

THE FINEST HOMES, TRAVEL AND LIFESTYLE Vol. 33 No. 2

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RIVIERA REPORT

The French and Italian Riviervas remain key destinations for global luxury buyers, shaped by scarcity, lifestyle priorities and long-term value rather than short-term gains



Nikolaus Thomale
Co-founder and
Managing Director
MYNE

The luxury property markets of the French and Italian Riviervas continue to attract international attention, shaped by scarcity, lifestyle appeal and long-term value rather than short-term speculation. While the two coastlines share Mediterranean glamour, their dynamics differ in pricing, buyer motivation and the type of homes in demand.

MYNE co-founder and managing director Nikolaus Thomale points to resilience at the very top end of the French market, particularly in globally recognised enclaves. He says: "Monaco, Saint-Tropez and Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat remain the most resilient markets on the French Riviera. Limited supply, global prestige and sustained international demand keep pricing firm even when broader market activity softens."

By contrast, Nikolaus explains that affordability still plays a role across the border: "The Italian Riviera is generally more accessible in pricing terms, although prime locations such as Portofino and Santa Margherita Ligure show similar resilience due to extreme scarcity and heritage appeal." He adds that motivation is increasingly long-term: "Buyers looking for these qualities are often attracted by long-term lifestyle value rather than rapid price growth, viewing ownership as a generational

investment." In both regions, he notes, "exclusivity, infrastructure and limited supply are the dominant drivers of demand."

Buyer priorities have also shifted toward homes that are ready to use. Nikolaus observes: "Buyers are prioritising lifestyle-led, move-in-ready homes over speculative projects." On the French Riviera, he says, "demand is strongest for modern apartments and villas with panoramic sea views, concierge services and family-oriented infrastructure such as schools and on-site amenities." He highlights a demographic change too: "Buyers are increasingly younger, often relocating or spending extended periods rather than using properties seasonally."

In Italy, character still matters deeply. According to Nikolaus, "buyers are seeking out villas steeped in rich architectural history and sweeping seaside views." Yet tradition alone is no longer enough: "They are particularly interested in properties where traditional architecture has been carefully blended with modern interiors, terraces and smart-home features." Across both coasts, expectations are aligned, with "connectivity, effortless maintenance and turnkey delivery" now essential.

Changes in taste have become more pronounced over the past few years. Nikolaus says: "On the French Riviera, preferences have shifted decisively towards highly polished, turnkey homes with modern layouts, strong natural light and integrated technology." He adds: "For today's global wealth

holders, a Riviera home is no longer about rustic charm but about finish, performance and visual appeal." Italy has followed a slightly different path: "Architectural character remains central, but expectations around comfort and functionality have risen sharply."

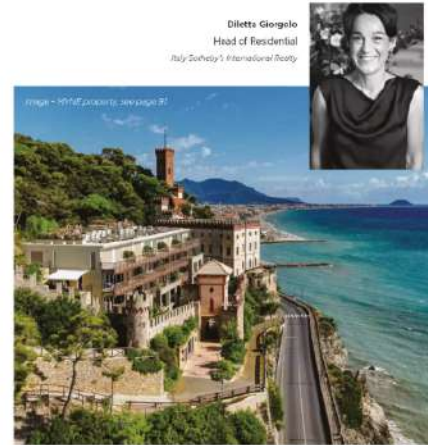
Amenities are another area where buyer demands are clear. Nikolaus states: "Across both coasts, sea views, outdoor space and proximity to the water remain fundamental." He references MYNE's research: "According to MYNE's report Rethinking the Dream: The Future of Holiday Home Ownership, buyers' top priorities are a sea view (68%), good WiFi (51%), proximity to the beach (46%), a friendly village nearby (44%), and access to a swimming pool (41%)."

Lifestyle tends to outweigh pure financial calculus at the top end. Nikolaus explains: "Buyers are selecting homes that support how they live, whether for family use, relocation or multi-seasonal living." In ultra-prime locations, "real estate is viewed as a store of generational value and a lifestyle asset rather than a transactional investment."

“ The Italian Riviera is generally more accessible in pricing terms, although prime locations such as Portofino and Santa Margherita Ligure show similar resilience due to extreme scarcity and heritage appeal ”

From an Italian market perspective, Diletta Giogolo, Head of Residential at Italy Sotheby's International Realty, sees steady growth driven by international interest. She says: "The Italian Riviera continues to enchant a global audience with its timeless coastal charm and refined, understated luxury." While values remain lower than across the border, "demand is steadily rising, driven by buyers seeking authenticity, privacy, and long-term value."

Diletta notes a clear preference for quality: "Today's buyers are drawn to panoramic villas and fully renovated historic residences that effortlessly combine authenticity with modern comfort." Outdoor living is central, with "expansive terraces, infinity pools, and direct access to the sea" increasingly expected.



Diletta Giogolo
Head of Residential
Italy Sotheby's International Realty



Buyer profiles are broadening too across multiple lifestyle segments, and buyer motivations continue evolving rapidly. Diletta explains: "The market now welcomes a discerning international audience, particularly from France, across Europe, the United States, and the Middle East, alongside a sophisticated domestic clientele." Priorities differ slightly, as "international buyers are often drawn to secluded retreats or second homes," while Italians "tend to favour locations that blend privacy with convenient access to amenities and community life."

Sustainability and technology are now decisive factors across the market. Diletta says: "Photovoltaic systems, advanced thermal insulation, and integrated smart-home solutions are no longer optional, they are essential." Nikolaus echoes this trend, noting: "Smart-home technology has become a baseline expectation rather than a luxury add-on."

Looking ahead, both agree that constrained supply, lifestyle relevance, and thoughtfully designed, future-ready homes will strongly shape the next exciting and dynamic phase of Riviera living. ■

PRIVATE RETREATS

» Les Citronniers, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, is a complex of seven new villas in a private, sheltered neighbourhood, yet close to the town's shops. Year-round restaurants let you enjoy Mediterranean flavours, and from April to September, a vibrant Provençal market fills the village centre with regional products.

Accessible via Etienne Gola Avenue, the complex sits on the village heights, with the beach just a short walk down a pedestrian path. The intimate villas feature contemporary Provençal architecture, blending naturally with the landscape. Terraced designs echo the site's historic dry-stone gardens, with local stones and light ochre lime plaster on the façades. Higher villas have traditional canal-tiled roofs, while others feature green rooftops to preserve views. This refined hillside setting offers privacy, elegance, and a harmonious connection to the surrounding nature.



Three bedroom villas £1.9m / €2.2m / \$2.6m
Four bedroom villas from £3.3m / €3.7m / \$4.4m
to £3.7m / €4.2m / \$5m

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MEDITERRANEAN ESCAPE

» Villa des Calanques, perched on the cliffs of Cassis, offering an intimate Mediterranean escape with sweeping views of the azure sea and the striking limestone Calanques. Guests enjoy private access to Les Roches Blanches, a historic 1920s resort with classical charm and contemporary luxury. The villa spans four levels, featuring refined living and dining spaces, outdoor terraces, two heated pools, a hammam, wellness area, and fitness room.

Days drift by beside the pool or in cosy cabanas, interrupted only by sea breezes and the distant call of yachts. Boats await in a private harbour for trips to the Calanques, Cap Canaille, or Porquerolles. Evenings are spent savouring French wine, fresh seafood, and the slow rhythm of village life. Villa des Calanques embodies relaxed opulence on the Riviera.

Perfect Hideaways
► www.perfecthideaways.co.za



PRIME LOCATION

» Ideally located just 300 metres from Rue d'Antibes and 400 metres from the Palais des Congrès, yet quiet for a city-centre setting, Villa Lérins offers the chance to live in the heart of Cannes, France in a fully renovated residence.

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This spacious three-/four-bedroom penthouse of 120m² on the top floor has been tastefully refurbished with high-quality materials. It features a hallway leading to a large double reception room with a beautiful open-plan fitted kitchen, all opening onto a generous south-facing terrace, as do the two en suite bedrooms, complemented by a utility room and guest WC. A private staircase leads to a stunning roof terrace with panoramic sea views of the islands

at Le Suquet. Part of the terrace is covered by a bioclimatic pergola, with a sunbathing area and a planted section, offering the perfect spot to enjoy a glass of champagne in the jacuzzi while taking in the magical view. Everything is in place to install a summer kitchen and a toilet at a later date.

Three-bedroom penthouse
 at £3m / €3.5m / \$4.1m



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BEACH ACCESS

» Cassis de Luxe is a refined retreat set high above the Mediterranean on the cliffs of Cap Canaille, Southern France. Spread across sixty hectares within the Calanques National Park, the former Hôtel du Revestel is now a grand private villa with sweeping sea views and rare seclusion.

The house sleeps up to twenty guests, with eleven or twelve suites facing either garden or water views. Restored in 2017, its interiors balance restraint and drama: lofty salons for long evenings, a grand piano, generous dining tables, a cinema room, a library, and a quiet private office. Terraces lead to gardens, pool and jacuzzi, while a private path drops to

Plage de l'Arène in minutes. Days pass easily between swimming, boating, walking into Cassis, or simply doing very little at all, enjoying complete privacy, the soft rhythm of the coast, and the gentle sea breeze.