



## [More and More Indians are looking to Buy Property Abroad](#)

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The rise in the number of Indian millionaires along with a fall in real estate prices in the UK and the US – economies that have been hit by the sub-prime crisis – have fuelled the demand for property abroad.

“We have seen a sharp rise in the percentage of Indian clients looking at real estate in London to 12 per cent from four per cent in the last few years,” Raine Countess Spencer, director of Harrods Estate Ltd, recently said on a visit to India.

“London is on top of the list followed by the US and then Malaysia and Thailand. Dubai is passé now,” says Anuj Puri, chairman and country head of Jones Lang LaSalle Meghraj, a real estate consultant.

The National Association of Realtors in the US recently reported a 2 per cent drop in the sales of single family homes in March this year compared with the previous month.

“Most high net worth Indians are taking up this opportunity to buy property abroad. Within the US, Houston, New Jersey and Texas are some of the prime locations,” said Pranay Vakil, chairman of realty firm Knight Frank India.

“It is very difficult to give the numbers at this point, but there has been a rise in interest. With the Reserve Bank of India allowing an individual to make an overseas investment of up to \$200 million, more options have been opened up,” said Anshuman Magazine, chairman and managing director of CB Richard Ellis.

Analysts said London was a preferred location because of India’s historical relationship with the UK. Places in the US are also much sought after because many Indians have their children studying in the US, and they want a home near their children.

Indians are also taking a fancy to European properties. Eric Groux, general manager of French-Real-Estate.com, said, “We arrange for 90 per cent mortgage for our international clients. We already have a list of around 26 clients from India who have expressed interest in buying with us.”

And what’s the price for an apartment in northern France? “Close to Rs 3.6 crore,” Groux said.

Other European companies have also been luring Indians with their villas and apartments. “We have been looking at making our presence felt in India for the last six months,” said Phil Tobin, global manager of Spain-based MRI Overseas Property. The company helps people buy and sell properties in more than 18 countries. It has plans to set up offices in Mumbai and Delhi soon and has set a target of selling 12,000 units in the next three years.

“Real estate prices in Mumbai are so high. I can offer you a small cottage in Egypt with a private beach for around Rs 1 crore,” Tobin said.

“In the US and the UK, there has been a drop in the numbers of new homes being purchased. So, for realty companies there, it makes sense to look at virgin markets such as India,” a real estate analyst said.