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# Paris buyers head Nord

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Investors are flocking to the French capital's increasingly chic 10th arrondissement



The Canal Saint-Martin

The 10th arrondissement in Paris sprawls outwards from the two train stations at its heart, Gare du Nord and Gare de l'Est. It is a melting pot, from the North African markets of Barbès to the Pakistani quarter around Gare du Nord, from the Chinese restaurants of Belleville down to the chic Canal Saint-Martin area in the east. At the weekend, the banks of the canal teem with young Parisians sharing bottles of rosé, while on the western side of the arrondissement, from Porte Saint-Denis up to Poissonnière, a growing restaurant and bar scene tempts tourists and locals away from the more traditional attractions in the city.

This is an area in the grip of transformation, and it is beginning to attract investors looking for a second home or pied-à-terre with good connections to the UK and the rest of Europe.

Peter Jorgensen, a buying agent, says change is already well

under way. The Place de la République, the scene of the Charlie Hebdo demonstrations in January, was renovated in 2013, and in June, state-owned rail operator SNCF announced an ambitious refurbishment plan for Gare du Nord, to be completed in 2023. The plans have long been in the pipeline. In 2007, after the much-vaunted transformation of St Pancras International at the London end of the Eurostar, Gare du Nord was forced to take an uneasy look at itself, and in particular its reputation as a hotspot for petty crime and vagrancy. Now, the district is attracting renewed interest due to its central location, good transport and prices that are still accessible.

Patrick Nicaud, of property agency Century 21 in the 10th arrondissement, says that investors are flocking to the area to buy properties that would be in a much higher price bracket on the other side of the river. He would recommend the area to foreign investors, as he considers it “one of the quarters most likely to change in the next few years”.

Rémi Feraud, mayor of the 10th arrondissement, is candid about the area’s poor image, but says that there are lots of development projects. Some of the ideas include a high-speed shuttle from Gare du Nord to Charles de Gaulle airport, a leafy urban promenade linking Gare du Nord and Gare de l’Est, and the complete pedestrianisation of the station forecourt, which is at present a tangle of buses and honking taxis. “Prices are going up. It’s maybe even too late to find a good deal,” says Edouard Héral, of Novestia Immobilier, which has a typical Haussmanian 155 sq metre apartment next to Gare du Nord on the market for €1.39m. Although it has been renovated, the property still has period details, such as stained-glass windows that look out on to a courtyard that was once used as stables.

North of the two stations is a house which has been converted from an industrial building by architect Alain Salomon. The property, priced at €2.2m by Barnes International, references its industrial past with metallic staircases leading to the upper and lower levels.

Susie Hollands, chief executive of property company Vingt Paris, is sceptical that there will be a significant change in the northern part of the arrondissement. “What people have to understand is that these areas have been in gentrification mode for probably more than 10 or 12 years already. Gentrification doesn’t happen as quickly as it does in London or Brooklyn.” This is due, in part, to buyers in France being liable to pay capital gains tax of 19 per cent, plus a possible 15.5 per cent “social charge” — a tax for social benefits received from the state depending on which social security system you subscribe to.



A house converted from an industrial building, €2.2m, Barnes International

“People are not just buying, turning it over and going on to the next one because the tax penalties for that just don’t make sense.” However, the property market is bouncing back, albeit slowly, from a period of inactivity between 2012 and 2014 when, according to

Jorgensen, investors were overcautious. Now they seem to have returned, with Paris sales up 3 per cent between February and April compared with the same period in 2014. This, coupled with prices either stable or decreasing, means there is increasing movement in the market, which is having an effect on younger and trendier arrondissements such as the 9th and 10th.



The area around the canal is studded with large, modern lofts that attract a young and wealthy clientele. A property listed with estate agents 20,000 Lieux for €1.8m is situated between the canal and the cosmopolitan Belleville quarter. The building used to be a *lavoir*, an old wash house, and the kitchen still has an enormous stone sink. The downstairs area is spacious, with six-metre high ceilings, and the property also has a terrace and a specially adapted wine cellar.

On the République side of the canal, a 232 sq metre house in a verdant private street is on sale with Junot Immobilier for €2.29m. Another converted wash house, it now makes use of its high ceilings with enormous windows that bathe the open-plan living space with light.

The 10th arrondissement used to deter buyers because of its slightly rough edges, but the lure of new development and its cosmopolitan atmosphere are making the area hip again.

## Buying guide

- Short-term rentals such as Airbnb are illegal in Paris if the property is not a primary residence, so check the rules before buying to rent
- The average price of property per sq metre in Paris is €7,920, down 2.5 per cent on last year, according to data published in April by the Paris Chamber of Notaries
- There are no extra charges levied on foreign buyers
- Agency fees are about 5 per cent

## What you can buy for . . .

**€500,000** A two-bedroom pied-à-terre between the two main train stations

**€1m** A 150 sq metre apartment in a Haussmanian building

**€2m** A four-bedroom apartment next to the canal with a rooftop terrace

*Main photograph: Hideo Kurihara/Alamy*





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