

## GETAWAYS OF THE WEEK



€4.5m

## BAROQUE ITALIAN BOLTHOLE

Villa La Voilina, in the Piedmontese town of Valenza, was used by Napoleon in 1800 as his HQ for the battle of Marengo – he is said to have ordered construction of the terracing and three black-and-white marble staircases. The main house has 13 bedrooms, 10 reception, barrel-vaulted ceilings and frescoed arches. It's set in five acres of formal gardens and 91 acres of parkland, with a greenhouse. Turin is 50 miles away. **020 7489 7722, beachamp.co.uk**



€530,000

## BALEARIC BLISS

Duties and traffic allowed, you could land at Palma airport and be sitting on this two-bedroom flat's terrace, drinking in the sea views, within half an hour. It's part of a hotel complex with pools and a sauna in Sitges, southwest Mallorca: the interiors are slightly dated, but it has a small kitchen, a living room and garage parking. A short walk away, you'll find restaurants, bars, shops and beaches. **00 34 971 678836, engelvoelkers.com**



From \$275,000

## CARIBBEAN CLASS

Visitors to Barbados know that St James, on the west coast, is the place to see and be seen. Half a mile south of Mullins, and 6% from the chic boutiques and restaurants of Holloway, one- to four-bedroom flats are for sale at Lantana, a new gated development. All have open-plan living spaces and private balconies with sea views; owners can use the two communal pools. The prices properties here will set you back \$400,000. **020 7016 3740, savills.com**

## Tasty retreats



Image: iStockphoto.com / Erik Sjöberg, iStockphoto.com / David Newton, iStockphoto.com / David Newton

You can never re-create that fabulous local dish at home – so why not go straight to the source? **Zoe Dare Hall** picks the freshest properties in gourmet destinations

Jamie started it. Then Mary, Michel Jr, a couple of Hairy Bikers and many more joined the gang, and the next thing we knew, we'd morphed into a nation that likes to cook. The very thought might leave the French spluttering in their soupe à l'oignon, but *les rouls* have developed a love of food that stretches far beyond simply watching TV cookery programmes – it influences how we live and even where we buy our holiday homes. Once something of a niche affair, the appreciation of good food has become far more democratic and sociable. It's the way many of us get to know a new place, meet people and feel part of local life when we are abroad. Boutique developments in

Europe and beyond have picked up on this desire, giving buyers the chance to engage with the culture and community through cuisine by offering bespoke services such as cookery lessons. Those who let out their holiday homes are also picking up on the culinary trend. "We've seen a big increase in the number of properties that offer some kind of food experience – whether it's a personal catering service or the chance to cook and eat traditional local cuisine," says Saskia

Welman, PR manager for Holiday Lettings. The food writer and cook Tara Stevens has cottoned on: Dar Namir, her house in Fez, Morocco, is in the heart of the medina and has an "immersion cooking school" in the courtyard kitchen. "It's a rental targeted at those who love food and love to cook," she says. "We shop in K'cif market, cook and eat together, and visit producers. Guests get to experience what it's really like to live in the medina." If you fancy a home that's guaranteed to get your

culinary juices flowing, here is some food for thought.

## Getting to know the neighbours

Nowhere beats Italy for the convivial, joyful, hands-on appreciation of gastronomy and the ability to make even the simplest ingredients taste magical. Dawn Cavanagh-Hobbs, founder of Appassionata – an Italian property company that specialises in boutique restoration projects – explores that love of all things homegrown in her latest project, Casa Tre Archi, in the medieval Marche town of Petrioli. The three-bedroom townhouse, attached to the town's ancient turrets, is available on a fractional basis: a €65,000 share gives the owner five weeks' annual usage (00 39 33154 12225, [appassionata.com](http://appassionata.com)). There's

no need to jump into the car when you want to eat out, as fine dining Italian-style is all around. "At the excellent local restaurant, the dishes change with the seasons and customers never see a menu," says Cavanagh-Hobbs, who also organises regular cookery lessons from a five-star hotel chef for the owners of her properties. Among them is Deborah Gale, 51, who lives in Windsor with her husband and five daughters. She is in no doubt about the appeal of this type of holiday home: "You overlook seascapes, sunflower fields and mountains, but an image that lingers even longer is that of our daughters learning to make fresh pasta in our farmhouse kitchen," says Gale, a Huffington Post blogger. "We have found a special place to lay down memories." For those who sit on the French side of the culinary fence, the Languedoc-based

Vintage stuff  
Wine lovers  
will be spoilt for  
choice browsing  
the Marche des  
Etoffes Rouges,  
in Paris, below.  
Bottom, the  
Marché d'Allier

+

TIMES-  
One lucky  
member will  
win a week  
of luxury in a  
villa for four  
in the south of  
France. Visit  
[mydreams.co.uk](http://mydreams.co.uk)

## LANGUEDOC

Snag up a two-bedroom, 80 sq metre flat at Les Carrasses – a chateau transformed into a luxury self-catering estate, with an infinity pool, a boulodrome, an orchard and an olive grove – and you'll receive 20 cases of wine a year. **0845 888 8067, domainedemeure.com**



€850,000

## GIRONA

A tantalisingly short drive from El Coller de Can Roca, voted the world's best restaurant, the minimalist three- and four-bedroom villas at RIA Catalunya Resort have large pools and floor-to-ceiling windows with a view of the golf course and the mountains. **020 7811 1097, knightfrank.com**



developer Domaine & Demeure has found a winning formula for foodies and wine-lovers. It turns neglected old chateaux into thriving rural havens of relaxed luxury, with pools and spas, working wineries, top-notch restaurants and endless opportunities for homeowners to get stuck in, whether it's through tastings and outdoor barbecues (the much-loved local mussels barbecues), making wine, picking vegetables or – once the olive grove is up and running – joining in the oil production. Their two chateau projects so far, Les Carrasses and St Pierre de Serjac, both near Béziers, sold out fast, and the first resale in six years has only just become available – a two-bedroom apartment in Les Carrasses, on the market for €425,000 (€219,000; 00 33 4 67 39 42 09, [domainedemeure.com](http://domainedemeure.com)).

Owners of 20 cases of the chateaux's wine each year, and the property is unlikely to sit around for long – there's a waiting list for future projects,

the next of which will be Château Caproun, near Narbonne. Flats there will be launched in spring 2016, with prices starting at about €200,000.

"Sixteen nationalities have bought properties in St Pierre de Serjac, but something that unites them all is their interest in wine and food," says Karl O'Hanlon, founder and chief executive of Domaine & Demeure. "I often see our owners strolling across the terrace, clutching handfuls of sage from the herb garden or fruit from the orchard, and we invite local winemakers to weekly tastings throughout the year." O'Hanlon's team also organises French lessons for owners, so they can forge friendships locally. "Food and wine are at the heart of everything we do."

## Food markets and festivals on the doorstep

The Boqueria, on the Ramblas, is the most famous of Barcelona's food markets. →

## Discover where world-class real estate meets championship golf, on Barcelona's doorstep

A stone's throw from Girona and Costa Brava's beaches, there is a luxury golf resort like no other. Where dazzling design and pioneering architecture front Spain's no. 1 golf course – a natural destination for the world's top players. Where state-of-the-art villas and deluxe apartments blend with stunning scenery. And where Barcelona beckons close by. Prices start at €985,000.



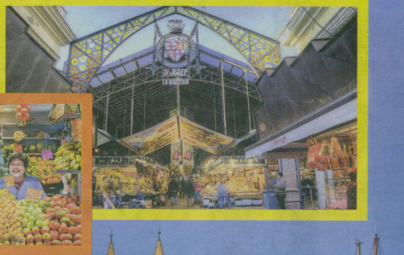
PGA Catalunya Resort is supporting the Royal Spanish Golf Federation to bring The 2022 Ryder Cup to Catalunya.

PGA CATALUNYA RESORT

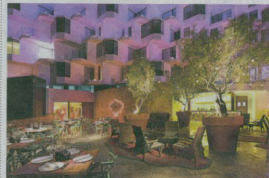
For more information or to book an appointment call 0800 046 7870 or log onto [www.pgcatalunya.com](http://www.pgcatalunya.com)

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Food for thought Once you've visited Palma's cathedral, you can pick up lunch at the Mercat de l'Olivar, above left. Top, the Boqueria, in Barcelona; below, the Hard Rock Hotel, Ibiza



## Currencies in a spin

With the pound in the best shape it's been against the euro since late 2007, at about €1.33, Europe is a tempting place for holiday homes. A €750,000 property would cost a sterling buyer €563,000 – down from €825,000 a year ago – plus many countries have seen property price falls of 40%.

Yet those factors that have weakened the euro – the European Central Bank's decision to introduce

quantitative easing in March, the economic slowdown and the outcome of Greece's election – mean buyers need to be sure before committing, particularly in Greece.

"If Greece leaves the eurozone, the currency would depreciate and there could be additional depreciation in property as a result," says Marianne Gilmore, commercial director at the foreign-exchange broker MoneyCorp. "It may be best to wait."

→ but other neighbourhoods have their vibrant virtues, including beachfront Barceloneta. You can buy studio flats nearby from €145,000 (00 34 933 041532, casamona.com).

Within a short walk of the swooping, rainbow-roofed Mercat de Santa Caterina – and next to the huge Mercat del Born building, the largest covered square in Europe, though it's no longer a marketplace – there's a renovated block of 10 flats, with two-bedders on sale from €375,000 (00 34 933 562989, lucasfox.co.uk).

This area is a popular choice for loft-style living in the thick of the urban hubbub.

For those who want those immersive food experiences on top, the bespoke travel company Into the Kitchen can organise tours of tapas bars, food shops and cookery demonstrations in your apartment.

"We also do Boqueria tours, where stops include a bar that sells nothing but sardines caught that morning, with house red wine," says the firm's founder, Carrie Fraas.

Over in Mallorca, Palma's old town shares the look and feel of the Born district, as well as the range of excellent restaurants – Marc Fosh's Simply Fosh is the latest eatery in Palma to be awarded a Michelin star. Food markets such as Mercat de l'Olivar are also close by.

A love of local culinary traditions often goes hand in hand with an appreciation of history and architecture, so consider a flat in a converted palace – an apartment in a recently renovated building in the cathedral district is on the market for €1.149m (00 49 4036 1310, engyelcookers.com).

In the French capital, Susie Hollands, who runs the Vingt Paris estate agency, says 75% of her buyers are drawn by gastronomy, which includes enjoying a wander around the city's street food markets. One of the best emporiums is Le Marché d'Aligre, in the Bastille district, where you can buy an innovatively designed two-bedroom loft apartment for €625,000 (00 33 970 46 69 01, vingtparis.com).

Ritz-Carlton Residences. Piero Lissoni-designed properties overlooking Surfers' Lake start at \$2m (£1.31m; 00 1 305 953 9500, theresidencesinmiamiibeach.com).

## Michelin stars on tap

Ibiza has long attracted a devoted following, thanks to its laid-back lifestyle and boho glamour, but it is also stepping into the spotlight as a culinary destination.

The multi-Michelin-starred chef brothers Ferran and Albert Adrià, the brains behind the fabled El Bulli restaurant, launch their latest venture, a "cultural-artistic fun fair for adults", in the former casino at Ibiza Gran Hotel in May. Cirque du Soleil is their partner in crime, so it's hard to know which will be more outlandish, the canapés or the cabaret.

Ibiza's Hard Rock Hotel, meanwhile, has what may be the world's most expensive tasting menu, at €1,500 a head. Even the benign exchange rate would struggle to make that palatable, but there's no shortage of takers.

A moment's walk from the Adrià brothers' new joint, you'll find White Angel, where Savills is selling the last 10 units of €463,000 (020 7106 3740, savills.com). The same agency has plots with a Jaime Serra-designed five-bedroom villa at Cap Martinet, near Ibiza Town, for €1.8m.

Over on the mainland, El Celler de Can Roca, in Girona, is the one to beat.

Just 10 minutes' drive from the restaurant – run by the Roca brothers, and last year named the best in the world on TripAdvisor – the striking white minimalist villas at the PGA Catalunya Resort start at €950,000, with apartments available from €385,000 (020 7829 8171, pgacatalunya.com).

Finally, here's one for the truly indulgent: at the Halcyon Retreat Golf & Spa Resort, set around the ornate 19th-century Château de la Cazine, near La Souterraine in France's Limousin region, owners need not venture beyond the grounds. The Halcyon's restaurant, under David Boyer, gained a Michelin star in 2014. It's its second year of operation. Wine tastings and other sociable foodie events are also on the menu.

"Restaurant bookings have increased significantly since the resort received the star, which in turn has led to an increase in hotel guests, wedding bookings and interest in property for sale," says Robin Barratton, MD of Barratross & Bird estate agency. He has apartments at the Halcyon for sale from €11,500 on a fractional basis; full ownership starts at €130,000 (0800 1300 3101, bandw.co.uk).

"You have seascapes, sunflower fields and mountains, but the image that lingers is of our daughters making fresh pasta"

In the Marais, steps away from the oldest fresh-food market in Paris, Le Marché des Enfants Rouges is an elegant, high-ceilinged one-bedroom flat. It's yours for €730,000, also through Vingt Paris.

Food festivals are also becoming fashionable events, as much about being seen as savouring the cuisine. There's still time to book a flight to Miami, where the annual South Beach Wine and Food Festival (sofbest.com) starts on February 19, drawing hundreds of famous chefs and wineries.

Tempted to stay for good? There are plenty of cool homes nearby, as Miami Beach is seeing an explosion of new development by the world's starchitects and luxury brands, including the



## CAPE TOWN

**What's the pull?** Tourists call it the Mother City, the locals prefer Sapaastad (Afrikaans city), which reflects its laid-back pace of life. Live in Cape Town and you're almost guaranteed to be within 20 minutes' drive of a sandy beach, a mountain walk and a wine farm. Best of all, if you behave like a snowflake and spend the British winters there, you'll have summer year-round.

**Where to live** Foreigners flock to overpriced villas in Camps Bay – where you can sip cocktails at one of the trendy beachside bars while gawking at a fashion shoot on the sand – or the harbourside blocks of flats springing up around the V&A Waterfront. Get more house for your money in Sea Point, where you can snap up a beachfront pied-à-terre for €110,000. Once gritty, the area is on the up, with a sinuous football stadium built for the 2010 World Cup at one end, and Cifra's wind-sheltered coves at the other.



**The cost of living** Buying food or clothes is on a par with Britain, but you can eat out for less than half what you'd pay in London. When it comes to property, money will go much further: the rand has fallen by 65% against sterling in the past four years, to about €17.40.

**What the locals say** "Ag lekker, man!" Use liberally to salute anything good/delicious/cool.

**Who to contact** 00 27 21 720 1700, pamgolding.co.za, thabangana.com

Martina Lees