

The Telegraph

Seasoned choices - the Luxury properties abroad that have all-year-round appeal

17 November 2014

By James Ellis

From Italy to Japan, enjoy high-end living come shine or snow. James Ellis finds the properties you'll love whatever the weather

When buying a home abroad, people often seek out the polar opposite of their everyday life — those living in unpredictable, often-rainy Britain, for example, prefer to head for warm, sunny climes with miles of golden sand. While that's perfectly reasonable, it makes more sense to look for a home in a place where you always have plenty of options — from sports and activities to events and attractions. Here are some of the best current buys with appeal that lasts throughout the year.

Niseko, Japan

When skiers and snowboarders began to look for more diverse places to practise their sports, the Japanese resort of Niseko seemingly sprang from nowhere to make it onto many of the top-10 lists during the mid-Noughties. It has remained there ever since. Famed for its soft powder and with a reputation among the locals as a great night-skiing spot, it comprises six main ski areas — Hirafu, Higashiyama (also known as Niseko Village), Annupuri, Hanazono, Moiwa and Weiss — with the first four skiable on one pass. There is also some prime back-country skiing, which you have to be in the know to discover.

Like many European ski resorts, Niseko, on the island of [Hokkaido](#), is rapidly gaining a reputation for its year-round offering. "In the UK, Niseko is primarily known for skiing, but it is a 12-month destination," says Kylie Clark of the Japan National Tourism Organisation.

"The Japanese summer is hot and humid, and Hokkaido provides an escape that's as appealing then as it is in winter. In the summer, diverse activities include the challenge of five world-class golf courses, including a Par 72 course designed by Arnold Palmer, renowned fly-fishing, hiking in scenic national parks, family-oriented horse trekking and white-water rafting, as well as road cycling and mountain biking."

A new development of luxury properties, [Kasara Niseko Village](#) Townhouse will comprise 42 three-bedroom homes that blend traditional Japanese architecture and contemporary features, with some units offering ski-in/ski-out access. Owners will also benefit from a

personalised concierge service and the chance to use amenities at the neighbouring Hilton and Green Leaf hotels, including indoor and outdoor onsens (traditional hot-spring baths). With no restrictions on foreign ownership in Japan, the only potential problem for purchasers is the expected excessive demand when these properties are put on the market in December.

Prices to be confirmed; current condominium prices in Niseko range from US\$950 to \$1,200 per sq ft

What to do there

Wakka Spa at the [Hilton Niseko Village](#) has been voted one of the top 10 in Japan. After a strenuous day of skiing, the Hokkaido Mena River Hot Stone body treatment, which also involves the use of relaxing aromatherapy oils, is just what the doctor ordered.

Japan may not be known for its dairy products, but the focus of Milk Kobo in Niseko Village is exactly that. With a cluster of milk related shops, eateries and museums, it offers delicious cakes, ice cream and yoghurt, all freshly made on site using milk and cream from its dairy farm.

When the powder melts, take a scenic nine-mile hike around the resort. The Niseko Circuit takes approximately six hours, with the trailhead accessible via public transport.

Miami, US

With its swaying palms, sublime art-deco architecture, burgeoning arts scene and temperatures that seldom drop below 75F (24C), Miami needs little introduction as a year-round destination. One of America's fastest growing cities, it is the kind of place where an 'any time, anywhere' attitude is epitomised by the concierge team looking after the superstylish condos at the Residences at [W South Beach](#) resort.



"We have one dedicated, detail-oriented team here and our owners receive a highly personalised level of service tailored to their specific needs and lifestyle," says the director of residential services Marcia Valente. "We know each owner's dog's name, children's birthdays and daily reading list, as well as their favourite flowers, food, wine, and even how they like their clothing folded and stored."

The resort, designed by Yabu Pushelberg, sits on a 300ft stretch of South Beach sand and has public spaces by Anna Busta decorated with museum-quality art (think Damien Hirst and Andy Warhol), as well as two restaurants and a huge Bliss spa. For those who like to be seen on the scene, the glamorous Grove garden and the Wall ultra-lounge — both usually packed with local celebrities — beckon.

More designer input is evident at the [Residences at the Miami Beach Edition](#), where Ian Schrager has teamed up with architect John Pawson to produce 26 one-of-a-kind homes. "There is simply nothing else like them currently in the marketplace. We tried to capture the details of life in the details of the architecture," says Schrager of the apartments, which sit atop the Fifties-built Edition Hotel and in a neighbouring new tower block.

With commanding panoramic views over the Atlantic, the one- to four-bedroom homes have outdoor spaces that feature private lap and plunge pools and outside kitchens, dining areas and fireplaces, plus an anonymous 'celebrity' entrance to protect the identity of their owners.

Condos at the Residences at W South Beach range from US\$997,000 to \$16.9 million; wsouthbeach.com/residences. Properties at the Residences at the Miami Beach Edition range from \$2,999,000 to \$7.9 million; for more information click [here](#)

What to do there

One of the latest additions to the Miami music scene is the Frank Gehry-designed [New World Center](#) on Miami Beach, which has performances by the Miami Symphony Orchestra. The Florida Keys start close to Miami. The northernmost is Elliott Key in Biscayne National Park, and it's a 160-mile drive to the furthest, Key West.

Hosted by the city in December, [Art Basel](#) has contemporary and modern works from the world's top galleries.

Mauritius

Mark Twain once said: "... you gather the idea that Mauritius was made first and then heaven was copied after Mauritius" - and it's hard to argue with the author when it comes to this beautiful island in the crystal-clear Indian Ocean.

The island may once have been a favourite pirate haunt but nowadays it is a haven for holidaymakers, attracted by a beguiling mix of beaches with miles of ice-white sands, a lush, mountainous interior, bags of Creole culture, bustling towns, such as the capital, Port Louis,

and welcoming locals. So however you prefer to spend your time — attending vibrant festivals, taking up the challenge of a mountain hike or relaxing on a beachside hammock with a book — Mauritius will be happy to oblige.

Like many other tropical destinations, the constant hours of sunshine are punctuated by rainy seasons — making this island up to five times wetter than the UK — but the short, sharp showers are soon burnt off by the re-emerging sun, and are responsible for the overall lushness.

Fortunately, buying a holiday home on the island has become easier since the government opened up the property market to foreign nationals via the Integrated Resort Scheme. If they want to buy a unit at one of the luxury developments that are sold under the scheme, and are usually located around a hotel, the purchase will automatically come with a Mauritian resident's permit that allows owners to stay in the country indefinitely.

One of the latest developments to join the scheme is [Amalthea by Anahita](#), a 520-acre estate with more than 50 villas, duplexes and residences to choose from, which will be ready for occupancy in 2015. It also has three miles of eastcoast shoreline and an Ernie Els-designed golf course.

Owners get to use the facilities of the on-site [Anahita the Resort hotel](#), with its lively La Place Belgath village of shops and restaurants, and have access to the estate's nature reserves in the centre of the island. When not in residence, they can choose to recoup some of their investment by entering their homes into a rental pool.

Prices range from €695,000 for the residences to €972,000 for a three-bedroom villa; [anahitaproperty.com](#)

What to do there

See Casela Nature and Leisure Park's wildlife, including birds, lions and zebras, by zip wire and hanging bridges.

Go canyoning at the stunning Tamarind Falls; its 11 waterfalls are the ideal setting for a scramble through rocks, pools and lush vegetation.

Enjoy a feast fest. February/March: the biggest Hindu festival outside India. August/September: kite-and opera events.

Tuscany, Italy

While many of us may dream of a place under the Tuscan sun, the garden of Italy is much more than just a place to visit in the heat of summer. Temperatures remain fairly high right through from mid-April until the end of October, making the shoulder seasons an ideal time to explore the vineyards and olive groves that pattern the hillsides.

Even in winter, the daytime mercury levels seldom drop below 50F (10C), but chillier temperatures can easily be remedied with a visit to outdoor thermal spas in Saturnia, San Filippo and Petriolo, while the renowned Christmas markets in Florence and Siena also beckon.

Hidden away in the storied rolling hills, and just a short drive from Siena, Florence and San Gimignano, a grand cypress-lined road leads to an historic castle that has been converted into the boutique [Castello di Casole](#) hotel. This is surrounded by a 4,200-acre estate dotted with farmhouse villas for sale, each with its own private glass-tiled infinity pool.

The homes are either restorations of centuries-old ruins, or reconstructions built using traditional methods and reclaimed stone and timber, and are decorated with antique and contemporary Italian furnishings and fabrics. Full and fractional ownership options are available.

"People choose Castello di Casole as it offers an authentic Tuscan experience in a rural and historic setting, with all the modern comforts you would expect of a second home," says Gary Moore of Timbers Resorts, which manages the estate.

As the company handles everything from maintenance to food purchasing, there are also fewer of the headaches sometimes associated with owning a home abroad. "The idea of a managed estate is catching on with families and couples who lead busy lives and want to make the most of their time away," Moore adds.

"Everything is taken care of — the home is perfect when you arrive, with groceries and wine stocked and clothes dry-cleaned — and you can use all the amenities of the hotel, such as the restaurant, spa and pools."

Prices for a Castello di Casole villa range from €348,000 to €7.25 million; [castellocasole.com](#)

What to do there

Florence is a honeypot for day-trippers, but after 4pm popular sites like the [Uffizi Gallery](#) empty out, the shops are less crowded and waiters much friendlier.

Owners of a property at Castello di Casole can go hunting with gamekeepers for hare, pheasant, deer and wild boar, as well as the elusive truffle.

With the Chianti and Montalcino regions a short drive away, take a tour of the area's boutique wineries.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/property/luxuryhomes/11231303/Seasoned-choices-the-Luxury-properties-abroad-that-have-all-year-round-appeal.html>