



My, how you've grown

Ibiza Town has become a sophisticated, stylish and family-friendly summer hotspot. Make way, Saint-Tropez, says Liz Rowlinson



Ibiza Town's picturesque Dalt Vila—the old fortified city—offers breathtaking views from its towering ramparts

HERE'S a saying in the Balearics that you don't choose Ibiza, it chooses you. These days, the island seems well disposed towards the high-spenders, glamour-loving types who previously flocked to the South of France for their summers. Now, Ibiza—especially in the south-east corner around Ibiza Town—has become considerably more sophisticated than in its hippy heyday, and has beautiful villas, good restaurants and classy beach bars. 'It took over from Saint-Tropez and Capri about five years ago,' believes Cathy Ouwehand, Savills Associate in Ibiza. 'Ibiza has the best parties, is the music capital of the world and is all about high-end tourism and discreet glamour.'

It's certainly more fashionable than Mallorca, and famous regulars such as Mick Jagger, Roberto Cavalli and Giorgio Armani prefer the lower-key scene that revolves around Ibiza Town and its marina, where the Cipriani has just opened an outpost. Although there are some who prefer the north of the island because it's less built-up, the south boasts the finest beaches—including Es Cavallet, Las Salinas and Cala Jondal—set off perfectly by the best sunsets.

A loyal Spanish market is supplemented by an international mix

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of high-fliers and hedonists, as well as families (even the hippest beach bars have high chairs). Such vitality is also sustaining the island's property market—prices have remained stable, especially at the high end, where the supply of supremely rentable villas still doesn't meet demand. 'There are bargains at the lower end [€1 million–€2 million],' says Fritzi Northampton of Bluestone Properties, Aylesford's woman in Ibiza. 'But people at the higher end hang on to properties. It's just like Saint-Tropez used to be.'

Bluestone Properties don't deal in apartments, but if you're happy not to be right at the heart of the action behind Ibiza Town marina, you can certainly get change from €500,000 for a well-located, good-quality one. Additionally, in an area where most people prefer to rent than stay in hotels, you can pretty much bank on a 16-week season of holiday lets.

One new project is targeting just such a niche, promising to be 'design-oriented, created for today's needs and at a price that undercuts the market'. The White Angel complex is to be built on a plot of land next to Pacha nightclub by Five Element Homes, a long-established developer. Prices start at €250,000 for two- to three-bedroom apartments through Savills (020-7016 3740). Units on the uppermost levels of the six-storey building will enjoy prized views of the old fortified city, or 'Dalt Vila', and all apartments will have terraces, access to the communal pool, concierge and other services, providing the ideal lock-up-and-leave pad for those who want to be at the heart of the urban Ibiza lifestyle, rather than have the seclusion—and upkeep worries—of a standalone villa.

There's certainly a touch of Miami's South Beach about the marina strip, and the exuberant design of Barcelona architect Jean Nouvel's Life Marina complex (with brightly coloured balconies snaking in waves, it was inspired by a boa constrictor) comes with a seven-figure price tag—properties start at €1 million through Lucas Fox (00 34 933 562 989; www.lucasfox.com). This is the entry-level point for decent villas on the island, according to Andrea

Wirsum of Engel & Völkers Ibiza—although you won't find any in the marina area. 'People want modern villas with sea views in Triple-A locations, such as Cala Jondal [west of Ibiza Town] and Talamanca [five minutes from the marina] with sunset views towards Dalt Vila or the island of Formentera,' she says. 'You can get houses that need work for €1 million, but, really, you're going to be looking at nearer €2 million for the better properties.'

Five Element Homes is also building a handful of exclusive, off-plan villas near Talamanca, at Cap Martinet, with prices starting at €1.5 million. There will be just seven 300sq m–320sq m (3,230sq ft–3,440sq ft) 'finca-style' villas with minimalist lines on 1,000sq m (10,760sq ft) plots designed by Catalan architect Jaime Serra. You'll get 4–6 bedrooms and an infinity pool as part of the sort of desirable Ibiza property that rents for €25,000 a week during the peak eight weeks of summer, according to Miss Ouwehand.

For sale in Ibiza



Can Furnet, €1.8m,

Five-bedroom, five-bathroom designer villa with more than 300sq m (3,230sq ft) of living space and a pool in Can Furnet, through Aylesford (020-7349 5100; www.aylesford.com)



Casa Cristal, €3.25m

Typically high-end Ibicenco contemporary villa in Cap Martinet, with four bedrooms, four bathrooms, a separate guest apartment and infinity pool, through Savills (020-7016 3740; www.savills.com)