HOW MOBILE WEALTH IS REDRAWING THE LUXURY PROPERTY MAP

SPAIN'S COSTA DEL SOL IS A NEW FOCUS FOR FIVE-STAR, BRANDED RESIDENCE LIVING

BY ZOE DARE HALL



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GLOBAL WEALTH IS ON THE MOVE

Four fifths of self-made, high-net-worth individuals live outside the country in which they made their fortune. And one fifth no longer resides in their country of birth. That's according to Savills estate agency in their new report on next generation wealth hubs.

Whether they are driven by geopolitical uncertainty, lifestyle ambition or a combination of both, today's wealthiest individuals are no longer bound by the old conventions of where they live and do business. They are crossing borders and continents to find new safe havens for themselves, their families and their capital.

Rising property taxes and restrictions on non-resident buyers are also steering wealth away from the global cities whose prime markets typically top price growth indexes. Punitive buying costs and more attractive fiscal regimes—combined with remote working routines honed since the pandemic–are persuading investors to look beyond the likes of London or New York in favour of lifestyle-driven resort locations. While London's prime market has seen price falls of nearly five percent over the last five years, according to Knight Frank Research, Quinta do Lago in the Algarve has recorded 61 percen thouse price growth.

Last year alone, Marbella on the Costa del Sol saw prime house prices rise by eight percent.

The needs and priorities of today's HNWIs—particularly as wealth trickles down into younger hands-differ to those of past generations. The main pillars still stand-such as a robust and sophisticated wealth eco-system, legal system and tax frameworks. But lifestyle matters more than ever to today's mobile super-rich. And that's where prime locations in Spain can play their trump card.



LIVE.
WORK.
BELONG

Migratory international wealth is helping long-established coastal destinations morph from seasonal holiday hubs to vibrant, year-round locations from which to run a business and raise a family. Where once a standalone villa sufficed, now buyers expect a full lifestyle package, including workspaces, world-class restaurants and international schools, indicative of the semi-permanence of these new arrivals.

High-net-worth buyers look different these days too. They have different tastes and priorities to past generations of HNWIs, which further plays a part in redrawing the wealth map of the world.



A NEW GENERATION OF WEALTH

One in five of today's global UHNW population—defined by Knight Frank as those with a net worth of US$30m or more-is under 40 and self-made, their fortunes often built from founding tech companies that tend not to anchor them to one location. This "Next Gen" wealth is also set to become the richest generation in history as beneficiaries of trillions of dollars in familial wealth that is being transferred to them over the next 20 years. Unlike their forefathers, however, they tend to prize lifestyle flexibility, sustainability and wellness over overt displays of extravagance and success.

In this newly footloose era of wealth creation, buyers are finding ways to make a nomadic existence spent among several properties work efficiently. Properties can be prepared for their arrival. Schooling can be done online, pets and nannies flown among homes. Such buyers are part of a "dip in and dip out" demographic, according to Knight Frank's Wealth Report 2026, and that is driving demand for a different kind of property to suit them.



EASE. PRIVACY. SECURITY

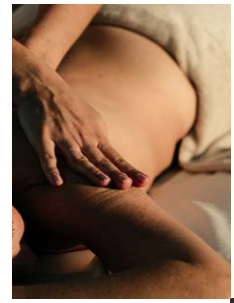
Time-saving ease and convenience are frontrunners on their wishlists, along with privacy and security. Peripatetic property buyers favour turnkey design that removes additional effort and expense from the process, and they seek the on-tap service and amenities of a five-star hotel.

As can be seen in other luxury spheres including retail and travel, the experiential aspect is also fundamental to affluent buyers' investment decisions. It's not just about where you live, but how you live.

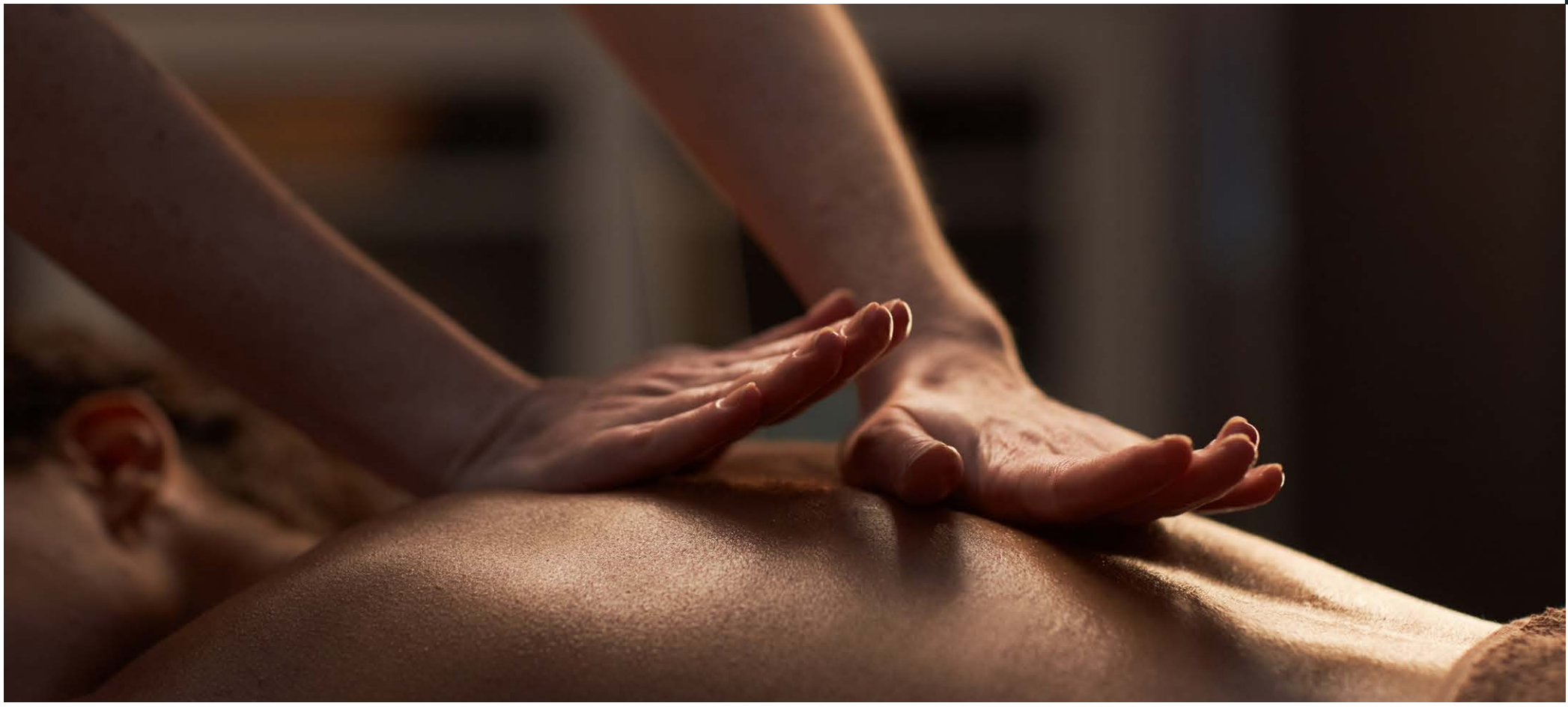
FROM WELLNESS TO LONGEVITY

Wellness—which increasingly involves the pursuit of healthy longevity through advanced diagnostics and treatments such as cryotherapy—underpins many affluent buyers' decisions to buy in a particular location or development. Having a globally-renowned wellness provider nearby such as Lanserhof—the 40-year-old Austrian longevity clinic, which soft launches its first southern European centre in Finca Cortesin on the Costa del Sol in late 2026—has become a destination amenity that few could have envisaged being so desirable for second home buyers a decade ago.

But so entrenched now is our attention to health that The Global Wellness Institute makes the correlation for the first time between where we live and longevity. "The built environment is not just a backdrop to life, but an active participant in how well and how long we live," the Institute states in its 2026 report.







THE RISE OF BRANDED RESIDENCES

Homes branded by a global luxury hotel also carry currency with today's well-travelled super-rich. For security and privacy reasons, 'this type of buyer likes to avoid ostentatious shows of wealth, preferring instead discreet entrances to their property and hidden basements for their cars. But they do value the familiarity, guarantee of high quality and onsite amenities that a hotel brand brings to a residential project, along with the effortless management of their properties. By bringing their hospitality expertise and brand equity into a residental setting, hotel operators ensure this is a home that comes without the burden of day-to-day responsibilities.

Branded schemes in Europe now command a 38 percent price premium over comparable non-branded schemes, a six percent rise since 2025, according to Savills. In a recent survey of 900 prime property clients, Knight Frank found that 39 percent would pay a premium for a branded residence, not for prestige of the badge on the door but for the service eco-system associated with a respected name.

The 46 private homes at The St. Regis Residences, Casares, Costa del Sol, reap the benefits that two brands bring: St. Regis's high service standards and professional property management, and Finca Cortesin's reputation as one of Europe's premier residential golf resorts. It's "luxury squared", says the project's developer, Enrique Lopez Granados, founder and president of Caledonian. "Owners are pampered to the extreme."

Spain is leading the way in Europe with branded residences, with 14 projects completed and 22 in the pipeline, making it one of Europe's "most dynamic growth markets", according to The Residence Report 2026/27 by Knight Frank, who also highlight. Europe as a whole is seeing a shift towards coastal branded schemes. By 2030, resort developments—as opposed to urban ones—will account for 65% of total supply, according to Savills. And the price gap between the two is diminishing, with Marbella's upper range of US$2,700 per square foot on a par with Madrid, according to Knight Frank.

"OWNERS ARE PAMPERED TO THE EXTREME"



THE QUIET RICH

Unlike most of Spain's branded schemes on the Costa del Sol, which are in Marbella, The St. Regis Residences, Casares, Costa del Sol appeals to a different type of HNW buyer on this coast. While many fashion and automotive brands are pouring into residential schemes in Marbella to capitalise on the city's global renown as a high-profile hub for the super-rich, The St. Regis Residences, Casares, Costa del Sol, 40km west of Marbella, are immersed in wilder, less developed landscape near the polo and golf estate of Sotogrande.

This location attracts "the quiet rich". says Lopez Granados of these €5m+ buyers. He describes them as "self-selecting", drawn to a likeminded community of residents who prefer a more subtle way to enjoy their wealth. So far, The St. Regis Residences, Casares, Costa del Sol is attracting buyers mainly from central and Northern Europe, and from the US. They range from younger entrepreneurs who have built up successful companies to families seeking a safe and beautiful place to make their primary home.

Such buyers are the adopters of what's widely described as 'discreet' luxury. They appreciate the integrity of well-conceived design, sustainable building practices and technological innovation designed to enhance the living experience. A perfect example are Caledonian's 'cold ceilings' which use tech, which uses a geothermal system to control the indoor climate through chilled ceilings and underfloor heating. Where high-profile designers such as Marcio Kogan and Lazaro Rosa-Violàn collaborate with Caledonian's in-house architects, it's "for the quality beyond the name", says Lopez Granados.

Western buyers on this part of the Costa del Sol also prize being in an exclusive enclave that is not in Marbella—indeed, some buyers have migrated from Marbella to Finca Cortesin, commenting that the two places have a contrasting "lifestyle identity", says Lopez Granados—but within half an hour's drive of Marbella's restaurants, clubs and boutiques.

The division between 'quiet' and 'loud' wealth may also be evident in HNW buyers' choice of brand. Debate rages over whether the high number of non-hospitality brands entering the sector such as Italian fashion houses or supercar marques—who must outsource management to third party operators—can deliver the requisite ongoing performance that a hotel brand can. Chris Graham, a branded residences expert, describes this question mark over how effectively quality standards and service delivery are sustained over the long-term as "a major challenge facing the industry".

Caledonian is among the developers who will partner only with hotel brands. And in synch with the growing trend globally for standalone residential projects—where the hotel brand provides the hospitality and service infrastructure, without an actual hotel on site—The St. Regis Residences, Casares, Costa del Sol is part of the brand's "massive shift" according to Jaidev Menezes, regional vice president EMEA at Marriott International into this model. Some 48 percent of Marriott's branded residential pipeline in Europe, Middle East and Africa is for standalone projects, compared with 26 percent of its open projects.

For buyers, the standalone story is one of hotel-level service combined with privacy, and about having 'right-sized' amenities that they will share only with other property owners in the scheme, not with the public. "It's your house with benefits," Lopez Granados says.

Buyers of a wide variety of ages are attracted to branded schemes such as The St. Regis Residences, Casares, Costa del Sol, some seeking an occasional home, some making it their primary residence. In all cases, against a macro backdrop of geopolitical instability, what today's mobile HNWIs want from their property investment is the certainty, continuity and quality that a globa brand brings, within a likeminded community and premier location.

The Costa del Sol is proving its versatility in adapting to the needs and demands of this new generation of international wealth by being the location of choice for some of the world's most outstanding branded residential schemes.

It's a location whose decades-long track record as a leading' before holiday home destination holiday home destination and magnet for luxury brands provides buyers with the security of investment and high-quality lifestyle they desire.

That's a package that may well persuade these mobile high-net-worth individuals to stop moving.





CALEDONIAN