

A new collection of luxury villas will raise the stakes on this much loved island, reports Gwenda Brophy

THE Akamas Peninsular is an area Cyprus is anxious to protect. Not surprising, given that this is a landscape of pine and juniper forests, gorges, sea caves and pretty bays, a world away from the more touristic enclaves on the island.

Botanists and naturalists are drawn by its unique species and rich habitats. And developers by the desirable setting. Along parts of the spectacular coastline limited building has been permitted — and the area is seeing the arrival of some of the most sumptuous and expensive villas on the island.

At St Georges, near Paphos, for example, the first phase of the Cap St Georges Villa Club is almost complete. The collection of just over 40 five and six-bedroom contemporary villas has been designed to make the most of the spectacular sea views, while there is also direct water access to the new Coral Bay Marina.

Based on the concept of an exclusive club, Cap St Georges is a combination of private villa ownership and hotel services.

So residents have a concierge 365 days a year, exclusive use of a seashore clubhouse, bar and restaurant, spa, gym and tennis courts, and a raft of personal staff from chauffeurs and babysitters to gardeners and housekeepers on hand. Prices start at £2.26million.

The peninsula is already on the radar for high-rollers — tycoon Philip Green has partied at the five-star Anassa Hotel, up on the north-east at Latchi.

Just 800m from the hotel are the Akamas Bay Villas. Fronting the beach, the three and four-bedroom villas each with private pool and secluded landscaped gardens, feature luxury finishes and materials as well as high-tech climate

control systems, while the floor-to-ceiling windows, terraces and sun decks take in panoramic bay views.

Rooms can be fine-tuned to a buyer's design from in-house cinemas to gyms or wine stores, and there is a concierge who will organise everything from chartering a yacht to a private jet.

Jonathan Salisbury, of Cybarco, a developer specialising in glitzy projects in Cyprus, says the properties are designed 'to appeal to high-end purchasers who want to escape and unwind from a time-poor lifestyle'.

Cash-poor they will not be — the villas are priced from £1.2million up to £3million. However, according to Salisbury, there is a sizeable level of interest for the develop-

ment, which will be completed by end of 2012.

Indeed, much of the new development on the peninsular is attracting the attention of a buying sector Cyprus has been keen to draw — the million-pound-plus international buyer.

Leptos Estates has just released the first of 13 luxury beachfront homes at the Latchi Beach Villas, in walking distance of Latchi marina and picturesque harbour with its fish and seafood restaurants, priced from £2million for a three-bedroom home.

However, in the present climate such buyers can be thinner on the ground, and there are more affordable alternatives to enjoy life on the peninsular, including those

from developers of the multi-million pound properties.

In the adjacent town of Polis with its relaxed lifestyle, cobbled square and tavernas, is Leptos Estate's Polis Beach Villas, set among some of the best beaches on the island, and priced from £357,000.

The same developer is also selling the Argaka Beach Villas five minutes' drive from Polis. The seafront two and three-bedroom detached villas and bungalows feature large sun terraces with pergolas and landscaped gardens with space for a swimming pool, and are priced from £258,000.

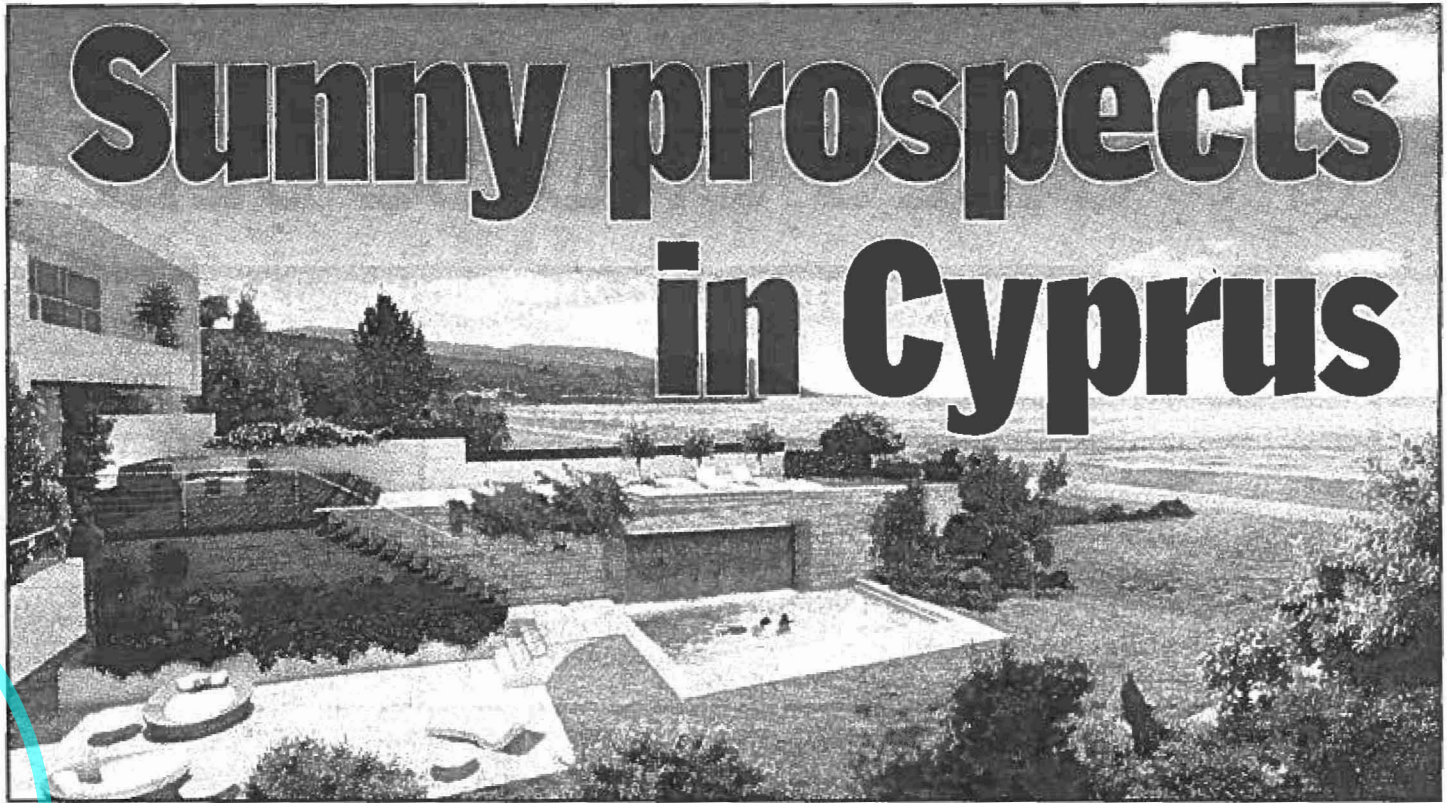
Interest in the Akamas Peninsular is expected to grow with the new motorway linking Paphos and Polis due to open next year. But for many,

part of the beauty of the place is the sense of entering a more tranquil world. Currently the drive through the peninsula takes in winding roads, through villages — home to traditional Cypriot life — past lemon groves and lush vineyards.

The new motorway may be a fast-track for those jetting in, but, says Pantelis Leptos, vice chairman of Leptos Estates, 'the old road will always be the picture-perfect choice'.

■ **CAP ST GEORGES**, Savills: 020 7016 3740, savills.com/abroad and capstgeorges.com. Cybarco: 0800 0855 221, akamasbay.com and Knight Frank: 020 7629 8171, knightfrank.co.uk. Leptos Estates: 020 8883 2333, leptosestates.com.

Sunny prospects in Cyprus



Swish: Akamas Bay Villas, due for completion in 2012, will have sweeping views of the Mediterranean