



Aix is a lively, stylish but welcoming city

**M**usic, art, culture, architecture - ask a local to describe life in Aix-en-Provence and you'll start a heated debate about which is the most important. This is a lively, stylish yet welcoming city that epitomises the mental image of living in the south of France.

A former capital of Provence, it has a well-earned reputation for style, from its elegant buildings and extensive shopping opportunities to its well-turned-out residents.

The city is safe and easy to navigate without a car by hopping on and off the local buses. And once you are in the centre, walking is the way to go to drink in the sights and while away an hour or two people-watching at a pavement café.

The architecture in the Aix area is very varied. Here's a round-up of what you will find:

#### **SOUTHERN BELLES IN THE CITY**

● **Baroque:** Many of the buildings in Aix-en-Provence's centre date from the 17th and 18th centuries, with splendid mansions (many of them listed) found mainly in the Mazarin district between the famous Cours Mirabeau and Boulevard

## Aix marks the spot

You've read the books, you've dreamed the dream now it's time to put those plans into action - **Judith Whitlow** takes a look at Aix-en-Provence for a taste of the south that's not to be missed

du Roi René. The streets are perfectly aligned at right angles to the beautiful gardens of the 17th-century houses. This area has the highest property prices per square metre.

The city's aristocratic past during the 17th and 18th centuries is reflected in its grand private mansions (*hôtels particuliers*). These often feature intricate stone facades, ornate doorways and wrought-iron balconies. Examples include the Hôtel de Ville (Town Hall) and Hôtel de Gramont.

● **Mediterranean style:** Many of Aix's buildings have symmetrical designs, stone or stucco exteriors in ochre or pale yellow with tiled terracotta roofs typical of the region. Shuttered windows in blue or green are a common feature too.

● **Fountains and squares:** Aix-en-Provence is famous for its numerous fountains that serve

as central decorative features in the city's public spaces. The most famous of these is the Fontaine de la Rotonde. Many of the smaller fountains date back to earlier periods, with designs ranging from Renaissance to Baroque.

● **Narrow, winding streets:** The old town has a maze of narrow, cobblestone streets typical of medieval cities, with

tall, tightly packed buildings. These streets often lead to intimate squares surrounded by restaurants and cafés. Get your trainers on and explore!

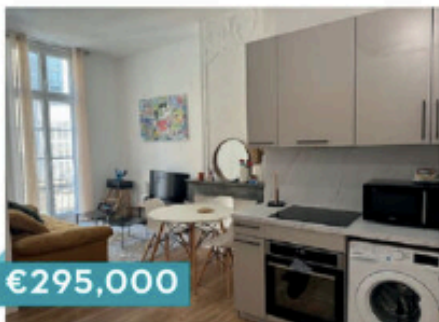
#### **IN THE COUNTRYSIDE**

● **Mass:** Surrounding Aix-en-Provence, the typical style is the *mas provençal*, a traditional stone farmhouse. These are often rectangular, with simple,

#### **A YEAR OF CÉZANNE**

Once home to Cézanne, and the subject of many of his works, Aix is celebrating his life and works in 2025. Look out for:

- An international exhibition at the Musée Granet, with works being loaned from many international collections
- The reopening of Cézanne's studio (*Atelier de Cézanne*) in the spring, after extensive renovations
- Cézanne's former home, the Bastide du Jas de Bouffan, will reopen to visitors following its restoration
- Organised visits to the Bibemus quarries that inspired many of Cézanne's most famous works



€295,000

#### HEART OF THE TOWN

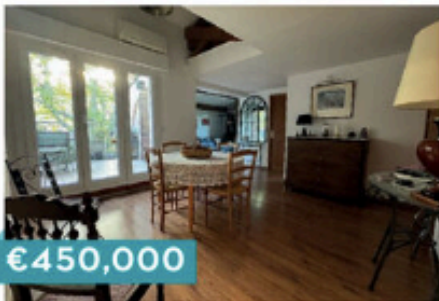
This renovated 35m<sup>2</sup> first-floor apartment in the centre of Aix-en-Provence is near all amenities. It has an open-plan living space, bedroom and shower room, plus, it is south-facing and double-glazed. An ideal rental investment.



€449,000

#### HILLSIDE HOME

Nestled in the hills of Les Milles, this beautifully renovated duplex flat is located within an 18th-century bastide property set in the heart of 6,000m<sup>2</sup> of parkland. This charming residence offers easy access to Aix and the TGV train station.



€450,000

#### GATED RESIDENCE

Close to Aix-en-Provence town centre, but located in a quiet spot away from the hustle and bustle, this two-bedroom duplex has all the comfort and security of being in a gated residence. It comes with a terrace, garage and parking space.



€663,000

#### LUBERON VIEWS

In a dominant position with views over the Luberon, this property is set in a quiet area just three minutes by car from La Roque-d'Anthéron. It's a contemporary, single-storey, four-bedroom house with an enclosed garden, swimming pool and double garage.

solid structures made from local limestone or sandstone, and are built to blend into the natural landscape. Terracotta-tiled roofs and stone walls are characteristic features; small windows keep the interiors cool in the summer heat.

● **Bastides:** Another common rural structure is the *bastide*, which is a large country house often surrounded by vineyards or olive groves. These buildings are more refined than the *mas*, usually constructed in a symmetrical design, with classical elements such as columns, pediments and formal gardens. *Bastides* were typically the homes of wealthy landowners and are still

prevalent in the countryside.

● **Romans:** In some areas around Aix you can find traces of Roman architecture, such as aqueducts, reflecting its past as a Roman settlement.

#### THE PRICE IS RIGHT

Understandably, Aix is pricey (a three-bedroom apartment could cost over €1m), yet that need not rule the area out. Of course, if money is no object, you can have the pick of city-centre properties. However, there are some more affordable areas just outside Aix offering the best of both worlds.

Several nearby villages offer excellent value for money in terms of property, while still

maintaining close proximity to the city. A three-bedroom house might be more in the region of €500,000 in one of these attractive spots. Here are a few places worth considering: ● **Venelles** offers a mix of countryside living and easy access to Aix-en-Provence. Property prices tend to be lower than in Aix, and the village has good amenities and schools, and is peaceful. It's popular with families and those looking for a quieter lifestyle without being too far from the city.

● **Puyricard** is a charming village that offers spacious properties and a rural feel. Although house prices can vary, they are generally more

affordable compared to Aix - particularly for larger homes with land. It's a great option for those seeking a blend of Provence's countryside and access to Aix's amenities.

● **Éguilles** is a scenic village offering panoramic country views. With its charming old town and local markets, it offers a peaceful lifestyle with more affordable property prices than central Aix. It's close enough to the city for commuting, but offers more space for your money.

● **Meyreuil** offers a close-knit feel with proximity to Aix and the Ste-Victoire mountain (popular for outdoor pursuits). This village tends to have lower

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€773,195

**BEAUTIFUL BASTIDE**

Located on the hills of Aix-en-Provence, this charming bastide is nestled in a small private estate. Enjoy the best of both worlds - the peace and charm of its tranquil setting, while just five minutes away is the vibrant Cours Mirabeau in Aix.



€1.35M

**VAULTED RECEPTION**

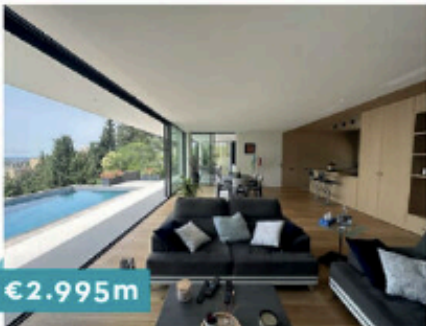
Dating from 1800, this stone village house has panoramic views of the surrounding hills and church tower. With a vaulted reception room, terrace, pool and two large studios on the ground floor, it also has a wonderful two-level home over the first and second floors.



€1.68M

**COUNTRY CHARM**

Comprising a renovated stone farmhouse, plus an outbuilding with an independent two-bedroom apartment, this property is set on 4,000m<sup>2</sup> of grounds with olive trees. It also features a pool, pool house and a double garage.



€2.995m

**INDOORS-OUTDOORS**

For lovers of indoor/outdoor living, this new single-storey architect-designed house in a peaceful location will tick all the boxes. Large windows open onto the landscaped garden for 180-degree views over the town. It has four bedrooms (two ensuite), garage and pool.

property prices compared to more famous neighbouring areas, making it a good option for those looking for value for money. The natural surroundings add to its appeal.

● **St-Marc-Jaumegarde** is nestled in a wooded, tranquil area. While it's still relatively close to Aix, it has a more

secluded feel, with large properties often at lower prices compared to those located more centrally. It's ideal for those who want space and a quieter lifestyle, but still need to be near Aix.

● **Le Tholonet** is situated at the base of the iconic Ste-Victoire mountain and offers stunning

views. While certain areas can be pricier than others, there are opportunities to find more affordable properties compared to the northern part of Aix. It's the perfect spot for nature lovers who want to be within easy reach of hiking trails, as well as the delights of Aix.

● **Bouc-Bel-Air** is a larger village with a mix of older and contemporary homes. It offers a suburban feel with lower property prices than in Aix, making it a good choice for families and those looking for affordable options. Amenities include schools and shops.

● **Fuveum** is a traditional Provençal village with lovely views of the Montagne Ste-Victoire. It is further from Aix than some of the other options but on the flipside, it offers attractive property prices and a peaceful lifestyle. It's great for those who want rural living, while still being within a manageable commute of Aix. ■

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**PROPERTY THAT PAYS**

This is a great area for investors who wish to rent out their property. There is a market for short-term lets for tourists and a very strong market for long-term lets for students and professionals. Aix is also close enough to Marseille to be commutable, offering even more scope for rental opportunities.