

Hotel Dort Mevsim in Pamukkale

<http://www.hoteldortmevsim.com>

Uniquely positioned as a cultural and geographical bridge between Europe and Asia, Turkey is a land of exotic contradictions. Where else does East meet West, old confront new, snowy mountains descend towards baking sands, and tradition come face-to-face with the ultra-modern? With magical mosques and monuments clamouring for attention among the bars, bazaars and beaches, find out why this is a destination to delight...

TURKEY

with all the trimmings

Words by Laura Roberts, pictures
by Pictures Colour Library, A1PIX



Istanbul's Blue Mosque at night: an illuminating spectacle against the inky Bosphorus

Above Sunset over the Bodrum Peninsula

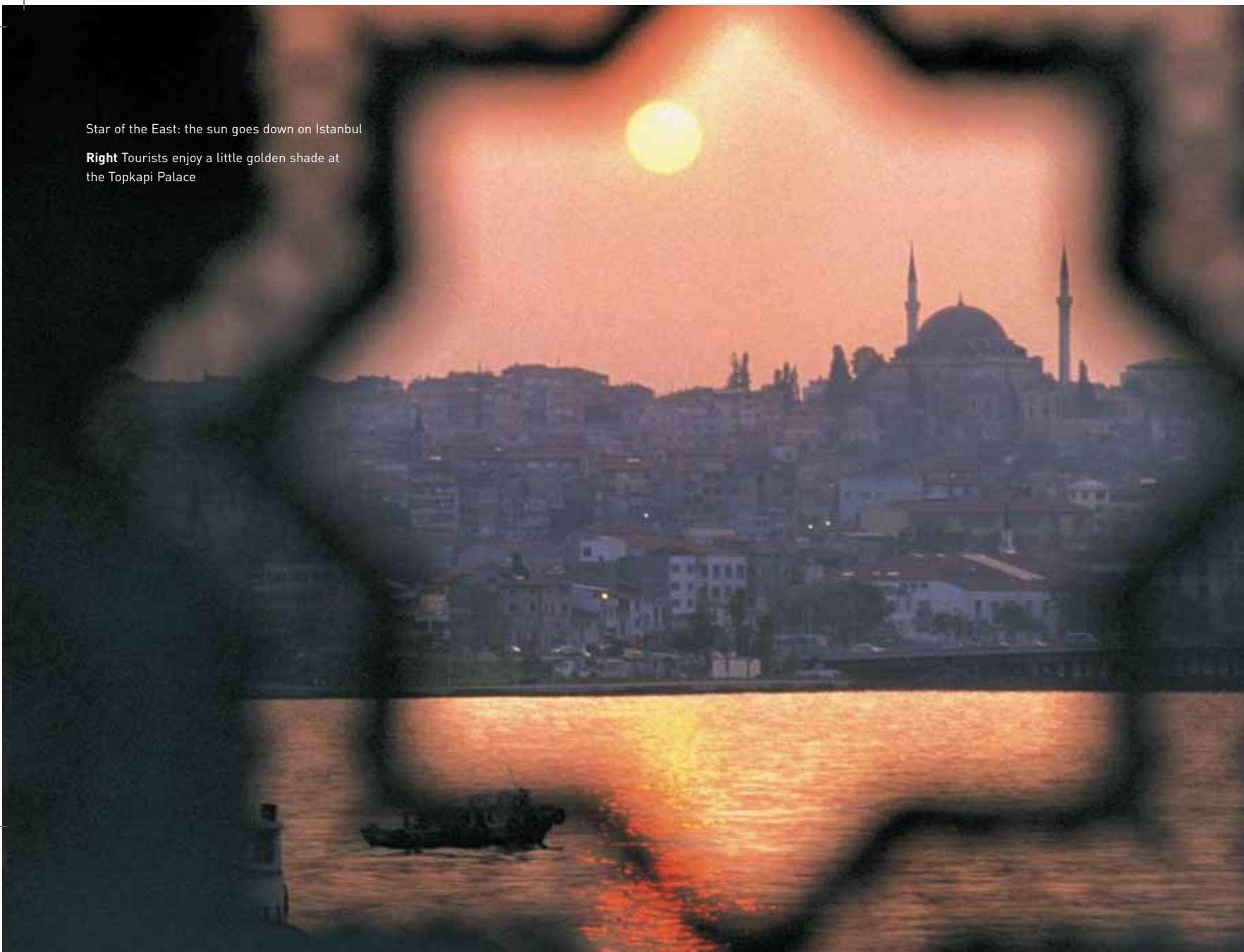
Above, right Women carry out the traditional craft of weaving woollen rugs by hand

Left The world-renowned Patara Beach



Star of the East: the sun goes down on Istanbul

Right Tourists enjoy a little golden shade at the Topkapi Palace



Modern Turkey is a fascinating amalgam of Europe, Asia and the Middle East, a blend of Western lifestyle and traditional mosques and markets, a place where everyday life is coloured, but not dominated, by the religious traditions of its almost entirely Muslim population. It's a country of contrasts – from bustling cosmopolitan towns and farming villages, to white-sand beaches and steep mountain regions with hidden alpine meadows. Surrounded by the crystal-clear waters of the Mediterranean, Aegean and Black Seas, Turkey boasts 8,000 kilometres of coastline, including the beach voted the best in the world by tour operators in a 1998 *Sunday Times* survey – the 18-kilometre stretch of golden sands at Patara. The Turkish people have an unrivalled reputation for hospitality, the food is fabulous, the coastline is a dream, and the cities are picturesque, with spectacular mosques and castles. And while costs everywhere are rising, Turkey remains the Mediterranean's bargain destination. The legendary Mustafa Kemal, a Turkish World War I hero

later known as 'Atatürk' or 'Father of the Turks', founded the Republic of Turkey in 1923 after the collapse of the 600-year-old Ottoman Empire. He took on the huge task of completely refashioning Turkish society, and did so with such success that he remains a hero in Turkey to this day: his statue is everywhere, and there are laws against defaming or insulting him. Stylish Istanbul is one of the most beautiful and romantic cities in the world. Straddling the Bosphorus, its skyline studded with domes and minarets, it shines as Turkey's cultural capital. The heart of historical Istanbul is Sultanahmet, the district centred on the Byzantine Hippodrome in the oldest part of the city. Best explored on foot, most sights are within easy walking distance of each other. The city is filled with palaces and historical buildings. On a finger of land at the confluence of the Bosphorus, the Golden Horn and the Sea of Marmara stands the Topkapi Palace, a maze of buildings that was the focal point of the Ottoman Empire between the 15th and 19th Centuries. In these opulent surroundings the sultans and their court lived and governed. A magnificent wooded garden fills the outer, or first, court. In the second court, shaded by cypress and plane trees, stand the



THE CLIMATE

Because of Turkey's geographical situation and the diverse nature of the landscape, the climate varies considerably from one part of the country to another. In Istanbul and around the sea of Marmara, the climate is moderate, with average temperatures of 27°C in summer and 4°C in winter; however, winter temperatures can drop below zero. In Western Anatolia (Aegean region) and on the southern coast of Anatolia (Mediterranean region) there is a Mediterranean climate, with average temperatures of 29°C in summer and 9°C in winter. The Anatolian Plateau has high temperatures during the day, which drop dramatically at night, with little rainfall and snow in winter. The Black Sea area is wet, warm and humid (summer 23°C; winter 7°C). In Eastern Anatolia and South-Eastern Anatolia there is a long, hard winter, with snow on the ground from November until the end of April (winter, 13°C; summer, 17°C).

palace kitchens, which now serve as galleries with exhibitions of the imperial collections of crystal, silver and Chinese porcelain. The second court also houses the Harem, the secluded quarters of the wives, concubines and children of the sultan.

Today, the third court holds the Hall of Audience, the Library of Ahmet III, an exhibition of imperial costumes worn by the sultans and their families, the famous jewels of the treasury and a priceless collection of miniatures from medieval manuscripts. In the centre, the Pavilion of the Holy Mantle contains the relics of the Prophet Muhammad.

The façade of the Dolmabahçe Palace, built in the mid-19th Century by Sultan Abdülmecit I, stretches along the European shore of the Bosphorus. The vast reception salon, with its 56 columns and four-and-a-half-ton crystal chandelier with 750 lights, never fails to astonish visitors. It was here that Atatürk died on 10th November 1938.

Turkey's capital, Ankara, is a sprawling city in the midst of the Central Anatolian steppe. It's very different from the Ottoman town of Angora which preceded it on this site: a quiet place where the famous long-haired goats were raised and their fleeces shorn and knitted into jumpers. Since 1920, when Atatürk set up his provisional government here, Ankara's main business has been government, but several significant attractions make it worth a flying visit.

Hisar, the Byzantine citadel on the hill east of the old city, and the nearby Museum of Anatolian Civilisations are both



LIFE OF LUXURY ↑

This stunning complex of 12 luxurious detached homes is perfectly located between Olu Deniz and Fethiye at the base of the magnificent Babadag mountain in Ovacik. All homes have beautiful views across the valley of Hisaronu and consist of four bedrooms, three bathrooms, two receptions and a private pool. Price: £171,000. For further information, contact Headlands International; tel: 01933 654000; www.headlands.co.uk



Istanbul's Ortakoy Mosque stands in the shadow of the Bosphorus Bridge – the slender thread linking Europe with Asia

Bottom High-quality Turkish carpets are always a favourite with holidaymakers

Since 1920, Ankara's main business has been government, but several significant attractions make it worth a flying visit



Above Turkish souvenir-hunting can be a weighty business

Right Truly unmissable – Istanbul's Grand Bazaar is a haggler's heaven!



GETTING THERE ↓

The flight time from London to Istanbul is around three-and-a-half hours; it's slightly longer for destinations further afield. Time difference is GMT plus two hours. There are major airports at Istanbul, Izmir, Dalaman, Adana and Antalya. British Airways (www.ba.com) and Turkish Airlines (www.thy.com) offer scheduled flights, but picking up a charter flight could save you money.



KAYA COTTAGES ↑

Pretty three-bed semi-detached cottages in the peaceful village of Kaya. The cottages have beautiful views and a shared pool. Price: £95,000. Aquavista Property Consultants; tel: 01580 850170; www.aquavistaproperty.com



GREAT-VALUE VILLA

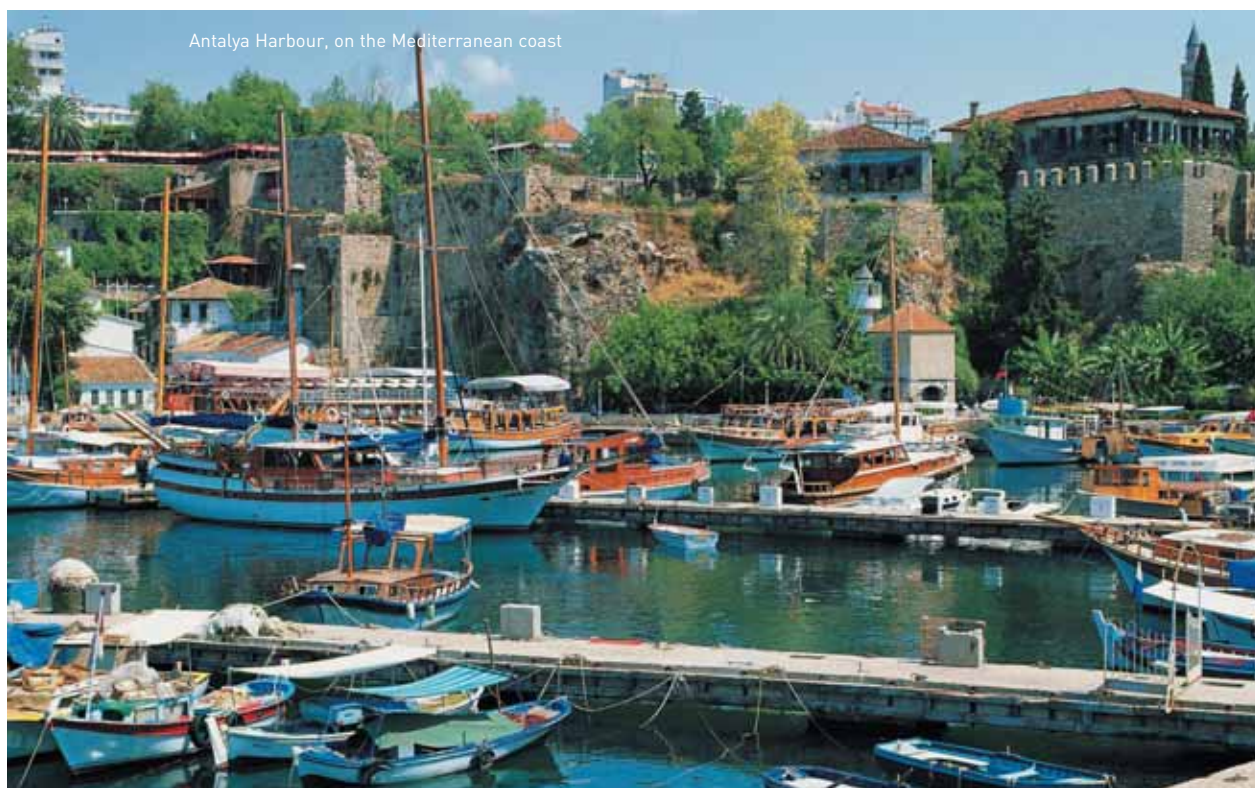
This fabulous natural stone villa has marble floors, two bedrooms, a private swimming pool, balcony and a garage. Price: £79,000. Curbanoglu Properties; tel: 0871 711 3919; www.curbanoglu.com

popular. The Presidential Mansion is preserved as Atatürk used it, with decor and furnishings from the 1930s.

Antalya is the main city on Turkey's central Mediterranean coast. Because the modern city was built on top of the remains of its predecessor, very little remains of old Antalya. Of the fortifications that once surrounded it, only Hidirlik Kulesi (a round Roman tower) is still standing, but make sure you find the time to check out the Byzantine triple-arched Hadrian's Gate, and the Kesik Minare (Broken Minaret).

Antalya is also a good base from which to explore the quieter coastal resorts and more spectacular ancient cities of the region. Side, 75 kilometres to the east – once chosen by Mark Antony and Cleopatra for a romantic tryst – is increasingly popular.

Also to the east, Alanya is a popular holiday destination with a mini-Miami feel, and the party town of Patara lies to the south-west. Its long and beautiful beach has Roman ruins among the dunes. There's no midnight bathing here, though – the beach closes at dusk to give sea turtles access to their nest sites. The



Antalya Harbour, on the Mediterranean coast

Home thoughts from...

Keith and Helen Wells

Keith Wells, 45, an IT consultant, and Helen, 42, a personnel manager, are from Stourbridge in Wiltshire and have a holiday home in Kalkan.

What's your property like?

It's a two-bedroom apartment on two floors just outside Kalkan, on the Mediterranean coast, with beautiful sea

views. It's part of a small development with a garden and a shared pool.

Why did you buy a property in Turkey?

We've had lots of holidays in Turkey over the years and we just love the country – the weather, the relaxed lifestyle, the people. We reckoned that we'd save money in the long-run by buying our own holiday flat.

How much did you pay for the apartment?

We bought it two years ago for £55,000. It was excellent value as it's really roomy and came fully furnished with air conditioning, all the kitchen appliances and satellite TV. The shared pool is a real bonus.

Have you had to do much in terms of additional work?

We haven't had to touch it. It was immaculate when we moved in.

How did you find the property?

We started off by searching for agents in the area on the Internet, then came over here on holiday and visited some of them. We found this place really quickly and both fell in love with it, and its location.

How did you find the buying process?

Really easy. Our estate agent introduced us to a good English-speaking lawyer, and we gave him Power of Attorney to deal with the purchase on our behalf.

What are prices like in this area?

They've gone up quite a bit since we purchased in 2002, but Turkey is still good value.

Do you plan to rent out the property?

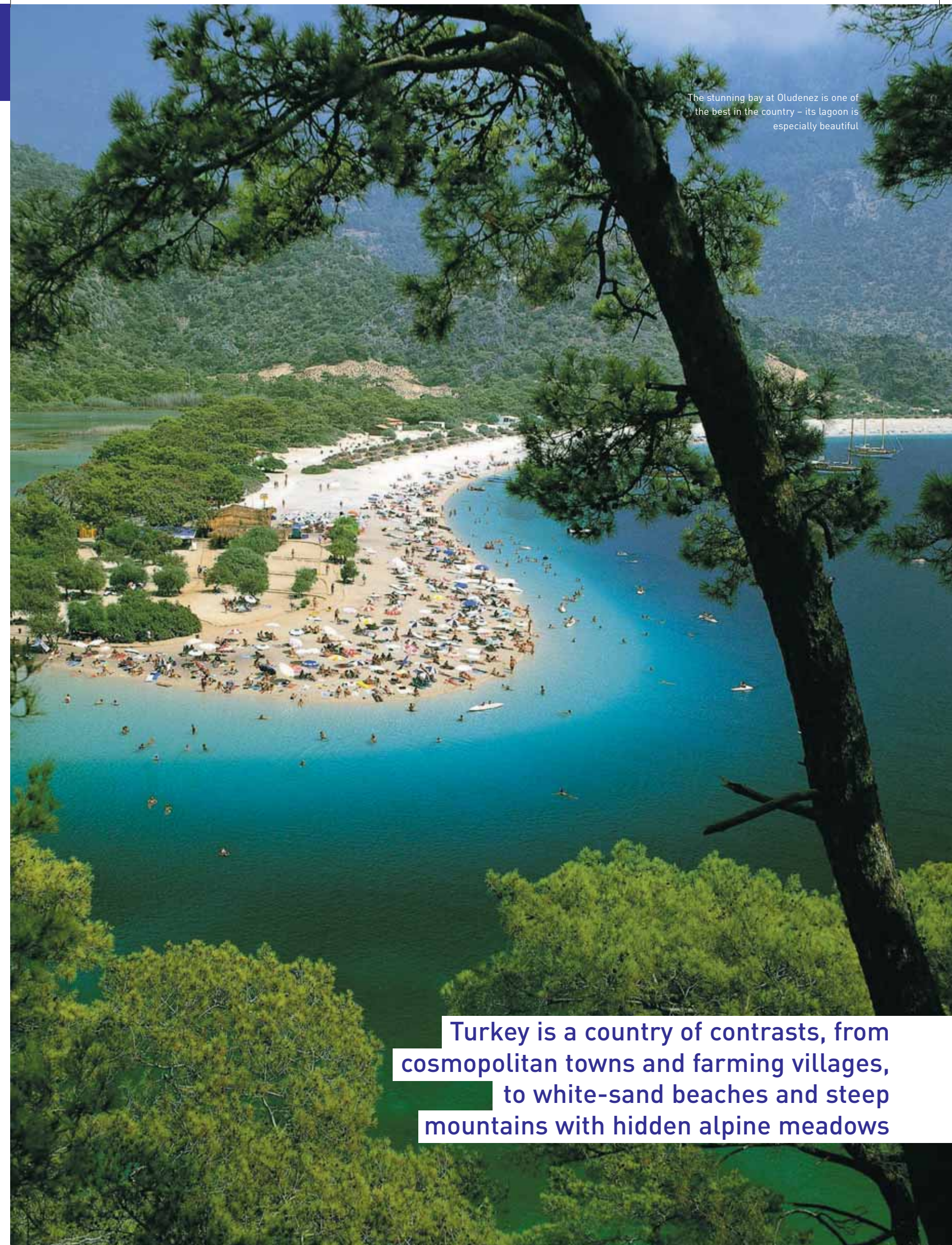
So far we've only let friends and family use it but, as rental property is popular, we're thinking of letting it out through an agent next year.

Do you have any advice to other readers wanting to buy in Turkey?

Our advice is: go for it. The lifestyle is wonderfully relaxing, and the weather is great all the year round.



Duden Waterfalls, near Antalya



The stunning bay at Oludeniz is one of the best in the country – its lagoon is especially beautiful

Turkey is a country of contrasts, from cosmopolitan towns and farming villages, to white-sand beaches and steep mountains with hidden alpine meadows

The crusaders' Castle of St Peter guards the bay at Bodrum – one of the south Aegean's prettiest and liveliest resorts

Bottom The streets, shops and small harbour of Kalkan remain relatively untouched by mass tourism

Opposite Last orders! Twilight time at a Bodrum bar



Home thoughts from...

Peter and Helen Jackson

Peter Jackson, 55, and his wife Sue, 53, have three children and two grandchildren. Peter owns a garden centre and Sue is a nurse. They have a villa near Fethiye.

What's your property like?

It's a four-bedroom villa with two bathrooms and a shared pool. We wanted somewhere big enough for all the family to stay.

Why did you buy a property in Turkey?

We thought of buying a holiday home some time ago, and initially looked at Spain. But we couldn't find anywhere that we liked – there's so much development in Spain you hardly know where to start. Then some friends suggested Turkey as an alternative. We went to Fethiye for a holiday and fell in love with the place. Buying a holiday home here seemed ideal.

How much did you pay for the villa?

We bought it last year for £85,000. It's beautifully finished, with lots of marble and a lovely kitchen with units made from local pine.

How did you find the property?

We literally walked into an estate agents while we were on holiday and

got lots of property details. There were plenty of new developments due for completion this year, but we didn't want to wait that long. Our villa had literally just been finished.

How did you find the buying process?

We were a bit concerned about the ins-and-outs of buying, but we used a local company who organised everything for us. It took a few months, but it was a painless process.

What are prices like in this area?

You can get some really good bargains if you search around. There is a lot of new property going up, too, so there's plenty of choice.

Do you plan to rent out the property?

No. We've been told you can get a really good return on renting out, but we really do want the whole family to be able to use it whenever they want to. Renting it out would make that impossible. Also, it's so lovely inside, we couldn't bear to think of anyone else living in it!

Do you have any advice to other readers wanting to buy in Turkey?

We haven't regretted it at all. The whole process, from finding the property to buying it, was hassle-free. If you want a holiday home, this is the perfect place.

YOUR HOME IN THE HILLS?

Located two kilometres from the beach in the hills surrounding Alanya, these luxury villas offer the buyer stunning views of the Mediterranean coast. The villas are of superb quality with modern kitchens and bathrooms, and are available with either two or three bedrooms and with the possibility of a private pool. Prices range from £90,000 to £160,000 depending on size.

Contact Mozaik Property; tel: 01273 624381; www.mozaikproperty.com



waterfalls at Duden, Kursunlu and Manavgat – all within an 18-kilometre radius of Antalya – are also worth a visit.

Historic, unspoilt Kalkan is one of the most beautiful locations along Turkey's Lycian Coast. (The Lycians were an ancient people who inhabited the area of present-day Turkey between the bays of Antalya and Fethiye.) Once a Greek village, Kalkan verges on the idyllic, and is untouched by mass tourism. It's centred around a little harbour, with an Old Town and a bazaar where you'll find restaurants and carpet shops. Kalkan lacks sandy beaches in the village itself, but with Patara only 15 minutes away, and regular boat trips to the two nearest sandy beaches, you'll have no trouble finding a pleasant spot to soak up the sun.

Bodrum is the south Aegean's prettiest – and one its liveliest – resorts, with a harbour and a port for ferries to the Greek island of Kos. Palm-lined streets surround its bays, and the traditional square white houses on the hillsides have been



Fethiye's winding streets are lined with the remains of ancient Lycian rock tombs

joined by smart new holiday villas. Prime Bodrum activities include boating, swimming, snorkelling and scuba diving. There is also a busy nightlife.

Pretty Fethiye on the Mediterranean coast is a large town among the pine forests, whose winding streets and surrounding mountains are lined with the remains of ancient Lycian rock tombs. An excellent climate makes the area rich in plant life, including the frankincense tree. Among the rarest species in the world, the tree is cultivated only around Fethiye and Koycegiz and in a small district of California.

Marmaris was once a small fishing village. Today, it's a bustling cosmopolitan resort with its own beach and another massive sandy stretch, just eight kilometres down the road at Icmeler. Alternatively, take advantage of one of the boats that chug away in the morning from the marina to scores of sandy beaches, like Cleopatra's Island and the Turtle Beach.

Its port welcomes luxury cruise liners, which disgorge passengers keen to visit the old quarter, and nearby archaeological sites including the ancient city of Ephesus, and Pamukkale – seen by some as the eighth Wonder of the World.

Marmaris is also a shopper's paradise. Leather goods, natural sponges and the local blue glass beads (*boncuk*) are among the

EAT AND DRINK

Bring a healthy appetite to Turkey – you'll be in for a treat. *Shish kebab* (skewer-grilled lamb) is a Turkish invention, and you'll find *kebapçis* everywhere. Lamb and fish dishes are restaurant staples, but can be expensive. Dumplings filled with a special meat mix, and eaten with lashings of garlic yogurt and melted butter with paprika, are the Turkish version of a Sunday roast. Aubergine is the number one vegetable: try *imam bayildi* (which translates as 'the priest fainted!'), a delicious stuffed aubergine dish. Desserts are sweet (often honey-soaked) and tend to incorporate fruit, nuts and pastry in tempting combinations.

Vegetarians aren't exactly catered for, but you'll never starve – making an entire meal from magnificent *meze* (a selection of starters) is easy. Similar to the Spanish tapas, Turkish meze include dried and marinated mackerel; fresh salad leaves in thick yogurt sauce with garlic; plates of cold vegetable dishes cooked or fried in olive oil; crispy-fried savoury pastries; deep-fried mussels and calamari in sauce; tomato and cucumber salad; and fish roe in sauce.

The national drink is *çay* (tea). Beer is served in most places, and Turkish wines are cheap and surprisingly good. *Raki*, an aniseed-flavoured grape brandy, is the tippie of choice.



COMPREHENSIVE COMPLEX

Excellent duplex apartment in a brand new complex in Calis. The apartment has three bedrooms and the buyer would have access to all the modern facilities in the complex, including a swimming pool, cafe, bar and gym.

Price £64,000. Contact Tulip Properties; tel: 00 90 252 614 4441; www.tulipproperties.com

Home thoughts from...

Phil Broadbent

Phil, 65, is a retired office manager from Oxford. He has an apartment in Calis, a quiet resort near Fethiye with a long sandy beach.

What's your property like?

It's a one-bedroom apartment about 15 minutes' walk from the beach. It's got an open-plan living area and a terrace.

Why did you buy a property in Turkey?

Well, some friends of mine bought a property in Fethiye, and I stayed with them a few times. I liked it so much I decided to buy a place of my own. Now that I'm retired, I can spend as much time here as I want.

How much did you pay for the apartment?

It cost me £35,000. It's ideal – although it's only got one bedroom, the sofa converts into an extra bed, so I can have people over to stay.

How did you find the property?

I went to the local agent my friends

used. He showed me a few properties, and this was one of them.

How did you find the buying process?

Quite easy. Again, I used the same people that my friends had used. They were able to advise me, and there weren't any problems. I paid cash, too, so I didn't have to worry about borrowing money – which made it simpler.

What are prices like in this area?

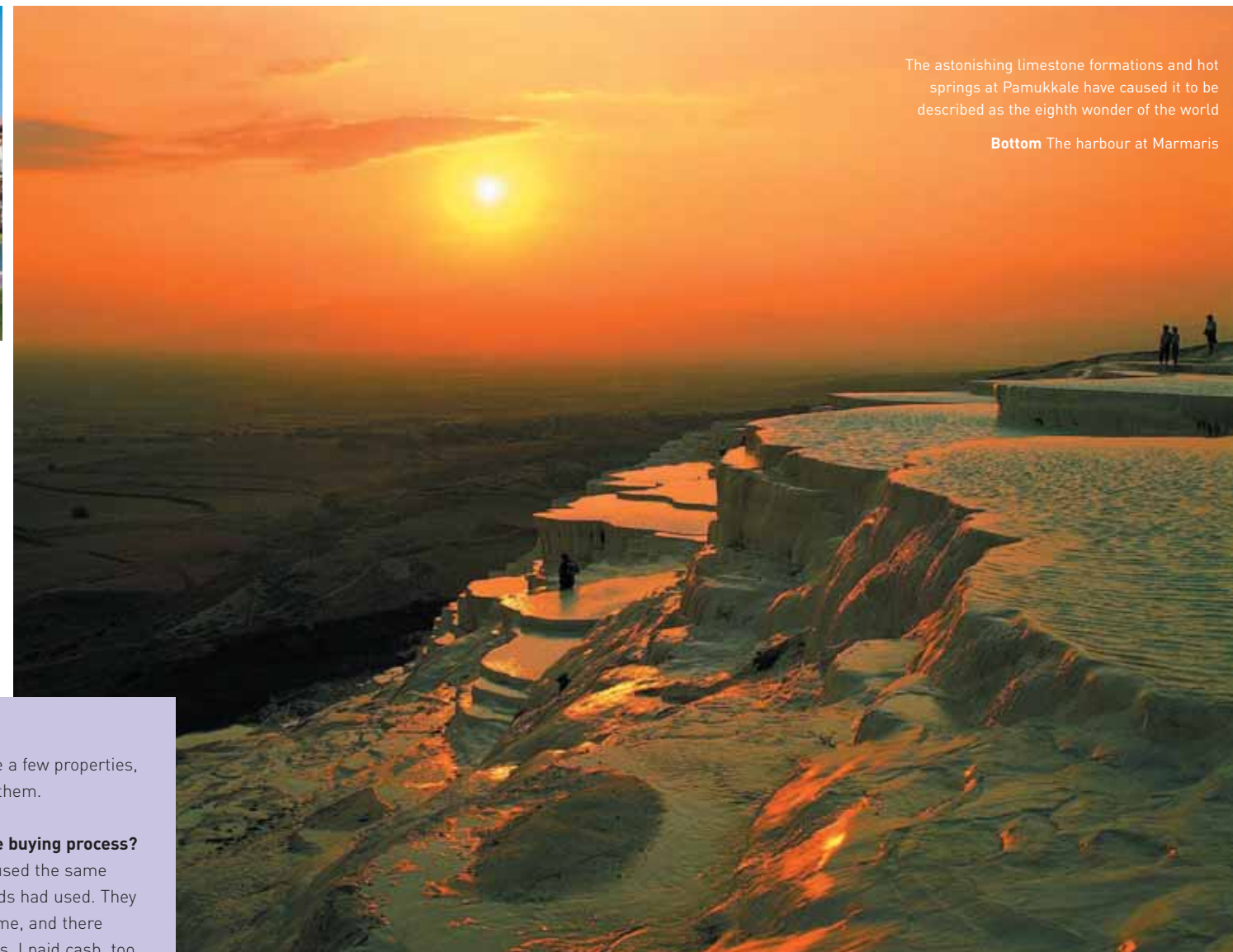
It seems to be getting more expensive, from what I can see. But it's still ridiculously cheap when you see what you can get for your money.

Do you plan to rent out the property?

No. I like to be able to jump on a plane and come here whenever I feel like it. And being retired, that's the luxury I have.

Do you have any advice to other readers wanting to buy in Turkey?

For anyone of my age, Turkey is a great place to be. The weather is kind to creaky joints, the cost of living is low and the way of life is wonderful.



The astonishing limestone formations and hot springs at Pamukkale have caused it to be described as the eighth wonder of the world

Bottom The harbour at Marmaris

CURRENCY



When buying a property abroad, you'll know the price in the local currency – but until you've fixed an exchange rate, you won't know the actual cost.

Currency markets can be quite volatile; you can monitor exchange rates online at www.hifx.co.uk/cc.

No-one can predict future exchange rates, so buy or reserve all of the currency that you need as soon as you agree on the property. You can hold it with your bank or currency broker until you need to send it overseas. If you don't have all of the money available at the outset, you can reserve an exchange rate for a future date.



BARGAIN BEACH HOME

Marvellous two-, three- and four-bedroom apartments in the Golden Park resort in Altinkum. The apartments are set in beautiful garden surroundings, with palm trees and a shared swimming pool.

Price from £42,000. Contact Aquavista Property; tel: 01580 850170; www.aquavistaproperty.com

5 THINGS TO DO IN TURKEY

- Purify the mind and body with the heat and vigorous massage of a traditional Turkish bath, or *hammam*.
- Control middle-age spread – and have a bit of fun – by taking belly-dancing lessons.
- Discover the underwater secrets of the Mediterranean and Aegean coastlines on a scuba-diving trip.
- Visit the market or bazaar to perfect the time-honoured practice of haggling.
- Get married and/or enjoy an enchanting honeymoon. Why not sail off into the sunset on a traditional wooden yacht, or *gulet*? (It's a lot closer than the Caribbean or Maldives).



Left The Trojan Horse is a reminder of Turkey's less peaceful past

Right Rock tombs in the ancient city of Caunos. Many treasures remain, as yet, undiscovered

Below The village of Dalyan nestles between mountains and sea – a protected area of outstanding natural beauty



AMAZING APARTMENTS

Terrific two- and three-bedroom apartments close to Hisaronu, with a communal swimming pool and garden area. Price from £67,500. For more information, contact Aquavista Property; tel: 01580 850170; www.aquavistaproperty.com



A GRAND DESIGN

This amazing detached villa was built by an interior designer to live in, therefore all the materials used are of top quality. The villa, located in Bodrum, has two bedrooms and three bathrooms. In the back garden there is a 350-year-old olive tree near the cleverly designed pond. The front garden has a large area of grass – in which you could build a private freshwater swimming pool – which is surrounded by banana trees. Price: £113,000. Contact Property Finders International; tel: 0845 330 1449; www.newskeys.co.uk



Dalyan has the widest variety of wildlife in Turkey, including species of birds not found anywhere else in the world

numerous bargains to be found in the friendly little shops that line the bazaar. Boutiques at the end of the promenade offer *kilims*, carpets, sandals and embroidery.

Dalyan village is a real contrast to Marmaris. Nestled between mountains, surrounded by lush green fields, next to a river and a huge lake and right by the sea, it's a protected area of natural beauty. On the opposite side of the river is the ancient city of Caunos, perhaps the second greatest archaeological site in Turkey. Only ten per cent of the city has been unearthed, and every year more and more treasures are discovered. The area around Dalyan has the widest variety of wildlife to be found in Turkey, including species of birds not found anywhere else in the world. A short boat ride away is a four-kilometre long beach providing a nesting ground for endangered loggerhead turtles.

Named after the pigeons that make their home in the town's 14th-Century castle, Kusadasi ('Bird island') on the west coast is one of Turkey's main holiday resorts, and close to important historical sites including Ephesus, Didyma, Priene and Miletus. It has superb beaches, palm-lined streets and plenty of excellent restaurants and shops. Nothing beats watching the sun go down over a drink at one of the bars that crowd the busy harbour.

Of Turkey's hundreds of ancient cities and classical ruins, Ephesus is the grandest and best preserved. A tour of the ruins will take at least half a day, and if you visit in summer, start early – before it gets too hot. Marble roadways and columned avenues create an authentic impression of this ancient gateway to the Eastern world. You'll find the Grotto of the Seven Sleepers; the colossal Harbour Gymnasium; the grand, marble-paved Arcadian Way; the impressive Temple of Hadrian and a scattering of Roman fountains, pools, brothels, libraries and public toilets.

For a real journey back in time, however, visit Harran in south-east Anatolia, one of the oldest continuously inhabited spots on earth. The hills around the town are surrounded by crumbling walls and topped with ruined buildings. As well as the fortress and the 8th-Century mosque, it is notable for the quaint, beehive-shaped mud houses still favoured by some of today's residents.



THE PROPERTY MARKET

Turkey is one of the brightest hotspots to shine in the overseas property market. Property there is excellent value for money, as the market is in its initial stages of development and can be compared with Spain five years ago. With Turkey expected to join the EU in 2007, prices are bound to rise. Holiday villas in Turkey are always in demand, especially during high season, May to September, so there's great rental income to be had.

High standards of education and medical care, a low crime rate – and a cost of living at least 50 per cent cheaper than in UK – also attracts mature couples and families with children to move to Turkey and live there full time.

Nevin Weston of Curbanoglu Properties, says: "The property market in Turkey is buzzing. In the last year nearly 8,000 UK citizens bought property in Turkey. One of the most popular areas is the Turquoise Coast, which, thanks to strict natural protection laws boasts pristine beaches and unspoilt countryside.

"One of the hottest tips would be the region around Dalaman. The Turkish government is committed to making this area one of Turkey's top tourist destinations. This is being achieved through rapid investment in the region and the commissioning of several significant development projects. These include expanding Dalaman airport, building three marinas and the region's first golf course. Since these projects are still in the early stages of implementation, prices have not yet reacted, so we would say that Dalaman is definitely one of Turkey's hottest tips for future growth."


You can buy a one-bed apartment for around £25,000 and a two-bed terraced house for just a few thousand more; £78,000 will buy you a five-bed villa with a garden.

Buying property in Turkey is quite straightforward. Foreigners may purchase land and property under their own names provided that properties are located in towns – not in villages or rural areas – and outside military areas.

After an agreed sale, in order to acquire the title of a property, an application has to be made to the local Land Registry Office. The title may be transferred once checks have been made to ensure the property meets all the necessary requirements.

During the transaction, the proofs or documents concerning the transfer of the full purchase price into Turkey must be presented to the Land Registry Office. Sometimes this process can take a few weeks, but where the owner of the property is a foreigner, the checks and searches will have already been carried out, so this part of the procedure can be very swift.

A 1.5 per cent duty both for the purchaser and seller must be paid. In addition, there is an annual property tax, collected by the local government at the rate of 0.1 per cent for houses and 0.3 per cent for developed lands.

New properties are exempt from the annual property tax for five years. All properties are subject to revaluation every five years for tax purposes. The acquired property may be resold and the proceeds of the sale may be transferred out of Turkey. 

www.curbanoglu.com Tel.: 0871 711 3919