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Homes abroad **Homes & Property**

As Parisians flee to London to escape high taxes, David could pick up a bargain château or a smart Montmartre flat

FROM fashionistas to football fans, everyone is excited about the arrival of Brand Beckham in Paris following the news that footballer David has signed a five-month contract with Paris Saint-Germain. But though Victoria will remain in London where the couple's children are at school, property agents are hoping for a surge in interest in the City of Love.

In 2011 more foreign income flowed into Paris property than any other European capital, and residential prices soared 22 per cent, according to figures from CBRE Group.

"But concerns about the eurozone and President Hollande's tax plans meant that 2012 was a difficult one for high-end Parisian property as risk-averse investors were wary," says Mark Harvey of Knight Frank. "However, this year has started stronger, as buyers have seen that Hollande is not as radical as he first seemed. British buyers are mainly looking below £900,000 to get a mix of rental income and a base to use themselves."

Beckham's five-month contract takes him to the end of the football season, but also ensures that he avoids the punitive wealth tax, which comes into play on assets of £1 million (£1.12 million) or more for stays over six months. For his brief contract Beckham will have the choice of some of the world's finest hotels. But if he is tempted to search for a pied-à-terre, what's on offer?

RESALE HOMES

Paris is largely unchanged since it was laid out in the late 19th century. This compact way of life in one of the world's most beautiful cities is a huge part of its appeal, but also means that supply is restricted and prices high. The centre is divided into 20 arrondissements: prime areas include the 7th Arrondissement by the Eiffel Tower, the Marais, and the "Golden Triangle" between the Champs Élysée and the Seine.

Winkworth France has a three-bedroom, second-floor apartment of 1,745 sq ft with wood-block floors, wide windows and generous room sizes for £1.7 million. The good address in Avenue Robert Schumann in the 7th close to

Spend it *comme* Beckham



REX FEATURES



£485,000: Becks, left, could buy a one-bedroom pied-à-terre (above) in Monmartre through Vingt Paris



£3.02 million: 60 miles from Paris, this 19-bedroom Picardy château comes with 82 acres, English gardens, two trout lakes and a helipad. Through Knight Frank

miles north of Paris to Picardy where a pretty 18th-century château is for sale through Knight Frank for a little over £3million. With 19 bedrooms, 82 acres including English-style gardens, two lakes stocked with trout and a helipad to smooth David's journey to Saint-Germain's stadium in south-west Paris, this could be an ideal weekend home for Team Beckham. Perfect when you have the money to spend it like Beckham.

CONTACTS

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By **Cathy Hawker**

FRENCH TAXES

IT IS perhaps ironic that while we are giving Paris one of our most famous sons, Monsieur Beckham, the wealthy French are coming to London in droves.

A threatened 75 per cent income tax on earnings above £862,630, with 45 per cent on incomes over £129,400 and an additional 15.5 per cent "social charge" on rental income – and capital gains on top of the existing 20 per cent already paid – are said to be to blame for driving record numbers of the French across Le Manche to Londres.

But other than the additional social charge, most British buyers' concerns focus on changes to the French wealth tax. Camille Letuve of Athena Advisors (athenaadvisors.co.uk) says that as wealth tax only applies on net assets in France, it is only buyers at the very top of the market who are affected.

"With France's highly favourable mortgage rates even high-end properties are being bought using finance so that the net value of the assets comes in below the roughly £1.1 million threshold."

the Quai d'Orsay should impress Victoria, with the hip boutiques and art galleries of Saint-Germain an easy walk away.

Two-minutes from the Louvre and the magnificent Jardins des Tuileries, Knight Frank has a one-bedroom apartment in the 1st Arrondissement for £552,000 and a loft-style one-bedroom apartment with exposed beams and in excellent condition overlooking a courtyard and Parisian rooftops on the Left Bank for £970,400.

Susie Holland of Vingt Paris sells and lets property to an international clientele and says that most interest comes from Italian, American and British buyers looking to spend between £850,000 and £1.3 million.

"Typically with that budget they often invest in centrally located pieds-à-terre around the 6th and 7th Arrondissements, St-Germain-des-Près and the 3rd and 4th in the Marais, allowing them to benefit from an authentic taste of Parisian life." Says Holland. "Meanwhile the long-term lettings market is busier than ever with demand for quality accommodation strong and clients from South America and Australia joining the international demand."

Holland says smart studios typically rent for £345 a week and one-bedroom apartments for £500 to £600. Most in-demand are properties near good transport links and close to buzzy areas such as Le Marais and St Germain, where there are good restaurants and clubs for after work. "These are the equivalents of Soho or Covent Garden in London," she adds.

BECKINGHAM PALAIS

For real privacy, and space to entertain, the Beckhams could look 60



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