



Palma is a charmer

Small harbours and old farmhouses make Majorca a favourite homes hotspot, says
Cathy Hawker

THE Balearic Island of Majorca is a well-established holiday-home hot spot. Traditionally, buyers come for sea views or the gorgeous stone farmhouses called *fincas*. Palma, the island's attractive capital, has harbour charm, centuries-old tapas bars and modern boutiques for a great day's shopping before relaxing with a cold glass of wine in the square.

Its historic old town, with narrow medina streets and echoes of Roman, Renaissance and Gothic architecture, has beautiful *palacios* where cool

Inland villages with true Majorcan character are good value for money

façades hide elegant courtyards and stone staircases. As noble Spanish families desert these vast buildings, innovative developers are realising the fabulous potential within.

Duncan and Christine Colebrook, from Lincolnshire, bought a converted penthouse in the oldest part of Palma four years ago.

"Palma has everything," says Duncan. "We're 10 minutes from the beach, 10 minutes from the international airport, 20 minutes from 10 golf courses and have a choice of marinas on our doorstep."

Colebrook has converted two *palacios* in the old town, preserving

the listed façade and designing modern loft-like interiors. His second project is nearing completion with three apartments for sale through Savills, priced from £726,800. The two- and three-bedroom flats have internal courtyards, marble bathrooms and parking spaces.

"It's difficult to restore here," admits Colebrook. "It takes one year to get the licences on these listed buildings and estimating costs is tricky. But you end up in a very different part of Majorca that many people don't appreciate."

"Prices in these converted palacios vary widely," says Tom Eck of First Mallorca. He has property from

£286,300 for a 1,044sq ft apartment to £12 million for a partially restored *palacio* with seven huge apartments on the exclusive Passeig Born.

For good value, Michael Cunnington of MJC Associates tips inland villages with true Majorcan character. In pretty Alaro, he has a stone town house with five bedrooms for £418,470, or in Puigpunyent, a three-

bedroom terrace and pool costs £510,900. "Puigpunyent is typically Majorcan. It's a good place to get away from it all," says Cunnington.

Contacts

■ First Mallorca: 00 34 971 425 262;
www.firstmallorca.com
■ Savills: www.savills.co.uk;
020 7016 3740

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CASE STUDY

'We now enjoy a healthy outdoors life in Majorca'

CARL and Amanda Edwards moved to Majorca from Staffordshire in 2005 after holidaying there.

"Initially we bought an apartment before moving into our house in Costa den Blanes outside Palma," says Amanda. "Our daughter Charlotte goes to a local Spanish school and has a healthy outdoors lifestyle with horse riding, cycling and walking."

The Edwards bought their house with a Spanish mortgage and have used the dedicated department in the local council for practical help and advice, including free Spanish lessons.

Thanks to the internet, Amanda, 40,



The Edwards have more time together

can live and work on Majorca all year round while Carl, 43, commutes back to his transport business in Stoke on Trent for 10 days each month.

"We spend more time together as a family than we did in the UK," says Amanda.

FACT FILE

There are more than 200 four- and five-star hotels, 23 golf courses and 15 spas on the island's 1,405 square miles.

Hot, hot, hot

Winter lows are 10 degrees Celsius, while summer temperatures average 27 degrees Celsius. Rainfall is highest in October and November.

Lively Palma

La Llonga was once the old fisherman's market. Expect to pay from £264,300 for two-bedroom apartments. This is a lively area of Palma, so parts can be noisy.

La Calatrava is the oldest part of Palma, crammed with large noble palacios around the Gothic Cathedral. Prices peak in D'Alt



Palma Cathedral and, right, a one-bed flat in the centre, £308,000 (00 34 971 425 262)

Murada, the so-called Golden Mile. "Prices in D'Alt Murada are on a par with Madrid," says Hans Lenz of First Mallorca.

Take the coastal route

The flatter, quieter east coast is the one to watch for those buyers who are looking for a new area with

potential growth, says Michael Cunnington of MJC Associates.

"It used to be a long, windy journey from the airport but new roads have made it much easier."

The Bendinat Group (00 34 971 405 000; www.bendinat.com) is building properties in the pretty fishing village of Porto Colom, priced from £281,000.

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£1.7 million:
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farmhouse in
Montuiri with
360 degree views
over rolling
countryside and with
large private gardens
and pool. Price has
recently been
reduced by 30 per
cent. Through Savills
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