

## Estate Agent Celebrates Three Decades in Spanish Property

Written by Australian Business

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MAZARRON, SPAIN, September 19, 2013 **/24-7PressRelease/** -- Chris Mercer, Founder of eponymous Mercers, notches up three decades in Spanish property this autumn. Starting out in the Costa Blanca back in 1983, when buying a home overseas was the reserve of the few, Chris now runs Murcia's most respected multi award-winning estate agency.

In the early 80s, Chris operated from an international estate agency in Henley-on-Thames selling property in and around Alicante. He was responsible for arranging marketing plans, sales and customer care strategies. In 1993 Chris decided he would stop working for other people and try his hand at running his own business - Mercers was born. Remaining in Henley but expanding his portfolio to up-and-coming Murcia, the buying public found prices irresistible and it soon became apparent that a Mercers office was needed on location in Spain.

Chris recalls, "I remember seeing Camposol Golf, now the setting for Mercers Murcia HQ, for the first time in February 1996. It was literally a field, no roads or properties, and I marvelled at the foresight and courage of developer Grupo Masa to start such a large scale project. Having already proved ourselves at developments in Los Alcazares and Orihuela, we were ready to launch Camposol Golf in April 1996. I remember selling two bedroom Fortuna-style villas on 400m<sup>2</sup> plots in the first phase for GBP28,500 and three bedroom Neptunos for GBP59,900. We soon grew and in 1999 opened our first office in Camposol Golf. By the year 2000 we had five staff and in that year alone Mercers sold 370 properties. Mercers certainly helped to create the market we see in Murcia today."

Having made the decision to home in on Murcia for its newness and ability to offer genuinely good value property, Chris Mercer believes that he has sold a couple of thousand homes in the area over the past 20 years, certainly more than any other agent, and Mercers is still there.

Chris continues, "The key to Mercers' survival is certainly our commitment to the area and a refusal to diversify into other countries - a mistake many other agents made with poorly thought-out forays into Morocco, Bulgaria and the like. We have always acted professionally and ethically and stuck to our core values. I have also assembled a great team and the property we offer is exceptionally priced - in fact values today are back to what they were in 2002."

Chris has seen many changes in the Spanish economy, legislation and buyers' habits over the years, but perhaps the biggest is that the average age of property buyers has come down. Younger people can now afford to buy a home overseas and realise their dreams of moving either part- or full-time to a warmer climate. The single aspect he would change in the Spanish property market is to make planning as tightly controlled and regulated as it is in the UK.

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So what has kept Chris in the same industry for 30 years? "I really do have a 'passion for property' as our Company slogan displays," says Chris, "I love the travel aspect and being able to change people's lives for the better. Also, we always try to give something back to the community that has helped us grow over the years and this includes being the main sponsor for the annual Camposol Fiesta, the first ever sponsor of the Camposol Journal as well supporting a whole host of local charities. I am not sure if I will be at the helm of Mercers in another 30 years, but I certainly hope the Company continues to grow at the heart of this thriving spot in southern Spain."

Business is certainly booming at Mercers. The Company sold in excess of 20 more properties in the first half of 2013 than they did in the same period last year, up 70%, and the feeling is that the market is set to accelerate further as the year progresses. If and when the new Paramount Theme Park and Corvera International Airport open, this will only hasten the process. Tourism figures for the Region also make great reading. Murcia welcomed 342,054 foreign tourists in the first seven months of 2013, up 8.1% on the same period last year. 25,589 more visitors have so far selected the region for their holidays in 2013, with the French and British leading the charge.

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Multi award-winning real estate agent set up by Chris Mercer, a man with 30 years experience selling Spanish homes and a real 'passion for property'. Unbelievable value in Murcia with prices starting from less than 50,000 euros for two bedrooms.