

# Homes

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14 » HOMES OVERSEAS

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## 'Our Spanish getaway suits us to a tee'

After carefully studying many European hotspots, one couple opted for Costa de la Luz. **Helen Riley** discovers why



**J**ULIE Rudd and Andy Gosling are proof that it pays to do your homework when you are looking to invest abroad.

Having set their hearts on Spain they then set out clearly what they wanted from their investment – something that would give them capital appreciation, provide rental income and be a place for them to visit occasionally.

They then started detailing the regions and listing each one's pros and cons.

Eventually they decided to focus on the Costa de la Luz in Huelva province – the Coast of Light that stretches from Tarifa, at the southernmost tip of Spain, northwest along the coast of Cádiz to the border with Portugal.

Beaches along this Costa face the Atlantic Ocean rather than the Mediterranean.

Julie, 35, and Andy, 33, from Macclesfield, worked out their budget visited the area and initially looked at townhouses. However, by coincidence, two friends from Bristol were also planning to buy abroad so they teamed up and started looking at larger villas.

Together they settled on a four bedroom, three bathroom

villa with swimming pool and gardens on the Nuevo Portil Golf Resort which they bought off-plan from Titan Properties two years ago for about £360,000. The villa overlooks hole 10 on the development's golf course.

Julie and Andy took a close interest in the progress of their property, visiting regularly to see how the work was going on and to choose things such as tiles for the bathrooms and kitchen.

Once the villa was complete the couple visited local stores to choose furnishings – a process which they say was very easy and enjoyable.

In May, the villa was ready and Julie, a mortgage adviser, and Andy, an aircraft technician, have made good use of the property since, fitting in several short breaks over the summer.

They are often joined by old schoolfriends Jackie Irons and Danny Thomas who also live in Macclesfield.

Julie says: "We wanted to make the most of the villa as soon as it was ready. We pick a weekend and look around for good flight deals and it's great to be able to ask friends to come along."

The arrangement with the other couple who part-own the

## COSTA DE LA LUZ



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property is fairly informal with each side checking on the other's plans before booking a flight.

However, they have decided to rent the property out in the future – and have agreed that neither side can visit in the school holidays so they maximise the rental potential.

The Nuevo Portil Golf Resort includes an 18 hole golf course. As well as villas and townhouses the development also has a four star hotel.

Prices start at £180,000 for a three bedroom, two bathroom townhouse and £380,000 for a villa.

Huelva borders Portugal with the natural border of the River Guadiana between the

two countries. Julie and Andy often fly into Faro airport in Portugal which is about a one hour drive from their villa or they can fly to Sevilla in Spain which is about one and a half hour's away.

There are also plans for a new airport at Huelva which is a half hour drive.

According to the Golf Federation of Andalucía, Huelva is the fastest growing golf tourist destination in the region, with the number of rounds played increasing by an average of 16 per cent over the past 12 years – more than twice the rise in the Costa del Sol.

The area has been popular with Spanish holidaymakers for some time but it is now seeing visitors from the UK and other European countries.

Most of the beaches have fine, white sand, backed by dunes and there are extensive pine forests in the region.

Water sports are particularly popular along this coast with both deep sea and river fishing available.

As in the rest of Andalucía, there is a strong equestrian tradition with regular dressage and polo tournaments so riders will find plenty of riding schools while activities for non-horse-riders include cycling, clay pi-

geon shooting and go-karting. Costa de la Luz is one of the most culturally interesting costas in Spain.

The festival season starts in March with the feria of Cádiz and lasts well into the summer months.

Cities worth exploring include Sevilla, Cadiz and Jerez – famous as the home of sherry.

Inland are traditional small villages with white-painted houses perched on the edge of cliff faces, where crafts include ceramics and basket weaving. The hills are covered in cork and pine trees, and oak trees provide nourishment for the famous Jabugo black pig.

Philip James of Manchester-based Assetz, says: "This area of the Spanish coast is becoming more popular, as prices are still quite competitive. The area is becoming quite well known as the Spanish Algarve."

Assetz is selling a range of

properties on the Altos de Montecastillo development near Jerez which includes a golf course and five-star hotel with health spa, tennis club, sports centre and two football pitches.

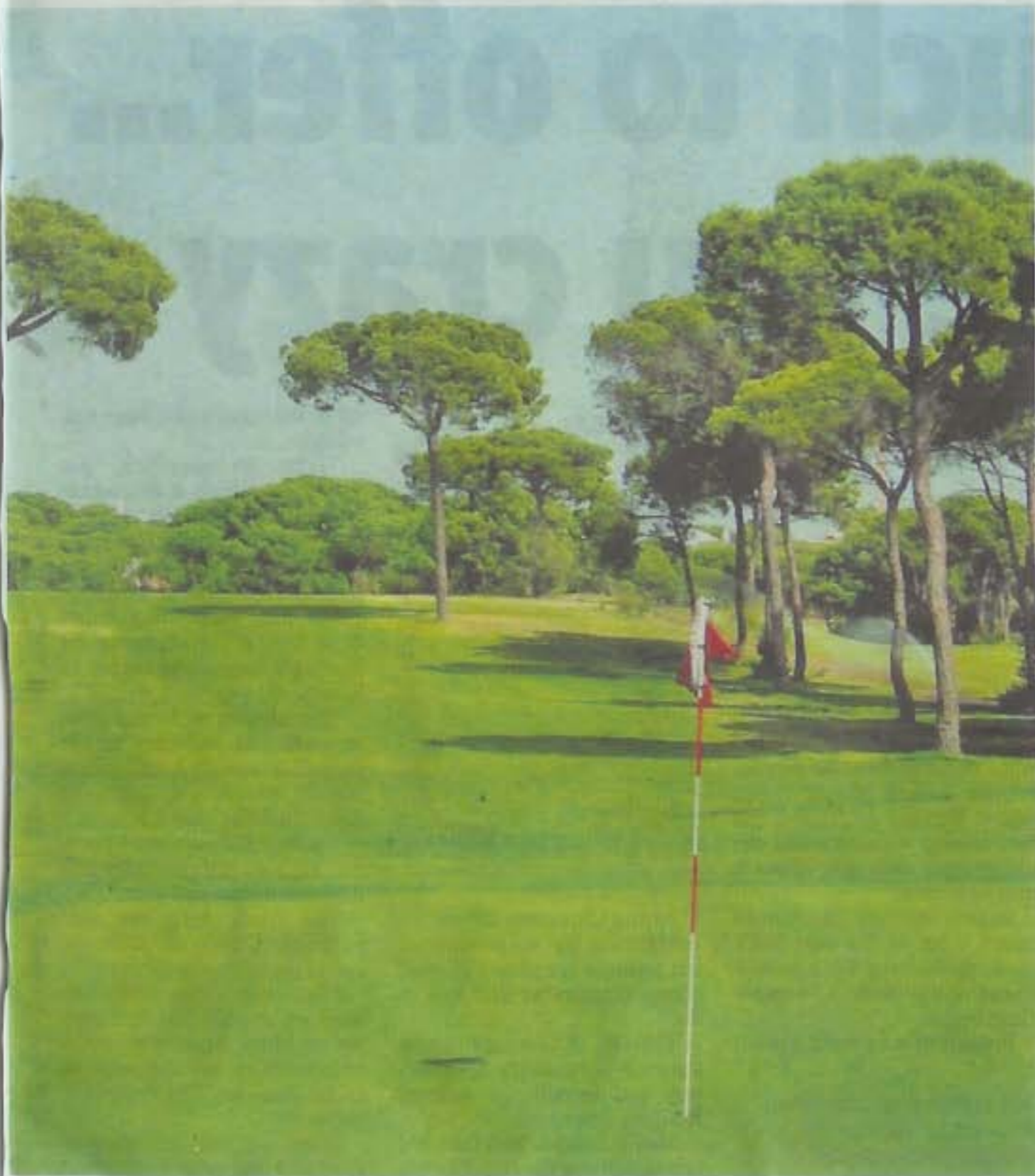
One bedroom apartments are priced from around £145,000 rising to around £210,000 for a two-bedroom penthouse.

Richard Gordon of Undiscovered Spain is another agent interested in the progress of the Costa de la Luz.

He says: "It can be an area some people fall in love with. They want the traditional Spanish lifestyle, empty beaches and laid back atmosphere."

"For other people it's too quiet. They prefer the Mediterranean resorts and the liveliness of resorts along the Malaga coastline, for example."

"It's a question of deciding what you want and what will serve your needs best."



▶▶ **SUNSHINE ESCAPE** Left, the golf course at Nuevo Portil which their villa overlooks. Above, Andy and Julie (right) enjoy a spot of lunch with school friends Jackie and Danny by the pool. Below, their stylish four bedroom villa



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