

# Seaside sites are awash with living potential

## *As thoughts turn to summer holidays by the water, **Graham Norwood** picks 10 hot spots on the British coast offering new-build properties*

**W**ith spring in the air, the prospect of owning a home on Britain's coast has rarely seemed more attractive. But seaside living can be costly in an old property, which needs constant work because of weather fatigue, too much sea salt and corroding metalwork. An easier solution may be to try new-build. Britain's canny developers have found the best remaining coastal sites for apartments and houses. Here are our top 10 destinations.

### 1 Salcombe, Devon

This fishing and crabbing port has 2,000 residents, including music diva Kate Bush. It has fantastic sailing, lively shops and restaurants with a real buzz, plus close proximity to some of Britain's most beautiful countryside. What's not to like?

"Salcombe's necklace of sandy beaches is the main summer attraction, but out of season it's just as special and preferred by many. Beaches are less crowded, and it's easier to walk up the high street," says Jane Summers of Marchand Petit estate agency.

Salcombe Heights has 13 four and five-bedroom water view houses. £1.15m to £1.15m through Marchand Petit, 01548 844473; marchandpetit.co.uk.

### 2 Saltdean, East Sussex

If central Brighton's bling deters you, nearby Saltdean is quieter and sits close to the rolling Sussex Downs. The resort has become heavily developed in recent years but with a real mix of architecture. Spanish influences rub shoulders with the occasional modernist property.

The Thirties Ocean Hotel – once part of Butlins – has been extended and turned into 180 flats. The main building's Art Deco splendour has been gloriously restored. £199,995 to £529,995, through Explore Living, 0845 873 9054; exploreliving.co.uk.

### 3 Poole, Dorset

Nautical enthusiasts need look no further. Poole has a large natural harbour, blue flag beaches, cross-Channel ferries and is the base of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. Unusually, a railway line runs through the town centre.

Overlooking the harbour, the Purbeck Hills and Brownsea Island is a new four-

bed home called Reflections, next to a yacht club and with 3,500 sq ft of living space. £2.95m, Sotheby's International Realty, 01202 709283; sothebysrealty.com.

### 4 Lytham St Annes, Lancashire

It's just south of Blackpool but is regarded as a more upmarket resort, celebrated for a fantastic golfing history and fierce winds. It is also immensely popular with retirement communities.

Lytham Quays is a small estate of five-bedroom houses with grand staircases, attractive flooring and views over the Ribble estuary. £1.25m from Redrow, 01253 365824; redrow.co.uk.

### 5 Westward Ho!, Devon

South Devon is bustling and blingy yet the county's north coast, especially this resort near Bideford, is the quiet life personified.

Only occasional winter storms in the Atlantic disturb the peace and you can get perfect views of them from this four-bedroom, 4,500 sq ft house packed with eco-features and overlooking Bideford Bay. £850,000 from Webbers Fine & Country, 01237 472344; fineandcountry.com.

### 6 Hove, West Sussex

Can DJ Fat Boy Slim, comic Mark Little and *The Full Monty* star Stephen Tompkinson all be wrong? They live in Hove, Brighton's little sister which is perhaps best known for Victorian and Georgian terraces near the sea front.

But there are sparkling new homes too such as Tongdean Gate, a 3,500 sq ft house built on the gardens of a neighbouring property inside a gated development. There are five bedrooms and the layout puts the emphasis on luxury entertaining. £1.35m through Mishon Mackay, 01273 829300; mishonmackay.com.

### 7 Cowes, Isle of Wight

Few locations are more synonymous with coastal living than the Isle of Wight. Think of the Round The Island Race, Cowes Week and countless other sailing challenges. The town is upmarket and traditional but retains a quieter way of life than its mainland neighbour Southampton, a 15-minute ferry ride away.

As the name suggests, the two-bed apartments at Vantage Point have a grandstand view of events on the water around the island. From £800,000 to £900,000 through Banner Homes, 07815 633101; vantagepointcowes.co.uk.

### 8 Thornham, Norfolk

North Norfolk is one of Britain's coastal gems, yet is far less crowded than most other hot spots and significantly better value. It is also a retirement favourite, because it is flat and there is a mix of sea and countryside close by.

This four-bedroom house is a very short walk from the coast, sits in a gated development and has its own parking and private garden. £1.25m, Bidwells, 01603 229428; bidwells.co.uk.

### 9 St Agnes, Cornwall

The coast in this part of north Cornwall is maintained by the National Trust, which has preserved scores of old tin and copper mines. These traditional industries rivalled farming and fishing for jobs and wealth in the area until a century ago.

Now tourism is the big business and these lodges near Trevaunance Cove are designated solely as second homes and are packed with eco-friendly features. £295,000 to £625,000 from Living Structures, 08448 805709; rockylanecornwall.com.

### 10 Camber Sands, East Sussex

This is ideal for activity fiends. The beach here, well known for its dunes recently the backdrop for some of *The Inbetweeners* television series, is also popular for kitesurfing, kiteboarding and kite-bugging.

Those preferring their entertainment inside may want to buy at the White Sand scheme with its one to three-bedroom flats, priced from £159,995 to £279,995. Ward Homes, 08445 566144; wardhomes.co.uk.

### Online

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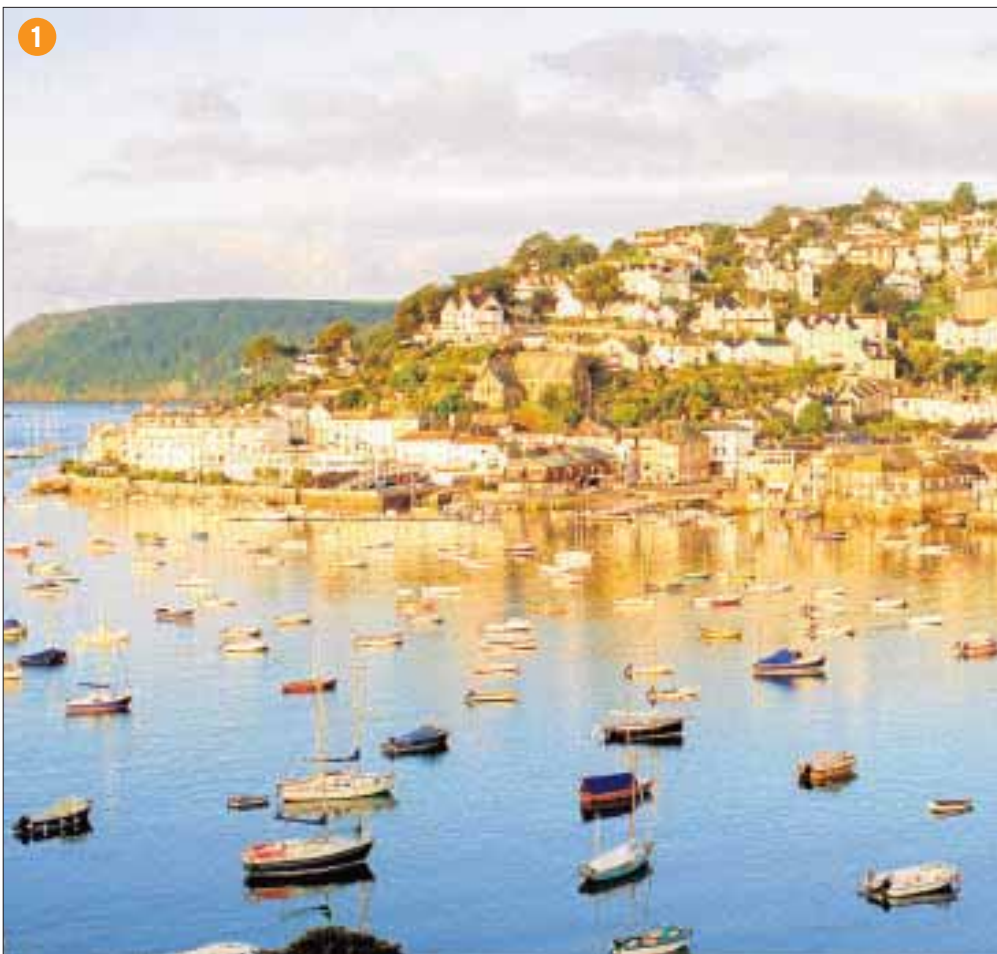


### Coastal investment tips

If you want to make a waterside home pay its way, follow this advice:

- Bargain hard to get the lowest price from developers keen to sell
- Choose an area not already saturated with rental properties
- Avoid areas renowned for stag nights and beach parties
- Allow children and dogs to maximise your renting audience
- Use a lettings agency known for high rental take-up
- Equip your home well - tenants demand gizmos and mod-cons
- Buying in family tourist areas will give you a longer holiday let season
- Consider a six-month winter let, then holiday lets during summer
- Undercut rival landlords - a low rent is better than no rent
- Use an accountant to optimise your tax position on rental income and expenditure.

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