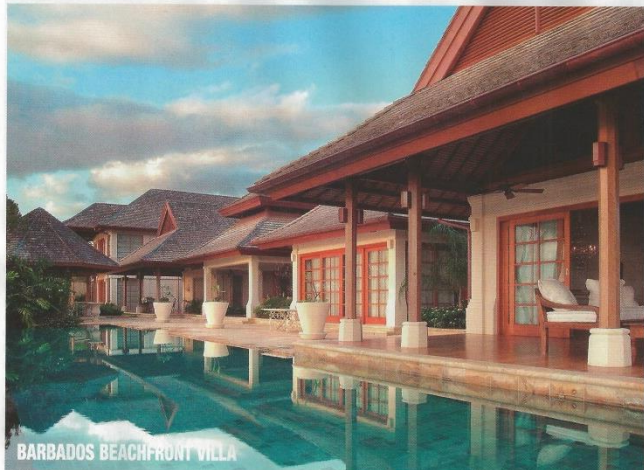


DREAM HOUSES

The house I wish I'd bought

It can happen to any of us, but, for an estate agent, it's almost an occupational hazard. Cathy Hawker asks the agents about the houses that slipped through their nets



BARBADOS BEACHFRONT VILLA

↑ Stephanie Patterson, Chestertons

Alang Alang Bay is a Balinese-style home on the west coast of Barbados, a glamorous sanctuary with the beach frontage that makes it my dream house. I first saw it three years ago when the Chesterton office opened in Holetown and it was love at first sight. It's perched on a bluff and is 13,000sq ft of heavenly living space: teak floors, high ceilings and custom-made furniture coupled with an outdoor shower, lily pools stocked with *koi* and an 80ft horizon-edge swimming pool. It was sold in 2013, but, even today, when I'm in Barbados, I still feel a pang every time I pass its unrivalled perfection. *Stephanie Patterson, senior international sales Chestertons (www.chestertons-international.com; 020-7201 2073)*

→ Richard Young, West Coast Villas



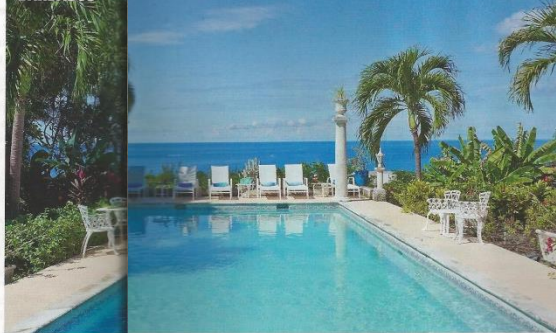
Shangri-La is the house I wish I had bought, a four-bedroom villa on Polo Ridge half a mile inland above Paynes Bay Beach. Two American gentlemen have owned it for several decades, enjoying years in a very special house at the same time as making an excellent investment through rentals and increased equity. It's also not on a development, so the running costs would be reasonable. The couple have excellent taste, keeping the coral-stone interior walls and elegant marble to create a house that reflects the outdoor living that reflects the best of Barbados life.

I've sat on the large terraces looking directly west over the ocean and felt the easterly breeze. The resident green monkeys come and sit with you by the pool as if it's their house and hummingbirds and our native friendly sparrows fly past, stopping perhaps to dip their beaks in your rum punch.

Polo Ridge is one of the few ridges with a complete drop-off: no one will ever be able to build in front of you. It abuts Holders polo field as well as the Sandy Lane estate, so you're at the epicentre of west-coast life, including Holders Festival, polo tournaments and concerts throughout the year, and Sandy Lane beach is one bay to the north.

Richard Young, managing director West Coast Villas (00 1 246 432 5050; www.westcoastvillas.com)

POLO RIDGE, BARBADOS



TUSCAN FARMHOUSE

↑ Jelena Cvjetkovic, Savills



I left Tuscany seven years ago, craving urban life in London, but, every spring and autumn without fail, I feel a longing to return. Work is a good excuse to go and, each year, I fall in love with a different house, but there is one in particular I cannot forget.

It's in San Donato in Poggio, across the valley from the lively and uncompromisingly Italian market town of Tavarnelle. The location is winning, close to the swanky new Antinori vineyard and several amazing restaurants in the Chianti hills. Although the area gets plenty of visitors, you won't see a tour bus in San Donato.

The house itself is fairly compact by Tuscan farmhouse standards, with four bedrooms and a separate guest-house, so you wouldn't rattle around too much, and is elegant with a touch of minimal chic. The two-acre gardens aren't attention-seeking, just filled with hardy Mediterranean plants that could endure both the extremes of the Tuscan climate and my negligence. Sure enough, it sold very quickly.

Jelena Cvjetkovic, Savills Residential International (020-7016 3740; www.savills.co.uk)

DREAM HOUSES



↑ **Tim Swannie, Home Hunts**

My dream property is in Châteauneuf de Grasse, a medieval village that has views over countryside to the sea. The old village is a delight, and the house itself is a stone property, totally private, set in a centuries-old olive grove at the top of a hill looking down over the garden and pool to the golf course and rolling hills of the French Riviera.

The buyers were a young couple from London who had been tentatively looking for years. We'd viewed many properties together and become good friends. I still visit the villa regularly and we often meet in Valbonne for a glass of rosé. Do I have house envy? In this instance, yes, but I've since bought a property nearby. I thought it was a good idea to stay close so that, perhaps, when they come to sell, I might be offered first refusal.

Tim Swannie, managing director of Home Hunts (00 33 9 70 44 66 43; www.home-hunts.com)



VENETIAN PALAZZETTO

← **Ann-Marie Doyle, Sotheby's**

Palazzo Zane Habsburg is a divine pink palace of exquisite beauty. A slightly faded 17th-century *palazzetto* in San Polo, it belonged to the descendants of the Habsburg dynasty. The seller was Dominic Habsburg, an American with film-star looks and panache. It was built by the Zane family as a *casino*, a place of entertainment in which their musically gifted daughter could perform. The family commissioned top acoustic architects of the day to create a huge central room with a double-height ceiling and a gallery. It had beautiful ceiling paintings and frescos as well as a secret garden. In later years, when Venice was at its height of decadence, Casanova was a visitor. I found the perfect buyer: eight years ago, a French foundation bought it before carrying out a major restoration to create a centre for Baroque music.

Ann-Marie Doyle, Sotheby's Venice (www.venicesothebysrealty.com; 00 39 415 220093)



DORDOGNE CHÂTEAU, FRANCE

← **Joanna Leggett, Leggett France**

The Château du Bourbet has been totally renovated, but is steeped in history. It dates back to the 15th century, with its origins as a fortress of the Knights Templar, and, more recently, it saw forced occupation by the German army in the Second World War. Today, it offers a good-sized family home, not too big, and also a business as a wonderful *chambres d'hôtes*. Many musicians and artists live locally, so there's always plenty to do. I sold the *château* eight years ago and my husband and I have become good friends with the current owners and visit often. My favourite fireplace is in the billiard room, which, centuries ago, would have been the *küchen*. It's the perfect venue for weddings, with a small romantic island on a river in the grounds. *Joanna Leggett, marketing director Leggett Immobilier (00 33 5 53 56 62 54; www.frenchestateagents.com)*



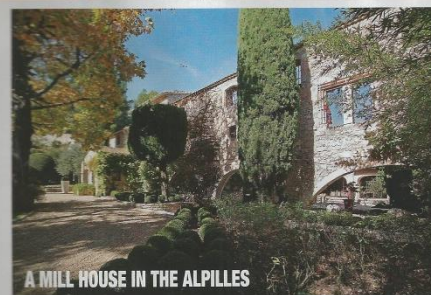
PUERTO ANDRATX VILLA, MALLORCA

↑ **Hans Lenz, Engel & Völkers**

From the lavender paths leading up to the main house to the Balinese sunset pagoda beside the pool, this villa in Puerto Andratx is understated, but intensely elegant. It combines influences from around the world without losing the true spirit of Mallorca architecture. With its guest house, the villa has seven bedrooms and was purpose-built and landscaped to cater for large groups of friends or family. Guests can gather on one of the many terraces with excellent sea views or find a totally private and peaceful spot among the olive groves and citrus trees of the heavily scented Mediterranean gardens.

The location is pitch perfect, too, 25 minutes from the airport, 20 minutes from Palma, Mallorca's capital city, two minutes from the fabulous harbour and fish restaurants of Puerto Andratx and one minute from a fantastic beach club.

One of my most memorable career moments was watching a spectacular winter sunset from this garden, its glorious red balloon plunging into the Mediterranean, falling just behind Ibiza and outlining our neighbouring Balearic island before disappearing into the blue sea. For me, it was the perfect view from the perfect holiday home. *Hans Lenz, managing director Engel & Völkers Mallorca (00 34 971-67 47 80; www.engelvoelkers.com/mallorca)*



A MILL HOUSE IN THE ALPILLES

↑ **Mark Harvey, Knight Frank**

I sold magical Le Moulin de Manville in Maussane-les-Alpilles in 2007 and have known it for 15 years. It's a 400-year-old mill that once formed part of the Château de Manville, built at about the time of Louis XIV. It was the home of aristocratic Madame de Manville—according to stories, the mistress of the king. The Moulin was neglected during the 20th century, but then was bought by a renowned Parisian designer, who spent a considerable amount of money on an extensive redevelopment. The result is chic and wonderful. It was the first restoration of its kind in Provence and set the benchmark with a *luxe*, boutique-hotel style that's young and funky. Maussane, five minutes' stroll away, is my favourite place in Provence.

Mark Harvey, head of Knight Frank's France, Monaco and Alps team (020-7861 5034; www.knightfrank.co.uk)