

Bricks & Mortar



Golf gets glamorous

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Welcombe Manor in Stratford-upon-Avon adjoins a championship golf club and is for sale with Knight Frank at £3.5 million

Hello, helipad and spa. A life of luxury close to the green.

When the players arrive at the historic Gleneagles Hotel in Perthshire next month to take a swing

at the 40th Ryder Cup, it's a fair bet that a few of the spectators live a stone's throw (or even a short putt) away. The five-star hotel sold land several years ago to generate the £18 million needed to help to host the Ryder Cup and the plots, now 14 homes on the edge of The Queen's Course, known as The Queen's Crescent, have become some of the most coveted addresses in Scotland. "Homes with access to golf courses are always going to be popular," says Michael Jones, of Knight Frank Scotland. "The locations have much more than golf to sustain them, which means many fared well during the recession."

There are plenty of reasons to buy a home on a golf resort, and not all of them are to do with a quick walk to the first tee. Easy access to luxuries such as hotel swimming pools, golf club restaurants and stunning views have long made golf resort properties popular at home and abroad.

Knight Frank is selling Glenaig, a seven-bedroom home in The Queen's Crescent, for £2.5 million. (The owner is also giving coveted Ryder Cup tickets to the buyer.) New owners won't have automatic access to golf club membership, but top facilities at the hotel such as award-winning restaurants, shops, an equestrian centre and spa are bonuses that attract buyers to the area, Jones says.

He admits, however, that the success of golf resorts abroad can sometimes give developers a slightly inflated sense of the market here. The Hamilton Grand, once a glamorous hotel, in St Andrews has apartments priced between £1.26 million

and £7.58 million, fairly hefty even for those that have superb views across the 18th hole of the historic Old Course. Only half the 26 apartments have sold or been reserved one year after the launch.

Head south and Savills is selling a seven-bedroom house (£9.5 million) from the luxury developer Octagon in St George's Hill, the billionaires' playground in Weybridge, Surrey. One of

the estate's big attractions is the very pretty 102-year-old golf course with three nine-hole loops. Simon

Ashwell, an agent at Savills, says that part of the charm is the tranquility that a golf course brings. "What is really wonderful and a huge appeal to buyers is all the greenery the golf course brings. A lot of residents use the course to walk their dogs and take a stroll."

The housing stock and buyer demographic at the Wentworth estate at nearby Virginia Water are similar. Knight Frank is selling West Park, a six-bedroom house with pool, cinema and staff quarters, as well as gated access to the 12th tee of the PGA course, for £18 million. Houses on both estates regularly sell for up to £20 million.



Cover, above and left: West Park is for sale with Knight Frank at £18 million

For those who prefer something a little more private, a rather extraordinary new-build property about ten miles from Exeter has its own private nine-hole course, with a shooting range, tennis, squash, badminton and volleyball courts — and helipad. The White House, as it's known, can be yours for £7 million. Agent William Morrison, of Knight Frank, says: "It's a lot of upkeep but this is a home — probably a weekend getaway — for people who want to stay active — like the current owners, who built the course themselves. And it's a huge benefit that you can have the whole thing to yourself when you want to play."

Francesca Steele



Saddlers' Hall in St George's Hill is on the market with Savills for £9.5 million