue exploring and understanding the different dimensions of luxury in order to effectively tap into this lucrative market.

The concept of luxury has evolved over time and has undergone changes. In Spain, at the end of the 1980s, a differentiation began to emerge between essential and non-essential services, and luxury was closely linked to the latter. The determination of whether a product or service is a luxury good depends on the income elasticity of demand. Income elasticity of demand is defined as the responsiveness of demand for a good or service to changes in income. A service is considered a luxury good when its income elasticity of demand is greater than that of other goods or services [7–9].

The luxury products and services of the past are not those of today because they have lost their accessibility or exclusivity and are no longer in abundance. An example of this is second homes, which in the 1980s were considered a basic necessity; now, with the rise in taxes and standard of living, the situation has changed, making it more complicated to have such a large extra expense [8]. The current concept of luxury is temporary and fluid; it changes constantly in relation to the time and the society in which it finds itself [10]

and transforms according to consumers' search for meaning, changing "have" to "being and experiencing" [11].

Indeed, the subjectivity of the concept of luxury makes it difficult to define, and it is often influenced by social and cultural factors. For example, what may be considered a luxury item or experience in one culture may not be considered as such in another. Moreover, luxury is often associated with intangible experiences such as traveling rather than tangible products or possessions [11]. This highlights the importance of understanding the various factors that influence the perception of luxury in different contexts as well as the evolving nature of luxury over time.

Luxury can be defined as a concept that is characterized by superior quality, typically at a higher price point, which is capable of satisfying the needs of the client. A luxury product or service is often exclusive, different, authentic, and unique, offering a total guarantee of satisfaction and comfort [12]. These attributes are often attributed to high-end services that are considered non-essential, exclusive, prestigious, and authentic and also have a high symbolic and emotional value [13].

Luxury is a complex and multifaceted concept that can be interpreted differently depending on the social and cultural context and the specific product or service category. The subjective nature of luxury adds to the complexity of its definition, which can be influenced by personal and social perceptions.

Services offered by ICT platforms, such as Airbnb Luxe, activate unique transactional and functional mechanisms that are relevant to the design of service systems. Understanding these mechanisms is important for the development of effective and efficient luxury service systems [14].

2.2. Luxury Tourism

The luxury market is essential to the tourism industry since it generates higher income and, therefore, higher profitability [6,8,15]. The concepts of luxury and tourism are closely related. Many years ago, only wealthy elites could afford to travel for leisure purposes. Therefore, this desire to seek exclusive and authentic experiences has always existed [16]. There are also a lot of authors who have been investigating the concept of luxury and tourism, as can be seen below (Table 1).

Table 1. Luxury tourism articles.

Author	Year	Journal	Context
Yang, Zhang and Mattila	2016	<i>Cornell Hospitality Quarterly</i>	Luxury Travel
Presbury, Fitzgerald and Chapman	2005	<i>Managing Service Quality</i>	Luxury Hotel
Walters and Carr	2015	<i>Tourism and Hospitality Research</i>	Luxury Second Home
Chang and Ko	2017	<i>International Journal of Hospitality Management</i>	Luxury Service (Golf Club)
Harkison, Hemmington and Hyde	2018	<i>International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management</i>	Luxury Accommodation
Demir and Saribaş	2014	<i>International Journal of Contemporary Economics and Administrative Sciences</i>	Luxury Tourism
Bernstein	1999	<i>Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly</i>	Luxury Hotel
Alves, Marreiro das Chagas and Duarte de Araújo	2012	<i>Studies and Perspectives in Tourism</i>	Luxury Hotel
Mansilla	2014	<i>The Ostelea School of Tourism & Hospitality</i>	Luxury Tourism
Iloranta	2022	<i>European Journal of Tourism Research</i>	Luxury Tourism
Farmaki, Spanou and Christou	2021	<i>International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality</i>	Airbnb Luxe
Carrasco-Santos, Ciruela-Lorenzo, Méndez Pavón and Cristófol	2021	<i>Journal of Open Innovation</i>	Luxury Destination

Source: Own elaboration.

In recent times, the notion of luxury travel has undergone a transformation, moving away from ostentatious, sumptuous, and grandiose experiences. The new luxury consumer is not merely interested in the acquisition of material possessions through expensive brands but instead seeks out unique, authentic, and personalized experiences as the primary motive for their travel. As such, the true essence of luxury lies in the ability to access the most extraordinary tourist destinations, where privacy and security are guaranteed [17]. The majority of what constitutes luxury tourism is distinguished by symbolic rather than material value, such as the ability to visit idyllic locations and partake in diverse cultural experiences [18].

The most relevant factor in considering a luxury destination is accommodation. If this main element is not taken care of and preserved, luxury tourism will not evolve and will remain stagnant. When talking about luxury tourism, we also talk about the activities that the consumer carries out in the place, such as the restaurants they go to, the shops they shop in, etc. [19].

In their report, the authors of [20] present five dimensions that are central to the creation of supply and demand in the luxury tourism market: monetary factors, durability, a direct relationship with the client, the social context in which it operates, and exclusivity. The luxury traveler seeks a unique experience that stands apart from mainstream trends and mass consumerism.

Thus, luxury tourism is defined as a type of sector in which the consumer demands exclusive tourist experiences based on a high-quality service with its own specific characteristics [20] in addition to uniqueness, comfort, a sense of luxury, exquisiteness, and personalization [21]. In other words, it is a travel experience that is not commonly accessible, has a high cost, offers a superior quality of service, provides additional pleasure, and can become a symbol of personal or social identity [22].

Moreover, a study conducted by [23] identified that the two most significant categories for describing the concept of luxury tourism are related to the product and the experience. This study collected 48 cases with different perspectives on luxury. From a product perspective, such as a hotel, luxury tourism is defined by material factors such as the physical environment, the surroundings, or the décor of the facilities, along with immaterial characteristics such as safety, quality, exclusivity, and comfort. The experience of luxury tourism is described as unique, personalized, and exclusive. The analysis also found that the price is often associated with luxury tourism since high cost is linked to luxury, and in most cases, a high price can indicate quality and prestige.

As the concept of luxury undergoes transformations, so does the perception of luxury among guests. With the increasing prominence of travel and exploration, guests' expectations continue to rise. Thus, it is suggested that guest experiences play a crucial role in shaping the definition of luxury [24].

2.3. Marbella as a Luxury Destination

Marbella, the capital of the Costa del Sol, is positioned every year as one of the most important tourist destinations in Europe. It is currently recovering as a luxury destination, linking Marbella with highly relevant initiatives and congresses around luxury offerings [25].

Laura de Arce, General Director of Tourism at the Marbella Town Hall, emphasizes the extensive range of luxury offerings available in Marbella, which are aimed at high-net-worth tourists. These offerings include five-star hotels, golf courses, establishments holding four Michelin stars, and more. In addition to these, Marbella provides access to complementary luxury services in exclusive areas such as Puerto Banús, which includes fashion outlets, yachts and boats, nightclubs, high-end vehicles, cosmetic surgery clinics, and significant real estate agencies [26].

Marbella, located in the province of Malaga, Spain, is a city full of history, gastronomy, whitewashed houses, and orange trees. It is a top destination for golf lovers, offering extraordinary views of the sea and mountains. The municipality boasts 26 km of coast-

line, four ports, important sports complexes, riding schools, tennis clubs, and incredible residential complexes [26].

According to the tourism website provided by the Marbella Town Hall, the municipality is a five-star destination with several certificates, including Best European Destination 2022, Most Exclusive Destination 2022, Safe Tourism Certified, Q of Touristic Quality, Smart Destination, Safe Travelers, Virtuoso Preferred Destination, and Traveler Made [27]. Marbella is a popular destination for wealthy tourists worldwide who are attracted by its sunny climate, exclusive resorts, fine dining, luxury shopping, and high-end entertainment. The tourism industry positioned Marbella as an internationally renowned destination in the 1970s and 1990s [28].

Marbella is considered a smart tourism destination in its initial phase, mainly adopting technological and sustainable strategies [29]. Although many tourist destinations are trying to implement technological solutions to address problems in cities, smart city research is still vital [30].

Several studies have examined the luxury tourism industry in Marbella and its impact on the local economy, environment, and society. Increasingly, property prices are higher, and there is a higher proportion of foreigners in the municipality, either to live or work [31].

One of the characteristics directly observed and mentioned by tourism agents was the tourist segmentation based on luxury tourism, golf tourism, shopping tourism, and sun and beach tourism, as well as the existence of luxury and grand luxury hotel chains [29]. In addition, Marbella is a tourist destination whose RevPar is among the highest in Spain [32].

Various studies have established a strong link between brand image and customer satisfaction. Therefore, it is crucial to implement strategies that enhance the customer's perception of the brand image. Having an excellent brand image not only improves customer satisfaction but also has a positive impact on brand power [33].

According to a qualitative study by [34], in the context of Marbella, destination image, location, accessibility, and accommodations are crucial variables that influence the choice of an event. Events are essential in promoting and enhancing brand power [35]. Furthermore, previous research on tourist satisfaction in Marbella has highlighted the importance of factors such as climate, safety, and quality of hotel services in shaping the overall experience of the tourist [36].

Overall, the luxury tourism industry in Marbella has important economic, social, and cultural implications. While luxury tourism can bring significant economic benefits, it is important to ensure that it is sustainable and responsible in order to minimize its negative impact on the environment and local culture. Future research can explore the impact of luxury tourism on specific sectors of the local economy, such as real estate and retail, and examine the effectiveness of sustainable tourism practices in Marbella.

Complementary services related to luxury help increase experiential enjoyment and symbolic value, hence the importance of the destination, in this case Marbella, offering an extra product that accompanies the accommodation [13,37].

The tourist relevance acquired by Marbella has improved other sectors directly related to leisure and luxury, especially golf courses, marinas, and cosmetic surgeries, as shows (Table 2). According to the data provided by the Marbella City Council, luxury is the segment that reigns over tourism companies in the municipality thanks to the 70 luxury firms in Puerto Banús and El Corte Inglés, luxury real estate, boats, yachts, and high-end car rental.

It is not surprising that luxury is a significant segment in Marbella's tourism industry, considering the various high-end offerings available in the municipality.

Table 2 presents data on the economic impact of luxury tourism on sectors such as golf courses, marinas, and cosmetic surgeries. Golf courses, in particular, are a significant attraction in Marbella, given its excellent climate and terrain. There are many golf courses in Marbella, and it is known as one of the best golfing destinations in Europe.

Marinas are another essential sector that has benefited from luxury tourism in Marbella. The municipality has four ports, including Puerto Banús, which is one of the most exclusive

marinas in the world. It is a popular destination for luxury yachts and boats, and it is also an excellent place to shop, dine, and party.

Table 2. Offer of tourist companies in Marbella according to typology.

Tourism Companies	Nº	Tourism Companies	Nº
Shopping companies (centers and shop with fashion brands)	41	MICE (congress venues, hostesses, services for congress, translators, catering)	69
Culture (historical heritage, antique dealers, art workshops, art galleries and museums)	84	Sports (riding centers, gyms, tennis and paddle clubs)	47
Gastronomy (Michelin stars, wine bars, large capacity rests and delicatessens)	70	Sea (beaches, marinas and nautical activities)	48
Shows (night, family entertainment, parks and gardens)	62	Health (spa centers, aesthetic clinics, physiotherapists, hospitals and clinics)	89
Golf (courses, shops, academies and schools, equipment hire)	32		

Source: [27] Own elaboration.

Finally, cosmetic surgeries have also become a popular service among wealthy tourists in Marbella.

Overall, luxury tourism has had a significant impact on various sectors in Marbella, including those directly related to leisure and luxury, such as golf courses, marinas, and cosmetic surgeries.

2.4. Luxury Holiday Homes in Marbella

The luxury segment in the accommodation sector has experienced strong growth over the last ten years, and this growth is expected to continue in the coming years with a higher occupancy rate [38].

In reference to Marbella as a luxury destination, there are various criteria since it can be beneficial or detrimental to the municipality. Marbella is one of the main luxury vacation spots in Spain due to its high RevPAR in 2019 with an average of EUR 130, transforming from a small town to a large tourist destination [37]. Its numerous beaches, golf courses, ports, sports activities, gastronomy, incredible Michelin-starred restaurants, and climate make this destination a luxury destination [39].

In recent years, the number of accommodation places in Marbella has grown by more than 200%, which is a clear positive evolution that the pandemic has been unable to stop [40]. Currently, the city has an accommodation offer that amounts to 8621 establishments with 77,905 beds [41]. In the previous year, Marbella represented 16.40% of the accommodation offered in the province of Malaga with 17.30% of its beds; and in Andalusia, it occupied 8.46% of establishments and 7.55% of places [40].

As seen in Table 3 and Figure 1, housing for tourist purposes is the modality that is gaining the most relevance in this destination, with more than twice as many hotel establishments and places. The number of houses for tourist purposes and their places is growing at a high rate in Marbella, surpassing the number of establishments and hotel places, hence the importance of analyzing various issues related to this new type of accommodation.

Table 3. Supply of tourist establishments in Marbella according to typology (2021).

Types of Establishments	Number
Tourist Accommodation	8.425
Hotel Establishments	106
Tourist Flats	87
Tourist Camps	3
Total Establishments	8.621

Source: [41] Own elaboration.

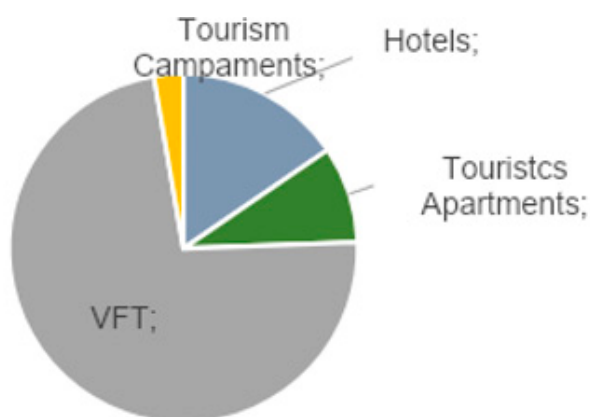


Figure 1. Supply of tourist places in Marbella according to typology. Source: [41] Own elaboration.

According to [42], housing for tourist purposes (HTP) is accommodation located in buildings situated on land for residential use, where the accommodation service will be offered for a price in the Autonomous Community of Andalusia, on a regular basis, and for tourist purposes.

It may also be a house in which the owner is the proprietor of the activity and rents it in its entirety to third parties on a temporary basis regardless of the number of days [43].

Figure 2 shows the large number of points corresponding to all existing HTPs in the center of the Western Costa del Sol, comprising a total of 8425 dwellings. From all these data, the prestige of this type of establishment is already understood, which is why it is necessary to investigate and work more on it, emphasizing luxury villas, which are the main reason for this research.

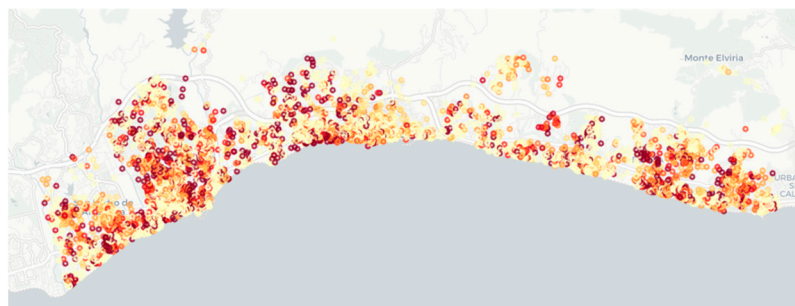


Figure 2. Map of holiday homes in Marbella. Source: [44].

According to [45], in tourist apartment establishments, these units can be villas, chalets, apartments, bungalows, or similar properties. Thanks to the study and analysis carried out in this research, the type of tourist housing belonging to the most demanded luxury sector in the area is the so-called villa or chalet.

Experiences that are based on services, which are intangible, are very difficult to evaluate. It can be measured by combining the characteristics of the product and those of the service, such as the physical environment, the appearance of the employees, the equipment, and the decoration, and valuing the invisible through the interaction between the host and the guest, generating emotions and high expectations for the traveler, to achieve a more functional and symbolic luxury [11].

The definition of luxury can be characterized in the home in tangible aspects, such as the facilities, environment, appliances, furniture, floor, and walls, and even intangibles, such as exclusivity, desire, sumptuousness, and exquisiteness. Therefore, the concept of luxury is formed by both physical and emotional elements [10].

The idea of a luxurious villa has been changing over the years. In the 21st century, the concept of the luxury villa was shaped in several ways: as a place where architectural

simplicity and simplicity predominate, without excessive adornments, where the guest can live a more authentic experience [10]. The true elite, luxury guests look for less populated places; they opt for private property and rigorously guarded areas beyond the reach of others, reinforcing the symbolic power of luxury travel, requiring social status and the privilege to experience a trip in another way [18].

2.5. Collaborative Economy

The growth of the phenomenon of tourist housing cannot be understood without the appearance of the so-called collaborative economy or sharing economy. The collaborative economy occurs when there is an exchange of goods and/or services in exchange for a price. We are immersed in the digital world, so we have to take advantage of new technologies to buy, sell, or rent these material or immaterial goods, that is, to satisfy our needs and desires [46]. The concept of the sharing economy encompasses two other definitions necessary for the existence of this new business model: the temporary use of goods and services by non-owners and, above all, Web 2.0 [47–49].

The collaborative economy involves the development of the social economy in which intermediaries are eliminated and only direct relationships between consumers and companies exist, using online platforms as support. In other words, it is a new business model produced around the digital world on the Internet, creating an online market [50–52].

This concept is applied to multiple economic sectors, such as education, health, or logistics. However, it is the tourism sector that is being most favored by this new type of business-to-business exchange, including, as far as we are concerned, collaborative accommodation [50,53].

There are various platforms dedicated to collaborative tourism. However, the most used by owners and companies dedicated to vacation rental management is Airbnb (Air bed and breakfast), which is why this platform has been chosen for this analysis. It has a usage rate of 54%, followed by Vrbo with a 20% rate and others with a 26% rate. Marbella is the municipality that obtained the most income from the Airbnb platform in 2019 of all the tourist points in Andalusia: around EUR 75 million [29].

Airbnb was founded in 2007 by Brian Chesky and Joe Gebbia when they welcomed three guests to their San Francisco apartment. Years later, the Airbnb Plus program was incorporated.

These latest changes made by the platform aim to adopt more professional and luxury-oriented accommodation standards, encouraging hosts to host competing practices against high-end hotels [11].

The service ratings have been very positive in Marbella, as shown in the table below (Table 4).

Table 4. Average ratings received on Airbnb for holiday homes in Marbella.

Services	Ratings in Airbnb
Accuracy	4.72
Price	4.61
Location	4.79
Communication	4.78
Cleanliness	4.66
Check-in	4.77

Source: [54] Own elaboration.

Currently, Airbnb Luxe has been introduced with the intention of offering luxury experiences with tailor-made trips, allowing travelers to discover different destinations in a more authentic way [55].

The Airbnb Plus modality allows the selection of higher-quality accommodations, verified by an inspection, with excellent evaluations of hosts, who are called superhosts in this section [56].

The tourist property that obtains the most positive evaluations and the fewest number of cancellations is considered a superhost, hence the importance of interviewing them. It should be underlined that being an Airbnb host is not easy. It can be said that it is a business subject, that is, it entails being in charge of the entire production process: providing space, creating and managing the offer of its accommodation, giving it value, increasing its competition, carrying out marketing strategies, etc. In short, it requires organizing all the activities well to make a profit [57].

Airbnb Luxe and Luxury Retreats is the new category that offers unique services. It was developed in 2017 after the travel experience that Luxury Retreats offered to the platform. It has more than 2000 premium accommodations with exceptional features. It is a platform where incredible accommodations are found around the world, which are designed by experts in high-end services. In addition, they offer a trip designer who is in charge of seeing that everything is in order. Not just any accommodation can be published on this platform; there must be an inspection and verification that the villas are in good condition. Some of the extra-exclusive services that can be found are chefs, drivers, childcare services, butlers, and massage therapists.

In the luxury sector, the interactions that the host of the tourist village must have with the traveler is very important. Absolute commitment is needed in order to exceed customer expectations, to take immediate action in case of complaints or problems, and to ensure satisfaction, that is, to do whatever it takes to obtain complete guest satisfaction: this is luxury. This type of behavior in the luxury tourism industry is recognized in one study [58] as “empowered behavior”, which reflects initiative, creativity, and total responsibility to increase customer satisfaction.

The introduction of the new luxury Airbnb project provokes the hosts belonging to this community to renew their properties, going from being basic to more authentic. This platform offers villa owners detailed suggestions on how to turn a home into an extraordinary five-star villa. However, each host builds the meaning of luxury around their home differently [10].

The competition is increasing, since nowadays, people travel more and more; they know about different types of accommodations, which gives rise to comparisons between them. It must be taken into account that a tourist villa and a luxury hotel do not offer the same services, so it may be more expensive to compete with different accommodations since they have different characteristics: in a villa, the guest obtains an exclusive and personalized service, in a luxury hotel, there are more guests and attention is distributed, hence the importance of meeting or even exceeding guest expectations [59].

The premium quality of villas is characterized by a range of unique features that result in a higher demand and subsequently a higher price. These features include higher quality facilities and services as well as a high level of interaction and commitment to the guest's needs to ensure they feel at home [60]. Furthermore, there exist various hypotheses which can influence rental prices, as indicated below [47]. For example, having a superhost status on Airbnb, receiving high ratings and a large number of comments can significantly increase the price per night of the villa.

In addition, the location of the villa plays a crucial role in determining the rental price. The weather can also strongly affect the pricing strategy along with the accessibility to various amenities such as those in the neighborhood. Although social aspects such as ethnicity or politics may not seem to impact prices, they can significantly affect price variations. The presence of other nearby villas can also result in price competition, and the increase in the number of villas intended for tourist use can have a significant impact on the rise in prices per night, as observed in the highly touristic areas of Marbella. In short, the communication between host and guest to maximize trust so that the client obtains the greatest possible satisfaction can be considered a peculiarity of luxury service [11].

According to the study carried out on Airbnb hosts by [11], luxury consists of many large and small details that they should be aware of. Some of them would be the accessories of the villa, such as high-quality white bedding, crystal tableware, and brand-name shampoos, gels, and creams; the furniture, such as marble countertops and floors; and access to streaming services such as Netflix and cutting-edge technology such as artificial intelligence. This is in addition to the immaterial, such as cleanliness, comfort, privacy and security. Luxury must encompass accommodating for and providing the unexpected so that the client feels totally surprised.

3. Materials and Methods

The purpose of this study is to conduct an analysis of the luxury housing supply in Marbella with a focus on characterizing it. The research methodology selected for this study was qualitative research, which involved conducting 13 personal interviews with individuals on the supply side of the market. Specifically, two interviews were conducted with homeowners, and 11 interviews were conducted with real estate agents who specialize in the luxury segment of the Marbella 11 area. Similar qualitative research methods have been employed in other tourism studies, with samples ranging from 12 to 18 interviews.

Therefore, the first phase was carrying out a literature review of scientific articles to obtain in-depth knowledge of the most important definitions and establish the framework to carry out this research.

The second phase of the methodology was analyzing the database offered by the Registry of the Junta de Andalucía, the Marbella City Council, and also Data Hippo, which was consulted to study the different types of accommodation. It was also necessary to search for information on some regulations that control the HTP in the autonomous community of Andalusia.

The third phase of this research corresponds to data collection from the Airbnb Luxe platform, which is a web area dedicated exclusively to luxurious tourist homes, in this case, the majority being villas. This analysis is complex, since there is no general rule that determines which homes are luxury and which are not. For this reason, the data are concentrated around Airbnb Luxe, in which tourist villas exclusively for luxury are offered. These are homes that have been analyzed, categorized, and stamped as luxury homes by the platform based on a series of characteristics typical of the sector, which is mainly due to the quality of the building, the interior and exterior decoration, the location, and a series of extra services such as a spa, gym, heated swimming pool, cinema room, etc.

To identify all the villas that Airbnb Luxe offers, it was necessary to select a reservation date and see those with availability, since there is no possibility of finding the houses without selecting a number of days. Therefore, a reservation date of 14–30 November was selected. This compendium of data examined the location of the homes shown on a map made by Google Maps (a total of 21 villas), price per night, maximum capacity of guests, number of rooms, bathrooms, and amount of security deposit.

In the fourth phase of the methodology, a total of 13 qualitative interviews were carried out: 2 with superhosts and 11 with luxury real estate companies in Marbella.

Regarding the two superhosts, the selection criteria that were applied included being on the Airbnb platform with a large number of evaluations and comments (superhosts) and having a willingness to participate in this research. The communication was made through the Airbnb chat, since the exchange of external data such as an email address or mobile phone number in the platform conversation was not possible.

Before asking the questions, the participants were informed of the confidentiality of the data provided and the obligation of anonymity. One of the interviews was conducted in Spanish and the other in English, according to the preferences of each host. The questions were based on the most important concepts of this analysis. However, at the beginning of the survey, questions were asked about the hosts to establish a general profile of the owner, such as gender, age, nationality, or type of housing offered.

4. Results

The research objectives set out in this research were as follows:

The first objective was to conduct a comprehensive review of the existing literature on the concepts of luxury, tourism, and Marbella as a luxury tourism destination. The second objective was to gather data on the current tourist accommodation options available in Marbella. The third objective was to analyze the supply of luxury tourist accommodation in Marbella by examining the listings on the Airbnb Luxe platform. Finally, the fourth objective was to conduct 13 qualitative interviews with homeowners and real estate agents in Marbella to obtain insights into the profile of luxury homeowners, the concept of luxury, and the various visible and non-visible elements that contribute to the overall concept of luxury in Marbella.

By achieving these objectives, the study aimed to contribute to a better understanding of the luxury tourism market in Marbella and inform future research on this topic.

From the development of the four research phases, based on the research objectives, we obtained the following results.

4.1. Results from the Literature Review

The complexity of the term 'luxury' in tourism implies that it is not just about tangible material goods or services, but it also involves intangible and experiential factors that contribute to its perceived value. This complexity in the concept of luxury demands a deeper understanding of its different dimensions and its impact on consumer behavior in the tourism industry. Therefore, the findings of this research can be valuable for the tourism industry and tourism research by providing insights into the non-visible aspects of luxury and how they influence tourists' perceptions and behaviors. By incorporating these insights, the industry can improve the development and promotion of high-end tourism products that cater to the demands of luxury travelers.

4.2. Data Collection of Different Types of Accommodation in Marbella

In the second phase of the study, which focused on the supply data of the different types of accommodations in Marbella, it was found that most of them are HTPs, ranking first in the total number of accommodations in Marbella.

4.3. Data Collection in Airbnb Luxe

The collection of data from the Airbnb Luxe platform revealed a total of 21 luxury villas available for rental in the municipality of Marbella, as shown in Table 5. It is worth noting that the sample analyzed in this section represents 100% of the villas available on the platform in Marbella, and that Airbnb Luxe is the most commonly used channel for the rental of tourist accommodations.

Table 6 presents a clear overview of the prices per night of the 21 luxury villas available on the Airbnb Luxe platform in Marbella. The table is ordered from the highest to the lowest price, providing an overview of the price range of these villas. The highest price per night is EUR 10,000, which is associated with Villa 1, while the lowest price is EUR 520 per night, which is associated with Villa 21.

Villa 1 is an accommodation with five bedrooms and five bathrooms with a capacity of ten people. It is a recently renovated villa with a minimalist and Scandinavian-inspired design, incorporating touches of green into the facilities. As previously discussed, the villa offers a simple design that is not overbearing or overdone, making it comfortable and quiet.

It is essential that the house is an open space since guests seek to have a unique experience where they can relax and connect with nature. It offers a huge garden with a good lawn and tropical palm trees. In addition, the accommodation has services that are essential in the world of luxury, such as a swimming pool, barbecue, private gym, parking, and a heated wine cellar.

Table 5. Qualitative methods used in tourism.

Author	Journal	Number of Interviews
Atsız, O.; Cifci, I.	Exploring the motives for entrepreneurship in the meal-sharing economy. <i>Current Issues in Tourism</i> 2022 , 25(6), 864–873.	13 interviews were conducted
Basouli, M.; Jabbari, G.	The relationship between crisis management and community resilience in tourism destination at corona crisis case study: Hamedan City. <i>Urban tourism</i> 2021 , 8(1), 33–48.	16 semi-structured interviews
Buhalis, D.; Karatay, N.	Mixed Reality (MR) for generation Z in cultural heritage tourism towards metaverse. In <i>Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism 2022: Proceedings of the ENTER 2022 eTourism Conference, January 11–14, 2022</i> (pp. 16–27). Springer International Publishing	18 semi-structured interviews and inductive qualitative research
Camilleri, M. A.	Responsible tourism that creates shared value among stakeholders. <i>Tourism Planning & Development</i> 2016 , 13(2), 219–235	16 managing directors interviews
Creswell, J. W.; Creswell, J. D.	<i>Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches</i> . 2017. Sage Publications.	13 interviews were conducted
Eichelberger, S.; Heigl, M.; Peters, M.; Pikkemaat, B.	Exploring the role of tourists: Responsible behavior triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic. <i>Sustainability</i> 2021 , 13(11), 5774.	19 in-depth interviews were conducted
Karsavuran, Z.	Surviving a major crisis: The case of dismissed tourism and hospitality employees. <i>Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events</i> 2021 , 13(2), 243–265.	13 interviews
Molina-Azorín, J. F.; Tari, J. J.; Pereira-Moliner, J.; Lopez-Gamero, M. D.; Pertusa-Ortega, E. M.	The effects of quality and environmental management on competitive advantage: A mixed methods study in the hotel industry. <i>Tourism Management</i> 2015 , 50, 41–54.	13 hotel managers were initially interviewed
Pung, J.; Chiappa, G.	An exploratory and qualitative study on the meaning of transformative tourism and its facilitators and inhibitors. <i>European Journal of Tourism Research</i> 2020 , 24, 2404–2404.	10 interviews (face to face) and 3 interviews (via Skype)
Song, H., Zhu, C.; Fong, L. H. N.	Exploring residents' perceptions and attitudes towards sustainable tourism development in traditional villages: The lens of stakeholder theory. <i>Sustainability</i> 2021 , 13(23), 13032.	12 semi-structured in-depth interviews
Um, T.; Chung, N.; Stienmetz, J.	Factors affecting consumers' impulsive buying behavior in tourism Mobile commerce using SEM and fsQCA. <i>Journal of Vacation Marketing</i> 2022 , 13567667221090991.	13 interviews
Santos-Júnior, A. Mendes-Filho, L.; Almeida-García, F.; Manuel-Simões, J.	Smart Tourism Destinations: Un estudio basado en la visión de los stakeholders. <i>Revista Turismo em Análise</i> 2017 , 28(3), 358–379.	14 interviews

Source: Own elaboration.

Likewise, it is one of the few accommodations belonging to the Airbnb Luxe community that has an evaluation, which is shown below:

“Villa 1 is a beautiful and big villa. There is everything you need, and the design is amazing. The inside as well as the outside area. The rooms are big and comfortable. There are also enough bathrooms so that with 8 people, you never need to wait to be able to shower.

The host has been always available, and the chef service (which we booked additional) was amazing, and I can only recommend it.

The kids also had fun in the pool. You can reach the beach in 10 min by car, and the nightlife is not far away.

We will be back in Marbella! Thank you for hosting us!” Nena

Villa 21 is a four-bedroom, four-bathroom mansion with a capacity of eight people, and it is located in the Golden Mile neighborhood of Marbella. This accommodation has a more classic design with vaulted ceilings and wooden beams, transmitting majesty with its furniture in warm tones. These characteristics correspond more to the idea of more luxurious materials that are ostentatious and ornate, as can be seen in the images, with a more decorated living room and bedroom.

This room also has a large garden with a swimming pool and barbecue where you can enjoy the outdoors, as well as parking and security systems.

Table 6. Villas offered by Airbnb Luxe in Marbella.

Villa's Name	Price per Night (EUR)	Persons	Room n°	Bath n°	Deposit (EUR)
Villa 1	10,056	10	5	5	3000
Villa 2	4550	12	6	8	2000
Villa 3	4–550	10	5	5	2800
Villa 4	3572	12	6	7	10,000
Villa 5	3571	14	8	8	5000
Villa 6	3319	15	7	8	1187
Villa 7	2950	14	7	7	3000
Villa 8	2950	8	4	4	
Villa 9	2858	12	5	6	
Villa 10	2768	12	6	4	
Villa 11	2655	12	6	5	5000
Villa 12	2622	8	4	5	
Villa 13	2190	14	6	6	1187
Villa 14	2056	10	5	6	3000
Villa 15	2000	12	6	7	1000
Villa 16	1450	10	4	4	2000
Villa 17	1450	8	4	5	
Villa 18	1400	14	7	7	3000
Villa 19	1350	10	5	5	
Villa 20	1203	8	4	3	
Villa 21	520	8	4	4	3000
Total	60,040	234	114	119	45,174
Mean	2859	11.14	5.43	5.67	3227

Source: [61] Own elaboration.

Comparing this accommodation with the previous one, the price variation is apparent, with Villa 21 being EUR 9500 cheaper than Villa 1. This significant difference in price is notable in terms of the services that one offers and the other does not, in addition to the design and quality of the furniture and facilities. This house does not have a private gym or heated pool, but it is closer to the center of town than usual. Even so, both villas require the same amount of money for the security deposit: EUR 3000. However, the price per night of Villa 21 is still less economical for a traditional traveler compared to a hotel, even after adjusting for the cost for the location, views, and size of the accommodation.

Villa 10 is the general and exemplary model of accommodation among the 21 villas published on Airbnb Luxe. It is a house with six bedrooms, four bathrooms, and a capacity of twelve passengers. At first glance, of the three accommodations analyzed, this one has a more attractive, youthful, and modern design. It is possible to enjoy a stay in a place such as this both in the summer, thanks to its large, well-furnished, and decorated garden and its large swimming pool, and in the winter, thanks to its chimney. It is located at a high altitude in the mountain, so it offers incredible views of the sea and the mountains.

One of the points that most favors this villa is its excellent location, since it is close to the best golf courses, as well as the beach and Puerto Banús; this, together with its incredible design and installation, justifies the price.

4.4. Supply-Side Qualitative Interviews

In the fourth phase, as mentioned previously, 13 qualitative interviews were conducted, of which two were with Airbnb superhosts (owners A and B) and the remaining 11 were with real estate agents in the luxury segment in Marbella.

4.4.1. Results of Superhosts Interviews

The first question asked in the questionnaire serves to establish the general profile of the people who decide to rent out their villas for tourism. There is a report by the Ministry of Tourism of the Andalusian Regional Government that shows that the majority of owners who rent out their villas for holidays are foreigners [62].

Focusing on the responses of the interviewees (owner A and owner B), they said that they were using Airbnb as the main means for managing their tourist homes due to the large number of services it offers, and one of them is its resource center, where Airbnb proposes strategies to make the rental as profitable as possible. The superhosts interviewed follow some of these strategies: owner A analyzes the market and updates its prices according to the competition, and owner B varies prices according to the season of the year.

Subsequently, the host is asked about the concept of luxury. Owner B describes luxury in the same way, as something personal, since for some it is “sophistication, brands, and money”, and for others, it can be considered “a deserted beach or being on top of a mountain”. Applying this concept to tourist villages, there are certain characteristics that both interviewees share. According to them, what makes a villa luxurious are “the good location, incredible views, quality of the construction, good interior facilities, and privacy”.

Regarding the potential profitability of luxury services and the advantages and disadvantages of operating in such a market, opinions among the interviewees were varied. Owner A argued that luxury is not necessarily required for a business to be profitable, as operating in the luxury market incurs higher costs. On the other hand, owner B believed that complete profitability can be achieved through offering luxury services, which can be considered an advantage. However, both owners agreed that the main disadvantage of operating in this sector is the highly demanding nature of customers, which requires hosts to consistently provide exceptional service.

4.4.2. Results Real Estate Agents in the Luxury Segment in Marbella

Regarding the analysis of the 11 qualitative interviews made with real estate agents in the luxury segment in Marbella, one of the most relevant results is the emphasis that they give to the visible and non-visible points that are related to the luxury concept.

It can be seen that there is a difference between those aspects that are revealed as “visible”, that is, those that you can see as services, such as the swimming pool and if it is heated; the gym; if it has close parking and how many cars can be parked; the sofa and how big and nice and expensive it is; the accessories such as towels and sheets; if they have amenities in the bathroom and what brands they are; and the decoration and design. Additionally, the location is another visible point of luxury, as is the technology regarding a smart TV, sound system, and alarms, for example. Another visible point is the extra services that are offered, such as a chef or any other service that can be provided by the host.

The other point is that those “not visible” are concluded as one of the main results of this research and are listed in the following table (Table 7). For example, one of the most cited non-visible points has been privacy, because the people that want to rent a luxury house are most of the time asking about whether the villa has privacy. The comfort, exclusivity, and possibility of having a unique experience must also be considered. The customers also are in need of a high standard of cleanliness and some specific personalization in some aspects.

Table 7. Results of qualitative interview—visibility of luxury in a house.

Visible	Not Visible
Facilities (jacuzzi, swimming pool, heated pool, gym, floor, walls, parking, etc.).	Privacy
Furniture (worktop, sofa, chair, table, etc.).	Comfort
Accessories (towels, branded shampoo and gel, sheets, crockery, cutlery, etc.).	Exclusivity, pure and unique experience
Design and decoration.	Personalization
Location, together with sea or mountain views.	Quality
Technology (smart TV, alarms, sound system, etc.).	Cleanliness
Extra services (chef, butler, chauffeur, etc.).	Comments and evaluation on platforms.

Source: Own elaboration.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

The present study aimed to test the hypothesis that the HTP (housing for tourist purposes) has a greater presence in the tourist market of Marbella than other forms of tourist accommodation. The results obtained confirm this hypothesis, as it was found that HTP housing is the most prominent type of tourist establishment in this destination. Specifically, the number of HTP housing options available in Marbella is more than twice that of hotel establishments and other forms of accommodation.

This finding has important implications for the tourism industry in Marbella, as it suggests a shift in consumer preferences toward HTP housing options as a preferred mode of tourist accommodation. Moreover, this highlights the need for hotel establishments and other accommodation providers to adapt their services and marketing strategies to remain competitive in the face of the increasing popularity of HTP housing options.

Overall, the findings of this study provide valuable insights into the changing dynamics of the tourism market in Marbella and contribute to the broader literature on the evolution of tourist accommodation preferences and consumer behavior.

The second hypothesis presented in this academic article posits that the luxury tourism industry in Marbella has a substantial positive impact on the local economy due to the high prices associated with luxury villa rentals. This hypothesis is supported by data indicating that Marbella received the highest income from Airbnb Luxe rentals of any tourist destination in Andalusia with approximately EUR 75 million generated in 2019 [63].

This finding highlights the significant economic benefits that luxury tourism can bring to a destination such as Marbella. Luxury villas, in particular, command high prices and can attract a wealthy and discerning clientele who are willing to spend on premium services and amenities. This, in turn, can stimulate local economic growth through increased spending on dining, shopping, and leisure activities. The results of this study on the concept of luxury within the tourism and accommodation industries have led to several conclusions, including a possible response to the main objective of the research: knowing the luxury villas in the municipality of Marbella through the platform Airbnb Luxe.

It is challenging to investigate and extract data on tourism in the luxury sector. Although luxury reflects aspects such as high quality or high income, in this sector, there is a lot of mistrust when it comes to providing information and figures, making this a rather mysterious and reserved group. The two owners questioned did not want to answer some questions related to the profitability margin of renting a house with such characteristics.

This analysis shows the complexity of defining the concept of luxury since it depends on many factors; for example, research on luxury consumption has traditionally focused on goods, but more research needs to be carried out on how to create luxury experiences [64].

The growing wealth worldwide has been accompanied by a shift toward luxury consumption from material possessions to experiential services [65]. However, there is no concrete definition of luxury goods or services [66]. Among the various descriptions of luxury, scholars generally agree that it is subjective, dynamic, and relative [67]; that is, it depends on the perceptions of consumers. In this research, several keywords related to

luxury (exclusivity, unique experience, personalized service, privacy, etc.) appear along with these terms in several articles from different international magazines. Even the 13 interviewees were not able to clearly answer what they considered luxury. It is not possible to determine something that is very generic, as for some, luxury is being able to reach the top of a mountain or an inaccessible beach, and for others, it is more related to materialism [68], expensive brands, and ostentation. Luxury can consist of more than just product features, quality, or price; it may be more inward-looking or intangible, such as authenticity, novelty, or uniqueness. Moreover, where luxury begins and ends could be determined according to the space and time in which it is found, varying depending on the type of consumer, country, or time, and the different dimensions that have been studied [69].

The third hypothesis was that the concept of luxury in tourism is complex and goes beyond the visible aspects that are already known, including non-visible aspects, as can be seen from the results of the qualitative interviews conducted and the referenced articles.

On the other hand, some studies about luxury tourism show that the concept requires attention in academic research [23]. This typology of tourism has not been investigated enough, and there is a great data gap. It requires much more attention and information due to its great global importance and high income in the Marbella destination, so it is necessary to carry out an exhaustive study of this matter. The intangible is always more complex to analyze, as there is no record of the material characteristics to consider [70,71]. To say that Marbella is a luxury destination would be something to be taken very seriously because, as it has been observed, through its offer of companies related to luxury, it has great potential in this sector. Although there is not enough research on luxury tourism, Marbella has a section of the City Council website dedicated to tourism that shows the golf courses, restaurants with Michelin stars, events, etc., on offer, which is clearly beneficial for the sector and for foreign tourists to whom such information is provided.

Likewise, luxury accommodation makes up a wide variety of properties that seek to differentiate what they offer through the characteristics of an installation, such as the size of the accommodation, furniture, design, etc. It is practically impossible to find a clear definition of luxury housing, since each one creates its own product with personal characteristics, in which some prefer ostentation and others prefer simplicity, with different competition, services, and strengths. Luxury services must be investigated from the subjective perceptions of consumers and hosts, since for each one, luxury represents something different.

Finally, it should be noted that there is hardly any research on the new Airbnb Luxe Luxury Retreats created by the Airbnb platform. The databases that extract information from Airbnb in general, such as Airdna, do not differentiate between Airbnb Plus and Airbnb Luxe, which makes it even more difficult to collect information. Keep in mind that the existence of Airbnb Luxe is efficient for hosts who want to dedicate themselves to luxury, and this program offers multiple services that allow the mission of hosting to be carried out in a more practical and safe way. Airbnb Luxe rarely shows a traveler's review or evaluation of a luxury villa. This could be in part because they are a small group of travelers who value privacy much more and are unwilling to share their personal experiences of the trip.

Other aspects to be considered in future research may be the consequences of the increase in tourist housing on the increase in, for example, first-time buyers and the rise in mortgage rates [72] and how this issue may influence poverty in some countries [73] as well as the consequences for social or even non-profit housing policies [74,75].

Some of the managerial implications may be as follows:

- It is necessary to understand the expectations and needs of travelers staying in this kind of luxury accommodation. It is important to know and understand what this type of tourist is looking for and what elements are needed to create a luxury experience. This information can be of interest to help luxury villa managers tailor their offer to better meet the needs of their target audience.

- Identify areas for improvement: The study may reveal areas where luxury villas in the municipality of Marbella, or other similar destinations, can improve to truly deliver a luxury experience.
- Develop marketing strategies: The study can help managers develop marketing strategies that better target luxury travelers. By understanding what luxury travelers are looking for, managers can highlight specific features and amenities at their properties that will appeal to this market.
- Leveraging platforms such as Airbnb Luxe: The study can also help managers understand how platforms such as Airbnb Luxe can be used to reach luxury travelers.

The limitations of the research may include:

The lack of a clear definition of luxury: The study acknowledges that the concept of luxury is complex and may vary depending on cultural and personal factors. As such, the lack of a clear and universally accepted definition of luxury could limit the study's ability to make definitive conclusions.

The study has been conducted based on an analysis of luxury villas offered through the Airbnb Luxe platform. The analysis could be complemented with a comparative analysis of all luxury platforms, which would also be interesting as a future line of study.

The study notes that luxury tourism is a typology that has not been investigated enough, leading to a great data gap. This lack of information may limit the study's ability to provide a comprehensive understanding of luxury tourism and its implications for the tourism and accommodation industries.

Future research directions for the study could include:

Expanding the scope of the study: The study could be expanded to include other luxury accommodations beyond villas, such as hotels or resorts. This could provide a more comprehensive understanding of luxury tourism in the region and its implications for the tourism and accommodation industries.

Comparing different luxury destinations: The study could compare Marbella's luxury tourism industry with that of other luxury destinations around the world. This could provide insights into the unique characteristics of luxury tourism in different regions and help identify best practices for catering to the luxury market.

Another of the future research directions is to complement quantitative research with a qualitative research approach to study luxury travelers. This could provide a more in-depth understanding of the motivations, expectations, and experiences of luxury travelers, although it is known that this research would not be easy to carry out because one of the things that this type of tourist seeks is to be unnoticed and maintain anonymity.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, M.J.C.-S. and D.G.-N.; Methodology, M.J.C.-S. and A.P.-R.; Software, A.P.-R.; Validation, M.J.C.-S.; Formal analysis, M.J.C.-S.; Investigation, M.J.C.-S. and D.G.-N.; Resources, M.J.C.-S. and D.G.-N.; Data curation, M.J.C.-S.; Writing—original draft, M.J.C.-S. and A.P.-R.; Writing—review & editing, M.J.C.-S. and D.G.-N. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: Acknowledgement of funding for this article is due to the University of Malaga.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

1. Rodríguez, J.V. Los Nómadas Digitales y Deportistas Internacionales Aumentan la Demanda de Viviendas de Lujo en Marbella. Available online: <http://bit.ly/43fXASP> (accessed on 23 June 2022).
2. Serrano, M. Marbella Refuerza su Posicionamiento como Destino de Lujo Europeo. Available online: <http://bit.ly/3o0oeia> (accessed on 26 June 2022).
3. Barciela, F. Villas y Mansiones, a Prueba de Crisis. Available online: <http://bit.ly/3UoUKqI> (accessed on 12 June 2022).
4. Hromada, E.; Cermakova, K. Financial Unavailability of housing in the Czech Republic and recommendations for its solution. *Int. J. Econ. Sci.* **2021**, *10*, 47–57. [[CrossRef](#)]
5. Ramos, M. La Vivienda de Alta Gama Genera 500 Millones de Euros en la Costa del Sol. Available online: <http://bit.ly/3zPHHEV> (accessed on 29 June 2022).

6. Gardetti, M. *Lujo Sostenible: Creación, Desarrollo y Valores de una Marca*, 1st ed.; LID Editorial Empresarial: Buenos Aires, Argentina, 2018.
7. Bessa, J. *El Lujo es un Concepto en Evolución*; Roca Gallery: Madrid, Spain, 2019.
8. Gimeno, J.A. Lujo y Primera Necesidad: Definición y Evolución en España. In Proceedings of the 3rd Public Economy Meeting, Sevilla, Universidad de Sevilla, Departamento de Teoría Económica y Economía Política, Seville, Spain, 10 February 1996; Available online: <https://idus.us.es/handle/11441/77911> (accessed on 29 June 2022).
9. Álvarez-Herranz, A.; Macedo-Ruiz, E. An Evaluation of the Three Pillars of Sustainability in Cities with High Airbnb Presence: A Case Study of the City of Madrid. *Sustainability* **2021**, *13*, 3220. [[CrossRef](#)]
10. Walters, T.; Carr, N. Changing patterns of conspicuous consumption: Media representations of luxury in second homes. *J. Consum. Cult.* **2019**, *19*, 295–315. [[CrossRef](#)]
11. Farmaki, A.; Spanou, E.; Christou, P. Constructing meanings of luxury in Airbnb. *Int. J. Contemp. Hosp.* **2021**, *33*, 3306–3330. [[CrossRef](#)]
12. Nicole, P. Lujo. Economipedia. Available online: <http://bit.ly/41cSJ2N> (accessed on 1 July 2022).
13. Chang, Y.; Ko, Y.J. Consumers' perceived post purchase risk in luxury services. *Int. J. Hosp. Manag.* **2017**, *61*, 94–106. [[CrossRef](#)]
14. Montagna, F.; Marcocchia, G.; Cantamessa, M. Tackling the Design of Platform-Based Service Systems, Integrating Data and Cultures: The Case of Urban Markets. *Systems* **2023**, *11*, 66. [[CrossRef](#)]
15. Martín, R. Cinco Características que Exigen los Consumidores de Lujo. Available online: <http://bit.ly/3KLmAtQ> (accessed on 11 June 2022).
16. Demir, C.; Saribaş, Ö. Luxury tourism in Turkey. *Int. J. Contemp. Econ. Adm. Sci.* **2014**, *4*, 2–4. Available online: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270541685> (accessed on 11 June 2022).
17. Bernstein, L. Luxury and the hotel brand. *Cornell Hotel. Restaur. Adm. Q.* **1999**, *40*, 47–53. [[CrossRef](#)]
18. Thurlow, C.; Jaworski, A. Visible-Invisible: The Social Semiotics of Labour in Luxury Tourism. In *Elite Mobilities*; Birtchnell, T., Caletro, J., Eds.; Routledge: London, UK, 2013; pp. 176–193. [[CrossRef](#)]
19. Alves, T.; Marreiro, C.M.; Duarte de Araújo, M.A. Competencias y habilidades necesarias de los gestores de hoteles de lujo y superlujo: Un estudio de caso en el Polo Turístico Via Costeira, Natal, Brasil. *Estud. Perspect. Tur.* **2012**, *21*, 604–620. Available online: <http://bit.ly/3ZU4VUY> (accessed on 18 June 2022).
20. Mansilla, J. Turismo de Lujo: Tendencias en Viajes y Destinos. Available online: <http://bit.ly/3KuGRCO> (accessed on 18 June 2022).
21. Zhang, E.; Tse, T. Tapping into Chinese Luxury Travelers. *J. China Tour. Res.* **2018**, *14*, 71–99. [[CrossRef](#)]
22. Liu, H.; Wu, L.; Li, X. Social Media Envy: How Experience Sharing on Social Networking Sites Drives Millennials' Aspirational Tourism Consumption. *J. Travel Res.* **2019**, *58*, 355–369. [[CrossRef](#)]
23. Iloranta, R. Luxury tourism—a review of the literature. *Eur. J. Tour. Res.* **2022**, *30*, 3007. [[CrossRef](#)]
24. Harkison, T.; Hemmington, N.; Hyde, K.F. Luxury accommodation—significantly different or just more expensive? *J. Revenue Pricing Manag.* **2018**, *17*, 231–243. [[CrossRef](#)]
25. Cristófol, F.J. Marbella, Centro del Turismo de Lujo (otra vez). Available online: <http://bit.ly/3MpdnIY> (accessed on 1 July 2022).
26. Portal Oficial de Turismo de España. Turismo en Marbella. Qué ver. Información turística. Spain Info. Available online: <http://bit.ly/3KKyQe3> (accessed on 24 June 2022).
27. Ayuntamiento de Marbella. Available online: <http://bit.ly/3nOhqnO> (accessed on 24 June 2022).
28. Del Río, J.L.; Malvarez, G.; Navas, F. Reservoir lake effects on eroded littoral systems: The case of the Bay of Marbella, southern Spain. *J. Coast. Res.* **2020**, *95*, 443–447. [[CrossRef](#)]
29. Santos-Júnior, A.; Mendes-Filho, L.; Almeida-García, F.; Manuel-Simões, J. Smart Tourism Destinations: Un estudio basado en la visión de los stakeholders. *Rev. Tur. Análise* **2017**, *28*, 358–379. [[CrossRef](#)]
30. Yigitcanlar, T.; Han, H.; Kamruzzaman, M.; Ioppolo, G.; Sabatini-Marques, J. The making of smart cities: Are Songdo, Masdar, Amsterdam, San Francisco and Brisbane the best we could build? *Land Use Policy* **2019**, *88*, 104187. [[CrossRef](#)]
31. Castro Noblejas, H.; Martínez-Caldentey, M.A. Marbella: From a Luxury Tourist Destination to Socio-spatial Segregation. In *Values, Cities and Migrations: Real Estate Market and Social System in a Multi-Cultural City*; Napoli, G., Mondini, G., Oppio, A., Rosato, P., Barbaro, S., Eds.; Springer International Publishing: Cham, Switzerland, 2023; pp. 199–216. [[CrossRef](#)]
32. Femenia Serra, F.; Perea Medina, M.J. Analysis of Three Spanish Potential Smart Tourism Destinations. In Proceedings of the 6th International Conference on Tourism, New Challenges and Boundaries in Tourism: Policies, Innovations and Strategies, Nápoli, Italy, 29 June–2 July 2016; p. 29.
33. Dam, S.M.; Dam, T.C. Relationships between service quality, brand image, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty. *J. Asian Financ. Econ. Bus.* **2021**, *8*, 585–593. [[CrossRef](#)]
34. Houdement, J.; Santos, J.A.C.; Serra, F. Factors affecting the decision-making process when choosing an event destination: A comparative approach between Vilamoura (Portugal) and Marbella (Spain). *J. Tour. Sustain. Well-Being* **2017**, *5*, 127–145.
35. Dospinescu, N. The public relations events in promoting brand identity of the city. *Econ. Appl. Inf.* **2014**, *1*, 39–46.
36. Santos-Arrebola, J.L. Application of the Rasch model to customer satisfaction in the destination of Marbella. *J. Qual. Assur. Hosp. Tour.* **2002**, *3*, 35–51. [[CrossRef](#)]
37. Carrasco-Santos, M.J.; Ciruela-Lorenzo, A.M.; Méndez, P.J.G.; Cristófol, R.C. An Online Reputation Analysis of the Tourism Industry in Marbella: A Preliminary Study on Open Innovation. *J. Open Innov.* **2021**, *7*, 111. [[CrossRef](#)]
38. Yang, W.; Zhang, L.; Mattila, A.S. Luxe for Less: How Do Consumers React to Luxury Hotel Price Promotions? The Moderating Role of Consumers' Need for Status. *Cornell Hosp. Q.* **2016**, *57*, 82–92. [[CrossRef](#)]

39. Jane, L. Analysis of Golf Tourism: British Tourist in Marbella. Pre-grade Thesis, Universidad de Málaga, Riuma, Spain, 7 December 2013. Available online: <https://bit.ly/43kwCJO> (accessed on 12 July 2022).
40. Ayuntamiento de Marbella. Plan Estratégico de Turismo en Marbella. Available online: <https://bit.ly/3KkNxDb> (accessed on 12 July 2022).
41. Registro Turismo de Andalucía. Informe de Oferta Turística. Available online: <https://bit.ly/40TWsTk> (accessed on 30 June 2022).
42. Decreto 28/2016, de 2 de Febrero, de las Viviendas con Fines Turísticos y de Modificación del Decreto 194/2010, de 20 de Abril de Establecimientos de Apartamentos Turísticos. (2016). BOJA. No 28. Available online: <https://bit.ly/3mjSJPu> (accessed on 14 August 2022).
43. García, A. La Vivienda con Fines Turísticos Vacacionales: Análisis de la Calidad, Reutilización y Apertura de la Información en los Portales de Datos Abiertos. Master's Thesis, Universitat Politècnica de Valencia, Valencia, Spain, 23 September 2019. Available online: <http://bit.ly/3mjSMey> (accessed on 12 October 2022).
44. Data Hippo. Available online: <http://bit.ly/3Gtqdhttp://bit.ly/40QoZZOSA> (accessed on 12 October 2022).
45. Decreto 194/2010 de Establecimientos de Apartamentos Turísticos. 20 de Abril de 2010. Consejería de Turismo y Comercio. No 220. Available online: <https://bit.ly/3Ms9QJS> (accessed on 23 October 2022).
46. Martín, I. (Universidad de Málaga, Spain). Análisis de la Problemática y del Impacto en el Sector Turístico de la Oferta y Contratación de Alojamientos de Particulares Mediante Plataformas Colaborativas. Repositorio Institucional de la Universidad de Málaga. Personal Communication. 11 March 2020.
47. González Morales, J.G. Influencia Espacial en la Determinación de Precios en el Alquiler de Viviendas Turísticas Bajo la Filosofía de Sharing Economy. Doctoral Thesis, Universidad de Granada, Granada, Spain, 10 August 2021. Available online: <http://bit.ly/3UnGQEV> (accessed on 23 October 2022).
48. Aznar, P.; Sayeras, J.; Segarra, G.; Claveria, J. Airbnb Competition and Hotels' Response: The Importance of Online Reputation. *Athens J. Tour.* **2018**, *5*, 7–19. [[CrossRef](#)]
49. Thackway, W.T.; Ng, M.K.M.; Lee, C.-L.; Shi, V.; Pettit, C.J. Spatial Variability of the 'Airbnb Effect': A Spatially Explicit Analysis of Airbnb's Impact on Housing Prices in Sydney. *ISPRS Int. J. Geo Inf.* **2022**, *11*, 65. [[CrossRef](#)]
50. Rodríguez-Antón, J.M.; Alonso-Almeida, M.M.; Rubio-Andrada, L.; Celemín-Pedroche, M.S. La economía colaborativa. Una aproximación al turismo colaborativo en España. *CIRIEC España Rev. Econ. Pública Soc. Coop.* **2016**, *88*, 258–283. [[CrossRef](#)]
51. Rostron, A. ¿Cómo calcular la Rentabilidad de un Alquiler Vacacional? Lodgify. Available online: <http://bit.ly/3nUDld8> (accessed on 23 August 2022).
52. Thirumaran, K.; Jang, H.; Pourabedin, Z.; Wood, J. The Role of Social Media in the Luxury Tourism Business: A Research Review and Trajectory Assessment. *Sustainability* **2021**, *13*, 1216. [[CrossRef](#)]
53. Lee, J.; Erdogan, A.N.; Hong, I.B. Participation in the Sharing Economy Revisited: The Role of Culture and Social Influence on Airbnb. *Sustainability* **2021**, *13*, 9980. [[CrossRef](#)]
54. Airdna Spain. Available online: <https://bit.ly/3mp895d> (accessed on 15 October 2022).
55. Airbnb. About us. Available online: <http://bit.ly/40QoZZO> (accessed on 23 October 2022).
56. Airbnb. Information about Super Hosts. Available online: <http://bit.ly/3o1TXzS> (accessed on 23 October 2022).
57. Gil, G.J. Redistribución económica y precariedad. El Caso de los Anfitriones de Airbnb. *Rev. Pensam. Análisi* **2019**, *24*, 92–113. [[CrossRef](#)]
58. Klidas, A.; Van Den Berg, P.T.; Wilderom, C.P.M. Managing employee empowerment in luxury hotels in Europe. *Int. J. Serv. Ind. Manag.* **2007**, *18*, 70–88. [[CrossRef](#)]
59. Presbury, R.; Fitzgerald, A.; Chapman, R. Impediments to improvements in service quality in luxury hotels. *Manag. Serv. Qual. Int. J.* **2005**, *15*, 357–373. [[CrossRef](#)]
60. Harkison, T.; Hemmington, N.; Hyde, K.F. Creating the luxury accommodation experience: Case studies from New Zealand. *Int. J. Contemp. Hosp. Manag.* **2018**, *30*, 1724–1740. [[CrossRef](#)]
61. Airbnb. Luxe. Available online: <http://bit.ly/40TPa1S> (accessed on 25 November 2022).
62. Martínez, P. Más de la mitad de los pisos turísticos de Málaga están en manos de extranjeros. Diario Sur. Available online: <http://bit.ly/3ZTXpcP> (accessed on 4 July 2022).
63. Andalucía Smart Data. Available online: <https://smartdata.andalucia.org/> (accessed on 27 October 2022).
64. Hung, K.; Huang, H.; Lyu, J. The means and ends of luxury value creation in cruise tourism: The case of Chinese tourists. *J. Hosp. Tour. Manag.* **2020**, *44*, 143–151. [[CrossRef](#)]
65. Yeoman, I.; McMahon-Beattie, U. Luxury markets and premium pricing. *J. Revenue Pricing Manag.* **2006**, *4*, 319–328. [[CrossRef](#)]
66. Hauck, W.E.; Stanforth, N. Cohort perception of luxury goods and services. *J. Fash. Mark. Manag.* **2007**, *11*, 175–188. [[CrossRef](#)]
67. Wirtz, J.; Holmqvist, J.; Fritze, M.P. Luxury services. *J. Serv. Manag.* **2020**, *31*, 665–691. [[CrossRef](#)]
68. Yeoman, I.; McMahon-Beattie, U. Exclusivity: The future of luxury. *J. Revenue Pricing Manag.* **2014**, *13*, 12–22. [[CrossRef](#)]
69. Brun, A.; Castelli, C. The nature of luxury: A consumer perspective. *Int. J. Retail. Distrib. Manag.* **2013**, *41*, 823–847. [[CrossRef](#)]
70. Park, K.S.; Reisinger, Y.; Noh, E.H. Luxury shopping in tourism. *Int. J. Tour. Res.* **2010**, *12*, 164–178. [[CrossRef](#)]
71. Swarbrooke, J. The meaning of Luxury in Tourism, Hospitality and Events. *J. Revenue Pricing Manag.* **2018**, *17*, 306–307. [[CrossRef](#)]
72. Venhoda, O. Application of DSTI and DTI macroprudential policy limits to the mortgage market in the Czech Republic for the year 2022. *Int. J. Econ. Sci.* **2022**, *11*, 105–116. [[CrossRef](#)]

73. Luczak, A.; Kalinowski, S. A multidimensional comparative analysis of poverty statuses in European Union countries. *Int. J. Econ. Sci.* **2022**, *11*, 146–160. [[CrossRef](#)]
74. Borgersen, T.A. Social Housing Policy in a Segmented Housing Market: Indirect Effects on Markets and Individuals. *Int. J. Econ. Sci.* **2019**, *8*, 1–21. [[CrossRef](#)]
75. Borgersen, T.A. A housing market with Cournot competition and a third housing sector. *Int. J. Econ. Sci.* **2022**, *11*, 13–27. [[CrossRef](#)]

Disclaimer/Publisher’s Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.