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Travel Issue

PERU, JAIPUR, CALIFORNIA, FEZ, SUSSEX



WHY BUY IN...

THE SOUTH OF FRANCE

This area has always been beloved by the Brits but, with restored confidence in the country, it's seeing a property resurgence, says **Anna Tyzack**

With its sun-kissed light, balmy temperatures and rolling vineyards, it's no wonder that the South of France is still one of the favourite second-home destinations for British buyers.

According to Anthony Lassman of property finders Nota Bene Global, southern France's star is only rising; those who might have previously toyed with Ibiza or Croatia are setting their sights back on Provence and the Côte d'Azur. 'It's coming back into fashion,' he says. 'People appreciate the fact it's not just a resort location but somewhere with a year-round life, a sense of history and that's so easy to get to from Britain.'

The Macron effect has helped bring confidence back to the South of France, according to Jack Harris of Knight Frank. 'For the past six years the market has been in the doldrums but it has now stabilised and buyers are seeing it as a base for price growth,' he says. After Paris, it is St-Rémy-de-Provence that has experienced the biggest price rises over the past 12 months, increasing five per cent when the average for the region is two to three per cent. Buyers are also drawn to the high rents that properties can command in this part of France between May and October. 'It helps towards the cost of running a second home,' Harris continues.

If Lassman could choose to invest anywhere in the South of France he'd buy on the Côte d'Azur, ideally a house on one of the exclusive domaines near St Tropez such as Le Capon. 'You're moments from the beaches, the town and also some

beautiful hilltop villages,' he says. Properties on the Côte d'Azur don't come cheap, however. Those with a budget of less than €1m can forget about owning property in St Tropez or one of the Caps, says Fleur Buckley of French Entrée.

There are, however, more affordable alternatives if you are prepared to look slightly outside these hotspots. Properties around Le Cap Taillat near Ramatuelle, for example, tend to be cheaper than those near St Tropez, says Lassman, while enjoying the same coastline, and at Port Grimaud, five kilometres away, townhouses are available for under the million mark and moorings are 25 per cent cheaper. 'It has a serene, Provençal atmosphere, and the glamour of St Tropez is just a short water-taxi ride away,' says Charles Antoine Sialelli of Athena Advisors. 'It has always struck a chord with British buyers as its one of the most beautiful spots on the French Riviera.'

The nearby villages of Vence, Valbonne and Tourrettes-sur-Loup are also a good investment, according to Buckley. 'Heading inland will not only give you a refreshing break from summer crowds but you will usually pay less too,' she continues. Tourrettes-sur-Loup is a particularly affordable option – there are village houses available for less than €400,000.

Away from the buzz of the coast, St-Rémy-de-Provence is another prime second-home destination, according to Harris. Not only does it have a strong and stable property market but, as with Nice and Cannes on the Riviera, it has a year-round life. 'The train from London to nearby Avignon is a great draw and the landscape

WHEN IN THE SOUTH OF FRANCE...

EAT

Chez Eric

An unpretentious Corsican restaurant in the picturesque village of Montfuron with panoramic views and the best burata in the South of France. +33 4927 77532

STAY

Oustau de Baumanière

Set among the villages and vineyards where Van Gogh and Cézanne found inspiration, this boutique hotel is famed for its cuisine and light airy rooms. baumaniere.com

SHOP

Lourmarin

A quintessential Provençal town, with cobbled streets, chic boutiques and cafés and the best Friday market in the area. lourmarin.com

DRINK

Whispering Angel

The lightest pink rosé from La Motte en Provence region, dangerously drinkable and highly revered by critics. esclans.com



is more Mediterranean than other parts of the region,' he says. 'Plus, there are excellent hotels, restaurants and shops.' Again, prices are high here – from €2m for a four-bedroom house with a pool; those on a smaller budget should look to L'Isle sur la Sorgue, about 40 minutes away, Harris says, which is an important centre for antiques and is also vibrant all year round.

Further off the beaten track, the eastern Luberon is beautifully quiet and unspoilt. Villages such as Grambois, St-Martin-de-la-Brasque and Ansois are surrounded by vines and open countryside yet Marseille airport is less than an hour away. 'It's the same Provençal lifestyle without such a high price tag,' says Buckley. Houses are cheaper here and you can find Peter Mayle-style farmhouses to restore – although Buckley warns of high renovation costs in this part of France. 'You need to have the necessary funds, vision and energy to pull it off,' she says.

If you're prepared to cross the border from Provence into the Languedoc-Roussillon, you can expect to find similar properties costing ten to 20 per cent less. The area, according to Buckley, has a similar climate to Provence yet is less populated and more affordable. The town of Arles, with its historic bullring, is becoming an increasingly popular destination for British buyers, as is Mirepoix, which has pretty timber-framed buildings.

The town of Céret, in the southernmost part of the area, half an hour from Perpignan airport. The town itself is quintessentially French with cobbled streets shaded by giant plane trees and there is a highly regarded weekly market but it also has a Catalan influence due to its proximity to the Spanish border. Picasso and Salvador Dalí both spent time here; there are a number of Picasso's works showcased in the Museum of Modern Art. Apartments here cost from €130,000 and, for around €350,000, you can purchase a traditional stone-built farmhouse with Catalan influence. A four-bedroom country house with separate annexe and indoor pool is on the market for €590,000 (frenchentree.com).

Whether you're buying in a lesser-known area or on the Riviera, it's crucial to pick the best location you can, according to Alex Balkin of Savills. 'Best in class properties are close to international airports and have access to technology such as broadband,' he says. 'People like to be connected these days, even when they're on holiday.'

In this respect, some might argue that the infrastructure in the South of France is rather too efficient.

FOR SALE



Côte d'Azur, Port Grimaud

In a private wooded park above Grimaud's harbour, Jardins d'Adelaide features studios to six-bedroom villas, all benefiting from high-end finishes and a great deal of privacy. €180,000. athenaadvisers.com



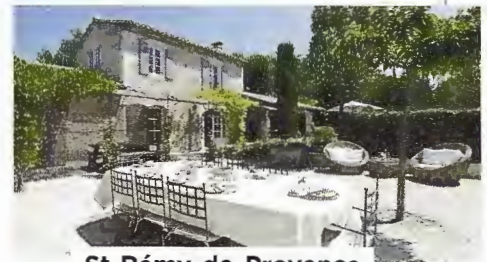
St Tropez

A five-bedroom villa with pool near the buzzing market town of Cogolin and 20 minutes from St Tropez. It's set in 2.4 acres of gardens with views over the Massif des Maures mountain range. €1.6m. aylesford.com



Languedoc-Roussillon

A beautiful mas in Arles-sur-Tech with landscaped gardens and stunning views of the Pyrénées. It has a state-of-the-art kitchen, ten en-suite bedrooms, two cottages and an infinity pool. £1.6m. savills.com



St-Rémy-de-Provence

This beautifully renovated four-bed mas in Les Alpilles is the ultimate Provençal home, with contemporary living spaces, landscaped gardens – with olive trees, lavender fields and fountains – and a wonderful setting. £2.1m. knightfrank.com

