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Paradise found

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The Greek shipping magnate Onassis wasn't the first person to own an island hideaway. But he was the first to instill into the public consciousness the concept of the private island as the ultimate retreat. Today's high profile island-owners, amongst them Ted Turner, Marlon Brando, Tony Curtis, Brooke Shields, Bjorn Borg, Nicolas Cage and Diana Ross, really have a lot to live up to.

In the last 30 years, some billionaires have been joined by others in recognising that a private island is the only reliable means of escaping the crowds.

But the great majority of transactions have been for between US \$200,000 and US \$800,000, with the average price being US \$300,000. Farhad Vladi, owner and manager of VLADI PRIVATE ISLANDS, reminds: "You don't have to be shipwrecked like Robinson Crusoe or a millionaire to own your own island. If you can afford a car, you can afford an island!"



Why do people buy an island? Most island owners buy for emotional rather than economic reasons. And most individuals buy islands for their personal retreat and vacation. Today it is much easier to live on an island than in former days as technology has a very significant impact on the island market. Nowadays, within the time period of approximately three months, a pre-fabricated home, electricity, phone and water (drill or desalination) can all be made available on an island without any great problems.



What kinds of islands are for sale?

In the last 30 years, Farhad Vladi has sold well over 1,200 islands. In his office in Hamburg, Germany, he has assembled a database covering over 10,000 islands all over the world - probably the world's greatest archive on privately owned islands. Vladi spends between four and five months each year travelling the world to discover, photograph and evaluate new islands on all four continents. His 30-year experience in the business makes Vladi a competent and widely recognised leader in the sale of private islands. The magazine GEO once referred to him as "Nature's Art Dealer", "the most successful and most capable island broker in the world". In his two offices in Hamburg, Germany and Halifax, Canada, are 20 employees assisting him in his island broking.

The **most expensive** island he has sold was Norman Island in the British Virgin Islands for US \$12 million. At the other end of the scale, he has sold several small islands for less than \$30,000. The **cheapest and smallest** island he ever sold was an island with 500 square metres in Lake Charlotte, Nova Scotia, Canada for \$ 1,500.

The **largest** island he has ever sold was Eigg Island on the west coast of Scotland with approximately 29,947,800 square metres. Another large and expensive island is now on the market: Musha Cay in the Bahamas with the most luxurious resort in the world (approx. 150 acres, Price: US \$ 56.5 million).

Five basic requirements for a private island

Because of their rarity, islands are the most attractive type of real estate and are incomparable to anything else on the real estate market. The most marketable islands comply with the following criteria:

- The island should not be too far from the mainland or another populated island.
- Property ownership must be clearly determined and recorded with the Land Registry Office.
- Drinking water must be available on the island and the vegetation must be attractive.
- The island must be suitable for development.
- The host country must be politically stable.

The very first step: renting an island!

No words can describe the beauty and individuality of an island. That is why people should discover this for themselves by renting one. Vladi emphasises renting as an island is very first step in the buying process. Hoping this will "strip away false illusions about islands, especially as "paradises". He encourages clients to sample island living in several diverse locales. His rental service, VLADI ISLAND TRAVEL , has more than 40 destinations, from Ireland to the Fiji's and the Bahamas, from US \$75 to US \$7,500 a day. These range from islands with luxurious resorts to undeveloped 'Robinson Crusoe' islands on which visitors need to pitch their own tents and organise their own meals. Vladi: "I lose all stress on my island, and that's what I want for my clients. I want to find them those special retreats that work best for their personalities."

Many private island owners spend only a part of the year on their island and offer it for rent for the remainder of the year - be it a log home on a small island in a lake in Canada or a villa on an island in the Caribbean with its own airstrip and staff. You can experience an unforgettable honeymoon on a secluded island; you can even have the wedding ceremony on a number of islands. The team of VLADI ISLAND TRAVEL organises all travel reservations and bookings.

More information can be found at www.vladi.de. or telephone +49 (0) 40 33 00 00.

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