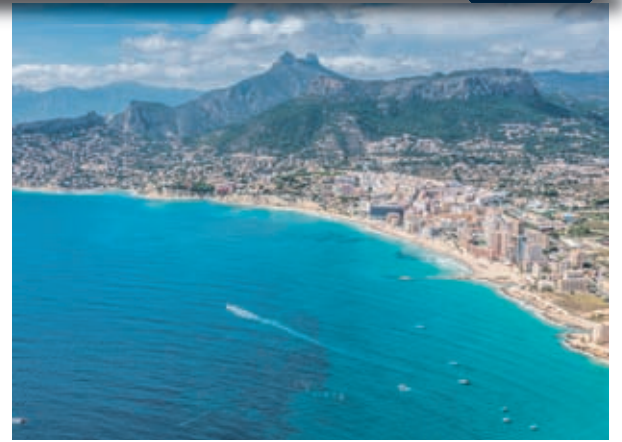


PROPERTY



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GUIDE



Apace in the sun!

By Matt Ford

BRITISH buyers have shrugged off Brexit fears to lead a new surge of property sales to foreigners in Spain. It comes as the first quarter of 2018 saw the most deals completed since 2014.

New data from the national Land Registry shows that sales shot up by 13.4 per cent from January to the end of March, with revenue rising to the highest quarterly total since late 2008.

And the number of overseas buyers rocketed by 13.2 per cent, according to the latest report by Spanish property registrars. British shoppers headed the ranking as they accounted for 14 per cent of foreign sales, with German and French nationals each representing 8 per cent.

Belgians were responsible for 7 per cent of overseas purchases, Swedes and Italians 6 per cent, Chinese 4 per cent and Russians 3 per cent.

Demand from Bulgaria increased

Brits lead surge in foreign buyers

the most after sales soared by 16 per cent, with Morocco and the Ukraine also demonstrating sharp growth.

But the number of buyers from Switzerland plummeted by 15 per cent, and those from France 10 per cent. Mark Stucklin of Spanish Property Insight said that the Swiss plunge is not significant since the country only serves up around 150 sales per quarter.

"A small change

in buyer numbers can deliver a high percentage change and we can't read too much into one quarterly decline, though generally speaking sales are about 10 per cent down from 2016 when the Swiss Franc was incredibly strong against the Euro," he added.

But he believes the French nosedive could be of importance and blames the Catalan independence crisis for the slump.



"France has traditionally been the second biggest market, and a decline of 10 per cent is noteworthy," he said. "I suspect the answer has something to do with the constitutional crisis in Catalonia, a Spanish region that borders with France, where the French have long been the biggest group of foreign buyers, with 43 per cent of the foreign market for second homes, according to the latest figures from the Association of Spanish Notaries."

The expert does not expect British expatriate strongholds to be affected, though, with the outlook generally positive since the figures do not map out where foreign buyers are concentrated.

"It is likely that all regions have seen an increase in buyers from abroad, with the possible exception of Cataluña," he concluded.

ON THE SPEND: The first quarter of 2018 was the busiest in a decade for overseas sales.

Property gladder

Malaga leads new build surge

By Gregory Kirby

MALAGA is the leading province in Spain for the sale of new homes.

There were 3.39 properties sold per 1,000 residents last year, making the Costa del Sol the star of the post-crisis new build recovery, according to the latest figures from the body of registrars.

Building ground to a halt in the crisis years because low demand from buyers scared constructors off investing.

The second-hand property market picked up a lot of the slack left by the bricks and mortar void.

Construction companies have started to build again only recently due to a hike in demand. And Malaga is leading the way in the upward trend.

In total 5,588 new builds were sold last year, a 22.4 per cent increase compared to 2016.

The city came third nationally in absolute terms, only beaten by much

more populous Madrid, where 14,967 new pads were sold and Barcelona which sold 6,636.

But deals in Malaga surpassed other expatriate hot spots including Alicante, Valencia and the Balearic Islands.

The figures are still well below those constructors enjoyed during the boom but do show a clear real estate market resurgence.

Coastal plots including Marbella and other Costa del Sol settings are benefiting most from the return in demand, while inland construction still struggles to take off.

The second-hand market still dominates property transactions. Some 24,712 used dwellings were purchased last year out of 30,300 in total, this makes up 81.5 per cent of all transactions.

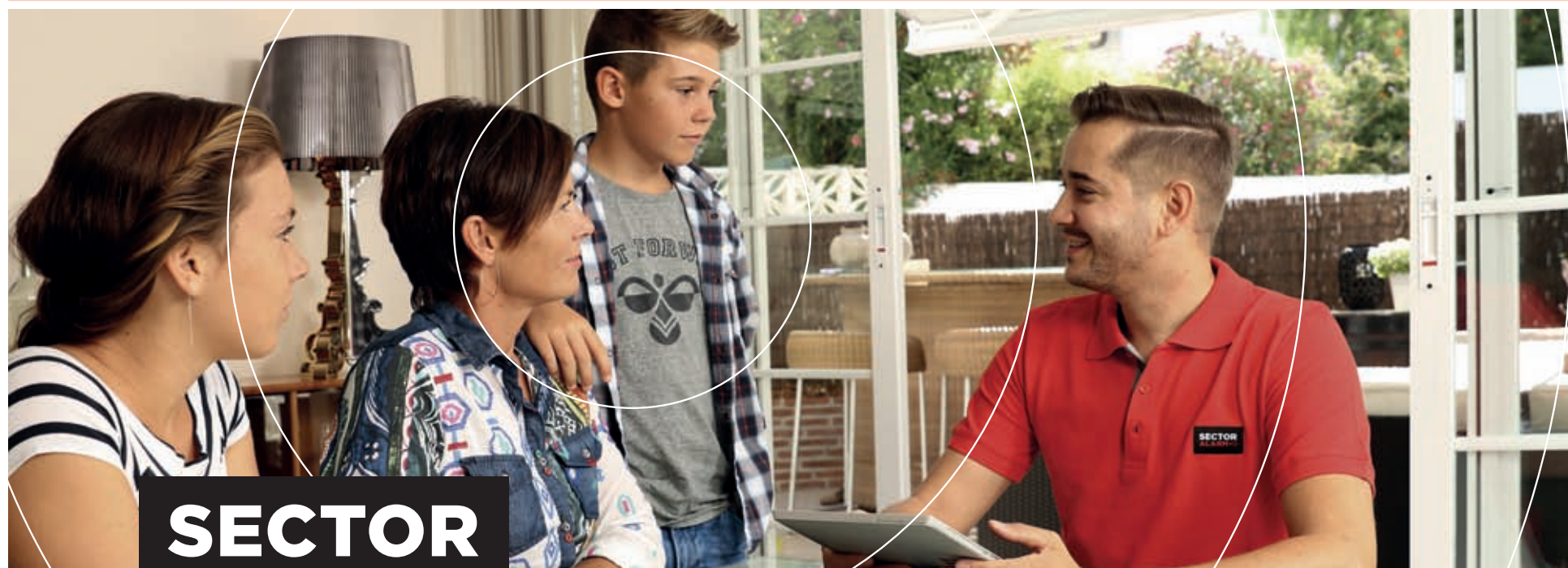


UP AND UP: New build sales are soaring.

Only Alicante had a higher rate of used house purchases than Malaga, which sold 15 properties per thousand residents.

In the overall count - including both new and used sales - Malaga lost its position as national leader, which it

held from 2014 to 2016. It finished 2017 in second place with 18.39 purchases per 1,000 residents, double the national average. Again, it was justipped by Alicante.



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SALES of homes costing more than €4 million have increased in 2017 compared to the previous year on the Costa del Sol.

It comes after the release of a report from Marbella's Panorama Properties.

Many of the best located homes built 20, 30 or more years ago are being sold to be demolished and rebuilt or be completely reformed, the firm's representative Christopher Clover said.

Works are sometimes carried out by specialised developers or otherwise by individuals.

Prices have spiked in Marbella's most sought-after locations where demand outweighed supply.

A concrete example is Puente Romana where prices have doubled from rock bottom prices in 2011 to now, Clover said.

A typical two-bedroomed apartment selling for €600,000 in 2011 would now go for €1.15 million on the so-called Golden Mile.

And a €375,000 apartment with one bedroom is currently

Living the dream

Luxury home sales rocket



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selling for €825,000, showing how in-demand these locations are, he added.

The profile of the average buyer is much lower than a decade ago at between 30 and 40 years-old.

There is a loyal market among German and Middle Eastern buyers

And purchases from French, Belgian and Nordic residents have also recovered since the crisis, Clover added.

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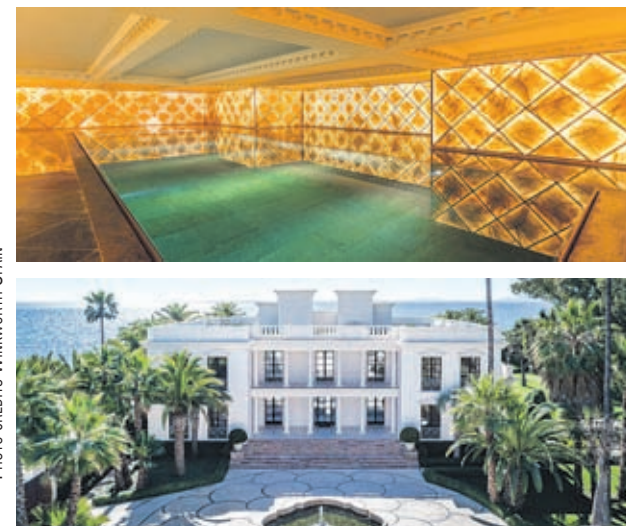


PHOTO CREDITS WINKWORTH SPAIN

LOFTY HEIGHTS: The decadent property's pool is flanked by a luxuriant garden.

ONE of the most luxurious mansions on the Costa del Sol has gone on sale for €15.5 million.

The stunning Guadalmina beachfront property was built in 2016 and has never been lived in.

It boasts a Turkish bath, indoor pool, a mosaic floored rooftop solarium, jacuzzi, sauna, a games room, Italian marble floors with underfloor heating and a fireplace.

Splash the cash

€15.5m mansion on sale

The garage fits eight cars, but more can be parked on the 1.25-acre plot if it is not enough.

The constructors have made it easy for the new owner to make the final instalments to a wine cellar and cinema if they please.

There is a lift if the lucky buyer is feeling too tipsy to stumble up the winding staircase with marble banisters.

And it could accommodate on-site staff in the adjacent guest house, which has two bedrooms and a bath-

room.

The Ernest Palanco Arquitectura villa construction firm built the mansion in 2016.

It has been building luxurious properties in the Middle East for over a decade and "is well-known on the Costa del

Sol," Christopher Vent of Winkworth Spain said.

The kitchen and main living area are on the first floor. And the upper floor stages the main bedroom suite and four more en-suite boudoirs. All of them open out onto an expansive terrace with

views of the Mediterranean.

Outdoors, a tropical garden awaits and a pool sits overlooking the sea.

The eight-bedroom mansion stands out from other mega properties for "the quality of its build, the size of the plot and of the property," the agent said.

It sits on 1.25 acres of land next to the sea and is only a five-minute drive to Puerto Banus, one of the world's glitziest ports.



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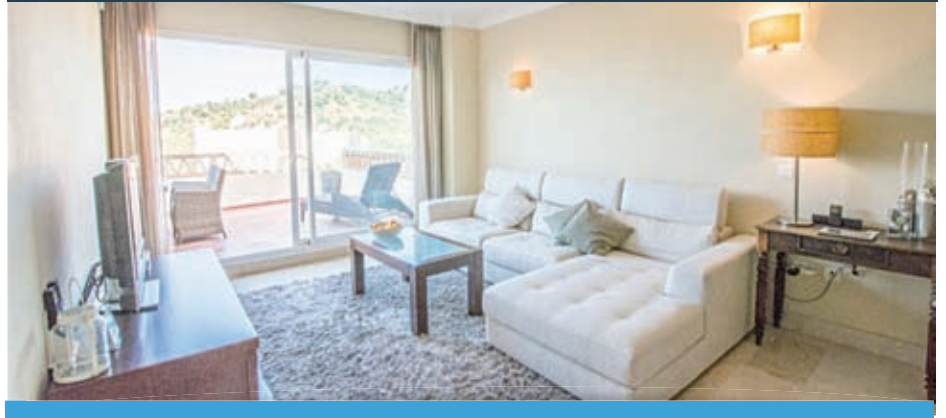


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Lovely three bedroom ground floor apartment, located a few hundred metres from the best beaches of Marbella.

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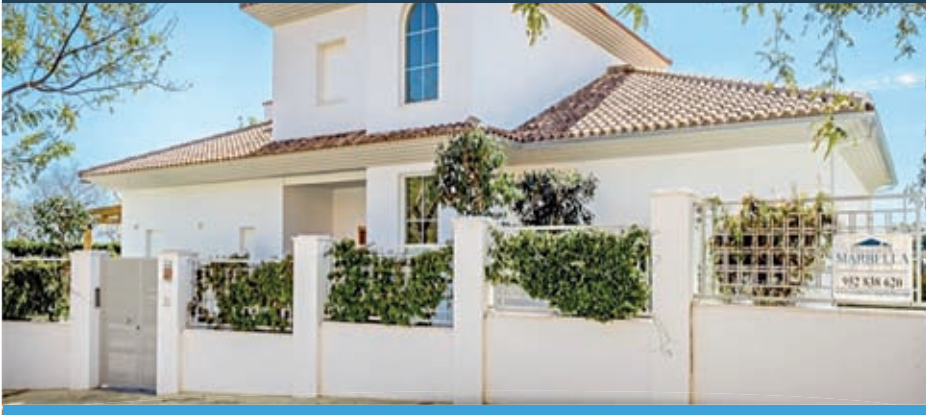


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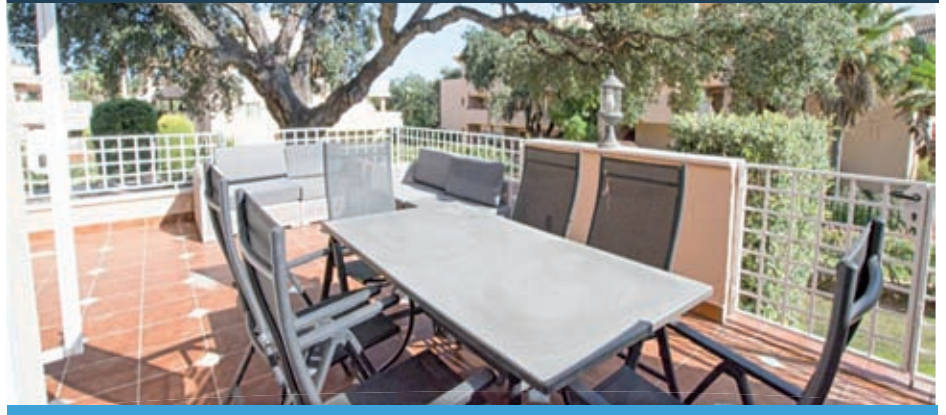


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emergency service and is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

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Línea Directa is definitely an intelligent decision when it comes to making life in Spain a little bit easier.

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We hope the information provided in this article is of interest.

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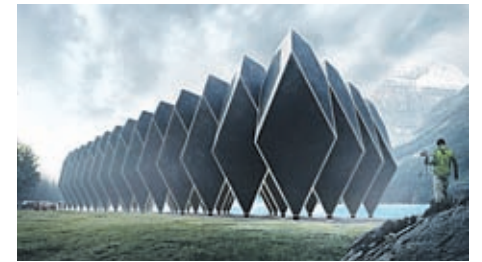
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PILLOWS IN A POD: The jaw-dropping design.

Hotel of the future



SPAIN is in the running to be the location for "the world's most futuristic looking hotel."

Its modular design will feature 42 multi-floored suites in 19-metre-tall luxury triangular pods.

Canada's WSP group engineers are working on the spaceship-like Tetra hotel with design pioneers from Innovation Imperative architecture group.

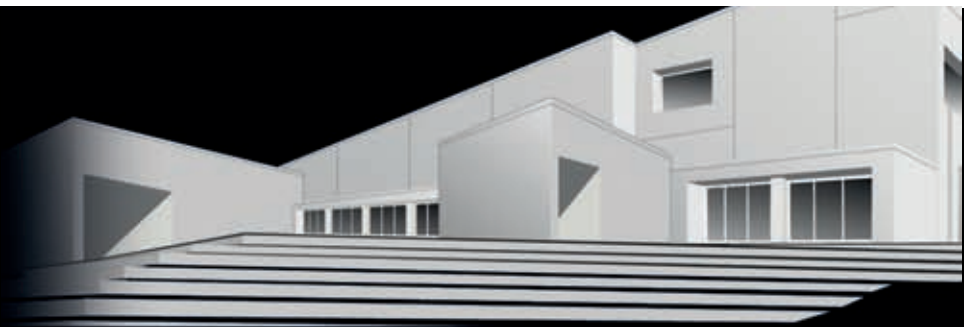
WSP has also worked on London's highest skyscraper - the Shard - and

Chelsea's Stamford bridge stadium.

The Canadian firm hopes for the space-age structures to be located in geographically stunning locations in keeping with their sustainable, carbon-neutral compositions.

Sites in Cape Verde, Norway, Canada, New Zealand, Portugal, Andorra, Hungary and the UK are also competing for the other-worldly hotel.

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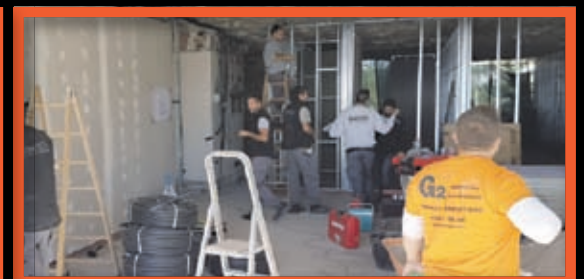
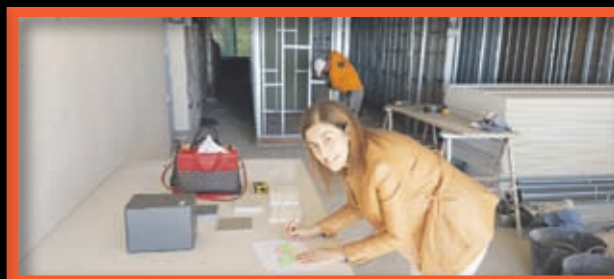


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'Extraordinary' Spanish homes

Unique quartet showcased by BBC

FOUR strange Spanish homes have made it onto the BBC's The World's Most Extraordinary Homes programme.

The first property is the almost invisible 'Rural House' belonging to Michelin star chef Fina Puigdevall.

She wanted a refuge from her hectic working life so she took 11 specially made steel boxes and buried them under a man-made ridge.

And if concealing it was not enough to evade peeping Toms, she put it metres from a farmer's manure pit.

The boxes are joined by a steel corridor with the master suite at one end and three other bedrooms at the other.

BBC presenter Caroline Quinn said: "It's aesthetically pleasing, but I imagine it can be a challenge to live with."

But the design was more popular with the Pritzker Architect Prize judges who awarded the property's designer Rafael Aranda its prestigious gong.

The famous chef who cooks in the nearby city of Otlot said: "I think it's a great idea that you enter the house below ground level. You never see cars, just nature," Puigdevall said.

"The smell is very important to me and the sound of the birds and when cows arrive in the morning you can hear them pulling up the grass in the field," she added.

The second building is a balancing act called Hemeroscopium House on the outskirts of Madrid.

It is made of seven giant concrete and steel beams plonked on top of each other in an upward spiral. Inside one of the hollowed-out beams is a swimming pool.

The only thing stopping it from tumbling down is a 20-tonne granite counterweight.

"It reminds me a little of Stonehenge," presenter Quinn said.

Three sisters are close - but not too close - in the third creation on a plot in



TRANQUIL: Chef Fina Puigdevall's underground 'Rural House.'



BALANCING ACT: The Hemeroscopium House.



THREE'S A CROWD: The 'House for Three Sisters' mini village.

southern Spain. The 'mini-village' is made up of three identical and separate houses linked by a shared courtyard where the families often dine together.

Maria, Rene and Manuka realised their dream of living together as one big family when they inherited their father's land in the town of Bullas.

The final residence is a ring-shaped dwelling nestled in a forest and looks like a spy headquarters. Nature is always at hand thanks to sliding glass doors which



BLING RING: Solo House 2.

quickly join living spaces with outdoors.

Solo House 2 is located in Matarranam, an area of north west Spain almost untouched by holidaymakers.

An arts project gave full creative control to the building's architects, who were set on the circular shape.

The home is on a hilltop plateau which gives owners of the 45-metre diameter ring full panoramic views. Its owner, Christian Bordaís, wanted to ignore ideas of how people are supposed to live.

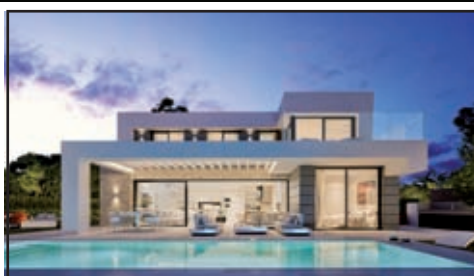


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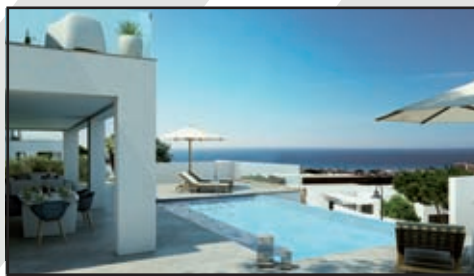
STUNNING VILLA



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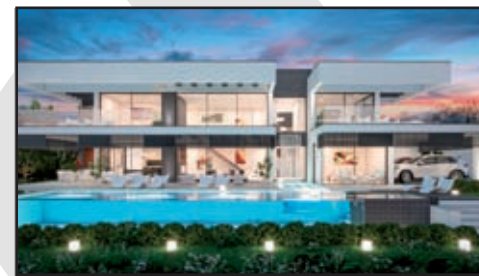
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Brits' boom time

BRITS are no longer scared by the Brexit effect as they buy more houses in Spain for the first time since the referendum.

British demand for Spanish property took a nose dive after compatriots voted for the United Kingdom to leave the European Union (EU) in 2016.

House sales plummeted 23.6 per cent in the second half of 2016 and another 16.1 per cent in the first semester of 2017.

Potential buyers were scared of a devaluing pound and political insecurity.

The British have been Spain's number one foreign real estate client for many years. And now the notary ministry's latest statistics show Brits are once again eyeing up the Spanish market. Trading with them grew 7.8 per cent in the second half of 2017.

But the green shoots do not mean Brexit has not left its mark on the market. The British bought almost a quarter of all Spanish properties sold to foreigners in 2015.

The figure is now just 14.3 per cent.

The United Kingdom still leads the foreign pack, trailed by the French, Ger-

Buyers return as fears subside



NO BREXIT BOO HOO: Housing demand has picked up.

mans and Romanians with 8.4, 8.1 and 6.8 per cent of the foreign buyers' market respectively.

There was a spike in Ecuadorians and Portuguese buying up in Spain. They bought 250 per cent and 131.4 per cent more in 2016 than the year before.

Cataluña's illegal independence vote on October 1 also hurt foreign demand.

Transactions grew just 2.5 per cent during the second half of 2017 - at the heart of the crisis - but they grew 19.8 per cent in the first half of the year.

The Cataluña crisis was not enough to stop foreign purchase growth at a national level, which hit 14.1 per cent year-on-year.

EU buyers bought two-thirds of the 49,553 dwellings sold in 2017, and the remainder went to non-EU residents.

Foreigners are also upping their budget and paying more per square metre than previously. They paid 5.7 per cent more on average compared to 2016.

And non-EU buyers are paying over €500 more than their EU counterparts for the same sized plots.

The trend started in 2014 when the 'Golden Visa' was introduced.



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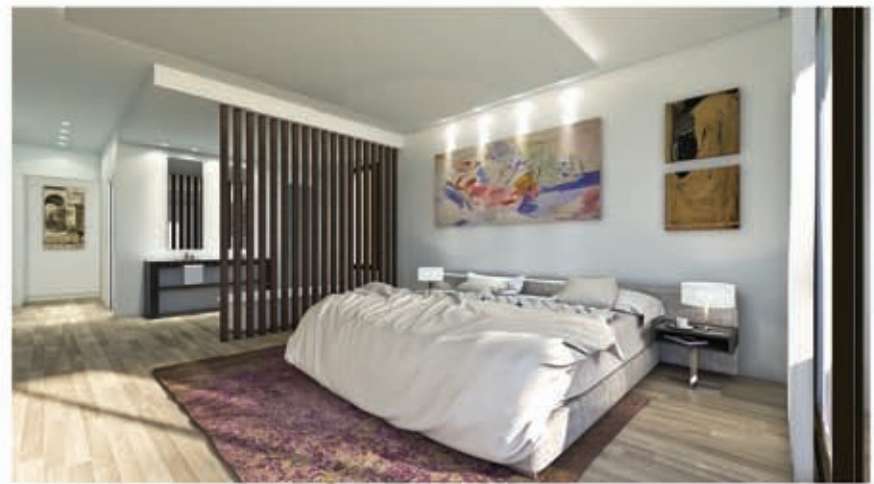
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ROUND HILL capital management firm will build 135 homes on the Costa del Sol in 2019 in a €250 million scheme.

It will team up with Villarroel Torrico architecture. The award-winning company is a veteran on the coast having constructed three million metres squared of real estate over the last 40 years.

The buildings will take 18 months to build and form the second phase of the Palo Alto project in Marbella.

A total of 600 properties will be built in the Palo Alto area. Works will be staged in two phases and the total investment is valued at €250 million.

"The objective is to put maximum quality properties on the market," Round Hill said in a statement.

The apartments will each be between 100 and 180 metres square and have two to four bedrooms with "spec-



PHOTO CREDITS PALO ALTO MARBELLA

BREATHTAKING: Rolling hills provide spectacular views.

Viva la **revolution**

New homes to feature nanotechnology

tacular views" thanks to the way the plots' land lies, according to the firm.

"The designs' modernity and state-of-the-art technologies make the apartments stand out," it added.

Villarroel Torrico will apply nanotechnology paint to the inside walls, purifying the air, eliminating bacteria and mould and repelling dust.

It is the first time the 'revolutionary paint' will have been used, project architects confirmed.

Prices will start at €400,000 and reach €1 million.

SPAIN'S economy minister has admitted to organising a 'safer' fixed-rate mortgage for himself ahead of a predicted interest rate hike.

The comments were made during an interview on Spanish radio in which Roman Escolano told people to be careful when taking out variable-rate house loans.

"This is one of the most important

Lend of an era?

decisions that anyone makes in their life from a financial point of view," the official said.

"It's a decision that affects you for many years and precisely for that reason I would urge caution."

The advice comes ahead of an ex-

pected rise in interest rates.

The European Central Bank (ECB) has been pumping money into markets to lower rates and give a much-needed boost to the crisis-stricken European economy, saving borrowers hundreds of Euros per month in

repayments.

But the ECB is expected to increase rates as early as next year now industry is stronger.

This could trouble millions of Spaniards who owe around €500 billion overall, much of which is due in floating-rate mortgage repayments racked up after the 2008 housing bubble burst.



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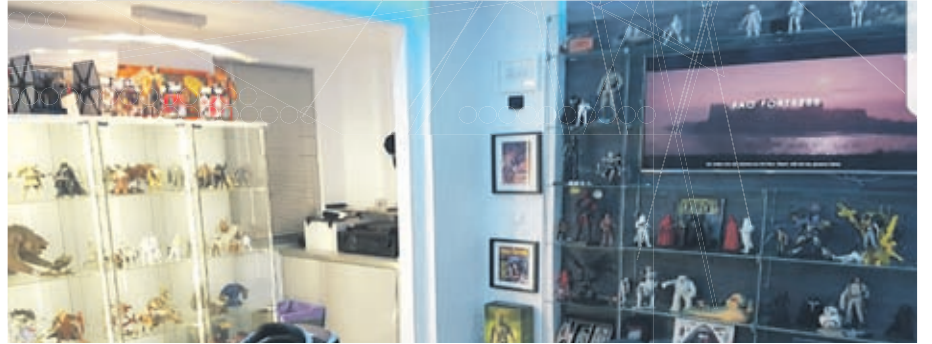
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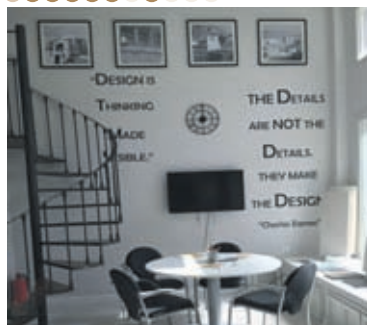
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M J Lancley acquired DIMENSION4 CONSTRUCTION last year and have incorporated them into the MJL Group of Companies

Make your holiday home work for you this summer

Owning a holiday home in Spain gives you the scope to lounge like a local and soak up the sun whenever you like, but are you making the most of it during the rest of the year?

Renting out your holiday home when you're not using it is a great way to cover your costs, accrue an additional income and ensure your property isn't shut up for long periods of time.

However, if you're using your bank to transfer the rental payments from Spain back to the UK you aren't maximising your potential earnings.

Cut your currency costs

By moving the rental payments from your holiday home back to the UK using a bank you could be exposing yourself to poor exchange rates and transfer fees.

An easy way to make your money go further is by using a currency transfer provider who doesn't charge transfer fees, like Currencies Direct.

Currencies Direct will also help you secure an excellent exchange rate for your transfer so you get more for your money.

Even a seemingly small discrepancy in the exchange rate you use for your transfer

can have a big impact on how much you receive, particularly when you're making large or regular currency transfers.

For example, if you were charging €900 a month rent, it would be worth £738 at a EUR/GBP exchange rate of £0.82, but £783 at an exchange rate of £0.87.

That does not sound like much of a difference, but if you were renting out your property for 10 months of the year, you could be £450 better off just from getting a better exchange rate, with average additional savings of over £200 by avoiding transfer fees.

That's cash you could splash on making the most of your time in your Spanish retreat.

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If you haven't actually purchased your Spanish holiday home yet and have a few million euros to spare, make sure you check out our next feature in Euro Weekly News, where we'll be exploring a stunning local property.

At Currencies Direct we've helped over 210,000 customers save on their currency transfers since 1996. Just pop into your local Currencies Direct branch or give us a call to find out more about how you can save money on your currency transfers.

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WORLD-FAMOUS Catalan architect Antoni Gaudi's first residential building is now open to the public.

Six of the modernist's designs are already listed as UNESCO World Heritage sites, and one, Casa Vicens, can be visited for the first time since it was built in 1885.

Fans regard the property, located on Carrer de les Carolines in the Gracia neighbourhood of Barcelona, as his first masterpiece.

Constructed as a summer residence for the well-heeled Vicens family, it is described as a "laboratory in which Gaudi developed the vocabulary of decorative motifs and symbols he would use in his later works."

The then 30-year-old was handed a blank canvas to design the house, and it is filled with wildly colourful nature-inspired forms that became a sig-

Right move!



OH MY GAUD: The stunning Casa Vicens.

nature of his style.

It has been lovingly restored with a modern staircase and lift installed to improve accessibility, and can be considered a must-visit for visitors to the capital of the northern region.



Luxury

jobs boost

THE job market has been boosted by strong luxury real estate market growth in the 'golden triangle' of Marbella, Estepona and Benahavis last year.

The sector generated €350 million in 2017 - an improvement on 2016 - according to figures published by the high-end property association DOM3.

A total of 800 stable jobs were created by luxury new-builds.

An extra 4,000 posts stemmed directly from building projects and another 12,000 were created through knock-on effects.

It is not just the building process itself which employs traders like bricklayers, architects and designers, Pou said.

Each residence employs an average of between two and four staff once finished, including gardeners, cleaners and cooks.

"Each luxury home is a small enterprise," association president, Laura Pou said.

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Batten down the hatches

ANYONE looking for seclusion on the high seas may be interested in a string of 19th century forts that have recently gone on the market for £11 million (€12.6 million).

The three sea fortifications, lying in the Solent between Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight, are currently being used as luxury hotels while one of them is becoming a museum.

They were built in the late 18th century to ward off potential invading forces from France's Emperor Napoleon III, a descendent of Napoleon Bonaparte.

They were later made part of an anti-submarine barrier guarding the Solent from German U-boats in the Second World War.



FORTIFIED: Three forts are up for sale.



SHIP SHAPE: Spitbank Fort costs €5.7 million.

'Historical charm'

SPITBANK FORT boasts eight bedroom suites, as well as a bar, hot pool, sauna and a roof deck which the owners Solent Forts said would be ideal for sunbathing.

The owners added it was packed with "historical charm" and "intrigue," all for a price of €5.7 million.

"The circular floor plan means you experience the world from a totally new perspective. With stunning panoramic views across the Solent and passing yachts in your sight, this is a tranquil setting," they said on their website.



BON VOYAGE: No Man's Fort has impressive ocean views.

Pushing the boat out

NO MAN'S FORT is the largest of the three up for sale with a price tag of €5.7 million. It houses 22 rooms and suites which can sleep up to 44 guests and there is room for more than 200 people for events.

It also features its own onsite pub, the Lord Nelson, as well as a cabaret club, roof top fire pits and several tunnels currently used to play laser tag. Owners Solent Forts said it was Britain's most secluded alternative venue.

"With floor to ceiling windows for an unrivalled panoramic view of the fierce beauty and dramatic seascape, this really is the venue that pushes the boat out," they said.



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Here are just a few of the fantastic properties we have on the market – for more information on these properties and others available – please visit our website or pop in and meet us!

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Rentals ramp up

MALAGA City's real estate prices continue to 'grow intensely' and rents are eating further and further into household salaries.

Average Malaga rents consumed 30 per cent of tenants' income last year, 10 per cent higher than the national average. It makes the southern city the most expensive place to rent in Spain, according to a report by real estate firm CBRE.

The next priciest spots are Barcelona, 28 per cent, Sevilla, 27 per cent and Madrid at 26 per cent.

Forces driving higher rental costs include a changeable labour mar-

ket making buying a riskier option and more profitable tourists' rentals. But increasing backlash from authorities on the latter could release some pressure on locals' pockets.

Spanish properties are set for a 6 per cent price hike by the end of the year. But the going rate in Malaga, Madrid, Valencia and the Balearic Islands could grow by up to 10 per cent, CBRE's 2018 residential report predicts. The figures confirm large cities, whose residents are wealthier on average, continue to be the strongest sources of buyer demand.

The company predicted price in-

creases would continue for the next six to 12 months given the prevailing demand, mortgage and accessibility conditions.

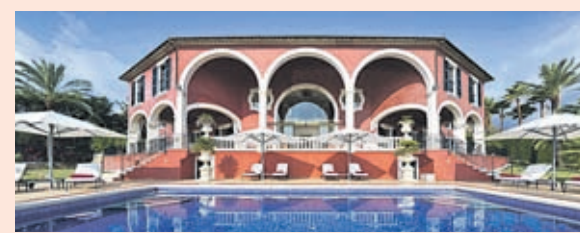
Current rates are actually growing moderately because statistics do not capture the housing market recovery in local areas where demand is intense and supply "very limited," CBRE said.

And housing sales are expected to reach 575,000 at a national level, or an 8 per cent annual growth rate.

But the firm calmed concerns about another housing bubble and said the current climate is unlikely to cause one.



SOARING: Malaga is now among the most expensive Spanish cities.



RARE CHANCE: The one-time President's getaway is up for grabs.

Presidential living

A PROPERTY which belonged to ex-president of the Spanish government is now on sale for €13 million.

The villa, built in 1997, is located in the Son Vida neighbourhood of Mallorca. The then president - Adolfo Suarez, who died in 2014 - used the retreat for holidaying until it was sold in 2000.

The buyer totally refurbished the house before selling it to the current owner.

It has eight bedrooms, one of which was Suarez's mega private suite boasting its own living space, two bedrooms and two bathrooms.

Several wings divide the ground floor which links the different living rooms, library, dining room, kitchen, serviced apartment and two garages.

A central patio sits at the centre of the hexagonal house.

And the pool area is surrounded by Mediterranean gardens.

The presidential hideaway is completely isolated from outsiders down to its 4,670-metre plot and private location.

German real estate company Engel & Völkers is selling the villa.

PHOTO CREDITS ENGEL & VÖLKERS

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A 19TH CENTURY country home which once stood derelict has come on the market after a seven-year refit.

The Palacio sits on around 3.5 hectares of land about half an hour away from Sevilla, placing it further inland than many luxury properties currently on the market.

Sellers Fine and Country said the house, which has a price tag of €3.5 million, was one of the finest country homes in Andalucia.

"The Palacio lies within pretty, rolling countryside, a patchwork quilt of olive groves, sunflowers and cereal crops," the estate agent said.

"This makes the location ideal for all kinds of outdoor activities including horse riding, paragliding and cycling."

The almost 4,000-square metre house was built around a central courtyard and gar-



RURAL RETREAT: The Palacio features 3.5 hectares of land.

CREDIT: FINEANDCOUNTRY.COM

den in the traditional Spanish villa style. It has seven bedrooms and bathrooms spread across two storeys.

The architecture is filled with Moorish influences and there are materials from Morocco, as well as from Spain and France, inside.

The drive up to The Palacio features olive trees and oleander bushes before arriving at an iron gate. It is surrounded by its land which also includes olive groves.

Amenities include a country-style kitchen, complete with an Aga stove, as well as en-suites for every bedroom and a Moorish-look heated indoor pool.

Five bedrooms sit on the bottom floor while two larger rooms occupy the first. At the rear of the property is a terrace garden and outdoor pool, as well as grounds filled with manzanilla olive trees.

Country pile!



CASASOLA

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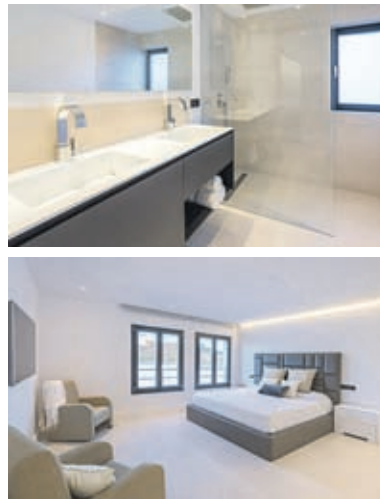
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€1,380,000



Villa Calima, Marbesa – Elviria

5 Bed – 6 Bath – Built 582 m2 – Plot 712 m2

Unique brand new contemporary beach villa with 5 bedrooms/ensuite bathrooms and 1 guest toilet. Open concept, double height dining area, floor to ceiling doors, fully fitted kitchen, underfloor heating, jacuzzi and much more.

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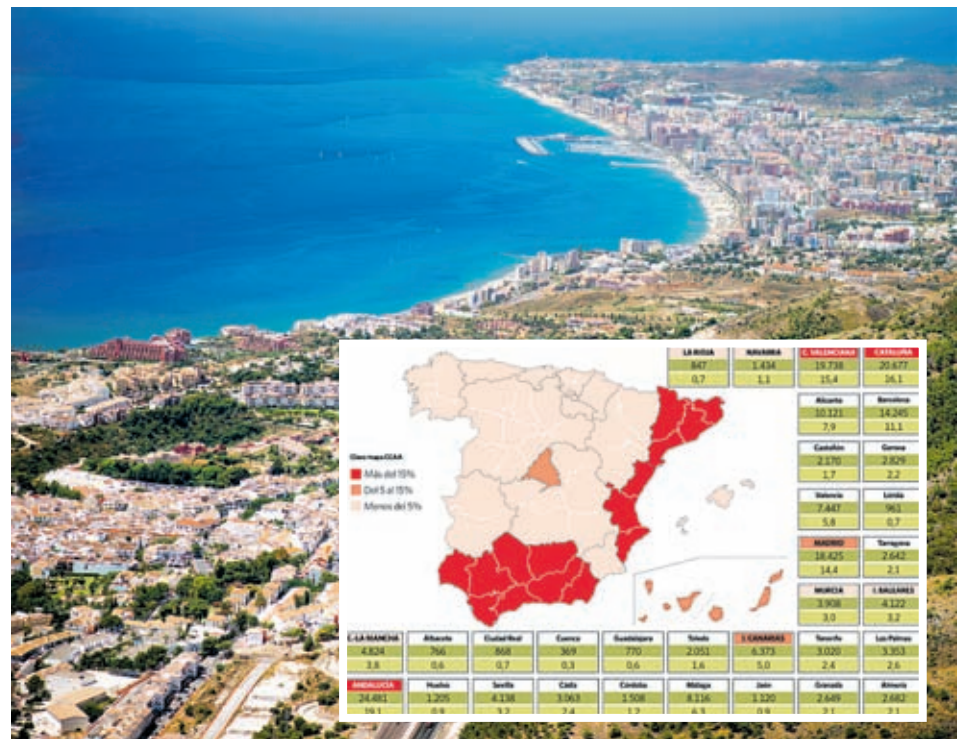
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RED MED: Andalucía's properties sold most according to the latest data (inset).

The pull of the Med

Coast leads Spain's real estate revival

A NEW report has shown how the housing market revival is divided according to region.

A total of 52.4 per cent of housing transactions were on the Mediterranean coastline and Spanish islands in the first four months of the year, according to the College of Property registrars' figures.

The best performing regions in total sales were Andalucía, Cataluña, the Valencian community and Madrid.

But the first two are well ahead of the rest with 24,481 and 20,677 properties sold in the first four months of the year respectively.

However, sector enthusiasm is cooled somewhat by fears of municipal crackdowns on holiday rentals especially in Palma de Mallorca, Valencia and Madrid.

But the positive results outweigh these concerns for the time being.

Even Valencia's Castellón - one of the housing crash's deepest black holes - is recovering. A

total of 8,199 properties were sold there in 2017, 20 per cent more than the year before and the most since 2009.

And Castellón's success spreads to the rest of Valencia's community too. There were 19,738 properties sold in the first two months, marking a 19.7 per cent increase on the previous fourth months.

The market buzz is mainly driven by investment in rental properties, helped by higher employment rates and readily available credit.

THERE is a reason Granada's parador is one of the most expensive in Spain's state-owned historical hotel chain.

The retreat is located within Spain's most renowned fortress-palace, the Alhambra. It is simply Granada's best located hotel just minutes' walk from the palace's scented flower-beds and intricate Arab architecture.

Guests enjoy a unique opportunity to spend the night in a building layered with history and imagine life as Moorish nobility.

After the masses have left, guests can step out of the hotel's doors and

Just Moorish

enjoy some of the Alhambra's romantic rose gardens in privacy.

The hotel itself sits within a 14th-century palace enjoyed by the ruling Nasrid family before being converted into a Catholic convent.

But Moroccan lanterns and Moorish patios evoke the palace's original occupants.

Views from the parador are spectacular expanding for miles along Granada's green plains as far as the eye can see.

Double room prices reach €435 in high season, but the low season is cheaper at around €210.



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By Joe Gerrard

If you have ever wanted to live in your very own fort then you may be in luck as castles are currently available on the market.

The first of these is a 13th century build sitting in the Badajoz region, Extremadura, around two and a half hours in the car from Sevilla.

The castle is currently in the hands of a family whose ancestors bought it in 1906 and spent the years following undertaking restoration works leaving it in great condition today.

The fort comes with a 450-hectare estate and features 50 living spaces, six large bedrooms, three bathrooms and nine lounges. A small on site museum and stables are included, all for the sum of €14.5 million.

For those looking for a cheaper and more modern option there is the ocean



FORTRESS: The Badajoz castle dates to the 13th century.

Kings of the castles

front Bastide for sale in La Coruna in Galicia for €3 million.

This fortified chateau was built in 1746 to defend the waterways of the region

and witnessed significant battles and has featured in books, according to estate

agents Moulin.

It comes complete with almost two-metre wide stone walls, nine bedrooms and a 3,000-square-metre courtyard. Its walls also feature 12 cannon loopholes and the castle's old moat is still visible in places.

A more intimate and homely choice can be found in the Costa Blanca. The turreted country home was built in 1900 and is surrounded by mountain views as well as being about 30 minutes from the coast.

Estate agents Moulin said the house offered "total tranquillity" with no neighbours, although a town with shops and leisure offerings is only a few minutes' drive away.

The castle lay derelict around 10 years ago and it has since undergone major restoration work.

It now comes complete with a swimming pool, kitchen, lounge, bedrooms and a sitting room in the turret for a price of €2.6 million.

Rent returns



PROFIT BOOST: Las Palmas province in the Canary Islands is faring best.

RENTAL housing in Spain offers an average return of 5.7 per cent, according to a study of property profits from a market research firm.

Servihabitat Trends said the average rate of rent was estimated to rise by between 1.5 and 2 per cent in the first half of this year.

The firm's study claimed the current average price of rental homes between 80 and 90 square metres was €680 per square metre. This figure was 9.7 per cent higher than the one six

months ago.

The average return on rent in the provinces was 5.8 per cent in Barcelona, 5.9 in Cadiz, 6.1 in Huelva, 6.4 Las Palmas, 5.9 Madrid, 6.3 Valencia, and 5.8 Zaragoza.

The company added the supply of rental properties in Spain was believed to be around 90,000, around 8.1 per cent less than those available in September 2017. The study claimed the fall was due to less time being taken for people to rent homes on average.

Green homes underway

PUBLIC housing authorities in Navarra have begun building more than 500 energy efficient social properties.

The buildings are near zero-energy (NZEB) units and keep power usage down due to their design and the materials used to make them.

Energy consumption is around 75 per cent lower in such homes than in

standard properties, according to environment NGO The Climate Group.

The project comes with the backing of a €40 million loan from the European Investment Bank. NASUVINSA, Navarra's social housing body, is set to manage building works for some 78,000 square metres of housing during the next three years.

New law 'overdue'

A NEW regional real estate law aims to 'professionalise' the sector.

Law 1/2018 - passed on April 26 - makes it compulsory for anybody working in the property trade to sign up to a new public registry, Spanish legal and property specialist Alex Radford said.

The legislation is "welcome and overdue" at a time when the real estate market is beginning to lift off again, Radford added.

It only takes a few cases of bad practice to affect the whole industry, he added.

The crackdown applies to "individuals or legal en-

tities who provide mediation services, advice and management in real estate transactions," the new law reads.

It includes the "purchase and sale operations, option of purchase, rental, exchange or transfer of real estate and the rights relating to such operations."

Anybody involved in these transactions will be held to account by the new laws and the disciplinary regime which comes with it.

But workers must meet five key criteria to register. They include having proper professional training and insurance, an es-

tablishment open to the public, no criminal convictions and permanently guarantee any money they handle.

And it will not be enough for mediators to expect clients to know their rights. They are legally obliged to inform interested parties what their entitlements and obligations are. In addition, if they do not return deposits as per the contract, they could face fines of up to €6,000.

Radford said that people should seek independent legal support to "protect their interests" in the case of any dodgy dealings.

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W-02CFLA - Benalmádena €248,000



FANTASTIC APARTMENT CLOSE TO PARQUE DE LA PALOMA AND THE BEACH

Apartment, 3 bed, 2 bath, 137m2, parking. This is a lovely 3 bedroom apartment in a closed complex with pool and gardens. In a perfect location: close to all amenities and the beach.

W-029DZS - Málaga €795,000



ELEGANT INTIMATE HOME

REDUCED FROM 875,000€ Lovely villa with 4 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, outdoor kitchen and all kind of comforts. 247m2 built on a plot of 1,492m2 close to the airport.

W-02CL3D - Benalmádena €820,000



STUNNING VILLA, WITH SPECTACULAR VIEWS TO THE MEDITERRANEAN IN MIJAS COSTA

Villa with 417m2 constructed, 4 bed, 3 bath, 3 terraces, pool. Independent 1 bedroom apartment. Recently renovated. A great opportunity in an incredible area!

W-027XPC - Málaga €1,950,000



MAGNIFICENT COUNTRY HOUSE

SPECIAL SUMMER PRICE REDUCED FROM 3,500,000€ Unique property in Malaga with 9 bedrooms, 12 bathrooms, 1,100m2 built on a plot of 58,000 m2. Surrounded by olive trees with more than one century of history.

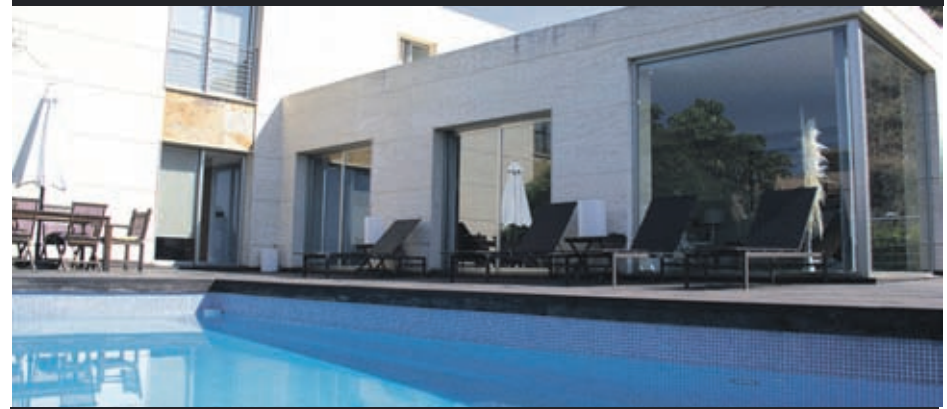
W-02CJJ7 - Benalmádena €1,150,000



AMAZING VILLA IN FIRST LINE OF GOLF

Villa with 6 bedrooms, 6 bathrooms, large terraces with views over the golf and the sea. 330m2 built on a plot of 1,000m2 in the quiet and luxurious urbanization in Torrequebrada, Benalmádena. Ready to enjoy life on Costa del Sol?

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EXCLUSIVE MINIMALIST VILLA WITH VIEWS REDUCED PRICE

Spectacular modern property with 5 bedrooms, 6 bathrooms, 473m2 built on a plot of 842m2 in Pinares de San Antón. Also boasts a guest and staff apartment.



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