

The Right Address

A modern, minimalist villa at Las Atalayas de Abama, Tenerife. Below, from left: Benalú, Marbella; Quinta do Lago, the Algarve





Hot Property

Portugal and Spain have long been favourites for northern Europeans seeking a holiday home on a golf course, and the pandemic has only added to that trend, reports PETER SWAIN

While Britain, Germany and Sweden shivered through the winter months, playing conditions in southern Spain, the Canary islands and the Algarve were just about perfect. A generation of second-homeowners from the Home Counties, Frankfurt and Stockholm have been seduced not only by balmy weather but modestly priced hospitality with a laidback family vibe and gentle sea breezes – plus, in these health-conscious times, the wide-open, biosecure spaces found around 18 holes of well-manicured fairways.

For the serious golfer, though, the quality of sporting facilities is paramount. The Jack Nicklaus Signature course at **Monte Rei** (monte-rei.com) in the eastern Algarve, just a few miles from the Spanish border, has been voted the best in Portugal for 10 straight years by multiple publications. And the hot news is that a second Signature 18-holer, the South, is about to start construction.

Close to the action, the 40 recently finished Clubhouse Residences have views over the 18th green and fairway, while enjoying the use of a communal 20m pool and gym. Monte Rei's Michelin-starred Vistas Rui Silvestre restaurant is nearby, and Faro international airport less than an hour's drive away. About half of these ideal lock-up-and-leave apartments have been sold so far to a wide variety of international clients, with rental returns in the region of about four per cent.



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The veranda of a residence at La Fuente, Marbella



Those who appreciate mixing lifestyle benefits with a return on investment are also looking at the one- and two-bedroom **Wyndham Grand Algarve Residences** (wyndhamgrandalgarveresidences.com) in the standout development of **Quinta do Lago** (QdL, quintadolago.com). “These elegant homes give buyers access to the hotel’s five-star services, not to mention three Championship courses,” says QdL CEO Sean Moriarty, “while enjoying effortless ownership with a guaranteed minimum of four per cent return annually.”

Traditionally, over half the resort’s buyers have been British, so Portugal’s Golden Visa scheme may well now interest them, as well as owners from further afield. “Wyndham Grand Algarve will continue to be included in the scheme due to the fact that it is technically a ‘touristic licence product’,” confirms Moriarty. As well as these new apartments, there are always a select number of grand villas on the market at QdL. “Covid-19 has affected the way we look at life. British buyers now give even more value to nature, green living, safe spaces and low-density environments. The Algarve and especially Quinta do Lago lends itself perfectly to this new approach.”

Almost next door, **Vale do Lobo** (valedolobo.com) is another multicourse venue with a fine tennis complex that’s seen a

significant bounce in recent sales, up 156% year-on-year in 2021. Phase I of the Oceano Townhouses sold rapidly, with the launch of more three-bedroom luxury townhouses in Phase II already generating substantial interest. Sales of multimillion-euro oceanside lots were up over 300% last year as buyers look to create their own bespoke villas in which they can not only play but work from home. “The pandemic has inspired a surge of welcome interest in Portuguese properties as UHNWIs reevaluate their work-life balance,” avers the resort’s Pedro Reimão.

The enduring class of well-established destinations is very much a feature of the current market. COVID-19 has persuaded many buyers to come off the fence and make major investment decisions – but not surprisingly, most want a guarantee of out-and-out quality. **Sotogrande** (sotogrande.com), midway between Marbella and Gibraltar, has been firmly on the golfing map ever since Seve Ballesteros led Europe’s Ryder Cup team to victory at Valderrama in 1997. Many locals actually rate the exclusive Real Club de Golf Sotogrande, founded in 1964, even more highly, and the enclave has several other very fine courses – one of which, La Reserva, is currently seeing significant real-estate action.



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With the six plots in the gated El Mirador community now sold and in mid-construction, the latest La Reserva project to launch is The Seven, a 12ha park landscaped à la Provençal by Frenchman Jean Mus, in which each of seven residences has been designed by a different world-renowned architect. Buyers will have free rein to amend the designs and work with the architects to create innovative contemporary homes; they can also use Sotogrande's 834-plus-berth marina, with slips up to 50 metres available, around which sit a bustling collection of restaurants, bars and boutiques.

Just along the coast in Marbella, Barbara Cason of Engel & Völkers reports strong demand for the exclusive **Benalús** (benalus.com) and **La Fuente** (lafuentemarbella.com) developments, and around the **Aloha** (clubdegolfaloha.com) and **Las Brisas** (realclubdegolfasbrisas.com) golf clubs. "Since Brexit, the market has opened up to other Europeans, Americans, even South Americans as well as the English."

Thirteen hundred kilometres southwest of the Spanish mainland, but still only a four- to five-hour flight from London, Oslo or Hamburg, the Canary

The Silvestre Villa, by Fran Silvestre Arquitectos, one of The Seven, Sotogrande, Andalucía





Cabot Saint Lucia.
Below: Monte Rei,
the Algarve

Islands are also popular with second-homeowning golfers. On Tenerife, Dave Thomas's course at the **Abama** (abamahotelresort.com) resort and development is a particular draw, as are the family-friendly hotel amenities, beaches and warm weather.

The pick of new homes at Abama are the 10 freshly launched Atlantic Ocean-view Las Atalayas villas, which the Prestige Owners Club looks after through its comprehensive management package. Scheduled to be turnkey ready later this year, international buyers are all agreed that in today's market, time-poor owners want all that pesky admin taken care of by someone else.

Rather further afield, another island has a brand-new project attracting attention from British buyers. The 150ha **Cabot Saint Lucia** (cabotsaintlucia.com) has 2.5 kilometres of spectacular ocean frontage on which Coore & Crenshaw is building its latest masterpiece. Thanks to this and the existing Greg Norman Sandals course, St Lucia is fast becoming a genuine golf destination.

Three- and four-bedroom Fairway Villa "townhouses" are proving popular, but it's the 130 custom homesites that really catch the eye. Co-founder Ben Cowan-Dewar attributes part of the scheme's success – \$120m in sales and counting – to the recent pandemic: "COVID has undoubtedly increased the demand for holiday real estate, and we've got flights coming in every day from Heathrow and Gatwick [8 hours 45 mins flight time]". A 50-key boutique hotel, resort and spa designed by British architect Richard Evans is planned in what is undoubtedly one of the Caribbean's hottest new developments.

Finally, the Open this year will be back at St Andrews, so it's timely to mention the very last freehold apartment still for sale in the historic **Hamilton Grand** (hamiltongrand.co.uk) looking straight down the Old Course's 18th towards the storied Swilcan Bridge. The first building in Scotland to have hot and cold running water in every bathroom has been sumptuously updated by Kohler (the US-based bathroom company), attracting buyers from all over the world. There is a rental programme, but these apartments, surely the ultimate golfing trophy homes, are aimed squarely at lovers of the game and its history.



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