

WHAT'S IT LIKE TO LIVE IN A SUSTAINABLE HOME?

by Vivion O'Kelly



THE BENEFITS OF SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainable living means a great deal to us, although we may not know it. After all, a large part of the benefits of sustainable living is not to have to think about it at all. At its most basic, it means peace of mind, healthy living and the comforting assurance that the environment we choose to live in will not be put at risk in any way by our choice.

So how do we know what's sustainable and what's not? Well, one way is to have your home checked out by one of the world's leading sustainability assessment groups, of which BREEAM is the world leader. Or to purchase a home that has already been assessed by BREEAM.

BREEAM provides third party certification of the sustainability of buildings and infrastructure projects, and is, in fact, an acronym of a group of words that mean little to most of us, but a great deal to those of us who have the good fortune to live in a BREEAM certified home. And if you must know (but feel free to forget), the acronym derives from Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method.

To be more specific about it might be pedantic, so to put it in practical terms, a BREEAM certificate is a guarantee of good living in every sense of the word. Good, because it's good for the environment on many different levels, good for your health and safety and good for your peace of mind. Good, because it cuts water usage and waste, running and maintenance costs and electricity use, vastly reducing carbon emissions. Good, because it tackles pollution in very concrete ways, ensuring that your natural surroundings stay open and natural, allowing you to hear the song birds throughout the day and see the stars throughout the night. Good, because it makes you feel good. In short, a BREEAM certificate gives you confidence in a sustainable way of life, now and tomorrow.

Buildings are BREEAM rated and certified on a scale of Pass, Good, Very Good,



Excellent and Outstanding, and up to the present date, more than 550,000 buildings have been BREEAM certified, with more than two million having been registered for certification in excess of 70 countries throughout the world. BREEAM is especially relevant now, in light of

the new rules on sustainability from the European Union, which are stricter than ever before.

Given that buildings and their construction together account for 36% of global energy use and 39% of energy-related carbon dioxide emissions annually (a lot more than cars), according to the United Nations Environment Program, sustainability is an ethos to be proud of.

WHAT ABOUT THE COSTS?

Contrary to popular perception, sustainable buildings are not significantly more expensive to design and build than those that simply adhere to regulatory requirements. Reputable research show that sustainable options often add little or no capital cost to a development project, and where certain costs are incurred, they will most likely be paid back through lower running and maintenance costs. There is also growing evidence that BREEAM rated buildings, apart from increasing overall value, also provide increased rates of return for investors and increased rental rates.



BREEAM CERTIFIED PROPERTIES ARE ATTRACTIVE TO INVESTORS

BREEAM was launched in 1990, and over the past 30 years it has become an internationally recognized and robust standard of sustainability excellence. It helps its clients during the planning, design and construction processes, using independent auditors to ensure that, both at the end of the design stage and on completion of construction, the standards of the scheme have been met. The result is that a BREEAM certified building will be fully sustainable, respectful of the environment and all natural resources, and make a property – already enhanced by having conformed to BREEAM standards – all the more attractive to investors. The scheme uses a worldwide network of experts in their respective fields and adapts its conditions to local and climatic conditions, raising awareness among owners and designers of the benefits of taking a sustainable approach and helping them to successfully adopt sustainable solutions in a cost-effective manner.

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BRIGHT IS A TRAIL BLAZER



The development company BRIGHT have led the way on the Costa del Sol with regards to sustainable luxury homes, first with their award-winning Villa Alcuçuz which is the first luxury villa in Marbella to be built under Passive House Regulations and standards. The villa uses a fraction of the energy of a normal standard build home with energy costs reduced by a massive 75%. Now, with regard to their new development Vista Lago Residences, a BREEAM certificate has been applied for, in full confidence that their final rating will validate the enormous effort and innovation gone into ensuring the maximum sustainability of the entire project. In fact, the 200 hectare Real de La Quinta development, which Vista Lago Residences is part of, was the first infrastructure planning project in Spain to obtain a BREEAM certificate. It is not for nothing that a core principal of BRIGHT, whose ethos is sustainability, is "building for today without endangering tomorrow."

Every home in Vista Lago, inside and out, is designed in such a way to maximise the health and wellbeing of its occupants. Owners can choose to have organic vegetable plots in their gardens, mini orchards and kitchen herb gardens. With charging points for electric cars, and pollution from light, noise and emissions dramatically reduced, a luxurious yet completely sustainable lifestyle can be fully realised.

For more information on Vista Lago Residences, visit the website: vistalago.es

To reserve your villa call the BRIGHT sales team on (+34) 648 981 111 or email them at info@by-bright.com

PEACE OF MIND

In the final analysis, as we said at the start, it's a question of peace of mind. Anybody who can afford a luxury home in the Marbella area will not be overly concerned with the relatively small increase in initial purchase price that adherence to BREEAM regulations may – or may not – incur. They might not lose sleep over just how well their building stands up to the ravages of time, and few new potential owners will boast to their cocktail party guests about the

finer technical details of a BREEAM certificate. But they will certainly wish to live in a house whose sustainability and respect for the environment is fully guaranteed, because that is the very reason they have chosen to live in such a privileged environment in the first place.