

# COUNTRY LIFE<sup>®</sup> INTERNATIONAL

WINTER 2011/2012



## White hot Barbados

Why everyone wants a piece of Paris  
Lock up and leave for peace of mind  
The most expensive properties on Earth



The luxurious way to see great art

## Renaissance masters by train

A NEW Orient Express tour explores the artwork of two of the greatest masters of the Renaissance, Leonardo and Michelangelo. Inspired by the National Gallery's upcoming exhibition 'Leonardo da Vinci: Painter at the Court of Milan', the nine-day itinerary will take guests from London to Milan and Florence. A National Gallery expert will accompany the tour, which starts with exclusive viewings at the British Museum and the National Gallery.

In Milan, guests will see *The Last Supper*, which graces the walls of the refectory in the church of Santa Maria delle Grazie and Michelangelo's *Pietà Rondanini* in the Castello Sforzesco fortress, as well as visiting the Brera Art Gallery. The trip to Florence will reveal Ghirlandai's *The Last Supper*, which influenced Leonardo's fresco, plus Michelangelo's *David* and the treasure trove of artworks that is the Uffizi Gallery. The new Orient Express tour begins on May 16, 2012, and costs from £7,950 per person (0845 077 2222; [www.orient-express.com](http://www.orient-express.com)).



## Castello di Casole hotel for 2012

NEXT April is set to see the opening of a fully restored castle at Castello di Casole, in Tuscany, as a new boutique hotel. Situated at the heart of Casole's 4,200-acre private estate, the hotel will offer 41 suites and provide a range of services and amenities for both guests and second-home owners, including two restaurants, an elegant bar, a spa in the old wine cellar, and a fully restored 18th-century chapel.

Castello di Casole is located just 45 minutes from Florence, and has 28 period farmhouses, which have been beautifully restored. Both fractions and re-sales are available, priced from £240,000 (€275,000) for a fraction, and £3.22m (€3.7m) for full ownership. For more information, visit [www.castellodicasole.com](http://www.castellodicasole.com) or telephone 00 39 0577 967 511.

### New replaces old in Courchevel 1850

A trend for renovation is gripping the sought-after resort of Courchevel 1850. Buyers want old chalets to knock down and replace with bigger and better houses. 'There isn't a lot of development land in Courchevel 1850—the *Mairie* [the French equivalent of a council] has been very conservative—but some of the chalets built in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s are now dated,' explains Matthew Hodder-Williams of Knight Frank.

'Rebuilding is being done by current owners, by buyers looking to rebuild chalets for their own use and by developers looking to create something amazing.'

These replacement properties usually have extra floors, but owners are also intent on adding state-of-the-art facilities. 'The call has been very much for luxury, with proper wine cellars, spas, surround sound, underfloor heating and bigger bedrooms,' explains Mr Hodder-Williams. The window of opportunity to join the rebuilders' ranks is limited: only a few of the original 1960s and 1970s chalets are still available.



Luxury to your own design: beautiful Vamizi Island is a very private island

## Exclusive Indian Ocean villas

BUYERS with a taste for the exotic can purchase their own beach plot and build a luxury villa on Vamizi Island, a private island in the Quirimbas archipelago, off the coast of Mozambique. Measuring almost 2,500 acres, the island has, to date, only housed Vamizi Island Lodge Hotel, best beach property in the *Good Safari Guide* 2011 Awards.

The plots range from two to 13 acres, with a minimum of 330ft of ocean frontage. The homes can have anything up to 600sq m of internal space and 400sq m of external space.

Each villa will consist of timber pavilions linked by raised timber walkways and be based around a lookout tower, inspired by the island's Portuguese lighthouse legacy. Only four or five are to be built each year, and will be priced according to individual specifications. Two villas have been finished, and there is an optional rental scheme. Prices start at £2.5 million (01285 762218; [www.vamiziprivatevillas.com](http://www.vamiziprivatevillas.com)).