

28 / OVERSEAS

ed up with the endless rain, the biting winds and the unrelentingly bleak weather forecasts? You're not alone. After the wettest winter for centuries — and we could have a couple more months of gusts and gloom to come — international estate agents are reporting their busiest January ever. It's not just the economy picking up, it's everyone closeted indoors looking for a pick-me-up property in the sunshine.

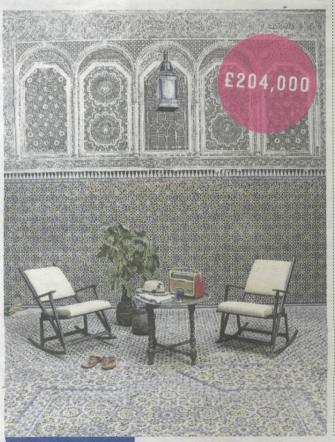
And it's not only long-haul tropical destinations that are seeing more interest, but European locations within easier reach, where if the temperature isn't yet in toasty double figures, it soon will be. According to Savills estate agency, the Caribbean has seen a 36% increase in web searches compared to the

same time last year; interest in Spain has risen by 83% as armchair buyers hunt for a bargain a budget flight away. Anecdotally, there has also been an increase in Mauritius and South Africa.

Viewers clicking on Rightmove show a similar desire to get away; the top-performing countries on the website are Spain, France, America, Portugal and Italy. And the Turkey specialist Spot Blue reports an 80% spike in web traffic over the first six weeks of this year, compared to 2013.

After all, wouldn't we all rather be lounging around, building sandcastles and contemplating whether or not to have a beer before the sun sets, than watching the encroaching floodwater and piling up sandbags?

We've picked our top 10 properties for sale in the sun: you can book a viewing right now, or simply curl up with a cup of tea and enjoy the fantasy.





MOROCCO

If you want an adventurous edge to your sun-lounging and a spectacular sense of history, only a three-hour budget flight away, head to Fez. The 1,000-year-old walled medina is home to one of the oldest universities in the world, and donkeys still rule the sandy roads. This seven-bedroom restoration project is looking for someone to finish it off — allow about £65,000 to install a kitchen and bathrooms, and to complete the roof. There's scope to buy the house next door, so you could add a pool. **020 3641 5358**, **aylesford.com**

£4.38m

Record numbers of Britons have been investigating a big move down under. As you'd expect, Australia has always been one of the most popular expat destinations, but now a booming economy, as well as sun, sea and surfing, is providing a significant pull. (Just don't mention the sharks.) Obviously, almost everyone is going to balk at the price of this 1,780 sq metre extravagance in Northbridge, near Sydney, but it's nice to dream. If you want to move, family homes further out in the suburbs typically cost \$500,000 (£274,000).

020 7016 3740, savills.com

£450,000

Members can enjoy 50% off on Champneys breaks. For full details visit

balcony), as well as four bathrooms and a pool Dalaman airport is 90 minutes away. 020 8339 6036, spotblue.com

16.02.2014 / 29

Winter ofcontent

With more wretched weather in prospect, a bolt hole in the sun has never seemed more appealing. Here's our pick of glorious pads to suit all budgets. By Helen Davies



The Caribbean gets busy in winter: the sandy beaches and (pricey) ticket for blowing away the rainy-day blues. James Bond's creator, lan Fleming, fell proved the perfect creative retreat - he dreamt up 007 there. It's now a resort with a hotel, a spa and pools, where you can buy a two-bedroom, 1,711 sq ft beach cottage. 020 7265 6595,

www.sanlorenzonorth.com

Contact us or register online for more information about this unique residential opportunity at the Quinta do Lago resort in Algarve, Portugal. The show villa is open by appointment



AE



TURKEY Thanks to the strength of the pound against the lira, Turkey is an even better bet than usual.
Consider Kalkan, on the Turquoise Coast, famed for cobbled alleyways, fish restaurants and night markets. This four-bedroom villa in the Kiziltas district offers the requisite Mediterranean views from the terrace (and from the master bedroom's



THAILAND

The Far East is a long-haul "fly and flop" option, but the quality of properties on offer in tourist-favoured Thailand is rapidly improving. This villa at the tropical Samujana resort, on the northeastern coast of Ko Samui, is one of 27, and has an infinity pool and a private cinema. Prices start at \$1.3m for a three-bedroom property, rising to \$5m for the more luxurious eight-bedroom model.

020 3667 7016, akinternationalestates.com From £784,000





SPAIN

If you want the classic golf and villa combo — where you can warm up over 18 holes even if there's a squall on the horizon — Los Altos del Golf, in Andratx, on Mallorca, is one of the more affordable resorts. Two-bedroom town houses start at 6495,000. 0800 012 1020, taylorwimpeyspain.com



MAURITIUS

First-class sunshine and first-class tax benefits (no capital gains or inheritance tax) are on offer if you invest in one of the island's new developments. This four-bedroom home at Villas Valriche, part of a 525-acre development, is 40 minutes from the airport. 020 7584 3050, cluttonsresorts.com

CROATIA

It's T-shirt weather already on Croatia's Adriatic coast, and owners of one of the 207 managed properties at the aptly named Sun Gardens resort, seven miles from Dubrovnik, can boost their vitamin D at almost any time of year. Prices in the third phase of the development start at €250,000 for a one-bedder, rising to €670,000 for a two-bedroom pad with the best sea view. **00 385 20 361650, dubrovniksungardens.com**



KENYA

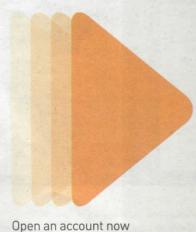
Ewan McGregor has stayed at Jahazi House, an exotic hideaway on the southern tip of Lamu island — it's close to the equator and the Indian Ocean, which means few days aren't dry and hot. The five-bedroom property has a wraparound veranda and is surrounded by frangipani, jasmine and lime trees. It's 15 minutes by speedboat to Lamu Town, and 20 to Manda airport, which connects to Nairobi.

020 7349 9772, aylesford.com

From £250,000

SENDING MONEY ABROAD?

FC EXCHANGE



WHY NOT SAVE £5,320 ON YOUR CURRENCY TRANSFERS? FAST. EASY & SECURE

FOFWOULLNOT OO HIV

FCEXCHANGE.CO.UK

Personal currency exchange +44 (0)20 7989 0000

Business currency exchange +44 (0)20 7989 1111

MAY RATE COMPARISON SURVEY*

FX Provider	GBP/EUR Exchange Rate	GBP cost for €250,000	Saving
FC Exchange	1.1820	£211,506	
Lloyds	1.1530	£216,826	£5,320
RBS	1.1534	£216,750	£5,245
NatWest	1.1534	£216,750	£5,245
First Direct	1.1534	£216,750	£5,245
Halifax	1.1615	£215,239	£3,733
Santander	1.1700	£213,675	£2,169

"We guide you through the process of sending your money abroad. Our fast, easy and secure service can achieve great rates of exchange for you. We make your money go further."

James Croft, Senior FX Broker, FC Exchange

FC Exchange is a trading name of Foreign Currency Exchange Limited. Registered office: Salisbury House, Finsbury Circus, London, EC2M 500. Registered No.05452483. Authorised by the Financial Conduct Authority (No.511266) under the Payment ServiceRegulations 2009 for the provision of payment services. HM Revenue & Customs MLR No.12215508. *Survey results based on moving £85,000 into EUR, conducted 16 May 2013 and information was gathered between 9.45am - 10.45am. Values in the table are the equivalents using rates given. Survey conducted by GSA. For further information please visit - http://bit.ly/fcexchange_may