

Property abroad: Why the British will love Liguria

For a taste of undiscovered Italy, Laura Latham recommends a coast of great opportunities for overseas buyers

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Italy's north west coast is often overlooked but it offers sunshine, pretty beaches and a fast track to the dolce vita. So while the whole world flocks to the beaches of the Côte d'Azur every summer, the Italians have a trick up their sleeve. They head instead to the Ligurian Riviera, an hour from Nice, which offers a spectacular coastline strewn with quaint harbours and chic resorts, backed by mountains dotted with charming hamlets.

Despite being popular with Italians, the area is still pretty much undiscovered by the British who, according to Luca Catalano of agency RealItalia, are missing out. "Liguria is a real Italian holiday destination," he says, "and is convenient for British buyers with regular flights into Genoa and Nice."

RealItalia is currently selling two developments in Liguria:

Colletta di Castelbianco, a restored medieval village in a dramatic hillside location near the town of Alassio, and Dominio San Sebastiano, a coastal eco-resort near the town of Savona.

The former, with its ancient church and winding alleys, is the epitome of historic Italian charm, but step into the apartments and you'll find high-spec, contemporary design. Also on site is a communal pool, restaurant and business centre. Properties are aimed at those who want the option of living here full time and start at £102,000 for a studio to around £300,000 for a two-bed apartment.

In contrast, Dominio San Sebastiano is a new project overlooking the sea targeted at buyers seeking a rental investment. Owners get 16 weeks' use per year and are obliged to rent it out at other times. They are offered guaranteed annual returns of 3 to 5 per cent.

Properties are designed along eco principles, with innovative green roofs, created from planting designed to help



The medieval village of Colletta di Castelbianco offers stylish homes in a historic setting from £102,000

the buildings blend into the landscape and to act as insulation, reducing the need for heating and cooling systems.

At £259,000 for a one-bedroom villa it's not the cheapest option in Liguria but, in addition to high-spec homes, the resort will have a spa and gym, tennis courts and pool, plus a highly-desirable private beach.

Italian property specialist Gemma Knowles says Ligurian coastal property is relatively pricey but claims if you look around you can find cheaper alternatives. "Away from the sea properties become more affordable," she says.

"Nice apartments in towns can cost from around £215,000 while inland you can find homes in charming hilltop villages or farmhouses from around £130,000."

Knowles believes Brits will love Liguria and says in summer the atmosphere can't be beaten. "Stylish Italians flock here to hang out on the beaches. Visitors can expect a very authentically Italian destination." What more could you want?

RealItalia: www.realitalia.co.uk ; 0870 890 9936; *GKItalian Property*: www.gkitalianproperty.com ; 020 7993 2967

Prize draw

Win tickets to see Andrea Bocelli in concert

Each year the opera singer Andrea Bocelli returns to his Tuscan hometown of Lajatico, near Pisa, to perform a one-off concert. Known as Il Teatro del Silenzio, the concert also includes performances by some of the world's top musicians and sells out months in advance. RealItalia, which is developing the residential project of Ville degli Olivi in Lajatico, in partnership with Bocelli's architect brother Alberto, is offering two pairs of tickets worth €280 per pair to this year's concert on 18 July. To enter all you have to do is email your name, address and telephone number to info@realitalia.co.uk. The first two names drawn at random after the closing date will each receive one pair of tickets.

Rules

1. Competition is open to UK residents aged 18 and over. Entries must be received via email by 5pm on the closing date of Friday 26 June 2009.
2. Only one entry per household. The first two names drawn at random after the closing date will each receive one pair of tickets to the concert at Il Teatro del Silenzio on 18 July 2009. The Winner will be notified by Wednesday 1 July 2009.
3. The prize is for concert tickets only and does not include flights, accommodation or any other expenses. It is the responsibility of the winners to ensure they have valid passports or any necessary visas.
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