

# A VINTAGE INVESTMENT

**T**RY TO imagine the satisfaction of strolling down row upon row of sun-drenched vines every day, watching your crop ripen beneath a cobalt-blue sky. And then, later on, sipping the results of your labours.

That will be the treat in store for Sting, who has just announced he is launching a red wine produced on his Tuscan estate.

But you don't need 182 acres to experience such a pleasure — and you don't need to be rich to make your own wine either.

An increasing number of developments around the world are tuning into the popularity of wine tourism and providing private individuals with the opportunity to buy a second home in a wine-producing location.

Such properties offer the best of both worlds: the experience of getting involved with wine-making without the responsibility of running a vineyard, says Anne Mizrachi, of French property agent Latitudes.

'Many British people like the idea of making their own wine. So they come to France and go to classes and join wine clubs near their holiday homes,' she says.

According to the travel website *TripAdvisor.com*, wine tourism is on the increase, and the most popular destination is Bordeaux in the south of France.

This is followed in popularity by Napa Valley in California, Tuscany in Italy and the Champagne region of France.

For those who want a full-time hobby, Latitudes is selling a renovated 16th-century, four-bedroom townhouse with 160 vines near Chinon in the Loire Valley for £312,900 (020 895 15 155, [latitudes.co.uk](http://latitudes.co.uk)).

Alternatively, if the idea of 100,000 bottles a year appeals, they've got a large farmhouse with a full working winery — or *chai* — and 25 hectares of vine in Bordeaux for £710,700.

Although you can get EU grants for making wine, buying a property on a working wine estate is a cost-effective alternative for budding *vignerons*.

At the Chateau Les Carrasses in the Languedoc, you can buy a property from £185,050. As well as participating in the wine-making process, you receive 50 cases of wine a year (0870 626 5203, [domainedemeure.com](http://domainedemeure.com)).

**K**ARL O'HANLON, of the project's developer *Domaine & Demeure*, says that the wine tourism element increases the rental potential of the 28 properties, 20 minutes from Beziers.

'Wine tourism is on the up and net yields of between 4 and 4.5 per cent are possible if owners rent out their homes in high season,' he says. 'Plus there's the added authenticity of owning — or staying in — a historic building on a *domaine* that has produced wine since 1886.'

The opportunities for integrating with the local community that wine production provides



Ripe to buy: A spectacular vineyard in Umbria, Italy

Picture: CORBIS

## You don't need to be a millionaire to buy a vineyard. Liz Rowlinson uncorks some tempting properties

appealed to a British buyer on another Languedoc wine estate, Le Jardins de St Benoit, in the village of St Laurent.

Owners at this 17-acre vineyard estate and spa — managed by Garrigae Resorts — can buy their own vines, join the local co-operative or just enjoy drinking, the rich-red Corbieres wine.

'I wanted to live at the heart of a French community,' says Pam Gregory, a 56-year-old management consultant from the New Forest. 'I've already booked two weeks in September to coincide with the grape harvest.'

Prices start from £183,250 for a one-bedroom townhouse. Properties can be bought on a freehold or leaseback basis, both offering income from the resort's managed rental scheme (0871 218 2103, [garrigae.com](http://garrigae.com)).

For something more contemporary, budding oenologists could look to the Alentejo region of Portugal, where strikingly modern homes come with their own vines on the LAND wine estate (00351 21 314 66 73, [l-and.com](http://l-and.com)).

The low, cubic homes — which start from £156,430 for a two-bedroom villa — are built around a central patio.

Owners can make their own wine in the 66-hectare complex's winery, select their own barrels and label their bottles.

You can also benefit from local wine expertise — and free samples — if you buy into a fractional scheme, such as Aqua Pura in the Douro Valley in the north of Portugal (00351 254 660 600, [aquapurahotels.com](http://aquapurahotels.com)) or Castello di Casole in the heart of Italy's Chianti region.

At the latter, free membership of the new Vinters Club — worth £22,400 a year — is available to owners of fractions at the 4,200-acre wine estate run by U.S. company Timbers Resorts.

You'll need to spend at least £259,230 for four weeks a year in a restored farmhouse (0039 0577 967 511, [castellodicasole.com](http://castellodicasole.com)).

Elsewhere in Tuscany, you can buy an apartment on a managed wine estate for £268,120 according to property agent Luca

Santoro of House & Loft (0039 276 017 010, [houseloft.com](http://houseloft.com)).

'Or, for greater privacy, you can get a farmhouse from £670,305 and appoint a local farmworker to manage your vineyard on a share-cropping basis.'

For the same price down in the foot of Italy, you can get 50 to 100 bottles of wine a year included in the deal when you buy a stone farmhouse in Basilicata or Puglia. Italian developer Francesco Carlucci, of Landscape Properties, arranges for owners' vines to be tended by local farmers (0782 571 7758, [dreamhomesinpuglia.com](http://dreamhomesinpuglia.com)).

**Y**OU can buy vine-bearing properties relatively cheaply in Cyprus and Crete (a small house with a few vines costs from £50,000 from [creteproperty.co.uk](http://creteproperty.co.uk), 0845 337 2717), though the better known wine-tourism destinations are a safer bet if you're after a decent rental income.

South Africa's Western Cape is one of the most heavily marketed wine regions.

The Cape Town office of Aylesford International sells properties in the wine-route hotspots — Constantia, Franschoek, Paarl and Stellenbosch — but a new vineyard and spa resort might appeal to those who like quaffing and pampering (020 7349 5100, [ayelsford.com](http://ayelsford.com)).

You can become a fractional owner of a 45-square metre hotel room at the Zorgvliet Vineyard Lodge & Spa, just outside Stellenbosch, from £8,000.

Owners will enjoy capital appreciation of their investment as well as their own row of vines and personalised wine labels.

Fans of the Malbec variety of Argentinian red wine might consider buying a home at the La Estancia de Cafayate in the north-west of the country, where owners of bespoke homesteads get 100 bottles of wine a year (0054 387 422 3146, [www.laestanciadecafayate.com](http://www.laestanciadecafayate.com)).

Owners can get involved in golf and polo or tour the local wineries, or *bodegas*. But for many it's an awfully long way to go for a decent glass of wine.

### Overseas Property



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## ON THE MARKET... in wine country



**Contemporary vineyard home, Portugal, £581,000**  
THIS sleek five-bedroom patio-style home at L'AND winery in the Alentejo comes with its own vines and orchards.

■ LAND: 00351 21 314 66 73, [l-and.com](http://l-and.com)

### Hotel suite on a winery, South Africa, £8,000 (fractional scheme)

OWNERS of this investment/lifestyle fractional purchase on the Zorgvliet Vineyard Lodge & Spa near Stellenbosch can partake of wine-making and wine-tasting.

■ ST ANDREWS Travel: 01204 397 367, [zorgvlietprop.co.za](http://zorgvlietprop.co.za)

