

Home and away

Properties around half a million ... and a surreal estate

By Anna Tims and Jill Papworth



Home Shalford, near Braintree, Essex

This thatched cottage isn't listed so planners are likely to be more lenient over improvements. You'd have to lose one of the four bedrooms if you want the bathroom upstairs, and there's probably not much you can do about the fact each pair of bedrooms are accessed by a different stairs. It has views over the countryside beyond the large garden. Offers in excess of £500,000. *David Burr, 01787 463404*



Home High St, Old Portsmouth

A relic of Georgian Portsmouth, this town house looks unchanged since a drawing of the street in 1842. Inside, painted panelling and a soaring chimney breast testify to its antiquity across three receptions and three double bedrooms. You may want to pay extra for the garage, even though it's a street away - because the Georgians made no provision for parking. Guide price: £500,000. *Fine & Country, 01243 487969*



Home Balham Park Road, London SW12

Your half-a-million only entitles you to part of the ground floor in this double-fronted house, for this has become a desirable postcode. However, this one-bed flat does cover a stately portion with lofty corniced ceilings in the living room and bedroom, a private deck and a lawn shared with the neighbours. Lapsed planning permission allowed expansion at the rear. Cost: £499,950. *Douglas & Gordon, 020 8673 0191*



Home Marine House, Ross-shire

You get 40 bedrooms for your outlay up here in Rosemarkie, as long as you don't mind sinking the same amount again in renovations. Since its origins as a Victorian mansion, it's served as a hotel and lately a care home. The property, near Fortrose, fronts a picturesque bay with views to Fort George and the Moray coastline. Gardens lead to the beach. Offers over £500,000 will be considered. *Strutt & Parker, 01463 723595*



Away Cordes-sur-Ciel, Midi-Pyrénées

Built in 1895, this former merchant's house is now earning its keep as a B&B in a medieval village high on a hilltop. Its first occupant was the owner of a 19th-century world-renowned embroidery company. Six bedrooms in the main house and a separate two-bed gîte can juggle paying guests and family. The terraced gardens have views over the Tarn countryside. Cost: £500,000. *Home Hunts, +44 (0)20 8144 5501*



Surreal Estate London

This Grade II-listed property in West Kensington was once the home of English prima ballerina Margot Fonteyn. Designed by architect Frederick Wheeler in 1891, it is part of a striking terrace of artists' studios known as St Paul's Studios. Impressive double-storey windows, four large double bedrooms and a south-facing garden, it needs complete renovation. Cost: £1,400,000. *Featherstone Leigh, 020 7381 0319*