



“There isn’t a lot of choice, so homes are selling incredibly quickly, in around 22 days”

“Despite the economic crisis, activity in the housing market has been remarkable,” says Aneisha Beveridge, head of research at Hamptons. “There isn’t a lot of choice, so homes are selling incredibly quickly, in a historic low of around 22 days. What’s more, a record-breaking 38% of UK homes are currently subject to bidding wars.”

Luckily, adverse situations see the team at the luxury estate and letting agent come into their own. With 15 decades of expertise, helping over 160,000 people

find new properties each year, Hamptons’ self-styled “home experts” are adept at navigating their clients through tricky times. For exceptional properties at the top end of the market, Hamptons has its new Prime service. Exclusive and bespoke, it assists its clients throughout every stage of a move, making the process as streamlined and stress-free as possible.

A central aspect of Prime’s appeal is the assignment of dedicated Prime Search Consultants such as Lisa Harvey, who help sellers and landlords alike smoothly secure their next purchase. “I am essentially an in-house property matchmaker, acting as a conduit between all of Hamptons’ branches,” says Harvey. “I sit like an umbrella across the whole network, with access to all our information, including off-market opportunities.”

Her ultra-private client list features between 15 and 30 households at any one time, with budgets ranging into the tens of millions. By fostering a close relationship with her clients, Harvey can take on the house-hunting process for them, including booking viewings.

“I do all the legwork,” she explains. “It’s about quality – I won’t bombard them with properties that meet their price range and nothing else. What they get from me is special attention and a personal service that gets them to the front of the queue.”

These days Harvey’s curated services are more in demand than ever because “people are wanting extra care – they are prepared to pay a percentage for a search agent to get them ahead.” For Hamptons Prime clients, the service is complimentary. One key shift Harvey has seen is the widely

publicised exodus from the capital, with Londoners purchasing a record-breaking 61,830 homes outside the city in the first six months of 2021. “Many of my high-net-worth clients wanting to move out of London are after ‘pandemic-proof homes,’” she says. “They want it all – and on site. These homes would be better described as complexes, with leisure facilities, spas, tennis courts, cinemas, stabling and a helipad, if they can get it.”

Suitably substantial properties on Hamptons’ books include six-bedroom Woodvale Cottage in Surrey, with two stables, a swimming pool, sauna and tennis court (not to mention two lakes), while Hertfordshire’s Leaside House comes with six reception rooms, a private island, and four acres of land. In Oxfordshire, the undeniably grand Grade I-listed Kirtlington Park, available to short-let, comes with all manner of amenities, ranging from a cinema room to a fully furnished library.

While traditional locations within the M25 remain popular, the growing work-from-home culture has given buyers freer rein. The Cotswolds is proving particularly hot property, but coastal retreats are also in demand with Londoners who are still as attached to the capital as ever but also want a seaside home that can provide a good rental income as an additional perk.

Other Prime clients include suburbanites weary of the blurred boundaries between home and work. “They want a home with a fun factor, a different vista, so it feels like they’re on holiday when they stay,” says Harvey. “Places with outdoor kitchens, entertaining areas... ancillary buildings have never been more in demand.”



Prime movers

Recent events have changed what people want from their dream home – and expert help in tracking it down has never been more crucial

WORDS CHARLOTTE MCMANUS

While the past 18 months have seen many sectors devastated by Covid-19, the property market has boomed. Between pandemic-related lifestyle changes and the stamp duty holiday, demand has outstripped supply, leaving even the most informed movers scrabbling to make sense of an intensely competitive marketplace.

Clockwise from top: Quarry Lodge, in the Buckinghamshire hotspot of Marlow, has that much sought-after asset – a riverside setting; Grade I-listed short-let Kirtlington Park in Oxfordshire has all manner of amenities; the stylish interior of the Treetops townhouse, Kensington



Clockwise from left: desirable Home Counties properties available through Hamptons include Woodvale Cottage in Surrey, with a swimming pool; Old Barley Mow Farmhouse in Hampshire has a waterfront setting and original features inside; in Hertfordshire, Leaside House has seven bedrooms and its own private island; five-storey Treetops in Kensington has three home-working areas



SCREENSHOT FROM THEIR PDF. HIGH RES NEEDS CALLING IN

In Marlow in Buckinghamshire, Quarry Lodge fits the bill with a detached 18ft building that can be used for work, rest or play. Its scenic riverside location, with private mooring and boathouse, is another hotly sought advantage. In Hampshire, the renovated Old Barley Mow Farmhouse is another covetable waterfront property. It comes with a self-contained annexe, complete with a bedroom, sitting/dining room, kitchen and shower room.

Of course, London, as one of the most resilient property markets on the planet, remains a highly desirable location in which to invest. Hamptons research indicates that city sellers are currently achieving a record share of their asking price (99.6% in August 2021), while the average London home is selling within an astonishing 34 days.

“For my clients, their London home remains important to them – it can be their third, fourth or even fifth home,” says Richard Broer, regional director of Prime Central London and head of sales, Kensington. “People are looking for more space, but that doesn’t mean that they are leaving London altogether. The Prime

Central London market has been underpinned by domestic buyers moving in and around the prime boroughs.”

He highlights the five-storey Treetops townhouse currently up for grabs in Kensington as an example, with its two kitchens, three home-working areas and a sizeable 31ft multipurpose space that can be used for a bar, gym or spa.

With London regaining its buzz post-lockdown, recent weeks have seen investors flocking back to the capital, with the buy-to-let market bouncing back in line with the surge in demand for rental properties. PIEDS-À-TERRÉ available for short-term lets are being snapped up in trendy neighbourhoods such as South Bank and Islington. As Beveridge puts it, “people want flexibility, and the concept of ‘try before you buy’ is really catching on”.

Though no one is sure exactly how the chips will fall in the wake of Covid-19, with more of us rethinking our priorities regarding how we live and where, the property market will clearly continue to ring the changes – and an experienced agent by your side is essential. hamptons.co.uk



INTERNATIONAL PROPERTIES

While Hamptons is primarily UK-based, its international partners have a roster of stellar properties on their books.

POLLENSA, MALLORCA



With exceptional views over Puerto Pollensa bay, this 600sq m mansion has a spa, cinema room and 13 acres of grounds containing an olive grove. £5,971,000.

MALAGA, SPAIN



With six bedrooms and a private swimming pool, this villa on Marbella’s “Golden Mile” comes with scenic views, 24h security and a tennis/paddle court. £6,767,000.

DORDOGNE, FRANCE



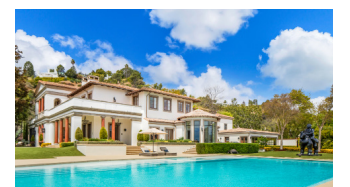
This meticulously renovated 18th-century watermill just outside a medieval village in the heart of the Périgord Noir comes with a 1,500m sq mill pond. £470,000.

COTE D’AZUR, FRANCE



On a closed estate five minutes from St Tropez, this six-suite villa offers 1,000sq m of light-filled space. Highlights include a swimming pool and helipad. £21,534,000.

BEVERLY HILLS, US



Sylvester Stallone’s Mediterranean-inspired mega-mansion comes with panoramic views, a custom cigar room – and a life-sized statue of Rocky Balboa. £61,651,000.