



**A CAPITAL HAPPY BIRTHDAY**

ITS happy 20th birthday to Eurostar, whose first Chunnel train sped from London to Paris on November 14, 1994. Used by more than 140 million people so far, the train is chosen over the plane by 70 per cent of travellers between the two capitals.

Return journeys 20 years ago cost from £99 and took three hours, compared with £69 and two and a quarter hours today. Property prices in central Paris have tripled in that time, but London buyers can still get good value, says Susie Hollands of French property agents Vingt Paris.

"Paris is underpriced compared with London," she adds. "A huge factor for Londoners buying a pied-à-terre here is that they can decide on the spur of the moment to hop on the train for a weekend away."

She highlights a two-bedroom flat by the excellent Montmartre food market for £545,000 and a one-bedroom artist's atelier in Les Halles for £459,000. Both are fully renovated and ready to rent.

- Vingt Paris: vingtparis.com
- Eurostar: eurostar.com



**£459,000:** close to Les Halles, a one-bedroom fourth-floor apartment. Through Vingt Paris

# Where to go in 2015

**Cathy Hawker** finds good-value holiday home hotspots easy to reach from London

**SUMMER IN SUPER SARDINIA**

BRITISH AIRWAYS continues to expand its services from Gatwick with new flights for next summer to Bodrum and Dalaman in Turkey, the Greek island of Crete, and perhaps most excitingly of all to Cagliari, the little-known waterfront capital of Sardinia, two hours from London.

Sardinia has a hot Mediterranean climate with bright, clear skies and temperatures that rarely dive below 15C. Most of the 250,000 annual British visitors to Sardinia head to the north, but Cagliari on the south coast is an upmarket delight.

The medieval city is 10 minutes from the airport, resolutely Italian with a vibrant culture and affordable restaurants, says local British resident Rebecca Lewis Lalatta, of Italian property agents Casa & Country. "Cagliari has three marinas

and is the training ground for the America's Cup yacht race," says Lalatta. "Today in November, from my roof terrace I can see many sails on the water. People enjoy sailing and windsurfing here year-round."

The beauty of living in Cagliari for her, she adds, is the variety of affordable activities nearby.

"You can go horse riding in the mountains or to the coast and not see a soul for 30 miles. The south has some of the best beaches in the Med, with Villasimius and Costa Rei to the east and Chia to the west."

A three-bedroom countryside villa overlooking Bosa Castle is £941,000 through Casa & Country. One- to three-bedroom flats in a restored palazzo in the centre of Cagliari cost from £329,700 through Savills.

- British Airways: ba.com
- Casa & Country: casaandcountry.com
- Savills: savills.com



**From £329,700:** apartments in a restored central Cagliari palazzo. Through Savills



**Historic Boston:** sought-after red-brick townhouses in Acorn Street, Beacon Hill

**BOSTON FOR LESS THAN £100**

MANY budget airlines have talked about introducing transatlantic services but Icelandic-based WOW Air has started taking bookings. From March 27 next year it will fly five times a week from Gatwick to Boston for £99, adding a Washington DC service later in the year.

Downsides include extra charges for checked luggage, a measly 5kg hand luggage allowance and a minimum of three hours to spend changing planes at Reykjavik airport – but the beautiful, scholarly city of Boston is worth it. Base yourself there and it is an easy drive to New England resorts such as Cape Cod, or to the ski resorts of Vermont and New Hampshire.

Boston is walkable and wonderfully green, with more than 60 universities and colleges including Harvard, and large IT and pharmaceutical industries. Property prices are highest among the aristocratic homes of Back Bay and the red-brick townhouses of Beacon Hill, with waterfront new builds selling strongly. Gibson Sotheby's International Realty is selling a two-bedroom flat with high ceilings in an 1890 building in Back Bay for £502,000. A studio flat in Blackstone Park near the excellent restaurants of South End is £219,300.

- Gibson Sotheby's International Realty: gibsonsothebysrealty.com
- WOW Air: wowair.co.uk

**A PLACE TO STAY AMES BOSTON HOTEL**

VOTED the city's best hotel in this year's prestigious Best of Boston awards, the Ames is a good base for visiting the capital of New England.

The 114-room hotel is in Boston's first skyscraper on the edge of the financial district. Opposite is the red-brick State House built in 1713 and emblazoned with the lion and unicorn, symbols of the British monarchy, while the Boston Tea Party was planned one block away. Boston Common and the shops of Newbury Street, the waterfront and Cambridge are all nearby.

Inside the hotel, original features including beautiful mosaic tiles on the half-barrelled ceiling in the entrance hall are joined by a crisp black-and-white scheme.

This is a funky, friendly and very comfortable boutique hotel, perfectly placed for business travellers in the week and leisure guests at the weekend.



**Funky and friendly:** the Ames Boston Hotel, where rates start from £135 a night. Visit ameshotel.com

**MAKE loaf NOT WAR**

**LOAF.COM**  
LOAFINGLY LOVELY FURNITURE