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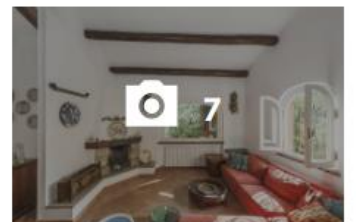
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Buying property in Italy: Tuscany's hidden beachside location that's favoured by celebs and entrepreneurs

Do as the chic Romans do with new Tuscan villas with year-round rental potential in Monte Argentario.

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Getting away from the summer crowds in Tuscany can be difficult but head south to Monte Argentario to find a natural beach location that the Italians have largely kept for themselves.

Discreet celebrities, wealthy entrepreneurs and chic Romans take their holidays there, enjoying a beautiful setting among umbrella pines and heavily scented rosemary.

Monte Argentario is a rugged circular peninsula tethered to the mainland by one road and two narrow sandbanks filled with casual beach clubs.

It is 90 minutes from Rome, within two hours of Siena and Florence and under one hour from exceptional Tuscan vineyards.

Have lunch at Le Mortelle, an Antinori vineyard in the Maremma region or head north to the modern winery at Rocca di Frassinello designed by Shard architect Renzo Piano.

The peninsula is 40 miles long with two main towns — exclusive Porto Ercole and the more workaday, year-round Porto Santo Stefano. In between there are cork and oak trees, olive groves and large but unshowy villas hidden down unmade roads, while flamingos provide vivid colour.

Old-school Italian glamour

Summers are busy and the region is seasonal but for a slice of true Italian waterfront life laced with old-school glamour — fresh seafood, sunny days and laid-back café style —Argentario hits the mark.

“Property prices on Monte Argentario vary from £265 to £890 per square foot, depending on sea views and the quality of the property with Porto Ercole, Cannelle and Cala del Gesso among areas most in demand,” says Diletta Giorgolo Spinola of Italy Sotheby’s International Realty.

“Rentals are good from June to September, possibly April, May and October, too. But what’s nice about Argentario is that it is also popular in the winter when many people come from Rome.”

A compact two-bedroom 694sq ft apartment overlooking the harbour in Porto Ercole is £265,000 but prices soon escalate sharply. A beautifully renovated stone house overlooking the sea in one of the prime areas of the peninsula with four bedrooms, large gardens and a pool is £2.3 million. Both through Sotheby’s.

New Hotel Villas

Argentario Golf Resort & Spa, close to Porto Ercole and 10 minutes from the beach, is a 73-room and suite hotel that opened in 2008.

The five-star design hotel is open year-round and has an established 18-hole golf course, a significant 29,000sq ft wellness centre and MediSpa, plus tennis and padel courts, jogging trails and pools.

Guests come to play golf but also to sail, swim, hike and enjoy the densely planted natural grounds set in a protected nature reserve.

This summer the resort has launched a collection of freehold villas to buy, five completed with a maximum of 22 planned eventually, in a private area a short walk from the hotel.

These detached homes, some with green roofs, are spacious and private with three to five bedrooms, set in gardens overlooking the golf course. Prices start from £1.5 million.

The hotel will fully manage the villas including rentals, splitting income 50/50 with owners. Projections based on one completed villa show 15 to 20 weeks' rental is possible with prices from £1,280 a night in low season. Annual maintenance is £17,800.

The owner of Argentario Golf Resort & Spa is Augusto Orsini, who has had a passion for Argentario since childhood holidays there. He developed the golf course first and then the hotel.

“What has always attracted me to Argentario is how close you are to nature,” he says. “It’s an open-air gym that allows me to practice my passion for sport.

“The advantages of owning a villa there include the high level of comfort in this unique natural environment where owners can use all the facilities of the resort.

“And of course, being an owner comes without the stress of managing and maintaining the property yourself while also generating an income if you choose to rent.”

Italian tax cap

A new tax regime in Italy aimed at attracting wealthy buyers allows anyone who has not lived in the country for nine of the past 10 years to apply to pay a flat annual tax of just €100,000 (currently £89,000) on all income generated outside Italy.

As a result, interest in prime property has increased, reports Clemente Pignatti Morano, managing partner at Italy Sotheby's International Realty.

- Argentario Golf Villas: argentarioresort.com;
villas@argentarioresort.it