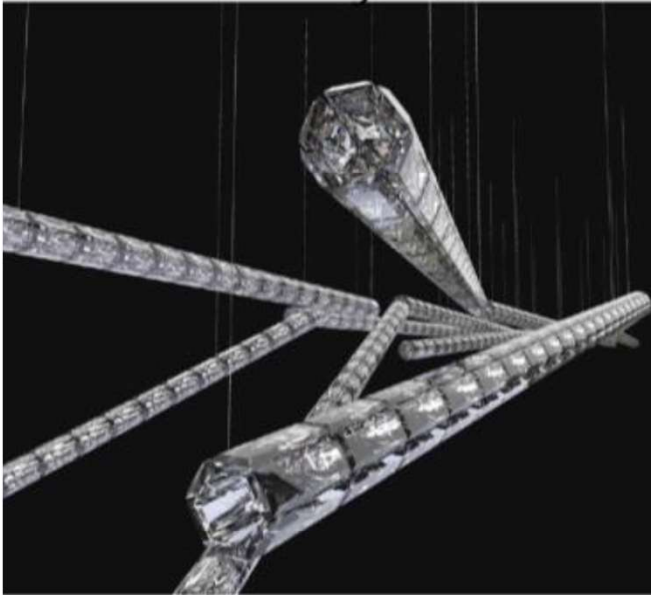


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Colour spectrum: a rainbow of style
Power luxe: lighting for all moods
Grand dame: Hoppen's big four: O
UAE - UN: nations united by design



Oceana Residence, Oceana Atlantis, Dubai



High-yield views

Whether buying or renting a home, consider its perspective on the world. Before closing the deal, follow the experts' advice and take a close look at the views from the property - for these, just like 'location, location, location', can have a huge impact on its rentability or resale value.

TEXT: RICHARD WARREN

When we buy or rent a home, we not only take possession of the property, but also of its views. If Sir Winston Churchill was right when he said "We shape our buildings; thereafter they shape us", it follows that the perspective of the outer world as seen from that building will influence our inner thoughts. EM Forster's *A Room with a View*, a novel that challenges narrow-minded Edwardian conventions, begins with two English traveling companions demanding a change of rooms at a Florence hotel because their room does not have a view of the river Arno they had been promised. When one of the travelling companions opens the bedroom window on her first morning in the new room it symbolises the fresh outlook on the world that she is to experience in the following weeks. "It was pleasant to fling wide the windows... to lean out

into sunshine with beautiful hills and trees and marble churches opposite, and, close below, Arno, gurgling against the embankment of the road," writes Forster. And it's not only tourists who want rooms with views - so do many homebuyers, some of whom will pay 50 per cent more for an abode that comes with an attractive vista than for a comparable property without one. The sea, mountains, olive groves, lakes, valleys and even golf courses are the types of view in demand. So too are views across city rooftops, of iconic urban landmarks like the Eiffel Tower, and of picturesque harbours, whether that be the glamorous, yacht-filled Dubai Marina or a tranquil Cornish fishing community. Aside from providing us with an opportunity to value beautiful surroundings,



L'Amandier, Marrakech, Morocco



a view is appreciated for other reasons too. For a second, third or even fourth homeowner it can be helpful to see New York's Central Park through a window first thing in the morning, so that they know where they are in the world. For reflective and creative types, a view provides spiritual perspective, even inspiration. The world's problems, our own problems, feel much smaller when looking down from a hilltop, and the same is true when looking at surrounding neighbourhoods from a penthouse or other lofty abode, or looking out at the vast expanse of the ocean from a beachside residence; expansive views of nature help remind us of our place in the greater scheme of things. Views also provide a great backdrop when entertaining at home, and, sometimes, more shallowly, the wow factor with which to impress guests – and even, more desperately, a conversation piece.

Having a view helps us to think more clearly: Just as being outdoors or inside a room with high ceilings can free up the grey matter to think colourful thoughts, so we're better able to think big when we can see big, and it's good for our mental and physical health. Through his research at the University of California, Berkeley, American psychologist Professor Dacher Keltner has found that enjoying an impressive view is one of a number of 'awe-inspiring' experiences that helps people to see the bigger picture, stimulating wonder and curiosity, as well as making them kinder and more collaborative. It boosts people's immune systems too, he has found.

Dubai, with its towering residential skyscrapers and grand infrastructure

schemes and expanse of the Arabian Gulf beyond, provides some of the world's great vistas – even if smog can blur those views some days. And, of course, the emirate is home to buildings that provide some of the world's biggest views, such as the Burj Khalifa. Dubai properties on the market that provide their occupants with an impressive outlook on the world include a penthouse at the Oceana Residence, which has views over Dubai Marina and the Palm Jumeirah's fronds towards the Atlantis, The Palm, Dubai. There would be no mistaking where you are in the world when looking out of the floor-to-ceiling windows from this place. On the market through Knight Frank for Dhs15 million, the three-bedroom home has a roof terrace from where these views can also be enjoyed, and an outdoor Jacuzzi, bar, gym and seating areas.

And more high-rises with big views are being built, including Creekside 18, located in Dubai Creek Harbour, which has views of Downtown Dubai and the Burj Khalifa. Prices for the 18 apartments under construction there start from Dhs906,888. Another development promising residents breath-taking vistas is 62/42, two towers of 62 storeys and 42 storeys respectively, which Emaar is constructing at Dubai Marina, and from where residents will be able to see the sea and the city.

Around the world, many other homes with compelling views can be found on the market. When it comes to having the ultimate sea-view few properties can rival The Ocean Retreat, a four-bedroom detached house in Tasmania,



The Ocean Retreat, Tasmania, Australia



Samujana, Koh Samui, Thailand



One Tower Bridge, London, UK



Australia, on the sea edge, with 180-degree views of the Tasman Sea and the horizon beyond, visible through walls of floor-to-ceiling windows on the ocean-side of the building and from an outside terrace. The Modernist-style house in the Falmouth district is on sale through Savills for Dhs6.1 million.

Where views are super-impressive, homebuyers will pay a princely sum to enjoy them. Robert Green, managing director of Sphere Estates, says homes that offer unobstructed views are the most sought after: "From panoramic sea views to golf vistas or fantastic mountain spectacles, buyers will generally pay anywhere around 20 to 30 per cent – sometimes even more in locations where premium sites are scarce – above similar properties that don't benefit from such views.

"The premium is largely determined by the quality of the view over similar properties. However, other factors also play a part, including orientation, positioning, privacy; and if within a resort development then the branding may also have an influence. Sea views are certainly sought after, purely because the majority of holiday home buyers seek beach locations. Frontline to the beach commands the highest premium, but buyers should also consider properties situated further back and elevated, offering commanding, and arguably more interesting, views over land and sea."

On the Thai Island of Koh Samui, Sphere Estates is marketing a contemporary style five-bedroom villa set back from the beach. With expansive sea views, it is on the market for Dhs7.35 million.

In Spain's Balearic archipelago, Alejandra Vanoli, managing director

of Mallorca Sotheby's International Realty, says a home with a view can have a premium in excess of 50% over an identical property without. Homes on the market on the Balearic Island of Ibiza include Can Benirras, a contemporary, six-bedroom hillside villa on offer through Aylesford International for Dhs30 million. Its extensive views encompass surrounding countryside and Benirras Bay.

Benefitting from stunning mountain views are 14 villas and a boutique hotel at the L'Amandier estate on the outskirts of Marrakech, Morocco. Set atop a plateau in the foothills of the Atlas Mountains, residents will have 360-degree views of the surrounding Toubkal National Park, olive groves and gardens when the five-hectare estate opens in autumn 2016, says its developer, Anwar Harland-Khan. Sales prices for the three-bedroom villas – which each have a roof terrace, plunge pool and access to the hotel's facilities – start from Dhs1.6 million.

City views can be among the most striking, and London has plenty of them, including the vista from One Tower Bridge, a new residential development on the south side of the Thames, where residents will be able to see Tower Bridge and the Tower of London on the opposite side of river through floor-to-ceiling windows and from their balconies when apartments are completed in 2017. Prices for the 376 apartments at the Berkeley Homes project start from Dhs7.1 million.

The wisdom behind the old property mantra of 'location, location, location' is never truer than when view becomes part of the equation. ■



Can Benirras, Ibiza, Spain



Creekside 18, Dubai Creek Harbour, Dubai