

LIVING ITALIA!

*Undulating hills roll
between the sea and
the mountains*

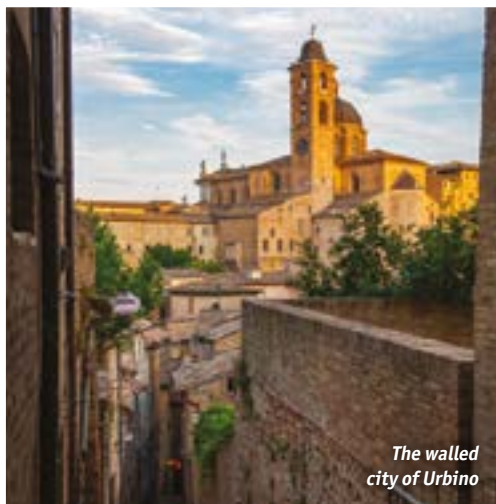


Living in *Le Marche*

Regularly showered with accolades for its cleanliness and quality of life, this prosperous, rural region is greatly loved by visitors and property-hunters. It remains an excellent place to buy yourself a home in Italy says **Fleur Kinson**.



*Il Ponte della Concordia,
Fossombrone*



*The walled
city of Urbino*



*Spiaggia Mezzavalle,
near Portonovo*

Forming the Italian leg's calf muscle on a map, Le Marche sits halfway down the nation's peninsula with the blue Adriatic Sea lapping its eastern edge and the pretty Apennine mountains rising along its western side. It's an extremely attractive and well-proportioned region, with a rich array of diverse landscapes lying within relatively easy reach of each other.

There are more than a hundred miles of clean, golden beaches here. There are countless miles of green and gold hills, often crowned with handsome old towns and villages. And there are rounded, wooded mountains snaked through with hiking trails, offering gorgeous vistas across the region and into neighbouring Umbria, Emilia-Romagna and Abruzzo.

Being attractive and well-proportioned is true of more than just Le Marche's landscapes. The region's pace of life is easy-going and sustainable, its general atmosphere serene and friendly. The population density is low, the unemployment rate very low, and the crime rate rock-bottom.

Le Marche is rural but prosperous, orderly but relaxed. Local communities are warm and welcoming, and many small towns enjoy a lively calendar of events and festivals that bring everyone

together. Lovers of big cities might be disappointed in Le Marche, as there are no big conurbations here. There is also hardly any heavy industry anywhere in the region.

But the region is certainly no remote backwater. The transport infrastructure is solid and reliable, with good roads and smooth-running rail, sea and air connections to other countries.

AT A GLANCE...

► THE REGION

Le Marche is located on Italy's central eastern coast. The main neighbours are Emilia-Romagna, Umbria and Abruzzo; the border also briefly kisses Tuscany and Lazio. Landscapes unfurl between the sparkling blue Adriatic and the majestic Apennine mountains. The coast is a long line of clean, golden beaches meeting warm, shallow water. Inland, the terrain rises to form an undulating world of green and sun-blonded hills.

► THE CLIMATE

Temperate, with warm-hot summers but no real dry season. Winters in the uplands can be cold, especially at night.

► THE CULTURE

Ducal palaces and museums abound. Grand master Raphael and architect Bramante were born in Urbino. Pesaro is the birthplace of Rossini.



CASA RINASCERE

Type of property **Fully restored farmhouse**
 Number of bedrooms **3**
 Price **€419,000**

Location **Penna San Giovanni, Macerata**
 Contact **Kevin Gibney, Property For Sale Marche**
 ☎ **+39 347 538 6668**

info@propertyforsalemarche.com
www.propertyforsalemarche.com

Stylishly restored stone farmhouse. Restored in 2021. High-end design. Great mix of rustic and contemporary styles, right-sized. High-end finish materials. 2-3 bedrooms depending on your needs, 2 bathrooms, pool with big surround and exquisite stonework integrated with pergola for outdoor dining. Beautiful views. Unrestored annex can be restored. Private plot with olive grove. 5 minutes to closest hill town, under 50 minutes to the coast, 25 minutes to the mountains.



VILLA GIUSTA

Type of property **Fully restored farmhouse**
 Number of bedrooms **4**
 Price **€539,000**

Location **San Ginesio, Macerata**
 Contact **Kevin Gibney, Property For Sale Marche**
 ☎ **+39 347 538 6668**

info@propertyforsalemarche.com
www.propertyforsalemarche.com

A completely restored 225 sqm stone farmhouse, Villa Giusta has what everyone is looking for. Spectacular view. 4 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms. Private, landscaped plot with pool and loggia. Central Marche location. Lots of windows, lots of light. Simple, discreet finish levels inside with lots of rustic and original touches. Walk to town. Under 45 minutes to the coast, 25 minutes to the mountains. Excellent for year-round living, holiday and rental use. The villa that's "just right".



Piazza IV Novembre, Ancona, and its Monument to the Fallen



The famous lion fountains of Jesi

TODAY'S MARKET

Le Marche's property market continues to be strong. "People are still seeking the peace and quiet of a house here, regardless of general economic and political uncertainty," says Kevin L. Gibney of PropertyForSaleMarche.com.

Jane Smith of Magic Marche agrees. She says, "The market has bounced back well since the Covid pandemic. Three types of buyer have emerged. There are those seeking to move to Italy and enjoy *la dolce vita* to the full – the 'life is too short' people.

There are others who are buying a second home here now that remote working has become an option since the pandemic, and they're working from their second home for long periods. And there are those who have always been buying here – Europeans who want an escape they can drive or fly to for holidays. The only thing that

has adjusted in all these groups is that there are fewer British buyers now because of Brexit."

Another notable trend in Le Marche is a shift towards buying finished houses rather than seeking out restoration projects. "Nearly everybody is orientated towards buying a finished house now," says Mauro Rieti of Unique Marche.

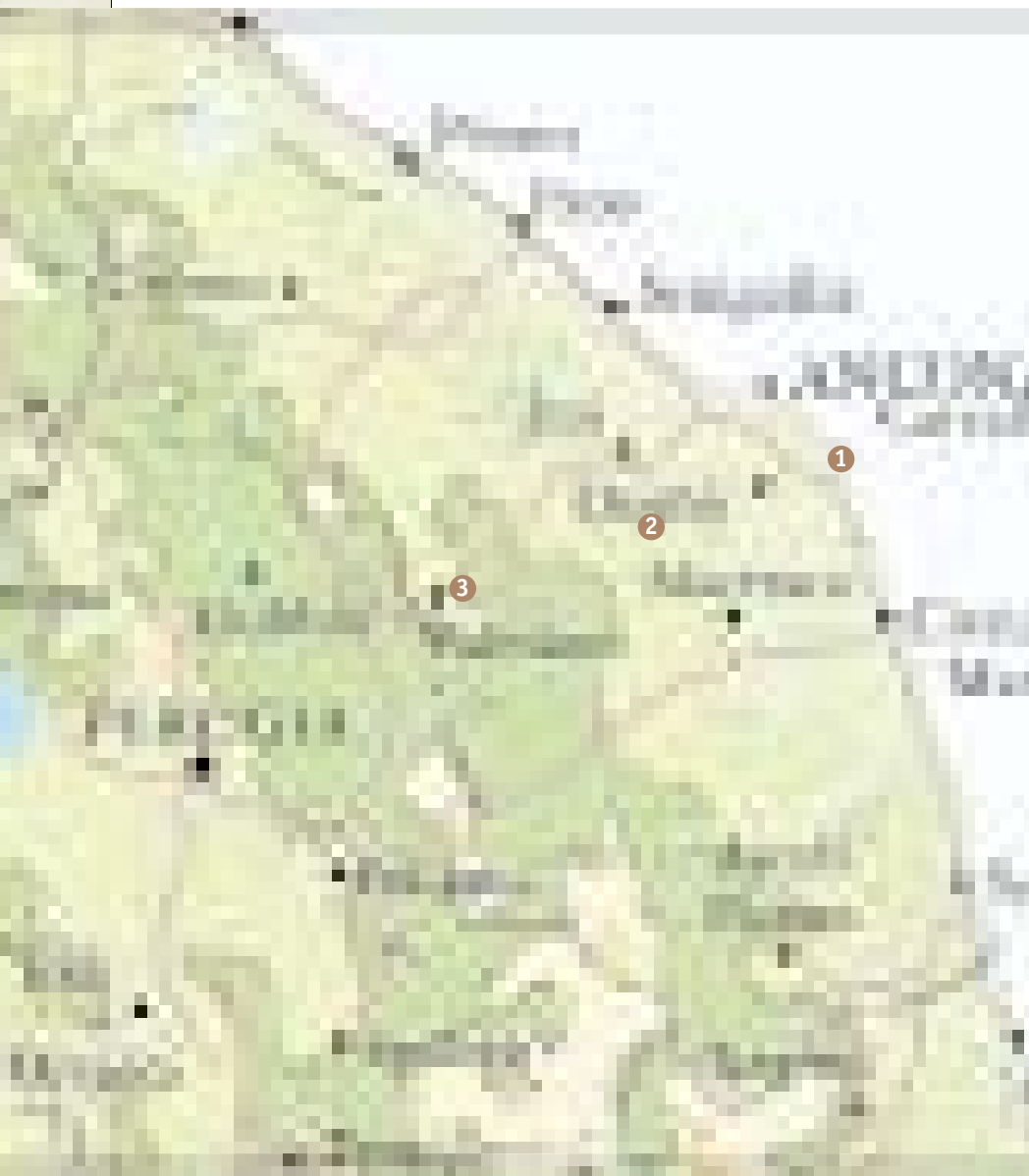
Other estate agents say the same thing. Kevin L. Gibney of PropertyForSaleMarche.com says, "In the past, there was a mix of interest in finished houses, standing houses to restore, and ruins to demolish and rebuild. Over the ➤



Evening market at Fermo

AD/s

LE MARCHE REGIONAL GUIDE



INTRODUCTION

Le Marche lies on the eastern side of Italy, between majestic mountains and inviting sea. The region is split into five provinces: Pesaro-Urbino, Ancona, Macerata, Ascoli Piceno and Fermo. Its proximity to both mountains and sea makes it very appealing to homebuyers.

Its Adriatic coastline stretches some 180km and includes some of the best Blue Flag beaches in Italy, while the steep eastern slopes of the Apennines include the stunning Monti Sibillini in the south. Much of the region is hilly or mountainous.

The main autostrada, the A14, and the state highway SS16 run swiftly along the coast, but further inland they are slower as they weave up and down the region's hills. The intercity train connections at Ancona link the region with Bologna and Rome. Ancona is also the site of Le Marche's international airport, which is served by Ryanair from London Stansted.

Le Marche boasts 13 protected areas, forests and nature reserves, including the Monti Sibillini and the National Park at Monte Conero on the coast near Ancona. The region has a remarkable historical heritage too, with its medieval hilltop towns and villages and more than 30 significant archaeological sites and 200 Romanesque churches, as well as the Renaissance city of Urbino, famed for its university and 15th-century Palazzo Ducale.



Adriatic coast seen from the village of Torre di Palme



Grottammare, Ascoli Piceno



The provincial capital of Ascoli Piceno



Wild beauty and beaches on the Riviera del Conero

THE COAST

1 The coast of Le Marche stretches from Pesaro to San Benedetto del Tronto, past sandy beaches and numerous small seaside towns and villages. The region can boast one of the highest number of Blue Flag beaches of any region in Italy. **Ancona** sits almost half way down the coast and is the administrative capital, and a busy port. With its Greek heritage there are many interesting styles of architecture. A lot of the coastal resorts are relatively small and retain a certain old-fashioned charm. The largest seaside resort is **Pesaro**, in the north, which is bursting with good shops and restaurants. Famous for being the birthplace of Gioachino Rossini, the town has an annual Opera Festival.

Senigallia, a little further south, is known as the 'Velvet Beach' with its 13km of soft, golden sand. The **Conero Riviera** offers the jewel of **Portonovo** with its Napoleonic fort, idyllic **Sirolo** and its spectacular golf course, and the Liberty-style architecture of **Porto San Giorgio**. Continue down the coast for **Pedaso**, which hosts a famous mussel festival, **Cupra Marittima** and its imposing castle, and **Grottammare** with its medieval old town. Finally you come to **San Benedetto del Tronto**, the second largest resort after Pesaro. The fishing port is very busy in the summer with its pretty promenades and vibrant nightlife. The coast itself might be expensive for property, but it's easy to get there from the nearby inland towns.

THE HINTERLAND

2 Move inland from the coast and you will find the rolling hills and open fields of farming country, a peaceful landscape punctuated by pretty hilltop towns and gentle valleys. The quieter environment and slower pace of life make this is a popular area for British buyers. One of the region's most eminent cities is **Urbino**. The city rivals Florence for cultural significance and the more compact, bustling city has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Further south, the hill town of **Macerata** boasts one of Europe's most outstanding outdoor theatres, the Arena Sferisterio, built in the 19th century to resemble an ancient Roman arena. The Stagione Lirica musical festival is held here every summer.

Close to the border with Abruzzo, the ancient town of **Ascoli Piceno** takes its name from the Picene tribe, who were conquered by the Romans in 89BC. The city was once a stop on the Via Salaria (the salt route) from Rome, but now enjoys a quieter existence. With one of the most beautiful marble-paved *piazze* in Italy, and a wealth of medieval architecture, there's plenty to enjoy.

Many other villages dot the landscape, including **Arcevia** (to the west of Ancona) perched on the foothills and surrounded by historic castles; Offida in the south with its unusual triangular piazza and memorable *vin santo*; and medieval **Jesi**, near Ancona, with its castle, cobbled streets and world-famous Verdicchio wines.



La Gola del Furlo, a gorge on the Via Flaminia

THE MOUNTAINS

3 The Monti Sibillini National Park was created in 1993 when 700sqm of mountainous wilderness was set aside as a site of outstanding natural beauty. Rising to more than 2,000m, this is a popular destination for naturalists, skiers in winter and walkers in the summer. The mountains form you need to plan your routes can be you need to plan your routes can be the border with Umbria to the west and the highest peak is Vettore, at 2,476m.

The area is dotted with medieval towns and criss-crossed with walking trails. There is shelter at the network of *rifugi* (mountain huts) across the range and all the maps and guides you need to plan your routes can be found at the Casa del Parco visitor centres. Popular nearby towns include Amandola with stunning views of the mountains, and Force, famed for its artisans and wrought iron work.



CASA VERANDA

Type of property **Fully restored farmhouse**

Number of bedrooms **2-3**

Price **€349,000**

Location **Mogliano, Macerata**

Contact **Kevin Gibney, Property For Sale Marche**

☎ **+39 347 538 6668**

info@propertyforsalemarche.com

www.propertyforsalemarche.com

Completely restored in 2019, right-sized 2-3 bedroom 177 sqm old brick farmhouse. Loads of features for a house in this price range – seismic restoration, underfloor heating, air conditioning, dual wood/gas heating system, damp resistance, double-glazed windows, big veranda section, vaulted ceilings in the living room and beams. Great views, close to excellent hill town, 30 minutes to coast, 40 minutes to mountains. Even has a small plunge pool! All this for €349,000!



CASA PERFETTA, PENNA SAN GIOVANNI

Type of property **Restoration project**

Number of bedrooms **4+**

Price **€119,000**

Location **Penna San Giovanni, Macerata**

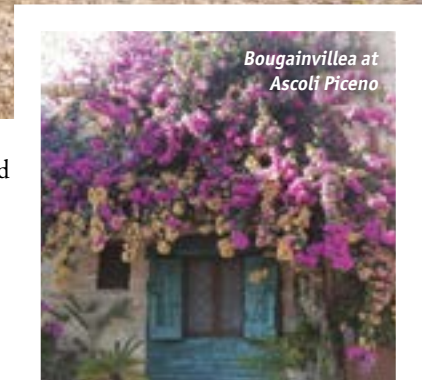
Contact **Unique Marche ☎ +44 (0)7957 659 142**

adam@uniquemarche.com www.uniquemarche.com

An extraordinary gem of rural Marche architecture perched atop a serene hill, offering panoramic vistas of the majestic Sibillini Mountains and the tranquil Adriatic Sea. This captivating property boasts a main residence and charming outbuildings, eagerly awaiting your creative touch and restoration vision. Set on a sprawling 5,000 sqm lot, the expansive 500 sqm interior space provides a canvas for your personalized dreams. With the dedicated support of the Unique Marche team, this enchanting haven is poised to evolve into the retreat of your wildest aspirations.



Sirolo's Spiaggia Urbani with its limestone cliffs and pine trees



Bougainvillea at Ascoli Piceno

past three years that mix has shifted dramatically to finished houses.

This is basically due to two things. First, Covid has created a 'mindset of now' – buyers don't want to delay being able to stay in their house. Second, the costs of restorations and new-builds have risen sharply in recent times because of supply-chain problems, the drain on materials caused by the Superbonus programme, inflation and other factors."

Jane Smith of Magic Marche adds, "Raw material prices have increased in the last 18 months due to the Ukraine war, more expensive manufacture and transport, etc. The best value is now in ready-restored property."

That said, with a drop in their popularity, the prices of old tumbledown homes needing restoration has plummeted, so buyers longing to fix up an old ruin need not necessarily abandon that dream altogether.

"The wrecks are getting cheaper and cheaper," says Mauro Rieti of Unique Marche, "so there could be an investment opportunity





The Cascata and Ponte Romano at Fermignano

in them.” Mauro also highlights the growing number of energy-cost-saving homes available in Le Marche. “Recently,” he says, “thanks to a national law that incentivised them, homes with high energy-efficiency have appeared on the market. These have technologies installed to make them practically energy self-sufficient – solar panels for hot water, heat pumps, underfloor heating, electric vehicle charging stations and more.”

PRICES AND PLACES

Like some other parts of the world, Le Marche has a north-south divide when it comes to property prices. The region’s southern half tends to be a little cheaper than the north.

The region is populated and cultivated, but never excessively so



That doesn’t mean the south is less charming in any way; much of this difference in price is due to the fact that many northern continental European buyers want the option of being able to drive to their holiday home, and northern Le Marche is slightly closer to them.

Mauro Rieti of Unique Marche says that tumbledown houses needing to be rebuilt start at about €80,000 in the northern half and €50,000 in the southern half. Houses needing restoration go for €150,000-€250,000 in the north, he says, and €100,000-€200,000 in the south. Meanwhile, houses needing minor work or completion ask €200,000-€350,000 in the north and €150,000-€300,000 in the south, and ready-restored homes ask €350,000-€900,000 in the north and €250,000-€800,000 in the south.

The north-south divide is only one geographical factor in Le Marche’s property prices. An even more significant divide is east-west: prices on the coast drop as you head into the inland interior, and drop even further as you reach the mountainous far west. It can be useful to think of Le Marche as comprising three vertical ‘stripes’, each with its own market. The coastal zone is priciest, then a short distance inland there’s an appealing ‘Goldilocks’ zone (neither too expensive nor too remote), and further west there’s the very low-priced mountainous zone. ➤



Image courtesy of Natalie and John Gardner

Natalie and John first met in Italy “many years ago”

OUR LIFE IN LE MARCHE

Birmingham-based Natalie and John Gardner own a two-bedroom house on the outskirts of a village eighteen miles from the sea in southern Le Marche. They spend at least four weeks there every summer and make several shorter visits at other times of the year. When they’re not at the house themselves, they make it available to friends and family, and also offer holiday rentals.

What drew them to Italy, and to Le Marche in particular? “Italy has always been special to us both because it’s where we first met,” Natalie explains. “Many years ago, we both had jobs with a walking holiday company and we often had to liaise with each other in Tuscany. Love bloomed over glasses of Chianti, and now here we are three decades later with a house of our own in Italy. When we started looking for somewhere to buy, our initial plan was Tuscany, for obvious romantic reasons, but the property prices were so much higher there than in many other beautiful bits of Italy. A friend told us about southern Le Marche, and when we came out to view properties here we fell in love with the area. The countryside is so pretty, there are lots of interesting little towns scattered about, and the sea is an easy drive away.

“Our house needed only minor work when we bought it in 2018. We got some excellent workers in from the village and another village further out, and our house looked stunning just a few weeks later. We sorted out the garden and the small olive grove ourselves, which was exciting. Neither of us knew much about garden-design or horticulture and we had quite a few laughs watching each other figure out how it was all done. Now when we sit on our patio and survey our handiwork, we both agree that we didn’t make a bad job of things. Or maybe that’s just the effect of the wine and the sunshine!

“We were fortunate that we didn’t need to depend on holiday rental income to cover our costs with the house. For us, the rentals thing is just a little sideline. We know other people with houses in similar locations to ours who get lots of visitor enquiries, and it works well for them. Le Marche is very popular with travellers who have good taste and want to enjoy the genuine Italy.

“The most important thing I’d say is that it’s a great adventure buying a house in Italy and learning to live like the local people. I’d recommend Le Marche to anyone. It’s an incredibly safe and friendly place, and of course it’s beautiful off the scale. Being at our house feels like being in our own little heaven on earth.”



CASA GIUDITTA, PENNA SAN GIOVANNI

Type of property **Ready to use villa**

Number of bedrooms **5+**

Price **€899,000**

Location **Monte San Martino, Macerata**

Contact **Unique Marche ☎ +44 (0)7957 659 142**

adam@uniquemarche.com www.uniquemarche.com

An exuberant villa, over 600 sqm, on a 7,000 sqm plot, all oriented to a jaw-dropping panorama stretching from Piceno’s valleys to the Adriatic’s embrace. 5 lavishly appointed bedrooms, each with its own bath, embody the artful marriage of local sandstone and reclaimed bricks, a testament to Marche’s finest architectural heritage. Luxuriate in comforts like underfloor heating and a heated pool, creating an oasis of indulgence. A captivating spectacle ready to be relished, this residence encapsulates the essence of grandeur, inviting you to savour every moment in this picturesque marvel.



ITALIA!
DREAM HOME
Renovated
Marche
farmhouse

CASA ZOE, PENNA SAN GIOVANNI

Type of property **Ready to use**

Number of bedrooms **4+**

Price **€790,000**

Location **Penna San Giovanni, Macerata**

Contact **Unique Marche ☎ +44 (0)7957 659 142**

adam@uniquemarche.com www.uniquemarche.com

A once humble farmhouse metamorphosed into a truly exceptional residence, at the heart of Marche, through the harmonious collaboration of skilled artisans, expertly breathing life into the architect’s vision, elevating every facet of local architecture. Nestled amid the rolling Marche hills, the farmhouse offers an intimate panorama that celebrates nature and ensures privacy. A singular haven, a testament to extraordinary craftsmanship, where history meets modernity in an architectural symphony, creating an unparalleled and distinctive retreat.



Gradara, with its well-preserved castle

Jane Smith of Magic Marche says that, “the most expensive part of Le Marche is anywhere along the 180-kilometre coastline, as this market is dominated by Italian purchasers with deep pockets.” That said, there are plenty of nice, modern-built apartments in and around the beach towns going for between €100,000 and €250,000. Jane Smith says there’s a ten per cent drop in house prices once you are more than twenty kilometres inland. She adds that the least expensive part of Le Marche is close to the Sibillini Mountains in the southwestern corner of the region.

BEACHES, HILLS, MOUNTAINS

All this discussion of places and prices might have left you wanting a greater understanding of the topography and character of Le Marche’s various areas. So let’s take a closer look at the lie of the land across the region.

As you’ve probably gathered already, Le Marche’s coastline is pretty gorgeous. It offers lots of long stretches of very clean golden sand backed by family-friendly resort-towns. The beaches slope very slowly and gently into the blue Adriatic, meaning there are lots of long, safe shallows made warm by the sun. The atmosphere along the coast is very relaxed and welcoming.

We’ve already mentioned that property prices start to sink

as soon as you begin to head inland in Le Marche. If you buy a home somewhere between about fifteen and thirty miles from the sea, you’re going to benefit from significantly lower prices, find yourself amidst some extremely pretty countryside and still have easy access to nearby beaches.

The gently undulating hills here hold plenty of charming small towns and villages, many with a lively calendar of local festivals and events. Being at a higher elevation than the coast, this inland area can offer lovely views down to the bright blue Adriatic in one direction and up to the mountains in the other.

As you head into Le Marche’s western extremes, the gentle hills buckle up to form the majestic Apennine Mountains and, in the south, to form the strikingly beautiful and otherworldly Sibillini Mountains. Both mountain ranges are only moderately high, making them impressive but not forbidding – in short, a hiking paradise. These higher-altitude parts of Le Marche are generally the region’s very cheapest areas for property, but they are undeniably attractive places nonetheless and very worthy of your attention. ■

USEFUL CONTACTS

www.magicmarche.com
www.propertyforsalemarche.com
www.uniquemarche.com