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Costa del Sol Market 2024 Forecast

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Contents

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About this document:

I write this document once a year and dependent on market conditions sometimes provide an interim update during the year. This is not designed to be a comprehensive Costa del Sol property buyers' guide or, sellers' guide (we also have such documents we can share with you). Nor is it a legal guide to buying a property in Spain. There are plenty of those documents readily available.

This document is a summary of my current views, opinions and observations of the local property market based on my experience of living and running a business on the Costa del Sol for the last 20 years. It also encompasses the views from discussions with other leading estate agents on the coast, as well as mortgage brokers, developers and banks. It is aimed primarily to assist those genuinely seeking to buy their dream property, make an investment and for those looking to sell an existing home on the Costa del Sol. Of course, the document might also be of interest for homeowners not looking to sell just now, but wanting to gain and insight about market conditions and activity. Indeed it should be of value to anyone who has a general interest in the Costa del Sol property market.

The aim of the document is to provide a brief summary of the preceding year, identify the market dynamics, the opportunities that exist and the challenges that property buyers and sellers might need to overcome. The main part of the document is the forecast of 2024 and my views of how I see the property market will develop during the year. Like any forecast, it is prone to have inaccuracies, is based on opinion and opens me up to being proven wrong. That wouldn't be the first time in my life! If you know me personally you will appreciate that I tend not to exaggerate and I have tried to be objective throughout the document. When I review last couple of year's forecasts, they seem broadly to have developed as predicted, with perhaps a few minor exceptions which I will outline.

I hope you find the document of value and welcome any feedback that you might have.

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Brief summary of 2023

Property sales in 2023 on the Costa del Sol were strong for a significant number of agents. The first seven months of the year were particularly busy with strong sales activity, but the last quarter of the year was somewhat disappointing with both inquiry and sales volumes significantly down on the previous year, with perhaps curiously the exception of the latter part of December. Across the board sales volumes were probably down on 2022, partly due to incredible level of activity in 2022, but sales values in 2023 were on average higher.

Main market theme 2023
Without doubt the main theme discussed by all agents along the coast was a shortage of properties available for sale, both resales and new developments. This is something we will explore further in the section on the market forecast for 2024.

The cause of this stock shortage is combination of pent-up demand and resulting high sales volumes in 2021 - 2023, an increasing number of different nationalities buying properties on the coast than ever before, the ability for people to work remotely, investor activity and vendors simply deciding to hold on to their properties.

Impact of Israel / Palestine
I am not clear if there has been a direct impact from this tragic situation as we tend not to have high volumes of sales from customers from this region. However, sales activity on the Costa del Sol is usually buoyant in the last quarter of the year and as I previously mentioned this was not the case. It's perhaps a question of general global uncertainty that had a knock-on effect.

Impact of Russia / Ukraine
The situation in Ukraine resulted in several new buyers on the Costa del Sol from that region – Ukraine, Poland, Germany, Czech Republic, Lithuania, Hungary, Estonia and Finland. Buyers have cited the reason for purchases as being 1) security for themselves and their families and 2) a safe store of wealth. This is more than an observation of the writer, is very evident and is reported by several agents along the coast.

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What's the market like at the moment in January 2024?

This without doubt continues to be the question I get asked most by clients, prospective buyers, existing property owners and friends I meet after golf in the clubhouse!

As I have said many times before, it is easy to give sweeping statements of general market wide conditions, but they rarely hold any real value to someone genuinely looking to understand specific local market conditions.

So my answer is always the same - "*it depends! Are you looking to buy, sell, invest or rent?"*

There is not just one market here on the Costa del Sol, rather it's a collection of micro property markets which are defined by property type, price range and location.

The Costa del Sol – the most curious market at the best of times.
For the purposes of this document the Costa del Sol is defined as the stretch of coastline between Malaga and Sotogrande, some 120 km. What the market is like in Sotogrande, compared to that of San Pedro de Alcantara, Elviria or Fuengirola have little in common. Yes, they are all on the Costa del Sol, but all have their distinct markets and of course their own town halls which dictate the building license policy and property taxes in their local jurisdictions.

In property markets where significant proportion buyers are looking for holiday or second homes, it is very often the case that buyers don't need to buy and sellers don't need to sell. This is certainly the case here on the Costa del Sol. Sellers, on the one hand, very often think their properties are worth significantly more than they realistically are. Buyers, on the other hand, often think they can buy anything with discounts, particularly if they are cash buyers. They are both mistaken.

This makes for an interesting market to say the least, where the role of professional real estate agents is to educate and manage expectations of both buyers and sellers. In my opinion it's a question of being able to demonstrate where the value is.

Reason why the Costa del Sol Market remains so fluid
Although it is becoming increasingly challenging to do so due to the lack of property stock available, many people find it hard to believe that they can come to the Costa del Sol for just a few days and return home having financially committed to buying a property and started the legal process of doing so.

One of the main contributory reasons why this is possible, which is often not immediately apparent to some prospective buyers, is the Multiple Listing System (MLS). This is a system where all property listings for sale are openly shared between estate agents. One agency has the property listing, the other brings the potential buyer. It's simple a case of sharing commissions and in fact 80% of properties sold involve two agents and are shared deals. It means that if an agent is doing their job correctly, they will find your ideal property if it is available for sale.

I've noticed a recent trend that some agencies are putting policies in place to not share their property listings with freelance 'agents' who work from their bedrooms and rather collaborate with other professional agencies. I feel this is a positive move as it should improve the quality of the client experience for both buyers and sellers.

Beginning of the year
Typically the beginning of the year is generally slow with the market waking up at the end of January. However, it seems like January 2024 has got off to a busy start with many agents reporting positive sales activity. Further, there has certainly been an increased number of inquiries in January from buyers planning to come out early in the year. Perhaps this is a result of a quieter Q4 2023 than usual.

New developments and construction activity as a guideline for current market conditions
One simple method to get a measure of market conditions and confidence is to use developer activity as a yard stick. Essentially the more cranes you see on the skyline, the more 'new development' activity is going on. You don't need to be a property expert to see the multitude of cranes along the entire coastline.

I have had a perhaps had an over cautious view on the new developments in the past. This is despite many new development projects being sold out before construction is underway and even sometimes even before it has started! This is perhaps one area where my last two forecasts have been off the mark, with many clients choosing to go down the off plan / under construction route.

However, I maintain that construction sites are the result of decisions taken by developers three years or more prior to the building activity, which means they are not always reflective of current market conditions. Thank being said, given the shortage of quality resale properties on the market, demand for new developments will continue to be high and sales will continue to thrive in 2024.

As a final word on new developments, regardless of the reputation of the developer it is critical to ensure that as a buyer you have all of the legal and financial protection in place in your contracts and your lawyer will verify this.

It's still a sellers' market!
Basically, due to a shortage of quality stock that has resulted from significant buyer activity over the past three years, property vendors generally find themselves in a strong negotiating position. Of course each transaction is different and the balance of 'power' in the 'seller : buyer' relationship is unique each time. Essentially it comes down to how important it is for either party to make the transaction happen.

Some sellers often estimate the value of their property based on the m2 built and the plots size alone. They fail to take into account, the property condition and that styles have changed over the last 20 years. Although a property might be perfectly liveable, in reality the next owner is likely to invest a significate sum modernising the property and bringing it up to standard. Buyers of course take this into account when making an offer and make comparisons to properties that are already refurbished or new build options.

Sellers sometimes take the view that there will soon be another buyer who 'will pay the price'. Buyers believe there is sure to be another suitable property just around the corner. Perhaps in some instances, either party could be right, but it is not always the case.

It is my belief that for every property there is the ideal buyer – you only need one! The task of the agent is to demonstrate to the seller if the deal being offered is the right one to accept.

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What’s going to happen in 2024

2024 looks to be a year of continued economic and political uncertainty around the world with medium inflation, interest rates in the 5-7% zone, peaked house prices or, in some instances on the decline (as much as 20% in some European cities), the ongoing conflicts around the world. There are no fewer than 50 national elections in 2024 which can bring opportunity by also uncertainty. What does all this mean for the year ahead in terms of the property market on the Costa del Sol?

Whilst the Costa del Sol does of course not exist in a vacuum, it is my view that the market is going to continue to be buoyant throughout 2024. I think the number of transactions will be similar to that of 2023, but the transaction values will be higher. There is a definite trend to quality and developers will continue to target the luxury market.

The market dynamics have changed
Traditional holiday and second home destinations have historically always had roller coaster type markets and property cycles. The impact of wider economic cycles have always had a knock on effect locally. This certainly used to be the case with the Costa del Sol property market and like many ‘expat locations’ used to be very transient.

However, this has changed significantly over the last 10 years. There is a growing community of both ‘expats’ from northern Europe and beyond and indeed Spanish nationals from different regions of Spain that have chosen to make the Costa del Sol their permanent home, or at least their home for several months of a year. The Costa del Sol has progressed over the past 20 years in terms of infrastructure, standards and amenities and I believe will continue to evolve positively.

The Costa del Sol has cemented it reputation as one of the top choice locations in Europe for those with wealth to live. This is reflected in the fact that Malaga airport had the busiest year on record in 2023 with 22.3 million passengers, making it the fourth busiest airport in Spain. Aena the airport operation is analysing ways to increase capacity in the current terminals.

What this means is that I see less of a roller coaster ride in terms of market cycles and prices moving forward. Of course, there will still always be market cycles locally and also ‘home market’ economies will have a knock-on effect here. However, the Costa del Sol has evolved and established itself as a destination to live and work throughout the year, as well as a major second home and holiday destination. This is verified by the new ‘Digital Nomad’ visa category with was introduced to accommodate remote workers from overseas. Of course, there remain busier times and quieter times, but there truly is an all year economy just like any city, but spread along a coastline of some 120 km.

The central theme of a shortage of properties will continue in 2024
Current demand outstrips property supply. The central theme remains the shortage of good resale properties and also new builds available on the market. This is something that will continue for the foreseeable future.

It is just a fact that due to the current market dynamics and circumstances, there continues to be more buyers from an increasingly number of diverse countries who are looking to buy a home, or invest on the Costa del Sol than there are good properties available for sale.

So moving forward both resale properties and new developments / off plan purchases will continue to be popular depending on the individual circumstance of buyers-

Institutional Investment
This is a subject rarely written about that most buyers are unaware of. During 2008-2010 when asset values were at a low, investment funds and private funds with deep pockets entered the market buying heavily undervalued assets from the banks such as unfinished property developments. They sat on the assets and then later invested to deliver and sell the properties. Most of these properties are long sold. But the investment funds did not disappear and have continued to invest in the Malaga province investing in hotels that require full and costly refurbishment, commercial and residential real estate or infrastructure opportunities. There are huge sums of institutional investment funds being committed in the province of Malaga. Again, standards are being raised to cater for the demand, particularly in the luxury market.

Is now a good time to buy a property on the Costa del Sol?
The best time to buy a property was 20 years ago. The next best time is now!

Of course, as a buyer you want to buy a property at the best possible price and as your agents, our core intention is to help you do that.

Basic economic theory says that when demand outstrips supply, prices go up. Are house prices higher than they were two years ago? Yes. Are house prices better value now than they will be this time next year? I believe that will prove to be the case.

The proof of the pudding is that we still have investors coming into the market. They see the value in the market and view the Costa del Sol as a safe haven to deposit funds in property. In fact, if you look at property markets such as the south of France, property on the Costa del Sol is still very affordable.

One major difference is that over the past 10 years there have been a much higher percentage of buyers with full equity (no mortgage required) than in the preceding years. That contributes to more stable market conditions.

In terms of 'the market prices', it's a similar pattern as always - premium properties in premium locations are always going to command their price. Also premium assets and locations whilst undeniably more expensive are less effected by market cycles.

Opportunity for buyers to secure their ideal properties, despite the competition
Buying a good property in the current climate has become somewhat of a competition. Those buyers who have their finances ready, be they full equity or mortgage buyers are more likely to succeed. Buyers who are ready to move quickly to sign reservation and purchase contracts (subject to due diligence of course) will be the ones to secure the premium properties. The price will depend on circumstance of each seller and their motivation to sell.

"Are you serious about buying a property in 2024?"
If you genuinely intend to buy a property this year, it's time to get serious.

Make sure you are completely ready to do so. That means that if you need or, want to have a mortgage, make sure the 'offer in principle' is in place and that the mortgage is only subject to a property valuation. It is the prepared buyer who is going to buy the property that *you* want.

Buyers visiting in the first quarter of the year generally face less competition from other buyers, so if the timing works for you, it could work to your advantage.

A cautionary note for sellers

Yes, it is a sellers' market at the moment! However, property owners who think they can successfully secure significant artificially high, random prices for their properties just because it is 'what they want for it' (unless they are sitting on something genuinely unique) are being misinformed, or being poorly advised by weak estate agents who won't give a true market valuation for fear of losing the listing. All that happens is that your property sits on the market for longer, before you readjust to a more realistic market price. This send all the wrong messages to buyers and creates confusion in the market as a whole.

In the main, buyers are smart. They have done their research and are being advised by a trusted agent. They are looking at the comparables and can see the value in a property and where a premium is worth paying for a specific property. Given the current market conditions with high buyer demand properties priced correctly will continue to sell quickly.

As a seller, if your property has been on the market for several months, chances are it is not priced correctly (or there are other issues).

The impact of higher interest rates on the Costa del Sol property market?

Higher interest rates of course means that the cost of borrowing is more expensive. There was certainly a lull in mortgage applications with the rate increases last year, but now that buyers are becoming accustomed to higher rates borrowing has started to flow again. I don't believe that interest rate alone is going to have a significant impact on the market, as a high percentage of buyers are not taking mortgages.

Another variable to consider is the affordability of existing loans both here and in home countries. Where property owners are feeling the impact of higher rates on their existing loans, it might cause them to decide to sell their property here in Spain, particularly while the market is in their favour.

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Challenges for Buyers in 2024
There are in my opinion three main challenges facing property buyers in 2024. These are dynamics specific to the Costa del Sol property market and are understood by relatively few buyers from outset. These challenges have a considerable impact on a buyer's ability to identify and buy a property at the right price. With enough time, research and perhaps some 'pain' you will eventually identify these issues yourself, but you can waste a lot of time in doing so and miss out on buying the property you wanted to secure. The challenges are as follows:

1) **A shortage of properties**
   If you look on the property portals –ThinkSpain, Kyero, Idealista and the like, you would be excused if you think there are thousands of properties for sale. The issue is, as you will find out, very often the advertised properties are no longer available for sale.

   Several agents have qualified buyers with significant sums of money waiting for a property that meets their main criteria, or looking to buy in a specific community. You would think it should be simple to buy a property with funds ready in hand, but it is not always the case. For buyers looking for quality, well located property there is actually limited availability and timing is a contributory factor. It may not always be possible to find your ideal property in one visit and perhaps you will need to return two to three times to secure the right property.

2) **Lack of urgency on behalf of property owners:**
   Generally in what are predominantly 'first home markets', when owners put their property for sale it is because they *need* to, or genuinely *want* to sell. The fact remains that a considerable number of property owners here on the coast do not actually *need* to sell their property. This is particularly the case for owners of prime real estate who know the value and uniqueness of their property. If it takes them one week or one year to sell, it really makes little difference to them. They take the view that 'someone will eventually pay the price', so they are inflexible when it comes to negotiations.

As a buyer you see a property advertised at a price. Unless it is explained to you, you are not to know from outset that the property is new on the market, or that the vendor has just reduced their asking price. In either case, the likelihood of the owner reducing the price significantly in these cases is slim. So, you put in a low offer hoping to negotiate. It is not accepted, but eventually someone else views the property and is happy to pay the price. Game over.

It is important that if you really want to buy a property, rather than being fixated on getting a discount you assess the value and actually secure the property you want. Again, that is why it is critical to have your finances in place, so that if you want to proceed, you can.

From the sellers' side, it is usual we believe our properties are worth more than they realistically are. It is easy to get stuck in that mind set and thus miss out on genuine sales opportunities.

3) Unreliable information

Obviously today the internet is the starting place for almost all buyers. The challenge is the out-of-date information, particularly that found on some of the property portals which are high ranking advertising forums for agents. Often properties which are long sold remain advertised as no one has bothered to remove the property from the portal. Sometimes such properties are intentionally left live as 'click bait´ to encourage enquiries.

Further, the lack of consistent valuation methods in an unregulated market means that on the one hand, professional and experienced agents will provide vendors with a realistic market price based on their assessment of the property and relevant comparable properties in the surrounding area They encourage the owners to market close to that price, allowing for a little negotiation room.

On the other hand, a large number of more inexperienced, or part time agents simply ask vendors how much they want for their property and then simply say 'OK' and list the property at that price.

This usually sets an artificially high starting price on the property. These properties tend to stay on the market for much longer until the vendor finally adjusts their expectations.

The challenge for buyers is that there is a mix of such pricing policies across the market. This creates a blurred understanding and false expectations on behalf of buyers as to what is realistically currently available and at what prices.

It means that only with research over time, or with the guidance of an experienced and professional real estate agent can they establish the real value of a given property.

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Ongoing buyer trends

The following are trends that have been consistent over the years and I believe will continue to be the case moving forward.

1) Desire to be close to amenities:
Over the past few years, regardless of type of property or budget, we have noted particularly high demand for properties located close to amenities. For some, this means ideally walking distance to shops, bars, restaurants and possibly to the beach. This is why properties located La Cala de Mijas, Elviria, Cabopino, San Pedro playa, Puerto Banus, the Golden Mile and parts of Marbella, Nueva Andalucia and parts of Estepona continue to be very popular. I see this as a trend that will continue. For others 'close to amenities' means a 15 minutes' drive is perfectly acceptable, especially if they get more for their money.

2) Private outdoor space:
Properties with private outdoor space will continue to be at a premium, be they apartments with large terraces or villas and townhouse with private plots. I have noted a trend for those who previously were looking at apartments to ask about townhouses, or entry level villas with private gardens, even if it means there is reform work to do.

3) Views:
There are those people for whom properties with big views – either sea or mountain views are a prerequisite. Locations such as La Cala de Mijas, La Cala Golf Resort, Calahonda, Riviera del Sol, parts of La Quinta, Los Arqueros in the hills behinds San Pedro, El Paraiso, Los Flamingos, Seghers and Buenas Noches are popular as they offer the opportunity for great, sometimes panoramic views. Properties with big views will continue to be in high demand.

4) Orientation for the sun:
Most northern Europeans, particularly Germans and Scandinavians will only consider South and South West facing properties. Many have the intention of spending the winter months in Spain and want to enjoy the afternoon/evening sun.

It shouldn’t surprise you that such properties, particularly those on the beachfront, walking distance to amenities, those with are SW facing for optimal light and winter sun conditions, those with extensive outdoor space and those with sea views come at a premium and are always in high demand. If you have decided on such a property, it’s worth remembering this when it comes to try to secure the property, especially in the current market.

Remote viewings and purchases

Whilst buying a property remotely via video like zoom / whatsapp / Facetime is not the norm, it is certainly more prevalent than it was just 36 months ago. The critical point of this new way of buying a property is to work with an agent you trust and who will be fully transparent with you.

Of course this is not for everyone, but I it is becoming more prevalent moving forward, particularly for those clients who know exactly where they want to buy. At the very least remote viewings will streamline the buying process and help focussed buyers preselect a property they would like to view with more accuracy before they visit, or even be the reason for an immediate visit.

In a market where there is a shortage of stock, remote viewings and purchases are one way for buyers to secure the property they really want.

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Summary
The Costa del Sol offers an amazing climate, outdoor lifestyle and quality of life which is genuinely hard to beat elsewhere in Europe. It's why so many people, year after year, decide to buy a second home, or indeed move here permanently. It is why my wife and I chose to make it our home and raise our family here over 20 years ago. It is increasingly becoming a premium destination, which caters for the luxury market.

In my opinion, 2024 will be a solid year for property sales on the Costa del Sol. The biggest challenge for property buyers will be to find the right property due to high buyer competition and an ongoing shortage of stock. Specific opportunities will come and go. Buyers that are genuinely ready to buy, that are open to a new process of buying by using the technology available to assist them will secure the best properties.

Perhaps now, more than ever before, working with the right agent to advise you when buying, or selling a property will be critical to your successful transaction. You need an experienced pair of hands – someone who understands the market, is ready to put the work in and can successfully negotiate on your behalf with either vendors or buyers. The agent needs to be capable of smoothly managing the relationships between all the parties, including other agents, the lawyers and where required banks, or mortgage brokers in order to help you achieve your specific objective and get the deal closed. If they can do that and do it with a smile, you are on to a winner!

If you are thinking about buying or selling a property on the Costa del Sol in 2024, I do hope this document has been of value to you. Over the years having seen so many people embark on this journey, I can genuinely tell you that now is a good a time as any to start the process. If our journey together goes no further than you reading this document, I hope you have found it helpful. For property buyers, I wish you every success in finding your property and achieving the lifestyle you desire. For property owners looking to sell, I hope this document has provided some good insight into the market dynamics and the considerations of property buyers. We do have a specific document that you can request on how sellers can achieve maximum value out of their property in the most efficient way.

On the final page you can learn a little more about my story. If you feel the services my team provide are a good fit and that we might play a role in this new chapter of your story of buying, or selling a property here on the Costa del Sol, we would be delighted to explore this with you. For both buyer and sellers, I´ve suggested a way that we might do this together overleaf. I promise to use my experience to your advantage. My intention is to help you achieve your property objectives, be that to buy or sell a property on the Costa del Sol.

To your success,

Anthony J. Fernandes

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Buyers - what to do next…

If you want to explore buying a property in the next 6 months and you might like us to assist you, here's what I suggest we do:

1) We have an initial call to get to know each other and you can explain what it is you are looking for and why. You can send me an email, but a call is usually much more beneficial.
2) We agree a detailed brief of what your ideal property looks like, where it is located and we will document your list of priorities.
3) We talk budgets, mortgages, buying costs, legal / administrative tasks and timescales and agree a plan that stacks the odds in your favour to buy your ideal property. We are open and honest with each other and we keep it real.
4) We create and review property shortlists and identify those properties that might warrant remote viewings
5) When you come to visit we can focus on those properties which you have prioritised and any others that arise that closely match your criteria to make the best use of our time.

Such a call should be a valuable conversation for you whether we do business in the future or not. At the end of the session you will receive a summary document which covers what we have discussed.

There is no charge for the call and there is no obligation on either party to take matters further. If we are not a good match for each other, we'll both know it. If that's the case, we'll try to point you in the direction of someone who can help you. Please be advised that the call usually lasts 15 - 20 minutes or so in the first instance in order to best serve your needs.

To arrange a time to talk through your situation, please call us email us at info@liontrustspain.com

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Sellers - what to do next…

If you want to discuss selling your property either now, or in the next 6 months and you might like to understand how our approach will be very different to other agents, here's what I suggest we do:

1) We arrange an initial call, or meeting whichever is more convenient to you. It's often more beneficial if possible to meet at your property, but if that is not possible initially because you are out of town, an initial call will suffice in the first instance.

2) We seek to understand your objectives and work out whether we genuinely feel we well positioned to successfully sell your property.

3) We'll share our approach with you, so you can decide for yourself whether you would like us to represent you in the sale of your property.

Such a discussion should be a valuable conversation for you whether we do business in the future or not.

There is no obligation on either party to take matters further. If we are not a good match for each other, we'll both know it and either way we will certainly share our views with you. If we're not the right team for you, hopefully we have added some value and we'll try to point you in the direction of someone who can better help you.

To arrange a meeting to talk through your situation, please email us at info@liontrustspain.com .

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Client feedback

We gave Anthony a list of our requirements for a Spanish property and he excelled finding us exactly what we were looking for! It was a very seamless, easy process, viewing short-listed properties and there was no hard sell.

Quick, easy, intelligent way of buying property in Spain! The whole process from viewing to completion was highly professional and seamless. At no time did we feel pressured into decisions but always offered accurate advice and local knowledge. Highly recommended!

Julie Paddon, UK

Anthony at Lion Trust sold our property in Marbella efficiently, very professionally in a very short timeframe. Can highly recommend him!

Martin S - Finland

From the time we made the decision to sell our apartment in Alcazaba Beach, Estepona right through to completion, Anthony at Lion Trust handled the whole sale very professionally but with a personal touch. We had our keys couriered to him and he made a very acceptable valuation, took some great photos and marketed the property very well. Anthony kept us fully in the picture as to how viewings had gone.

Anthony quickly found the right buyers and the sale progressed very smoothly. He liaised with our solicitors and helped handle the sale of our furniture etc. All in all, we were very happy and pleased we had appointed the Lion Trust to sell our property

Alister & Toril Guppy

Anthony is a highly professional and personable agent.
He listened to our requirements and delivered a positive result, generating international interest and selling our property in Pueblo del Sol within a matter of weeks. Anthony was attentive, responded to communication quickly and made a tricky remote sale almost seamless. I would highly recommend Anthony and Lion Trust and wouldn't hesitate to use his real estate company in the future.

Jack Dahl

Working with Anthony from Lion Trust Property to sell my house in Estepona could not have gone any smoother. All calls to Anthony were returned in less than an hour, even on the weekend, over the six weeks it took to sell my house.
Anthony is a professional and attentive agent, who made himself available in every way to ensure a quick and efficient sale. He has a highly pleasing personality, and I highly recommend his services.

Prisca ROBIN

Having found and purchased our dream villa with the help of Anthony at Lion Trust, it made perfect sense to give him the task of selling our penthouse in Los Flamingos. Both Anthony and Charlie kept us informed with feedback after each client visit and they managed all appointments with other agents. It was a highly professional service which I wouldn't hesitate to recommend"

Chris Peacock

In about April 2020, having visited the Marbella area briefly earlier in the year, I decided to look in earnest at available properties. With Covid taking a grip and not living in Spain, the internet was my best option.

I came across Lion Trust and contacted Anthony, who immediately responded and clarified my requirements - 3+ beds and baths, community-based, residential, easy reach of facilities but away from the vacation scene. We Skyped a couple times and went through a range of properties that Anthony researched for me. This made it easy for me to rank and prioritise, based on my criteria. Together, Anthony and I sifted the properties into a short list and he offered to take videos of the top selections. This was a major step forward, as although photos are helpful, they don't always give much feel to a place.

At this time, although nervous about the prospect of buying a property "online", Anthony's carefully made videos, descriptions and straightforward honesty gave me a real sense of security and comfort. I felt I was not taking a risk - in fact I could be saving money, effort and stress by not having to trapse around dozens of properties myself, a long way from home. So, having discussed the pros and cons of the top 2 or 3 selections, it was an easy decision to pull the trigger and make an offer when the right property came along. Anthony took my offer to the seller's agent, we quickly agreed a price and the property was reserved the next day.

During and after the sale, Anthony was always at hand to answer questions about the area and to offer advice on the steps I needed to take to move to Spain. I moved to my new Andalucian home in July as soon as the restrictions were lifted.

Overall, the process Anthony and I took was stress-free, exciting, economical and slick. I would readily recommend using Anthony and video-based property selection.

From G.H. – UK

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My wife and I have been visiting the Estepona area for several years and decided to buy a villa nearby, so we arranged viewings for several properties over two weeks in February 2020. We had a reasonably clear idea of where we wanted the villa to be, what features it needed to have and most importantly the budget that we had to work with. The first few villas we saw with local agents helped us to discount certain areas and gain a clearer understanding of what exact features the villa needed to have.

We shared this revised brief and, with one notable exception, were shocked by how little notice estate agents actually took of our requirements, preferring on the whole to send us villa details that were either outside our budget or chosen area, or didn't have the features that we wanted. The exception to this was Anthony Fernandes of Lion Trust who took the time to call me, clarify exactly what we were looking for and also what our priorities were if the perfect villa didn't exist. He assured us that he would send us only relevant details, which later that day he did. We viewed three villas with Anthony, all of which ticked the exact boxes that we had specified and we soon made an offer on the first one that we saw with him.

Anthony even arranged for a local construction company to meet us at the villa to discuss the feasibility of our ideas to modernise aspects of the property. Ownership of the villa was split between 3 relatives of the original owner so negotiations were a little slow but, after we had returned to England, Anthony called with their counter-offer and a deal was quickly agreed. Anthony put us in touch with an excellent, English-speaking, local law firm and the legal formalities began.

Unfortunately within a few weeks the Covid lockdowns in the UK and elsewhere started and several legal issues also arose that meant completion of the deal would not be straightforward. Eventually we completed the transaction in September but during this entire 7-month period Anthony was regularly updating us on the progress and often even liaising with the lawyers on our behalf.

Even after the deal was completed, Anthony has continued to help us by recommending reputable local contractors, being our local contact for the alarm company until we sorted a full time local property management business and even showing contractors around the villa to provide quotes when we were unable to get out to Spain ourselves. Without Anthony's help we almost certainly would neither have found our dream villa nor have concluded the deal and although Covid continues to make things difficult he remains an invaluable asset. His excellent knowledge of the local property market, his insistence on only recommending suitable properties and also him being fluent in Spanish, English and German make Anthony and Lion Trust an exceptional and reliable choice for anyone thinking of buying a property on the Costa del Sol.

From Chris Peacock - UK

Lieber Anthony,
nachdem mein Kauf mithilfe deiner lückenlosen Betreuung abgewickelt wurde, möchte ich mich ausdrücklich für deine Engagement, die Geduld und die seriöse Recherche meiner - nicht immer klar definierten - Wünsche bedanken. Auch die zahlreichen und immer gut örtlich und zeitlich strukturierten Besichtigungen mit den verschiedensten Makler-Kollegen hast du hervorragend organisiert. Und dieses breite Spektrum aller Wunschimmobilien hast du mir auf eine angenehme, entspannende und erfahrungsreiche Art präsentiert, und das ohne jegliche Kaufdruck auszuüben. Selbst kritische Bemerkungen oder meine teils abrupten Ablehnungen haben dich nicht aus der Ruhe gebracht.

Die Vorstellung, dass ich mit einer Unzahl von verschiedenen Maklern diese Vielfalt der Objekte hätte sehen wollen, wäre ein schweißtreibende und horrende Arbeit im Sommer gewesen. Im Nachhinein ein unvorstellbares Szenario und viel verlorene Zeit.. Die Eingrenzung der Favoriten, die letztlich erfolgreiche Preisfindung und -verhandlung sowie der Kaufabschluss wären ohne deine Hilfe kaum möglich gewesen. Auch deine Begleitung bei der empfohlenen der Rechtsanwaltskanzlei zur Abwicklung des gesamten Kaufvorgangs in der Corona-Krise verdient mein ausdrückliches Kompliment. Momente der
Unsicherheit habe ich nie erlebt und immer deinem konservativen und überaus seriösen britischen Stil vertrauen können.

Abschließend kann ich nur sagen, dass aus diesem Kaufvorgang für mich eine schöne und gute Erfahrung in Calahonda mit dir Realität geworden ist und sich daraus sogar eine hoffentlich lange (Golf)Feundschaft entwickelt hat.

TRANSLATION:

Dear Anthony,

After my purchase was completed with the help of your seamless support, I would like to thank you expressly for your commitment, patience and serious research into my - not always clearly defined - wishes. You also did an excellent job of organising the numerous viewings, which were always well-structured in terms of location and time, with the most diverse broker colleagues. And you presented this broad spectrum of all desired properties to me in a pleasant, relaxing and experiential way, and without exerting any pressure to buy. Even critical remarks or my sometimes abrupt rejections did not put you off your guard.

The idea that I would have wanted to see this variety of properties with a myriad of different estate agents would have been a sweaty and horrendous summer's work. In hindsight, an unimaginable scenario and a lot of lost time.... The narrowing down of favourites, the ultimately successful pricing and negotiation as well as the conclusion of the purchase would hardly have been possible without your help. Also, your guidance in the recommended of the law firm to handle the entire purchase process in the Corona crisis deserves my express compliments. I never experienced any moments of uncertainty and was always able to trust your conservative and extremely serious British style.

In conclusion, I can only say that this purchase process has turned into good experience for me in Calahonda into a reality with your help and has even developed into a hopefully long (golf) friendship.

From W.W. - Berlin

Sunshine, golf courses, beautiful harbour, sea view, very few natural disasters, nice people, low crime rate and Indo-European language – these are characteristics I was looking for to spend my retired life.

Searched internet from Japan, I found an attractive property in Malaga among many candidates all over the world. This property, a modest apartment was on the marketed through Lion Trust. A few days after I registered on the net site of the company, the director, Anthony Fernandes emailed me and clarified my requirements. I asked him several basic questions about the apartment, and proposed a Zoom meeting and a video recording of on-site visit by himself. I was able to gleen enough information to make a decision. Google Earth was also helpful for understanding the neighborhood.

Then I decided to proceed purchase process, which turned out to be quite different from that in Japan. Anthony was very professional and helpful. He proposed a few plans to negotiate the price, including furniture in my case. The deal was successful and I was able to buy it with a solid discount. This happened in mid May in 2020. Economic outlook was dire in Spain as well as the rest of the world. I imagine the seller was anxious to liquidate quickly. Nobody knows the future but one thing was clear to me, i.e. the environment of the property has now will last for a long time. Superb quality of Costa del Sol will certainly attract many people around the world.

Lion Trust helped me with a legal firm to check all legalities and to transfer the funds to the seller with the power of attorney. The change in ownership was also smoothly done and everything was completed in mid August.

We exchanged more than 150 emails during the whole process. I am very satisfied to have bought it through Lion Trust. I was fortunate to know Anthony and his team. Trust is nowadays a very precious quality.

Only caveat is that I cannot go back and forth freely across Japan border right now! Well nothing will last forever.

From T.N.- Japan

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About the Author

I came to Marbella in 2003 with my French wife and twin baby boys. It was originally for a sabbatical, trial year living in Southern Spain, away from the city grind and selling internet IT solutions to offshore and private banks. I got involved in the property market and one year turned into two, and two into three... before we knew it this place felt like home and that is what it has been ever since!

Initially, I worked for what was at the time one of the biggest real estate companies on the coast. I soon realised that there was an opportunity to provide a service on my terms - to offer a personal service with integrity and professionalism I had learned when dealing with private banks. Lion Trust Property was created.

I can't tell you that there haven't been some twists and turns along the way over the past 20 years, but perhaps I´ll share those with you in person!

So that's my story, what about yours?

Whatever it is that has lead our paths to cross it would be my privilege to be small part of your story, be it to help you find your dream property for a holiday home, or a permanent residence as part of a new lifestyle, or indeed to sell your property so that you can move on to the next chapter.

About Lion Trust Property

Choosing who you trust as your estate agent to advise you when buying a property on the Costa del Sol and Southern Spain is a very personal matter. Time is perhaps everyone's most valuable asset. There are some 22,500 properties available for sale on the Costa del Sol and we have access to them all, but we will never show them all to you!

We offer property buyers a unique, first class service tailored to your needs. We work in partnership with discerning clients of all budgets, who place value on professionalism, integrity and honesty. Our intention is to find you your ideal property at the best possible price. For property sellers we deliver results based on market research, listening to your objectives, smart marketing and networking and diligent follow up of every single inquiry for your property.

We have been working on the coast since 2003. You are invited to contact us, under no obligation to decide whether you can benefit from our experience.

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Legal disclaimer:

Lion Trust Property is the trading name for the Spanish legal entity SPC Overseas Realty S.L.

This information has been prepared using information believed by the author to be reliable and accurate and is also based on personal opinion. Lion Trust Property makes no warranty as to its accuracy or completeness. The information may be subject to change without notice. The author and Lion Trust Property does not accept responsibility for changes made to this document.

Lion Trust Property operates independently from developers and uses a shared multiple listing system (MLS) for resale properties. All contracts to purchase a property are made directly with the property developer offering the property or a private vendor. We always recommend our clients seek independent legal advice and financial as part of the buying process.

Lion Trust Property can accept no liability for losses resulting from the purchase of property where we have been involved in the intermediation.

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