

A good time to buy in Paris but also across France

While President François Hollande becomes increasingly unpopular, the French property market is gaining momentum. The general consensus is that Hollande, who has faced much criticism for increasing taxes while in office, will not be re-elected in the 2017 elections, and this may well encourage more buyers to invest in French property. According to Home Hunts (home-hunts.com), savvy overseas investors are buying in France while prices are low, and are paying particular attention to Paris.

"Our savvy investors know that President Hollande is unlikely to be re-elected and the right wing are more than likely to come back to power – whether this be Sarkozy again or another leader," says Hervé Lévy, regional manager for Paris and the surrounding area for Home Hunts. "This is likely to encourage property investors back again and so it really is the time to buy now, while better prices can be negotiated and there are amazing apartments and mansions on the market. We already have quite a number of English and Russian clients who own a property in London and wish to acquire an apartment in Paris."

The French capital has long been attractive to overseas property buyers as a place to invest, and has also recently been revealed as the world's most visited city, which is good news for those who are keen to generate a rental income from the property they buy.

"There is a growing demand from people who are about to retire and wish to purchase a property which they could also operate as a guesthouse/bed and breakfast, and Paris and its surroundings are an ideal place to run this type of activity," Hervé Lévy continues. "We also have a number of buyers who are looking for a

pied-à-terre that is suitable for a family, rather than frequently having to stay in expensive hotels with their children."

According to M. Lévy, the majority of his clients have a budget of between €1-€2m, but often want to see what is available in a higher price bracket. If a more expensive property catches their eye, they will increase the budget in order to buy it.

Published earlier this year, the Home Hunts Inside France Report revealed that prices in the French capital were the lowest they had been for several years, and that the 8th, 16th and 17th *arrondissements* were proving particularly popular with buyers.

Paris may be the location *du jour*, but France as a whole still remains a firm favourite with British buyers, coming top of the list of countries for an overseas purchase. According to the latest Property Hotspots Report from HiFX (hifx.co.uk), some 35% are looking for a property in France. "When it comes to a sound overseas property investment, it's no surprise France remains a firm favourite with Brits as it ticks all the right boxes," says Mark Bodega, director at HiFX. "Borrowing costs have tumbled in recent months and mortgage rates are at their lowest in years."

The report also revealed an increase in the number of buyers looking for a ski property, with 18% searching for a pied-à-terre on the pistes. The resorts of Chamonix, Morzine and Les Trois Vallées remain at the top of the list.

The French government has recently announced further new measures to boost the housing market, which include the simplification of France's building regulations, and tax breaks to encourage landowners to sell land for house building.

A five-minute walk from the Champs-Élysées, this two-bedroom apartment has been renovated to a high standard and is on the market for €1.95m (home-hunts.com)

