20 YEARS

ALPINE PROPERTY INVESTMENTS

2006 - 2026

INVEST IN LIFESTYLE

THE COMPLETE BUYER'S GUIDE TO

The French Alps

The market, the resorts, the process, the numbers, the tax and the structures, everything you need before buying a ski property in France.

Specialists in ski property across the French Alps



YOUR GUIDE TO BUYING IN THE ALPS

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HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Read it once end to end, then return to the sections that match your situation. The figures are realistic guides based on typical transactions, but every purchase is different, always confirm the specifics for your property with the notaire and a tax adviser before committing.

SECTION 01 · THE MARKET CASE

Why the French Alps

Buying in the French Alps is one of the most rewarding purchases you can make: a base for winters on the snow, summers on the trails, and an asset in one of Europe's most consistently supply-constrained property markets. It is also a purchase in a foreign legal system, in a second language, with its own tax rules, fee structures and contract types. This guide removes the guesswork.

The French Alps are home to some of the largest linked ski areas in the world. The Trois Vallées, Paradiski, the Portes du Soleil, Les Sybelles and Tignes–Val d'Isère sit alongside historic towns such as Chamonix and Megève. For property buyers, the fundamentals are strong.

- **Constrained supply.** Planning restrictions, limited buildable land, steep terrain and rising environmental requirements limit new development in many communes. Desirable resorts cannot expand indefinitely, which supports the scarcity of well-located property.
- **A genuine dual-season market.** The best resorts are no longer winter-only. Summer trade, hiking, cycling, trail running, golf, lake tourism, now extends the season substantially, and remote working has added demand for medium-term stays outside the classic holiday weeks.
- **Snow security.** Higher-altitude resorts and those with glacier or north-facing terrain offer the most reliable conditions in a warming climate, and the market increasingly prices this in.
- **Accessibility.** Geneva, Lyon, Grenoble and Chambéry airports put most major resorts within a 1–3 hour transfer of a short-haul flight, and the Eurostar/TGV network adds a low-friction alternative.
- **A secure legal framework.** France has a mature, notaire-supervised conveyancing system, strong consumer protections on new-build, and no restrictions on foreign ownership.
- **Infrastructure as a value driver.** Investment in lifts, snowmaking, public spaces and resort regeneration can support demand and long-term values, although

appreciation is never guaranteed. It is worth checking what infrastructure spending is planned near any property you shortlist.

Lifestyle, investment, or both?

Most buyers sit somewhere between a pure lifestyle purchase and a pure investment. It matters, because the two pull in different directions: the resort that is perfect for your family's February half-term may not be the resort with the strongest year-round rental demand. The most successful purchases start with one honest answer, how many weeks a year will you realistically use it, and how hard must it work financially the rest of the time?

> *"If the property must cover a meaningful share of its own running costs, rental performance should drive your choice, not the other way round. If it is primarily a family base, buy where you genuinely want to be and treat any rental income as a bonus."*



SECTION 02 · NARROWING THE FIELD

Choosing your resort

There are more than 200 ski resorts in the French Alps. The good news: a handful of criteria will quickly narrow the field to two or three genuine candidates.

1. **Altitude & snow record.** Higher resorts, or those with access to high and north-facing terrain, generally offer greater snow reliability, though accessibility, atmosphere and year-round appeal matter equally.

2. **Access.** Transfer time shapes both your usage and rental appeal. Around 90 minutes or less is especially attractive for regular short stays, though longer transfers can be worth it for larger or higher ski areas.

3. **Dual-season strength.** A resort with a real summer economy can add around 4–8 lettable weeks a year and supports local services year-round.

4. **Rental demand.** Occupancy, achievable weekly rents and the depth of the local managed-rental market vary enormously between resorts that look similar on paper.

5. **Resort character.** Purpose-built convenience (ski-in/ski-out, on-piste apartments) versus traditional village character (chalets, year-round communities) is a genuine trade-off. If children are central, look for the official *Famille Plus* label.

6. **Budget fit.** Entry prices per square metre range from around €7,000 in emerging resorts to €50,000+ in the most prestigious addresses. Your budget will do some of the shortlisting for you.

A sense of the market tiers

TIER	TYPICAL RESORTS	CHARACTER
Prestige	Courchevel 1850, Val d'Isère, Megève, Méribel, Chamonix	International prime market, strong capital values, deep luxury rental demand
Established premium	Morzine, Les Gets, Châtel, Saint-Martin-de-Belleville, Courchevel Le Praz, Village & Moriond	Strong dual-season appeal, village character, robust family rental market
High-altitude value	Tignes, Les Arcs, La Plagne, Val Thorens, Alpe d'Huez, Les Deux Alpes, La Toussuire, Orelle	High-altitude convenience, strong winter demand, comparatively accessible entry prices
Emerging value	La Rosière, Vaujany, Samoëns, Saint-François-Longchamp, Valloire, Saint-Sorlin-d'Arves	Improving infrastructure, attractive pricing, potential for longer-term growth

Categories are indicative, not official. Individual hamlets within the same resort can sit in very different price brackets.

Shortlist, then visit. Aim to get from 200 resorts to two or three candidates on paper, then visit. A resort's feel on the ground settles most shortlists quickly.

SECTION 03 · A TOUR OF THE MARKET

Resort directory

A brief, honest tour of the resorts our buyers ask about most, a flavour, not a full list. Part of what we do on a discovery call is match your specific brief against the whole market, including resorts you may not yet have considered.

Val d'Isère & Tignes ESPACE KILLY

Iconic, high-altitude and superbly snow-sure, with one of the longest seasons in the Alps. Val d'Isère pairs serious skiing with a genuine village and a major regeneration programme, a strong signal for long-term values. Tignes offers the same ski area at more accessible prices with a purpose-built, sport-first character.

Courchevel & Méribel TROIS VALLÉES

The heart of the world's largest linked ski area. Courchevel spans the international prime market of 1850 to the more affordable lower villages, with prices varying dramatically between them. Méribel is central, sunny and family-oriented, made up of distinct villages each with its own feel and price point.

Saint-Martin-de-Belleville TROIS VALLÉES

An authentic Savoyard village inside the Trois Vallées, prized for its architecture, restaurants and calm. It offers big-ski-area access with real village charm, and has been one of the market's quiet outperformers.

Megève & Combloux

Megève is the grande dame of the French Alps: elegant, gastronomic, dual-season and under an hour from Geneva. Neighbouring Combloux offers much of the same Mont Blanc scenery and access at considerably friendlier prices, a classic value play beside a prestige address.

Chamonix & Les Houches

A world-famous, year-round mountain town rather than a conventional ski resort. Chamonix hosted the first Winter Olympic Games in 1924 and has a summer economy as strong as its winter one. Planning constraints support the value of well-located existing property, while Les Houches offers a more village-led alternative at the valley entrance.

Morzine, Les Gets & Châtel PORTES DU SOLEIL

Around 90 minutes from Geneva, these are the benchmark dual-season villages: genuine year-round communities, major summer mountain-biking economies and deep family rental demand. Châtel in particular combines preserved character with access to one of France's largest ski domains.

Saint-Sorlin-d'Arves & La Toussuire LES SYBELLES

Les Sybelles is the fourth-largest linked ski area in France and the seventh-largest in Europe, yet remains one of its best-value corners. Saint-Sorlin-d'Arves and La Toussuire are both genuine dual-season villages, busy on the snow in winter and on the trails and roads in summer, and their comparatively accessible pricing leaves clear room for long-term capital growth as the area's profile rises.

Alpe d'Huez & Les Deux Alpes

Sunny and high, with significant recent lift investment. A broad range of apartments and strong appeal to buyers prioritising snow reliability and rental potential. Selected new-build may qualify for VAT recovery where the required rental and service conditions are met.

Valloire GALIBIER-THABOR

A traditional Savoyard village with a rare true dual-season economy. In winter it anchors the Galibier-Thabor ski area; in summer it sits at the foot of the legendary Col du Galibier, one of the most famous climbs in the Tour de France, drawing road cyclists from across the world alongside hikers and mountain bikers. That genuine year-round appeal, at accessible prices, makes it a compelling lifestyle-and-investment prospect.



SECTION 04 · THE FIRST STRUCTURAL DECISION

New-build (VEFA) or resale?

This is the first structural decision in any French Alpine purchase, and it changes the process, the costs and the tax treatment.

Buying off-plan: the VEFA system

New-build in France is usually sold off-plan under a VEFA contract (*Vente en l'État Futur d'Achèvement*, sale in a future state of completion). It is a heavily regulated, buyer-protective structure:

- **Staged payments, capped by law.** You pay in instalments tied to construction milestones. French law and subsequent contracts broadly cap stage payments at 25–35% for foundations and completion of the first floor, 70% when airtight and watertight, and 95% at completion, with the balance on handover.
- **Completion guarantee.** The developer must provide a bank-backed *garantie financière d'achèvement* (GFA), helping ensure completion even if the developer fails. The reservation deposit is held securely on the Notary's Escrow Account. No funds can pass to a developer until the Final Contract signature, with the GFA required to allow this process to happen.
- **Warranties.** A one-year guarantee of perfect completion, a two-year guarantee on certain equipment, and a ten-year structural guarantee (*garantie décennale*).
- **Reduced purchase costs.** Notaire fees are commonly around 2–2.5% versus roughly 7–8% on resales. New properties may also qualify for a total or partial two-year *taxe foncière* exemption, subject to local rules and a timely completion declaration.
- **Customisation.** Buying early usually means choosing finishes and sometimes adapting layouts. the property is genuinely yours from day one.
- **VAT recovery potential.** With a qualifying furnished rental activity and the required hotel-style services, a buyer may recover the VAT included in the purchase price (see Section 7).

The trade-offs: you are buying from plans, completion is typically 18–30 months away.

WHERE WE COME IN

Alpine Property Investments works under formal agreements with a select group of established French developers whose delivery records we know first-hand. Part of our role is to have already asked these questions before a development ever reaches you.

Buying a resale

Resales give certainty and immediate use. You can see the property, its setting, the layout and its views before committing and in some cases those in prime village-centre positions, may have no new-build equivalents. Resales are also often sold with furniture included in the price. Against that, purchase costs are usually around 7–8% and renovation may be required, although this can add future value to the property and there is normally no VAT recovery on the purchase itself.

Side by side

	NEW-BUILD (VEFA)	RESALE
Purchase costs	≈ 2–2.5% Notary fees	≈ 7–8% Notary fees
Taxe foncière	May qualify for a partial/total 2-year exemption	Payable from day one
VAT recovery	Possible with qualifying rental services	Not on the purchase itself
Availability	Completion typically 18–30 months if buying on project launch	Immediate
Certainty	Buying from plans & specification	See exactly what you get
Condition	New, warrantied, efficient, customisable	Varies; renovation may be needed
Choice of location	Limited to current developments	Whole market, including prime centres



SECTION 05 · HOW IT RUNS

The buying process, step by step

French purchases are supervised end to end by a *Notary*, a state-appointed legal officer whose duty is to the transaction itself, not to either party. The process is methodical and secure, and while a Notary can represent both the buyer and seller, many overseas buyers prefer their own independent English-speaking Notary to act on their behalf, who we can recommend. Where two Notaries are involved in the purchase process, Notary fees are shared between them.

1 **Reservation or preliminary contract**

Agree property and price, confirm mortgage affordability, then sign a reservation contract (new build) or a *compromis de vente* (resale). The deposit, typically ~5% for VEFA or up to 10% for resales, is paid onto the Notary client escrow account on signing the preliminary contract.

2 **10-day cooling-off period**

As a buyer of residential property you have a statutory 10-day cooling-off period after signing the reservation or *compromis* contracts, during which you can withdraw without penalty and recover your deposit in full.

3

Preparation of the Final Contract

The Notary assembles the legal file: title, planning searches, diagnostics, copropriété documents. Mortgage offers are arranged in this window; contracts usually include a financing condition that protects you if the loan is refused. For VEFA sales, no final contract can be signed until the GFA has been obtained. Where it is favourable to purchase not in individual names but through a company acquisition, the company creation occurs at this stage.

4

Completion

The *acte de vente* (resale) or *acte authentique* (VEFA) is finalised and can be signed in person or via POA. Funds transfer through the Notary's account, and ownership passes. For VEFA, stage payments then follow construction until handover.

Typical timeline

STAGE	RESALE	NEW-BUILD (VEFA)
Offer → preliminary contract	1–3 weeks	1–2 weeks
Cooling-off period	10 days	10 days
Searches, financing, notaire file	6–10 weeks	6–12 weeks
Legal completion	≈ 2–3 months from offer	≈ 2–4 months from reservation
Keys in hand	At completion	At handover, ~18–30 months after launch

The real numbers

One-off purchase costs

COST	NEW-BUILD (VEFA)	RESALE
Notary fees & taxes	≈ 2–2.5% of price	≈ 7–8% of price
Agency fees	In the advertised price.	In the advertised price
Mortgage arrangement	Varies by lender, loan & guarantee	Varies by lender, loan & guarantee
Currency transfer	Use a regulated FX provider compared to banks for better rates	Use a regulated FX provider compared to banks for better rates
Furniture pack (if letting)	Varies by size & required specification (please ask for more information)	Sometimes sold fully furnished

Annual running costs

Typically, annual running costs include:

- **Copropriété charges.** Applicable to properties with communal areas. Charges cover maintenance, heating, lighting, caretaking, lifts, grass cutting, and communal facilities. Amounts vary by building and whether the residence includes a pool, spa or wellness facilities.
- **Taxe foncière.** The annual ownership tax, based on notional rental value. New properties may qualify for a partial/total two-year exemption; waste-collection charges may still apply.
- **Taxe d'habitation.** Still charged on second homes (abolished for main residences only).
- **Insurance.** Copropriété owners must hold civil liability cover; the building is generally insured through the copropriété, while owners separately consider contents, holiday-home and rental cover.
- **Utilities & management.** Electricity, water, broadband.
- **Accountants' fees.** If renting, annual personal or company accounts will need to be prepared and submitted.

If renting, linen, cleaning and management fees have to be considered. It is also worth noting that in general all annual costs of an apartment or chalet in the French Alps (excluding finance) can be covered by renting the property for 2–3 high-season weeks in the winter.

Wealth tax (IFI): the actual bands

France applies real-estate Wealth Tax (IFI) to households whose net taxable French property assets exceed €1.3 million. Non-residents are assessed on French real estate only. Qualified connected debts such as loans for renovation and construction improvements or the amount of a French mortgage are deductible. Setting up a SARL or SCI company containing two or more shareholders at the point of purchase, in some cases can also assist in lowering Wealth Tax, but we always recommend seeking advice and can introduce you to experts in this field for tailored conversations. Once the €1.3m threshold is crossed, the tax is calculated on bands beginning at €800,000:

NET TAXABLE FRENCH PROPERTY ASSETS	RATE
Up to €800,000	**0%**
€800,000 – €1.3m	**0.5%**
€1.3m – €2.57m	**0.7%**
€2.57m – €5m	**1.0%**
€5m – €10m	**1.25%**
Above €10m	**1.5%**

If your purchase may approach the threshold, take advice early. Financing can affect the net taxable value, but borrowing solely for tax purposes should only be considered with specialist advice.



SECTION 07 · INCOME & THE VAT REBATE

Rental income & the 20% VAT rebate

The 20% VAT rebate on new builds

This is one of the most valuable and least understood features of the French Alpine market. New-build prices commonly include 20% French VAT. Where the property is operated as a qualifying furnished holiday rental and at least three of the required hotel-style services are genuinely provided, the owner may recover the VAT included in the purchase price. Eligibility depends on the legal and operational structure, not simply on appointing a letting agent, and normally brings ongoing VAT registration, accounting and reporting obligations.

A WORKED EXAMPLE

€500,000	≈ €83,333	≈ €416,667
VAT-inclusive purchase	VAT element (one-sixth)	Net if fully recoverable

The adjustment period runs over 20 years, with a potential pro-rata repayment if the property leaves the qualifying regime early, calculated on a 1/20th deduction for every year rented (after 20 years, no VAT to repay).

What about your own use?

Treatment of personal use depends on the agency management agreement and tax structure. Typically, properties must be offered for rent for a minimum of 9–10 weeks in the winter and 2–3 weeks in the summer, with some (not all) of the high-season weeks offered for rental. Under these contracts, stays by the owner, friends or family are booked through the local agency who are managing the property on your behalf.

Classic Freehold, LOI Montagne and Residence Tourisme

All property purchases in France are Freehold. There are, however, three types of property available to purchase: Classic Freehold, LOI Montagne and Residence Tourisme.

Classic Freehold

This is the most popular type of property. Owners have the choice whether they want to rent for a few weeks, rent and follow the VAT reclaim obligations, or, for those who don't want to rent, they don't have to. The choice is entirely up to the buyer.

LOI Montagne

This type of property comes with a rental obligation managed through a local agency. Owners can change agency at the end of the rental contract, typically after 2–3 years, should they wish. Owner usage varies, typically from 4–6 weeks own use during the winter and variable periods of up to 8 weeks in the summer. Outside of these periods, owners generally have full use of their property without obligation.

Residence Tourisme

Run by the onsite Management Company under a BAIL Rental Contract. There is no choice to change who rents the property for you, for an extended fixed period of a minimum of 9 years. This is not a property Alpine Property Investments sell.

How rental income is taxed

Furnished letting is commonly taxed under the LMNP regime (*loueur en meublé non professionnel*). Under the *régime réel*, qualifying costs (land taxes, interest on mortgages, accountants' fees), depreciation of the building and furniture as well as a maintenance trip may be deducted against rental income, which can substantially reduce your annual taxable profit.

Non-resident owners normally declare the income in both countries, with double-tax treaties in place with over 120 countries that include the UK, US, Ireland, Holland, Belgium and Switzerland which are intended to prevent double taxation. Specialist accounting advice is therefore recommended and we can propose suitable professionals to speak with.

Selling later: Capital Gains & Social Tax

French capital gains tax of 19% applies to the profit of the sale of a property in France, calculated after tangible deductions such as renovation or construction costs that have been incurred. Taper relief begins after the fifth year of ownership and full exemption from Capital Gains is achieved after 22 years.

Social Tax, payable only by those residing outside of the EU, is charged on the taxable profit at 17.2% (7.5% in certain circumstances), with charges reducing to nothing to pay after 30 years.

Creation of a French SARL or SCI can help in the mitigation of paying tax on the profit of a property, and we recommend a conversation with an expert in this field and have someone whom we can propose.



SECTION 08 · HOW YOU HOLD IT

Ownership structures & inheritance

How you hold the property matters as much as which property you buy, and it is far easier to get right at purchase than to restructure later. Three common routes:

Buying in personal names

For many couples the simplest starting point. It generally preserves access to the LMNP furnished-letting regime and avoids ongoing company administration, though the right structure depends on family, tax and succession position.

Buying *en indivision* (joint ownership)

Two or more buyers each own a defined share. Straightforward for couples, but awkward for friends or wider families: decisions require agreement, and any co-owner can in principle force a sale. For more than one household, a company structure is usually cleaner.

Buying through an SCI or a SARL / SARL de Famille structure (popular French companies that can hold properties)

An SCI (*société civile immobilière*) or SARL (*Société à Responsabilité Limitée*) are simple French companies that can be created to hold property. Shares can be gifted or transferred in stages, useful for inheritance planning; several families can hold clearly defined shareholdings; and exits are managed by transferring shares rather than forcing a property sale.

> **One crucial caveat generic guides miss:** an SCI is designed for unfurnished, passive ownership. If an SCI carries on furnished letting as its business, it generally falls into French corporation tax, which changes the entire tax picture and can be seriously disadvantageous on eventual sale. If your plan involves the VAT rebate and managed furnished letting, personal ownership under LMNP is usually the better route. Take specialist cross-border advice before committing to an SCI; we can introduce you to advisers we trust.

Unmarried buyers should obtain advice before purchasing, as inheritance tax treatment and succession outcomes can differ significantly depending on whether the buyers are married, in a recognised civil partnership, or have no formal legal relationship. We recommend a conversation with an expert in this field and have someone whom we can propose.

French inheritance rules: what every foreign buyer should know

France applies forced heirship: a reserved share of your estate must pass to your children, regardless of what your will says. For many international buyers it is the single most important legal difference from buying at home.

- **Electing national law.** Under the EU Succession Regulation, an owner can generally elect in a properly drafted will for the law of their nationality, such as English law, to govern succession. This does not remove French inheritance tax, and additional French rules may affect particular international estates, so individual advice is essential.
- **French inheritance tax still applies.** Even where overseas law governs who inherits, French inheritance tax still applies to French property. Transfers between spouses on death are exempt. Each child has a tax-free allowance of €100,000, with progressive rates above that; distant relatives and unrelated beneficiaries face far higher rates, up to 60%.
- **Planning tools exist.** Joint-purchase clauses (such as the *clause tontine*), adjusting your marriage regime, holding via an SCI/SARL, or electing national law in a will to mitigate inheritance. The right tool depends on your family situation. We recommend seeking guidance on this topic as part of the purchase process. The Notary we recommend will be able to assist with succession. A short conversation at purchase, and a properly drafted will, resolves almost all of these circumstances.

Succession is the least glamorous part of buying in France and the most expensive to ignore. A short conversation with a cross-border adviser at purchase, and a properly drafted will, resolves almost all of it.

SECTION 09 · BORROWING

Financing your purchase

French banks lend to non-resident buyers, and French mortgage rates have historically been attractive by UK standards. Key points for overseas buyers:

- **Loan-to-value.** French banks lend to qualifying non-residents, but the available loan-to-value depends on nationality, residence, income, age, assets, property type and rental structure. UK buyers can be asked for a larger deposit than French or EU-resident borrowers. Loans typically range to 70%, with occasional 80% options available.
- **Affordability rules.** French lending is affordability-driven. Banks assess total debt repayments, including existing commitments, against household income and apply their own criteria. Documentation is thorough, so expect to provide a full financial file.
- **Fixed rates.** Long-term fixed rates are the norm in France, giving certainty over the life of the loan. You know what you pay each month for the length of the term, typically 15, 20 or 25 years. Interest-only options exist but are less common.
- **Why borrow in France.** A French mortgage aligns the debt with the property and allows offset against such things as rental income and Wealth Tax if approaching the threshold.
- **Currency strategy.** For the deposit and fees, for those outside of the Euro you will need to move native currencies (e.g. sterling, dollars) into euros. A specialist currency broker can obtain better rates than a bank, ensuring a lower net amount payable. With forward contracts this lets you fix your rate for staged VEFA payments. On large purchases this materially matters.

OUR ROLE

Alpine Property Investments works alongside specialist French mortgage brokers who arrange non-resident lending daily, and we time mortgage applications around the contract's financing condition so your deposit is protected throughout.

SECTION 10 · FOR UK BUYERS

The post-Brexit position

Brexit changed nothing about your right to buy: there are no restrictions on UK citizens owning French property, and the purchase process is identical. What changed is time spent in France.

- **The 90/180 rule.** Without a visa, UK citizens can spend up to 90 days in any rolling 180-day period in the Schengen area. For most holiday-home owners, even keen skiers, this is ample: it comfortably covers a full winter of trips plus summer visits.
- **Longer stays.** For stays beyond the Schengen 90/180-day allowance, UK citizens must apply for an appropriate French long-stay visa. The correct category and duration depend on the planned length and purpose of the stay; check the current France-Visas requirements before travelling.
- **Property does not equal residency.** France has no golden visa: buying a property, at any price, does not itself confer residency rights. Residency comes through the visa system; owning a home in France helpfully supports a visa application but does not replace it.
- **Tax and banking.** UK-resident owners declare French rental income in both countries under the double-tax treaty, with credit given so income is not taxed twice. French banks continue to lend to UK buyers, and the notaire system handles non-resident purchases as standard.

> Brexit has not restricted UK citizens from buying or owning French property. Its principal practical effect for most second-home owners is the 90/180-day limit on visa-free time in the Schengen area, with an appropriate long-stay visa required for longer periods.

SECTION 11 · INDICATIVE PRICING

What your budget buys

Indicative asking-price guidance only. Availability and pricing can change quickly and vary substantially by village, condition, outlook, floor level and proximity to the slopes.

BUDGET	WHAT IT TYPICALLY BUYS
€350k–€500k	1 to 2 bedroom new-build apartments in high-altitude ski areas (Alpe d'Huez, Les Deux Alpes, Les Arcs, Vaujany, Champagny-en-Vanoise); 2 to 3 bedroom apartments in emerging resorts (St Sorlin d'Arves, La Toussuire, St François Longchamp, Orelle, Valmeinier); studios in some of the bigger-name resorts.
€500k–€1m	2 to 3 bedroom new builds in established premium villages (Les Gets, Morzine, Samoëns, Châtel, Valloire); 3 to 5 bedroom new builds in emerging resorts (St Sorlin d'Arves, La Toussuire, St François Longchamp, Orelle).
€1.5m–€3m	2 to 3 bedroom apartments in prestige resorts (St Martin de Belleville, Val d'Isère, Méribel, Courchevel, Megève); substantial chalets in premium dual-season villages.
€3m +	Larger apartments, penthouses and selected chalets in more premium resorts; trophy properties at substantially higher budgets.

- **Value is often one village away.** Prices can vary substantially between villages sharing the same ski area, and better value is often found one village away from the prime address.
- **The right extras pay their way.** An additional bedroom, parking space or genuine ski-in position can materially improve both rental demand and resale appeal.

though every purchase should remain within a comfortable budget.



SECTION 12 · QUICK ANSWERS

The questions every buyer asks

Why buy in the French Alps?

With over 200 resorts to choose from there is something for everyone. Superb skiing and home to some of the biggest and best ski domains in the world by winter, as well as incredible hiking, mountain biking, road cycling and climbing in summer, the French Alps is blessed with an array of world-famous iconic resorts as well as premium and emerging destinations to provide outstanding second home opportunities to "Invest in Lifestyle". With some of the best rental returns to be found anywhere in the Alps, coupled to long-term capital appreciation, here, unlike other countries, there is no restriction on what you can buy or when you can sell.

Can foreigners buy property in France?

Yes. There are no general nationality restrictions on buying property in France, although ownership does not by itself grant any right of residence. Buyers have no restrictions on what property they can purchase. All property types, sizes and locations are eligible.

Do I have to rent out my property?

No, if you purchase a Classic Freehold property without a rental obligation. Renting becomes relevant only if you want to reclaim the 20% VAT rebate on a new build, which requires a managed furnished-letting commitment. LOI Montagne and Residence Tourisme properties come with their own rental obligations, which vary by development.

Does buying a property give me the right to live in France?

No. France has no golden visa. For non-EU residents, time in France is governed by the 90/180 day rule or by a long-stay visa, whatever you own. EU residents can live in France.

Is my deposit safe on an off-plan purchase?

French VEFA purchases contain strong safeguards. The reservation deposit is held on the Notary's Escrow Account. Stage payments are capped by law, and the developer must provide a completion guarantee (GFA) before the final deed is signed.

How long does the whole process take?

Around 2 to 3 months from offer to legal completion. For off-plan, handover of the finished property follows the build, typically 18 to 30 months.

Can I get a French mortgage as a non-resident?

Yes. French banks lend to qualifying non-residents, but the available deposit and terms depend on the buyer's nationality, residence, income, assets, age, property type and intended rental structure.

Can I complete without travelling to France?

In many cases, yes. A power of attorney and the notaire's approved remote identification and signing procedures can allow completion without travelling to France.

Should I buy through a company?

Sometimes yes, an SCI or SARL helps with inheritance planning and multi-family ownership. Advice can be provided by recommended professionals.

What if I sell before the 20-year VAT period ends?

A pro-rata VAT adjustment may arise if the property leaves the qualifying rental regime before the end of the 20-year adjustment period.

Is the VAT rebate simply a 20% discount?

No. It is the recovery of the VAT contained within a qualifying VAT-inclusive purchase price, subject to a continuing taxable rental activity. On a VAT-inclusive price, the VAT element is one-sixth of the total.

Do I need a structural survey?

A survey is not automatically part of the French buying process, properties being sold as seen. The seller supplies statutory diagnostic reports, but buyers of older or extensively renovated properties may wish to commission an independent building survey.

Will Brexit cause me problems (UK buyers)?

Brexit has not restricted UK citizens from buying or owning French property. Its principal practical effect for most second-home owners is the limit on visa-free time in the Schengen area, alongside additional administration for longer stays.

SECTION 13 · YOUR NEXT STEP

The next step is a conversation

If this guide has done its job, you now have a framework: a clearer sense of your 'why', a realistic picture of the numbers, the structures and the tax landscape, and the criteria to shortlist resorts with confidence.

Alpine Property Investments works under formal agreements with a select group of established developers across the French Alps, and we guide buyers through every stage covered in this guide: shortlisting resorts, judging developments, structuring the purchase, arranging finance and currency, and setting up rental management, VAT recovery and succession planning with the right specialists.

Book a free, no-obligation discovery call

We will map this guide onto your specific situation: your budget, your usage plans, and the resorts that genuinely fit. You will leave the call with a shortlist and a clear plan, whether or not you buy through us.

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