

# TOTALLY TROPICAL PROPERTY

square mile goes on a whirlwind investment tour of the Caribbean property scene, from Barbados to St Kitts. **Bernadette Costello** and **Ailsa Leslie** report

**T**he laid-back vibe of Kitts – the trendy London nightspot inspired by the island of St Kitts – may be one reason why London's jet set has acquired a totally tropical taste for the Caribbean. A famous pirate movie – no need to say which – and the Cricket World Cup were other major draws to the Caribbean last year, while easy, affordable access from the UK is another temptation to visit these lush islands off the south-east coast of North America.

The Prime Minister of St Kitts is proving how well the two cultures have mixed since the English settled there in 1624, with a planned visit to the Kitts club in Sloane Square this year. It might sound like a ridiculously huge effort for the PM of a tiny Caribbean island to make the eight-hour flight to the UK to have a few bevies. However, St Kitts is on a globe-trotting mission, much like other islands such as Antigua, St Lucia, Grenada, Turks & Caicos and Trinidad & Tobago, to grow their economies, by boosting tourism and foreign investment into their property markets.

Tax-free incentives are proving more major reasons to invest, along with quality, good value developments on some Caribbean

**The buy-to-let market offers opportunities in Trinidad and the rental market in Tobago is also buoyant – here, yields have reached up to 11.3 per cent**

islands where this high level of property is in short supply. Some islands have also introduced new regulations for foreigners to own freehold property.

With guaranteed good weather, white beaches, friendly people and property at very attractive prices, the Caribbean seems to fit the bill for the City investor. Finance is also widely available with a wide range of mortgages of up to 100 per cent.



## TURKS & CAICOS SPORTING CLUB AT AMBERGRIS CAY

Eight miles of white shoreline complemented by ten miles of biking and bridle paths can surely satisfy the fussiest buyer. But in case this isn't enough, the focal point of the island will be the deep water marina designed to accommodate vessels in excess of 200ft. There will also be an on-island customs, which would allow private direct flights to the island to land on the jet strip.

Act quickly though. Nearly a third of the island's homes have already been sold, so the chances to own in this private paradise are diminishing quickly – as is space for all the private jets, presumably.

**CONTACT:** Lucy on 0845 224 3658, or email [info@quintessentiallyestates.com](mailto:info@quintessentiallyestates.com)



## THE ISLAND

Situated in a variety of tropical hideaways, from St Lucia to Barbados, luxury villas from The Island cost between £490K and £1.2m, and all come with their own private grounds, state-of-the-art media centre, sunken double bath and infinity-edged swimming pools. Just in case this isn't relaxing enough, they are also slap-bang in the middle of spas that boast any treatment required to stimulate, purify, soothe and de-toxify, all pretty necessary considering the amount of exertion needed to cope with the rigorous demands of swimming, sunbathing and gloating at those that settled for less.

To learn more, go along to Industry Real Estate's "The Platinum Collection" showcase held at the Brewery, Chiswell St, London EC1 on 30 April 2008. To pre-reserve please, visit [www.industryre.com](http://www.industryre.com) and register at The Platinum Collection.



ABOVE AND MAIN: Turks & Caicos Sporting Club at Ambergris Cay

So, out of around 100 islands, where's best to invest? Ray Withers, an agent from Caribbean specialist Property Frontiers, reckons the most exciting investment market is picturesque Grenada, where property and tourism markets are rising fast and a number of high-class developments are under construction. He adds: "Barbados has some of the region's most famous beaches and a vibrant party scene but prices have risen to extortionate levels, especially on the west coast," he says. "However, three-bedroom villas in St Lucia are around 27 per cent below those of Barbados, at £160,000.

"The buy-to-let market offers opportunities in Trinidad and the rental market in Tobago is buoyant - here, yields have reached up to 11.3 per cent. Popular Bequia, in St Vincent and the Grenadines, has great bargains where studio apartments are available from £110,000. And Antigua's recent property boom is due to improved flights and outstanding golf and yachting facilities." ■



## LE PARADIS BEACH, GOLF & MARINA RESORT, ST LUCIA

A rare feature of this five-star resort in St Lucia is the 18-hole Greg Norman championship golf course. A mile of sunny coastline offers hidden coves, snorkelling, reef diving and deepwater marinas for mega yachts. The marina village will have gourmet restaurants and exclusive boutique shopping. Rainforests provide great hiking and horse-riding trails for families and a kids' club will be built at the resort. The Westin Experience has a rejuvenating spa, fine dining, tennis courts and swimming pools.

**DETAILS:** From £385,000 to £570,000  
**CONTACT:** Barton Wyatt, 01344 843 000,  
[www.bw-international.com](http://www.bw-international.com)