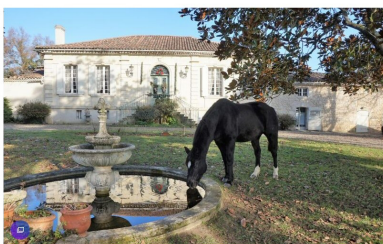




## How Bordeaux became 'the only seller's market in France'

Mary Wilson  
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The former home of the Bishop of Bordeaux is €3.99 million with Home Hunts

The neoclassical city of Bordeaux, on the Garonne river in south-western France, is becoming one of the most dynamic, exciting and forward-thinking French cities. This is mainly down to mayor Alain Juppé, locals were delighted that he was not selected as the conservative candidate for the 2017 French presidential election – so he could continue as mayor.

"He has completely revitalised the city," says Rory Ramsden of luxury property agency Home Hunts. Over the last 10 years, Juppé has cleaned up the old façades, upgraded squares, pedestrianised boulevards, created a hi-tech public transport system and redeveloped the riverfront.

Shining new buildings have been constructed, including the Herzog & de Meuron-designed stadium and the decanter-shaped La Cité du Vin. In 2018, the 1448-wide Jean-Jacques Bosc bridge, the sixth to span the Garonne, will open.



Leggett

It's hardly a surprise that Bordeaux was named by Lonely Planet as the top city to visit in 2017. It is also the centre of the eponymous wine-growing region and is building its reputation as one of France's prime golfing destinations, the new Golf du Médoc course was recently awarded France's Best Golf Course 2016.

Keen players can take advantage of a new Bordeaux Signature Golf Pass which gives them special rates – €169 (£145) from November to March – to play the two Golf du Médoc courses and one at Grand Saint-Emilionais Golf Club.

From July this year, the new high-speed train will make Bordeaux only two hours from Paris. All this is helping to turn Bordeaux into a desirable residential area, especially as values are so much lower than those in central Paris. The average price in Paris is €753 (£544) per sq ft, compared with €328 in Bordeaux.



Home Hunts

"The property scene here is hot, with the new train already having an effect on the market," Ramsden says. "Many Parisians are moving down to Bordeaux and the city is pretty close to being a sellers' market – probably the only city in France to be one."

Britons like Bordeaux for its culture, ease of access and excellent restaurants, bars and nightlife.

Andy Jeffries, a retired teacher, used to live in Canterbury with his wife, Chris, and two daughters. Before his wife died in 2010, the couple had talked about moving to either Aix-en-Provence or Bordeaux.

"I didn't want to drop our plans, so I chose Bordeaux," he says. "I started coming to Bordeaux for short breaks five years ago and moved here full-time in 2014."



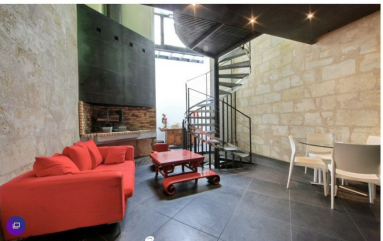
Andy Jeffries moved to Bordeaux full-time in 2014

Jeffries first rented on the outskirts, but was drawn to the vibrancy of the city centre and moved into a one-bedroom flat with a balcony in the trendy Chartrons quarter. He pays €695 a month for the flat and a garage, where he keeps his bicycles and wine. "The transport system within the city is excellent, but I'm also an avid cyclist and Bordeaux is very safe to cycle through," he says.

Jeffries has found it easy to integrate into Bordeaux life. When he's not setting exams for Edexcel, he runs a small English theatre company and plays the guitar and sings in the local bars.

Property prices are rising strongly in the city – up two per cent in the last three months and on average 6.9 per cent higher over the year. Several of the grand city-centre buildings have been converted into smart apartments, some of which boast ultra-contemporary interiors.

"Prices don't show any signs of slowing down," says James Smith of French estate agency Leggett Immobilier. "Bordeaux is proving immensely popular. There are very few good properties for sale, with a long list of people to buy."



Ismaes

Current properties on the market include a fabulous chateau with acres of Premières Côtes de Bordeaux vines, just 10 minutes' drive from Le Grand Théâtre and Gordon Ramsay's restaurant, Le Pressoir d'Argent. The house – formerly home to the Bishop of Bordeaux – has four bedrooms, three reception rooms and a snooker room. It comes with a five-bedroom gite, which has been let consistently throughout the year, and a one-bedroom maison des vignes. The 23.5-acre estate is listed with Home Hunts for €3.99 million.

The effect of Brexit has been felt, Smith has noticed a 10 per cent drop in UK enquiries but an increase in the "seriousness" of these clients.

"The British are looking for both pied-à-terres and investment properties, as there is a particularly strong rental market here," he says. "We've also seen a change in buyer profile with an increase in the percentage of people looking for holiday homes and a decrease in the percentage of retirees."

