

COUNTRY & TOWN HOUSE

Bulletin

YOU GIVE ME (CELEBRITY) ELECTION FEVER

It's not often that celebrities get involved in housing issues but the May election, in particular the possible mansion tax, brought out the stars. Myleene Klass, Bill Oddie, Griff Rhys Jones, Sol Campbell and Angelina Jolie (left) all spoke against it (even though Angelina, an American, doesn't have a vote), while Victoria Wood came out in favour. Meanwhile Russell Brand and Eddie Izzard took to London's streets to campaign for more affordable homes and veteran film director Ken Loach told an election rally that he wanted more public housing.

SPEND TIME WITH THE SIMPSONS

Hank Azaria is a name that may not mean much but you would recognise his voice – or do we mean voices? Hank is a star of *The Simpsons*, playing bartender Moe, Kwik-E-Mart owner Apu and the inept Chief Wiggum. The job pays well if his home is any indication. It's a four-bedroom villa within a gated community in the Santa Monica mountains of Los Angeles. There's a formal dining room, living room, large kitchen, plenty of balconies from which to admire the views and a hot tub outside to rest the vocal chords. \$3.5m from Hilton Hyland (hiltonhyland.com).



Is the dream of home ownership dying?

Remember when England was a nation of actual or aspiring homeowners? Not anymore. Only 64 per cent of households are owner-occupiers, and that figure plummets to 36 per cent amongst those aged 25 to 34. But of those who do own their home, over half now own outright, having paid off that mortgage during the recent low-interest years. It's all change in the rental sector too – a cool 19 per cent of all households now rent privately, out of choice or necessity, and that figure balloons to 48 per cent of those aged 25 to 34.



GET YOUR HANDS ON HELEN'S FRENCH PAD

Think an Oscar-winning actress only owns homes costing tens of millions? Think again. The wonderful Helen Mirren, 70 this summer, is selling her very modest mas two kilometres from the village of Saint-Paul-en-Forêt in Provence for £457,000. It has three bedrooms, a covered terrace and bags of original charm. Part of the property is still to be restored and you will probably want to install a pool – an easy job in the hectare of land that comes with the house. It's just under an hour's drive to Nice airport, and the house is selling through Home Hunts (home-hunts.com).