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CAN'T do holidays without your favourite sport? Then perhaps you should buy a holiday home on a sporting estate and play golf or tennis to your heart's content – there could be riding and sailing, too.

The best overseas sporting estates offer upmarket homes and the finest facilities in a secure, family-friendly environment.

A huge advantage of owning on an exclusive and specific estate is the strong rental potential, which helps with providing an income to cover the higher maintenance charges that are a necessary price to pay for the convenience of an on-site team keeping the estate in peak condition.

"A good estate should provide buyers with somewhere safe to relax with their family, full management services and a multitude of things to do," says Paddy Dring, of Knight Frank.

"An established estate with good infrastructure and a solid reputation means you can enjoy your home and rent it out to pay your overheads, and hopefully benefit from a healthier resale market."

Barbados: eight-hour flight

THE Caribbean's five-star island complete with top-drawer hotels and a safe, welcoming reputation. Golf is the major attraction but there are also polo fields at Apes Hill and Lion Castle Estate and a marina at Port St Charles.

On the prime west coast, three of Barbados' five 18-hole golf courses are on the residential estates of Apes Hill, Royal Westmoreland and Sandy Lane. Apes Hill is the newest kid on the block, a former sugar plantation-turned-polo and golf estate, high above lively Hometown with views to the Caribbean and Atlantic seas.

Green monkeys hide in the trees surrounding the golf course and polo ponies ride out twice a day in the carefully tended grounds.

Prices at Apes Hill start from £267,000 for a third of an acre plot, with semi-detached villas from £587,100 through Knight Frank.

Owners at Royal Westmoreland, where entry prices are £318,470 include Wayne and Coleen Rooney, while villas at Sandy Lane, the most exclusive area of this exclusive island, start from £1.53 million.



A playground for your favourite sport

Second homes on sporting estates make money sense. By **Cathy Hawker**



FROM £318,470: flats at Royal Westmoreland (above), on Barbados, and the golf course at Apes Hill (left), where prices start at £267,000 for a third-acre plot

NOT SO FAR

Dubrovnik: three-hour flight

CRYSTALLINE seas, steep pebble beaches and wooded green islands make Croatia's Adriatic coast a winner, albeit one with few quality resorts.

One of the first is Dubrovnik Sun Gardens, 15 minutes north of Dubrovnik in Orašac, now in its third year of full operation.

There is a 200-room five-star Radisson hotel and 207 one- and two-bedroom apartments with enough facilities to occupy even the very restless.

Owners can choose from clay tennis courts, three pools, a modern sports centre with gym and squash courts and an outstanding 35,000sq ft spa, along with 13 restaurants.

On the water there's a tiny marina where boats shuttle across to Dubrovnik and outlying islands.

The well-fitted, comfortable apartments are in three-storey buildings overlooking the sea and priced from £148,150 for 462sq ft one-bedroom units and £268,400 for 850sq ft two-bedrooms, excluding VAT at 23 per cent. Owners have access to all hotel facilities and property will be fully managed.

South of France: two-hour flight

AN HOUR from Aix-en-Provence TGV train station, 45 minutes from Nice airport and 22 miles north of St Tropez, Domaines de St Andreol is an established and scenic golf and leisure resort. Property – 200 homes in total – is built in faux-Provençal style around the landscaped 350-acre grounds.

There is a challenging 18-hole golf course to keep the players happy, and the non-golfers can enjoy a spa, indoor pool, tennis courts and gym. The hotel provides restaurants and bars.

The last 13 new two-bedroom leaseback apartments (without VAT to pay if placed in the rental pool) cost from

£250,000 to £298,000 for 710sq ft to 775sq ft with guaranteed annual rental returns from 3.4 per cent, through Erna Low.

At the top of the market, a detached four-bedroom villa and pool overlooking the medieval village of Gassin at Gassin Golf and Country Club is £2.18 million, through Knight Frank.

CONTACTS:

- Erna Low Property: ernalowproperty.com; 020 7590 1624.
- Knight Frank: knightfrank.com; 020 7629 8171.
- Dubrovnik Sun Gardens: dubrovniksungardens.com; 00 385 20 361 650.

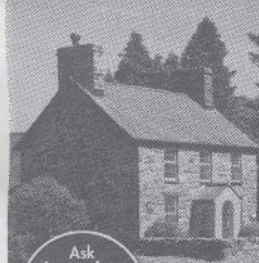
'SERVICE AND FACILITIES ARE WORTH PAYING FOR'

OWNERS on large overseas estates will pay the management company an annual maintenance fee covering anything from rubbish collection to landscaping and lighting of communal areas. Fees vary widely. At upmarket Finca Cortesin, a Spanish golf resort near Gibraltar, they start from an annual £2,400 while at Italy's exclusive Reschio Estate in Umbria they average £54,000 for a five-bedroom restored farmhouse in large private grounds.

"When you compare the services and facilities you receive at the best resorts you can often find that the maintenance on some estates is not that far different from running a property off-resort," says Paddy Dring of Knight Frank. "And for most owners, the convenience of having a complete management service and excellent facilities are worth a certain premium."

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Alan and Nicky Hughes
Property ref W7164

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£250,000: flats at golf and spa resort Les Domaines de St Andreol in the South of France



FROM £148,150: sea-view flats at Dubrovnik Sun Gardens, Croatia