

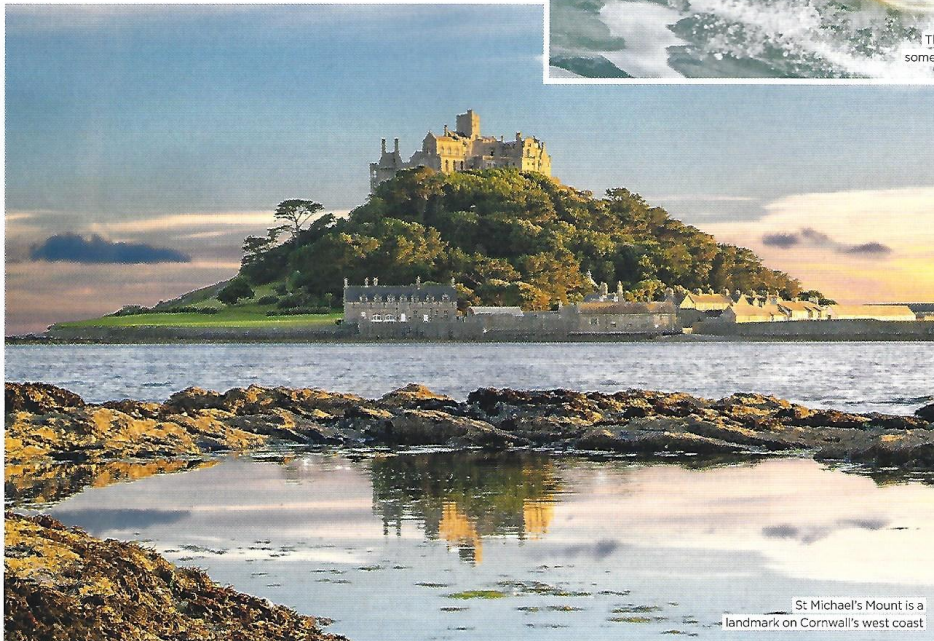
LET'S MOVE TO

CORNWALL

Fast broadband and regular flights have opened up the county, says *Anna Tyzack*



The north Cornwall coast offers some of the best surfing in the UK



St Michael's Mount is a landmark on Cornwall's west coast

With its rugged cliffs, deserted beaches and windswept moors, Cornwall is a different world entirely to that of London and the Home Counties. The train from Paddington takes five hours to reach Falmouth, Cornwall's largest town, which has a population of just 22,000 people, – seven per cent of the size of Wandsworth.

As such, city dwellers have always considered Cornwall to be summer beach holiday destination rather than a place to call home. This is changing, however, due to superfast broadband, flexible working and four flights a day from Heathrow to Newquay. 'The big change in Cornwall over the past decade is that people with young families are making the county their main home, while still working part of the week in London or Europe,' explains Jonathan Cunliffe, an estate agent specialising in upmarket family homes in Cornwall.

The wave of London buyers heading to the Cornish coast has brought with it city-style amenities such as artisan delis and bars, along with

gentrification of existing attractions such as Penzance's Jubilee Lido, which is now heated using geothermal energy, and St Michael's Resort spa hotel near Falmouth, which reopened last year following a £50m renovation.

There is also now a trendy independent cinema in Newlyn, while the Blue Bar beach café at Porthtowan on the north coast has sparked a new era of upmarket beachfront dining. 'Go back 15 years and beach cafés were nasty huts,' Cunliffe says. 'Now you can get great coffee and food in every cove around the county.' A five-minute walk from his house is the Gylly Beach café on Falmouth's famous Gyllyngvase Beach, which has a bakery, café, outdoor barbecue and firepit.

It's the water that attracts buyers to choose Cornwall over any other county, Cunliffe says; here they

WHEN IN CORNWALL

Walk to lunch
Take the coast path from Mawgan Porth to Fifteen. fifteencornwall.co.uk

Soak in the spa
For adults only, go eco at The Scarlet (scarlethotel.co.uk); or with the family, head to the Bedruthan (bedruthan.com).

Date night
The Longstore in Charlestown has delicious seafood and views. thelongstore.co.uk

Something different
At Tarquin's distillery you can wax and sign your own bottle. tarquinsgin.com

Light exercise
Cycle the Camel Trail from Padstow to Wadebridge.

Brunch with friends
Appleton's at the Vineyard on a slow Sunday. appletonsatthevineyard.com

Room with a view
Watergate Bay Hotel is right on the beach. watergatebay.co.uk



can enjoy endless cliff walks and beach days plus arguably the best sailing and surfing in the country. 'Priorities are changing; people are motivated by experiences. Cornwall is all about being outside by the water,' he explains.

South Cornwall is famous for sailing, with deepwater moorings in the Helford River and Fal Estuary and yacht marinas in Falmouth and Mylor, while northern beaches such as Polzeath and Watergate Bay are a paradise for surfers.

There are more practical aspects of a move to Cornwall, however. The county offers an excellent range of day schools, including outstanding state primaries – St Breock Primary, for example, in Wadebridge, St Minver Primary School near Rock and Falmouth Primary Academy – along with prep schools Truro Prep and Polwhele House, where pupils can ride ponies. Falmouth School and Wadebridge Secondary are top state secondary schools, while Truro High School for Girls is a highly-regarded private school.

Property prices are substantially cheaper than the Home Counties, too: for £750,000 to £1.2m you can buy a five-bedroom house with land, just a short distance from the beach – the equivalent in West Sussex would cost more than £2.5m.

Traditionally, second-home buyers have been drawn to the Camel Estuary in the north and the River Fal, River Fowey and Helford

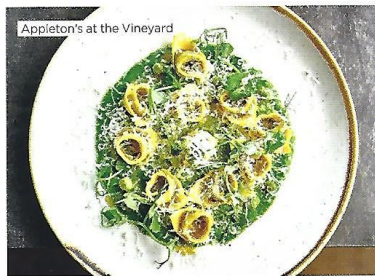
River in the south. These areas are still popular but Cunliffe has noticed a gravitation towards Falmouth and Wadebridge, which has seen a huge amount of regeneration over the past five years. 'They are both year-round destinations, which is why they suit those who are living here full time,' he says.

The property market in Cornwall has cooled considerably since the heady days of 2007, when Cunliffe was selling properties in the fashionable fishing village of Rock for £6.5m, although buyers can still expect to pay £3m for a trophy house on the Camel Estuary. 'We used to have city boys in their droves, which we don't any more, but if you find something you like, you still have to act fast.'

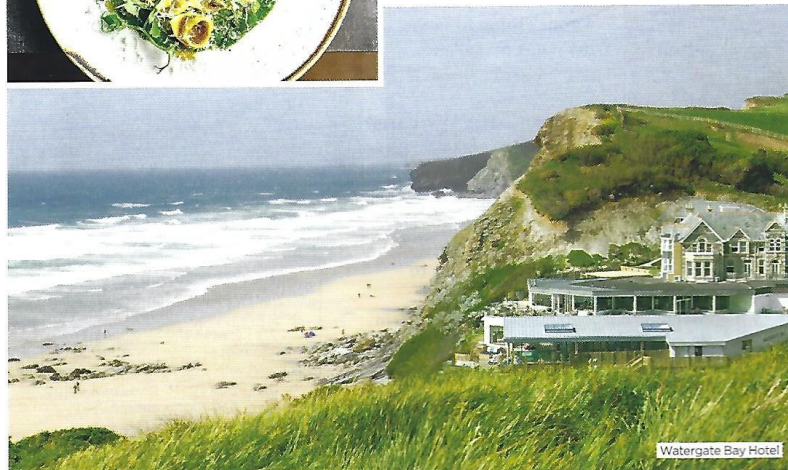
For those after a quieter location, try the Seven Bays around Padstow, which are slightly lower profile than Rock yet every bit as beautiful. Meanwhile, Sandy Lush of Cornish property agents Alexander Lush recommends the Rame Peninsula on the River Tamar in the south-east. 'The area is a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, with a ferry connection to Plymouth,' she explains.

Cunliffe, who has a wife and young family, couldn't fathom living in London rather than Cornwall. He used to work there several days a week but started his own property business 18 months ago, to ensure he didn't have to leave the county. 'The work/life balance is better down here – I used to spend so much time travelling but now I can do more exercise,' he says.

In the evenings, he'll go mountain biking along the coastal path, then enjoy a pint in a waterfront pub. His wife goes paddleboarding before the school run. 'That's quite typical for us these days,' he says. 'We really do live the cliché.' ■

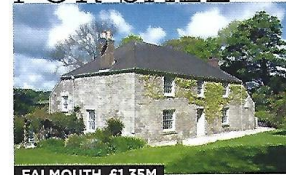


Appleton's at the Vineyard



Watergate Bay Hotel

FOR SALE



FALMOUTH, £1.35M

Penrose Farmhouse is in a rural hamlet near the sandy cove of Maenporth. The house is awash with period features and has an Aga. jonathancunliffe.co.uk



HELTFORD ESTUARY, £1.75M

This architect-designed house in sought-after Helford features spacious, open-plan living spaces and beautiful views of the water. jonathancunliffe.co.uk



ST BURYAN, £685,000

A rural, traditional stone farmhouse, not listed, with four bedrooms, a greenhouse, art studio, workshop, pond and kitchen garden in an acre of grounds. savills.co.uk



ROCK, £2.3M

Whispers is a New England-style house set in mature grounds of 4.7 acres, within walking distance of beaches and shops in fashionable Rock. johnbray.co.uk



KINGSAND, £325,000

The Beach Nest is a gem of a cottage in the south-east of the county, near the seashore and fully renovated. An ideal weekend cottage and holiday rental. alexanderlush.co.uk