

Get away to the Algarve

The BBC series *Get Away for Winter* which follows friends and families as they work out how to fund and find rental properties abroad to escape the worst of the British weather focused on the Algarve last month. We asked Len Port to speak to some of those involved in the programme so we could hear more.



Trish & Dave

Trish and Dave Guilford from Sussex stayed in Ferragudo from mid-December to mid-February after their specially filmed search for an ideal winter getaway. They chose a two-bedroom apartment at €650 a month and enjoyed their first stay in the Algarve so much that they have booked accommodation in Ferragudo for six months throughout the whole of next winter.

Mandy Hughes, a Lagoa-based property consultant, who managed the majority of the venues for the *Get Away for the Winter* filming in the Algarve last October, says the winter rental market here is very buoyant.

"Every year we are seeing more visitors from both Europe and further afield, particularly America and Canada." She says the winter trend provides a great option for local owners who rent their property out in the summer months but often have it standing empty over the winter. A quality, two-bedroom house or apartment in a good location can often be rented for between €500 and €800 per month plus utility costs in the winter.

"There is not a great demand for villas over the winter as those visiting from November to April tend to be retired couples." As many of the major holiday resorts almost shut down over the winter months, less publicised places such as Lagos and Ferragudo are entertaining the bulk of the winter visitors. Mandy says.

"The long term rental market, involving lets of twelve months or more, has also become increasingly busy. Property sales are a very important side of our business and we see that many overseas purchasers are opting to rent before they buy – giving themselves time to decide on their preferred area over a twelve month period rather than basing their property choice on relatively short holiday experiences."

Mandy notes that many of those investing in an Algarve property may be well placed to enjoy it either as solely a second home, or making the most out of their investment with holiday and long term lets. "In Algarve Sales and Rentals we have found that property owners are turning to us to manage the whole rental process for them. That includes advertising, finding tenants, arranging contracts and then getting the tenants settled into the property.

"The incentives to do this are many, not least of which is no longer having to pay utilities, gardeners, and pool maintenance.

"Once they have taken all their costs into account, 95% of owners come to the conclusion that they actually make more profit for a long-term rental than they do for the summer holiday market."

Trish and Dave Guildford, retirees who have fallen in love with the Algarve as a result of taking part in the first episode of the BBC's *Get Away for the Winter* series, are also expecting to make a profit next winter. While renting in Ferragudo again, this time for six months from next October, they intend to rent out their Sussex home. They anticipate a far higher income per month from their own house than they will be paying in Ferragudo, plus saving on UK heating bills, food and other less expensive items here.

Trish and Dave, who stayed in Ferragudo from mid-December to mid-February, say they would consider renting elsewhere in the Algarve in future years. "We love the Portuguese and especially the Algarve area with its beautiful scenery and glorious beaches and walks. The feeling of friendliness from the locals is really lovely. We feel safe here and less stressed."

Mandy Hughes, of the Lagoa-based company Algarve Sales and Rentals, did the background research and suggested accommodation in the €650 to €800 a month in locations other than the already most publicised places. Mandy, a consultant with the company Algarve Sales and Rentals, co-ordinated details of the property search that spanned five full days early last October. On camera, another agent with much experience in all sections of the property business here, Nick Austin, gave Dave a guided tour around a fisherman's cottage and a two-bedroom apartment in Ferragudo, a two-bedroom apartment in Vilamoura, and a typical Portuguese townhouse in Lagos.

They visited a property in Porches too, but it did not feature in the show as it was out of the price bracket. An unusual feature of the series is that one of the couple – in this case Dave's wife – stays at home. Trish, was not in the Algarve in person during the filming, but was filmed daily in their Sussex home taking part in her husband's guided tours via Skype. Dave, is a 74-year-old retired independent financial adviser, while 71-Trish worked as a baby sign teacher and vibrogym exercise coach. Of the four properties they were shown, the Guilfords went for the Ferragudo apartment.

The Algarve programme can be watched on BBC1 Catch-up.