

# Spanish Hideaways: Mallorca



The north-west coastline of Mallorca offers tranquility, privacy and above all, the most stunning views of the Mediterranean

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A steep, single-track lane winds its way up one of the highest peaks that make up the Tramuntana mountain range on the north-west coastline of Mallorca. At the top, only the slimmest of cars can squeeze down the drive that narrows between two dry-stone walls. This is the Ermita de Valldemossa, a crop of stone buildings surrounding a chapel that dates back to 1737; home to a tiny and dwindling community of hermits. Local fishermen ask the hermits for advice on the areas to plunder for a day's catch, such is their understanding of the vast expanse of sea which stretches from the feet of the mountains below to the edge of the horizon. The view has to be one of the most spectacular that the Mediterranean can offer: old Mallorcan farmhouses are barely noticeable among the folds of the mountains and not one development blots the landscape.

**'This part of the island attracts a certain type of buyer,' says Adam Estradas of Engel & Völkers. 'The old señorial houses require upkeep and access to the sea is not always easy. It tends to draw those who are attracted by the unparalleled views, the privacy and the pace of life, which isn't showy or glitzy, like some other parts of the island.'**

There are a fair smattering of actors, artists and musicians who have bought properties in the villages of Valldemossa and Deià (Michael Douglas, Andrew Lloyd Webber), but you would struggle to find a Premiership footballer in their midst. There isn't a resort season life-cycle here: owners tend to spend three to six months of the year in their houses, considerably longer than in other areas.

The local government has got to grips with the understated glamour of the area: recent investment in the once rather shabby port of Sóller has brushed up its appearance quite considerably. Boutique hotels are springing up and, last month, it was announced that an investment company intended to open Spain's most luxurious hotel in the port, managed by the same group that run Dubai's Burj-Al-Arab.

The area: houses with sea views will command price tags of anywhere between €1.7 million to €7m (and rising), but when compared to the French Riviera, where Russians are allegedly paying £40 million for houses in the best enclaves, these sea views appear cheap. And even with the recent negative media coverage of the Spanish market, the chorus from the island is the same: it's a different market.

Property Market by Robert Maunday, First Mallorca 'Mallorca is a different animal to mainland Spain: there are no mass-market developments, property fairs or hard sales with cheap inspection flights. The mainland experienced a slowdown in 2006; Mallorca had its best year ever. The market for apartment, villas and country properties so far this year has been very active, and quality properties with sea views meet with brisk demand.'

source: <http://www.countrylife.co.uk>