JUST

SELLING IN MARBELLA, BENAHAVÍS AND ESTEPONA · 2026 EDITION

The Sellers Guide

What a sale on this coast actually involves: the paperwork before you list, the price the market will pay, the taxes and costs that come off it, and the difference the right mandate makes, from the people who sell here every week.

WELCOME

A sale is mostly decided before the first viewing.

By the time a buyer walks through the door, the three things that will determine what you get for your home are already fixed: the price you chose, the condition of your paperwork, and the way the property has been presented to the market. This guide is about getting those three right, and about the costs and taxes that stand between the price on the contract and the money in your account.

Marbella is not one market. A frontline apartment, a golf valley villa and a hillside estate answer to different buyers, different budgets and different timescales, and a price that is confident in one street is optimistic two hundred metres away. The single most expensive mistake a seller can make here is to test the market with a number nobody has tested against evidence, then spend nine months walking it back.

JUST Real Estate was founded in Marbella in 2015. Our managing partner has worked this market for 25 years. We sell for owners across Marbella, Benahavís and Estepona, and we see the same preventable problems again and again: a licence that was never registered, a deed that no longer matches the cadastre, an extension nobody declared. Every one of them is cheaper to fix before you list than to explain to a buyer's lawyer in week six.

WHO IS BUYING, AND WHAT THEY BUY

The market you are selling into

A local market with an international customer: who your buyer is changes how the home should be priced and presented.

Where your buyer is likely to come from

BY ORIGIN, NOT BY RANKING

The largest share of demand on this coast is Northern European. Scandinavian buyers, principally Norwegian, Swedish and Danish, are the most consistent purchasers of apartments and family villas, with Belgian and Dutch buyers close behind. British and Irish demand is the oldest established, from a bolt-hole in San Pedro to an estate in the hills. The Middle East is now a force at the top of the market, typically cash and buying privacy first. Buyers from the Americas are fewer but growing, and behave like relocation buyers.

Spanish and other European purchasers matter more than foreign sellers assume, particularly between €500,000 and €1.5 million. The point is not the league table: your buyer is probably not from your country, will read the listing in a second language, and will send a lawyer through your title.

What is selling well in 2026

QUALITATIVE, AND CONSISTENT ACROSS THE COAST

TURNKEY VILLAS

Finished, furnished and liveable. Buyers pay to avoid a building site.

WELL-LOCATED APARTMENTS

Walkable to the beach or a village, with a usable terrace.

CLEAN PAPERWORK

Licence, cadastre and deed agreeing. These negotiate least.

COMMUNITY AMENITY, ALWAYS AN EARLY QUESTION

LIGHT AND PROPORTION, NOT FLOOR AREA

02 · VALUATION

Pricing, and getting it right first time

Price is the only lever that works instantly, and the only mistake that compounds. A property launched correctly does its best work in its first three or four weeks, while it is new to every buyer already looking. A property launched high is invisible for that period, and by the time the price comes down it is no longer new, it is stale.

Room to negotiate. A margin of five to seven per cent above the number you would accept is normal and sensible. Fifteen per cent is not a negotiating position, it is a filter that removes you from the searches of the very buyers who would have paid you fairly.

Price per square metre is not a number. On this coast it is a range so wide as to be useless without context. Orientation, plot, views, floor level, the state of the community and the quality of the build move it more than floor area does. Two apartments in the same block, one facing the sea and one facing the car park, are not the same product at a discount.

What we price against. Closed transactions rather than asking prices, in your community and your price band, adjusted for condition and for what the title says. Asking prices tell you what other owners hope for. Only completed sales tell you what someone paid.

Emotional value is real, and it is not transferable. The buyer is comparing your home with the four others they saw that week.

ONE SALE, WORKED THROUGH

What a sale costs

An illustration, not a quotation. A resale sold in 2026 for €1,500,000 by a single non-resident owner who bought in 2014 for €1,050,000 and can document €95,000 of purchase costs and capital improvements. The plusvalía line is set by the town hall from your cadastral land value.

What comes off the price

A €1,500,000 RESALE, SELLER NON-RESIDENT

Agency fee, exclusive mandate at 6% plus 21% IVA	€108,900
Lawyer acting for the seller, 1% plus 21% IVA	€18,150
Plusvalía municipal, town hall assessment	€10,800
Cancelling the mortgage at the notary, registry and gestoría	€1,000
Energy performance certificate	€250
Costs of sale	€139,100

And then the tax on the gain

BOUGHT IN 2014 FOR €1,050,000

Transfer value, the price less the costs of sale above	€1,360,900
Acquisition value, purchase price plus costs and documented improvements	€1,145,000
Taxable gain	€215,900
Tax on the gain at 19%, the non-resident rate	€41,021
Less the 3% the buyer withheld at the notary	€45,000
Refund due back from Hacienda	€3,979

> Net proceeds here are €1,319,879, which is 88% of the headline price. The retention exceeds the tax due, so the seller reclaims the difference rather than paying more. Keep every invoice from the day you bought: documented costs are the ones that reduce the gain.

Tax on the sale

Plusvalía municipal. A municipal tax on the increase in the value of the land under your property, and by law the seller pays it. After the Constitutional Court struck down the old formula in judgment 182/2021, Royal Decree-Law 26/2021 of 8 November rebuilt the tax, in force from 10 November 2021. There are now two ways to calculate the base and you may use whichever gives the lower figure: the objective method, which applies a coefficient for the years you have owned the land to the cadastral land value on your IBI receipt, or the real-gain method, which takes the actual gain and applies the land's share of the cadastral value to it. Each town hall sets its own rate, which cannot exceed 30%, and the declaration is due within thirty working days of the deed. If there was no increase in the land value at all, no tax is payable, but you must still declare and prove it.

Capital gains, if you are resident in Spain. The gain goes into the savings base and is taxed on a scale: 19% on the first €6,000, 21% from €6,000 to €50,000, 23% from €50,000 to €200,000, 27% from €200,000 to €300,000, and 30% above €300,000. Two exemptions are worth knowing. If you are over 65 and the property has been your habitual residence, the gain is exempt outright with no obligation to reinvest. If you are under 65 and reinvest the proceeds of your habitual residence in another habitual residence within two years, the gain is exempt in proportion to what you reinvest.

Capital gains, if you are not resident. The gain on the transfer of Spanish property is taxed at a flat 19% under the non-resident income tax, and that rate applies wherever you live. The 24% figure that circulates is the general non-resident rate for other income, rental income from outside the EU and EEA in particular, and it does not apply to the gain on a sale. At completion the buyer must withhold 3% of the price and pay it to Hacienda on form 211 within a month. That is a payment on account, not the tax itself. You then file form 210 within four months of the sale to settle the real liability, and where the retention exceeds it, as in the example on the previous page, you claim the balance back.

What reduces the gain. The purchase price and the taxes and fees you paid on the way in, documented capital improvements, and the agency, legal and plusvalía costs of selling. Ordinary maintenance and redecoration do not count. If you bought before 31 December 1994 the old reduction coefficients may still help you, capped across your lifetime at €400,000 of transfer value.

The smaller lines. IBI for the year of sale falls on whoever owned the property on 1 January, but since the Supreme Court's judgment of 15 June 2016 it is apportioned between seller and buyer for the time each held it unless the contract says otherwise. Cancelling a mortgage at the register costs roughly €700 to €1,200 all in, between the notarial deed, the registry and the gestoría, and it is deductible against your gain. The energy performance certificate is a seller's cost of €150 to €400 for most homes.

> Every number on this page is a number your lawyer can check before you accept an offer. Ask for the net figure, not the headline one.

The paperwork, before you list

A buyer's lawyer starts due diligence the day the reservation is signed, and anything missing surfaces then, at the worst possible moment for your negotiating position. We check all of this before we market, not after.

DOCUMENT	WHAT IT PROVES	WHERE IT COMES FROM
Title deed, escritura	That you own it, and on what terms	Your notary or your lawyer's file
Nota simple	The registry's current view: owner, charges, mortgages, embargoes	Registro de la Propiedad, days
Licence of first occupation	That the building may lawfully be lived in. In Andalucía newer works may instead rest on a declaración responsable under Law 7/2021	Town hall
Energy performance certificate	Mandatory to advertise. Valid ten years, five for a G rating, under Royal Decree 390/2021	A registered technician
IBI receipt, latest	That the local property tax is paid, and the cadastral land value used for plusvalía	Your own records or the town hall
Community certificate	That you owe the community nothing. Required at the notary under article 9.1.e of the Horizontal Property Law, issued within seven working days	The administrator
Cadastral record	That surface areas and boundaries agree with the deed	Catastro, free online
Mortgage balance certificate	The exact figure to redeem on the day	Your bank
Utility bills and NIE	Supply, consumption and your identity as vendor	Your own records

> The two that go wrong most often are the same two every year: a deed that no longer matches the cadastre, usually an enclosed terrace or an undeclared pool house, and a first occupation licence that exists on paper but was never registered. Both are fixable in time. Neither is fixable in a fortnight.

Preparing the property

Buyers decide faster than they admit. The first ninety seconds of a viewing, and the first four photographs online, do most of the work. Neither is expensive to get right.

Clear before you clean, clean before you photograph. Empty surfaces, half-empty wardrobes, washed windows, open shutters. Take out anything that dates the house or narrows its appeal: heavy curtains, dark or oversized furniture, personal photographs, anything themed. You are not erasing your taste, you are removing the effort of imagination from the buyer.

Small works pay, large ones rarely do. Neutral paint, modern light fittings, a garden tidied and replanted, cracked tiles and dripping taps fixed. These return several times their cost. A full kitchen or bathroom refit, chosen to your taste and not the buyer's, generally does not, and delays the launch by months.

Photography is not a cost, it is the shop window. Shot on a bright day, never on a phone, with a floor plan and measurements, aerials where the setting deserves them, and film for anything above the entry price bands. The buyer sees the photographs long before they see the house, and frequently decides on them alone.

If the property is let. You can still sell, but viewings need notice, the lease binds the buyer, and most owner-occupier buyers will want vacant possession. Decide early which buyer you are selling to, because it changes the price and the timetable.

PRESENTATION IS THE CHEAPEST MONEY A SELLER SPENDS

Your strategy and your agency

You will be approached by several agents, all of them confident. The question worth asking is not how many will list your home, but which one is contractually obliged to spend money on it.

The two models

WHAT EACH ONE REALLY BUYS YOU

	OPEN LISTING	EXCLUSIVE MANDATE
Commission	5% plus IVA	6% plus IVA
How it is shared	With whichever agent introduces the buyer	4% to introducing agents, 2% to us
Marketing investment	None guaranteed, the risk sits with the agent	Photography, film, paid reach and priority placement, committed in writing
Control of the message	None. Price, photographs and description vary by agent	One price, one set of images, one narrative everywhere
Reporting	Ad hoc	Scheduled, with feedback after every viewing
Term	Open ended	Ninety to one hundred and eighty days, revocable if we miss our commitments

Why more agents is usually fewer buyers

THE MECHANICS, PLAINLY

An open listing feels like broader coverage. In practice it produces the same property at four prices, photographed four ways, appearing four times in the same search. Buyers read that as a property nobody can sell, and they read the lowest of the four prices as the real one. No agent invests properly in a listing they may lose to a phone call, so nobody films it, nobody advertises it, and it becomes a name on a list.

An exclusive mandate is worth the extra point only if it comes with obligations attached. Ours does: a committed marketing spend, a launch date, collaboration with the wider agent network under one agreed price and one set of images, and the right for you to walk away if we do not do what we said. Open listings do make sense for a property priced below the market and built for a quick sale. For everything else, control is what produces the price.

BEYOND A PORTAL LISTING

Marketing beyond a portal

Start with the buyer, not the channel. Before anything is written we decide who is most likely to buy this house, what they will care about and where they are looking. A family relocating for schools, an investor buying yield and a couple retiring to the sun are three different campaigns, and the same photographs will not persuade all three.

The visuals set the price expectation. Edited photography by daylight and, where the terrace earns it, at dusk. Floor plans with measurements, aerials where the setting is the selling point, and film with pace, cut for social as well as for the listing page. Virtual staging for empty properties, so a buyer sees a home rather than a shell.

Where it appears. The Spanish portals, the British and Scandinavian ones and the international luxury platforms, all carrying the same price, images and description in the buyer's language. Our own site takes the full presentation: brochure, film, plans and the neighbourhood context a portal has no room for.

The people we already know. An agency's most valuable asset is the buyers who told it what they wanted and have not found it yet. Your property is matched against those requirements and sent to the right names before it reaches a portal, and to the collaborating agents who hold buyers in your price band. That is where an exclusive earns its extra point: one agreed narrative, rather than four agents telling four stories.

Discretion, if you want it. An off-market launch reaches verified buyers and a closed group of agents, never appears online, and preserves your privacy at the cost of some reach. It suits the top of the market and owners who cannot be seen to be selling, and works poorly for an ordinary apartment.

Print still earns its place at a viewing. A brochure to leave behind, a presentation sheet in the buyer's language, and a viewing pack with the legal documents ready for their lawyer. It answers the questions that otherwise arrive a week later.

And you will know what is happening. Feedback after every viewing, portal and campaign figures, and a scheduled written summary. Silence from an agent is not discretion, it is an absence of activity.

DRESSED FOR THE PHOTOGRAPH BEFORE A BUYER SEES IT

A TERRACE DRESSED, NOT LEFT EMPTY

Viewings and buyer management

Every visitor is qualified first. What have they already seen, are they buying with cash or with a mortgage, what is their timetable, do they have a lawyer in place, have they bought in Spain before. This is not gatekeeping. It is the difference between four serious visits and twenty that go nowhere, and it tells us how to present your home to each of them.

Notice, and grouping. We give you as much warning as we can and group appointments where possible, so your week is disturbed once rather than five times. Before each visit: shutters open, lights on in the darker rooms, laundry and clutter away, the terrace swept.

Leave, if you can. Owners mean well and almost always talk buyers out of things. A buyer who is imagining their own furniture in your sitting room will stop the moment you explain why you chose yours.

How the viewing is run. The property is introduced before anyone walks in, then led at the buyer's pace. Objections are answered on the spot, with the documents to hand, because an unanswered doubt becomes a reason not to offer.

Afterwards. You get the buyer's impressions, an honest read on whether an offer is likely, every objection raised, and what we intend to do next. Consistent feedback about the same thing is market information, and it usually means the price or the presentation needs to move.

Negotiation, and the road to the notary

Once an offer is on the table everything accelerates, and most of what goes wrong from here is a failure of sequencing rather than of goodwill. Allow eight to twelve weeks from accepted offer to notary, longer if the buyer needs Spanish finance.

01 **An offer arrives, and is assessed**

Amount is one of four tests. The others are the strength of the buyer, cash or mortgage, the conditions attached, and the completion date. A slightly lower offer from a cash buyer with no conditions is frequently the better deal, and we will tell you when it is.

02 **Accept, counter or hold**

You get a recommendation with reasons, not a message passed along. Where there is more than one interested party we structure a fair offer window rather than letting a private auction run out of control.

03 **Reservation**

A modest deposit takes the property off the market for a fixed period while the buyer's lawyer works. Nothing binds either side until it is in writing, and no verbal agreement is worth anything here.

04 **Due diligence**

The buyer's lawyer checks title, charges, licences, community and cadastre. Because we checked all of it before marketing, this is usually the quiet fortnight rather than the noisy one.

05 **Private purchase contract**

Typically 10% of the price, with the balance due at the notary. This is the document that sets the completion date and the consequences of failure on either side, so it is worth your lawyer's full attention.

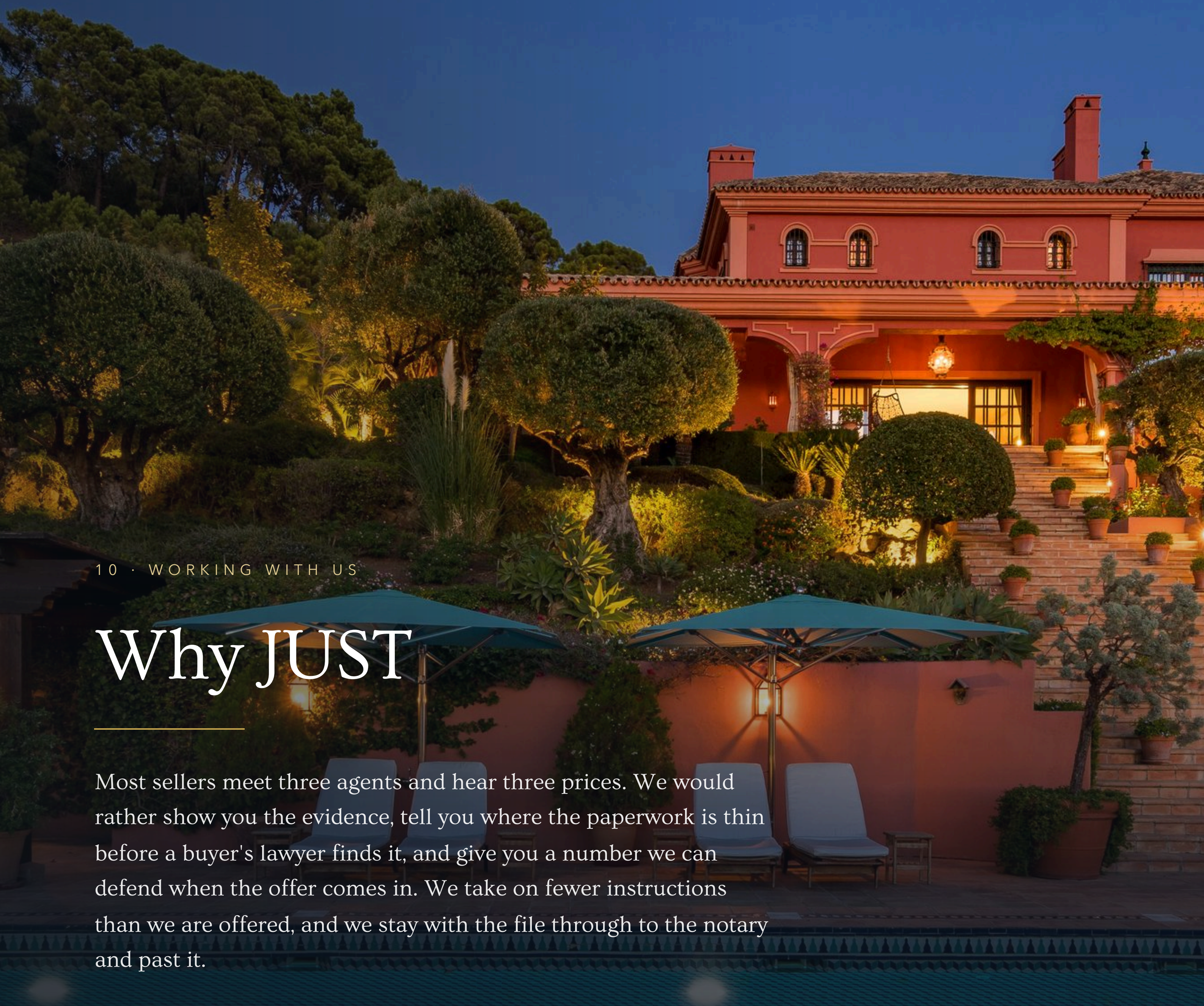
06 **Completion at the notary**

Deed signed, keys handed over, balance paid. A non-resident seller sees 3% of the price retained here and paid to Hacienda by the buyer. Mortgage redemption and cancellation happen at the same table.

07 **After the signature**

Utilities and community transferred, the plusvalía declared within thirty working days, and form 210 filed within four months if you are non-resident. We stay on the file until all of it is done.

TAX RATES, THRESHOLDS AND PROCEDURAL DEADLINES AS AT 2026-08-16. THE SAVINGS SCALE AND THE NON-RESIDENT RATE ARE THOSE IN FORCE FOR 2026; PLUSVALÍA COEFFICIENTS AND THE MUNICIPAL RATE ARE SET LOCALLY AND CHANGE BY ORDINANCE.



10 · WORKING WITH US

Why JUST

Most sellers meet three agents and hear three prices. We would rather show you the evidence, tell you where the paperwork is thin before a buyer's lawyer finds it, and give you a number we can defend when the offer comes in. We take on fewer instructions than we are offered, and we stay with the file through to the notary and past it.

VALUE

A price built from closed comparables and the condition of your title, not from what you hoped to hear.

PRESENT

Documents in order, photography and film to the standard the price implies, and a launch that lands everywhere at once.

NEGOTIATE

Offers assessed on strength as well as amount, and terms that hold from reservation to notary.

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