

The Telegraph

From Telluride chalets to Patagonian ranches, where the super-rich migrate during winter



Elk Run Drive, Telluride, for sale through Sotheby's International Realty

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19 DECEMBER 2018 • 2:36PM

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This winter's retreats for the super-rich divide into two camps: places to be high profile – and spots to hide away.

“The high-profile – who might go to Sandy Lane in Barbados, for example - like to be seen with people in their bubble”, says Hugo Thistlethwayte, the head of Savills’ international department. “It’s not quite Cannes at 7pm on an August evening, crawling along the Croisette in your Testarossa, but it is showing off in a way, on a private beach with people within your own group.”

Their opposites are the “quiet luxury” variety that Anthony Lassman, founder of the private client management company Nota Bene Global, says he mainly deals with. “They don’t want to prove anything or rub shoulders with celebrities. They want the micro knowledge, enjoying things that only insiders know,” he comments.



Red Mountain house in Aspen is for sale via Sotheby's International Realty CREDIT: AUBREE DALLAS

So where do the extrovert-versus-camera-shy HNWIs look for homes this Christmas?

High profile

For the US market, the place to be seen in winter is Aspen – home to 50 billionaires, according to Knight Frank, who feature it as one of just four ski destinations that see \$25m sales in their Global Ultra-Prime Report 2019.

Aspen's prime address, with an average property price of \$12.1m, is Red Mountain. Sotheby's have a spectacular five-bed house on Red Mountain for \$22.95m and properties set further into the valley often come with hundreds of acres of land.

“It's a fantastic all year round destination that attracts a lot of celebrities. Americans love the kudos of saying ‘we have a home in Aspen’. They're the same sort who will be on Sardinia's Costa Smeralda or the Greek island of Mykonos in summer,” says Anthony Lassman.



Verbier's Chemin de la Pleyeuse CREDIT: PICASA

In Europe, Verbier is the Swiss equivalent – the perfect Alpine bubble for royals (Prince Andrew owns a £13m chalet there) and billionaires (Richard Branson rents out his chalet The Lodge from £87,000 a week in December). There’s even a ski lift named after one of its regulars, singer James Blunt, whose restaurant La Vache sits on the summit.

“Everyone is treated the same and they are never hassled. It’s a small, very wealthy resort that caters totally to them,” says Tim Swannie, founder of the French property agency Home Hunts, who is marketing a five-bed chalet for CHF6.9m (£5.1m).

For HNWs in search of sun rather than snow this season, the just-opened Nikki Beach club in Barbados is a new magnet for those who like to be seen. “The biggest shift in behaviour we’ve seen in a long time is the super-rich choosing a destination for what experiences it offers – what it can give their family and friends, rather than the perception of the location,” says Penny Mosgrove, CEO of Quintessentially Estates, who is marketing the three-bed beachfront house Seawatch, on Barbados’s west coast, for US\$15m.



Ibis Isle, Palm Beach CREDIT: EDWARD C BUTERA

Palm Beach in Florida is another perfect “winter doldrum getaway” for the wealthy. “The ease of jetting in and out, the intimate proximity to world-famous shopping and restaurants, the beautiful people, private enclaves and mansions along the waterfront all contribute to its allure. A stroll down Worth Avenue or Royal Poinciana Plaza is a veritable Who’s Who,” says Jim McCann, broker at Premier Estate Properties, affiliate of Christie’s International Real Estate, who are marketing the ultra-modern villa Ibis Isle, with water frontage on two sides, for \$7.9m.

Low-key hideaways

Discreet skiers – in particular, “quietly wealthy Americans who are confident with their money,” says Anthony Lassman – skip Aspen and go to Telluride instead. Deep in the snowy forest is 500 Elk Run Drive, a contemporary four-bed chalet on sale for \$6.65m through Sotheby’s International Realty.

In Europe, you can find a similar spirit in La Clusaz, according to Christie's International Real Estate (CIRE). "It's a high quality ski resort that's far less known than Val d'Isère or Megève, real estate is much more affordable and wealthy people find what they want - discretion," says Benoit Clerc of Agence Clerc, a CIRE affiliate agency. "It's a place to be cool and relax. People live a simple life there, but it's also home to La Maison de Bois, whose chef, Marc Veyrat, has three Michelin stars," says Clerc, who is marketing a 10-bedroom, 370m² chalet with incredible hilltop views for €4.2m.



Les Aravis chalet in La Clusaz is on the market with Agence Clerc CREDIT: THOMAS BEKKER

Being off the beaten track and connecting with nature is a high priority for hideaway HNWI's. Andres Amos of the ReMind luxury estate agent group, another CIRE affiliate, suggests Patagonia in Argentina for those seeking a hidden retreat.

"Most HNWI second home owners there come from Europe or North America – they include the Suchard chocolate family and Benetton family – and several Emiratis and Arab princes have bought land next to the Andes Ridge in recent years," says Amos. "Life here is like it was 50 years ago in North America – simple, wild and slow-paced." He is marketing the 500-acre Patagonia River Ranch, a sporting estate in San Martin de los Andes, a two-hour flight from Buenos Aires, for US\$8m.

If the bling and boutiques of winter super-yacht havens such as St Barts don't float your boat, an Indonesian retreat with a focus on wellness might, says Marcus Gondolo-Gordon, founder of Incognito Property. That's where he's re-focusing his attention for buyers this winter.



Patagonia River Ranch is a two hour flight from Buenos Aires

“People experience a place such as Amankila in Bali and want to find their own villa in a similar setting, where they can fully immerse themselves in the nature, culture and raw beauty of the country,” says Gondolo-Gordon. Two-bed turnkey villas at Selong Selo Residences, overlooking Selong Belanak Bay in Lombok, start at \$495,000

Another healthy hideaway is the North shore of Kauai, the Hawaiian island that draws the likes of Will Smith and Mark Zuckerberg to its vegan cafes and yoga retreats. On sale for \$13m through Elite Pacific Properties is the sprawling Kilauea Beach Estate, set on 6.15 acres next to a wildlife refuge. Its facilities include a Balinese stone soaking tub next to the long saltwater lap pool.

The Maldives resorts of Soneva Fushi and Soneva Jani are also places where HNWI's can “blend in and no one really cares who they are,” says Robert Green, founder of Sphere Estates. He is marketing villas at Soneva Jani from US\$3m for one-bedroom, including over-water villas that can only be reached by boat.



A four bedroom overwater villa at Soneva Jani in the Maldives

“You’ll find celebrities and hugely successful entrepreneurs having dinner next to normal families and honeymoon couples, but it’s extremely rare for people to stare or ask for photos.”

You needn’t go long-haul, however, to find the perfect, discreet winter retreat. “Some enjoy what are perceived to be European summer homes in winter. Club 55 in St Tropez has a fabulous New Year’s Day brunch, and it’s really only for those in the know,” says Anthony Lassman. “People use their homes in the Var or Provence at that time, when it’s free from all the summer yachts and Eurotrash, and you can have the log fires burning.”

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