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Investing In A Fiji Island Luxury Retreat With No Reserve

Do you dream of owning an island idyll and beach paradise? Well, an ultra-exclusive [luxury](#) island in the South Pacific with oceanfronts and a showcase villa could be all yours this weekend. Yes, [Wavi Island](#), a 27-acre retreat in [Fiji](#) is going under the hammer – with no reserve price – through a live auction process. And, it might tempt a recent Powerball lottery winner to snap it up.

Platinum Luxury Auctions, which is headquartered in Miami, Florida, and has closed over \$400m in luxury real-estate auctions, is organizing two auctions for the retreat that offer buyers the opportunity to invest in this island and features twenty oceanfront lots – ranging in size from a half to one-full acre.

Scheduled for this Saturday, February 13, the island's 3,000 sq. ft. 'Signature Villa' will be sold to the highest bidder in an auction after the home was recently offered for \$2.9 million (c.£2m/€2.56m).

Whilst it might tempt some high net worth investors in North America, potential buyers from Melbourne and Sydney are understood to have expressed interest in the residence as a luxury retirement home or a holiday get away.

Equally the successful buyer could also rent it out by the week through operators like [Edge Retreats](#), which was started by London-based Australian Luke McCormick, and offers a curated collection of exceptional villas across the globe's most coveted destinations. Their offerings range from private island hideaways to personal chefs and every last luxury in-between in around 30 countries.

The villa property on Wavi, which is owned by an Australian based in the state of Victoria, was completed in 2012 to serve as the island's model property. Features include a pool and spa, a barbeque gazebo, covered walkways, three sumptuous luxury bedrooms as well as 3 full and 3 half baths. The views from the villa are over the Koro Sea.

A Rare Opportunity

An island auction such as this is certainly a rare opportunity. Even on an international basis whole don't exactly come to market every five minutes. So, it stands to reason they are uncommon around the Fiji area and the South Pacific region more broadly. And, while other properties have been put up for auction in Fiji, it's pretty rare to be one of a select few (just 20 individuals) to own such a private island. Most of the villa's rooms open wide to the pool deck and outdoor living spaces, with splendid ocean views in the background.

Trayor Lesnock, Founder and President of [Platinum Luxury Auctions](#), commenting on aspects of this exclusive property says: "Both the pool and spa have a 'wet-edge' (or 'infinity edge') design. And, the large pool deck and adjacent gazebo lounge rounds out the pool area features."

To date, the [US-based firm](#) has handled auction programs in areas including Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, St Thomas USVI (US Virgin Islands), St John USVI. Now, as well as Fiji they are examining several opportunities in French Polynesia, St Maarten, Israel and Italy.

Lesnock, who incidentally has just flown back from looking at and running his slide rule over a \$10m luxury property in the Cabo, Mexico, adds on the Signature Villa: “The mosaic bath in the master suite is also impressive and opens to big-picture ocean and mountain views. The style could be classified as ‘laid-back’ island luxury.”

Immediately following the villa’s sale, Wavi’s nineteen remaining oceanfront lots will be offered for sale as part of a so-called ‘high bidder’s choice’ auction, in which the highest bidder of each round of bids will choose their desired lot from the available inventory.

These lots were previously for sale at prices ranging from \$1m to \$1.89m each, and they are vacant and ready for immediate development, with power and water sources already having been pre-installed.

Foreign Property Ownership In Fiji

Fiji is one of the very few countries in the South Pacific Islands that permits foreigners to own property, including the ownership of freehold real estate. Even so, more than 90% of Fijian real estate is held on a leasehold basis, meaning that purchasers never truly hold ‘free and clear’ title to a given property. Instead they lease it over the course of a very long term, which typically last for decades.

Here Lesnock notes that: “99 years appears to be common.” He also reveals that their office has received a number of indications of interest for Wavi “...with many folks actually inquiring about purchasing the island as a whole.”

Given that all of the property lots on Wavi Island are offered freehold title and on an unencumbered ownership basis, this gives prospective buyers peace of mind in their Fijian property investment.

According to an analysis of sales figures from January to June 2015, which appears to be the most recent data available, there were 660 real-estate property sales in Fiji over this period. And, of these 47% were completed on freehold land with total property valued at c.\$147.2m

Registering & Fees For The Auction

In terms of how to register for the upcoming auction, it's a fairly simple and straightforward process. Bidders sign the auction 'Terms of Sale', which is a basic two-page document. Then they must place \$100,000 in an attorney's escrow account – or show equivalent funds via a cashier's/bank check.

Each bidder is then subsequently verified and confirmed by Platinum Luxury Auctions' sales office and given a 'Bidder Verification' number. Those bidding on multiple properties would require multiple \$100,000 deposits. Final confirmation of each bidder occurs immediately prior to the auction. After that the bidding starts.

“In the case of the Fiji auction, bidding will likely occur ‘virtually’ using an online bidding system,” says Mr Lesnock. “Generally we use this method for very remotely located properties.”

As regards fees on the auction, each bidder pays a Buyer's Premium on top of their high bid. This Premium is an amount equal to 10% of the high bid. So, with a \$1m bid this will equate to a gross purchase price of \$1.1m once the Premium is added. But if you have the cash why not splash out for a rarely offered Fijian island.

Failing that, one might want to check out a luxury villa in Fiji through Edge Retreats before deciding to buy in the future.

They offer, for example, [Dolphin Island](#) in Fiji, a 14-acre private retreat for a maximum of just eight guests. It's touted as the ultimate luxury castaway private Pacific island experience – on an exclusive-use basis. Prices for Edge Retreat's exclusive villa rentals can typically start from £10,000 (\$14,500) per week depending on the property, size and location.

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