

THE HOUSE OF WINDSOR

CHERYL MARKOSKY DISCOVERS THE
OPULENT SIDE OF FLORIDA ON THE
ULTRA-ELEGANT WINDSOR ESTATE.

Britons can be forgiven their confusion when the Windsor name doesn't deliver a castle with a royal baby, Great Park or the Ascot racecourse. That's because this Windsor is in Vero Beach on Florida's Treasure Coast where it's delivering its own set of majestic assets.

Canadian retail billionaires Galen and Hilary Weston, the owners of Selfridges, bought Windsor in 1989 and turned it into a private paradise spanning more than 400 acres of a barrier island with 350 homesites (plots) between the Indian River and Atlantic Ocean.

This quiet enclave – a gentler version of more social Palm Beach 80 miles south – is where Andy Murray's tennis coach Ivan Lendl has a home. What better accolade for Britons considering buying in a country club community than housing the tennis star-turned-coach who can do no

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+ 44 (0) 20 7190 7710

wrong after helping Andy Murray win the Wimbledon Championship?

Another resident luminary is crystal magnate Nadja Swarovski. "The people who come here have nothing to prove," she says.

Even members of the Royal Family have been known to visit to support charity events on the polo field and attend art gallery openings, along with actor Tommy Lee Jones and hotelier Salvatore Ferragamo, grandson and namesake of the famous designer.

As well as the polo and art, Windsor has a Robert Trent-Jones' 18-hole golf course with no tee times, three restaurants, a clubhouse with its own art gallery exhibiting world-class talent such as Jasper Johns and Peter Doig, an equestrian centre, gun club, and beach club with private access to the sea. Although this is as splendid as it sounds, Robert Green, general manager of A&K International Estates says it's also an understated family-friendly seaside retreat that's luxurious without being ostentatious.

Even better, he says European buyers will be delighted to find there aren't many building regulations - you need to choose one of nine builders approved by Windsor's keeper of the architectural code and accept that some exterior architectural blueprints might be frowned upon. "But inside the houses you can do whatever you want."

In addition, Green emphasises that there's sufficient choice, from buying a plot from £198,000 to build your own home from scratch, to choosing a village house, cottage or country estate (small mansion) between 2,837 and 14,113 square feet and costing from £789,000 to more than £7.9 million.

These Anglo-Caribbean-style houses are freshly painted in understated pale hues and arranged around a courtyard

with loggia, pool and garden. A&K International Estates is selling three such homes on Gleanmare Lane in the South Village with four bedrooms, five bathrooms and two reception rooms ranging from £1.39- £2.581 million.

Why should Britons consider investing in property at Windsor? "Florida's seen a surge in sales lately and this is fuelling price rises," explains Green. "Largely driven by foreign buyers, there's strong evidence that demand will ensure further capital appreciation - especially for top quality properties in prime locations." This is superb news for British buyers now discovering this secret world with a climate so placid you can swim in the sea and go riding along lush trails in December.

Even the street names - Eton Way, Fortnum Place and Kent Court - make Windsor feel like a home from home. And you might even be lucky enough to catch Lendl and his family perfecting their swings on the golf course, where he tends to spend his time these days.

