

FRENCH PROPERTY NEWS



ISSUE 400
JULY/AUGUST 2026

WIN!

A cruise and cycle
holiday for two
in France

COGNAC COUNTRY

Riverside homes and
vineyard views

FRENCH CONNECTION

Meet the expats who discovered their
love of France was in their blood

EXPERT ADVICE

Buying guide: Pays de la Loire

Inheriting French property

Hausmannian architecture

Avoiding buying pitfalls

Holiday home Q&As

PROPERTIES FOR ALL BUDGETS

frenchentree.com
francepropertyshop.com



£7.50



FRANCE MEDIA
GROUP

Buying a property in France?

We can support your foreign exchange needs



- Competitive exchange rates and zero transfer fees
- Manage frequent payments through a regular payment plan before and after your property purchase
- Lock in exchange rates for up to two years*
- Dedicated account manager to support you throughout the process
- Track rates through market alerts
- 24/7 secure online access to your Moneycorp account

Scan the QR code to open a free Moneycorp account today, and get your French property purchase underway.

We are fully licenced to operate in Europe, so we can continue to support you with payments after your purchase.

Don't forget to quote 'French Property News'

Let's talk +44 (0) 203 773 6355 | frenchentree@moneycorp.com

www.moneycorp.com



*Forward contracts may require a deposit. Currency at risk.
TTT Moneycorp Limited (company number 738837) is registered in England. Its registered office is at Floor 5, Zig Zag Building, 70 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6SQ. Moneycorp is a trading name of TTT Moneycorp Limited which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority for the provision of payment services (firm reference number 308919). Moneycorp FRM is a trading name of Moneycorp Financial Risk Management Limited which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority for the provision of designated investment business (firm reference number 452443). Date of approval: 02/02/2024.



THOUGHTS FROM THE PIGEONNIER



3 THINGS I'VE LEARNT THIS ISSUE

P11

Legendary Chanel designer Karl Lagerfeld's manor house home has come onto the market

P60

International students are eligible for €1 lunches at university restaurants.

P92

You can get all sorts of grants and assistance to start up an agricultural business in France

Welcome to our 400th issue! Ever since 1989, the magazine – which actually started out as a newspaper – has followed the ups and downs of the French property market. We've featured properties big and small and told the stories of ordinary people who've dreamed big and found their own treasured homes across the Channel. Back when *FPN* was first launched, the Channel Tunnel had yet to be built, there was no such thing as the EU and properties were priced in francs. You can read more about the events that have shaped the UK and France since then, and how the French property market has fared, on page 80. And don't miss our fantastic 400th issue competition – the lucky winners will enjoy a luxury 'cycle and cruise' holiday in France (see page 83). As from that very first edition, this issue is a mix of informative articles, latest property market news, expert advice, inspirational real life stories and beautiful properties. We hope you enjoy it and find it useful for your own property journey; please do get in touch with your househunting stories. And here's to another 400 issues – santé!

Karen



EDITOR'S PICK

Unique villa with pool and gîte in the south of France

The name of this stunning home in Provence sums it up perfectly: Villa Romantique. From the tower-like entrance to the circular collonaded pool, and the sumptuous interiors to the spectacular views, it feels like something out of a fairytale. The seven-bedroom property is perfectly located within the Golden Circle of Avignon, St-Remy-de-Provence, Arles, Nîmes, Uzès and the Pont du Gard. Priced at €945,000, it has been beautifully renovated by the owners over 23 years, and also boasts five-star holiday rental reviews. villaromantique.co.uk



Contributing this issue...



Page 56

Resi Lombeek

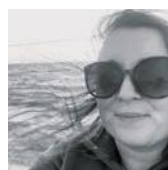
Resi founded Lomagne Properties in Gascony in 2013, connecting clients with exceptional homes in southwest France, and offering a personalised service.



Page 96

Stijn Neyrink

Chartered French accountant and tax advisor at RFN since 2003, Stijn supports international clients with expatriation and French real estate.



Page 24

Chloe Marshall Hipeau

Fluent in French and English, Chloe is the co-owner of immo3c estate agency, covering the Poitou-Charentes and offering buying guidance.



Page 52

Louis Jansen van Vuuren

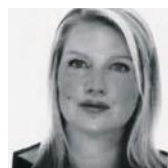
Louis is a writer and artist living in the Nouvelle-Aquitaine and South Africa. He has written nine books including 'Almost French' and 'Bilton & Dior'.



Page 97

Carmel O'Connell

Carmel and her husband, Joe Wilson, are the owners and operators of the French national property management franchise Les Bons Voisins.



Page 72

Leah Rottier

Leah is a freelance writer, copy editor and French/Swedish translator who lives with her French chef husband and family in southwest France.



Page 74

Scott Middleton

Scott has been a removals consultant with GB Liners since 2019, and is also a non-executive director at Quality Service Standards Limited.



Page 92

Catharine Higginson

Lifelong Francophile Catharine moved to southwest France with her young family in 2002 where she runs survivefrance.com

FRENCH PROPERTY NEWS

www.frenchentree.com

OFFICE +44 (0)1225 463 752

SUBSCRIPTIONS +44 (0)1202 087 628

EDITORIAL

Editor-in-Chief: Guy Hibbert, guyhibbert@francemedia.com

Editor: Karen Tait, karen.tait@francemedia.com

Art and Production Director: David Eachus, dave@francemedia.com

Sub-editor: Claire Vaughan

Managing Director: Benjamin Stephens, ben@francemedia.com

Subscriptions Manager: Michaela Sillick, michaela@francemedia.com

Advertising Manager: Emma Kestin, emma.kestin@francemedia.com

UK and US Sales Director: Peter Cullingford, peter@francemedia.com

Tourism Business Development Manager: Alison Joyce, alison@francemedia.com

Digital Marketing Manager: Dan Mead, dan@francemedia.com

Digital Content Lead: Elinor Sheridan, elinor.sheridan@francemedia.com

Digital Marketing & Video Executive: Oli White, oli@francemedia.com

Media Sales Consultant: Jasmine Thomas, jasmine@francemedia.com

FrenchEntrée Website Editor: Zoë Smith, zoe@frenchentree.com

FrenchEntrée Memberships Manager:

Claire Ewins, members@frenchentree.com



[facebook.com/
frenchpropertynews](https://facebook.com/frenchpropertynews)
magazine



[twitter.com/
frenchpropnews](https://twitter.com/frenchpropnews)



[instagram.com/
frenchpropertynews](https://instagram.com/frenchpropertynews)



[pinterest.com/
frenchpropnews](https://pinterest.com/frenchpropnews)

FRANCE MEDIA GROUP

France Media Ltd publishes a number of print and digital titles for the Francophile audience including *French Property News*, *France Today*, *FrenchEntrée*, *Bonjour Paris* and *Taste of France*.

French Property News is a publication of France Media Group.

+44 (0)1225 463 752, info@francemedia.com

www.francemedia.com

© Copyright 2026 France Media Ltd. Printed by Warners. All rights reserved.

We cannot accept responsibility for any mistakes or misprints. Reproduction in part or whole is strictly prohibited without written permission from the publisher. We cannot accept responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts or photographs damaged in the post. Material sent on speculation, unless enclosed with a stamped addressed envelope, will not be returned to the sender. France Media Ltd reserve rights of ownership. Euro prices quoted are subject to fluctuations and were correct at the time of going to press. Current exchange rates should always be sought.

French Property News ISSN 1751-6846, is published six times a year by France Media Ltd, Runway East, Kings Court, Parsonage Lane, Bath, BA1 1ER, United Kingdom. Subscription records are maintained at Select Publishing Services, P.O. Box 633 Bournemouth, BH1 9EH.





In association with
Hamptons
INTERNATIONAL

LEGGETT

INTERNATIONAL REAL ESTATE

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE YOU CAN TRUST



chalet **villa** château **farmhouse** apartment **vineyard** gîte **cottage** coast **country** city



EXCLUSIVE

Sitting Pretty

Vaucluse €460,000
Ref: A44298 - 3-bedroom renovated property with garden and pool.

Agency fees to be paid by the seller.
Energy class: E Climate class: B



Wow Factor

Var €495,000
Ref: A44604 - 3-bedroom Provençal farmhouse with room for a pool.

Agency fees to be paid by the seller.
Energy class: D Climate class: B



Château Chic

Lot-et-Garonne €823,935
Ref: A32753 - Exquisite 6-bedroom château set in 12 acres.

5% agency fees included paid by the buyer.
Energy class: F Climate class: F



EXCLUSIVE

High Altitude

Haute-Savoie €595,000
Ref: A41055 - 3-bedroom triplex with mountain views and covered parking.

Agency fees to be paid by the seller.
Energy class: B Climate class: B



EXCLUSIVE

Southern Charm

Aude €397,000
Ref: A44530 - 3-bedroom house with garden, pool and vineyard views.

Agency fees to be paid by the seller.
Energy class: D Climate class: B



Country Life

Creuse €424,000
Ref: A33804 - Country manor with a second house to renovate.

6% agency fees included paid by the buyer.
Energy class: E Climate class: B



B&B Potential

Landes €599,000
Ref: A15638 - Stunning 7-bedroom manor house with pool.

Agency fees to be paid by the seller.
Energy class: D Climate class: C



Lovely Longère

Ille-et-Vilaine €229,000
Ref: A25537 - 2/3-bedroom longère with garden and workshop.

Agency fees to be paid by the seller.
Energy class: E Climate class: E



EXCLUSIVE

Simply Spacious

Maine-et-Loire €240,750
Ref: A38524 - Large 4-bedroom house with guest accommodation.

7% agency fees included paid by the buyer.
Energy class: D Climate class: B



Rental Income

Charente-Maritime €274,000
Ref: A31483 - 6-bedroom stone house with gîte and enclosed garden.

Agency fees to be paid by the seller.
Energy class: E Climate class: B



Historic Origins

Dordogne €629,000
Ref: A31138 - Exceptional 3-bedroom property, with 6,000m² garden.

Agency fees to be paid by the seller.
Energy class: E Climate class: E



EXCLUSIVE

Gardeners World

Orne €279,000
Ref: A44883 - Renovated 4-bedroom house with basement and garden.

Agency fees to be paid by the seller.
Energy class: E Climate class: E

+33 (0)5 53 60 84 88 • leggettfrance.com • info@leggett.fr

We are recruiting independent sales agents across France

Turn your skills into a successful business with Leggett Immobilier

Change starts here :

+33 (0)5 53 60 82 77 recruitment@leggett.fr



Sophie Lebarcq - Leggett Agent

35+
YEARS
of French
property
advice

FRENCH PROPERTY NEWS

CONTENTS

400th
ISSUE

WELCOME

- 3 Editor's pick**
A unique villa in the south of France
- 8 Tête-à-tête**
Let's chat! Share your views and experiences by letter and social media
- 11 News**
All the latest on the French property market, travel and events
- 145 Next issue**
What can you expect in the next issue of *FPN*?

À VENDRE

- 16 Three of the best**
Properties set between mountains and sea
- 18 French property dreams**
A contemporary villa and pool near a Luberon village
- 20 Holiday home pick**
A luxury lodge on an attractive park with amenities in the Dordogne
- 22 Coup de coeur**
Team *FPN*'s pick of homes priced at €400,000
- 24 Agent's dream home**
An inspiring country home in Deux-Sèvres
- 113 Property showcase**
Our handy map and 26 pages of French properties

LOCATION

- 26 Loire loveliness**
Buying guide to the Pays de la Loire region
- 40 Cognac country**
Riverside towns and vineyard views
- 56 Agent interview**
Insight into the Lomagne area in southwest France
- 68 Tour de femmes**
Exploring locations along the women's TDF route
- 80 Hotspot**
Montpellier: A dynamic southern city near the sea

REAL LIFE

- 32 In the blood**
Met the expats whose links to France run deep
- 44 Mountain highs**
Running a yoga and walking retreat in the Alps
- 52 Magical moments**
A touching story of a château renovation in the Tardes valley
- 64 Creative inspiration**
A Lot-et-Garonne home and artists' residence
- 76 Not run-of-the-mill**
A decades-long tale of owning a historic *moulin*
- 146 My village**
Vence, Alpes-Maritimes



ON the cover

A charming village house surrounded by hillsides in Hérault – see page 16

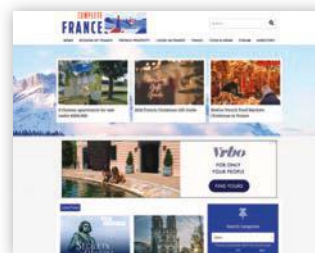
GO ONLINE TO READ MORE ABOUT FRENCH PROPERTY AND LIVING IN FRANCE, PLUS BROWSE THOUSANDS OF PROPERTIES FOR SALE



frenchentree.com



francepropertyshop.com



completefrance.com



44



52



36

EXPERT ADVICE

- 36 Monuments and homes**
A look at Hausmannian architecture in France
- 48 Mediterranean gardens**
Our French interiors series takes a wander outside
- 60 Higher education**
A guide to applying for French universities
- 72 Working life**
Expat business owners bringing the UK to France
- 74 Moving day**
Removals tips to ensure a smooth move
- 80 400th issue!**
How has the French property market fared since FPN's launch in 1989?

THE KNOWLEDGE

- 88 Legal column**
Avoiding the pointy bits!
- 90 Money column**
Currency advice
- 92 Guide to...**
Grants and other help for agricultural businesses
- 94 Ask the experts**
Q&As on French property and moving to France

JOIE DE VIVRE

- 100 Joie de vivre**
Books, films, interiors, quizzes and more
- 103 The intrepid châtelaine**
Slow-living at the château
- 104 Column: Janine Moore**
Bastille Day celebrations
- 104 Rural riddles**
Countryside conundrums
- 106 Woody's worries**
Compost communications
- 108 Recipe**
Ratatouille tart



WIN!
A 'cycle and
cruise' holiday for
two in France -
see page
83

26

HAVE YOU SEEN?



FRANCE TODAY MAGAZINE

Find out everything you need to know about this fantastic country, with plenty of unique cultural insights and feature pieces to keep you entertained.

SPECIAL OFFER



SUBSCRIBE TO SAVE!

Stay informed. Plan with confidence. Make smarter decisions. Subscribe before next issue and lock in this year's rate for the next 12 months. Every issue delivered free to your door. **Turn to page 58 to find out more and subscribe today**

Tête à tête

This month's pick of our social media



€185,500



Ten minutes from Mont-St-Michel and a railway station with TGV links, and under an hour from the Channel ferry. This four-bedroom house is full of quiet charm. Roses over the door, two fireplaces, a veranda, 176m² of living space across three floors, a garage and 1,700m² of gardens. It needs no introduction and very little persuasion.

Marie-Françoise Hatroupin:

Does the Deux Chevaux come with the deal? 😊
I dream of having one

Alison Agence Newton Immobilier:

Nice try! 😊 Sadly not, Lola is my 2CV - she's adorable, we do lots together 😊

Jim Yvette Kidd:

I just spent today at Mont-St-Michel. The countryside is simply stunning. Wish I could buy a place like this and simply retire. Beautiful!

GET IN TOUCH!

Tell us what you love about France and what owning a French property means to you, on our social media or email: karen.tait@francemedia.com

Haute-Vienne, €169,600:

Around 15.5 hectares, a ruined chapel, an old forge with bread oven, two barns, an enclosed courtyard farmstead and panoramic views across rolling countryside. This 300-year-old farmhouse near Rancon is one of the most atmospheric renovation projects we've come across. The farmhouse is habitable — three bedrooms, a traditional kitchen, a pellet burner and a new roof already in place. The septic tank will need updating, but beyond that the bones are exceptional. The attic alone offers the potential for something spectacular. For equestrian buyers, the pastureland is ready to use and the flat section is made for a sand arena. For everyone

else, it's simply one of the finest rural settings in the Limousin.

Lyn Bowler:

I just love Rancon... used to own a little house in the heart of the village, on the Rue des Marchands de Vin. I have very fond memories of the area, it's so beautiful...

Elizabeth Roberts Riley:

Oh, how many ponies could I have if I lived there! It's beautiful!

Paula Edwards:

How gorgeous?! 😍

Richard Sparkes:

Moving next week

Denise Naudé:

Oh my hat I would love that ❤️

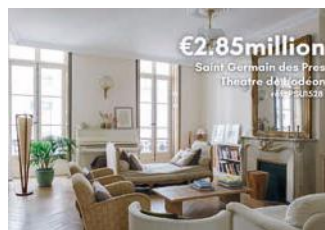


ON INSTAGRAM

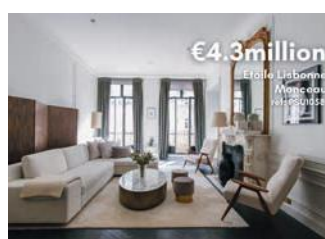
Follow us on Instagram
@frenchpropertynews



3 DREAMY
APARTMENTS
IN PARIS



€2.85million
Saint Germain des Pres
Theatre 44 Modéon
44 100 25328



€4.3million
Etoile Lisboise
Montecarlo
44 100 25328



€3.98million
Saint Germain des
Pres Boc
ref: P528443

Which one would
you choose to
call home?

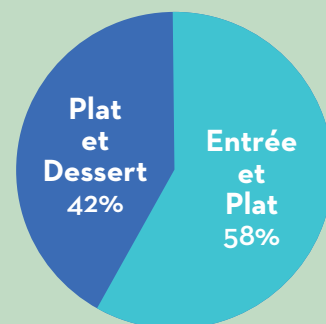
Find these properties
and more on
francepropertyshop.com



WE ASKED YOU...

“What would you choose,
starter or dessert?”

Join our Facebook group:
Living in France



WINNER OF BEST FRENCH ESTATE AGENCY & WEBSITE FOR SEVEN CONSECUTIVE YEARS



VENDEE €310,300 HAI
BVI85783 5-bed village house with pool, walking distance to amenities
Fees: 7% paid by the buyer Net price: €290,000



EXCLUSIVE
AVEYRON €175,000 HAI
BVI72621 Historic 2-bed character house with barn, garden and views
Fees: 7% paid by the buyer Net price: €163,551



EXCLUSIVE
CHARENTE-MARITIME €110,000 HAI
BVI84586 Unique off-grid mill house with 2000m² of land and rural views
Fees: 9% paid by the buyer Net price: €100,918



EXCLUSIVE
CHARENTE €449,000 HAI
BVI82691 Stylish 4-bed ancien relais de poste with barns and pool
Fees: 6% paid by the buyer Net: €423,585



DORDOGNE €330,000 HAI
BVI85218 4-bed main house, guest, annex, pool, workshop and views
Fees: 6% paid by the buyer Net price: €311,321



LOT €345,000 HAI
BVI82066 5-bed, 2-bath modern home with pool near Gourdon
Fees: 5.2% paid by the buyer Net price: €327,947



EXCLUSIVE
VIENNE €194,400 HAI
BVI85487 Charming 3-bed property with outbuildings in a rural location
Fees: 8% paid by the buyer Net price: €180,000



EXCLUSIVE
LOT-ET-GARONNE €999,000
BVI84899 16thC château with chapel, pool and stables set in 2Ha
Fees: paid by the vendor



EXCLUSIVE
DORDOGNE €850,000
BVI85264 Exceptional 4-bed stone farmhouse estate with superb pool
Fees: Paid by the vendor



LOT-ET-GARONNE €884,000
BVI61108 Superb 12-bed mansion, a 1-bed cottage and a pool in 4.7Ha
Fees: paid by the vendor



EXCLUSIVE
HAUTE-GARONNE €890,000
BVI84665 Secluded estate in 9.6Ha of forest, streams and waterfalls
Fees: Paid by the vendor



EXCLUSIVE
BOUCHES-DU-RHÔNE €1,690,000
BVI84602 Contemporary 5-bed residence, 2kms from Aix-en-Provence
Fees: Paid by the vendor

"We have the best colleagues and a great work /life balance"
Join our team!



Moving to France?

We're recruiting Independent Property Consultants across South West France.

Want to know more?

Contact Tina Anderson,
Head of Recruitment
recruitment@beauxvillages.com



www.beauxvillages.com +44 (0)800 270 0101 info@beauxvillages.com

WE ARE
RECRUITING
ACROSS
FRANCE

JOIN  OUR
TEAM



Agence

 **Newton**  **.com**

As seen on  **YouTube** @TheFrenchEstateAgent

Bring your French dream to life
agencenewton.com
+33 (0) 222 444 080

Moving you since 1986



INTERNATIONAL MARKETING. LOW FEES. ENGLISH-SPEAKING AGENTS.

AU COURANT

Keeping you up to date with the French property market, news, travel and events

FOR SALE!

UNIQUE HOMES: BUY A VILLAGE ESTATE, PRISON OR GLAMOROUS CELEBRITY MANOR!

FORMER HOME OF FASHION ICON AND MONACO PRINCESS

Under an hour from Paris, the Manoir du Mée comprises an elegant main house plus guesthouse set within landscaped grounds of about 5,000m². There are seven bedrooms in the manor house, each with its own bathroom and dressing room, and with unobstructed views of the gardens. There's a spacious kitchen, dining room facing the park and further reception rooms, as well as more intimate spaces like a games room, bar and library lounge with fireplace. Original features have been carefully preserved including Versailles parquet flooring, mouldings, picture rails and fireplaces. There's also an independent guesthouse.

The property was formerly owned by Chanel's creative director Karl Lagerfeld, who bought it in 1986 as a summer home, to escape from Paris. He went on to completely refurbish it, which is located in the village of Mée-sur-Seine, and also used it for Chanel adverts featuring muses Tatjana Patitz and Ines de la Fressange.

The manor's glittering past doesn't end there though, as in 1998 he sold it to Princess Caroline of Monaco, who lived there for over six years, putting her own mark on the interiors and hosting glamorous gatherings. Built in 1749, the *manoir* was also home to the Fraguier family, Lords of Le Mée, who bought it in 1877, and French actress Renée Saint-Cyr, who appeared in 60 films between 1933 and 1994.

Manoir du Mée is for sale at €2.7m with Pyla Paris.



Above: The former home of Karl Lagerfeld is for sale at €2.7m (pylaparis.fr)

Below: This Provencal village estate would make an ideal hospitality business



Caen prison was built in 1899

NORMANDY PRISON

What our next property lacks in glamour, it certainly makes up for with historic presence.

With the threat of demolition hanging over it, Caen's former prison has been put up for sale by the French state. Built between 1899 and 1904, the 270-inmate prison was in use until 2023 when the last inmates were relocated to the new Caen-Iffs prison. Close to the city centre, the 8,832m² building sits on a 1.8ha plot and is built from Caen stone with a glass roof. Requiring renovation, it is expected to sell for several million euros.

VILLAGE VIBES

Meanwhile, in the heart of Provence's Verdon Regional Nature Park a substantial village estate has come onto the market for €958,000 (Leggett Immobilier). Located in the sought-after village of St-Laurent-du-Verdon, near the Lac de Ste-Croix and spectacular Gorges du Verdon, the restored stone estate includes a spacious main residence, independent guest accommodation, rooftop terrace, swimming pool and landscaped outdoor spaces – making it ideal as either a luxury private home or boutique tourism business.

On the market



€349,000, Gironde, Nouvelle-Aquitaine: Five-bedroom former winemaker's home with gîte, swimming pool and outbuildings



€179,300, Morbihan, Brittany: Charming countryside home with four bedrooms, two bathrooms, large garden, terrace, parking



€90,000, Manche, Normandy: Pretty two/three bedroom colombage cottage in just under an acre of land

FIND MORE PROPERTIES ON
FRANCEPROPERTYSHOP.COM
& **FRENCHENTREE.COM**

COUNTRY LIFE: YOUNGER BUYERS



© SHUTTERSTOCK

Homebuyers in the French countryside are getting younger, taking advantage of a decline in interest rates and two years of falling prices, says French land agency SAFER.

Their latest report also points to a dynamic recovery

of the country property market in terms of sales, albeit with a more timid increase in prices. After three years of decline, the market picked up in 2025 while remaining below the 2021 peak.

The market is improving across all regions, SAFER reports, but particularly in

the Nouvelle-Aquitaine, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes and Brittany regions. Recovery is slower in Bourgogne-Franche-Comté and Normandy.

Not surprisingly, prices remain high in sought-after locations, on the coast and around metropolitan areas.

IN NUMBERS



+15% - 93,450 transactions
+13.9% - 44,900 hectares
+20% - 23,63 billions of euros

YOUNGER BUYERS



Average age:
43 years

(Down by seven months)



WHAT'S ON IN JULY/AUGUST 2026



© SHUTTERSTOCK

4-26 JULY

SPAIN & FRANCE

TOUR DE FRANCE

This year the tour will start in Barcelona, and the second stage in Tarragona will be the furthest south the peloton has ever gone. The race will pass through seven French regions, 29 departments and five mountain ranges - the Pyrénées, Massif Central, Jura, Vosges and Alps - before the final stage in Paris.

le-tour-fr



© SHUTTERSTOCK

4 JULY

ACROSS FRANCE

BASTILLE DAY

Marking the anniversary of the storming of the infamous Bastille prison in 1789 - a turning point for the French Revolution - La Fête Nationale has become one of the brightest stars in France's calendar, celebrated in big cities and tiny villages alike. Expect fireworks, music, dancing, festivities, feasting and fun!

france.fr



© GASPARD COMBES/UNE TÊTE AU HAVRE

UNTIL 20 SEPTEMBER

LE HAVRE, SEINE-MARITIME

A SUMMER IN LE HAVRE

The Norman coastal city becomes an outdoors art gallery for Un Été au Havre, celebrated each year since 2017 when it marked the 500th anniversary of the founding of the city and port. Key installations include rotating mirrors in front of the cathedral and sculptural ice-like blocks flating on the Bassin de Commerce.

uneteauhavre.fr



© JAZZ IN MARCIAC/FACEBOOK

20 JULY - 5 AUGUST

MARCIAC, GERS

MARCIAC JAZZ FESTIVAL

Some 200,000 jazz fans from all over the world converge on this Gascon village to immerse themselves in one of the best and longest running summer jazz festivals in Europe. This year - the 48th edition - artists will include Sting, Samara Joy, Kool and the Gang, Marcus Miller, Diana Krall, Imany, Ibrahim Maalouf and more.

jazzinmarciac.com

FRENCH PROPERTY MARKET: MEASURED PRICES



©ARTHUR HANES PEXELS

Property prices in France have remained relatively stable, according to the latest Seloger-Meilleurs Agents index. But against the flat backdrop, there are several notable contrasts. The chairman of estate agency network Laforêt said in an interview with *Les Échos* that despite the weather events, elections and the conflict in the Middle East, the volume of transactions ticked up 2% in May compared to the previous year and expects that if the same trend continues it could result in an 8% increase in the whole of 2026, although some areas are responding more energetically than others.

In this context, an economist for SeLoger-Meilleurs Agents said that while some cities are experiencing a genuine property boost, such as Paris, Marseille

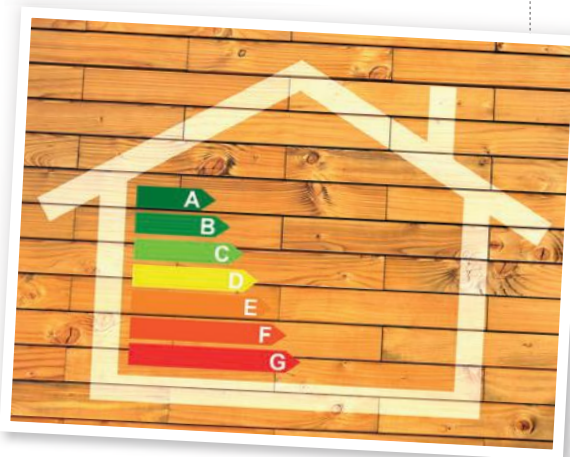
and Montpellier, which have been on the rise since the start of the year, others are just ticking along, such as Bordeaux, Strasbourg, Lille and Nice. Another analyst for Bien Ici, however, said to *Actual-Immo* that Nice prices weathered the property market slowdown better thanks to a more international clientele and limited supply, so while there have been slight declines in recent months, prices had already remained high overall.

Elsewhere, there appears to be a real adjustment, with prices adapting to buyers' purchasing power, which is likely the reason why the price index is rising in rural areas (as SAFER report). The forecast for the coming months? Analysts agree that the needle to watch is the trend of interest rates because a further rise could quickly put the brakes on this still fragile recovery.

ENERGY SIEVES

Prime Minister Sébastien Lecornu has announced new measures to ease restrictions on owners of energy-inefficient properties, subject to certain conditions. For context, in France homes are rated on a scale from A to G based on their energy consumption and CO2 emissions; A represents a highly efficient home and G a very energy-intensive one. This rating appears on the Energy Performance Diagnostic (DPE), which is mandatory when selling or renting a property. Renting out G-rated properties has been banned since January 2025, and F-rated properties were due to be banned from early 2028.

The relaxation of the rules is part of a new bill to reactivate the housing segment and provide local authorities with more decision-making ability. To



ease the shortage of rental properties, the government wants to allow units classed as energy inefficient to go back onto the market, provided the owner agrees to carry out upgrades to improve their energy performance within three years for houses or five years for apartments.

©THEORY / SHUTTERSTOCK

TRAVEL NEWS

■ The EES (Entry/Exit system) digital scheme is now in operation at European borders, including France. EES replaces passport stamps with biometric registration, using facial scans, fingerprints, and digital travel records to monitor entries and exits in real time. The system's launch has seen occasional delays at borders and some controversy with travel operators...

■ Ryanair called on the French government to suspend the rollout of the EES until September to ensure that passengers, including holidaymakers, avoid long passport control queue delays at French airports during the peak summer season.

■ Wizz Air UK managing director Yvonne Moynihan has advised travellers to arrive at airports three hours before departure due to long queues linked to the EES.

■ Since the EES became fully operational in April, almost 7,000 non-EU citizens have been refused entry to the EU due to having previously overstayed in the Schengen area, according to the '2026 State of Schengen Report' released by the European Commission.

■ British and American nationals travelling through Nice Côte d'Azur airport are reportedly being allowed to use e-gates, reducing queues to see an immigration officer. E-gate access applies to these travellers whether they are residents of France or visitors, a Nice airport spokesman told *The Connexion*.

■ The EU has launched the 'Travel to Europe' app allowing non-EU travellers subject to the EES to pre-register their passport data and facial image up to 72 hours before reaching a border crossing.

■ The EES will be followed by Etias, a fee-based travel authorisation for travellers who benefit from visa-free short-stay access to the EU, including Brits. The launch is currently expected to be the last quarter of 2026.

INCOME TAX RATES AND THRESHOLDS

The long claw of France's income tax system is reaching 900,000 additional households this year, primarily affecting the lower middle-income segment. This shift stems primarily from adjustments to tax rates and thresholds.

A report by *Les Échos* said the expansion results from a combination of several converging factors: tax bracket increases that failed to keep pace with inflation, causing bracket creep, and rising average household incomes driven by wage negotiations and minimum wage increases, pushing some households above exemption thresholds.

The gradual erosion of certain tax relief schemes is also fuelling this growth. Tax loopholes, which are constantly under scrutiny by the Treasury, are seeing their scope narrow, leaving more taxpayers exposed to the full force of income tax.

The report added that, for the state, this expansion represents a substantial fiscal windfall estimated at several billion euros annually amid tight budgetary constraints.

IN HOT WATER: BOILER BLOCK

In the context of volatile oil prices, Prime Minister Sébastien Lecornu unveiled a series of measures aimed at reducing the country's dependence on fossil fuels. One of the policies includes a ban on gas boiler installations on all new constructions starting at the end of 2026. This expands an existing ban that already applied to individual homes but not to collective residential buildings or commercial properties. Additionally, two



million social housing units are to be taken off gas by 2050.

Lecornu said that "...as long as we depend on oil and gas, we will continue to pay the price for other people's wars".

The government also pledged to install one million heat pumps annually by 2030, with the goal of halving heating costs. Other related measures include public support for

electrification to be doubled from €5.5bn to €10bn per year by 2030 (funded through redirected existing subsidies rather than new spending), and an additional 50,000 subsidised electric vehicles to be made available from June this year, targeting high-mileage workers such as nurses, home carers, and trades hit hardest by surging fuel prices.

PARIS OFFICES TO BE CONVERTED

France is pushing for the conversion of empty office spaces into 8,200 homes in the Paris region. This initiative has been on the table for some time, without a great deal of momentum, but the Paris region has now tendered 61 select projects, mostly in the suburbs surrounding the

capital. According to the latest survey by Knight Frank, office vacancy rates in the Île-de-France region reached yet another record high in early 2026, as there are now nearly 6.2 million square metres of vacant space, 43% of which has been vacant for at least four years. The report notes that since the pandemic, the

Île-de-France office market has been struggling, largely due to longer commutes and the rise of remote working.

The conversion into housing aims to remedy a shortage of residential rentals, although investors may balk at the technical hurdles, intricate regulations and limited profitability the option offers.

NEWS IN BRIEF

■ Beer consumption has overtaken wine in France for the first time. According to an industry report, consumers drank around 10 million litres more beer than wine in 2025.

■ Carrefour has launched *Carrefour des générations*, a new scheme for over-65s in France. It includes free home delivery from €50 of shopping, clearer labelling for products aimed at older customers, more small-portion products, extra staff assistance and help signing up for loyalty cards. The scheme applies to Carrefour Express, City, Contact and Montagne stores (not Carrefour hypermarkets or larger supermarkets).



Santé! Beer drinking overtakes wine

■ *Notaire's* fees have increased in many departments, after local authorities were given the option to raise their share of property transfer taxes. The departmental element can now rise to 5% until 31 March 2028, with the total cost depending on the department, type of property and buyer's situation. Some 97 departments have opted to apply higher fees.

■ Applications for France's new €100 fuel allowance are now open via impots.gouv.fr. The aid is aimed at French residents who use a personal petrol, diesel or non-rechargeable hybrid vehicle for work or commuting, and who meet income and mileage conditions. To qualify as a *grand rouleur*, applicants must either travel at least 15km each way between home and work, or drive at least 8,000km per year for professional journeys. The payment was initially expected to be €50, but has since been doubled to €100.

■ A château property development in France has become the subject

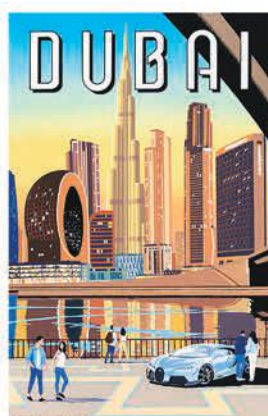
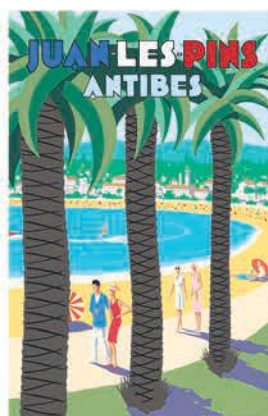
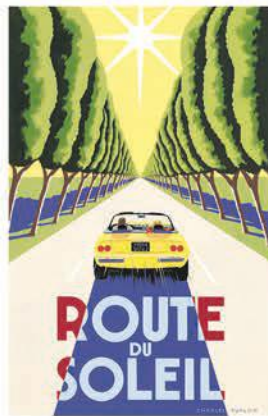
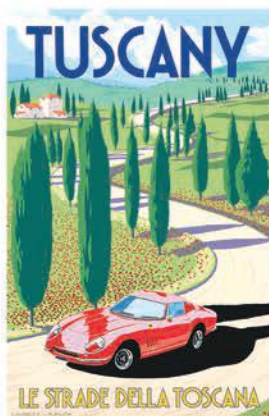
of an international fraud investigation. The case involves the 19th-century Château de la Cazine estate situated in the Creuse department. Promoted as the Halcyon Retreat Golf and Spa Resort, the estate was marketed as an upmarket destination featuring luxury lodges, championship golf course, wellness facilities and guaranteed returns for investors. However, according to French prosecutors, construction work never properly began and investors may have been defrauded by as much as €16m. A British suspect has been arrested and investigators continue to search for another man connected to the project.



PULLMAN EDITIONS

Timeless Art Deco Posters

135 Hand painted, Original, Limited Edition Prints, Conceived,
Designed & Made in the UK
Available Framed or Unframed



View & Buy at
PULLMANEDITIONS.COM

SCAN THE QR CODE



Visit our London Shop:
131 Pancras Road, London
NW1 1UN
Tel: 020 7387 6039
Info@pullmaneditions.com

FREE SHIPPING WITH CODE: FMSHIP

Three of the best

You want sand and summits, surf and ski, rocky peaks and rock pools, coves and canyons, glaciers and ice lollies – and in the south of France, you can have it all, says **Ruth Wood**



€449,000 PYRÉNÉES-ATLANTIQUES

The clue's in the department name. This handsome manor house has glimpses of the Pyrénées and is less than an hour's drive from the elegant resort of Biarritz on the Atlantic coast. Offering a pool and double garage in the 2,035m² grounds, the property is near the centre of spa town Salies-de-Béarn. Although it sits at low elevation in the Béarn foothills, within two hours you could be hiking up the twin-horned Pic



du Midi d'Ossau, arguably the most iconic Pyrenean peak. The house has five bedrooms (four on the first floor and one ensuite). Downstairs there's a large open-plan lounge-diner with pellet burner, a well-equipped kitchen, a family bathroom and a playroom/office or fifth bedroom.

sophiefolley.com

€495,000 VAR

The Beckhams once owned an estate in Bargemon and you can see the glitzy French Riviera from the mountain pass above the village. But this hilltop community, known as the 'Pearl of the Var', is a tranquil place of cobblestone lanes and shaded squares. Likewise, this nearby property is an authentic jewel, its exquisite renovation concealed by stone walls and a terrace with sweeping views over 14,000m² of grounds and Alpine foothills. The farmhouse



has three bedrooms, open-plan living space, second lounge, utility room and bathroom. Outbuildings include a small cottage with hot tub and workshop. In less than an hour, you can be on the beach at St-Raphaël or skiing in Gréolières.

leggett.fr



€288,000 HÉRAULT

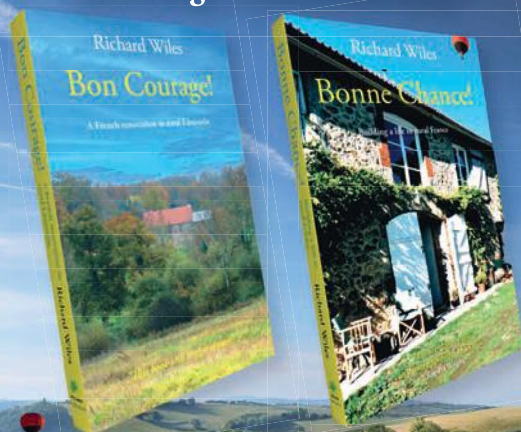
Surrounded by the Haut-Languedoc hills yet only 40 minutes from Valras-Plage and other popular Mediterranean beaches is this charming 17th-century house. It's in a picturesque village with a bar and bread delivery, a few minutes from the riverside town of Cessenon-sur-Orb. For sale furnished, the house comprises four bedrooms, two bathrooms and a lounge-diner with kitchen opening onto a marble terrace with petite pool.



There's also a studio gîte with ensuite shower, plus three cellars including a workshop. The Espinouse mountains lie just 20km to the northwest with the Montagne Noire beyond and the Cévennes mountains a couple of hours to the east.

realestateoccitanie.com

Llamas, hot air balloons and the dream of renovating a ramshackle barn!



The road to a new life in rural France...

The first two books in the trilogy by Richard Wiles are now available



From Amazon & bookshops:
Paperback £10.99 Ebook £7.99
www.richardwiles.co.uk

NAVIGATE FRANCE

French long stay visa & relocation specialists



Your one-stop solution
for all your French
administration requirements

- French healthcare registration
- Document & Letter translation
- Buying a property
- Utility connections
- Property diagnostics & surveys
- Feasibility studies & renovation budgets
- Sourcing contractors
- Vehicle import
- Transfer driving licence
- Starting a business
- Importing furniture

Making your move to France just that little bit easier

www.navigatefrance.com



SELLING YOUR HOUSE IN FRANCE?

Market your property with us from as little as £199 and start generating enquiries by speaking to one of our advertising consultants.

We will be happy to create a package for you that is quick, easy and cost effective in French Property News magazine and online.

FRANCE
PropertyShop

FrenchEntrée

For more information and to book
contact sales@frenchentree.com

ARCHITECTS

SWEETCH

UK - FRANCE

Innovative and transformative Architect practice dedicated to assisting English speaking clients achieve their life changing dream in France.

We improve your life!



www.sweetcharchitects.com



French
property
dreams

Cherry pick of Provence

Ruth Wood discovers an elegant contemporary villa, guesthouse and pool near a Luberon village that's famous for its cherry orchards

Life is a bowl of cherries. Don't take it serious. It's too mysterious. You work, you save, you worry so. But you can't take your dough when you go, go, go. Songwriter Lew Brown wrote these lyrics in New York nearly a century ago, but they seem just as apt today in St-Saturnin-lès-Apt, a village nearly 4,000 miles away in Provence. This is one of the Luberon regional park's beautiful hilltop villages, not far from the likes of Gordes and Roussillon, but less polished, less commercial, less crowded.

Life here revolves, as it has for centuries, around year-round residents and seasonal produce that delights the senses – wine, olive oil, honey, lavender, truffles and, above all, delicious cherries.

Cherry orchards surround the village, intermingled with olive groves and vineyards. When spring arrives, they burst

into blossom, blanketing the southern slopes of the Monts de Vaucluse in a white and pale pink froth acknowledged to be one of Provence's most beautiful seasonal sights.

There are many enchanting properties in the Luberon hills, but this contemporary beauty a 15-minute stroll from 'St-Sat' – as the locals call it – is our cherry pick. Commanding exceptional south-facing views, it comprises a three-bedroom villa and independent guesthouse set in almost half an acre of land with a pool.

The double-blade wooden shutters are pure Provençal tradition, as are the terracotta roof tiles and exposed timbers – all crafted by local artisans. Yet the property is bang up to date. Built in 2012, it was designed for exceptionally low energy usage and excellent thermal performance with rooftop solar panels and battery providing electricity and an air-to-

water heat pump providing underfloor heating and cooling.

There's even a 'bioclimatic' pergola overlooking the pool with a louvred roof that adjusts electronically to provide ventilation, shade or sun.

The main house has an open-plan living space on the ground floor with travertine flooring, mosquito screens on all the openings, and glazed doors onto the terraces. The bespoke kitchen has integrated storage, built-in appliances and a stunning central island. A laundry room and downstairs toilet complete this floor.

On the upper floor, we find a superb master bedroom with ensuite freestanding bathtub and shower, dressing room and private balcony offering panoramic views. The two other generous bedrooms on this floor share a shower room.

The guest house is currently configured as a two-bedroom apartment upstairs while

the ground floor is ready for conversion into a separate dwelling complete with woodburning stove.

The villa and its gîte sit on a beautiful wooded plot with several outbuildings, garages and parking spaces.

"This is a rare property on the market," says Dan Brewer of Healey Fox agency. "With two independent dwellings, it would be ideal as a primary residence to welcome family and friends or as a seasonal rental project. The features are high-end, the amenities carefully designed. You're only 15 minutes' walk from the centre of the village and within easy driving distance of the Mediterranean coast."

But the cherry on top? "It's got to be those panoramic views over the Provençal countryside," he says. ■

On the market for €1.59m
healeyfox.com

À VENDRE





Holiday
home pick

Simple luxury

Looking for a comfortable holiday home in rural Dordogne with a ready-made community and amenities on the doorstep? Consider a leisure home, says **Ruth Wood**

With its prehistoric caves and stunning medieval villages, Dordogne has an old-world charm that enchants British holiday-home buyers. But that doesn't mean they all want a period property. Some dream of a ready-made retreat where they can enjoy the simple life in contemporary comfort. No need to renovate the kitchen. No need to worry about woodworm in the beams or crumbling outbuildings.

It's this quest for luxurious simplicity that brings househunters to L'étang Bleu holiday park in northern Dordogne. "Our leisure homes offer people the best of all worlds," says Jo Finch, owner of the site near Mareuil. "You can have a stylish modern home tailored to your specifications in well-maintained grounds where the

grass is already cut and the pool is all ready for you. You can instantly be part of a friendly community of mainly English-speaking clientele. Yet you also have beautiful medieval market towns and villages on your doorstep where you can immerse yourself in an authentic French experience."

L'étang Bleu is in the heart of the Périgord Vert, the part of Dordogne named for its forests, rivers and rolling hills. The nearby tourism hotspot of Brantôme, known as the Venice of the Périgord, is built on an island in the lush Dronne valley - the same river that flows through the *Plus Beau Village* of Aubeterre-sur-Dronne just over the border in Charente.

Jo and her husband Marc took over L'étang Bleu in 2002 and now have 30 leisure homes in their park, which is also a campsite. Owners can't live on site permanently but can visit

at any time of year.

The couple work with well-established leisure home manufacturers Willerby, Regal and Pemberton (based in the UK) and Rapidhome and Nautilhome (based in France) to give buyers a wide range of models to choose from. All the brands offer options to tailor certain aspects such as layout, exterior cladding, kitchen style, flooring, furnishings and thermal specification.

Pictured here is Willerby's stylish Sierra model. Priced from £48,350+VAT, it can have two or three bedrooms, including a king-size master with ensuite bathroom. The bang-on-trend interior has bold green cabinet doors, splashes of contemporary pink fabrics and rustic oak features. Optional extras include central heating and a smart thermostat.

Once buyers have chosen their preferred model, Jo and

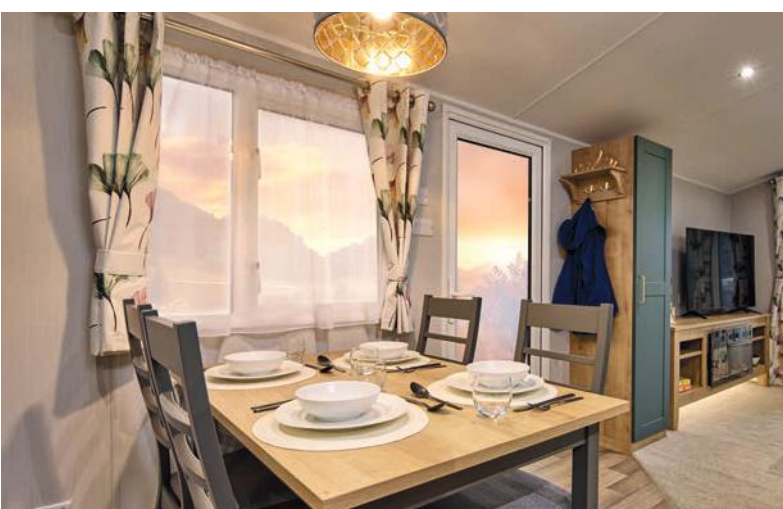
Marc handle the sales process, transportation and installation, plus any additional extras such as a base for a garden shed.

Then it's simply a case of enjoying the on-site amenities, which include a gym and the private fishing lake after which the holiday park was named. From April to the end of September, holidaymakers can lounge by the pool or dine at the bar-bistro, which serves home-cooked food. On summer nights you might be invited to listen to live music over *moules frites* or a barbecue. But mainly the Finches keep it simple. "People come here to escape the noise of everyday life," explains Jo. "It's a place where you can hear the cuckoo call in the day and see a sky full of stars at night. Just beautiful." ■

Prices from £35,150; annual site fees from €3,750
letangbleu.com



À VENDRE



We're celebrating!

To mark our 400th issue, we've picked out a gorgeous trio of properties across France for sale at €400,000

TEAM
FPN'S COUP
DE COEUR

€400,000, VENDÉE



Near Maillé, in the Marais Poitevin regional natural park, this oh-so-pretty house combines modern comfort and traditional charm, and has a huge 47m² living/dining room, kitchen, three/four bedrooms and two shower rooms. There's also a characterful one-bedroom guest house with stunning country views. Outside, the swimming pool and its large terrace are perfect for enjoying the peace and quiet on a sunny summer's day. Completing the picture, there's a beautiful covered terrace for alfresco summer meals, private gardens and a marsh river adding a touch of serenity to this idyllic setting. I can feel myself relaxing already...

Ref: 684265 (Beaux Villages Immobilier)
Karen Tait, Editor



Set in a hamlet 20 minutes from Giverny, this charming Seine-side property has all the ingredients for a peaceful retreat: a beautiful garden, a cosy living room with a fireplace, and private land on the banks of the river, with the possibility of adding a pontoon. I

love that it offers both character and flexibility, with three bedrooms in the main house (including a master suite with dressing room and bathroom), plus an independent studio for hosting guests. It feels like a rare opportunity to enjoy village life not too far from the capital, riverside views and easy access to one of the most picturesque corners of the Île-de-France region.

Ref: 692012 (Sextant)
Elinor Shedian, Digital Content Lead

€400,000, VAL D'OISE



€400,000, PYRÉNÉES-ATLANTIQUES



Rarely does a property capture the very essence of southwest France quite like this. Set high above the valley with breathtaking panoramic views of the Pyrénées, this enchanting stone house comes complete with an independent gîte and charming guest cabin. A true hidden gem for those seeking lifestyle and income potential. Beautifully maintained, with modern comforts including a heat pump, double glazing and recent upgrades throughout, it blends character with practicality effortlessly. Surrounded by fruit trees and peaceful countryside, yet within easy reach of Pau, ski resorts and the Atlantic coast.

Ref: 690060 (Sophie Folley Immobilier)
Peter Cullingford, Sales Director



**TO ADVERTISE ON THE SITE CALL
0044 (0)1225 463752**



Don't forget to Like our France Property Shop Facebook page and see our daily property picks. Sign up for the newsletter too!

CRANBURYS

Movers • Shippers • Storers

MOVING TO FRANCE?

We are a reliable and professional removals from a local, independent, fourth generation, family-owned business

- Household & Personal Effects •
- Full, Part and Return Loads •
- Full Packing Service •
- Storage Facilities •
- Antiques and Cars •

www.cranburys.co.uk



T: +44 (0)1962 777684 | E: moving@cranburys.co.uk

Ashtons
LEGAL

Fluent in French legal affairs

For expert legal advice on:

- French property sales, purchases and gifts
- French inheritance law and tax
- Implications on your UK estate of French property ownership.

call 0800 915 6037 or email
france@ashtonslegal.co.uk

www.ashtonslegal.co.uk



Bury St Edmunds | Cambridge | Ipswich | Leeds | Norwich

www.ashtonslegal.co.uk/your-life/french-legal-services



AGENT'S
DREAM HOME

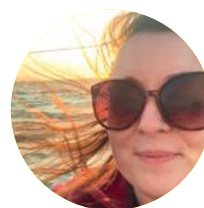


ON THE
MARKET FOR
€199,500



“This is the kind of home that inspires new routines and lasting memories...”

SAYS **CHLOE MARSHALL HIPEAU**



For me, the charm of a country property comes from the feeling it creates the moment you arrive - a sense of calm, space and character that cannot be recreated. This beautiful stone house near the popular market town of Lezay in Deux-Sèvres captures exactly that spirit. Surrounded by peaceful countryside and mature gardens, it offers the rare opportunity to enjoy traditional French living in a setting that feels both timeless and welcoming.

What makes this home especially attractive to me is the balance between character and comfort. The stone façade,

exposed beams and original architectural details give the property warmth and personality, while the generous living spaces would allow me to have the perfect family life. Every space feels connected to the outdoors, which would encourage me to enjoy a slower rhythm of living shaped by nature and the changing seasons.

The house offers wonderful flexibility. Spacious reception rooms, comfortable bedrooms and useful outbuildings create endless possibilities - whether hosting family and friends, working creatively from home or simply enjoying the tranquillity of rural France. The barn and additional

spaces add further potential for workshops, guest accommodation or future projects.

Outside, the gardens provide privacy and space to put in a pool if I wished. Long summer evenings, quiet mornings beneath the trees and open countryside views all contribute to the feeling of escape that defines this property. This is the kind of home that inspires new routines and lasting memories. ■

Chloe Marshall Hipeau is a co-owner at immo3c estate agency
Tel: 0033 (0)5 49 07 76 88
agence-berland-bennett.com

*Say 'au revoir' to currency worries
and 'bonjour' to certainty – because
exchange rates shouldn't spoil your
Provençal paradise.*



Since 2004, Excel Currencies has helped buyers like you save thousands on French property transfers with our multiple award-winning products and services. Beat the banks, protect against fluctuations, and gain peace of mind with our trusted solutions.

- ✓ **Certainty in Uncertain Times:** Fix your rate today for future payments up to 2 years – no surprises on the cost of your dream home.
- ✓ **Save Time & Money:** Avoid costly bank rates; our experts guide you with bespoke risk tools.
- ✓ **Real Savings Example:** Like Mr & Mrs Jones, who locked in at the right time and saved over € 15,000



see how Mr & Mrs Jones
saved by scanning...

Or visit

www.excelcurrencies.com/forward-contract

Excellent 5 Stars



#1 of 44 companies for Money Transfers
#1 of 71 companies for Payment Services

Call today on +44 1322 221121 and quote FPN to get a
FREE tailored currency assessment and property purchase strategy.



Excel Currencies are Authorised by the Financial Conduct Authority - 911228.

Excel Currencies Ltd is a company registered in England and Wales (No: 05171054) and the registered office address is; Enterprise house, 8 Essex road, Kent, DA1 2AU.

Learn more about
the regions of France

frenchentree.com/
french-property



La Baule-Escoublac is a very desirable coastal town, which is reflected in its property prices

Pays de la Loire perfection

Renowned for its gorgeous châteaux, and unforgettable food and wine, the Pays de la Loire has all the French hallmarks visitors look for...

Annaliza Davis explains why it's also a great spot for househunting



The Pays de la Loire region covers a huge area in northwest France, from the Atlantic coast below Nantes reaching northeast up beyond Le Mans. At 32,000 km², it is 1.5 times the size of Wales and its current population is estimated at nearly four million.

Looking at the architecture in the Pays de la Loire, you'll notice a shift from the granite-and-slate properties close to

Brittany, moving through the pale limestone of the Loire Valley and into the terracotta tiled roofs towards the south.

The region includes a wonderfully diverse range of landscapes, from the coastal areas of Loire-Atlantique (44) and the Vendée (85) to the vineyards of Maine-et-Loire (49), the quieter and more rural Mayenne (53) and Sarthe (72), which are filled with woodland and heritage sites to explore.

And of course, all along the River Loire are the historic châteaux for which France is rightly renowned, a legacy of regal architecture that will take your breath away.

While its natural beauty, stunning landscapes and history make the Pays de la Loire an obvious tourism destination, it also has a strong economy that encompasses everything from shipbuilding to tech companies, and it is

renowned as one of France's top regions for employment.

The Vendée attracts retirees and families seeking a coastal life, while Loire-Atlantique's growth is driven by the economic strength of Nantes and St-Nazaire, pulling in workers and start-up companies. Angers in Maine-et-Loire has a solid reputation as a 'lifestyle' destination, and if you're looking to move to a quieter, more traditional part of France,



LE MANS: MORE THAN MOTORS

While we associate Le Mans with its 24-hour motor race, the town itself has so much more to offer. Nicknamed 'The Plantagenet City', Le Mans overlooks the Sarthe valley and has a surprisingly beautiful collection of half-timbered houses dating back as far as the 1400s, clustered along narrow cobbled streets. Le Mans cathedral is one of the largest in France, covering over 5,000m², and is a showcase of Gothic-Roman architecture, complete with flying buttresses and glorious stained-glass windows.

And if you're a petrol-head, the Musée des 24 Heures du Mans motorsports museum – located near the main entrance to the racetrack – was renovated early in 2026 and offers vintage vehicles, prototypes and historic racing cars.



Famous for its racing, Le Mans racetrack is every petrol-head's dream

Le Mans has some beautiful half-timbered houses:



Nantes is an economic powerhouse, but still has plenty for tourists to enjoy

“If you're looking for a quieter, more traditional part of France, then Sarthe and Mayenne offer space and affordable properties”

then Sarthe and Mayenne offer space and affordable properties.

MATCH THE PLACE TO YOUR POCKET

According to Se Loger, the average property price across France currently stands at €3,115/m². In Pays de la Loire, they're lower than this, costing an average of €2,672/m², but there is huge variation across the region. In Mayenne, it's possible to buy a home for less than €1,200/m², but in Loire-Atlantique this can rise to

€4,100/m² in Nantes centre or even €6,500/m² on the coast in La Baule-Escoublac.

Whether you're looking for an investment property, a family home, a city-centre studio or a rural idyll with acres of land, the diversity of the Pays de la Loire gives you a good chance of finding the type of property you're looking for. It's a matter of knowing where to look.

LOCATION: WHERE TO FIND WHAT YOU WANT

In terms of economy and

FOOD AND DRINK



The Pays de la Loire is famous for meat and fish dishes featuring *beurre blanc* sauce, sardines from St-Gilles-Croix-de-Vie and pork *rillettes*. Menus regularly feature a delicious type of garlic bread known as *préfour* and *mogettes de Vendée*, large butter beans, often served with local ham.

Of the local cheeses, Le Curé Nantais (above left) and Port-Salut are the best known, while sweet specialities include the classic butter biscuit 'Lu', created in Nantes in 1886; the rum-infused sponge *gâteau Nantais*; and the *brioche Vendéenne*, often flavoured with orange blossom.

Unsurprisingly, you'll find plenty of local wines, from the crisp white Muscadet (ideal for seafood) to the red Saumur-Champigny and, of course, the orange liqueur Cointreau, which is still produced in Angers.

tourism, the top city is Nantes (population 325,070), where you can buy a 50m² apartment for as little as €155,000 in the developing district of Doulon, or spend over €200,000 in chic Hauts-Pavés. Nantes has a strong rental market and, as a university town with more than 65,000 students, small studios are extremely popular. A 20m² studio starts at €85,000 (€4,250/m²) rising to €125,000 in premium spots like Place Graslin (€6,250/m²), or possibly higher if it's a new-build with optimum energy performance. Most are rented out furnished for around €550 a month, and in the most popular areas – such as Hauts-Pavés or near the hospital – they can be snapped up within 48 hours of being listed.

Less than two hours east of Nantes, Saumur (population 26,074) offers a great balance of history, affordability and accessibility. With two-hour rail connections to Paris, this

attractive riverside destination is topped by a stunning château built from the pale *tuffeau* limestone, as are many of the town's historic buildings. Properties here average €1,901/m² and you can buy a 20m² studio for just €40,000, rising to €55,000 for a renovated studio in an historic building near the quays. Rental incomes on a 20m² studio are €360–€460 per month, so it can bring better returns than Nantes, but with more risk of sitting vacant between tenants.

For seaside living, you could try Les Sables-d'Olonne (population 48,740) on the Atlantic coast above La Rochelle and three-and-a-half hours from Paris by train. This harbour town is the start and finish line for the famous Vendée Globe yacht race, which takes place every four years, and although it's popular with tourists, it's less crowded than some other destinations. You

“Les Sables-d'Olonne is less crowded than some other coastal destinations.”



Popular seaside resort and port Les Sables-d'Olonne is on the Atlantic coast



The medieval fortified château in Angers dates from the ninth century

WHY WE MOVED HERE



Originally from Wiltshire, Nicholas Le Ny-Clarke has lived in France since 2016, where he works as a real estate agent.

“My husband Remy is from Vannes, and the move to France was helped by the Brexit vote, along with the

cost of living, quality of life and property prices. After initially living in Brittany, we chose to live near Nantes so we were still close to friends, had better weather and more facilities on our doorstep including a big airport. The Côtes-d'Armor (Brittany) was more remote and rural, with close-knit communities. There are fewer expats in the Loire-Atlantique and it's harder to get to know people, but on a practical level, it brings me a larger client base for my estate agent business. And we love having more sunshine and Nantes on our doorstep!”

can buy an 80m² family home with three bedrooms and a small garden here for less than €300,000 with a premium if you're right by the sea.

Talking of premium, La Baule-Escoublac (population 16,613) is another coastal town, but its desirability brings a high price tag: in a prime location with a sea view, a 20m² studio can cost €240,000 and be rented out for €900 a week in peak season. However, the average cost for a 20m² studio is €140,000, while houses actually represent better value: an 80m² villa set back slightly from the seafront costs €370,000–€500,000.

For best value, head to rural Mayenne, where you can buy

a 125m² stone-built property with an impressive 1,500m² of land for €130,000 or a 50m² stone barn to renovate for less than €20,000.

If you'd prefer a building plot, a budget of €50,000 would buy 220m² in the Vendée, 1,970m² in a village in Maine-et-Loire or up to 8,500m² in Sarthe. Always check the plot is *constructible* or you might find you're not even allowed to park a motorhome on it.

TRANSPORT

The Pays de la Loire has excellent transport links. Nantes Atlantique airport has international flights, direct flights to major European

d
s”

Saumur's château overlooks the confluence of the rivers Loire and Thouet



Laval is a small city situated on the River Mayenne

Property types



Longères are typically found in rural areas - this one with four bedrooms and almost 2.5ha of land is priced at €234,800 ([propertyinfrance.com](https://www.propertyinfrance.com), ref cj 829)

Longère

This is a long, rectangular home built of local granite or schist, with steep slate roofs. Farming families would house livestock at one end and live at the other. Longères are found in Sarthe, Mayenne and Maine-et-Loire. Prices start at €55,000 for a renovation project, €275,000 for one that's move-in ready and €450,000 for an immaculate example with lots of land and outbuildings converted into gîtes.

Maison de maître

The 'master's house', these once belonged to the local nobility, and tend to be located on the outskirts of villages or within large estates. Expect an elegant, symmetrical property with high ceilings, large windows and a central hallway. In the Loire Valley, they are often built from pale tuffeau stone, giving them a regal, luminous appearance. For a well-maintained one in a good location, you'll pay from €395,000 to over €1m.

The Nantaise

This urban style, found in and around Nantes, dates from the 1900s and the properties were designed to make the most of small building plots. They feature a ground-floor garage or utility area, with the living space on the first floor and bedrooms above that. They typically have an outdoor staircase leading up to the front door, and no load-

bearing interior walls, so they can be easily adapted. These family homes cost around €450,000.

Hôtels particuliers

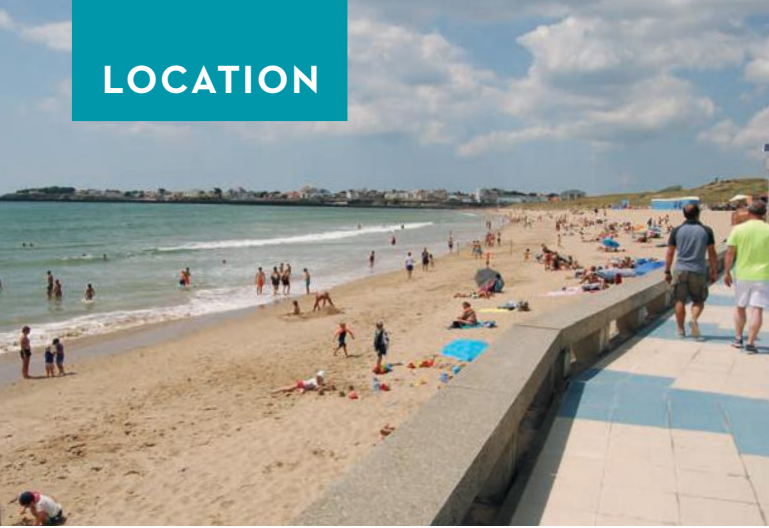
In the historic centres of Nantes, Angers and Le Mans, these private town mansions were built for wealthy families in the 1700s and 1800s. Period features include stone carvings and wrought-iron balconies, and maybe a hidden internal courtyard. Most cost between €550,000 and €1.5m.

Bourrine

This unusual property style is only found in the Vendée wetlands. It's a traditional marshman's cottage built from humble, local materials such as earth and straw, with a thick thatched roof. They are almost always whitewashed to reflect the sun and are perfectly adapted to the marshlands. If one comes on the market, it will typically sell for up to €400,000.

Troglodyte houses

Generations simply carved their own homes out of the soft limestone cliffs around Saumur and along the banks of the Loire. While troglodyte homes look like caves from the outside, the interiors can be surprisingly modern, and many have been converted into luxury guest houses, wine cellars or unique private homes. They start at €125,000, but larger examples can cost €375,000.



Bustling holiday resort St-Gilles-Croix-de-Vie is on the Vendée coast

cities and various domestic connections, while Angers-Loire offers additional regional and seasonal services, and Rennes and La Rochelle airports are also within a couple of hours from the centre of Pays de la Loire.

Rail connections are equally impressive: you can get to Paris from Le Mans in just 55 minutes, from Angers in 90 minutes or from Nantes in less than two hours. Trains also connect to Lille, Lyon and Strasbourg without changing in Paris, and Aléop (the local rail service) has rail links throughout the region.

Travelling by car is also straightforward, and most roads around Nantes and the dual carriageways connecting to Brittany are toll-free. If you're catching a ferry to St-Malo it's only an hour and 45 minutes to Nantes.

EMPLOYMENT AND THE ECONOMY

The Pays de la Loire has a diverse economy, according to

the national statistics agency INSEE ranking fourth for industrial job creation, thanks to its shipbuilding, aeronautics and food processing. Most working adults are concentrated in Loire-Atlantique, which accounts for nearly 40% of the region's total population.

Nantes is an employment hotspot, particularly for services such as tourism, consulting and tech companies. In the last quarter of 2025, over 12,000 new businesses were created in the Nantes metropolitan area. The towns of Ancenis and Les Herbiers also have a great record for near-full employment.

The proportion of retired people is growing, and in some areas – such as coastal Vendée – 35% of the population is aged 65 and over. However, despite this, unemployment in Pays de la Loire is historically below the national average – currently standing at 6.2% (compared to 7.5% across France) – and 69% of newcomers to the region are of working age (15-64). ■

WHAT THE AGENTS SAY...



Gonzague Le Nail has spent more than 27 years as a property agent (cabinetlenail.com). Here, he shares his insights into the market in Pays de la Loire.

"In the Pays de la Loire, the two most sought-after areas are the coast and the Loire Valley, with demand peaking around the major cities. This means that if you're interested in cheaper areas, you need to venture off the beaten track, such as the junction of departments 44, 49 and 53, or the eastern Vendée bordering Deux-Sèvres, or even the upper Mayenne. In general, if you buy to renovate, you will make money on resale, but that depends on your building costs.

"The market has returned to a natural rhythm following the Covid upheavals, although Brexit has reduced the number of British buyers. That said, they still visit our website regularly and the Pays de la Loire remains appealing because it has a better climate, a certain *savoir-vivre* and proximity to regions further south that are simply too hot, so I'll say 'see you soon!'"

On the market



UNDER €150,000

Charming cottage

Full of charm, this 92m² detached cottage is for sale furnished and beautifully maintained. It has three bedrooms, 990m² of gardens with a workshop and is located in a peaceful Mayenne hamlet 3km from Gorron.

€143,000

(Property in France, ref AS-4991)



€150,000-€200,000

Business opportunity

This 700m² stone barn would make an impressive family home or business. It has a reception hall, office space, sauna, indoor heated pool and space to convert, all on a 2,000m² plot an hour from La Rochelle.

€162,000

(Property in France, ref BVI71649)



€200,000 TO €350,000

Hôtel particulier

Secluded and private, but this five-bedroom mansion has all amenities within five minutes' walk. The property has high ceilings and an inner courtyard, plus an adjoining 115m² annexe waiting to be renovated. Ideal business venture or home.

€340,000

(Cabinet Le Nail, ref LN-6RRPW)



€350,000 TO €500,000

Villa with pool

In Noyant-Villages outside Saumur, this attractive 340m² villa has bright spacious rooms, underfloor heating and a separate gîte. Its large, enclosed garden is planted with mature trees and has a heated swimming pool and large pool house.

€450,000

(Property in France, ref FESaumur)



€500,000 TO €1M

Seaview home

Wake up to ocean views in this 115m² home with its south-facing terrace. It has light-filled living spaces, two upstairs bedrooms, plus a bunk-bed room and is in a quiet area, next to the coastal cycle path. Port Bourgenay and the golf course are nearby.

€525,000

(Coldwell Banker, ref 00050BLV)



OVER €1M

Your own château

This grand, late-19th-century château is on the edge of a village, in 2.4ha of landscaped parkland, with a pool and two guest houses. It has a majestic entrance hall and a vaulted cellar. A wonderful family home, or holiday/events business.

€1,148,000

(Property in France, ref BVI75604)

FIND THESE & MORE PROPERTIES ON PROPERTYINFRA.NC.COM



LE NAIL
• Immobilier d'Exception •



Ref. 4861: Country House in the heart of the Charente countryside.
Energy class: E. Climate class: C. Price: €980,000



Ref. 4788: 19th-C. Property with outbuildings, in Southern Burgundy. Energy class: D. Climate class: D. Price: €1,595,000



Ref. 4845: Castle complex set within a moat, in Cher department.
Energy class: E. Climate class: E. Price: €935,000



Ref. 4827: 19th-C. Noble Dwelling on the outskirts of Moulins (Allier department). Energy class: E. Climate class: E. Price: €845,000



Ref. 4839: Little Manor House on the banks of a canal in Morbihan. Energy class: D. Climate class: D. Price: €609,000



Ref. 4803: 19th C. Château near Laval, in Mayenne department.
Energy class: D. Climate class: B. Price: €795,000



Ref. 4853: 19th-C. Mansion in the « Little Tuscany » of Charente.
Energy class: D. Climate class: D. Price: €875,000



Ref. 4821: 19th-C. Château in Loire-Atlantique department.
Energy class: C. Climate class: A. Price: €798,000

+33.(0)2.43.98.20.20



cabinetlenail.com

French connection

Gill Harvey meets three people with French ancestry, who made the move to France - back to their roots - and never looked back...



A peaceful spot:
lanthe's current home

I EMBRACED MY FRENCH HERITAGE

**Ianthe Roper,
Poitou-Charentes**

When Ianthe Roper moved to France in 2003, she was aware that there might be some French in her background. "My great grandmother's maiden name was Deverinne, although she was born and brought up in India until the age of eight when she moved to a boarding school in the UK. She believed

the original Deverinnes had been an aristocratic family who'd fled from Paris to India at the time of the Revolution, setting up as planters. But I didn't know if there was any truth in the tale."

However, her main motivation for moving was to buy a large property with her then partner, Richard. "I was a freelance trainer at the time and realised that I could buy a place in France big enough



Ianthe's ancestors were from Paris

to create a training centre, for the price of my property in the Chilterns." She eventually decided to run a gîte in the Poitou-Charentes region, as

regulations around running the centre proved overly complex.

After her mother's death in 2008, when she'd been in France for five years, Ianthe was prompted to look more into her past. "I inherited all the family photos and realised I hadn't a clue who most of the people were. It made me realise how little I (and my mother) knew about our roots."

After joining a popular genealogy site, Ianthe soon



The property in Poitou-Charentes that Ianthe ran her gîte from until 2017



Hard at work cleaning the gîte before the next guests arrive

found that at least some of the rumours and family stories that she'd grown up with had been true. "The family did indeed originate from Paris, although they were wine merchants rather than aristocrats. And while they had moved to India, the first Deverinne moved there in the 1760s, before the Revolution."

She also discovered that once in India, the family had become intertwined with another family - the Italian Savis - through several marriages. Armed with this knowledge and with the help of some family connections she'd discovered online, Ianthe was able to trace her line back through the 18th century.

"The first Savi to reach India was John Angelo Savi, a surgeon who married a girl called Elizabeth Corderan. She was the daughter of a military general, André François Corderan, who was in charge of the naval fleet in India, a man once presented with a gold pencil case by Napoleon.

"There was a sense of completeness in finding out I had French ancestry, even though the family hadn't lived in France for centuries," says Ianthe. "In fact, when I went for naturalisation in 2019 I mentioned I was descended from one of Napoleon's generals and all the French were terribly impressed."

After splitting up with her then partner in 2009, Ianthe met Jean-Paul, and the pair were together for five years until his death in 2015. "Being with him also made me feel more integrated, more French," she recalls.

Ianthe closed her gîte business in 2017 and moved to a new home from which she taught English. Now retired, she's recently been made a municipal councillor and is busier than ever.

"As for genealogy, there are still some things I'd like to explore, but research has come to a natural end until more documents become available. Still, it has given me a sense of belonging - in fact, chatting to some of my French friends, I've discovered I probably have more French ancestry than they do!"

MY FRENCH ANCESTRY WASN'T THE ONLY DRAW

Sam Parry lives in Corrèze with husband James

Interior designer Sam Parry had always known that her family had French roots, but it wasn't a deciding factor in her move to the country in 2008.

"I'd long known that my family, the Bousfields, can be traced back to Normandy, and came over to Britain with William the Conqueror," she says. "A distant family member is a historian, so has done a great deal of research, and has written books on the subject. There's even a town called Bouville in Normandy where they think the name originates."

While Sam admits that she wasn't particularly invested in this family story, she did have fond childhood memories of France. "My aunt lived in Paris until I was eight, so we used to go over there for holidays. Interestingly, I visited years later and could still remember certain streets, like a déjà vu experience."

But none of this was a factor in Sam's eventual move to



Sam has ancestors from Normandy

France with husband, James, and children, Will and Ben. In fact, the decision came out of the blue while they were holidaying there. "In 2007, we had a family holiday in the Corrèze region. We just fell in love with the area straightaway.

"Gradually, holiday conversations about what it might be like to live here led to a decision to up sticks entirely and give it a go! It was as if the universe had spoken to us!"

At the time, Sam's business partner had just announced his decision to step back from their interior design company for personal reasons, which made the move more clear-cut. "We also felt that the children, aged seven and 10 at the time, might be able to integrate more easily than they would if we waited.

As it was, the first year for them was quite difficult, but they settled eventually."

While their decision to relocate was spontaneous, Sam and James spent a great deal of time planning how they'd make a living once they'd made the move, putting together a business plan and investigating rules and regulations before taking the plunge.

"We decided to operate cycling holidays. James is a keen cyclist and we thought we'd create a place that was a bit like a ski-chalet holiday, but for cyclists. When we opened in 2011, we were one of the first places in France to offer holidays of this type."

Sam's French connection may date back to 11th-century Normandy, but it is Corrèze that has stolen her heart. "I become homesick when I leave Corrèze!" she says. "I really feel part of the local community. I've just been re-elected as a councillor after serving from 2014 to 2020, and having to step back while I awaited my French nationality. I'm very excited to serve the area again!"

Still, the anecdote about her past was a great conversation opener when the family first moved. "I used to joke to locals that I was 'coming home' by moving to France," she says.

correzecycling.com

"There was a sense of completeness in finding out I had French ancestry"





Their property was previously a shop



The couple renovated their home



Courtney and Steve live in Jussey

OUR LEAP INTO THE UNKNOWN PAID OFF

Courtney Price lives in Haut-Saône with partner Steve Ruth

Courtney Price was in high school in New Jersey, US, when she found out about her French roots. “My mother is a great fan of genealogy and she traced our family tree back several centuries. With no websites to help, she did it all through personal research.”

Unexpectedly, the family discovered they were related to someone who had made it into the history books: Marie Warenbauer Ferree, who had fled France in the late 1600s and founded a town in Pennsylvania named ‘Paradise’.

Arriving in the states alone after her husband Daniel died, Marie was able to secure a land grant from William Penn, the English theologian and Quaker, who oversaw the founding of Pennsylvania – an unusual feat for a woman. “We’ve got a copy of the land grant somewhere. It was drawn up in her son’s name, but handed to her.”

But Courtney’s journey to France wasn’t linked to this discovery. In 2022, she and

Steve decided to move abroad, tired of the political and financial situation in the US. They considered many places and were struggling to decide.

“In the end Steve told me his wish list for a home – it had to be in a village or town, with certain amenities, for a certain price. I found what he was looking for in Hauts du Val de Saône in France, somewhere we’d never been.”

As it was during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2021 and travel was out of the question, the couple took a leap of faith, selling one of their properties to buy the house sight unseen.

Having arrived in the town of Jussey (Franche-Comté) in May 2022, the pair set about renovating their home, which had been a shop previously, before subsequently purchasing another property in the town

and moving to renovate that. Despite “constantly living in a construction zone” and arriving knowing little French, the couple have settled well into their new life, spending their time renovating and getting to know their new country.

“We’ve learned quite a bit of French. I still do online lessons and we go out and about to *vide-greniers*, talking French as much as possible to the stallholders. We have great knowledge of language when it comes to building materials!”

And the pair feel very much at home. “We have French friends, Swiss friends, Dutch and English friends. People often ask us how we found this area, as Americans who knew little of the country. It’s quite tucked away.”

While Courtney credits the people and the relaxed pace of life in France for her current contentment rather than any ancestral connection, she does believe that she’s inherited something from her famous relative. “Marie was an incredible woman to achieve what she did at a time when women were barely listened to. My family has a lot of strong women, and we attribute that to her!”

Perhaps it is this that helped Courtney to make a success of her move overseas and settle so well in a completely new location. “We’re both so happy, less stressed. It was a leap into the unknown, but it’s really worked out.” ■

“My ancestor fled France in the late 1600s and founded a town in Pennsylvania named Paradise”



Courtney and Steve’s move to France was the reverse of what Marie did

MOVING WITH CARE

Removals and Storage
Weekly services to
and from France



Coventry/Warwick: 024 7663 2501 Wolverhampton: 01902 714555
Birmingham: 0121 444 1885 London: 0207 937 1999
Rugby: 01788 541044

sales@burkebros.co.uk www.burkebros.co.uk



French planning
& architectural services



Fully qualified English speaking architects and planning consultants offering full design and planning services for any size of project, anywhere in France.

New Build • Extensions • Renovations • Swimming Pools
Retrospective Permits • Barn Conversions • Châteaux

siret : 881 631 642 00025 email: enquiries@frenchplans.com



www.frenchplans.com

established in 2002

Aerial view of Paris showing
Haussmann's long straight
boulevards lined with
elegant buildings



Parisian panache

The architectural vision of Napoleon III and Haussmann transformed Paris into one of the most beautiful cities in the world – you can buy your own piece of Haussmannian elegance in the capital and beyond, says **Joanna Leggett**

Dirty, dark, dangerous and overcrowded. By the mid-19th century, the centre of Paris had become a *melée* of ancient medieval streets. It was unhealthy to say the least and ready for change – not least in its management.

Our story about its redevelopment begins with Napoleon's nephew, Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte (1808–1873), who had swept himself into power after a period of imprisonment and exile. He became President of France in 1848 before staging an imperial coup in 1851 proclaiming himself Emperor Napoleon III and head of a new political system: the French Empire.

Paris, its capital, was a mess. With rubbish and sewage flooding into the Seine, cholera and typhoid were commonplace. The narrow

winding streets meant traffic circulation was a nightmare, as wagons or carts could barely move through them. In addition, they were easy to barricade – perfect for encouraging revolutionary fervour and insurrection. Crime and discontent ruled.

It was Napoleon I who had said, in 1798, he wanted “to make Paris the most beautiful city that ever existed”, but his nephew was the one who expanded this idea to modernise and make Paris magical. Napoleon III was exiled in England for a time and, impressed by its town planning (thanks in no small part to the 1666 Fire of London), he wanted to bring grandeur, space, wide boulevards and cohesion, not least in infrastructure to his own capital. He wanted grand parks, gardens, tree-

lined avenues and, most importantly, a modern sewage system. What Paris needed was light, air, clean water and good sanitation!

MAN OF ACTION

The magnitude of his plans faltered until he brought in the ambitious and able Haussmann, a civil servant rather than an architect, to develop and implement his scheme. Over the next 17 years, they transformed and rewrote the tapestry of Paris, creating what is for many the most beautiful city in the world. Underlying the redesign were the *remits* for construction – Haussmann style.

Georges-Eugène Haussmann was born in central Paris in 1809. By the time he was 22 he had already commenced his career in public administration. Ambitious, well organised,

a hard worker and driven, he moved around various departments before being appointed prefect of the Gironde in Bordeaux in 1851.

Napoleon III had started a project that would connect the Louvre to the Bois du Boulogne. Exasperated by the slow progress, he searched for a new prefect for the Seine to carry out his ambitious reconstruction programme.

Born into a bourgeois military family, Haussmann was imposing both physically (at 6'3, he was tall) and intellectually. He had studied at elite Parisian colleges and worked hard. Unsurprisingly, he got the job, and on 29 June 1853 he was given the mission of making the capital healthier, less congested and grander (a role he held until 1870), thus becoming one of the most famous – and

“It was Napoleon I who had said, in 1798, he wanted ‘to make Paris the most beautiful city that ever existed’”

controversial - urban planners in history. Within a week of his appointment, he was summoned to meet Napoleon who produced a map of the city with large black lines cutting through the streets and told him “this is what I want”!

Developing the grand plan to connect the north of the city with the south, east and west, Haussmann met with the Emperor almost every day. Important landmark buildings were connected by wide boulevards, and Napoleon expanded the size of Paris by annexing adjoining communes.

An aqueduct was built to bring clean water from Champagne, reservoirs increased water supply, grey water was used to wash streets and water new parks. Paris sewers were completely rebuilt and miles of pipes installed along the streets for gas lights.

Tens of thousands of workers were employed in construction and to improve sanitation, water supply and traffic circulation in the rapidly expanding, crowded city. For the next 17 years, Paris was the site for probably the largest ever public works programme in Europe. It's thought that Haussmann funded much of the work by charging tolls on deliveries coming into the city.

Cutting a swathe through ancient neighbourhoods,

Haussmann knocked down 12,000 buildings (including his family home), cleared space for the Palais Garnier and Les Halles, linked new train terminals around the city centre with long, wide, straight avenues, created an astounding 27 parks and squares, adorning them with intricate railings, decorative bandstands, lamp posts, newspaper kiosks - and the list goes on.

Smart new avenues were constructed and thousands of trees planted to line them - perfect for the future *flâneur* to parade along in elegant clothes before sitting at a convenient café on the broad pavements with seating spilling over the terraces, ideal for surveying the passing crowds.

Haussmann is celebrated, especially internationally, for much of what is loved about Paris - its wide avenues flanked by imposing, symmetrically designed buildings, neatly arranged stonework façades and intricate wrought-iron balconies.

His work was controversial though. Many at the time - some even today - consider his plans, which sliced through ancient slums displacing thousands, to be the work of an imperialist megalomaniac.

However, the style of architecture - Haussmannian - is the classic that defines Paris



€519,900

CHARM AND ECO DESIGN

This three-bedroom apartment is in Carré Haussmann, a new eco-district designed in classic Parisian style with stone façades, slate roofs, ironwork balconies with symmetrical lines. It combines traditional charm with the ease of modern, smart technology living. With generous outside spaces, it's just 6km from central Paris in Le Plessis Robinson and overlooks waterways integral to this prestigious development.



€395,000

GRANDEUR IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

Not far from St-Emilion's vineyards is this elegant manor house close to Chalais. It has four ensuite bedrooms, with five more available for renovation. The grand hallway leads into elegant living and dining rooms, with ornate plasterwork and wooden panelling. There's an enclosed garden within four hectares of grounds. An amazing home with potential as a B&B or a venue for luxury weddings.



Haussmann's creations are marked by their mansard roofs and iron balconies

and immediately comes to mind when you think of its streets lined with those elegant apartment buildings so pleasing to the eye.

By 1870, after what had been a frenetic rebuilding marathon, Haussmann's work was mostly done. Some criticised him: accusing him of destroying the ancient charm of the city (though the Marais and other pockets escaped his developers' zeal), and for the staggering 2.5bn francs bill for the work (estimated at around €75bn 10 years ago). Nonetheless, work continued

in the capital until 1927 in order to finish his grand plan.

ELEGANT AND SPACIOUS

A classic Haussmann building is no more than six storeys high and offers spacious apartments with small outdoor terraces. Initially, stairs were the only way of reaching different floors, but lifts were added later.

The ground floor sometimes housed commercial activity; the first floor the most elegant apartments with the highest ceilings, beautiful parquet flooring, ornate plasterwork and marble fireplaces. French

LOCATION

windows opened out to wrought-iron clad balconies. Servants' quarters were on the top, usually sixth, floor. Today, they are considered highly desirable for their exceptional views over the city. Wide entrances leading through to a courtyard were the norm, allowing the nobility to enter with horse-drawn carriages. The apartments also had running water and WCs.

Pierre de taille (dressed grey stone) was used on exteriors. The architecture is marked by the use of dormers in slate-covered mansard roofs, angled at 45 degrees to allow maximum sunlight to flood the streets.

It's said that up to 60% of Parisian buildings are built in this style. Apartments continue to be much in demand, despite being very expensive as they're usually located in the most attractive parts of Paris.

COUNTRY HOMES

Hausmann's style spread throughout the country. Artisans who had made money building in Paris returned to the countryside to build their own homes, echoing the architecture of the capital. Many town centre properties and countryside *maison de maîtres* boast their own version of Paris's unmistakable style, with symmetry, mansard roofs, dormers and iron balconies.

As for Hausmann, he was the first modern-day urban developer later labelled a genius. Today, he is remembered by the boulevard that bears his name and by his Haussmannian classical architecture.

Hausmann's beautiful renovation of Paris attracted several Impressionist painters. Perhaps the best examples of his architectural backdrops are by Caillebotte, whose paintings depicting the transformed city are considered unprecedented. Pissaro and Monet (among others) also used his sublime architectural backdrops for their work. I wouldn't mind hanging any one of those on my walls. ■

Joanna Leggett is the Marketing Director at Leggett Immobilier - view the full portfolio of properties for sale in France at leggettfrance.com

TIMELESS CHARM

With no immediate neighbours, this recently renovated maison de maître in Dordogne is close to the urban amenities of Périgueux, as well as its ancient buildings and bustling markets. Here, warm elegance combines modernity with authenticity. Large ground-floor living spaces provide access to the garden and there are five bedrooms and four bathrooms. In addition, a garage sits within the beautifully landscaped gardens.



€577,000

€549,995



ELEGANT AND SPACIOUS

In the centre of Vallière, on the Plateau des Millevaches in Creuse, this maison de maître, built in 1892, derives its style from Hausmann. With varied uses over the past century, it's now a classically elegant and luxurious guesthouse with owners' suite, providing opportunity for an immediate income. In all, there are nine predominantly ensuite bathrooms, spacious living, professional kitchen and many amenities including a walled garden with sauna and hot tub.

€1.042M



BEAUTIFULLY RESTORED AND STYLISH CHÂTEAU

Close to the spa town of St-Jean-d'Angély and the Charente-Maritime coastline, this impressively restored Haussmann-style château celebrates its original architecture and detail. There are 12 bedrooms, as well as a gîte, private parking and swimming pool in the garden. Shops and markets are just a short amble away. The château has potential for luxury boutique accommodation with staff accommodation. A beautiful property in highly enviable situation.



Your new life starts here.

- ✓ Visa health insurance
- ✓ Temporary health insurance
- ✓ PHI – private health insurance
- ✓ Company health insurance



CAP Coverage – 5 sites de résidence – Inscrite au RCS de l'Outre-mer de la France
Membre de l'Association des Entreprises Françaises (AEF) – Immatriculée
à l'Ordre des Experts de l'Immobilier (OEI) – Numéro 1000332 (www.aef.fr)

+33 (0)5 54 54 85 59

contact@lonemi.fr

www.lonemi.com

Franklins

UK & European Removals and Storage



- Family run business established in 1985.
- Removal services to and from France.
- Packing Services.
- Storage.
- Full loads, part loads and single items.
- Excellent reviews online.
- Customs Clearance.



0121 353 7263

  /franklinsremovalsLtd

www.franklinsremovals.co.uk
sales@franklinsremovals.co.uk

The Hennessy distillery sits on the banks of the Charente in Cognac



Spirit of the Charente

Cognac in Charente is famous worldwide for its brandy, but it's also a fantastic place live, writes **Eleanor Hewitt-Coleman**



Set along the gentle bends of the Charente River, the town of Cognac is known worldwide for the amber spirit that carries its name. Yet for those who live here, Cognac is less about the drink and more about a way of life shaped by the river, the vineyards and a long tradition of craftsmanship.

Despite its global reputation, life here is refreshingly down-to-earth. Surrounded by vineyards and the gentle countryside of the Charente, Cognac offers a lifestyle that feels both relaxed and practical. Many arrive here as visitors and end up calling it home.

Local life is closely tied to the land and the spirit produced

here. The surrounding countryside is planted largely with Ugni Blanc grapes, supporting generations of growers, distillers, coopers and cellar masters. Cognac, itself, is very much a working town rather than a showpiece. The major houses - Hennessy, Martell, Rémy Martin, Otard and Meukow - remain central to the local economy. Otard operates from the Château de Cognac overlooking the Charente, one of the town's most recognisable landmarks.

LIFE ALONG THE RIVER

The River Charente plays a central role in the town's atmosphere. People walk their dogs along the towpaths,

cyclists cross the bridges into the surrounding countryside, and rowing clubs train early in the morning. Just by the river lies Parc François I, once part of the king's hunting grounds and now a large area of meadows and woodland. Families come here to walk, picnic or simply enjoy some space outdoors.

Markets are, of course, an important part of local life. While the covered market in the centre is currently undergoing renovation, traders have temporarily moved into the surrounding square and nearby streets, creating a lively meeting point for residents buying fish, vegetables, cheeses and local specialities. The town centre itself offers a relaxed mix

of cafés, bars and restaurants, while nearby villages add their own character with small restaurants and local artisans.

CULTURAL COGNAC

For a town of its size, Cognac has a lively cultural calendar. Spring begins with the Festival Art du Mouvement, dedicated to contemporary physical theatre. In early July, the well-known Cognac Blues Passions festival fills parks and riverfront spaces with music from international artists. Later in the month, the Fête du Cognac celebrates local gastronomy and the famous spirit along the river quays. In early autumn, Coup de Chauffe turns the town centre into an open-air stage, while the Ban de la Distillation marks the traditional start of the distilling season. These events add an extra energy and life to the town, but Cognac continues to feel welcoming and authentic.

Beyond the town, the Charente countryside offers opportunities to explore. Vineyards stretch across gently rolling hills, dotted with



© SHUTTERSTOCK

DID YOU KNOW?

Even if you are not a cognac drinker, visiting the Musée des savoir-faire du cognac offers a fascinating introduction to the craft behind the spirit. Dim cellars stacked with ageing barrels, the scent of oak and grapes in the air, and the slow process of blending all help explain why cognac has earned its global reputation. The major houses such as Hennessy, Rémy Martin and Martell also welcome visitors for tours and tastings, allowing a closer look at the skills that sustain the region and have done for centuries.



€165,000

BOURG-CHARENTE, CHARENTE

This attractive two-bedroom cottage, just off the village square which has a shop-bar and Michelin-starred restaurant, comes with a walled garden, pool and barn. Original features include exposed stone walls, beamed ceilings, tiled floors and Charentaise fireplace.



€247,500

STE-SÈVÈRE, CHARENTE

A handsome former farm cottage in the heart of a beautiful village just a stone's throw from historic Cognac. Set in an enclosed lawned garden with mature trees and shrubs and far-reaching views over the church, it offers a tremendous sense of tranquillity.



€256,800

ROUILLAC, CHARENTE

Nestling in 3,000m² of land in a small hamlet, this restored mill is just minutes from the town of Rouillac. The peace is only broken by birdsong and the trickle of the small stream flowing through. The property comes with a large stone barn and a 32m² garden studio.



€258,500

BRESDON, CHARENTE-MARITIME

Set in an attractive hamlet, this south-facing four-bedroom stone house comes with an independent guest annexe, a lawned walled garden with trees and a swimming pool. Rouillac, with its amenities and an enormous monthly market, is just a short drive away.

farmhouses and small villages. Nearby towns have their own character. Saintes, a short drive away, is known for its Roman heritage, including the Arc de Germanicus and a remarkably well-preserved amphitheatre.

Angoulême offers a larger cultural scene and is famous for its international comics festival, while Jarnac sits beside the river a few minutes from Cognac. Weekends might involve cycling through the vineyards, browsing a village *brocante*, or lunch at a local restaurant.

ACCESSIBILITY

Despite its rural setting, Cognac is well connected. The nearby TGV station in Angoulême

means Paris is two hours by train, while regular regional services connect to Saintes, Royan and La Rochelle, making coastal trips easy. By road,

Cognac sits between the N10 via Angoulême and the A10 via Saintes, allowing easy travel north or south. Several airports are within two hours'

drive, including Bordeaux, La Rochelle and Angoulême, while Paris can be reached in about four hours by car. This combination of countryside tranquillity and practical transport links makes Cognac appealing both for permanent living and as a second home base for exploring the region.

CHARACTER PROPERTY

Cognac and the surrounding villages offer a wide range of homes, from historic townhouses to rural properties in the midst of vineyards. In the town centre, 17th/18th-century houses often feature high ceilings, tall windows and stone staircases, sometimes



Medieval houses and narrow cobble streets in Cognac's old town

Read more
location guides on
frenchentree.com



€381,600

STE-SÈVÈRE, CHARENTE

With plenty of character and generous spaces, this five-bedroom home is set in a tranquil, verdant setting just 15 minutes from Cognac. The property also has a separate office and guest house, providing potential for multi-generational living or extra income.



€466,400

STE-SÈVÈRE, CHARENTE

This large contemporary villa with five ensuite bedrooms is nestled on the edge of a village, close to Cognac. Set in beautiful grounds of almost 1.4ha with a pool, this property would make a luxury family home or provide the opportunity for a chambres d'hôtes business.



€649,000

CHÂTEAUNEUF-SUR-CHARENTE, CHARENTE

Overlooking vineyards, close to the riverside town of Châteauneuf-sur-Charente, this beautiful four-bedroom home offers a blend of original features and modern amenities. It has an olive-tree-lined drive, a large garden with pool, a guest cottage and garages.



€799,980

CELLES, CHARENTE-MARITIME

Charming estate with pool, gîtes, outbuildings and peaceful gardens. The property is currently run as a B&B and gîte business, offering the opportunity for a new owner to generate income, with potential to expand, subject to the appropriate permissions.

with private courtyards hidden behind traditional façades.

Riverside apartments also offer attractive views across the Charente river. Prices for town apartments typically range from €200,000 to €450,000, while larger historic houses can reach €500,000-€900,000 depending on their size and location.

SLOWER PACE OF LIFE

Outside the town, villages and hamlets provide more space and a quieter pace of life. Traditional Charentais stone houses with terracotta roofs and timber beams are common,

LOCAL HOTELS AND RESTAURANTS

For a refined stay, Chais Monnet offers a luxury hotel experience with its Michelin-starred restaurant Les Foudres. Nearby, La Naue Hôtel et Jardin combines boutique accommodation with the restaurant Notes. For drinks with a view, don't miss Indigo by Martell, which has a rooftop terrace overlooking the town. Just outside Cognac, excellent local restaurants include La Ribaudière, Graines et Garenne, and L'Essille, which are all well known for their fantastic Charentaise cuisine.

often with gardens, barns or additional outbuildings. Renovated farmhouses and manor houses offer larger plots and countryside views, with prices typically ranging from €250,000 to €600,000,

while vineyard estates or larger properties can exceed €1m.

Although Cognac's name travels the world on labels and bottles, for residents it's simply a place to live. The Charente river flows quietly through the

town, vineyards stretch across the surrounding hills, and life follows a steady rhythm shaped by the seasons. From elegant townhouses to village homes and countryside estates, property here has character and a connection to the traditions and landscape of the Charente.

Cognac charms effortlessly, with a relaxed, authentic feel. It's a welcoming town with a strong sense of community and a comfortable pace of life. ■

Eleanor Hewitt-Coleman is on the marketing team at **Beaux Villages Immobilier** beauxvillages.com



Can you spot risks in French Property purchases?

Most buyers don't miss risks because they're careless; they miss them because they don't know where to look.

We do, and now you can too.

Our free Risk Reduction Guide walks you through the process step-by-step, highlighting each critical moment with a **whopping great asterisk***.

- Spot risks early
- Know what to check
- Buy with confidence

★ Asterisk risk reduction :-)

Start spotting them yourself:



Download your free guide

www.brightavocats.com/guide

Bright
A V O C A T S

Tel : 00 33 (0)5 61 57 90 86 • contact@brightavocats.com Property Lawyers in Toulouse

daren.fr

TIC IMMOBILIER
AU COEUR DU POUJOU

31 Place des Martyrs de L'Occupation
16700 RUFFEC

00 33 (0)545710046
www.tic-ruffec.com
info@tic-ruffec.com



€186,170

Saint-Claud R7494: Country house 3km from Saint-Claud. A charming country house with a large, flat, wooded plot. This traditional farmhouse exudes plenty of charm and character, and is situated just a few kilometres from a large market town with shops and restaurants.



€196,800

Ruffec R7476: Charming spacious house near Ruffec with outbuildings. Located just a few minutes from Ruffec, this lovely and characterful home offers generous living spaces and a pleasant lifestyle.



€223,400

Mansle R7475: Charming country property with gîte, studio & heated pool near Mansle. Behind its authentic exterior, the main house offers generous living spaces and a warm atmosphere, blending exposed beams, stone features, and modern comforts. From the moment you step inside, you'll feel the welcoming ambience.



€249,950

Aigre R7481: Spacious town house with private gardens and barns. An impressive stone property conveniently situated in the busy market town of Aigre. With its size and location it could offer a perfect business opportunity for anyone wanting to develop a Bed & Breakfast income.



€287,230

Aigre R7492: High-quality 4 bedroom renovated character house near Aigre. Character house renovated with authenticity and high-quality finishes. Exposed stone walls, original beams, and spacious rooms create a warm and elegant atmosphere.



€297,850

Nanteuil R7488: Wonderful character property with gîte business in Nanteuil-en-Vallée. An elegant, fully renovated village house together with an independent gîte business, vaulted cellar, workshop, large barn, private courtyard, charming garden and off street parking.



The chalet the Watsons bought on a whim

A novel retreat

What started out as a book-writing sabbatical in France for **Mairi Watson** resulted in a permanent move and a thriving yoga and walking business, she tells **Alison Gibb**

Turning 50 was a huge thing for me, not helped by everyone leaving home all at the same time, explains Mairi Watson. “Our youngest son was following his siblings and heading off to university; at the same time, my husband was starting a new career as an engineer offshore. I felt like everyone was off on a new adventure and I was stuck at home. I decided I needed to

shake my life up a bit.” And shake it up she did.

Mairi decided to rent out the family home and move to France. “My plan was to have a year’s sabbatical somewhere warm to write a novel. Having worked in France as an au pair and later as a features writer, I had always wanted to return to live there – the question was, where?”

After much discussion, Mairi was outvoted and the family decided on a village in the Alps. They all loved skiing and hiking so moving to a ski resort for a year seemed like a fun idea. It may not have been warm, but at least it was France.

“We needed to be near an airport so that Peter had easy flights to Aberdeen, the children would be coming and going during the long holidays, and I still needed to pop back every now and again to see our ageing parents,” says Mairi.

Aside from the easy airport access, Mairi was keen for their new home to be in a village that didn’t close down between the winter and summer seasons and had a community feel.

The family settled on Les Contamines-Montjoie, an hour from Geneva airport and 40 minutes from Chamonix.

“It was a place we had visited a couple of times when the children were small. It was very charming, cute and

traditional with what looked like a strong, rural community. From afar, it looked perfect.”

The reality was somewhat different. The couple arrived on 1 May having rented an apartment through a friend of a friend. “The only time we had visited the village was during the ski season, so we just presumed it would be busy all year round,” says Mairi.

A QUIET START

Peter and their son Finlay helped Mairi and family’s two spaniels settle into their new rental home and then left – Peter to go back to work offshore, while Finlay headed to university. “I remember spending the first night in the apartment on my own with rain pouring down the Velux windows and thinking, ‘what on earth have I done?’. I had never felt so alone.”

With all the tourists gone and the locals on their much-needed post-ski season holidays, the village was deserted. “I got into a routine of waking early, packing a picnic of a baguette and cheese and a bottle of water, and heading out with the dogs. I would walk for five or six hours following the signposts up the mountains, literally passing no one on my way. Spring was starting to bloom, with wildflowers appearing and snow melt filling the rivers.”



Mairi enjoys hiking in the Alps



Beautiful Alpine countryside: the chalet has a stunning mountain backdrop



It's a welcoming space



The family rented out the top floor during the skiing season



Exposed wooden beams give the chalet character

Every lunchtime, Mairi returned to the apartment and sat at the kitchen table to write. As spring turned to summer, she started to meet people – in the village shop, in the one café that stayed open out of season, and through a yoga class in the next village, St-Gervais-les-Bains. Peter and the children came and went, she and the dogs got fitter, and Mairi started to love the solitude and time out.

IMPULSE BUY

“Although we were all loving ‘my’ sabbatical, we had no plans to buy a house – let alone stay. Then, one day in September, my son Sean and I looked in the window of the local estate agent and saw this tired, rundown 1960s chalet for sale. For fun we popped along and took a look. Within a day we had made an offer and it had been accepted!

“Eight months after our initial viewing, on April Fools’ Day, we finally got the keys to our new home! We walked out of the *notaire*’s office, across the road to a café and ordered a stiff drink. Peter and I sat there looking at each other not knowing if we should laugh or cry! On a spontaneous whim we had somehow managed to buy a house in France and commit ourselves to living there,” explains Mairi.

With everyone home for the Easter holidays, the family was able to progress quickly with the renovations. Within a month, they had moved in.

“Everyone knows the French Alps for the skiing, but not everyone knows it for the stunning summers”

“Vey luckily, we were able to move into the upstairs bit of the chalet, which is a separate apartment, and work on the rest of the property slowly over time.”

Mairi’s writing was put to one side for a while and she became a full-time project manager, co-ordinating the electricians, plumbers, tilers, painters and decorators – in

French. “There’s nothing like a project like this to develop your language skills,” she laughs, “nor a better way to get to know the village.”

With only seven out of the 1,300 full-time residents of the village being native English speakers, Mairi and Peter were forced to make an effort to learn French and integrate. “I speak enough French to

have a decent conversation, but Peter’s French is still very school boy, however, I am always astounded at how he manages to communicate. With a combination of Franglais, Google Translate and sign language, he manages to make himself understood and can borrow a *tournevis électrique* (electric screwdriver) from the neighbour, no problem!” says Mairi.

LES JOLY DAMES

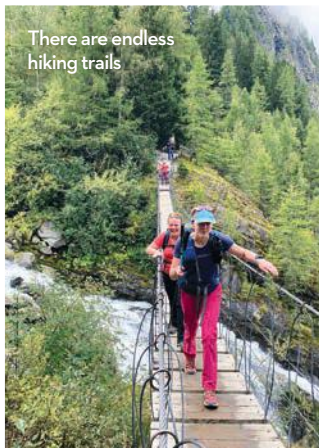
Over the next few years, the couple settled into the community. Peter continued to work offshore, while Mairi got a job in the village school teaching English and with a local friend interviewed the people of the village and wrote a book: *Histoires Vivantes d’un Village Alpin, Les Contamines-Montjoie*. She also managed the upstairs apartment of their chalet, which they rented out on Airbnb during the ski season and the summer holidays when the children weren’t at home.

“With Brexit, we were obliged to apply for residency, which required us both to have incomes in France. I set up a *micro* business for my teaching and writing and we put the income from the apartment through a *micro* for Peter. Our French residency cards (*carte de séjour*) allowed us to travel freely between the UK and France,” says Mairi.

It was the year before the Covid-19 pandemic, however, that Mairi decided to turn her hobbies of hiking and yoga into



The sitting room is cosy, with a traditional open fire for cold nights in the Alps



There are endless hiking trails



Walking weekends are popular



Whether guests come in groups or alone, they get to know people



Post-hike refreshments



Delicious food is on the menu



Les Joly Dames offers yoga weekends

a business. “Everyone knows the French Alps for the skiing, but not everyone knows it for the stunning summers. It was the reaction of our friends to the amazing weather, the incredible wildflowers and the endless hiking trails that led me and a friend, June, to start our company, Les Joly Dames.”

RELAXING RETREAT

Les Joly Dames hosts walking and yoga weekends for small groups of women. They are welcome to come on their own or with friends for a three-day, four-night weekend of hiking with a guide, eating delicious food, drinking good wine, practicing relaxing yoga and spending time in the company of other vibrant, interesting, likeminded women.

Very sadly, June’s husband died and just after the pandemic, she returned to the UK to be nearer her children. Now, nearly six years on, the business has grown in the most exciting and unexpected ways. Les Joly Dames now offers walking and yoga weekends in

Morocco and Slovenia, as well as the French Alps.

“We have an incredible team of chefs, guides, yogis and drivers who make the weekends seamless and fun for our Dames,” says Mairi. “And most importantly we have an amazing following of Dames, who come year after year for a weekend of adventure, challenges and spoiling.”

LIFE-CHANGING

But Les Joly Dames would never have come about if Mairi had not decided to have a sabbatical year in France to write a novel.

“Living in France - and especially the Alps - has changed my life. I would say that, before we moved here, my life was probably a bit pedestrian. I cared

about the car that I drove, what my neighbours thought and which shops I bought my clothes from. Now I can honestly say that none of that matters to me. I am fitter and stronger than I was in my 40s, my car, like everyone else’s in the village, is old, rusty and a bit dented. Our children have learnt to ski like the locals and have an appreciation of life abroad that I’m not sure they would have had, had we not left the UK,” Mairi explains.

However, she still enjoys waking early, packing a picnic and heading up the mountain. The only difference is that when she returns, she no longer sits at the kitchen table to write. Instead, she organises the logistics of the upcoming Les Joly Dames weekends. Maybe one day she will get round to writing her novel. She does, I gather, have 35,000 words already written! ■

Find out more about walking weekends for women at lesjolydames.com



Views from the balcony of the family’s Alpine home are truly stunning

“Living in France - and especially the Alps - has changed my life”



Homes, France, Lifestyle



+44 (0) 1869 226350

info@healeyfox.com

www.healeyfox.com



Near Amenities

Charente €287,230 (HAI)
771112 - Beautifully Renovated 4 Bed Stone House.
Energy performance C | Gas emissions C



Far Reaching Views

Dordogne €360,400 (HAI)
770507 - Traditional Stone Property Set on Three Hectares.
Energy performance G | Gas emissions C



Classic French

Dordogne €399,000 (HAI)
770396 - In the Heart of the Périgord Noir with Swimming Pool.
Energy performance C | Gas emissions A



Riverside

Dordogne €450,000 (HAI)
770352 - Old Property with Views of the River.
Energy performance D | Gas emissions B



Whole Package

Dordogne €460,000 (HAI)
770330 - Main House, a Converted Outbuilding and a Swimming Pool.
Energy performance D | Gas emissions D



Grand Designs

Hautes-Pyrenees €798,000 (HAI)
769652 - Prestige Modern Home with Indoor and Outdoor Pools, Pyrenees Views.
Energy performance A | Gas emissions A



Mountain Views

Pyrenees-Atlantiques €445,000 (HAI)
768877 - Beautifully Converted Bergerie House with Enchanted Mountain Views.
Energy performance C | Gas emissions A



Mountain Views

Gers €385,000 (HAI)
768821 - Charming French Country Home with Pyrenees Views, Pool & Barn.
Energy performance D | Gas emissions D



Great Value

Hautes-Pyrenees €299,500 (HAI)
768123 - Charming Restored Country House Offers Lovely Open Views and Pool.
Energy performance D | Gas emissions D



Furnished

Pyrenees-Atlantiques €259,000 (HAI)
768450 - A Charming Village Property with 5 Bedrooms and Pool.
Energy performance F | Gas emissions C



Modern Mediterranean

Aude €464,400 (HAI)
767903 - Superb Contemporary Villa with Swimming Pool and Open Views.
Energy performance A | Gas emissions A



A Year in Provence

Vaucluse €1,700,000 (HAI)
767703 - Sumptuous Mas with Intimate Swimming Pool and Elevated Views of Mont Ventoux.
DPE in progress

FRENCH MORTGAGE EXPERTS

Whether you have found the perfect Alpine Chalet or magnificent Villa, we make the process of getting a French mortgage simple.

When it comes to French Mortgages, our team speak their language and ours. For a quote from the experts call us now on +44 (0) 207 484 4600

Or visit www.internationalprivatefinance.com

Where we guide you through the French mortgage process.



International Private Finance Ltd Registered Office: 114 St Martin's Lane, Covent Garden, London, WC2N 4BE. Registered in the UK 6292950. International Private Finance Ltd (IPF) is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. IPF is entered on the FCA register (fca.gov.uk/register) under reference number 726230



International
Private Finance
LONDON

Bring the Med to your own garden

The south of France is home to some truly wonderful gardens – **Susannah Cameron** heads outside to offer tips on how to recreate the sun-drenched aesthetic on your own plot

One of the most memorable garden experiences I have had in France is in the tiny, perched village of Èze, which improbably hosts two spectacular gardens. The Jardin Exotique sits vertiginously, 429 metres above the sapphire Mediterranean, while just below it, the gardens of the Hôtel Château de la Chèvre d'Or cling to the cliff face, reinforcing the sense that land, sea and sky meet at the village's edge.

Together, they offer an exemplary expression of the Mediterranean garden and a compelling reference point for anyone hoping to emulate its aesthetic.

Winding paths and stone steps lead through countless varieties of cacti in every shape, size and hue, punctuated by cypress trees and wisteria in full bloom draping languidly over awnings and alive with violet carpenter bees bobbing from flower to flower. The effect captures the essence of Mediterranean gardens and is a delight to recreate.

From the cactus-heavy Riviera to the romantic planting palette of inland Provence, the principles are the same. As you travel further inland, away from the drama of the coastal cliffs and onto more easily tamed terrain, the planting begins to shift.

Gardens begin to introduce species more commonly associated with Provence – lavender, roses, jasmine and rosemary – loosening the structure, while preserving the same sun-drenched spirit.

Mediterranean gardens are defined by their hardscape. Stone steps, retaining walls, gravel paths and terraces create a framework that suits heat and drought, and shapes the way you move through the space. These surfaces also hold warmth, releasing it slowly after sunset, and lending evenings here their magical afterglow.

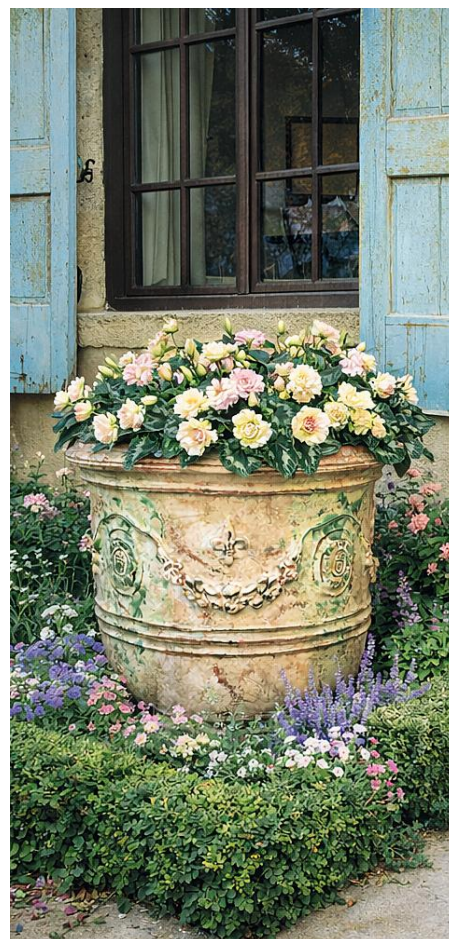
DAY AND NIGHT

Private gardens in and around the Mediterranean and inland Provence are designed with a deliberate and thoughtful layout that respects not only the seasons but also day and night alfresco dining, entertaining and lounging.

In cooler months, sheltered corners that capture the sun are furnished with a simple stone bench or a small table for two. In high summer, the focus shifts to shade and the prevailing breeze, where hours drift by long after sunset.

As soon as the weather allows, life moves outdoors. Morning coffee becomes lazy brunches, long lunches stretch into evening and dinner may end with a late swim before bed. We reluctantly drag ourselves indoors at the end of the day.

Lighting plays an important role and offers an alternative experience of the garden. Returning home at night, or welcoming guests after dark, becomes a small pleasure as



In the Med, you'll find cacti of every shape and size

“Stone steps, gravel paths and terraces create a framework that suits heat and drought”

soft lights guide them along the path to the front door. Like their counterparts in Èze, these gardens feel relaxed yet considered, never rigid or overly formal, and are often set in bucolic countryside surroundings that seem to fold gently into the landscape.

PLANTERS AND VESSELS

Biot jars are the quintessential Mediterranean vessel. Produced in the coastal town of Biot near Antibes, they were made in vast quantities during the 18th and 19th centuries thanks to the region's rich clay deposits. At their peak, dozens of workshops supplied jars across Provence and the wider Mediterranean region.

Each piece was hand-thrown and supported with rope and wooden frames during shaping, often leaving subtle rope impressions beneath the glaze. Originally used for storing and transporting olives and olive oil, the cornerstone of Mediterranean cuisine, their generous curves echo the form of the olive itself. Examples from the 18th century tend to be taller and more upright, while 19th-century jars are rounder and more bulbous, their time-softened surfaces bringing instant presence to terraces and garden corners.

Anduze planters, with their tulip shape, footed base and decorative garlands punctuated by medallions, have been associated with southern gardens since the 17th century. Traditionally used for citrus trees - lemons, kumquats and oranges - they bring both structure and fragrance to terraces and doorways. Placed in a sheltered, sun-warmed spot near the house, the perfume



Clockwise from top: Èze's Jardin Exotique sits 429m above the sapphire Mediterranean; a pot à feu can be used to punctuate planting; Anduze planters, with their decorative garlands, are closely associated with southern gardens

“Cast-iron jardinières move easily between indoors and out, while sculptural ornaments and statuary introduce personality”

from their blossom drifts indoors in spring.

Antique examples from the 18th and 19th centuries are prized for their patina and depth of glaze. Traditional finishes include warm terracotta and the distinctive flame glaze combining ochre and deep-green tones, often associated with historic workshops such as Boisset. Bespoke versions can still be commissioned when specific sizes or finishes are required.

GARDEN ANTIQUES

Watering cans in copper or zinc are both practical and decorative. Most antique examples date from the late 19th to early 20th century. Their warm polished copper, weathered verdigris, or soft zinc finish adds charm – especially when grouped together or left beside a fountain, ready for use.

Metal garden furniture is exceptionally practical in Mediterranean climates. Unlike wood, it can remain outdoors year-round without warping or moulding. Nineteenth-century Arras chairs and benches, often recognised by slender slats and paw or sabot feet, bring elegance without fragility.

Marble-topped bistro tables supported by cast-iron tripod bases are heavy enough for exposed gardens and evoke café life found throughout France. Smaller metal circular tables (*guéridons*) suit morning coffee for two, while larger versions accommodate shared meals and often have a central opening for a parasol.

Cast-iron planters add weight and structure. Medici urns remain favourites, with or without handles, while Chambord models feature generous scrolling handles that allow repositioning around the garden. Most date from the 19th century, and antique pairs are still

obtainable with patience. Cast-iron *jardinières* move easily between indoors and out and are ideal for spring bulbs or orchids planted in moss.

Sculptural ornaments and statuary introduce personality. Classical figures create formality, while animals such as rabbits, roosters or swans add a playful note. The more weathered the surface, the more naturally the piece sits in the landscape. Placed on a pedestal or nestled within planting, sculpture rewards discovery by day and becomes a striking feature when illuminated at night.

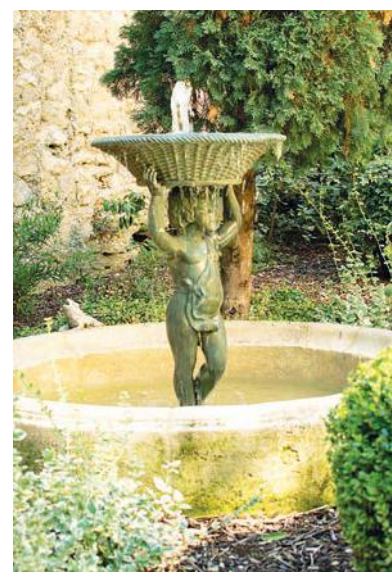
Finials and architectural fragments add sculptural punctuation. A *pot-à-feu*, typically carved in stone and shaped like a stylised flame, originated in Renaissance and Baroque architecture, and was used on gate piers, balustrades and garden walls. Often found in pairs, they bring symmetry and a sense of permanence.

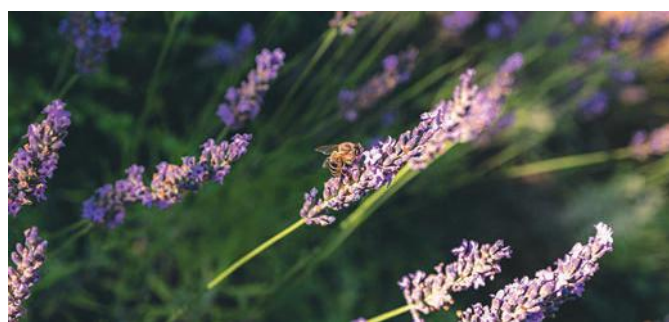
Water shifts the atmosphere entirely. A round bubbling fountain with a central finial introduces gentle sound and movement. A simple trough set against the façade provides a practical place to fill cans during early morning watering, before the heat builds and the cicadas begin their chorus.

ESSENTIAL PLANTS

Fragrance is essential in this type of garden. Rosemary, thyme and lavender release their scent when brushed or warmed by the sun. Drought-tolerant Mediterranean natives such as santolina, cistus, and euphorbia characias thrive in dry conditions. Seaside daisy (beach aster) spreads generously, softening edges and helping suppress weeds.

Citrus trees flourish in pots, allowing them to be sheltered if frost threatens. Hydrangeas bring lushness to shaded garden beds beneath trees. Box can be clipped to your





Clockwise from top left: Metal chairs and table for outside dining complete a Provençal courtyard; a show-stopping Biot jar; the scent of lavender will whisk you to the south; hot-hued hydrangeas; slender cypress screen without shade; a focal-point statue; water features create interest; an antique Arras dining set

heart's content into spheres, cones, or other forms, offering evergreen structure year-round and looking particularly captivating veiled in snow.

In spring, narcissus and tulips push through the soil, the first sign of the season. They make generous cut flowers for the house or for friends, though they prefer shallow water and frequent trimming. A glass vase makes it easy to monitor their thirst.

Roses fill garden beds and scramble over pergolas and doorways, while climbing jasmine releases its intoxicating perfume on warm evenings. Olive trees lend silvery foliage, and cypress provide slender vertical emphasis without blocking light, creating contrast in form and deep-green tone.

Plane trees offer generous shade and are quintessentially Provençal. From the grand avenues that cut cool tunnels

through the landscape to the prettiest village squares, where café tables gather beneath their canopy. Napoleon is often credited with ordering thousands planted along roads to provide shelter from the harsh sun for marching troops.

Given time, the garden settles into its surroundings, as though it has always been there. Olive leaves flicker silver in the breeze, lavender hums with bees and stone holds the day's warmth into the evening. Nothing feels hurried or imposed. Instead, the space evolves into something deeply rooted and of its place. ■

Susannah Cameron is Director at Chez Pluie Provence, an online boutique selling French antique and vintage pieces
Tel: 0033 (0)7 84 56 02 37
chezpluie.com

NEXT ISSUE: Discover the best-selling French antiques



A place of magic and courage



Despite buying their château sight unseen during the COVID-19 pandemic, South Africans **Elbé** and **Christo Lindeque** created a magical place, says **Louis Jansen van Vuuren**



Christo and Elbé Lindeque made Château de Montfleur their own

In the gentle, rolling countryside of the Tardes valley in central France, where mist lingers over the farmland at dawn, stands a château that seems suspended between centuries. With its three proud towers and a solitary pair of stone gargoyles keeping silent vigil, the 15th-century Château de Montfleur is more than a residence. It is a presence. A guardian of memory. A place where, as its website so aptly declares, magic happens.

Approached by a quiet country lane and framed by mature trees, the château reveals itself gradually. First the slate roofs, then the towers, and finally the warm stone façade glowing in the golden afternoon light. It's the kind of place that invites reflection.

BORN OF HISTORY

The origins of Château de Montfleur date back to the

1400s, a time when France was emerging from the shadow of the Hundred Years' War. In rural regions such as the Tardes valley, fortified manor houses were both family homes and defensive strongholds. The château's three towers hark back to that era – symbols of vigilance and resilience. Weathered gargoyles have watched over five centuries of

change: from feudal allegiances to revolution, from agricultural rhythms to modern quietude.

Unlike many grand estates that have been heavily altered and stripped of character, Montfleur retains a sense of authenticity that is increasingly rare. Its proportions are harmonious, its stonework honest, its chapel intimate rather than ostentatious. The

outbuildings – once stables, houses and workshops – are a reminder of an era of self-sufficiency and rural life lived to a seasonal rhythm.

Inside the château, there are signs of its long history everywhere. Its thick stone walls hold the coolness of summer and the warmth of winter fires. Beamed ceilings span gracious salons. Stained-glass windows frame vignettes of the parkland and the sky like living paintings.

SIGHT UNSEEN

It was during the uncertain days of the global COVID-19 pandemic that fate bought Montfleur and its current owners together. In a time when the entire world felt



Elbé and Christo bought into a timeless piece of history and the local community

Left: Château de Montflour has many outbuildings, including a chapel

constrained and cautious, a South African couple, Elbé and Christo Lindeque, made a decision that many people would have considered audacious: they purchased the château sight unseen.

There was, however, nothing reckless about their choice. Those who know Elbé describe her as creative, with an eye for beauty she can see beyond the obvious. When the property became available, she recognised something intangible about it. She and Christo understood that Montflour was not merely a building. Here was an opportunity to steward something rare.

As soon as they could, they headed to France full of enthusiasm. Within months, the château echoed with purposeful activity. They carried out the restoration needed with sensitivity and style, preserving original features wherever possible and integrating modern comforts discreetly. Elbé and Christo cleaned up the stone, revived wooden features and chose fabrics with care. They didn't simply redecorate - they reimagined the château's interiors - honouring its past while embracing the present and the life they wanted to embark on there.

Within a remarkably short time, the transformation was complete. Word spread throughout the local area and neighbours who had initially been curious about the South African couple who had taken on such a challenge, soon became admirers of what they had achieved. The château once again became a centrepiece of the community.

SETTLING IN STYLE

It is no small feat to settle into rural France, particularly in an area where traditions are deeply held and neighbours observe newcomers with quiet discernment. Elbé and Christo managed to integrate gradually, by respecting and taking part in the local customs, embracing the language and participating in community life. They ▶



Each of the bedroom suites is themed around a French notable



The Richard Coeur de Lion bedroom

“They didn’t simply redecorate – they reimagined the château’s interiors – honouring its past while embracing the present”



Attention to detail continues in the ensuite

Right: Elbé's creative flair is evident throughout the château - each of the suites has its own distinctive character

held gatherings at Montflour, welcoming in their new friends and neighbours.

The château's seven bedrooms and honeymoon suite were each given their own distinctive character. Elbé chose the fabrics with both beauty and comfort in mind, including fine linens for the beds. Attention to detail is evident everywhere - even in the bathrooms - from lighting to luxurious fittings.

Elbé and Christo named the bedroom suites after French notables: Madame de Pompadour, Chevalier Bertrand du Guesclin and Richard Coeur de Lion. The romantic honeymoon suite in one of the towers is aptly called the Joséphine de Beauharnais Suite after Napoleon I's first wife.

There's a library for guests - lined with books and bathed in lamplight - and a games room, where a large pool table invites relaxed competition. Several salons offer space to relax or chat to other guests. In each room, Elbé and Christo managed to create an atmosphere that balances grandeur with intimacy. Montflour is truly welcoming.

Outside, is an expanse of lush parkland. Its mature trees cast dappled shade over lawns. In spring, apple blossoms soften the landscape and in autumn, leaves carpet the ground. Montflour's small chapel is soon to be renovated and once that's been done it will offer a quiet space for reflection. It is easy to imagine generations marking life's passages here - weddings, baptisms, farewells.

DIFFICULT CHOICE

Just as the final touches were being added - Aubusson tapestries hung, artwork positioned, plans laid for the future - tragedy struck. On a perfect Sunday morning, under a blue sky, Elbé suffered a catastrophic aneurysm.

Despite swift medical attention, there was nothing that could be done for her.

The loss reverberated far beyond the château walls. For Christo, it was as though



the very axis of the world had shifted. Montflour had been Elbé's dream, her labour of love. Every room bore her imprint; every carefully chosen detail reflected her vision.

The region mourned alongside him. In villages

where lives are closely intertwined, such sorrow is shared. The château, once animated by creative energy, entered a period of stillness.

Eighteen months is both an eternity and the briefest of spans when measuring grief.

Christo remained at Montflour, surrounded by the beauty they had restored together, yet acutely aware of the absence at its heart. To stay was to preserve her dream; to leave was to move on.

BRAVE DECISION

In the end, he decided to place the château on the market and return to South Africa. It was not a decision born of indifference, but of love - an acknowledgement that Montflour deserved to continue its story in the hands of someone ready to embrace it fully. And so Château de Montflour stands once more at a threshold moment.

What makes Montflour so special in a country abundant



There are several outbuildings in the château's grounds adding flexibility



Fairytale Château de Montflour is imposing but welcoming too

“The main residence, chapel, a magnificent pigeonier, a maison gardien, several outbuildings and grounds form a harmonious whole”

with historic properties? It is, above all, its authenticity combined with completeness. Many châteaux have lost their ancillary buildings or surrendered parkland to development. Here, the ensemble remains intact: the main residence, chapel, a magnificent pigeonier, a *maison gardien*, several outbuildings and grounds forming a harmonious whole.

The seven bedrooms and honeymoon suite offer flexibility. They make the

château ideal for a private family residence, an intimate hospitality venture or a retreat space. The library invites long afternoons of reading by the fire. The games room encourages laughter and camaraderie. Multiple salons allow for both grand entertaining and quiet evenings. There are loft spaces that have been transformed into a studio or atelier and living quarters for staff.

Modern amenities have been integrated without disturbing

Montflour’s historical integrity. The comfort that has been added doesn’t compete with character; it enhances it. The result is an estate that feels lived-in and loved rather than staged, gracious rather than being ostentatious.

In a world that is increasingly defined by speed, newness and uniformity, Montflour offers something profoundly countercultural: rootedness. Here, you are reminded that walls can hold stories, that craftsmanship and care matter,

and that beauty that has been patiently cultivated over centuries carries a different weight than novelty.

It is tempting to romanticise old stones, yet at Montflour that romance feels earned. The gargoyles perched high above the entrance have witnessed joy and upheaval alike. It has seen wars and weddings, neglect and renewal, love and loss. Its silent watch embodies the resilience of the place.

The château does not deny sorrow; it absorbs it, as it has absorbed centuries of human experience. And in doing so, it transforms grief into continuity. Elbé’s vision is not erased by her passing. It lingers in the colour palettes she chose, the textures she favoured, the welcoming atmosphere she so carefully cultivated.

A GLIMPSE OF MAGIC

To visit Château de Montflour is to step briefly outside of ordinary time. Morning light filters through tall windows onto stone floors. The scent of old wood mingles with fresh air drifting in from the park. Evenings draw in with a gentleness that encourages conversation, reflection and contemplation.

This is not merely a property for sale; it is an invitation to stewardship. Whoever next walks beneath its towers will inherit not only an estate of architectural and historical value, but also a story of courage, creativity and love.

In the Tardes countryside, where fields roll gently toward the horizon and the pace of life remains mercifully measured, Château de Montflour stands as a testament to what is rare and irreplaceable. It reminds us that magic is not spectacle. It is devotion. It is the willingness to see exciting potential where others see risk. It is the quiet transformation of stone and timber into a home.

And somewhere, in the interplay of shadow and sunlight across the château’s ancient walls, there is a sense that the magic endures. ■

For more information about Château de Montflour visit montflour.com

How long have you worked as an estate agent in France?

I have lived in France for around 18 years and have worked in French property for about 13 years. I started out at the agency where we bought our own home, initially as a graphic designer and photographer. Over time, I became involved in property sales, and when the owners retired, I launched my own agency, Lomagne Properties, built on local knowledge, honest advice and a personal approach.

Which part of France does your agency cover?

We mainly cover the Lomagne area in southwest France, especially the Gers and Tarn-et-Garonne, with a strong focus around Beaumont-de-Lomagne, Lectoure, Fleurance, Mauvezin, St-Clar, Auvillar and the surrounding countryside.

Describe your region in five words

Light, tranquillity, friendly, authentic and beautiful.

What brings people to the Lomagne?

The peaceful lifestyle and gentle beauty. Often described as the 'French Tuscany', the region is known for its rolling hills, sunflower fields, picturesque *bastide* villages and quiet country roads. Life here revolves around good food, local markets and enjoying time outdoors. The area is famous for its garlic, melons, traditional gastronomy and long lunches on sunny terraces.

It also has a rich historical heritage, with medieval villages, stone architecture and the famous Santiago de Compostela pilgrim's route passing through towns such as Lectoure, Miradoux and Auvillar. Above all, people are drawn here for the calm, space and authenticity that are becoming harder to find elsewhere in France.

What's your favourite corner of the region?

I have a soft spot for the countryside around St-Clar and the northern Gers. I especially love the rolling hills where you can enjoy extraordinary sunsets and, on clear days, even catch a



Lovely Lomagne

Resi Lombeek speaks to **Karen Tait** about her corner of Gers and Tarn-et-Garonne



glimpse of the Pyrénées in the distance. The waving grasses, ever-changing colours of the landscape, sunflower fields and the quality of the light here are simply magical. It is peaceful, open and deeply inspiring whatever the season.

Is it easy to get to from the UK and beyond?

Yes, although a car is essential for fully enjoying the region. One of the advantages is the access to the TGV network via Agen, which connects easily to Bordeaux, Toulouse and Paris. Toulouse airport is also within comfortable reach for international travel (just over an hour from our area). There's a feeling of being rural and peaceful, without being cut off from the rest of France.

Is it suited to those seeking a holiday or a permanent home?

It's great for both. It works beautifully for holiday homes because it offers sunshine, space and a sense of authenticity without being overdeveloped. It is also ideal for permanent living for people seeking a calmer lifestyle and a strong feel of community. Tarn-et-Garonne can offer slightly easier access to larger services and medical facilities, while the Gers is often chosen for its scenery,

tranquillity and the quality of life it provides.

Are there any local property hotspots or areas that are perhaps less-well-known?

Lectoure remains very desirable for housebuyers, as do villages and the countryside around Fleurance, Condom, Mauvezin, Auvillar, Valence d'Agen and Moissac. British buyers often know the Gers, but some parts of Tarn-et-Garonne are still undiscovered and can offer excellent value, especially around villages with good access to services.

What kind of properties are available here?

The region is known for its stone houses, Gascon and Lomagnol farmhouses, *maisons de maître*, village houses, former presbyteries, country estates, barns and properties with land, outbuildings and views. The architecture is generous, warm and full of character, often with pale stone walls, terracotta floors, exposed beams, shutters, fireplaces and large welcoming reception rooms.

What's can buyers expect at the different price brackets?

- **Under €100,000:** Usually a small renovation project, village house, barn or other

property that's in need of significant work.

- **€100,000-€250,000:** Village houses, smaller country homes, renovation opportunities or simple homes in good locations.
- **€250,000-€500,000:** Comfortable character homes, often with garden, countryside views, outbuildings or the potential to add a swimming pool.
- **€500,000-€750,000:** Larger country houses, elegant *maisons de maître*, properties with land, guest accommodation, swimming pools and/or located in beautiful settings.
- **€750,000-€1m:** Substantial estates, high-quality restorations, impressive views, swimming pools, guest houses or the space for equestrian possibilities.
- **Over €1m:** Exceptional estates, châteaux, historic properties or large domains with lots of land, outbuildings, swimming pool and strong lifestyle or business potential.

What's the cheapest property you have on your books at the moment?

A spacious four-bedroom house for €199,900 (see details below) - and off-market, a stone semi-

On the market



€750,000, Tarn et Garonne:
Elegant maison de maître with gîte, pool, optional equestrian land and outbuildings; beautifully renovated and move-in-ready



€635,000, Tarn et Garonne:
Perfect country retreat in excellent condition; open-plan living space, outside living area, pool, bar and amazing garden



€199,900, Tarn et Garonne:
Four-bedroom village house with two offices, living room with log-burner and garden with potential; walking distance to amenities



"The appeal of the Lomagne is its peaceful lifestyle and gentle beauty"

Located on the Santiago de Compostela pilgrim's route, Lectoure is a property hotspot sought after by buyers

detached two-bedroom house for €190,000.

What's the most unusual property you have sold?

Maybe not the most unusual property, but definitely the most unusual décor - the owners had created a boutique hotel called The Champagne House, where everything revolved around champagne. The attention to detail was incredible, and as a former photographer, it was an absolute pleasure to capture. It's one I still remember fondly.

What would be your dream home in the region?

To be honest, I think I already live in it. It's a home full of character with plenty of space to welcome family and friends, and it's where we raised our children. From the terrace

and infinity pool, we enjoy uninterrupted views across the rolling hills and some truly spectacular sunsets. For me, a dream home is not about size or luxury; it's about feeling connected to the landscape and enjoying the lifestyle that comes with it.

Why do British people buy houses in your area?

For space, sunshine, value, authenticity and a better quality of life. Many British buyers are looking for a more peaceful way of life, a home with character and original features and a region that still feels genuinely French. Those who have decided to relocate permanently are also attracted by France's healthcare system which, while under pressure like many others today, is still widely regarded as more accessible and reliable

than what most people are used to in the UK.

What tips would you give to anyone thinking of buying in your area?

My advice is simple: choose the region first, then the house. Work with an agent you trust and listen to their local knowledge. Don't try to see everything - after 10-15 properties, most buyers become overwhelmed. Be realistic, accept that compromises are normal, and that only by viewing homes do you discover what truly matters to you.

What advice do you have to help people settle into life here?

Learn some French, shop locally, use local artisans, go to the markets and local festivities, introduce yourself to neighbours and accept that life

moves at a different pace. The more you participate, the more the region opens up to you.

What are your predictions for your local property market?

I expect a steady, more balanced market. Buyers are active again, but they are careful and well-informed. Nationally, the French market has shown signs of stabilisation and renewed activity after the slower period of 2023-2024. ■

Resi Lombeek is the founder of **Lomagne Properties**
lomagne-properties.com

AVERAGE HOUSE PRICES

How much would you expect to pay for a detached property in good condition with some land?

A detached property with land, in good condition?

Generally, this will range from around €350,000 to €600,000, depending on the location, views, acreage, outbuildings and overall presentation. For properties with a particularly high standard of finish, both inside and out, it is also common to see price tags of €600,000 to €1m, especially when they offer exceptional views, a pool, guest accommodation or other premium features.

A three-bedroom

townhouse? Usually between €150,000 and €300,000, depending on the town, outdoor space and condition.

A renovation opportunity?

Often from €80,000 to €200,000, although larger or better-located projects can be higher.

FIND MORE PROPERTIES ON PROPERTYINFRAANCE.COM & FRANCEPROPERTYSHOP.COM



€275,000, Tarn et Garonne:

Ready-to-move-into, three-bedroom country house with no near neighbours, pretty garden, pool, garage and greenhouse



€550,000, Gers: Two houses

in one! Create a large family home or a gîte/guesthouse in this beautiful Lectoure townhouse, with large garden and views



€370,000, Gers: Comfortable

family home with views of the Pyrénées; four ensuite bedrooms, outbuildings, terrace, pool and space for a gîte



€599,000, Gers: Renovated

cottage with five bedrooms, pool, lake and panoramic views, combining comfort, privacy and authentic Gers rural charm

Your essential guide

To living and buying property in France

BUYING GUIDES • REAL LIFE STORIES • LOCATION FEATURES • LEGAL & FINANCE

FRENCH PROPERTY NEWS



ISSUE 400
JULY/AUGUST 2026

WIN!

A cruise and cycle
holiday for two
in France

**COGNAC
COUNTRY**

Riverside homes and
vineyard views

SAVE
MORE WITH
DIRECT
DEBIT



FRENCH CONNECTION

Meet the expats who discovered their
love of France was in their blood

EXPERT ADVICE

Buying guide: Pays de la Loire
Inheriting French property
Hausmannian architecture
Avoiding buying pitfalls
Holiday home Q&As

PROPERTIES FOR ALL BUDGETS

frenchtree.com
francepropertyshop.com



£7.50



SUBSCRIBE NOW AND PROTECT YOUR CURRENT RATE

Subscribe before the next issue and lock in this year's rate for the next 12 months. Whether you're actively searching, planning ahead or simply want to stay informed, **French Property News** will be with you wherever you are on your journey.

With expert-led insight, trusted professional advice and real-life buyer experiences, a subscription is the smart way to stay one step ahead.

- Clear advice on buying, selling, renovating and owning in France
- In-depth regional features to help you choose the right area
- Legal, tax and financial guidance from trusted specialists
- Inspiring real-life stories from buyers who've done it successfully

Stay informed. Plan with confidence. Make smarter decisions.

Subscribe to **French Property News** today and guarantee the best price for the year ahead.

PAY BY DIRECT DEBIT Save 40%!

Never miss an issue with ideas and inspiration to keep your plans on track.

- Just £13.49 every six months by Direct Debit
- Save 40% off the cover price every issue
- Spread the cost and keep your money for longer

2-Year Subscription Save 36%!

Ideal for long-term planning and expert updates as your plans evolve.

- Lock in your 36% saving with a 2-year subscription at £57
- 12 issues of practical guidance and market insight
- No more searching in the shops with every issue delivered direct to your door

2 EASY WAYS TO SUBSCRIBE

Online at www.francemedia.shop/FPN400
Or call +44 (0) 1202 087 628 and quote FPN400DD

TERMS AND CONDITIONS: SAVE 40% when you subscribe by 6-monthly Direct Debit (UK only). Your account will be debited £13.49, saving £18.02 based on the annual cover price of 6 issues at £7.50 per issue. Any changes to the payment amount will be communicated to you beforehand. Standard annual cover price for 6 issues is £45. SAVE 36% is based on £90 over 2-years (12 issues x £7.50) and is available when you pay by credit/debit card. Please allow up to six weeks for delivery of your first subscription issue.



Left: Sarah's son Isaak (second from right) on the Sorbonne Nouvelle campus with friends

University life

Do your children want to go to university in France?
Sarah Daly examines the process of enrolling in higher education - whether or not you are already a French resident

When we went to live in France as a family, with two very apprehensive kids aged 14 and 11 years, we could not have imagined that seven years later they would both be studying in Paris. It was a long process, but attending university in France is a realistic goal for many Anglophones, whether French resident or not. Some universities and *grand écoles* (specialising in areas such as economics or engineering) run degree courses, masters or doctorates purely in English, which may be more appropriate for those who aren't confident in the language.

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

Higher education usually starts in the year you turn 18

in France, and there will be support from *lycée* teachers (in particular the *prof principal*, or class tutor) on preparing for the next steps. Sarah Lecoecue is head of philosophy and a class tutor at Lycée Eugène Woillez in Montreuil-sur-Mer.

"Preparation starts in earnest when pupils in *seconde* (usually aged 15 or 16) choose their options," she tells me. "This can affect their eligibility for certain university courses, so at least knowing whether they are heading for science

or humanities is useful at this point. Later, we help our pupils to understand what they want out of life and how they imagine their future to look. Are they emotionally and financially ready to leave home for a big city? Do they need a lot of guidance or do they study well alone? Do they have one or two strong areas of interest or would a broad course be better to begin with to help narrow down preferences? I always advise teenagers to consider their happiness over money and to look at what gives their life meaning over what is comfortable, but then I am a philosophy teacher!"

UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESS

The process of applying for higher education begins in *terminale* (final *lycée* year), with a strict timetable for each step, but Sarah suggests that pupils begin their broad research sooner if they can. About half of her pupils already have an idea of the profession they are aiming for, which helps to narrow things down.

Parcoursup (parcoursup.gouv.fr) is the platform used by pupils to apply for almost all courses, whether state or private. Those not listed on the site are not state monitored and approved, so come with the risk of higher fees and less credibility with employers.

"Parcoursup has a vast amount of information on individual courses, such as what grades are needed, how





Sorbonne University in Paris

many places are available and how many pupils usually apply,” Sarah says. “It can feel quite scary to navigate, so my job is to help pupils to work through it methodically and meet deadlines. As teachers, we then look at each pupil’s *vœux*, or choices, to check that they are realistic, with some ‘dream’ courses and others as a safety net.”

Pupils will be given priority for local universities. France is divided into 18 academic regions, so applying for some courses within your region is a good idea, and is often a preference for pupils who don’t want to move too far from home. It’s not unusual to study outside of your region, however, and in the case of the Paris architecture schools, which my daughter applied to, we were told that no weight was given to any particular area.

PARENTAL SUPPORT

Sarah says that many parents seem to rely on teachers for support, largely because of a lack of information. “We don’t know everything, so we recommend that parents help their kids with research and with attending open days, without trying to

“Preparation starts in earnest when pupils in ‘seconde’ (aged 15 or 16) choose their options”

dictate their choices. Parents can be too cautious, and the teacher’s eye can help, opening up possibilities and keeping options open.”

Every pupil can apply for 10 courses (and these are not ranked) and can sometimes add up to four alternatives. Architecture is an immensely competitive course and each school has roughly 20 applicants per place. It became apparent as our daughter

began to attend open days and interviews, though, that we often saw the same faces at each one, so the odds weren’t quite as terrifying as they had at first appeared.

She applied to eight architecture schools, including one in our *académie*, but her teachers insisted she also choose two other courses where she was virtually guaranteed a place to ensure that she wasn’t left high and

dry if she didn’t get into any of her popular choices.

A WAITING GAME

Most offers of places are not dependent on the results of the *baccalauréat* exams, but are based on an average of grades over the last two years of *lycée*, together with school reports and an application letter.

My son applied for degree courses (*licences*) and was not required to attend interviews. My daughter had the insane situation of attending four interviews on one day in Paris, but was able to choose time slots to maximise the chances of getting to them all. She did, but it was a close call and involved complex logistics, so her dad and I both went with her for support.

STUDENT ACCOMMODATION

My son, now 22 and applying for Masters courses, took a year off before starting a linguistics course at the Sorbonne. A gap year is not a French thing; it is becoming more popular, but he didn’t get confirmation that his deferral was accepted until two weeks before the academic year began, which was hugely stressful. The only positive was that he was able to apply for official CROUS (Centre Régional des Œuvres Universitaires et Scolaires) accommodation early and he has lived in his €500/month flat in central Paris for four years so far.

Student halls of residence in France are not specifically linked to a university, although many will be close to one or more. CROUS is the official

The screenshot shows the 'Mon Logement Crous' website. At the top, there are logos for the French Republic and Crous, with the text 'Trouver un logement dans une résidence universitaire'. Below this is a navigation bar with 'Accueil', 'Je recherche un logement', and 'Je consulte mon dossier'. The main heading is 'Mon Logement Crous' followed by 'Rechercher mon logement Crous'. There are two buttons for the academic year: 'Pour l'année prochaine 2026 - 2027' and 'Pour cette année 2025 - 2026'. A search bar is labeled 'Ville, résidence ou lieu d'étude'. Below the search bar are fields for 'Prix maximum' and 'Surface minimum en m²'. To the right, under 'Type de cohabitation', there are checkboxes for 'Individuel', 'Colocation', and 'Couple'. A 'Lancer une recherche' button is at the bottom right. An illustration of a person with a backpack is on the left, and a building with people in windows is on the right.

platform for accommodation and this is allocated according to your means: the higher the level of grant (*bourse*) that you receive, the better chance you have of getting a place. This also depends very much on how early you apply and how oversubscribed the accommodation in the area of study is, so we were very fortunate, given his grant is low and Paris is popular and, like many French cities, lacking in student accommodation.

My daughter wasn't so lucky. While she received some offers, she was on waiting lists for the schools she really wanted and didn't find out until early July that she had a place at one of them. By this time, all the university accommodation had been allocated and private student halls were full, which threw us into the scrum of the private rental market.

This is not an unusual situation to be in, so my advice is not to make plans for the summer before your child starts university as it took us about eight trips to Paris, before we found a flat in a safe area at a reasonable price. She started university with students who were commuting for two hours each way while still flat-hunting.

COST OF EDUCATION

According to the French government, the real cost of education in France is around €10,000 a year, but for French and EU students, and for certain other students or courses, this cost is heavily subsidised. Most



Halls of residence in France are not linked to specific universities

undergraduates have paid just €178 for fees for the year in 2025/26, for instance.

If you receive any form of grant (and the bar for this is relatively low – think Britain in the 1980s), you will usually pay no fees at all. Even as a non-EU student, fees are not excessively high. For this academic year, they are below €3,000 on average.

In terms of the cost of living, even in Paris, this isn't as expensive as you may fear. Rent caps operate in many French cities, based on the location, size and facilities on offer. International students are likely to be eligible for the €1 lunches available to all students at CROUS restaurants.

Most students can benefit from reduced train travel on proof of ID and, in big cities, travel cards are available, although tariffs will vary. For instance, my kids pay less than €400 each for an annual railcard that gives them

unlimited travel on buses,

trams, Metro, RER and regional trains in and around Paris.

MOVING TO FRANCE TO STUDY

Procedures for applying to study in France vary according to your country of residence and your nationality. EU students, and certain others, will need to apply via Parcoursup, in the same way as French students do. For anyone who is unsure of where to start however, Campus France is the official organisation that

deals with applications from overseas students from 73 non-EU countries.

Campus France aims to encourage study in France and to accompany students through every step of the application process. It's a good starting point for getting to grips with what courses are available and how to apply, whether you're still at school or looking at a masters or doctorate. It also helps potential students with the administration necessary to apply and even offers guidance on living in France and learning French.

MAKING THE GRADE

After the stress and drama of open days, applications, interviews and offers, and of finding somewhere to live, my daughter told me she had a shock in week one of her five-year architecture course. She realised this was only the beginning of her journey and she now has to actually apply herself to succeed at her university course after focusing so hard on getting a place! ■



The Parcoursup website is where students register their study choices

FIND OUT MORE

- The first port of call in finding out what careers and courses are available is **onisep.fr** which includes descriptions of various jobs and what the entry requirements are for these. If you know what you're looking for, you can research entry requirements for specific university courses here too.
- The platform **parcoursup.gouv.fr** is what pupils use to express their *voeux* or choices. There is a strict time frame for doing this. The school should guide your child to an extent but, as a parent, it's definitely a good idea to stay informed of timescales.
- Once your child is ready to apply, they can go to **messervices.etudiant.gouv.fr** and set up an account. This is a bit of a one-stop-shop for applying for grants, finding accommodation and putting together a rental file if you need one.
- MonProjetSup (**app-mps.avenirs.onisep.fr**) is a government website aimed at high school pupils. It allows them to complete a

personal profile that will then suggest careers and courses based on their preferences etc.

- For UK residents who want to go to a French university, **uk.campusfrance.org** is the English-language starting point for studies in France, or in France and the UK. For residents of other Anglophone countries, **campusfrance.org/en** provides information on courses and application processes.
- To benefit from reduced train fares, download and complete a form from **snCF-voyageurs.com/en/travel-with-us/in-france/mainline-fares/pupils-students-and-apprentices/**
- If you need to find accommodation in the French town or city where you will be studying, **lescrous.fr** allows you to search by location and has information about €1 meals and applying for grants and other social assistance. Its aim is to improve living conditions for students and to help them adapt to student life.

MAKING YOUR MOVE TO FRANCE LESS TAXING

www.kentingtons.com

FRANCE: 0805 03 00 01 - UK: 08451 23 84 23 - EMAIL: info@kentingtons.com



Les Bons Voisins

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Friendly and professional

Help for home owners throughout France,
from security checks, cleaning and changeovers to
maintenance, gardening and full guest management.

Contact us now for more info
email: info@LBVfrance.com
+33 (0)5 62 29 26 62

www.LBVfrance.com

Est. 2002 Siret: 507 805 620 00055

Leave your home in **EXPERT** hands and **RELAX**



Flexible  Professional  Trustworthy  Experienced

Julia and Colin's home in Nérac

Creative inspiration

Julia Douglas and her husband **Colin Usher** were scraping by in the UK 10 years ago – they now own a beautiful *maison de maître* in Lot-et-Garonne where they run a creative residency

How did we change from thinking that being able to afford a fried-egg sandwich in a café on the east coast of Scotland was ‘living the dream’ to realising that owning a mansion in the south of France was actually the dream?

In early 2014, we decided to start looking in earnest at France as the destination for our future. We were renting a cottage in the countryside outside Edinburgh, and were enjoying the rural life; however, as self-employed creatives, every month was a financial challenge. We had no savings, no pension and no way of changing that.

We were also both yearning for a new challenge. A business we could build together into something fabulous. We got to thinking, what if we could purchase a property that could also be our new business? A house that could be a home, but also provide us with our income and pay for itself?

“Let’s open an artist residency?” I suggested



Colin and Julia run Studio Faire

ambitiously. We both have much to offer in terms of creative skills, and we love to meet likeminded people, after all. We’d hit the nail on the head and suddenly felt excited

and motivated. OK, so we had a plan; now how on earth could we achieve this goal? Any property that we could afford in central Scotland would be teeny weeny. Certainly nothing that would work as a residency space.

“How do you feel about France?” Colin asked. “Have you seen the price of the properties there? It’s about a third of the price of the UK!” Astounded by what was available to buy within our limited budget, we became obsessed with the dream



The house has a separate gîte/apartment that’s perfect for the residency

of relocating and setting up our residency in France.

We pinpointed Bordeaux as a good location to start scouting from, as the airport is ideal for visitors from the UK, and the train down from Paris only takes two hours, so anyone flying in from further afield could easily travel down from there. We decided that our search could stretch to anywhere within an hour and a half’s drive of Bordeaux.

Not only are the house prices tantalising in the southwest, but the countryside is lush, and unlike Scotland, the sky is huge, and the sun shines warmly for most of the year.

We visited the region several times, driving hundreds of kilometres to get a feel for the area, but every time we kept returning to Nérac in Lot-et-Garonne. It’s such a stunning, vibrant town, full of ancient history (a ‘royal city’ in fact, with the remains of King Henri IV’s 16th-century château in the centre), a weekly farmer’s market selling seasonal, local produce, a gorgeous riverside walk, and annual festivals from spring through to autumn.

THE SEARCH BEGINS

It was 2016 now, and it seemed like a good idea to just get ourselves over to France and rent a house while we looked for the perfect place to set up our business. We knew that what we were after was unusual and expected it to take a while to find. It had to have enough rooms and bathrooms for a minimum of three residents, with studio space for artists and musicians, plus the ability for us to have our own private space.

We were astounded to find an ideal property within the first six months, with the help of an agent from Leggett Immobilier, just a five-minute walk from the centre of Nérac. It was all that we’d dreamed of. An 1830s building, with three-metre-high ceilings, marble fireplaces, period features, green shutters, a separate gîte, outbuildings and an absolutely enormous garden. It was stunning!

Securing a mortgage as self-employed people proved to be more challenging than we’d expected. We’d been

successful in raising enough for a deposit with support from family, plus a crowdfunding campaign, and Colin had managed to secure work that provided a steady amount in his account each month, but my income fluctuated too much for the banks' confidence, so it wouldn't contribute.

After being turned down by three different banks, we started to despair. We were devastated to think this might just be a fanciful dream. Then our estate agent suggested we enlist the help of a broker, and so, we drove to Bergerac to meet with Ace Cr dit.

"You're certainly unusual, but we think we might have somewhere in mind," the broker said encouragingly. She was right! An independent bank in Bergerac called Banque Tarneaud (now part of Soci t  G n rale) saved the day!

KEYS TO HAPPINESS

Having made the offer in September and been on a rollercoaster of emotions over the following few months, we finally got the keys at the end of March 2017.

Over the first year, we focused on making the house work for both us and the business, so we updated the electrics, got new water heaters and additional bathrooms were key. We thought it would be easy to add an ensuite to our bedroom, after all, there was already a sink in there. However, after we moved in, we realised that it was serviced only by cold water, which drained directly onto the lawn!

We opened exactly one year later, hosting residencies for seven months of the year, then taking five months over the winter to renovate the rooms, which had last been decorated in the 1960s. The enforced break during the COVID-19 lockdown gave us an added bonus of time for this work, and today, we only have two bedrooms that have not been stripped, filled and painted.

We're fortunate that the property came with over 4,000m² of land. It's totally unique, being right near the centre of N rac. It was completely overgrown when we took it on, untouched



One of the spacious bedrooms



A welcoming hallway



The dining room is open to all

"Not only are the house prices tantalising in the southwest, but the countryside is lush and the sun shines warmly for most of the year"



There are 17 cherry trees in the grounds



The house (left)
from above

for over five years, overrun with ivy, laurel and brambles. It still has a wild side to it, but we love the ‘park’ with its ancient magnolias, planes and horse chestnuts, as well as an abundance of fruit trees (the 17 cherries that all blossom white in the spring really are something to behold).

Our residents all love the house, gardens and town too, with the word ‘magical’ recurring repeatedly in the feedback we’ve had. We’ve now hosted more than 200 artists, writers, musicians and dancers, who’ve come to stay with us from all over the world,

“If there exists a more perfect artist residency than Studio Faire, I don’t know where that is”

and the business has been a huge success.

It was so hard to know if this idea would work out as it was impossible to test the market before we moved, so we’re delighted with how it’s been received. We’ve even had multiple repeat visitors. “If there exists a more perfect artist residency than Studio Faire with Colin and Julia in

Nérac, I don’t know where that is. Nérac, itself, is a magical place with one of the best Saturday farmers’ markets in France,” said Susan April, a writer-in-residence.

BIGGER AND BETTER

Through our developments at the property over the years, we are now able to host as many as 12 residents in six double

bedrooms, four in the main house and two in the separate self-contained apartment in the grounds – and we still have ample space for ourselves.

It’s a large property to look after, though, as we manage all of the gardening, cleaning and maintenance ourselves. There’s always something to do. But we do enjoy that kind of work, and it’s inspiring to meet so many talented people and have them creating masterpieces all around us.

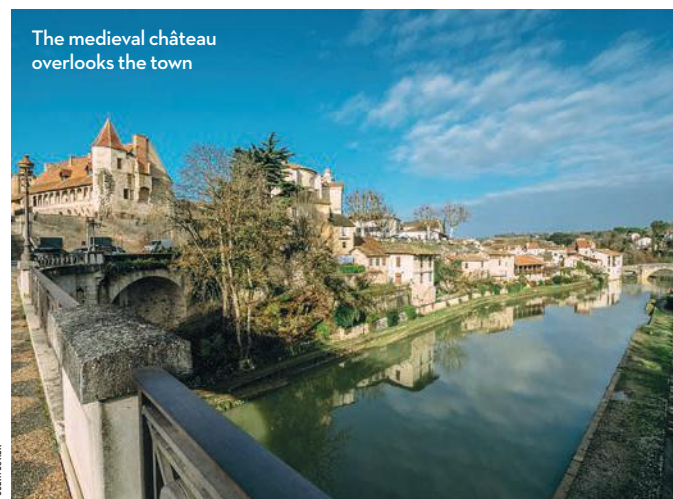
We also continue to work on other projects to subsidise our residency fees. We do web design for artists and small businesses, creative writing on Substack, we are developing our YouTube channel and compose ambient music.

We’ve changed how we do things here over the years, and rather than taking a long break over the winter, we now take a week off from guests every four weeks. We’d like to travel more throughout Europe, and although we can organise long weekends during these breaks, we do long for a bit more downtime to travel.

We also miss the sea, which we lived near in Scotland. We’re getting itchy feet again and feel it’s time for a change once more. A new challenge. Maybe a tiny house with a sea view, from where we can write and make music?

It’s definitely going to have to be something very special to top this place! ■

The house is now on the market, priced at €435,000. See more images and get in touch at studiofaire.fr



The medieval château overlooks the town



The River Baïse passes through Nérac

Discover our World-Class International Schools in France

ICS Paris

- Teaching the prestigious IB Curriculum for learners aged 3 - 18.
- An innovative STEAM programme for future-forward thinkers.
- A school with a heart, in Paris' 15th district.

www.icsparis.fr



ISN Nice

- Located in the vibrant city of Nice on the French Riviera.
- An IB World School for learners aged 3 - 18.
- Through unique learning spaces, ISN inspires students through innovative and real-world learning.

www.isn-nice.com



Mougins British International School

- A premier French Riviera campus combining academic prestige with an inspiring natural environment.
- Offering the English National Curriculum up to A Levels for students aged 3-18.
- Grow and thrive, surrounded by nature.

www.mougins-school.com



ICS Côte d'Azur

- An Early Years and Primary School for children aged 2-11 in Valbonne-Sophia Antipolis.
- A 50:50 French/English bilingual programme.
- Nurturing global citizens through an exceptional bilingual education rooted in a culture of care.

www.icscotedazur.com



Contact our admissions team today to book a visit or learn more about enrolment.
admissions@globeducate.fr



Poligny
Montbrison
Sisteron

Tour de hotspots

Carolyn Reynier uses pedal power to find property in three towns along the route of this year's Women's Tour de France: Poligny, Montbrison and Sisteron

Pump up the tyres and pack the panniers – we're off on the 2026 Women's Tour de France. The fifth edition starts on 1 August in Lausanne on Lake Geneva in Switzerland and finishes on 9 August in Nice on the Mediterranean. We're looking at property in and around three stages along the Tour's route.

In Jura (Bourgogne-Franche-Comté), Poligny is a Gallo-Roman fortified city with a rich historical patrimony including

the remains of 16th-century ramparts – and a landscape of vines and grazing cattle.

Montbrison, the historic capital of the ancient province of Forez, is in the Loire dpeartment (Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region). A *Site Patrimonial Remarquable*, thanks to its Gothic collegiate church and other classified historic buildings, it lies at the foot of the Monts du Forez.

Our final stage is Sisteron and its citadel in Alpes-de-Haute-Provence (Provence-

Alpes-Côte d'Azur). On the Route Napoléon, at the confluence of the Buëch and Durance rivers, this *Station Verte* is one of seven gateways to the Parc naturel régional des Baronnies provençales.

POLIGNY

Our first stop, Poligny, has fine terraced *hôtels particuliers* (private mansions), some dating back to the 16th century. Most have an interior courtyard and rear garden, says Patrice Hugonniaux of APS Immobilier.

From above left: View of Poligny and the Jura landscape from the Croix du Dan; cyclists stop for drinking water in Les-Planches-près-Arbois

They are two storeys high, often with attic *chambres de bonne* (maids' rooms), which have been or can be converted into bedrooms or apartments. There's a lot of yellow-ochre Burgundian stone in the sector, Patrice explains, with small tiles on the roofs. Expect to pay circa €500,000 for a house in good repair. Some properties have been converted into apartments.

Patrice quotes a starting price of €150,000 for a property around 100m² requiring little or no work. He adds that some apartments have antique wood panelling on their walls, parquet floors with marquetry, old fireplaces with door jambs carved directly

On the market



€398,000, Savigneux: Just outside Montbrison, four-bedroom villa with attic for conversion, plus 300m² hangar in enclosed grounds with building permission and space for pool (Cabinet Olivier Plaine)



€119,000, Marcilly-le-Châtel: North of Montbrison, this four-bedroom stone property has conversion possibilities, with a vaulted cellar, outside space and veranda (Cabinet Olivier Plaine)



€289,000, Verrières-en-Forez: Four-bedroom stone property with landscaped courtyard, large garage, enclosed grounds plus 1,564m² of agricultural land (Cabinet Olivier Plaine)



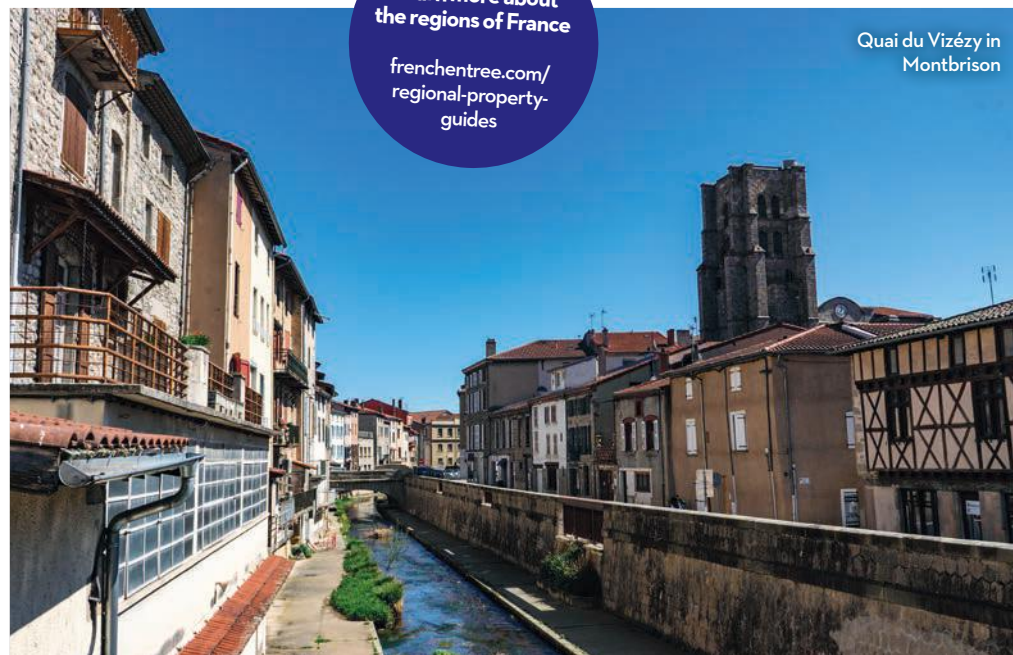
€217,000, Poligny: Located in a quiet residential setting, this three-bedroom townhouse has an office, mezzanine, basement atelier, courtyard and terrace (APS Immobilier)

out of the stone. The town centre is a listed area and thus subject - like our other two towns - to the eagle eye of the local *Bâtiments de France* architect. You can buy modern properties outside the centre. The average price for the sector is €200,000-€300,000.

Montbéliard and Simmental cows produce the raw milk for the deliciously fruity *Appellation d'Origine Protégée* (AOP) Comté cheese. And their presence means you can find former stone farmsteads in surrounding villages and hamlets or in more isolated locations. Currently, Patrice is marketing a farmhouse with a hectare of land at nearby Aumont for €180,000 - liveable in but requiring renovation, and the A39 motorway is just five minutes away.

Arbois to the north, with around 3,000 inhabitants, is smaller than Poligny. This is one of the four appellations of France's smallest vineyard known for its *vin jaune* and *vin de paille*. You find similar types of property as in Poligny - *hôtels particuliers*, which may or may not have been converted into apartments - but prices are higher. "Let's say that Arbois has more cachet than Poligny," says Patrice.

Economically, it's Poligny that attracts, for tourism it's Arbois. Other wine villages are also popular with buyers including Montigny-lès-Arsures, Château-Chalon and Pupillin. It's a convivial place to live, Patrice says. "It's very touristic but only April/May to October." There's winter tourism up in the Haut-Jura; it only takes an hour to get to



Learn more about the regions of France

frenchentree.com/
regional-property-
guides

Quai du Vizézy in
Montbrison

"State grants for renovation make apartments 'dans leur jus' (in their original state) attractive"

the Station des Rousses (it's only a small department, circa 5,000km²). "We're protected from the large cities," says Patrice, but if you need one, there's prefecture Lons-le-Saunier and Dole.

MONTBRISON

We freewheel now into Loire subprefecture Montbrison - the Monts du Forez to the west, the Forez plain to the east - and talk to Sébastien Eclercy of Cabinet Olivier Plaine.

On top of a hillock stand a Calvary (religious statue) and the château ruins. Below, the historic centre is encircled by a series of boulevards. Some houses date back to medieval times, most were built in

the 19th century. There's not that much stone here, says Sébastien, they were often constructed of *pisé* (rammed earth) and sometimes *mâchefer* (burnt charcoal residue).

State grants for renovation make apartments *dans leur jus* (in their original state) attractive for investors and private buyers. He quotes €800-€1,500/m². The lower figure is "four walls and a roof", the higher may include outside space and a good location. The range for renovated properties is €2,000-€2,500/m².

Older properties have timber staircases, original frameworks and façades, and may have a garage. Upper levels are small (30m²-50m²) but you can have

two or three floors, accessed by steep timber staircases. Prices per square metre are similar to apartments.

The railway station is just a 15-minute walk across the circular boulevard and this is where you'll find more modern properties. Sébastien quotes prices of €3,200-€4,000/m² for new building programmes. Renovated apartments along the quays of the Vizézy river, which flows through the town, sell for €2,300-€2,800/m².

You'll find typical stone Forez architecture in the Monts du Forez hillside villages - for example, Verrières-en-Forez, Sauvain and Gumières. Prices are low: €1,000-€1,500/m² depending on state of repair. ▶

FIND MORE PROPERTIES ON [FRANCEPROPERTYSHOP.COM](https://francepropertyshop.com)



€367,000, Montigny-lès-Arsures: On a 3,000m² plot, former abbey with five bedrooms, separate apartment, cellar, and garages, plus a maisonette for renovation, (APS Immobilier)



€308,000, Grozon: Situated between Poligny and Arbois, this four-bedroom villa has a swimming pool and protective dome, garage and photovoltaic panels (APS Immobilier)



€159,000, St-Lothain: In a wine village near Poligny, this old stone two-bedroom house has a vaulted cellar, garage, outbuildings and garden; sanitation work required (APS Immobilier)



€224,000, Montbrison: This two-bedroom, ground-floor apartment is ideally located for services in the town centre, and comes with a terrace and garage (Cabinet Olivier Plaine)

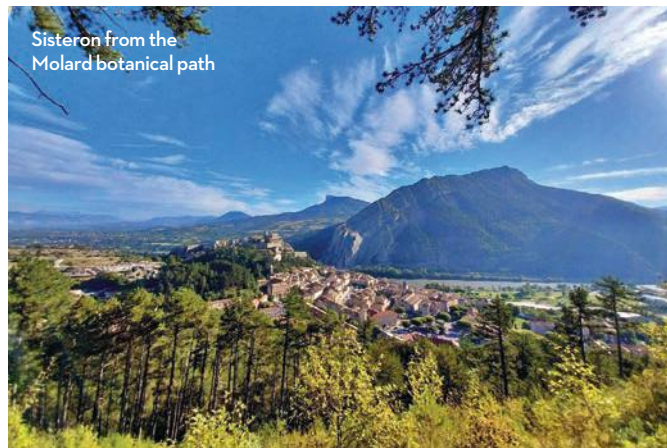
Many Foréziens and Lyonnais have second homes here - they come in summer looking for fresh air in these villages where stone houses remain cool. "You're a little higher up, so in summer there's less heat than in the plain," says Sébastien. There are old barns and farmsteads here (and in the plain); you could pick up a real ruin for €500-€1,000/m².

There's walking, hiking, mountain biking and some skiing (depending on snowfall) in the two small resorts of Chalmazel and Prabouré. "We're very central, Massif Central, close to the Alps, winter sports, Switzerland, and we can reach the nearest Mediterranean resorts in around three hours, Bordeaux and the Atlantic Ocean in around six," says Sébastien. "In terms of location, it's a very strong point."

SISTERON

Sisteron is our final stop. Napoleon Bonaparte also halted here on his way to Paris having escaped from island exile on Elba and landed at Golfe-Juan on 1 March 1815. He only stayed for three hours; I'm sure you'll stay longer. It's also famous for its lamb, which has its own IGP (*Indication Géographique Protégée*) and *Label Rouge* - delicious.

Here you'll find apartments in *copropriétés* and town houses in the centre, then modern apartment blocks and detached houses, and in the valleys more prestigious properties with land, says Céline Delage Denis of Passion Immo by C+L.



Sisteron from the Molard botanical path

In the centre, you'll pay around €1,300/m² for an apartment in need of freshening up in an old town house, and €2,000/m² and above for something that's *tout nickel* (spotless), says her husband and business partner Lionel. For undivided houses, he quotes €1,700-€2,500/m².

Many houses are built with *galets*, river pebbles from the Durance, which rises in Hautes-Alpes near the Italian border and flows into the Rhône at Avignon. Houses are narrow and high - ground floor plus up to three or four floors of about 50m² each. In old Sisteron you also find properties overlooking the river. A view of the Durance and the Rocher de la Baume can add 15% to the price, says Lionel.

Outside the historic centre are 1960s apartment blocks. Depending on the quarter, prices are €1,300-€2,000/m² and for a fine apartment in a building with a lift they can reach €3,000/m². You'll also find houses with gardens, all within a 10-minute walk from the centre. Two popular

quarters are Le Thor and Les Plantiers. Le Thor, above the village, has pretty views.

"Les Plantiers is known as the Petit Nice because even when the Mistral blows, there's not too much wind here," says Lionel. "I live in Nice and can vouch that when this strong, cold northern wind - named after Provençal poet Frédéric Mistral - reaches us, it is mercifully much diminished."

Check out the Jabron Valley to the south, with its detached houses, fine stone properties and villages including Mison, Volonne, Salignac - '*les petits villages où il fait bon vivre*'. You have all the advantages of Sisteron, but not its high property taxes, says Lionel.

Sisteron is one of the best served towns in the Alps for transport; the A51 motorway takes you to Marseille Provence airport in just 90 minutes. There's a commercial zone with many national chains so the Sisteronais no longer have to go down to Marseille - even folk from prefecture Digne-Bains come here to shop as do neighbouring Haut-Alpins.

We're close to everything, Lionel explains - two hours from Grenoble, three from Lyon. The couple have an apartment on the coast and in the Ubaye Valley for skiing. "We leave Friday evening at 4.30pm, pick up our daughter from school, and by six we're *à la neige ou à la mer*."

Our female cyclists leave Sisteron for Nice on Saturday 8 August, but here is where we dismount. I hope our mini Tour de France Femmes has given you plenty of inspiration. ■

ville-poligny.fr
coeurdujura-tourisme.com
ville-montbrison.fr
parc-livradois-forez.org
sisteron.com
baronnies-provencales.fr

3 REASONS TO BUY HERE

Three charming historic little towns in lesser-known departments of Jura, Loire and Alpes-de-Haute-Provence, each with its own distinctive and lovely rural scenery

You'll find stone barns, *hôtels particuliers* and town houses or an apartment in one, farmsteads, village houses - either renovated, or for renovation

Easy plane access into Lyon-St-Exupéry and Geneva Cointrin for Poligny, Lyon for Montbrison and Marseille Provence for Sisteron; train stations in all three towns

On the market

FIND MORE PROPERTIES ON PROPERTYINFRA.NC.COM



€172,000, Sisteron: Three-bedroom apartment with a covered terrace and parking with a security barrier; all it needs is a little modernisation (Passion Immo by C+L)



€315,000, Sisteron: Duplex apartment with a ground-floor bedroom and terrace, two bedrooms and a terrace with views above and a basement garage (Passion Immo by C+L)



€290,000, Sisteron: Close to shops and other amenities, this two-bedroom one-storey house has a garden and covered terrace in a quiet, secure residence (Passion Immo by C+L)



€285,000, Sisteron: Southeast-facing, detached, three-bedroom bungalow in a peaceful central location with a terrace and space for a swimming pool in the garden (Passion Immo by C+L)

PRIVATE CLIENT ADVISORY & REAL ESTATE



RFN – French Accounting & Tax Advisory Firm

Supporting non residents with French property investments for over 40 years.

Our Services for UK Residents Investing in France

- Comprehensive tax and accounting advice for French property purchases
- Guidance on buying a second home, rental investments and company-owned real estate
- Structuring advice to optimise French tax implications
- Full handling of **all French tax returns and mandatory filings**
- Assistance with French administrative formalities
- Ongoing support to ensure long-term compliance

RFN

Société d'Expertise Comptable

ORDRE DES
EXPERTS-COMPTABLES
Région Hauts-de-France



3087 rue de la Gare
F-59299 Boeschepe (Lille)



info@rfn.fr



+33 (0) 3 28 49 45 93



www.rfn.fr

My Insurance

Save time and money by comparing holiday home insurance online from leading UK Insurers.

- ✓ Comprehensive policy cover
- ✓ Competitive premiums
- ✓ Plain English policy wordings
- ✓ UK based call centre
- ✓ 5 Star Service (Google, Trustpilot & Feefo)



t: +44 (0) 1428 600002

Mon-Fri: 9am-6pm; Sat 9am-1pm

w: my-holiday-home-insurance.co.uk

**STILL NEED TO WORK IN THE UK
- to LIVE IN FRANCE?**

STOP!

Take your UK office to France!

Use your Mobile as a virtual UK office



My UK Office puts you back in the UK, to give you:

- A UK 01/02 number
(existing or new)
- A UK-based phone service
- A real UK fixed IP address
(for web-based work)
- No long-term contracts.
- No hardware to buy
(uses your own Mobile)

Simple. Affordable. Unique.



www.myukoffice.eu

+44 (0) 1202 367 292



A service from UKSofa.eu

• **ANDERLAINE INTERNATIONAL**

**YOUR ALPINE BRIDGE TO
FRENCH BUSINESS AND PROPERTY**



English-speaking experts in legal, tax and property investment support across the French Alps.

Thinking of investing, relocating, or starting a business in France?

Meet us:

• Annecy,
Les Gets,
Morzine,
St-Pierre-en Faucigny

• anderlaine.com/en/

• +33 (0)4 50 25 08 08

Anderlaine



A taste of home

Establishing or taking over a shop selling British foodstuffs in France can be a great way to integrate, says **Leah Rottier**

For many food and wine lovers, France is often seen as the Holy Grail of world-class gastronomy, enticing newcomers to gain a few kilos upon arrival, thanks to fresh, crusty baguettes, decadent cakes and pastries, and a never-ending selection of delicious cheeses.

But no matter how tasty the croissants and *charcuterie* platters are, sometimes British comfort food is the only thing that will really hit the spot.

HOME SWEET HOME

With a French partner and a permanent home in Dordogne since 2007, Jane Patterson knows the concept of being fully integrated into French life, yet craving a food item that reminds her of England.

Owner of the aptly named A Taste of Britain shop, in



Jane with some of her stock

the beautiful bastide town of Eymet, Dordogne, she supplies a wide range of products, including baked beans, tea bags, chocolate and frozen food, to the large population of British homeowners living in the region.

"In 2019, the then owner of A Taste of Britain decided to

retire," Jane explains. "I wasn't sure if I should take over, and I hesitated. Could I do it? Run a business on my own in France? Deal with French authorities and accountants? It was scary, but I did it, and I have no intentions of returning to the UK now. My life is here and I love it."

Running an import business to give British homeowners in France access to items they frequently miss is a good option if you enjoy a customer-facing role and you can count good organisation, planning and logistics in your skillset. But if the thought of starting a business from scratch is overwhelming, purchasing an existing British shop, as Jane did, is often easier and comes with an existing customer base.

Jane's advice for those looking to go down this route

is straightforward: learn the French language and be resilient. "I went to weekly French classes for over 10 years," she says. "Running a business in a different country can be a challenge; the language, paperwork and cultural differences being the main issues."

"The business started well for me," she adds. "Then Brexit happened. This was my first challenge, as I was importing foods from England. For the first three months after Brexit, deliveries stopped! Then Covid happened. This was the next challenge, but it was less of a problem as we were allowed to stay open and supplies were getting through."

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

Jane considers that the capacity to remain strong in the face of adversity is a necessity in her business. She also advocates working closely with an accountant, building a solid network and continuing to evolve. She regularly speaks to other English shop owners throughout France to discuss new options, such as importing from Ireland, as the post-Brexit paperwork and red tape mean some previous suppliers in the UK have ceased shipping to France.

With its sizeable British community, Dordogne is a popular choice for those looking to sell imported food goods. The picturesque town of Eymet, in the southern tip of the department, is ideally located to attract customers in the neighbouring departments of Lot-et-Garonne and Gironde too.

Eymet boasts a mild climate, a sprawling weekly market and proximity to airports in Bergerac and Bordeaux for international flights. It's a laidback and welcoming place in which to live, which explains its popularity with those looking to purchase a place in the sun.

When considering operating this type of business, location really is key. Caroline Brittain

"You'll soon be tempting just as many French customers as British ones with your trifle kits, mushy peas and pork pies"



Clockwise from top left: Caroline Brittain, the owner of Brittain's; shoppers browse in the centre of Varbonne; shelves full of items to stave off homesickness

owns and manages a similar shop in the stunning Côte d'Azur region.

"I opened my business, Brittain's, in 2004," she explains. "Valbonne seemed to be a good location for a British shop as it's near to Sophia Antipolis and several international schools."

Sophia Antipolis is a sprawling technology park located in southeast France and is the headquarters for dozens of multinational corporations, with employees settling in the surrounding area from every corner of the world. With its proximity to this technopole – as well as to Nice, Cannes and Antibes – the beautiful town of Valbonne is

a delightful place to live and open a shop.

Rather than purchase an existing business, Caroline established Brittain's herself, leaning on her vast experience working for several blue-chip companies in the food industry before arriving in France.

Her business continues to evolve and she now offers an online shopping experience throughout France, enabling customers who live too far from Valbonne to purchase in person to have their British goods delivered directly to their front door.

In addition to researching the area thoroughly before taking the plunge, Caroline also took the essential step

of finding an accountant she could rely on. "Setting up and doing administration for this business is very different from the UK, and very complex," she says. "I would advise that anyone looking to set up this type of business takes advice from an accountant and ensures that they have the right type of structure in place. I work very closely with my accountant."

MARKET FORCES

Marketing is especially important when opening a new shop with no existing customer base, and Caroline insists that 'word of mouth' can turn out to be the best form of advertising. Placing free adverts on the social media pages of local communities or investing in small adverts in regional newspapers and magazines are also ways to avoid spending a large amount of money upfront in the early days of a new business.

It's also a good idea to take a wider look at the population in the area where you're thinking of opening your British shop. "We have a mix of clients – British, French, Scandinavian, Dutch and South African," explains Caroline. "This is a very multicultural area, and there are many people who are not British, but who have

spent time working in the UK. Or those with family or friends, who have then introduced them to British food."

Running a British shop in France is a fantastic option for those wanting to earn a good income and integrate into French life, while primarily dealing with English-speaking customers at the outset.

Be sure to participate in the regular meetings for local business owners run by your *mairie* (town hall), and perhaps even arrive with a small selection of your products for people to try.

As your confidence builds, along with your language skills and clientele, you'll soon be tempting just as many French customers as British ones with your trifle kits, mushy peas and pork pies. ■

TOP TIP

If you decide to run a British shop in France, use similar shops in the country as a network you can rely on for advice and support when difficult situations, such as Brexit, arise. By sharing ideas and information, including new supply routes, your business can only grow, and you'll feel less isolated during more challenging times.



Valbonne in the Côte d'Azur region, where Caroline runs her shop Brittain's

It's your move...

Moving to France, making a fresh start, is exciting – removals expert **Scott Middleton** gives you his tips to ensure that your new life gets off to the best possible start

Whether you're heading to a rustic farmhouse in the Dordogne, an apartment in Paris or a villa on the Côte d'Azur, here are some helpful removals tips, tricks and insights that will help to make your dream of moving to France a reality.

MAKE CONTACT EARLY

It is never too soon to have an initial discussion with your chosen removals firm; moving successfully has always required detailed planning. Clients may also have to budget well in advance of any relocation. This conversation normally involves the question of when the move is roughly planned for. Summer is our peak season, and availability is generally harder to guarantee. Who wants to move when there's snow on the ground?

If we have more time to plan, we can discuss tailored options and find the most suitable service for you. Whether that is a part-load (where you share space on a vehicle) allowing us to set the delivery date to maximise efficiency, or selecting a special direct delivery (where the dates are set by you), it's entirely your choice. Both have very different price points, however, and everyone's situation will be different.

START DECLUTTERING

Before you even start to think of taping boxes shut, please start to declutter. Begin in outbuildings, the garden, garage, then work back into the house and then the loft.

The house will contain the most sentimental items – likely to start an argument with a significant other or children – so please don't start there. However, do try to be ruthless,

as clutter will only increase your volume, and most likely your removals quote.

HOW WE QUOTE

The company you choose should carry out a survey, in person or via video, to figure out what is, and isn't, to be included in your move. In addition, they should calculate the number and type of boxes you will need for the move, at time of survey. They should be able to explain the services on offer and find the one that will work best for you.

Be wary of anyone willing to quote over the phone, or off a list, as this could mean extra charges later – and the accuracy of the estimate will be nowhere near as good.

CHECK YOUR EXPERTS

Make sure you know exactly who you are dealing with from the start, through review platforms like Trustpilot, word of mouth and magazines such as *FPN*. Making sure you're

dealing with an accredited firm – like a member of the British Association of Removers Overseas Group, to ensure you have full protection throughout your move – is paramount. This would also include membership of the Advanced Payment Guarantee Scheme, which gives you a safety net if the chosen company suffers financial failure before your move. Ask your experts for their accreditations – don't be shy.

WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER THE SURVEY

You must be given a written quotation with terms and conditions within a reasonable time after the survey. Please read the written quotes you receive, to ensure that the services offered are what were agreed during your surveys.

Check the terms and conditions to make sure they are what you expect, as not all movers are the same or held to the same standards.



I've had many situations where we have given the most 'expensive' quote, for the client to later find that a competitor has forgotten something vital or included hidden extras in the small print.

You are the one paying, so please ensure that you understand what you are buying and pick up the phone if you have any questions. There is genuinely very little I like talking about more!

TO PACK OR NOT TO PACK?

Any mover will tell you that you can self-pack, but a good mover will explain why you shouldn't and the risks involved. If you pack the boxes, the cover is normally 'limited' per box or could be nothing if you're dealing with an unaccredited firm. You would also be expected to create an inventory of goods for the move. Making sure you understand what you are buying, and the risks, is vital.

If we pack for your move, you can live fairly normally up until a day or two before you leave; we create the inventory and remove the stress. We can also dismantle and reassemble furniture on request. We



If the removals company does the packing, they can create an inventory

A hassle-free move means
you can settle in quicker



“If we pack for your move, you can live fairly normally up until a day or two before you leave”

give ‘standard cover’ in this scenario, which means your items are protected to their current value. We would ask you to provide a value for your goods, so we can cover against loss and damage up to that amount in the written quote.

Remember, you have seven days after the delivery to make a claim with a British Association of Removers member, which can be extended for a flat fee.

PROHIBITED ITEMS

Food and plants are not normally allowed in the move. Furthermore, be aware that alcohol is dutiable (and taxed) depending on the type of alcohol, value of each bottle, alcohol percentage and volume per bottle. We can help you by providing an estimated cost to import, so please speak with us.

We also ask you not to include any jewellery, money, coins or stamps within the move. If you intend to move via a part-load, we also cannot accept any lithium-ion batteries (for example, electric bikes) as

these would be stored in our warehouse before travelling. We are unable to store lithium-ion batteries, due to fire risk.

NAVIGATING CUSTOMS

Note that when we get customs clearance for your goods,

you’ll need to have provided us with documents to prove your transfer of residence to France from the UK. This allows duty-free import under certain conditions. The documentation list is shorter if you retain residency in the UK,

but you pay duties and taxes for the import of the movable goods into France, and this applies to secondhand items too. This can come as a bit of a shock for many movers. Speak to your expert, they will help you understand what your own position is in detail.

ON THE DAY

Trust in your removals personnel to carry out the move well and try to be on hand in case they have any questions. On arrival, they will introduce themselves and then carry out a walk-through with you to ensure they understand the job perfectly. This will be done at the end of the move too, to ensure the property has been left in good condition and nothing has been forgotten – make sure you look in every cupboard before you leave!

HERE TO HELP

We’re here to guide you through your move – every step of the way. There really is no greater professional reward than knowing you’ve helped move someone successfully and they are happy in their new home, so please do reach out. I hope the points above help to make your move a little smoother. *Bonne chance!* ■

Scott Middleton is a removals consultant at GB Liners
Tel: 0808 1000 988
gbliners.com



A personal visit to assess the amount of goods you have means we’ll get the size of truck exactly right for your move

My love affair with France started when I was 18 in 1968, when I went to the Monaco Grand Prix. Sitting on a beach at Beaulieu-sur-Mer, I remember thinking how much I would love to spend time there.

Back in England, I started a landscaping business. A couple of years later, a swimming pool company asked if I would build pools for them in southern England. That led me to wonder whether pool companies received enquiries from France that they were not interested in pursuing. A year later, in 1971, I was building my first pool in France overlooking St-Tropez bay. It never felt like work; it felt like an adventure.

I didn't want to return to England anytime soon. Eventually, I secured another pool project in the hills above Monaco. Between jobs, I worked on the luxury yacht Malahne, owned by film producer Sam Spiegel. After completing the second pool, I tried to establish a French company, but the process was difficult at the time so I returned to England and focused on my business there.

It took another 14 years before I returned to France with a new business idea. In 1988, a friend and I began looking for properties to renovate for a small holiday business. We chose the Mayenne department because it was close to Channel ports and offered peaceful countryside. My heart may still have been in St-Tropez, but my wallet certainly wasn't.

HIGH FIVE

We eventually bought five properties, with Le Moulin de Go intended as the business headquarters. We started

Anything but run-of-the-mill

Get more
inspiration from
readers' stories

frenchentree.com

Mick Watson's fascination with France has been a long one – it began with installing swimming pools in the Riviera 50 years ago, and now he owns a historic mill in rural Mayenne



The ancient mill is now run by an association

renovating the house I now live in, but a financial downturn forced us to put our plans on hold while we concentrated on keeping our UK businesses afloat. Fortunately, we had bought the properties outright.

Five years passed before we were able to revisit. During that time, I worked in Guernsey on several large contracts. In September 2006, as I neared the end of a major hotel project, I bought a one-way ferry ticket to France. At the age of 56, a

new adventure began. The move proved to be a steep learning curve. I left Guernsey with three workmen, very little French and only a rough idea of what awaited us. I had arranged accommodation in a gîte near the first property, a house in the village of Torcé-Viviers-en-Charnie. It was in far worse condition than I had expected.

Two days after our arrival, the mayor turned up to ask what we planned to do. When I explained that we intended

to renovate the house, he told me we had arrived just in time. It was considered unsafe and, because nobody had been able to contact me, the authorities were preparing to demolish it.

The roof came off, and we rebuilt a collapsed corner before beginning the rest of the renovation. By February 2007, the work was complete and I moved in. We then tackled another large property about 40 minutes away. Like the first, it required complete renovation.



The mill was very decrepit when Mick bought it back in the 80s



Local artists painting during one of the events at the mill

Six months later it was finished and sold to an English couple through an advertisement in *French Property News*.

I owned another property near Mont-St-Michel, too far away for daily commuting, so I rented a nearby gîte and hired a French carpenter to help. That renovation remains unfinished, although it now has a new roof, windows, doors and floors.

In 2019, life became easier after I established an association, similar to a UK charity, to manage Le Moulin de Go. Then the Covid pandemic arrived. Because I was not living at the mill, I was unable to travel there and continue the work. For two years, everything stopped: no open days, no fundraising and no restoration work.

MAYENE EVENT

When activities resumed, volunteer enthusiasm was stronger than ever. Open days attracted more than 300 visitors. Today we organise two major annual events. In June, volunteers run a fundraising evening for around 130 guests, with food prepared on site and celebrations continuing late into the night. The second event coincides with St-Pierre-sur-Erve's festival on 15 August. Artists paint throughout the village during the day, and in the evening thousands of candles and lanterns illuminate the streets. Last year alone, the mill welcomed around 2,000 visitors. One of our greatest attractions is the bread and pastries baked in the restored bread oven.

In 2023, I granted the association a 99-year lease on the mill. This ensures its future beyond my lifetime and enabled the association to seek support from the French Heritage Society to fund the replacement of the old asbestos roof tiles, the final major task needed to restore the mill fully.

In September 2025, we received confirmation that the funding had been secured. Work began in November and, despite weather delays, was eventually completed by a local roofer from the village.

Each spring, volunteers gather to prepare the mill for the season ahead. Jobs



Mick opening the sluice gate to start the waterwheel



Restoring the mill has been a decades-long adventure

“We have two annual events – the celebration goes on into the early hours of the morning”

include painting, gardening and general maintenance. At lunchtime, we light the barbecue and provide food and wine for everyone involved.

One of the most fascinating moments of the restoration came when we lowered the water level in the millstream to clean it. As I walked upstream checking for stranded fish, I spotted a pistol buried in the mud beneath an old bridge. After cleaning and researching it, I discovered it was a Spanish-made Star pistol used by American forces during the Second World War. Curious, I bought a metal detector and later found an English pistol nearby. Further investigation suggested the weapons had probably been hidden beneath

the bridge for use by the French Resistance. Over time, vibrations from farm vehicles crossing the bridge appear to have caused them to fall into the stream.

A HELPING HAND

The volunteers continue to amaze me with their dedication. Many even thank me for allowing them to help. For anyone moving to France who wants to integrate, my advice is simple: volunteer. Find a local organisation and offer your help. None of the mill volunteers speaks English, and my French remains far from perfect, yet they have made me feel part of the family.

My main reason for moving to France was quality of life,

and I have never regretted the decision. These days my time is divided between the mill, my garden and an eight-acre woodland that I have been gradually returning to a more natural state. More than 30 years ago, it was planted with 9,000 Christmas trees. Many have since died, so I cut them into logs that keep me warm through the winter.

At 75, that is enough to keep me busy. I have certainly slowed down in recent years, but I still enjoy the lifestyle I came here to find.

The biggest setback to the mill restoration came during the pandemic when local authorities informed us that, because St-Pierre-sur-Erve is a protected village, we had unintentionally breached several planning regulations.

We were required to remove a wooden chalet and bar used for catering during open days and clear an area where machinery and building materials were stored. Most frustratingly, we were no longer permitted to erect marquees for events, even temporarily. This made fundraising and private events much more difficult.

Despite these challenges, I remain grateful for the life I have built in France. What began with a teenage visit to the Côte d'Azur has become a lifelong adventure filled with restoration projects, friendships, discoveries and a sense of belonging that I never expected to find. ■

moulindego.com



Mick's little helpers

Read more
about life in
France on
frenchentree.com



A traditional fleuriste named after the popular flower used to celebrate May Day

French florist shops, or 'fleuristes', often have lovely names such as *Harmonie Florale*, *La fleur d'or* and *L'ami fleuriste*. I've also spotted a few made-up names including *Fleuristerie*, *Bouquetterie*, *Fleurathèque* and *Floratique*.

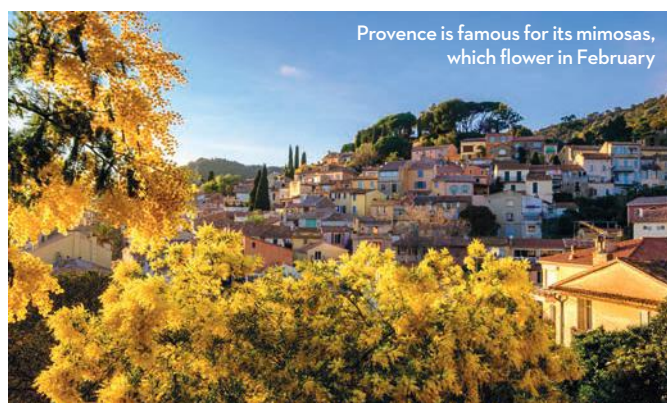
One slightly puzzling name in a small town near ours is *Comme une fleur*. The literal translation is 'like a flower', but it may refer to a common French expression: *Arriver comme une fleur* (to arrive like a flower), which means to arrive unexpectedly, suddenly or uninvited, so it implies that it is done in a carefree or naïve manner.

Florist stalls can also be found in weekly markets, in all weathers. There is always between one and three in the small town where I live.

Key times of the year for all florists, stalls and flower sections in supermarkets, are February, May and November. From the start of February, you'll see lots of mimosa for sale, while from mid-February - for Valentine's day - there are displays of roses in many different colours. In May there's lily of the valley,

Blooming lovely

You'll see beautiful florists and flower stalls all year round in France but at certain times of the year, particular flowers take pride of place, explains **Monique Jackman**



Provence is famous for its mimosas, which flower in February

and in November these lovely fragrant shops are full of chrysanthemums.

For up to 10 weeks in the middle of winter, people in Provence enjoy the mimosa season, a big treat from Mother Nature. Numerous mimosa trees of various sizes can be

seen in private gardens as well as public places. This is when cut mimosa and small trees can be bought across the country.

This part of France is where my husband and I retired 19 years ago. I was born in Marseille and lived in Cannes as a child. Much later, my

family and I owned a holiday mobile home for over 16 years in Boulouris, east of St-Raphaël.

There are apparently about 500 types of mimosa tree, a species that originated in Australia. One particular type grows in the many hills that line the Côte d'Azur. They tend to be of small and medium size; most of them look like large shrubs to me.

MIMOSA CENTRAL

The Massif de Tanneron in Mandelieu-La Napoule is one of the largest mimosa forests in Europe, and the town has been crowned the mimosa capital of France. Annual mimosa fêtes and festivals take place in several of the Provençal towns.

Clusters of the fluffy and fragile-looking bright yellow

“Every winter, the explosion of bright yellow mimosa against a blue sky is breathtaking”

small balls - looking like miniature pompoms - appear almost overnight around the unusual leaves that look like minuscule ferns. I have seen some excellent descriptions for this unusual flower, such as *boules d'or* (golden balls) and *petits soleils* (little suns). Every winter, this explosion of bright yellow mimosas against a royal blue sky is just breathtaking.

As expected, all the various businesses - large and small - that sell flowers and plants, are full of bunches of mimosa, or mixed cut flowers that include some mimosa. You can also get small mimosa trees in pots.

In fact, this flower is omnipresent all year round in this part of the world as it features on postcards against the bluest Mediterranean sky



Pots of lily of the valley for May Day

and on souvenirs. There are even artisan-made sweets that represent mimosa 'balls' - but to say that they are not the tastiest sweets I have sampled is a big understatement!

MAY DAY GIFTS

Lily of the valley, *le muguet*, can be seen everywhere on May Day. Like white heather in England, this flower is supposed to bring luck - *un porte-bonheur*, a lucky charm - to those who receive it, but only on this very day. In addition to the usual places that sell flowers, private sellers (many with no licence) also appear for just one day. The flower plays a big part in one of the oldest French customs, started by King Charles IX.

With its unique, distinct perfume, the flower marks the middle of springtime and

is known as a symbol of a return to happiness as well as a symbol for lovers. Jewellery, trinkets, ornaments, toiletries and perfumes associated with lily of the valley are available in boutiques throughout the year.

Immediately before and especially on May Day, florists and flower departments in other shops, sell a large quantity of lily of the valley all over France. Traditionally, everyone buys a stem of this seasonal flower, or a bunch of mixed blooms that includes some lily of the valley, or perhaps a small planted pot, to give as a present, mostly to all the girls and women they love or want to thank. Nowadays, men too are happy to receive *muguet*.

Most people, whether family members, friends, neighbours, colleagues, perhaps a child's teacher or your hairdresser - basically anyone you wish to thank and show appreciation to - will be given some lily of the valley on May Day.

You can even find pretty *gâteaux* and tarts in *pâtisseries*, decorated with edible or artificial small white bells and deep green leaves. As with the mimosa, postcards or greeting cards adorned with lily of the valley images, sometimes scented, are available for people to send to their loved ones.

ALL SAINTS' DAY

All Saints' Day (1 November) - *La Toussaint* in French - is a Catholic celebration and a bank holiday. The official celebration



Chrysanthemums are often chosen to honour the dead on All Saints' Day



Most local markets will have several flower stalls and at all times of the year

in honour of the spirits takes place on the evening of 31 October, then on 1 November people usually go to church and then take artificial and fresh flowers and plants to cemeteries and tidy up the graves.

On these days, florists' shops thrive and stalls often pack the cemetery entrances. Despite visitors being sombrely dressed or shedding a tear, the place looks quite lively with so many

people coming and going all day with their colourful flowers.

Graves nearly all carry photographs of their occupants, some with personal details - their occupations or personal messages perhaps - or small ornaments such as pottery animals. I have even seen graves decorated with a bust of the deceased. A visit to the cemetery on 1 November will always be a moving and respectful occasion.

As chrysanthemums flower in October and November, and last a long time, they are often chosen on these annual occasions, as well as for funerals. This is why they are not normally taken as a gift for hosts at a drinks party or meal in France. ■

Monique Jackman has written several French language books, including the *Better French* series, available from Amazon and other bookshops



A MOMENT OF REFLECTION



The British love for French property remains strong

As we reach our **400th issue**, we take a look back at the events that have shaped the UK and France, and how the French property market has evolved over the past 37 years

Back in 1989 *French Property News* started out as a 16-page black-and-white newspaper, founded by Dick Schrader. House prices in the UK had doubled within three years and interest in property in France had grown exponentially; until 1988, Brits had been buying in France at the rate of under 2,000 houses a year, suddenly they were buying more than 10 times as many. Prices were low and there was a massive supply of attractive properties to renovate. Typical budgets were between 20,000-40,000 French francs.

It wasn't until April 2001 that the publication became a full-colour, glossy magazine, and shortly after that, editor Karen Tait came on board.



From 1998 to 2007, prices doubled in many French cities, including Lyon pictured here

FRENCH PROPERTY MARKET EVOLUTION 1989-2026

Over the years, the French property market has seen many highs and lows - notably influenced by the 2008 global credit crash and Covid.

1989-1998: Slow growth and relative affordability

After the late-80s downturn, property prices were fairly stable or modestly rising. High interest rates in the early 1990s limited borrowing. Housing was still relatively affordable compared with later decades. Paris was already expensive, but regional France remained accessible.

Key feature: A calm market with local variations, not a national boom yet.

1998-2007: Major housing boom begins

Strong economic growth and low interest rates. Easy credit expansion across Europe. Rising demand in cities, especially Paris, Lyon, Bordeaux and coastal areas. Prices roughly doubled or more in many urban areas during this period. Ownership rates increased. Buy-to-let investment grew. Second homes in rural/coastal France became more popular.

2008-2012: Global financial crisis slowdown

The global recession hit France less violently than the UK or Spain. Prices stagnated in many regions with slight declines in other areas. Banks were more conservative than in Anglo markets, so there was no housing crash.

Key difference from the UK: France avoided a dramatic crash due to stricter lending and regulation.

2013-2021: Strong urban price surge

Ultra-low interest rates from the European Central Bank. 'Safe haven' demand increased for property. Paris became one of Europe's most expensive cities, with prices rising sharply, especially inner arrondissements. Secondary cities (Lyon, Bordeaux, Nantes) surged. Rural France stagnated or grew slowly.

Paris became one of Europe's most expensive cities



"The 'credit crunch' and resulting global recession hit France less violently than the UK or Spain"

Key feature: Growing divide between 'dynamic cities' vs 'declining rural regions'.

2020-2022: Pandemic boom
COVID triggered a temporary

property surge, with buyers seeking larger homes and gardens. As a result, rural and coastal areas saw renewed demand; remote working increased flexibility; prices

rose quickly in many regions.

2023-2026: Slowdown and interest rate shock

Inflation plus ECB interest rate rises changed everything. Mortgage costs increased sharply. The market cooled, especially in cities.

Current patterns:

- Paris: slight price correction or stagnation.
- Regional cities: mixed, some still rising, others flat.
- Rural areas: sometimes weak demand.
- Transactions have dropped compared with the boom years.
- Buyers have stronger negotiating power again.



Post-Covid, there was a surge in demand for rural French homes

LONG-TERM TRENDS (1989-2026)

HUGE OVERALL PRICE INCREASE

- National prices have risen several-fold since 1989.
- Paris has seen the most extreme growth.

STRONG URBAN-RURAL DIVIDE

- Cities: expensive, competitive markets.
- Rural areas: slower growth, sometimes stagnation, slower market.

STRONG STATE INFLUENCE

- France has strict lending rules, strong tenant protections and a regulated rental market in major cities. This has made it less volatile than the UK and

less crash-prone than Spain or Ireland. Interest rates drive cycles.

- Like most of Europe, low rates led to booms (2000s, 2010s), high rates saw slowdown (early 2020s).

BOTTOM LINE

Since 1989, the French housing market has:

- Roughly quadrupled or more in major cities.
- Become increasingly urban and unequal.
- Remained more stable than many other European markets.
- Entered a new phase of stagnation/adjustment since 2022.

EVENTS THAT HAVE SHAPED THE UK AND FRANCE SINCE 1989

Fall of the Berlin Wall and end of the Cold War (1989-1991)

- Both countries entered a new post-Cold War world.
- Europe shifted from military division to political and economic integration.
- NATO and the EU both expanded their influence.

Maastricht Treaty and creation of the modern EU (1992)

- Laid the foundation for the European Union and the euro.
- Deepened cooperation between France (core EU builder) and the UK (more reluctant partner).
- Long-term political tension in Britain over sovereignty.



The EU was created in 1992

Channel Tunnel opens (1994)

- First fixed physical link between the UK and mainland Europe.
- Revolutionised travel, trade and cultural exchange.
- Became a symbol of European integration.

UK 'New Labour' landslide and French political shifts (1997-2002)

- UK embraced centrist New Labour politics and economic



The Channel Tunnel back in 1994

modernisation, with Prime Minister Tony Blair at the helm.

- France saw alternation between socialist and conservative governments.
- Both countries aligned more closely on EU policy in this era.

Death of Princess Diana (1997)

- Massive emotional impact in the UK and globally.
- Changed how the British monarchy interacted with media and public opinion.
- Major cultural moment in modern British identity.

France wins 1998 FIFA World Cup

- France's most iconic modern cultural moment.
- Symbol of multicultural national identity.
- Boosted football as a core part of French culture.

9/11 and the War on Terror (2001 onward)

- The September 11 attacks led both France and the UK into new security era.
- The UK joined wars in Afghanistan and Iraq; France opposed Iraq invasion.

- Increased terrorism concerns across Europe.

7/7 London bombings and European terror wave (2005-2016)

- Deadly attacks in both capitals - 7 July 2005 London bombings and Charlie Hebdo shooting (2015) - reshaped domestic security.
- Expanded surveillance and policing powers in France/UK.
- Terrorism became a defining political issue.

Financial crisis and rise of populism (2008-2016)

- Banking crisis hit UK financial sector hard.
- France faced stagnation and unemployment pressures.
- Led to austerity in the UK and protest movements in France.

Brexit and European political realignment (2016-2020)

- UK voted to leave the EU, transforming its global role.
- France became one of the leading powers in the EU.
- The biggest split in modern Western European integration.



In 2016 the UK voted to leave the EU

COVID-19 pandemic (2019-2020)

- The pandemic reshaped daily life across both countries, with lockdowns, social distancing and working from home.
- Tourist and hospitality industries suffered temporary and permanent closures.
- Suspension of travel between the two countries; when travel reinstated, proof of vaccination was required.

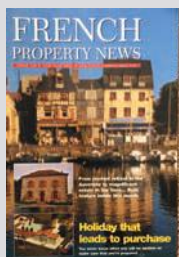


Airports were empty during the first stages of the COVID pandemic

Post-2020 - honourable mentions

- Death of Queen Elizabeth II in 2022 and start of King Charles III's reign (UK monarchy transition).
- France hosted the Paris 2024 Olympics (UK hosted summer Olympics in London in 2012)
- Russia-Ukraine war and the US-Iran war reshaping European security, energy and cost of living.
- Introduction of the EES (Entry/Exit System) at EU borders from 2025, replacing manual passport stamping with biometric data including facial recognition and fingerprint scans. ■

INSIDE THE FIRST ISSUE



The first issue in 1989, editor Karen Tait's first issue in 2001, and three anniversary issues

about buying an apartment in Provence, property-minding companies, a book review of *Buying Residential Property in France* by the French Chamber of Commerce and a glossary of useful terms.

- We were also surprised to discover a news piece on a system allowing you to turn on the heating in your holiday home with a simple phone call - not exactly old technology 37 years later!

- The issue led with a story on Eurotunnel, following doubts reported in the national media over the Tunnel's train capacity. An industry expert said that it wasn't feasible to run 20 trains per hour through the Tunnel. Today, up to 400 trains pass through it every day.

- Another cover story focused on the introduction of Brittany Ferries' French Property Owners Club, explaining how membership could help British owners of property in France make savings on their Channel crossings. Although the scheme is no longer available, regular travellers can

take advantage of the Club Voyage scheme.

- The founding issue also covered stories on a chateau for sale in the Loire-Atlantique, how to finance a property purchase, the property markets in Picardy and Brittany, a real life story

WIN! A WEEK'S BOAT BIKE TOUR IN FRANCE FOR TWO PEOPLE IN 2026, ABOARD EITHER THE CLAIRE ETOILLE OR FLEUR



WIN A CRUISE & CYCLE ESCAPE THROUGH THE HEART OF FRANCE

Win the adventure of a lifetime with an unforgettable 2026 Cruise & Cycle escape through the heart of France. Imagine waking each morning aboard a charming floating hotel, drifting along picturesque rivers, past medieval villages and stunning countryside before setting off on two wheels to explore hidden gems, historic towns and world-famous landscapes. From the romance of Parisian waterways to the tranquil beauty of canalside paths, this incredible journey combines relaxation, culture and adventure in one truly unique holiday experience. Along the way, enjoy delicious regional cuisine, scenic cycling routes, welcoming local markets and breathtaking views that will stay with you forever. Whether you're an experienced cyclist or simply love discovering new destinations at a slower pace, this fully guided cruise offers the perfect blend of comfort and exploration. Travel through beautiful French villages, visit iconic landmarks and experience the charm of life on the water aboard a luxury vessel designed for unforgettable memories.

boatbiketours.com

For your chance to win this spectacular 2026 cruise experience and start dreaming about your next great adventure through France, enter here: frenchentree.com/competitions

Terms and conditions: The winner can choose from selected departure dates, subject to availability. The holiday is to be taken by the end of 2026. For full T&Cs, visit frenchentree.com/competitions



Elegant architecture on the Place de la Comédie, and inset, a typical narrow street in the old town

City and coast

Capital of the Hérault department and close to the beach, Montpellier combines a vibrant lifestyle with southern sun, writes **Karen Tait**



A home in Montpellier offers a combination of lifestyle, culture and investment potential. Located close to the Mediterranean coast, the southern city enjoys over 300 days of sunshine a year, making it ideal for outdoor living. Residents and holiday-home owners can enjoy nearby beaches, vineyards and scenic countryside while still benefiting from all the conveniences of a modern city.

Montpellier is known for its vibrant atmosphere, blending historic architecture with contemporary design. The centre features charming squares, cafés and cultural landmarks, while newer districts provide modern housing and excellent amenities. Its thriving arts scene, festivals, restaurants and shops create an energetic yet relaxed lifestyle that appeals to people of all ages.

The strong local economy is driven by education, healthcare, technology and tourism. Homeowners benefit from a stable property market

and increasing demand for housing, particularly from students and professionals.

For families, there are good schools, healthcare facilities and green spaces. For retirees and investors, it provides a safe environment, attractive climate and strong long-term property values in one of France's most desirable regions. Excellent transport connections complete the appeal, including high-speed rail and an international airport, easing access to and from the UK and the rest of Europe.

Buyers can choose from varied neighbourhoods, each appealing to different lifestyles. Écusson is the historic heart of Montpellier, known for its medieval streets and elegant squares. Properties here are full of character, often in period buildings with high ceilings and balconies. Port Marianne is a modern and fast-growing district with stylish apartments, green spaces and excellent transport links. Designed by architect Ricardo Bofill, Antigone is famous for

its grand neoclassical style and pedestrian-friendly layout. It offers spacious apartments close to the city centre.

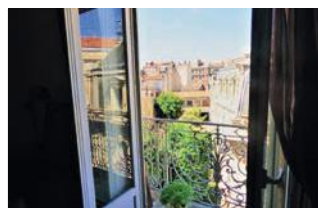
The average price of property in Montpellier is €3,528/m², with prices rising to €4,521/m² in sought-after Port Marianne (Beaux Arts and Les Arceaux are other hotspots). On the outskirts, Mosson offers good value and an appealing environment thanks to its large park. Average prices across the Hérault department as a whole are €3,401/m². ■

On the market

FIND MORE PROPERTIES ON
[FRANCEPROPERTYSHOP.COM](https://francepropertyshop.com) & [PROPERTYINFRANCE.COM](https://propertyinfrance.com)



€72,520: Turnkey leaseback investment opportunity - studio in Montpellier with 4.6% net yield, in the Grisettes district



€265,000: Between Place de la Comédie and the train station, two-bedroom apartment in a renovated Haussmann building



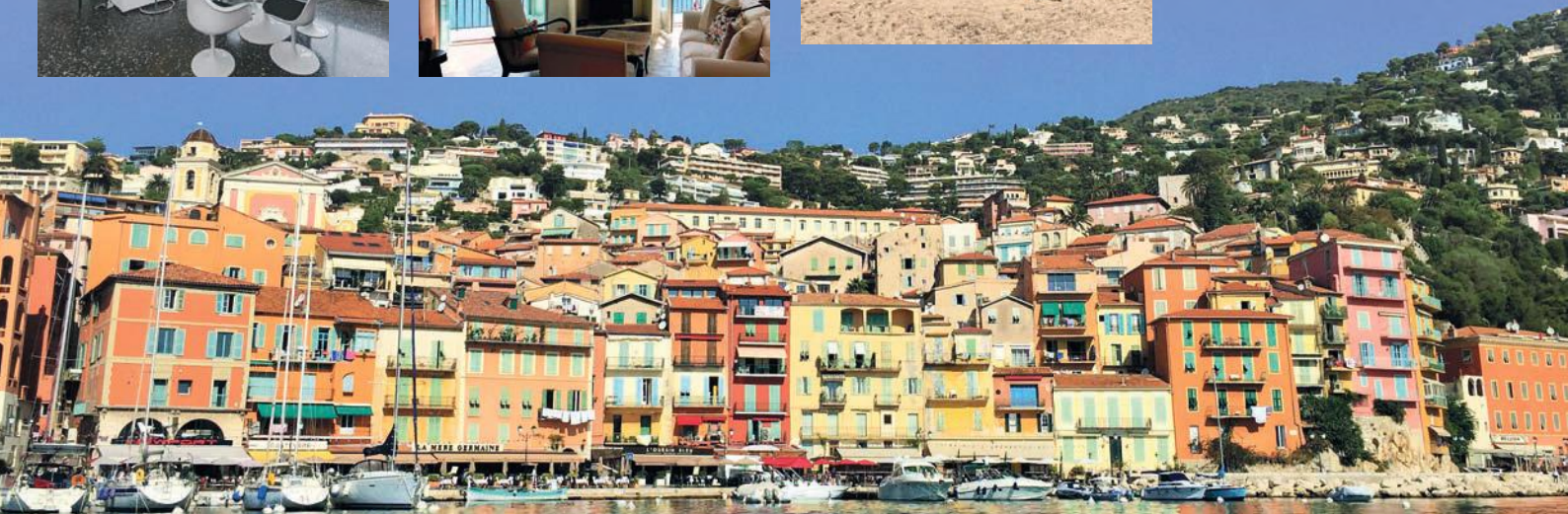
€399,000: Two-bedroom house with garden and pool, located in a quiet and green area, with private parking for two cars

Riviera
experience.com
Be at home in Villefranche sur Mer



Know before you buy
Live on the Côte d'Azur first!

FABULOUS SEA VIEW APARTMENTS



The best way to shop for a property to buy is to live in the area first. Choose one of our fully equipped long-stay apartments for your perfect entrée to life in France.

rivieraexperience.com



We Handle the Hassle, You Savour the Joie de Vivre

Your New French Life Starts with the Right Visa!

At The European Concierge, we provide expert support for individuals and families relocating to France, specialising in visa applications, residency documentation, and your first 12 months of administration nightmare. Our personalised service simplifies complex administrative tasks, from vehicle registration to healthcare access. With tailored guidance and end-to-end support, we help our clients confidently navigate French bureaucracy and begin their new life in France.

Discover more at

 theeuropeanconcierge.com

 the.european.concierge@gmail.com

MOVING CUSTOMERS BETWEEN THE UK AND FRANCE FOR OVER 50 YEARS

- Specialist, experienced, friendly and helpful staff
- Customs clearance included
- Covered against loss or damage
- Full or part loads available
- Storage available if required

Freephone

0808 1000 988

GB Liners



MEMBER NO. G013



Guaranteed
Cover is provided for
Worldwide Moves



Branches
nationwide:

London

Aberdeen

Brighton

Bristol

Cirencester

Cheltenham

Edinburgh

Hereford

Leeds

Loughborough

Manchester

Local – National – International – Removals & Storage

gbliners.com

THE KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge is power and when it comes to buying a French property, it's important to understand as much as possible about the process



VLADISLAV PERES NIKOLAYEV © SHUTTERSTOCK

P88 **LEGAL COLUMN**

A practical guide to avoiding the pitfalls of a property purchase, from understanding ownership structures to accessing the finances to pay for it

P90 **MONEY COLUMN**

How can movements in the currency market affect the real price of your French property - and how can you use currency tools to protect your budget

P92 **GUIDE TO...**

The financial assistance and support you can expect to receive if you plan to start up or buy an agricultural business in France including a smallholding

P94 **ASK THE EXPERTS**

Q&As on mortgages, château wedding venues, inheritance law, unwanted guests at holiday homes, and French VAT on renovation work

Legal column

Sarah Bright-Thomas gives a practical guide to avoiding the sharper bits of a property purchase



There are few fantasies more enduring than buying a property in France. The image arrives fully formed: sunlight on old stone, long lunches beneath plane trees, a local market somewhere nearby selling olives and cheese to improbably elegant pensioners.

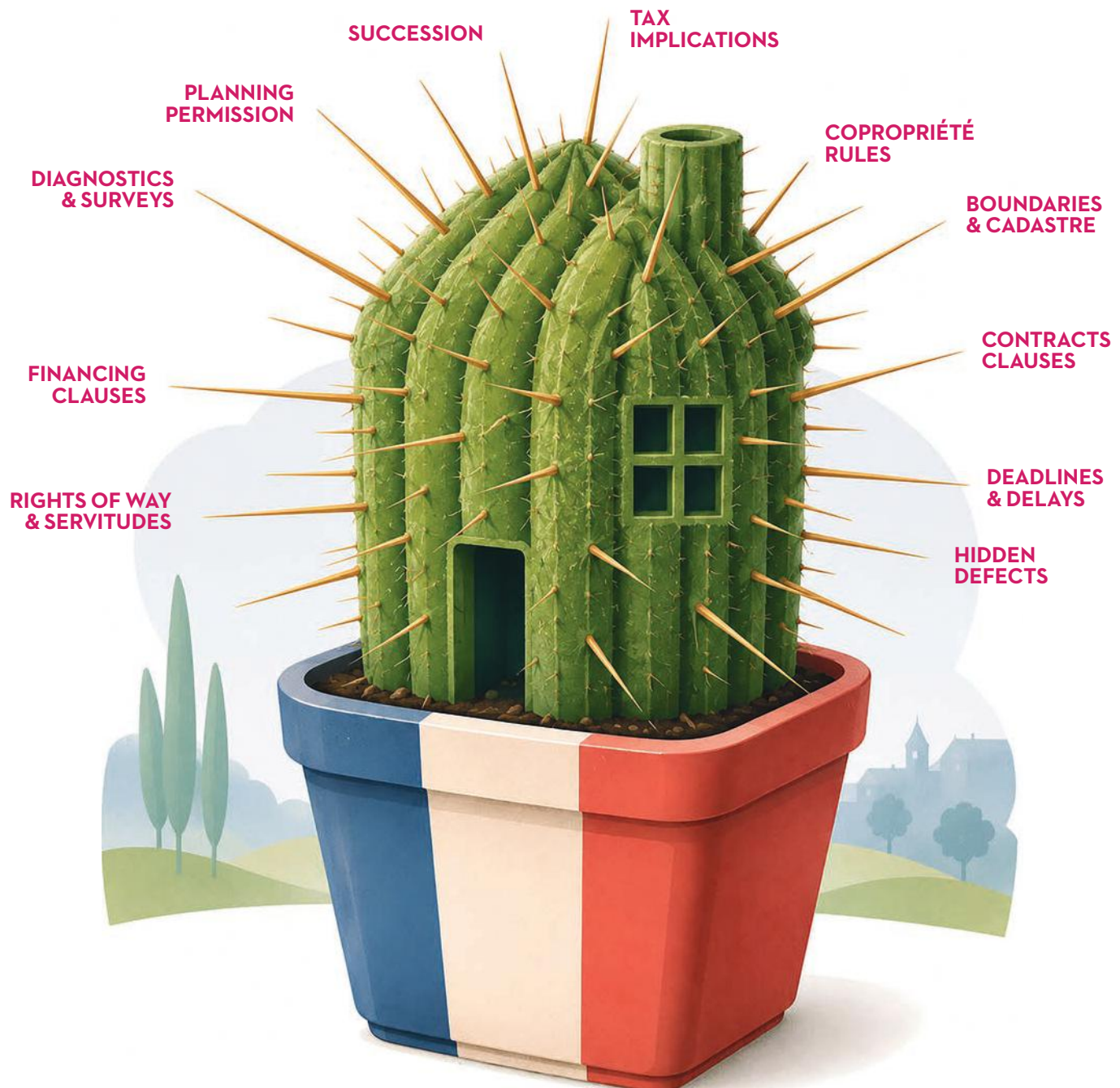
At this stage of the dream, nobody is thinking about things like inheritance law, septic tank compliance or the precise wording of a financing clause. And quite right too. A French property purchase should be exciting. Slightly romantic, even. But after 25 years advising buyers

and sellers, one observation returns with remarkable consistency: the people who enjoy the process most are rarely the most optimistic. They are usually the most prepared.

The French property system is not hostile, nor particularly mysterious. In many ways

it is more structured and protective than buyers from the UK initially expect. A good *notaire*, for example, can be extraordinarily diligent. The difficulty is simply that the system operates according to its own logic – and foreign buyers often discover which rules matter only after they matter quite a lot.

The temptation, naturally, is to believe that common sense will smooth over the rougher parts. Occasionally it does. Occasionally it introduces one to the rougher parts personally. Buying emotionally while reading legally is surprisingly difficult.



And that is where the sharper bits begin to appear.

The process resembles cultivating a cactus rather more than arranging flowers. Perfectly manageable with preparation and care. Slightly painful if grasped enthusiastically at the wrong moment.

WE'LL SORT THAT OUT LATER

Many buyers begin searching for a property before deciding how they actually intend to own it. Joint ownership? Sole ownership? A company structure? A future holiday let? A retirement home? Something eventually passed to children? Something to be sold quickly if circumstances change?

These are not especially glamorous conversations, which is why they are often postponed until after an offer has been accepted and emotions have firmly taken control of proceedings. Unfortunately, French law retains a stubborn preference for dealing with realities rather than intentions.

Inheritance planning is a particularly common example. Buyers frequently assume that an existing UK will automatically governs their French property in precisely the same way. Sometimes it may. Sometimes not entirely. Sometimes not at all in the manner expected. Many buyers prepare for sunshine more carefully than succession law.

This is rarely catastrophic immediately. The real difficulties tend to emerge years later - usually during bereavement, resale, remarriage or family disagreement - precisely when everyone would prefer life to be administratively simple. Preparation is generally cheaper than correction.

THE ESTATE AGENT SAID IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE

Estate agents are invaluable during a French property purchase. Good ones often possess remarkable local knowledge, practical intelligence and patience. But buyers occasionally misunderstand the distinction between commercial guidance

“The difficulty is that when problems do arise, they tend to become expensive very quickly”

and legal certainty.

A terrace “should be possible”... A barn “ought to convert beautifully”... A swimming pool “normally isn’t a problem”...

And sometimes all of this is perfectly true. Until you discover the building sits within a protected heritage perimeter. Or the local planning rules prohibit external alterations. Or the *règlement de copropriété* quietly forbids short-term letting. Or a neighbouring property possesses a right of way directly through the future rose garden.

The phrase “it should be fine” has probably preceded more French property disputes than any legal clause ever written. The French system itself is often wonderfully logical once properly understood. The difficulty is that several perfectly logical systems may apply simultaneously, for example:

- Planning law
- Co-ownership regulations
- Easements
- Local restrictions
- Environmental rules
- Contractual obligations

The spikes tend to appear where these overlap.

FINANCING IN PRINCIPLE

Foreign buyers are often surprised by how early French contracts become legally serious. An accepted offer is not merely a gentlemanly understanding over a bottle of rosé. Once the preliminary contract is signed, deadlines begin running, obligations become enforceable and deposits can become exposed if contractual conditions are not respected correctly.

The financing clause *condition suspensive de prêt* is a classic example. Many buyers hear reassuring phrases from banks: “You should have no difficulty”... “It looks promising”... “In principle, yes”... Unfortunately, contracts

display limited interest in phrases such as ‘in principle’.

The financing clause must correspond precisely with the loan sought. Amounts, duration, deadlines and conditions all matter. If the wording is too vague, or the buyer fails to comply strictly with the clause, legal protection may weaken considerably.

People are remarkably calm about wiring €400,000 internationally while becoming deeply anxious about paying for legal drafting.

DOING IT YOURSELF

Now, to be absolutely fair, many buyers complete French purchases successfully without extensive professional assistance. Intelligent, organised, bilingual and methodical people often navigate the process extremely well. But doing so requires a very particular mental state.

You must remain patient during delays; precise with documents; sceptical without becoming paranoid; available during administrative deadlines; emotionally detached while negotiating emotionally significant purchases...

This last point is perhaps the most difficult of all. A property purchase is usually tied to a future life projection: retirement plans, family gatherings, personal reinvention, escape from stress, proximity to grandchildren, sunlight, vineyards, peace, optimism. Buyers understandably fall slightly in love. Contracts do not.

The legal process remains stubbornly procedural regardless of whether you are purchasing a château in Dordogne or a flat in Nice. That procedural discipline is often what protects the buyer when things become unexpectedly complicated.

ECONOMY OF FALSE SAVINGS

There is, of course, an

understandable desire to reduce costs. A survey feels expensive. Independent legal advice feels optional. Translation services appear avoidable. Reviewing co-ownership regulations sounds faintly soporific. And perhaps none of these precautions will prove necessary. Many transactions proceed perfectly smoothly.

The difficulty is that when problems do arise, they tend to become expensive very quickly, for example: a non-compliant extension; neighbour litigation; an impossible planning project; undisclosed structural defects; inheritance deadlock between heirs; drainage disputes; invalid conditional clauses; blocked resale situations.

None of these situations necessarily arise because somebody acted maliciously. Very often, they arise because somebody assumed. The French property system is not especially unforgiving. But it is notably unenthusiastic about ambiguity. Which is why preparation matters so much before the process properly begins.

Over the years, we have seen almost every imaginable variation of French property optimism collide with legal reality - and fortunately helped resolve many of them. Eventually, we began noticing the same difficulties appearing repeatedly: the same misunderstood clauses; the same planning assumptions; the same inheritance surprises; the same financing complications; the same misplaced confidence in verbal reassurances.

Which is precisely why we created our free legal guide to reducing risk in French property transactions. Not to frighten buyers away from their plans. Quite the opposite. The dream remains entirely achievable. It simply helps to know where the spikes are before picking up the cactus. ■

Sarah Bright-Thomas is an avocat with Bright Avocats in Toulouse

Download your Free Guide to Legal Risk Reduction at: brightavocats.com/guide

Money column

Mar Bonnin-Palmer

explains why your budget needs to go further than the asking price



For many UK buyers, the idea of owning a home in France holds a timeless appeal. It might be a sun-soaked villa nestled among lavender fields, a rustic farmhouse with weathered shutters or a chic apartment overlooking a bustling market square. Whatever the vision, the dream is often the same: a slower pace of life, better food and the feeling of truly switching off.

It's no surprise, then, that once the idea takes hold, the search begins quickly. Weekends are spent scrolling through property listings, holidays become viewing trips, and before long, it's easy to picture yourself already living there.

But while the romance of buying abroad is undeniable, the financial reality deserves just as much attention - particularly at the outset. Because when purchasing in France, the asking price is only the beginning of the story.

BEYOND THE LISTING PRICE

One of the most common misconceptions among first-time overseas buyers is that the listed price broadly reflects the total cost. In reality, there are several additional expenses to consider.

In France, buyers are responsible for notary fees (which include taxes and administrative costs), typically ranging between 7% and 8% for older properties. There may also be legal fees, survey costs and, depending on the condition of the property, renovation or refurbishment work to do.

Even for buyers who plan to move straight in, small expenses can quickly accumulate - such as furnishing, decorating or

upgrading certain features to suit personal taste.

Taken together, these costs mean your budget needs to stretch further than you might initially expect. And yet, there is another factor - less visible, but just as important - that can have a significant impact on the final figure: currency.

CURRENCY IS PART OF THE EQUATION

If you're buying a property in France, the price will almost certainly be set in euros. For UK buyers funding their purchase in pounds, this introduces an additional layer of complexity. Unlike a fixed price purchase in sterling, the true cost of your new home will depend on the exchange rate at the time you convert your money. And because currency markets move constantly, that cost is not fixed until the transaction is completed.

At first glance, fluctuations in exchange rates may seem relatively minor. But when applied to a property purchase, even small movements can translate into substantial differences. Consider a property priced at €300,000. If the pound is trading at 1.21 against the euro, the cost would be roughly £248,000. If the rate falls to 1.14, the same property would cost closer to £263,000. That's a difference of around £15,000 - purely as a result of currency movement.

For many buyers, that could represent the budget for renovations, furniture or simply a financial buffer. It highlights how exchange rates are not just a background detail, but a central part of the purchasing process.

TIMING IS EVERYTHING

What makes currency particularly relevant is the



timeline involved in buying property in France. Unlike in the UK, where transactions can already feel lengthy, the French process follows a structured legal path. After your offer is accepted, you'll typically sign a preliminary contract known as the *compromis de vente*. This is legally binding, subject to a short cooling-off period, and marks a key milestone in the purchase. From that point, completion often takes between two and four months.

During this period, exchange rates can move significantly. Global events, economic data and shifts in market sentiment can all influence the value of the pound against the euro - sometimes quickly and unpredictably.

This means the rate available when you agree to buy the property is unlikely to be the same as the rate you receive when you make your final payment. For buyers who haven't planned for this, it can

lead to uncomfortable surprises and added financial pressure at a crucial stage of the process.

Acknowledge from the outset that currency plays a key role in your purchase. The final cost of the property will depend heavily on the exchange rate you achieve, so having a plan in place early is essential. Leaving currency decisions to the last minute can expose you to unnecessary risk. The good news is that while currency fluctuations cannot be controlled, they can be managed.

TRACK THE RATE

It's good practice to note the exchange rate at the time you submit your offer. This gives you a baseline and helps you assess whether market movements are working in your favour or against you.

Once your offer is accepted, you'll move towards signing the *compromis de vente* (purchase contract). This is a



“The final cost of the property will depend heavily on the exchange rate you achieve so have a plan in place early”

legally binding commitment, following a 10-day cooling-off period. From there, you can start to explore ways of managing that exposure.

FIX YOUR RATE

For buyers who prefer reassurance and predictability, one option is to fix the exchange rate in advance.

This can be done using a forward contract, which allows you to secure a rate today for a transfer that will take place in the future. In effect, it enables you to lock in the sterling cost of your purchase, regardless of how the market moves in the meantime.

For example, if you know

you'll need €300,000 in a few months' time, you can agree the rate now and remove the uncertainty entirely. Typically, this involves placing a small deposit, with the balance settled closer to completion.

For anyone working within a defined or non-negotiable budget, this approach can offer valuable peace of mind. It ensures that an adverse change in exchange rates won't suddenly push the purchase beyond reach.

TARGET A RATE

Not every buyer feels the need to fix a rate immediately. For those with greater flexibility, there may be an opportunity

to benefit from favourable movements in the market.

One way to approach this is by setting a target exchange rate. If the market reaches that level, the transaction happens automatically. This removes the need to monitor currency markets constantly, while still allowing you to take advantage of potential improvements.

Of course, this approach involves a degree of uncertainty. Exchange rates do not always move in the desired direction, and waiting can mean missing the chance to secure a known, acceptable rate. That's why many buyers choose a more balanced strategy.

BALANCED APPROACH

In some cases, buyers choose to split their strategy. For example, you may secure part of your funds with a forward contract to protect the core of your budget, while leaving the remaining amount open to try and benefit from any positive

movement in the market. This approach provides a mix of certainty and flexibility, helping reduce risk while still allowing for some upside movement in your favour.

For most people, managing exchange rates is not something they deal with regularly. And when combined with the legal, administrative, and emotional aspects of buying a property abroad, it can quickly feel overwhelming. This is where specialist support can make a meaningful difference.

Currency specialists can help you understand your options, guide you through the process, and offer tools designed to manage risk more effectively. Also, they often provide more competitive exchange rates than high street banks, as well as lower or no transfer fees - potentially saving thousands over the course of a transaction. More importantly, they bring clarity to a part of the process that can otherwise feel uncertain.

CAREFUL PLANNING

Buying property in France should be an exciting and rewarding experience. It's about more than bricks and mortar; it's about creating a lifestyle, a retreat, and perhaps even a long-term investment in a different way of living. But achieving that dream comfortably requires careful planning.

By looking beyond the asking price and accounting for the full financial picture - including currency - you can approach your purchase with confidence. You'll know what you can afford, understand the risks and have a strategy in place to manage them.

And when the moment finally comes to pick up the keys, you can focus on what really matters: settling into your new surroundings, exploring your local village or town and beginning your next chapter in France. Because when everything is planned properly, the dream doesn't just remain a dream - it becomes a reality you can truly enjoy. ■

Mar Bonnin-Palmer is Head of Partnerships at Moneycorp
[moneycorp.com](https://www.moneycorp.com)

AGRICULTURAL SUPPORT

Food and where it comes from is a serious topic of conversation in France and most people are supportive of French farmers. If your plans to move to France involve some sort of agricultural business, you'll be pleased to hear there is plenty of help available, as **Catharine Higginson** explains

France is a nation of food lovers. Food and where it comes from is taken very seriously in France and any meal invariably involves lengthy discussion about the ingredients and their provenance. As a result, farming is taken equally seriously, and the vast majority of the French population are very supportive of the farming industry and tend to back their (fairly frequent!) protests. This in turn, results in a government who are aware of the importance of the agricultural lobby and provide significant help in the form of grants or *aides* and other forms of assistance.

In addition to the grants which are available on a regular and ongoing basis, the French government prioritises supporting farmers during any given short-term crisis. For example, at the time of writing, the huge increase in fuel prices



You can apply for assistance with the costs involved in protecting your herd – these sheep are grazing in the Pyrénées

has resulted in the government providing emergency relief for farmers in the form of delayed payment of social charges and income tax, short-term loans and instructions to the banks to take a more 'flexible' approach with clients who may be experiencing difficulties. In another example, earlier this year a special bureau was opened to assist and financially

support poultry farmers affected by avian flu.

SUBSIDIES AND LOANS

So, what kind of help can farmers access? Like almost any service or grants available in France there is variation from region to region so for anyone considering starting up as a farmer in a particular region, it's sensible to work out what

is available before making a definitive decision.

In general, the *aides* apply to both young farmers who want to start out and those who are already farming. They can take the form of subsidies for investments, preferential loans, tax exemptions and support for environmentally friendly measures or a transition to organic farming

The help available varies from region to region so if you're considering starting up as a farmer in France, work out what is available where before making a definitive decision



or modernising buildings and upgrading equipment. Collective and co-operative set-ups are also eligible.

There are numerous different grants available at both European, national, regional and departmental level but the best known is probably the PAC or *la politique agricole commune* which is the base of European-wide assistance for farmers.

It's based on two main pillars, FEAGA (*le fonds européen agricole de garantie*) and FEADER (*le fonds européen agricole pour le développement rural*). The FEAGA finances direct assistance and payments to farmers while the FEADER supports rural development.

This development takes the form of environmental and climatic help - MAEC (*mesures agro-environmentales et climatiques*) - grants for organic farming and the ICHN.

The ICHN (*indemnité compensatoire de handicap naturel*) is assistance given to farmers in regions where production conditions are considered more difficult than elsewhere; these are known as *zones défavorisées* and are often areas where conditions are harsher and encouraging the continuation of farming helps maintain the landscape and biodiversity.

Currently 20,400 French communes fulfill the strict criteria to qualify for this grant and around 100,000 farmers benefit from it. Payments vary between €35 and €450 per hectare and are calculated according to the area, how significant the difficulties of farming there are assessed to be and the type of farming, livestock or cereals etc.

MODERNISING FARMING

At national level, the majority of French grants are administered by FranceAgriMer which reports to the Ministry of Agriculture. They provide assistance with funding for modernising processes and infrastructure, moving to organic farming, supporting local and sustainable forms of production and administering *aides d'urgence*, such as the payments made to poultry farmers during avian flu.



In France, you can even get a grant for improving bee pollination



Many French food products enjoy protected status - including the distinctive white Charolais cattle in Burgundy

The regions are responsible for administering part of the FEADER grants, helping farmers upgrade their equipment, improving animal welfare and reducing their environmental impact.

They also provide start-up help and grants, and help with landscape improvement projects such as hedge and meadow land preservation.

Given the vast amount of help and assistance available, it can be quite overwhelming to try to work out what you might be entitled to. For example, if you have a herd of sheep or goats you can apply for assistance with the costs

involved in protecting your herd. This could include paying for a shepherd or a guardian service, or a payment if you undertake the task yourself. It can also cover the cost of buying, training and sterilising sheep dogs, investing in electric fencing and various other forms of assistance and will vary according to factors such as location, herd size, risk involved and so forth.

There are grants available for things such as improving bee pollination - API (*Amélioration du Potentiel Pollinisateur des Abeilles*), and rare breeds - PRM (*Protection des Races Menacées*) in addition to assistance with housing for those in the agricultural sector. This can include help with deposit payments, rent reductions of up to €300 per month for young farmers, low-cost loans to improve or extend the home and loans of up to €40,000 at a heavily discounted rate to help with buying a property, plus free help and advice on what is applicable to an individual's personal situation.

WHERE TO LOOK

So how do you go about finding out exactly what you might

be entitled to? There are two approaches. You can contact a specialist via a website such as mes-allocs.fr/guides/aide-par-situation/aide-agriculteur or cerfrance.fr/metiers/agriculture and do an initial online calculation before getting in touch.

You can also trawl through the official French government website agriculture.gouv.fr which is guaranteed to be both accurate and up to date. However, there is a lot of information on there and it can be quite daunting. Perhaps the best way is to start with your region and see what help in finding out what you may be entitled to is being offered there. For instance, there are over 90 different agricultural grants and aides available here installer-transmettre-normandie.fr on the Normandy site. Searching using the words 'installer', 'agriculture' and your region should set you off on the right path.

Psychological help and support for farmers and their families is also available via the Agri'écoute helpline (agriculture.gouv.fr/agriecoute-mal-etre-solitude-idees-suicidaires-parlez-en). This is funded by the state and the agricultural social security 'caisse' the MSA (*Mutualité sociale agricole*), and personalised help and support is also available from the *Chambre d'agriculture* in each department. There's also a network known as the *Solidarité Paysans* which provides support, information and help negotiating with creditors or assistance with legal proceedings.

Farming can be incredibly hard but as you can see, there is a massive amount of help and support, both financial and otherwise, available to farmers in France. Land is still affordable and there are plenty of beautiful old farms waiting to be loved again so if you've always dreamed of farming in France, go for it! ■

Top tip

If you are serious about moving to France and becoming a farmer, it is absolutely crucial that you do your research on the regions and the different grants available before buying.

You may well discover vast differences in different areas and this will almost certainly have an impact on the region that you eventually choose to move to.

NEXT MONTH

Guide to: Decluttering - recycling, secondhand shops and more

Q&A Ask the experts

Need advice? Put your problems to our panel

WEDDING VENUE PITFALLS

What are the biggest mistakes British buyers make when purchasing a château in France to turn into a wedding venue?

JOSS GENESTET of The Venue Finders responds

(thevenueadvisors.com): France has become one of the most attractive destinations in the world for weddings. Every year thousands of British couples travel to the French countryside to celebrate their marriage in historic châteaux and elegant estates. This demand has also encouraged many British buyers to invest in properties in France with the goal of transforming them into wedding venues.

However, after working for over 15 years in the wedding industry and collaborating with venues across France, I have seen that owning a beautiful château is only the beginning. Many buyers underestimate the strategic decisions required



Joss Genestet

to create a successful wedding venue business. There are several common mistakes that British investors often make when entering this market.

One of the biggest mistakes is not clearly defining the objective of the purchase. Some buyers see the property as a lifestyle project, others as a business designed to generate revenue, while some hope to renovate and resell in a few years. Each objective requires a different strategy. Without clarity from the start, owners often spend years repositioning

the venue before finding the right direction.

Another frequent mistake is targeting the wrong wedding market. Not all venues operate in the same segment. Some focus on local weddings, others specialise in destination weddings, luxury celebrations or high volume events. British couples planning destination weddings often expect accommodation on site, privacy and the possibility to host a full wedding weekend rather than just a single day event. If the venue is not designed with this experience in mind, it can be difficult to attract this market.

Capacity is another factor that is often underestimated. Investors must carefully consider how many guests the venue can host for the reception and how many can stay overnight. The difference between accommodating 40 guests and hosting 120 can completely change the financial model of the business.



Pricing strategy also plays a major role in the success of a venue. If the rental price is set too high, bookings may be limited. If it is too low, the venue may attract the wrong clientele and damage its perceived value. Finding the right balance is essential to position the venue correctly within the market.

Interestingly, many buyers focus immediately on large renovation projects, when smaller strategic improvements often have a greater impact. Improving ceremony areas, creating a strong rainplan, enhancing reception spaces

CAN I 'GRANT' MY FRIEND A MORTGAGE?

I live alone in France. As I do not have any income a friend has offered to lend me some money. However, she says she wants to know that if anything happens to me she can get her money back. I do not have a mortgage over the house, so can I grant her a mortgage, and would that work for us both?

MATTHEW CAMERON of Ashtons Legal responds

(ashtonslegal.co.uk): While mortgages are generally completed in favour of a bank or other institutional lender, there is no reason why one could not



Matthew Cameron

be granted to a private person. A mortgage is a right registered against one party's property to protect the interests of another.

A mortgage could be charged against your house, to protect

your friend's. The house could not be sold, gifted, or mortgaged to someone else, without your friend's consent. If you were to die before repayment, the right would remain in place, so your friend would still be protected.

It would be important to agree the terms carefully before entering into such an arrangement. For example, is your friend going to be charging you interest? If so, that interest may be treated as taxable income for them; if not, then it may constitute a gift to you, which would itself be taxable. Is it anticipated that you

would make monthly or annual repayments, or is there some other plan for future repayment of the debt? It is common for a lender to register a charge at a value greater than the borrowed amount, to cover any interest due or recovery costs: would your friend require that?

You must bear in mind that while you are friends, it is important to clarify all terms in respect of a financial transaction, as friendships can be damaged by debt.

It is notable, of course, that your friend might be able to take possession of your property if

WHEN HEIRS DISAGREE...

In the future I stand to inherit a French property along with various members of my family. The problem is, it's unlikely that we'll have the same ideas about what to do with it – some want to sell, others to keep it as a family holiday home. What happens when heirs disagree in France?



Fabienne Atkin

FABIENNE ATKIN of Stone King responds (stoneking.co.uk):

In France, an estate is not administered by executors or personal representatives. Instead, a French *notaire* deals with the formalities following a death, and the heirs are deemed to own the deceased's assets from the date of death.

Where there is more than one heir, the estate is held in indivision, meaning that the assets are jointly owned rather than allocated to specific individuals.

Joint ownership can create practical difficulties. While everyday matters may be straightforward, important decisions – such as selling the property – usually require the agreement of all co-owners.

Where heirs have differing objectives or strained relationships, this requirement for unanimity can result in deadlock.

Each heir must decide within a prescribed timeframe whether to accept the inheritance outright, accept it with limitations or renounce it entirely. An heir who renounces is treated as though they had never inherited and receives no benefit from the estate.

If that heir has children, the children inherit in their place and must also renounce if the intention is to disengage fully. Where the children are minors, court approval may be required and it must be shown that renunciation is in their best interests.

Joint ownership can be

brought to an end through a *partage de succession*, which allocates specific assets to each heir so that they become sole owners.

Where the inherited property is the principal or sole asset of the estate, this may involve the joint owners compensating the departing owner financially (*soulte*) or buying them out (*licitation*). This is only feasible if sufficient funds are available or if the heirs unanimously agree to sell the property and divide the proceeds.

French law is based on the principle that no one can be forced to remain in indivision. If agreement cannot be reached, an heir may apply to the court for a judicial partition, although this process is often lengthy and costly.

Legislation enacted in April 2026, expected to come into force in early 2027, seeks to address deadlock situations and vacant estates. It codifies existing case law by empowering judges, in cases of urgency and where required by the common interest, to authorise a joint owner to sell a jointly owned property without the consent of the other co-owners.

Disputes involving inherited property in France can be complicated, particularly where multiple heirs, cross-border considerations or family tensions are involved. Obtaining early advice can often help prevent matters from escalating and identify workable solutions.

A successful wedding venue requires more than a beautiful property

or designing attractive outdoor areas can significantly improve the venue experience without major construction work.

Elements that seem secondary can also become key selling points. For example, many properties already have swimming pools, but the real value lies in how the pool area is designed. When it becomes a social space with seating areas, music and outdoor bars, it can transform the wedding weekend experience.

Finally, marketing is often underestimated. A beautiful property does not automatically generate

bookings. Visibility is essential, and successful venues rely on strong marketing strategies as well as trusted networks of planners, photographers, caterers and other wedding professionals.

France offers extraordinary opportunities for investors interested in the wedding market. But success requires more than just a beautiful property. It requires clear strategy, market understanding and professional guidance to turn a château into a thriving wedding venue business.

you were to fail to observe your obligations as to the loan.

The mortgage would be registered at the French land registry. A *notaire* would need to complete the mortgage deed to be registered as a charge against the property. You would therefore also need to account for the *notaire's* fees and duties for completing the deed: these could be in the region of 1%-2% of the value.

Giving your property as collateral for the loan is going to protect your friend, the lender. It is also going to impose a burden on you, so do take advice.



Get in touch!

Ask your questions about French property or life in France...

Email: karen.tait@francemedia.com

Alternatively, you can post your question on our Facebook page

Holiday rentals

Stijn Neyrinck explains the VAT rules for renovation



Buying a characterful property in France to transform into a holiday rental is a dream for many - but when renovation enters the picture, so do some surprisingly complex VAT rules. Get it right, however, and there may be a valuable opportunity to recover costs.

When does renovation work attract 20% VAT instead of the reduced 10% rate?

Most buyers are relieved to hear that renovation works on residential property in France often benefit from a reduced VAT rate of 10%. But this isn't guaranteed - and for larger-scale projects, the rules can shift quite quickly.

In simple terms, the reduced rate applies to standard improvement works on existing buildings. However, once a renovation becomes substantial, the French tax authorities may consider the project equivalent to a new-build. At that point, the full 20% VAT rate comes into play.

So, what counts as 'substantial'? It's not just about cost, it's about how much of the property is being transformed. If the majority of structural elements (like foundations or load-bearing walls) are rebuilt, the classification as new-build is quite clear.

Less obvious, however, is that, even without major structural work, a property can still fall into this category. If more than two-thirds of the key internal elements are replaced - such as plumbing, electrics, internal walls, heating systems, windows and doors - the project may also be treated as new construction for VAT purposes.

In practice, many full renovations of older French homes, especially those taken back to the shell, cross this threshold. The takeaway? Before starting works, it's well worth reviewing the scope carefully with your contractor and adviser. The difference between 10% and 20% VAT can be significant.

Is it possible to recover VAT on renovation costs?

Potentially, yes - and this is where things get interesting. Normally, income from furnished holiday rentals in France is exempt from VAT. This means you don't charge VAT on your rental income, but equally, you can't recover VAT on renovation or running costs.

However, an important exception exists. If your rental

activity resembles a small-scale hotel operation, you may be able to opt into the VAT system. To do so, you must provide at least three of the following four services:

- Breakfast
- Regular cleaning during guest stays
- Provision of linen
- Guest reception (whether in person or organised system)

These services must be offered under conditions similar to those found in the hotel sector, so this isn't just a tick-box exercise. In addition, you need to demonstrate that you are running a genuine, ongoing rental business with regular occupancy.

If these criteria are met, your rental income becomes subject to VAT (typically at 10%). While that means adding VAT to your rental prices, it also opens the door to reclaiming VAT on major expenses, including renovation works taxed at 20%.

For anyone undertaking a large refurbishment, this can make a substantial financial difference.

What should owners consider before opting for VAT status?

While VAT recovery can be very attractive, it's important

to understand that it comes with long-term commitments. The key rule to be aware of is the 20-year adjustment period. If you reclaim VAT on major renovation works, you are effectively committing to a VATable rental activity for the next 20 years. If you stop earlier - for example, by selling the property or switching to standard VAT-exempt holiday lettings - you may need to repay part of the VAT previously recovered.

The good news is that this 20-year period often aligns neatly with the accounting depreciation of renovation costs. Under the French 'réel' tax regime, owners can deduct depreciation annually from their rental income, reducing their taxable profit.

For example, a €100,000 renovation could generate around €5,000 per year in depreciation deductions over 20 years. Combined with VAT recovery, this can significantly improve the overall return on investment.

However, stepping into the VAT system also means additional administration: VAT registration, regular filings and compliance checks. French tax authorities take these rules seriously and may verify whether the required services are genuinely being provided.

For buyers planning a major renovation project, VAT isn't just a technical detail - it can shape the financial outcome of the entire investment. In some cases, what initially looks like a disadvantage (20% VAT on works) can actually become an opportunity when combined with a well-structured rental activity.

As always with French property, the key lies in planning ahead. Taking advice early - particularly from a French accountant or tax specialist - can help ensure your dream renovation doesn't come with unexpected surprises, and may even unlock valuable savings along the way. ■

Stijn Neyrinck is a chartered French accountant at RFN Société d'Expertise Comptable
Tel: 0033 (0)3 28 49 45 93
rfn.fr/en

© SHUTTERSTOCK

"If more than two-thirds of the key internal elements are replaced, the project may be treated as new construction for VAT purposes"



Unwanted guests

Carmel O'Connell tackles some tricky holiday home situations



We've noticed what looks like a hornets' nest in the eaves of our house. Should we be worried, and who is actually responsible for dealing with it?

We found one ourselves last summer - though 'found' is perhaps too gentle a word for what happened. We were driving up the track towards a client's property when we passed an old tree stump by the driveway. The van must have disturbed them, because suddenly the air around the stump was very much alive. We didn't stop to admire the view. Windows up, keep moving, make a phone call - as it turns out, exactly the right response.

The first thing to establish is what you're dealing with. France has two species: the native European hornet (*frelon européen*), large, loud, and relatively docile unless provoked; and the Asian hornet (*frelon asiatique*), smaller, darker and a serious threat to honeybee populations. The Asian hornet is now widespread across much of France. If in any doubt, photograph it from a safe distance and ask a professional to identify it.

The nest is on your property, so the responsibility - and cost - is yours. Do not attempt to remove it yourself. Call the *mairie* first; they can direct you to approved local operators. You can also report to FREDON (the regional pest management body) or use beesforlife.fr, which connects reports to certified professionals near you. Expect to pay €120-€180 depending on accessibility, with a professional typically available within 24 to 48 hours.

A nest discovered in July, when it has been growing since April, is considerably more complicated - and more expensive - to deal with than

one caught in spring. Regular property checks earn their keep for precisely this reason.

If you have guests arriving imminently, warn them and keep them away from the area until it's dealt with. You have a duty of care as an owner. And if anyone is stung and shows any signs of a reaction - hives, swollen tongue, difficulty breathing, chest pain - dial 15 (SAMU) or 112 immediately.

Our French neighbours have complained that guests we had staying made too much noise. We weren't there ourselves. Could we be held responsible?

The short answer is yes - as the property owner, you can be held responsible for your guests' behaviour even when you're not there. It's one of those things people rarely consider until a neighbour is knocking on a door that nobody is answering.

French law takes noise nuisance (*tapage nocturne*)

seriously. Excessive noise between 10pm and 7am is a legal offence, and neighbours are perfectly entitled to call the local *gendarmerie* if it continues. If the police attend and record an incident, a fine can follow, and as the owner of the property, your name is on the paperwork.

Beyond the legal aspect, there is the human dimension. Rural communities in France are tight-knit. Your neighbours live there year-round, have been tolerant all winter, and would like July to be peaceful. A bad summer can sour a relationship that took years to build - and it's often that same neighbour who notices your burst pipe in October.

Set clear expectations before guests arrive. A simple house guide - in English and French if possible - covering quiet hours, parking and pool rules goes a long way. Make sure there's a contact number guests can reach in the evening, and that neighbours can use if things go wrong. A problem resolved at 11pm is far better than a formal complaint in the morning.

If a neighbour raises a concern, respond quickly and apologise genuinely, even if you weren't there. How you handle a complaint matters almost as much as the complaint itself.

We returned to our French house to find that someone had been using our pool while we

were away. Can we do anything about it, and how do we stop it happening again?

This happened to one of our clients during a heatwave - and if you've ever arrived home to find damp towels that aren't yours draped over the sun loungers, you'll know that the feeling is somewhere between outrage and profound bewilderment. Who does that?

More people than you'd think, unfortunately. In a heatwave, an unoccupied property with a visible pool is an irresistible temptation to walkers or people who've clocked it over the fence on previous visits. It feels victimless to them. It isn't.

Legally, this is trespassing (*intrusion sur propriété privée*) and it is taken seriously. Should you report it to the *gendarmerie*? Yes, though don't expect them to dust your sun loungers for fingerprints. Without clear evidence, an active inquiry is unlikely. But that's not the point. Filing a report (*main courante*) creates an official record. If it happens again, that record matters. If the situation escalates, or you need to make an insurance case for repeated unauthorised access, having reported it each time strengthens your position.

Prevention is the more productive response. A clearly visible *Propriété Privée - Défense d'Entrer* sign is your first line of defence: a deterrent and legal protection in one, removing any ambiguity about whether access was permitted. Beyond that, consider how visible your pool is from the road. A locked gate, a higher hedge or a pool cover signals the property isn't abandoned. A timer on exterior lights helps too - a house that looks lived-in is far less inviting.

And check your insurance. Some policies require that pool areas meet specific security standards. If an uninvited visitor injures themselves in your pool - however absurd that sounds - the liability question can become very uncomfortable very quickly. ■

Carmel O'Connell and husband Joe Wilson run Les Bons Voisins
Tel: 0033 (0)562 29 26 62
propertymanagementinfrance.com

“An unoccupied property with a pool can be irresistible to some”



Not all pool guests are invited!

FrenchEntrée

With you every step of the way



FROM DREAM TO DOORSTEP

Every step covered... Guidance, advice, and support

FrenchEntrée Plus Membership

What's included in your one-year membership:

- **First-step consultation:** Explore your plans and map out your journey
- **Personalised roadmap:** Turn your goals into a clear, actionable strategy
 - **Second consultation:** Extra guidance whenever you need it
 - **Ongoing phone & email support:** Friendly help at every stage
 - **In-depth expert guides:** Everything from buying to settling into life in France
- **French Property News digital subscription:** Full access to the archive and every new issue
- **Trusted network of experts:** We connect you only with the specialists you actually need

Whether you're setting up a new life, buying a holiday home, planning retirement or exploring investment opportunities, we are here to help you avoid the common pitfalls of moving to France

WHY CHOOSE US?

Since 2003 we've been helping buyers fulfil their dream to own a place in France. Our print media, websites, newsletters, webinars and exhibitions are there at every step of the journey. Property search, legal & tax, regional choices, planning and building, healthcare & pensions - we've got all the answers.



Next steps...

- ✓ **Book a free 15-minute discovery call to find out whether membership is the right fit for you**
- ✓ **Join as a Plus member and schedule your first consultation with our Relocation Advisor**
- ✓ **Get your personalised, in-depth Roadmap, guiding you through every stage of your journey**
- ✓ **We'll introduce you to any experts identified during your consultation. VIP service available**

**FRENCH
PROPERTY NEWS**

FrenchEntrée
FIRST FOR BUYING PROPERTY & LIVING IN FRANCE

**FRANCE
PropertyShop**

**COMPLETE
FRANCE**

**FRENCH
PROPERTY
EXHIBITION**



Book Call

**join.frenchentree.com /
members@frenchentree.com
or call us on +44 (0)1225 463752**

July and August mark the mass exodus from French towns and cities to the coast and countryside for annual summer holidays



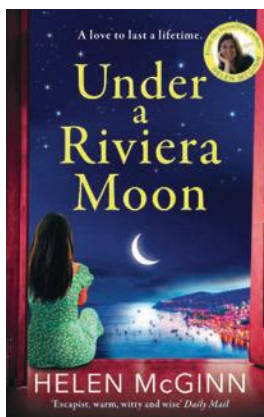
Joie de vivre

READ

UNDER A RIVIERA MOON

By Helen McGinn (Boldwood Books)

Maggie travels to the Riviera to collect photos and memories from her grandmother's best friend, the elderly yet glamorous Allegra. We learn about Allegra's student life in 1960s Paris, with its art and jazz clubs, while also following Maggie's discovery of modern-day Cannes, bright with dazzling seas and lively markets. Romance blossoms for both characters, and for us as we fall in love with France seen through McGinn's eyes.



WATCH

BIGBUG (2022)

Watch on Netflix

This odd sci-fi explores familiar dystopian themes when humans are trapped in their home by machines who have overstepped their bounds. However, it is far from the Hollywood stereotypes, with a futuristic 2CV and lines such as, "I prefer to drink chicory, at least then you die in good health". Available with English subtitles (and audio), it's slightly ridiculous but certainly French and the sets are quite beautiful.



TEST YOURSELF

Les associations

Match each image with its French name

BIBERON
BOUTEILLE
THERMOS
GOURDE



answers p102

DID YOU KNOW?

PARIS TRULY IS THE HOME OF THE FASHION SHOW

The world's first fashion show was, unsurprisingly, held in Paris in 1858, but the concept was created by a British designer, Charles Frederick Worth (1825-1895). Born in Lincolnshire, Worth's passion for fashion began when he worked with a haberdasher, and aged 13 he moved to London to gain an apprenticeship. In 1845, with meagre savings, he sailed for Paris, worked in a fabric and dress shop and unusually began to design dresses. After winning a first-class medal for design at the 1855 Paris World Fair, he set up his own shop and became the first designer to show a collection in advance and the first man to become internationally famous in fashion. Following his lead, fashion shows were then adopted worldwide.



© WORTH PARIS

Test yourself



© SHASTA - ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES

PROPERTY TALK

What does
'une bétonnière'
mean?

1. A beetroot plant
2. A livestock pen
3. A cement mixer

answers p102

French interiors

Take your pick of these mellow yellow items to bring the sunshine into your home through the summer season

Quilt cover with a modern twist
on a classic French design
✿ £68 francoisesaget.com



CHEZ VOUS

Send us pictures of
your French home to
inspire us with your
interior design!



Deep yellow velvet footstool
in minimalist style
✿ £69.99 la-maison-chic.co.uk



Beach bag in woven palm fronds and yellow fabric
✿ £66 maisonsdumonde.com



Brighten your bathroom with this
plush polkadot towel
✿ £15 3suisses.fr



Handpainted abstract 'Safran'
painting in golden shades
✿ £270 blancdivoire.com

CLICK OF THE MONTH

COMMENT ÇA MARCHÉ



Comment Ça Marche (meaning 'how it works', or 'how does it work?') was initially launched in 1999 to explain about new technology, hence its name. Based around a forum format, it helps consumers find answers about technology, and has developed to cover other areas such as law, health, finance and even cookery. It now ranks number 21 of the most visited sites in France. You can ask a question on anything and everything, from how to reconnect your printer to personal liability, and receive answers online or by email. Alternatively, browse its themed articles to find the answers you need.
commentcamarche.net

Test yourself



IDIOM

“Découvrir le pot aux roses”

1. To reveal a surprise gift
2. To discover an unexpected treasure
3. To uncover the truth

answers p102

French icon

Discover some of France's most fascinating icons

GRIMOD DE LA REYNIÈRE: THE FIRST FOOD CRITIC

You may never have heard of Alexandre Balthazar Laurent Grimod de La Reynière (1758-1837), but he is partly to thank for France's gourmet reputation. Alexandre was born without fingers, so his wealthy father commissioned artificial metal hands and his mother preferred to keep him away from her social circle, encouraging him to travel with his tutor. He studied law, became a theatre critic, and had a complicated relationship with his parents.

In 1782, aged 24, he hosted the first of many 'Wednesday philosophical dinners', then on 1 February 1783, Alexandre's friends received death announcements and an invitation to a funeral dinner. The scene featured 365 candles, a coffin and altar boys, then Alexandre himself appeared for dessert; the event caused a scandal but had its desired effect of boosting his profile.

In 1785 he published a paper that so embarrassed his society parents that he was sent to a monastery for a year, where he calmed his rebellious nature and cultivated his gourmet tastes.

Alexandre then opened a food wholesaler but went bankrupt and sought refuge with his aunt in Béziers, safe from the Revolution. He eventually returned to Paris and from



© RMN-AP (CHATEAU DE VERSAILLES), FRANCK RAUX

1802 resumed hosting extravagant weekly dinners. In 1803, he published *L'Almanach des Gourmands*, the first guide to the art of fine dining, which was immediately successful, bringing fame, fortune, and merchants sending samples in the hope of future inclusion. The Almanach was published annually until 1812, then in 1815 Alexandre withdrew from Paris and retired to a country manor, where he spent his inheritance surrounded by pigs and chickens. He died aged 80.

Food-writer Jean-Claude Bonnet declared, "Grimod is indeed the only true founding father of gastronomy".



What to drink...

Each issue, we take a look at a different French tippie. This time, we're looking at the popularity of a bright green drink... ..

If you're a regular visitor to France, you're sure to have seen people sipping a green drink in a tall glass or heard people ordering a *sirop à la menthe*. While most British and American adults would resist a drink that seems to resemble mouthwash, it's a French institution, and mint-flavoured cordial is enjoyed by all ages. Why is this? Some will tell you that it is refreshing, but much of its popularity comes from nostalgia, as French children are raised on *menthe à l'eau*, mint-flavoured squash. There are variations to suit all ages, too, with *diabolo-menthe* (mint cordial with lemonade) and the more classy, grown-up version of *perrier-menthe*, cordial with fizzy water. There are many theories as to why France enjoys this mint flavour, but it could be because when absinthe was banned in 1915, the French palate was already accustomed to green herbal beverages, so *menthe à l'eau* filled the void – without the hallucinations.



ANSWERS:

Idiom: Découvrir le pot aux roses = to uncover the truth
Les associations: 1. Thermos = flask, 2. Gourde = reusable drinking bottle, 3. Bouteille = glass bottle, 4. Biberon = baby bottle, 5. Property talk: Une bétonnière = a cement mixer



The intrepid châtelaine

Even during the busy summer season, **Erin Choa** takes time to appreciate every corner of the château

Hidden behind the 'new' Château de Bourneau, you can still find the only surviving medieval tower of the original fortified château.

It sits in the corner of the château island, where the west and south wings meet and it is always a surprising discovery for our wedding couples daydreaming out of the window of our honeymoon suite.

The original château was built 550 years ago by the first intrepid châtelaine, the Dame de Bourneau Jaquette de la Ramée who asked permission from the French king, Louis XI, to build a fortified castle here at Bourneau.

The medieval château fell into ruin during the French Revolution but this remaining turret still stands proud as a solitary tower embedded within the medieval walls that plunges into the moat to watch the north-eastern approach from the château island.

Some of the little windows remain, as do the long water gutters that continue to pour rainfall into the moat, now that they are no longer choked with weeds after a day of unblocking decades of debris and growth.

The tiled roof is certainly a new addition and each generation has edited this odd medieval remainder into a new purpose. We only have access to one floor but I always wonder if there is a concealed staircase buried under a more recent stone floor that hides another chamber?



In the corner of the château island, an original medieval tower provides the perfect setting for a moment of slow dining

In summer, it is deliciously cool inside, as if hewn from smooth rock in a hidden creek. We often speculate whether it was repurposed in the 19th century into an ice house when the château was in her heyday, wining and dining and producing fancy ices and creams from the hot kitchen only a stone's throw from the turret.

Now, it has been repurposed once again into a woodstore and where our spoilt cat, HRH Oscar, has made his hunting lodge for when the moon is high and he stalks the park for game (well, mice) and retires there to sleep until dawn.

By this tower, the ramparts lead to a sunny spot in front of the 19th-century kitchen (still the kitchen to this day), which makes a perfect summer sun-drenched terrace,

hidden behind the château. Sometimes, I pretend it is our private restaurant and dress the little café table with French linens and cook that morning's market finds for lunch beside the moat: seasonal produce and local oysters, finished with a platter of oozing ripe cheeses and golden baguette all washed down with an ice-cold rosé.

It is our lunchtime treat and a moment of slow-living calm in what is a rushed and busy season when we are usually found gardening and running through the heat between our four holiday cottages to get them ready for guests to enjoy summer beside our pools.

We may not be on holiday ourselves but the French lifestyle has taught us that the little luxury of the sunny lunch pause makes us more efficient and sustains our energy for our

otherwise fast-paced holiday and events season.

This moment of slow dining, between the old château and the new, is the perfect recharge and reminder of the history we sit between and protect for future generations. Château-life can be hard work, but it is beautiful work too, and these little lunchtime slices of French slow-living, peering up at centuries old buildings that we look after and have improved over our custodianship, are just rewards. ■

London-born hospital doctor Erin Choa is the 6th châtelaine of Château de Bourneau, where she lives with her French fiancé Jean-Baptiste and bossy cat HRH Oscar. She blogs about their château-life on Instagram @theintrepidchâtelaine @chateaubourneau



“The French know a thing or two about throwing a fête...”

While the cities celebrate Bastille Day with pomp and panache, **Janine Marsh** is happy staying local

Bastille Day is one of the most important days of the year in France, though were you to mention ‘Bastille Day’ to anyone French, they would look at you in confusion. They know this major celebration as *Le Quatorze Juillet* - the 14th of July, or *La Fête Nationale*.

It’s a day of parades, pride, and parties, complete with feasting and fireworks, and it commemorates, according to my neighbour who is a French historian, two major French Revolution events.

The first was the storming of the Bastille prison in Paris on 14 July 1789, which kickstarted the Revolution. A year later on 14 July 1790, the event was commemorated with a one-off national holiday known as the *Fête de la Fédération*.

A hundred years after that, the government decided to have a permanent annual holiday to honour the French Revolution each 14th July,

trouncing a rather grim recommendation that the holiday should take place on 21 January, the day King Louis XVI was beheaded.

Le Quatorze Juillet is the kind of festive bash that proves the French know a thing or two about throwing a fête. It all kicks off the night before with the *Bals des Pompiers* - parties hosted at fire stations by local firemen. This is a tradition that began in 1937 when a group of people followed firefighters back to their station from a *Fête Nationale* parade.

You need no invitation to join in - just turn up and enjoy food and drink, music and dancing - which at my local fire station shindig always includes *Le Madison*, a kind of hop, skip and jump line dancing anthem that has been a hit in France since the 1950s.

Most of us in France have a day off for the *Fête Nationale*, and where I live, it’s de rigueur to go to the annual 14th July



The perfect place to spend Bastille Day in the north of France!

“La Fête Nationale is a day of parades, pride and parties, with feasting and fireworks”

festive antiques market in the town of Montreuil-sur-Mer.

“Why do you call it Bastille Day?” Breadman asked me as he dropped off my baguette one 14 July. “We French find it very odd!”

I explained it was my understanding that it was never made clear which 14th July event - the storming of the Bastille or the first party celebrating it - was the exact one that was being celebrated, so English speakers decided to call it Bastille Day, deciding for themselves that, of course, it made sense to go for the date which had the most drama.

As we chatted, the aroma of sizzling sausages at the 14th

July village barbecue at the town hall wafted beneath our noses, the sound of Boney M’s *Ra Ra Rasputin* being played by a DJ who was singing along, bawling into the microphone what sounded to me more like ‘Ra Ra Rabbit’s skin’, echoed around the valley. We may not have the pomp and panache of city parades, but we sure do know how to live the good life in the middle of nowhere, rural northern France! ■

Janine Marsh lives in France with her husband and 72 animals. Her latest book is ‘How to be French: Eat, Drink, Dress, Travel, Love’ thegoodlifeinfrance.com



Le Quatorze Juillet antiques market in Montreuil-sur-Mer

DAVID DALE REMOVALS

Trust the experts to make your move

Call us on 01423 324948



For over 40 years we have been moving people to and from Europe, we collect regularly in all parts of the U.K. and deliver in most areas of France bi-weekly. We can offer clean, safe container storage facilities until your dream home is completed. We are always on the move helping our customers to settle in to new homes and businesses. Try us for service and value.



David Dale Removals, 3 Milby Road,
Boroughbridge, York YO51 9BW

email: david@daviddale.co.uk

www.daviddale.co.uk



Ruth Semple Building Surveying

Independent Professional
Building Advice in France

Own a property?

Damp, cracks, roof problems?
Advice, diagnosis and solutions.

Buying a property?

Building surveys.
Pre-purchase advice.

Ruth Semple MRICS, chartered surveyor since 1993
rsbuildingsurvey@gmail.com
www.ruthsemplebuildingsurveying.com/

+33 (0) 6 95 97 77 57
+44 (0) 7753 678 817



Buy your French property
with confidence (by knowing exactly
what to look out for)

Buying in France doesn't have to feel uncertain.

With the right legal guidance, you can understand every step,
ask the right questions, and avoid unpleasant surprises.

Our free guide highlights each critical moment with a
whopping great asterisk* so nothing important slips past you.

- Clarity at every step
- Fewer surprises
- Better decisions

* Asterisk reduction :-)



Download your free guide today
www.brightavocats.com/guide

Bright
AVOCATS



Tel : 00 33 (0)5 61 57 90 86 • contact@brightavocats.com Property Lawyers in Toulouse

Rural riddles

Jeremy Hobson solves more of your pastoral problems

SIGN OF THE TIMES

Q I've attached an image of a sign I once saw tucked away in a hedge in north Deux-Sèvres (and have just rediscovered in an old photo file). The wording reads 'Chasse Gardée par les brigades mobiles de la Fédération'. Presumably it had something to do with the local hunt but it was very different to any of the more modern signs I've seen and I wondered if you might know more?

Stephen Cunningham

A The style and condition of the sign seems to suggest that it was made sometime in the 1950s/1960s and is, as you say, different to those you are likely to come across in rural France today which indicate that unauthorised hunting is not permitted.

As to the actual wording, I would assume that 'brigades mobiles' refers to the gamekeepers or wardens



© STEPHEN CUNNINGHAM

This old sign was hidden in a hedge

appointed to keep an eye on land over which game was shot and were empowered to check an individual's *permis de chasse* (hunting licence) plus any seasonal bag quotas enforced by the local prefecture. The 'Federation' mentioned could well refer to the *Fédération Départementale des Chasseurs*. Nowadays, the *Office Français de la Biodiversité* (OFB) is responsible for issuing hunting licences while the *Fédération Départementale des Chasseurs* (FDC) organises the training and exams required to obtain the licence.

Regional groups of the latter also maintain wildlife habitat etc. (With reference to which, see also 'Rural Riddles in FPN Issue 399).

ON YER BIKE!



Bikejoring is a popular activity in France

Q Elsewhere, I've read a piece about bikejoring in France. We've recently moved from the UK where one of our friends was a keen participant and now we've got a young, fit dog rescued from a local rehoming centre (and which needs plenty of exercise), I wondered about getting involved.

Natasha Taylor

A Bikejoring (a sport where one or more dogs pull a cyclist on a bicycle using a special harness for the dog and a shock-absorbing bungee

leash) is popular in France - and is seemingly, becoming ever more so.

With the right equipment (a mountain-type bike, safety helmet, pulling harness, specialist pulling leash and a bar mounted to the bicycle frame to avoid the leash becoming entangled), most of which can be bought from retail outlets such as *Inlandsis* (*inlandsis.fr*) and others, it's possible to either go-it-alone, or join a club and take part in competitions. The latter are, it seems, managed by

the *Fédération Française des Sports et Loisirs Canins* (FFLSC) in several regions of France.

Before getting too involved I would suggest going to one of the events as a spectator so that you can see exactly what's required and then, if it is something of interest, begin by taking things slowly around the forest tracks or safe off-road areas around home.

Oh... and although your dog might be fit, make sure you are too as it can apparently be quite a strenuous activity!

LIFELESS LILIES

Q On our quite large pond/small lake, we've noticed that some of the leaf stalks of the water lilies are being broken. Grappling a few in from the water to look at the damage, they seem almost to have been cut. We've seen water voles and we have a large family of coots... could either of those be the culprit?

Becky and Mark Scanlon

A Although it's unusual unless there is a large population of them, it could well be that coots (*Fulica atra*) are responsible. They are predominantly vegetarian and feed mainly on algae and aquatic plants so it's possible that they have been nipping off the petioles of your lilies as you describe. Any damage is most likely to occur in their breeding season - generally March-July - but can go on later if they have a second brood.



Could coots be the culprits?

NO SMOKE WITHOUT FIRE



Many rural homes in France depend on burning wood for heating

Q We've been reading recently about the French government's intention to ban open fires in some areas of the country. We have two (very efficient) woodburners in our house and a ready supply of sustainable wood at our property and would be reluctant to swap to another method of heating.

Ben Ryan

A It seems that it is local authorities rather than the French government who are responsible for imposing the ban on open fires in some areas. Some even mention

woodburners - although that seems to be a possible restriction on installing new ones rather than a reference to existing ones.

Many rural households in France depend on burning wood for heating - you can set your clock by the seasonal pollarding of oak and ash - closely followed by the relentless sounds of distant chainsaws. It's both a tradition and necessity!

Some in certain areas are, I know, being bombarded by offers for cheap solar or 'pompes à chaleur' and some departments are offering

subsidies for new equipment and installation. However, canvassing several living in traditional rural properties regarding a *pompe à chaleur* - a heat pump operating by extracting energy from the air, soil, or water - the general opinion is that they don't work and obviously, solar is only effective when the sun shines!

There's also the problem of resistance to change. For many of the rural French, wood is cheap and plentiful - as one person recently told me: "When legislation changes, we will change but until then, we will preserve tradition!"

NOTHING TO CROW ABOUT!

Q Earlier this year I bought a mature Japanese cockerel from the *animalerie* section of our local Jardiland. At first he crowed lots and displayed to my seven bantam hens but now he rarely crows and doesn't seem to pay much attention to his harem. I'm totally baffled. Have you any ideas please?

Lindsey Critchley

A What an unusual query - to which I have no definitive answer! However, assuming that your cockerel is feeding well and is in good health, I'm wondering



© LINDSEY CRITCHLEY

An attractive addition to the flock

whether, after his initial exuberance, he's nothing more than exhausted after displaying to (and presumably attempting to mate with) the hens. Unless one is flock-mating with large groups of hens and several males, seven females is a lot for just one cockerel - some breeds can manage it but the Japanese isn't one of them.

Should you be requiring fertile eggs, you might find that he's only mating with a few of his favourites, in which case, eggs from the others might well be infertile.

If, on the other hand, you just want him around as an attractive addition to the flock, I shouldn't worry too much. Having said that, it is strange that he's not crowing much as most bantam types do like to make their presence known!

CHEESY CONUNDRUM

Q Recently, as we wandered around a local *marché de pays* and looked at the huge array of tempting cheeses on offer, my partner and I discussed the fact that some areas of France seem to produce more goat's cheese than others. Is there a reason?

Sue Webster

A Much depends on the region - and its topography, geology and climate. As in the UK when it comes to dairy cattle and milk production, goats thrive better and produce more milk in certain areas of France because of the availability and quality of grazing. As examples, these include parts of the Loire Valley and much of Poitou-Charentes.

Conversely, some goats' cheeses are made in regions such as Provence and Languedoc because goats can do well on terrain that would be unsuitable for cattle.



Just like cattle, goats thrive in areas with good grazing

GET IN TOUCH! If you have any 'rural riddles' for Jeremy, contact him by email at jcjeremyhobson@gmail.com
Jeremy Hobson is a France-based writer who specialises in all country matters j-c-jeremy-hobson.co.uk

Woody's worries

Ruth Wood gets coached in the art of compost-making



“A compost workshop?” My husband Jon looked bewildered.

Our teenage daughter Mabel grimaced. “I don’t really want to spend the day playing with poo. No offence, Mum.”

None taken. We’d just arrived at our holiday home in Morbihan and were discussing how to spend our precious week in the August sunshine. Clearly, Jon and Mabel were thinking more along the lines of a bike ride or a day at the beach. Not a lesson on making brown stuff.

“It’s not playing with poo,” I clarified. “It will be about composting kitchen scraps and stuff like that.” Mabel did not

look reassured. “You two don’t have to come, obviously,” I added hurriedly. “It’s only an hour and it’s free.”

COMPOST COACHING

A couple of days later, I was standing under a gazebo in the communal garden of a nearby village with about seven other people, all peering at woodlice.

The workshop had been organised by Pontivy Communauté (the district council). First, a woman from the council showed us how to assemble the free plastic bins you can pick up from the local authority. Then a compost expert told us how to master the art of mixing kitchen scraps and hedge cuttings into a

magical concoction that would support new organic life.

Most of it was common sense stuff I’d heard before. But there were a few surprises. At one point the workshop leader produced a large metal corkscrew and began twisting it into the heap. It turned out this was a Brass’Compost, a tool invented in Brittany, to mix green and brown waste, break up compacted layers and add air to the compost. “It’s better than using a fork and much kinder to your back,” he told us.

He also introduced me to the concept of a ‘haie sèche’ (dry hedge) or ‘haie morte’ (dead hedge). Made by stacking and weaving pruned branches, twigs and woody garden waste between vertical stakes, it’s a low-cost way to repurpose garden debris and make a useful fence or windbreak. I saw an example a few days later in Pontivy and was struck by how beautiful it was. I’m sure birds, insects and hedgehogs would feel the same.

DIGGING NO-DIG

Attending the compost workshop was not quite an act of whimsy. We’re planning to move to our holiday home for good next year and grow as

much of our food as we can. In April, I started laying the groundwork for what I hope will be the first of several veg beds. I’m going to have a stab at the no-dig method, which, ironically, means trying not to stab the soil but leaving it as undisturbed as possible. The idea is to feed soil life from the surface, leaving nature to do the work below. But this requires a lot of compost – especially in the early days when you’re establishing your plots – and we can’t get going on a heap until we move here.

No matter. Jon found Arvor Compost, a nearby business that composts green waste from local recycling centres and sells it on to individuals, farmers and businesses. Certified organic, the business shreds the material after removing contaminants such as plastic and metal, then piles it up in giant, well-ventilated sheds, turning it every week and injecting manure.

As so often in rural France, I felt like Winnie the Pooh (a bear of very little brain) when I turned up at the site, half an hour from our house, to find I was the only customer without a trailer – or even any bags!

An hour later I returned with bags – but without a spade. Fortunately, nobody saw my red face as I clambered onto the mountain of brown stuff and shovelled it into the bags with my bare hands. The weighbridge showed I’d collected 500 litres – equivalent to 10 large bags from a garden centre – yet it set me back a mere €20.

Back at the house – feeling less like Pooh – I triumphantly laid a carpet of cardboard on a patch of grass, dampened it down and heaped the compost all over it. Then I sowed buckwheat straight into it as a cover crop, to start enriching the soil while we’re back in the UK.

“How did you get on at the poo place?” asked Mabel.

“Aren’t you supposed to leave the compost to settle down for a few months before you sow anything?” said Jon, looking sceptical.

But I waved them off with a mischievous grin. “Oh poooh poooh to all that.” ■

“It’s not playing with poo – it’s about mastering the art of turning kitchen scraps into compost...”



Ruth dampens down cardboard on a patch of grass before covering it in compost collected from a local facility

Kingsfords
SOLICITORS

BI-LINGUAL FRENCH LEGAL ADVICE
01233 624545
www.kingsfords-solicitors.com

The French department is here to help you with all property and probate related matters:

- ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE FOR BUYERS AND SELLERS OF FRENCH PROPERTY
- ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE WITH FRENCH PROBATES AND SUCCESSIONS
- PROPERTY TRANSFERS UPON DIVORCE OR SEPARATION
- ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE WITH FRENCH WILLS
- PROVIDING ASSISTANCE WITH UTILITY PROVIDERS AND FRENCH ADMINISTRATION
- FRENCH PROPERTY ISSUES

OUR MAIN OFFICE IS IN ASHFORD, KENT, ALONGSIDE OFFICES IN CRANBROOK AND HYTHE

Contact Marie Antoinette Bassini
mab@kingsfords.net
01233 624545
2 Elwick Road, Ashford, Kent, TN23 1PD

Kingsfords is the trading name of Kingsfords Solicitors Limited (No. 4034772), registered in England and Wales. Registered office: 1 Elwick Road, Ashford, Kent TN23 1PD. Authorised and regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA No. 4034772).



Trusted legal advice by French avocats

- French property conveyancing
- French estate administration
- Wills, French estate and tax planning
- Ownership structure, gift and transfer of French properties
- French property administration, disputes and litigation

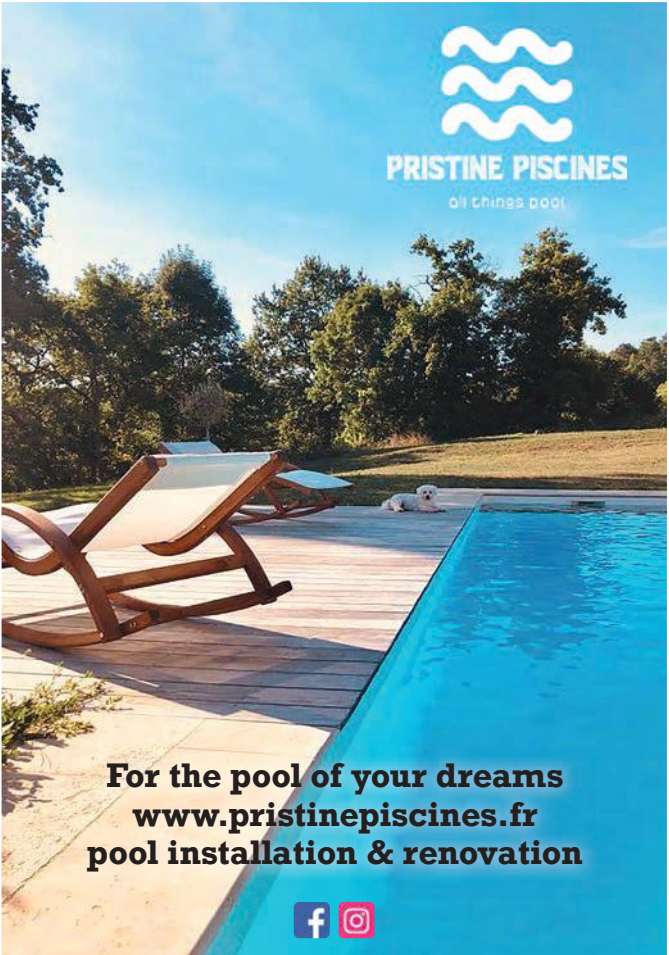
Contact
Deborah Vaysse
01227 763939
france@furleypage.co.uk
furleypage.co.uk

Canterbury office
39 St Margaret's Street Canterbury Kent CT1 2TX
Also at Chatham and Whitstable

**furley
page**

Knowledge. Experience. Results.

PRISTINE PISCINES
all things pool



For the pool of your dreams
www.pristinepiscines.fr
pool installation & renovation



RICS Certified Historic Building Professional

MKN Surveyors LIMITED

BUILDING SURVEYORS FRANCE

MKN Surveyors Ltd - RICS Chartered Building Surveyors
Matt and Kay Noble | Boutique, Independent We provide detailed, impartial RICS Building Surveys across all parts of France, specialising in rural, complex and historic properties including chateaux, mills, manoirs and character homes.

- Level 3 RICS Building Surveys (France-wide)
- Heritage & Historic Building Expertise
- Drone roof inspections (registered French operators)
- Technical Due Diligence
- Measured surveys & 3D data capture (drone & LiDAR for more complex properties)

MKN Surveyors Ltd - Independent. Bilingual. Trusted

Web: www.mkn-surveyors.com
Email: france@mkn-surveyors.com
SIRET: 921 979 118 00012

 **RICS**

DEEP-FILLED RATATOUILLE QUICHE

Quiche Façon Ratatouille

"My maman always has one or two ready-made pastries in her refrigerator, and quiche is probably the first savoury recipe I learnt to make. I still frequently make it, as it is the perfect fridge-raid type of dish. Here, I fill it with the vegetable queen of the season: ratatouille." **Manon Lagrève**



Ratatouille is a rustic summer vegetable stew

Serves 6

INGREDIENTS

2 small aubergines (eggplants), thinly sliced
2 tablespoons olive oil, plus extra for drizzling
320g sheet of ready-rolled puff pastry
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
3 tomatoes, thinly sliced
2 small courgettes, thinly sliced
1 large red onion, thinly sliced
1 teaspoon herbes de Provence
3 large eggs
50ml semi-skimmed milk
100g Parmesan, grated
Handful of basil leaves
Salt



Buy your ratatouille ingredients at a French market

METHOD

Preheat the oven to 200°C fan.

Place the aubergine slices on a baking sheet, drizzle with the olive oil and season with salt, then roast in the oven for 15 minutes.

Without removing the paper it comes on, line a deep 20cm round baking tin with the puff pastry. Prick the base with a fork.

Sprinkle the garlic over the pastry, then arrange the vegetables inside on their sides in a spiral, alternating as you go: one slice of aubergine, one slice of tomato, one slice of courgette and one slice of onion and repeat until all the vegetables have been used and two concentric circles have been made. Drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with the herbes de Provence.

Whisk the eggs with the milk and Parmesan, then pour the mixture over the vegetables.

Bake in the oven for 40 minutes until golden on top, then remove from the oven and finish with the basil leaves.





Extracted from
La Saison by
Manon Lagrève
 (Quadrille, £26)
 Photography
 by Nassima
 Rothacker



Learn French in Provence

Since 1995, Millefeuille Provence has welcomed adults from around the world to learn French through full immersion. Our intensive courses are designed for people who want to see real progress fast. Most students stay for two weeks, but even one week makes a big difference.

Our school is located in the stunning 18th-century Château Correnson, a former wine estate in the Rhône Valley. Surrounded by vineyards and hills, it's an inspiring and peaceful setting to focus on your French.

Classes run Monday to Friday, with six lessons a day. But learning doesn't stop there — you'll continue through shared meals, evening conversations and cultural activities around **French and Francophonie news, way of life and traditions.**

You'll stay on site in a private en-suite room, with freshly prepared meals every day. By the end of your stay, you'll not only boost your French, but enjoy a truly memorable experience in Provence.



Millefeuille-Provence, Château Correnson, 40 route d'Avignon, F-30150 Saint-Geniès-de-Comolas
Email: info@millefeuille-provence.com | Website: www.millefeuille-provence.com



NOEL DE SPEVILLE
SOLICITOR

French Law in Plain English
by Noel de Speville



Noël De Spéville is an experienced, fully bilingual solicitor, who specialises in French legal matters. He can assist with complicated French property and inheritance matters and he can help guide UK-based owners of French property, as well as English solicitors, through the French legal system. Noel has a comprehensive knowledge of cross-jurisdictional issues. Together with his handpicked associates, he can provide comprehensive legal support in England and in France.

Noel will assist with your matter holistically, considering both the French and English legal aspects, to help you avoid unintended consequences. Noël also has considerable experience in disputes and litigation. In conjunction with his associates in France, he has helped many clients resolve a variety of problems concerning French property. With more than 15 years of experience of assisting clients with their French property matters, Noël aims to assist you with your legal requirements in a practical and proactive manner.

If you would like an initial chat, you can call Noel on 01344 204 984

www.frenchlawuk.co.uk | info@frenchlawuk.co.uk

MAP YOUR SEARCH

Use our handy regions and departments map to help you find your dream property

Turn over
to browse
properties

KEY

-  Ferry port
-  Airport
-  Eurostar
-  Regional capital



- | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 01 Ain | 16 Charente | 32 Gers | 48 Lozère | 64 Pyrénées-Atlantiques | 80 Somme |
| 02 Aisne | 17 Charente-Maritime | 33 Gironde | 49 Maine-et-Loire | 65 Hautes-Pyrénées | 81 Tarn |
| 03 Allier | 18 Cher | 34 Hérault | 50 Manche | 66 Pyrénées-Orientales | 82 Tarn-et-Garonne |
| 04 Alpes-de-Haute-Provence | 19 Corrèze | 35 Ille-et-Vilaine | 51 Marne | 67 Bas-Rhin | 83 Var |
| 05 Hautes-Alpes | 20 Corsica | 36 Indre | 52 Haute-Marne | 68 Haut-Rhin | 84 Vaucluse |
| 06 Alpes-Maritimes | 21 Côte-d'Or | 37 Indre-et-Loire | 53 Mayenne | 69 Rhône | 85 Vendée |
| 07 Ardèche | 22 Côtes-d'Armor | 38 Isère | 54 Meurthe-et-Moselle | 70 Haute-Saône | 86 Vienne |
| 08 Ardennes | 23 Creuse | 39 Jura | 55 Meuse | 71 Saône-et-Loire | 87 Haute-Vienne |
| 09 Ariège | 24 Dordogne | 40 Landes | 56 Morbihan | 72 Sarthe | 88 Vosges |
| 10 Aube | 25 Doubs | 41 Loir-et-Cher | 57 Moselle | 73 Savoie | 89 Yonne |
| 11 Aude | 26 Drôme | 42 Loire | 58 Nièvre | 74 Haute-Savoie | 90 Territoire de Belfort |
| 12 Aveyron | 27 Eure | 43 Haute-Loire | 59 Nord | 75 Ville de Paris | 91 Essonne |
| 13 Bouches-du-Rhône | 28 Eure-et-Loire | 44 Loire-Atlantique | 60 Oise | 76 Seine-Maritime | 92 Hauts-de-Seine |
| 14 Calvados | 29 Finistère | 45 Loiret | 61 Orne | 77 Seine-et-Marne | 93 Seine-Saint-Denis |
| 15 Cantal | 30 Gard | 46 Lot | 62 Pas-de-Calais | 78 Yvelines | 94 Val-de-Marne |
| | 31 Haute-Garonne | 47 Lot-et-Garonne | 63 Puy-de-Dôme | 79 Deux-Sèvres | 95 Val-d'Oise |

PROPERTY SHOWCASE

VALBONNE REF: 15114

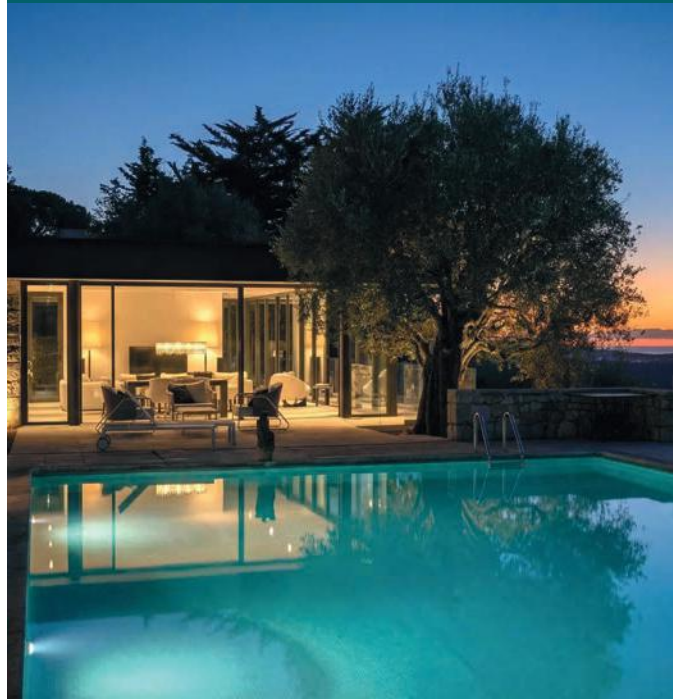
£POA SOLE AGENT



Just steps from Valbonne, this exceptional 10-hectare estate features a 17th-century monastery, olive grove, character buildings, swimming pool, pool house and tennis court, offering rare charm, privacy and luxury amid stunning natural surroundings.

VENCE REF: PIL-00235

€3,175,000 SOLE AGENT



Contemporary villa built in 2023 with pool and stunning panoramic views of the Mediterranean, Cap d'Antibes, Vence and Esterel. Four bedrooms, modern comforts, underfloor heating, and a 100m² sun-drenched terrace.

EZE REF: 11193

€3,690,000



Elegant Belle Époque villa in a peaceful setting with stunning sea and Èze village views. Around 280m² of living space, heated pool, generous grounds and premium finishes, just 15 minutes from Monaco.

CANNES REF: 15680

€3,990,000



Exclusive contemporary villa in prestigious Super Cannes, boasting spectacular 180° sea and mountain views. Offering 360m² of living space, open-plan living areas, south-facing terraces, landscaped gardens and swimming pool.



CARLTON INTERNATIONAL

1240 route des dolines, Buropolis 2, 06560 Valbonne

TEL: +33 4 93 95 11 11 **EMAIL:** info@carlton-group.com

WEB: www.carlton-international.com

PROPERTY SHOWCASE

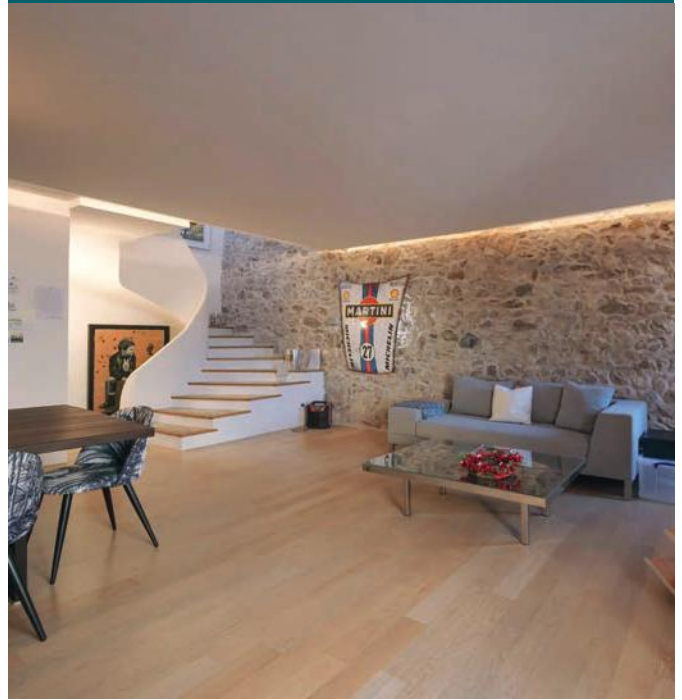
ROQUEFORT LES PINS REF: 15744 **€4,200,000** **SOLE AGENT**



Exclusive Provençal bastide near Valbonne, set within a peaceful 1.7-hectare estate with landscaped gardens and olive grove. Beautifully renovated, featuring elegant reception rooms, 6 bedrooms, fireplace and covered terrace.

SAINT TROPEZ REF: LEO0223

€3,850,000



Beautifully renovated village house in Saint-Tropez's historic La Ponche quarter. Offering 170m² of living space over four levels, it combines restored stonework, authentic charm, contemporary comfort, and high-end finishes.

CANNES REF: 00303

€4,100,000



Elegant 305m² Belle Époque penthouse occupying the entire top floor of a historic 1875 mansion in Cannes. Beautifully renovated, it sits within a private estate, just minutes from La Croisette and beaches.

GRASSE REF: FRE-00867

€4,900,000



Exceptional Provençal estate in sought-after Super Magagnosc, offering over 660m² of living space. Featuring six bedrooms, three independent apartments, and stunning hillside surroundings, it combines privacy, charm, and authentic Riviera living.

CARLTON INTERNATIONAL

1240 route des dolines, Buropolis 2, 06560 Valbonne
TEL: +33 4 93 95 11 11 **EMAIL:** info@carlton-group.com
WEB: www.carlton-international.com



PROPERTY SHOWCASE

EXCLUSIVE LIMOUX, AUDE REF: BVI85489

€368,000



This 5-bed property with plenty of charming original features is set in a private, mature Mediterranean garden with saltwater pool. In a village just 5 minutes from popular Limoux, with Carcassonne and the Canal du Midi, the Pyrénées and the Mediterranean all an easy drive away.

MONFLANQUIN, LOT ET GARONNE REF: BVI85523

€449,000



Less than two minutes from the charming bastide village of Monflanquin, this beautiful single-storey home has been tastefully renovated. Adjoining the main house is a converted barn for friends and family, or potential income. Includes garage and motorhome carport with photovoltaic panels.

EXCLUSIVE MONTPON-MÉNESTÉROL, DORDOGNE REF: BVI82564

€595,000



Between Périgueux and Bordeaux, nestled in a lush and tranquil setting, lies this splendid character home that combines the charm of the past with modern comfort. The main house is connected to a second dwelling to incorporate into the whole or keep completely independent. Pool and summer kitchen.

BEAUX VILLAGES IMMOBILIER

Head office: 3 Rue Robert Descorne, 33580 Monségur

TEL: +44 (0)800 270 0101 / +33 (0)8 05 69 23 23 **EMAIL:** info@beauxvillages.com **WEB:** www.beauxvillages.com

Beaux Villages
IMMOBILIER

PROPERTY SHOWCASE

CAHUZAC-SUR-VÈRE, TARN REF: BVI80488

€795,000



Just 1km from a vibrant village with amenities, the 5-bed home with pool enjoys a peaceful setting with stunning views over open countryside and surrounding vineyards, olive groves and fields of sunflowers that seduce the mind and calm the soul. 1 hour to Toulouse.

EXCLUSIVE LIMOUX, AUDE REF: BVI80493

€390,000



Tucked away in a quiet lane within the ancient ramparts of a picturesque and highly sought-after medieval spa village, this beautifully-presented 7-bed stone property combines character, comfort and versatility. Just 15 mins to Limoux, 30 mins to Carcassonne airport and both the sea and mountains are within easy reach.

EXCLUSIVE SAUX, CHARENTE REF: BVI82691

€449,000



This beautifully-renovated Charentaise offers 200m² of living space plus over 250m² of adjoining barns and outbuildings, all forming one harmonious and connected residence. The enclosed, walled garden with pool and covered terrace offers privacy and tranquillity.

BEAUX VILLAGES IMMOBILIER

Head office: 3 Rue Robert Descorne, 33580 Monségur

TEL: +44 (0)800 270 0101 / +33 (0)8 05 69 23 23 **EMAIL:** info@beauxvillages.com **WEB:** www.beauxvillages.com

Beaux Villages
IMMOBILIER

PROPERTY SHOWCASE

NEAR LEZAY REF: 5270

€199,500 – DPE F



Beautiful traditional stone house near Lezay offering rustic charm, spacious interiors, and character features. Includes large barn, mature garden, and peaceful countryside setting with open views.

NEAR MELLE REF: 5269

€243,800 – DPE VIERGE



Charming stone Maison de Maître near Melle with panoramic countryside views. Generous living spaces, original period features, elegant reception rooms, multiple bedrooms, outbuildings, and extensive grounds offering strong renovation and lifestyle potential.

NEAR SAUZÉ-ENTRE-BOIS REF: 5247

€124,200 – DPE F



Detached stone house in hamlet offering full renovation potential. Spacious interior with large convertible attic, outbuildings, and garden. Ideal countryside project with scope to create a charming family home or holiday retreat.

NEAR CHEF BOUTONNE REF: 5151

€164,780 – DPE G



Fully renovated detached character home near Chef-Boutonne offering stylish modern comfort blended with original charm. Spacious living areas, fitted kitchen, 3 bedrooms, garden, and outbuildings in a peaceful village setting.



IMMO 3C AGENCE IMMOBILIÈRE

79 Grande Rue, 79190 Sauzé-Vaussais

TEL: 0033 5 49 07 76 88 EMAIL: info@immo3c.fr

WEB: www.immo3c.fr

PROPERTY SHOWCASE

NEAR SAUZÉ-ENTRE-BOIS REF: 5174 **€144,855 - DPE E**



Charming stone house near Sauzé-entre-Bois with garden and outbuildings. Offering character interiors, spacious living areas, and countryside appeal, this property combines rustic charm with renovation potential in a peaceful rural setting.

NEAR RUFFEC REF: 5244

€103,550 - DPE E



Stone house near Ruffec to renovate, offering great potential with land and barn. Spacious interiors with original features, outbuildings, extension scope, set in a rural location close to a popular bar and restaurant.

NEAR SAUZÉ-ENTRE-BOIS REF: 5195 **€207,000 - DPE E**



Well renovated stone house near Sauzé-entre-Bois offering stylish comfort and character features. Spacious living areas, fitted kitchen, three bedrooms, garage, and garden with open countryside views in a peaceful rural setting.

NEAR RUFFEC REF: 5277

€77,490 - DPE E



Pretty stone property near Ruffec offering renovation potential with barns and garden. Full of original character, spacious rooms, outbuildings, and scope to modernise, set in a peaceful rural hamlet with countryside charm.

IMMO 3C AGENCE IMMOBILIÈRE

79 Grande Rue, 79190 Sauzé-Vaussais

TEL: 0033 5 49 07 76 88 EMAIL: info@immo3c.fr

WEB: www.immo3c.fr



PROPERTY SHOWCASE

DORDOGNE, AQUITAINE REF: A29935CHT24

€299,000



Restored stone farmhouse in the Dordogne countryside, offering spacious family living, exposed beams, swimming pool and panoramic rural views. Combining authentic French charm with modern comfort, this retreat is perfect for holidays, entertaining or year-round living.

EXCLUSIVE HAUTE-VIENNE, LIMOUSIN REF: A37284IS87

€190,000



Character stone farmhouse with guest cottage, swimming pool and landscaped gardens in the heart of the Limousin countryside. Blending rustic charm with modern comfort, this peaceful retreat offers flexible living, privacy and excellent potential for holiday rentals.

EXCLUSIVE SEINE-MARITIME, HIGHER NORMANDY REF: A29634AMO76

€267,500



Country home with breathtaking rural views, set within beautifully landscaped grounds with majestic pine trees. Three bedrooms, bright living spaces and a peaceful Mediterranean feel, this idyllic retreat blends serenity, character and timeless French countryside charm.

VIENNE, POITOU-CHARENTES REF: A43442HRC86

€449,800



Countryside estate near Saint-Savin, featuring a six-bedroom family home, independent gîte, swimming pool, private tennis court and extensive outbuildings. Set within landscaped grounds, this property offers privacy, lifestyle appeal and holiday rental potential.

EXCLUSIVE LANDES, AQUITAINE REF: A38428NJD40

€348,000



Elegant 19th-century Maison de Maître in the heart of Gascony, featuring original stone staircase, soaring ceilings, guest house and private walled garden. Rich in character and potential, this rare property offers refined living moments from cafés, markets and countryside.

EXCLUSIVE HAUTES-PYRÉNÉES REF: A37633YJR65

€280,000



Spacious five-bedroom country home near Tournay, offering Pyrenean views, mature gardens, expansive terrace, games room and double garages. Peaceful yet convenient, just 40 minutes from skiing, golf and airport connections in beautiful southwest France.

LEGGETT IMMOBILIER INTERNATIONAL

Head Office: Route de Ribérac, 24340 La Rochebeaucourt et Argentine

TEL: +33 (0)5 53 56 62 54 / **UK :** 08700 11 51 51 **EMAIL:** info@leggett.fr **WEB:** www.frenchestateagents.com

LEGGETT
IMMOBILIER INTERNATIONAL

PROPERTY SHOWCASE

EXCLUSIVE DEUX-SÈVRES, POITOU-CHARENTES REF: A44277DTH79 **€788,000**



Restored 19th-century chateau overlooking woodland valleys, featuring nine bedrooms, two independent gîtes, landscaped gardens, orchard and swimming pool. A rare estate combining elegance, privacy and income potential, just 45 minutes from Poitiers and TGV.

DORDOGNE, AQUITAINE REF: A21343TYS24

€125,000



Exceptional property combining character, comfort and income potential near Montignac-Lascaux. Elegant living spaces, guest accommodation, swimming pool and beautiful countryside views, this home is perfect for family living, holidays or hospitality ventures.

CÔTES-D'ARMOR, BRITTANY REF: A44678NCL22

€88,000



Charming Breton countryside retreat with exposed stone walls, spacious gardens and authentic character throughout. Renovation project in peaceful Côtes-d'Armor countryside, outdoor living and excellent potential as a family home, holiday escape or gîte project.

CHARENTE, POITOU-CHARENTES REF: A37556NIE16

€625,400



Renovated farmhouse with panoramic countryside views, guest accommodation and equestrian potential. Set within peaceful grounds with pool, barns and paddocks, this property blends rustic charm with modern comfort in the heart of southwest France.

SOMME, PICARDIE REF: A39856NAC80

€201,000



Stylish 3 bedroom countryside home near the Somme coast, featuring spacious light-filled interiors, landscaped gardens and excellent access to beaches, Amiens and Calais. Ideal as a family residence, holiday retreat or charming French getaway.

EXCLUSIVE NIÈVRE, BURGUNDY REF: A36357ARV58

€495,000



Escape to Burgundy's Morvan hills with this beautifully restored 19th-century manor offering six bedrooms, four bathrooms, vast barns and business potential. Surrounded by nature, orchards and terraces, it's perfect for hospitality, permaculture or a retreat.

LEGGETT IMMOBILIER INTERNATIONAL

Head Office: Route de Ribérac, 24340 La Rochebeaucourt et Argentine

TEL: +33 (0)5 53 56 62 54 / **UK :** 08700 11 51 51 **EMAIL:** info@leggett.fr **WEB:** www.frenchestateagents.com

LEGGETT
IMMOBILIER INTERNATIONAL

PROPERTY SHOWCASE

VALENCE-SUR-BAÏSE, GERS REF: SNM_183 €370,000



Discover this stunning maison de maître set in the very heart of the village, within immediate reach of local shops and everyday amenities. Fully renovated with great taste and care, the property offers over 330 m² of living space.

CONDOM, GERS REF: SNM_211 €579,000



Located in a peaceful and unspoiled environment, with no nuisances, just 5 minutes from Condom and 20 minutes from Lectoure, this character property enjoys an ideal setting combining tranquility with easy access to amenities, set on approximately 3.5 hectares of land.

MIRANDE, GERS REF: SNM_206 €595,000



This character château, whose origins date back several centuries, offers approximately 520 m² of living space set within an unspoiled natural environment.

VIC-FEZENSAC, GERS REF: SNM_207 €169,500



Located in the heart of Vic-Fezensac, this charming 92 m² townhouse offers a pleasant and bright living environment. Composed of 4 rooms, including 2 beautiful bedrooms, or 3 if needed, it will appeal to those who love space and comfort.

VALENCE-SUR-BAÏSE, GERS REF: SNM_181 €141,500



This impressive single-storey house of 126 m² enjoys an ideal position just a short walk from local shops, with a garden and double garage.

AINGAN, GERS REF: SNM_76 €790,000



Ideally situated on the outskirts of the charming village of Margouët-Meymes, this exceptional property features a swimming pool and solar energy and has been beautifully renovated. It includes 2.5 hectares of land.



GELAS IMMOBILIER
19 avenue de Lorraine, 32190 Vic-Fezensac, Gers
TEL: +33(0) 7 70 66 84 30
EMAIL: contact@gelasimmo.com
WEB: www.gelas-immobilier.com



PROPERTY SHOWCASE

RUFFEC REF: R7480

€99,950



3 bedroom stone house for sale near Ruffec 16700. Two bedrooms, a shower room, and a toilet on the ground floor. Upstairs, there is enormous potential to create more living space, but already with a recent bedroom and dressing room very good condition.

CIVRAY REF: R7501

€103,375



Well kept 3 bedroom property in a no through road in Civray 86400. The property is in excellent condition throughout and has a lovely low-maintenance fenced garden offer sun or shade and privacy.

CHAUNAY REF: R7500

€107,500



Old schoolhouse to renovate with outbuilding and garden. 6 minutes south of Chaunay in a quiet village. There are 2 large ground floor rooms totalling a little more than 100m², with lots of natural light and a large convertible attic.

VILLEFAGNAN REF: R7479

€129,950



Charming three-bedroom stone village house with study, enclosed gardens and character features, located near lively Villefagnan with shops, schools, sports clubs and cafés, perfect for relaxed French village living.

MAUPREVOIR REF: R7477

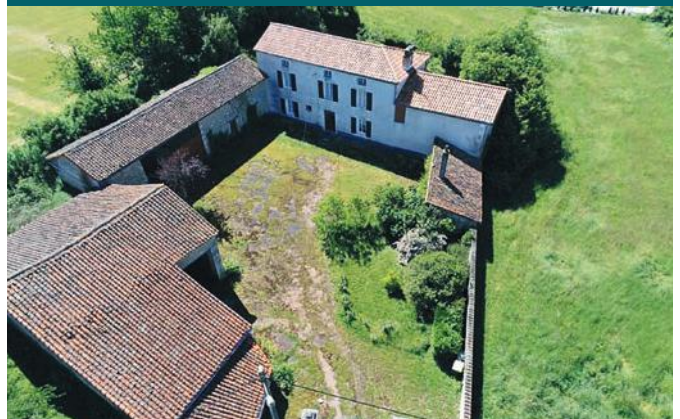
€159,570



Detached stone property With 4 bedrooms and a beautiful garden of over an acre. Located in an enviable position at the edge of the pretty village of Mauprévoir. With a beautiful mature enclosed garden of over an acre, and just a short walk to a small supermarket, bar, and pharmacy.

RUFFEC REF: R7483

€186,000



Spacious farmhouse with 1.9 hectares of land - ideal for horses. The main house offers three large bedrooms, one of which is on the ground floor with a dressing room/office. It is equipped with oil-fired central heating and partially benefits from double glazing.



AGENCE TIC RUFFEC

31 Place des Martyrs de L'Occupation, 16700 RUFFEC

TEL: 00 33 (0)545710046

EMAIL: info@tic-ruffec.com

WEB: www.tic-ruffec.com

PROPERTY SHOWCASE

TARN ET GARONNE REF: 107112

€699,000 AFI



Beautifully maintained five-bedroom property in a peaceful setting, featuring a new pool, secluded mature garden and a large barn in good condition. A must-see.

GERS REF: 97377

€595,000 AFI



Authentic Gascon house with an independent studio apartment, pool, wine cellar and outbuildings, sitting in a lovely garden of over 2 acres. Wide views across the countryside.

TARN ET GARONNE REF: 101400

€1,190,000 AFI



Chateau with panoramic views in the heart of Lomagne. Four bedrooms, four bathrooms, huge terrace, garden with swimming pool, endless outbuildings, huge potential. Picture perfect.

GERS REF: 101269

€575,000 AFI



Beautiful country property sitting in the middle of its one hectare of flat, well-maintained garden. Huge entertaining area opening onto a walled courtyard. Four bedrooms, two on the ground floor.

GERS REF: 107229

€1,670,000 AFI



Hunting lodge with a gite and a park of over 4 hectares - full of history and original features. Four floors offering spacious and comfortable living in the countryside around Lectoure.

TARN ET GARONNE REF: 89418

€675,000



Two houses - one entirely renovated to a very high standard, the other with bags of character and original details. Refurbished pool, over 8 acres of garden, large outbuilding with new roof. The best of rural France.

LOMAGNE PROPERTIES

EIRL - Resi Limbeek - Character houses in the South West of France

TEL: 0033 (0) 7.60.85.21.76 **EMAIL:** Lomagne.properties@gmail.com **WEB:** www.lomagne-properties.com



LOMAGNE PROPERTIES

PROPERTY SHOWCASE

GERS REF: 99344

€695 000 AFI



Country property in immaculate condition, recently renovated to a very high standard. Three bedrooms, large, light and bright living spaces, lovely garden – a real family home.

GERS REF: 85023

€640,000 AFI



Maison de Maître with four hectares of land, a private lake and fields of wildflowers. All bedrooms en-suite, fabulous outside living area with pool and pool house. Renovated with taste.

GERS REF: 98439

€1,680,000 AFI



A rare opportunity to buy a fully renovated property. Main house with five bedrooms, great entertaining space, large newly refurbished pool area. Gîte with its own pool, and numerous outbuildings. Perfect condition throughout.

GERS REF: 102753

€598,000 AFI



A lovely, well maintained stone house with a large barn in good condition, surrounded by 2h of gardens with beautiful views. Private, but only a 5 min walk to a village with amenities.

TARN ET GARONNE REF: 87428

€1,358,500 AFI



Fabulous manor house with outbuildings situated in the edge of a pretty village, on the border of the T&G and the Gers. Revenue potential from the gîte. Pool and park.

GERS REF: 93222

595,000€ AFI



A lovely, well maintained stone house with a large barn, surrounded by a fully fenced 8000m² garden with fabulous mountain views. Five bedrooms, vast salon, new pool.

LOMAGNE PROPERTIES

EIRL - Resi Limbeek - Character houses in the South West of France

TEL: 0033 (0) 7.60.85.21.76 **EMAIL:** Lomagne.properties@gmail.com **WEB:** www.lomagne-properties.com



LOMAGNE PROPERTIES

PROPERTY SHOWCASE

GIRONDE REF: L3293

€151,000*



Charming Périgourdine home with manageable garden, set in an elevated position near the Dordogne River. Features include a garage, lovely countryside views, amenities and a monthly market. Located outside the flood zone - an opportunity not to be missed! Land : 1,600m²

LAUZUN REF: L3480

€357,000



5-bedroom stone village home full of charm. Excellent condition with generous accommodation over three floors and a good-sized garden. Located in a medieval village near shops, restaurants and 30 minutes from Bergerac and the airport. Land: 64m² with garden shed.

LOT ET GARONNE REF: L3162

€430,000



Exceptional renovated stone farmhouse with elegant interiors, double garages, stone barn, outbuildings, and heated swimming pool enjoying panoramic views. Ideally located beside a village with bakery and café, just 10 minutes from renowned Bastide market towns.

LOT ET GARONNE REF: L3220

€399,000



Beautifully renovated three-bedroom property in secluded grounds with countryside views. Includes one-bedroom gîte, workshop, lake, summer kitchen, swimming pool, and two acres. Accessed via private driveway, five minutes from all amenities at Casseneuil.

LOT ET GARONNE REF: L3359

€640,500



Beautiful stone-built house with swimming pool, outbuildings, 17 hectares of land, and a one-hectare lake. Peacefully situated in the countryside, just 10 minutes from village shops and 40 minutes from Bergerac airport.

LOT ET GARONNE REF: L3284

€981,750



Rare opportunity to acquire an enchanting 1820 chateau in an elevated countryside setting. Featuring a swimming pool, detached stone barn, and 2.5 hectares, the property offers charming character, spacious accommodation, and elegant proportions across four floors.

RICHARD IMMOBILIER

7 rue du Chateau 47410 Lauzun

TEL: +33 (0)5 53 83 30 46 **EMAIL:** info@richardimmo.com **WEB:** richardimmo.com



*Agency fees included.

PROPERTY SHOWCASE

LOT ET GARONNE REF: L3426

€1,600,000



Impressive restored Manor House with four gîtes and outbuildings. Set in an elevated position with panoramic Lot-et-Garonne valley views, offering generous accommodation and excellent lifestyle or commercial potential, including weddings and holiday rentals.

LOT ET GARONNE REF: L3231

€307,400



Attractive stone farmhouse with swimming pool in countryside setting with woodland, farmland, and orchard views. Located near a village, just 10 minutes from market towns including Lauzun, Eymet and Castillonès. Land : 1.5ha approx.

LOT ET GARONNE REF: L3470

€176,500



Charming three-bedroom village house in the heart of historic Lauzun, featuring two bathrooms, private courtyard, and garage. Within walking distance of amenities, connected to mains drainage, and ideal as a permanent residence or holiday home. Courtyard 50m².

LOT ET GARONNE REF: L3461

€166,850



Charming three-bedroom stone property set on 3,900m2, including mature woodland. Offering character, privacy, and renovation potential, it features a swimming pool requiring refurbishment. An excellent opportunity for a bespoke home or holiday retreat.

DORDOGNE REF: L3369

€88,000



Pretty restored stone property with mansard roof and balcony, full of character and quirky features. Located in a sought-after village with amenities, restaurants, and bars, close to Bergerac, its airport, and the Château Vigier golf resort. Land : small outdoor space.

LOT ET GARONNE REF: L3351

€250,000



A deceptively spacious and beautifully presented village house, offering stylish turnkey accommodation with four bedrooms and a private courtyard designed for elegant outdoor dining. Situated in a picturesque village with excellent amenities.

RICHARD IMMOBILIER

7 rue du Chateau 47410 Lauzun

TEL: +33 (0)5 53 83 30 46 **EMAIL:** info@richardimmo.com **WEB:** richardimmo.com



*Agency fees included.

PROPERTY SHOWCASE

SALIES DE BEARN REF: 2062

€349,000



Immaculate townhouse with garden and garage, located in quiet residential area. Beautifully decorated, the property offers three bedrooms and two bathrooms (one with sauna). A few minutes' walk from town.

ORTHEZ REF: 2047

€399,000



Spacious architect-designed house with swimming pool and mature garden located on the heights of a medieval town. Built on five half-levels, the property offers several distinct living areas.

SALIES DE BEARN REF: 2059

€450,000



Former Béarnaise farmhouse, lovingly restored, with pool, double garage and views over the rolling countryside. In a rural setting, yet only a few minutes' drive from popular thermal spa town.

SALIES DE BEARN REF: 2056

€149,000



Beautifully renovated, three-bedroom townhouse, ideally located within easy walking distance of the thermal spa facility, shops, bars and restaurants. Living accommodation is offered over three floors.

CASTAGNEDE REF: 2055

€249,000



Charming family home located in pretty village with excellent restaurant and access to river. The neighbouring spa town is just a short cycle ride away along the old railway path.

LUCQ DE BEARN REF: 2054

€250,000



Opportunity to renovate this beautiful Béarnaise farmhouse, set in over two hectares of land, with views of the Pyrenees and surrounding rolling country side. An idyllic setting for mountain lovers!

SOPHIE FOLLEY IMMOBILIER

3 Place Jeanne d'Albret, 64270 Salies-de-Béarn, France
TEL: +33 5 59 38 32 50 EMAIL: contact@sophiefolley.com


SOPHIE FOLLEY
IMMOBILIER

PROPERTY SHOWCASE

HAUTE GARONNE REF: MM2263MD

€849,000



A rare estate distinguished by its generous volumes, preserved authenticity, contemporary features and high-quality renovation. Set in a privileged natural environment. Guest house and swimming pool. 1.2 hectares. Lisle-en-Dodon.

HAUTE GARONNE REF: MM2192AP

€500,000



Idyllic country house with breathtaking views. This magnificent property offers classic Gascon charm with modern comfort. This property offers a generous and bright living space. Swimming pool. 3 hectares. Boulougne-sur-Geese.

HAUTE PYRÉNÉES REF: MM2217TC

€599,500



This stunning luxury mansion with 450 m² of living space, 6 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms A property where every detail has been designed for comfort and well-being. 4.5 hectares. Vic-en-Bigorre.

HAUTE PYRÉNÉES REF: MM2209SD

€675,000



Exceptional country property with equestrian facilities. Tucked away in the Gascon countryside with uninterrupted views of the Pyrenees, 5 minutes from a bustling market town. Swimming pool. 5.75 hectares. Trie-sur-Baise.

PYRÉNÉES ATLANTIQUE REF: MM2280SH

€450,000



A charming four-bedroom family home created within the stone walls of a mid-19th century bergerie (sheepfold) with beautiful countryside and mountain views. Swimming pool. 1500m² land. Sauveterre de Bearn.

PYRÉNÉES ATLANTIQUE REF: MM2295LL

€258,000



Situated in the heart of this historic village a renovated 4 bedroom house dates from 1765, sold fully furnished. Beautiful mountain views and pretty garden. Just 30 minutes from the ski slopes. Aspe Valley.



MAISONS ET MANOIRS

21 Rue du Général de Gaulle 32140 Masseube.

TEL: +33(0)608040910

EMAIL: marc@maisonsetmanoirs.com

WEB: www.maisonsetmanoirs.com

PROPERTY SHOWCASE

LOT-ET-GARONNE REF: WMC707

€595,000



Exceptional country house near Penne d'Agenais, set in 1.7 hectares, blending period charm with modern comfort, featuring tower, spacious living areas, guest cottage, pool, lake, outbuildings and beautiful landscaped grounds.

LOT-ET-GARONNE REF: WMC701

€595,000



Historic hilltop residence in Tournon d'Agenais, blending medieval origins with refined modern living, featuring elegant interiors, restored outbuilding, courtyard garden, three bedrooms and timeless character steps from local life.

LOT-ET-GARONNE REF: WMC704

€696,800



Magnificent, restored 18th-century estate on 17 hectares in Saint Maurin with main residence, hamlet, outbuildings, pool, garage, and conversion potential, offering elegant interiors, panoramic views, exceptional privacy in the countryside setting.

LOT-ET-GARONNE REF: WMC675

€448,000



Beautifully restored period townhouse in Tournon-d'Agenais, offering five bedrooms, elegant living spaces, balcony views, historic features, modern comforts and strong rental potential in a sought-after bastide location.

TARN-ET-GARONNE REF: WMC537

€475,000



Charming early 19th-century stone farmhouse set on 3 hectares at the end of a private lane, offering complete privacy, four bedrooms, study, pool, outbuildings and beautiful countryside views near Bourg-de-Visa.

LOT REF: WMC706

€135,000



Beautifully renovated stone house in the village of Grézels, offering three floors of stylish living, one bedroom, terrace with village views, modern comforts and easy low-maintenance living.

WHEELER
PROPERTY SOUTHWEST FRANCE

WHEELER PROPERTY SARL

18 Grand Rue, 47470 Beauville

TEL: 05 53 47 92 30 **TEL:** Carol Ann 06 70 47 23 53 **TEL:** Robert 06 44 96 05 88

EMAIL: carolann@wheeler-property.com **WEB:** www.wheeler-property.com

PROPERTY SHOWCASE

TARN-ET-GARONNE REF: WMC654

€195,000



Charming restored stone house in Roquecor village offering four bedrooms, open-plan living, private rooftop terrace, rare garage and workshop, blending historic character with modern comfort in a sought-after location.

TARN-ET-GARONNE REF: WMC555

€395,000



Quintessential 19th-century stone village house in St Paul d'Espis, fully restored with modern comforts, offering three bedrooms, open-plan living, barn with conversion potential, heated pool, gardens and countryside views.

TARN-ET-GARONNE REF: WMC424

€580,000



Stylish architect-designed 1975 "Tower House" in Moissac, set in private parkland with pool, garage, outbuildings, six bedrooms, open-plan living, modern upgrades and panoramic views over the old town.

LOT-ET-GARONNE REF: WMC670

€298,000



Elegant 1846 stone bastide in Beauville village, beautifully restored with stylish interiors, four ensuite bedrooms, open-plan living, valley views, cellar potential and private garden, all steps from shops, restaurants and summer markets.

HAUTE GARONNE REF: WMC620

€475,000



Luxury 1850s farmhouse with annex in Escancrabe, restored to high standards, offering open-plan living, three ensuite bedrooms, guest cottage, outbuildings, 2.27 hectares of land and stunning Pyrenees views.

LOT REF: WMC573

€279,000



Charming, restored country house in Lendou-en-Quercy, set in peaceful countryside with far-reaching views, two bedrooms, stylish interiors, modern kitchen, wood burners and beautiful gardens near Montcuq and Lauzerte.

WHEELER PROPERTY SARL

18 Grand Rue, 47470 Beauville

TEL: 05 53 47 92 30 **TEL:** Carol Ann 06 70 47 23 53 **TEL:** Robert 06 44 96 05 88

EMAIL: carolann@wheeler-property.com **WEB:** www.wheeler-property.com

WHEELER
PROPERTY SOUTHWEST FRANCE

PROPERTY SHOWCASE

TARN ET GARONNE REF: JK-2605

€190,800 AFI



3 bed village house with separate garden - this charming village house set on a mid-level, south-facing position in Lauzerte.

TARN ET GARONNE REF: JAS-2606

€495,000 AFI



5 bed house, 2 bed gite, barn and pool located in a quiet location with 3 hectares of parklike gardens and pastures. Lovely country views near to Castelsagrat.

TARN ET GARONNE REF: JAS-2556

€769,600 AFI



A rare equestrian property near Castelsagrat, lovely valley views and 18 hectares of pasture, 11 stables, 3 bed stone house and swimming pool.
Easy access to village.

LOT ET GARONNE REF: JAS-2554

€950,000 AFI



Stunning domaine near Agen with manor house, guardian cottage, large barn for events, lake and 19 hectares. Many opportunities available at this property with extended families, rentals and farming or stud.

TARN ET GARONNE REF: JK-2552

€426,000 AFI



A beautifully restored stone farmhouse, with guest cottage, apartment, pool and gardens set in a peaceful hamlet near to Bourg de Visa.
Ideal for extended families or hosting guests.

TARN ET GARONNE REF: JK-2603 **€665,000 AFI**



Located just outside Bourg De Visa, a remarkable eco domaine with four dwellings, pool, 6 hectares of pasture, woodland and a lake.



POPPINS REAL ESTATE

Touffailles, 82190, France

TEL: 0033647784916 / 0033652714556

EMAIL: poppinsrealestate@gmail.com

WEB: poppinsrealestate.com

PROPERTY SHOWCASE

LOT REF: JAS-2546

€352,560 AFI



Renovated home near Castelnau Montratier with outbuildings, 2 hectares of flat land. Thanks to new heat pump system and complete insulation, it has an excellent B energy performance rating.

TARN ET GARONNE REF: JAS-2506

€795,000 AFI



A stunning ensemble of stone properties near to Montaigne de Quercy with a traditional 3 bed farmhouse, a fully renovated barn, a guest cottage, swimming pool, 13 hectares of land.

TARN ET GARONNE REF: JAS-2510

€472,500 AFI



Authentic stone farmhouse near Bourg de Visa with 4 bedrooms, a large barn, swimming pool and a manageable 4857m² garden. Easy access to the village with local commerce.

TARN ET GARONNE REF: JAS-2523

€685,000 AFI



A wonderful country house a short drive from Moissac, with 5 bedrooms, a guest cottage with 3 beds, swimming pool and 3 acres of gardens plus 13 acres of land.

TARN ET GARONNE REF: JAS-2522

€449,000 AFI



A stunning 3 bedroom stone property, swimming pool, 2 bedroom guest cottage and 8686m² of gardens and woodland located in a small hamlet between Montaigne de Quercy and Lauzerte.

LOT ET GARONNE REF: JAS-2544

€315,000 AFI



A recently renovated 3 bed village house in Saint Vite with a guest house and fenced garden, located within easy reach of all the shops at Montayral.



POPPINS REAL ESTATE

Touffailles, 82190, France

TEL: 0033647784916 / 0033652714556

EMAIL: poppinsrealestate@gmail.com

WEB: poppinsrealestate.com

PROPERTY SHOWCASE

MOUGINS, CÔTE D'AZUR REF: 86875691

FROM €1.5M



Private and secure domaine comprising of 10 architect-designed 4 and 5 bedroom villas, elegantly set within approximately 1.5 hectares of lush greenery, at the foot of the village of Mougins. Private garden, pool, garage, fitted kitchens. Low French stamp duty applies.

AGAY, ST RAPHAEL, VAR REF: 86870450

FROM €345,000



Set in the exceptional surroundings of the bay of Agay, a new secure and modern style development nestled at the heart of a landscaped enclave featuring a communal pool. Beach, shops and restaurants on foot. Low French stamp duty applies.

FRÉJUS PLAGE, VAR REF: 86869590

€285,000



Fréjus beach and St Raphael on foot, an ideal location for this lovely pied-a-terre and rental investment with 1 bedroom, 1 bathroom and with more than 50m² of living area and a terrace. Air-conditioning. Gated and secure. Low French stamp duty applies.

GOLFE-JUAN, CÔTE D'AZUR REF: 86855661

FROM €260,000



Between Cannes and Nice, minutes to lovely sandy beaches of Juan les Pins, elegant new development in sought after residential area. 1, 2 and 3 Bedroom apartments available with large private terraces or gardens. Low French stamp duty applies.

THÉOULE-SUR-MER, CÔTE D'AZUR REF: 82403176

€1,370,000



Unique 3 bedroom, 3 bathroom ground floor apartment with stunning sea views in one of the most exclusive areas on the Côte d'Azur with 175m² private garden, terrace, spa, parking, air-conditioning.

JUAN-LES-PINS, CÔTE D'AZUR REF: 86853214

FROM €182,000



New contemporary development within walking distance to the sandy beaches of Juan-les-Pins and all amenities, in quiet residential area in the heart of landscaped gardens with access to communal pool. Low French stamp duty applies.



HALKIN RIVIERA Ltd

London Office, 2 Eaton Gate, Belgravia, London, SW1W 9BJ United Kingdom (by appointment only)

TEL: +44 20 7989 7777 EMAIL: mail@halkinriviera.co.uk

PROPERTY SHOWCASE

NICE, CÔTE D'AZUR REF: 86844682

€445,000



1 bedroom 1 bathroom apartment with access to a West facing terrace with lovely sea views on the 16th floor of an iconic new luxury development designed by award-winning Japanese architect. Low French stamp duty applies.

GOLFE-JUAN, CÔTE D'AZUR REF: 86171650

FROM €230,000



450m to the famous Marina and opposite the sandy beaches of Golfe-Juan, on a quiet road, just 1km to the town centre, the train station, its local shops and restaurants, a new development in the heart of the lovely seaside resort, between Cannes and Antibes.

JUAN-LES-PINS, CÔTE D'AZUR REF: 85695147

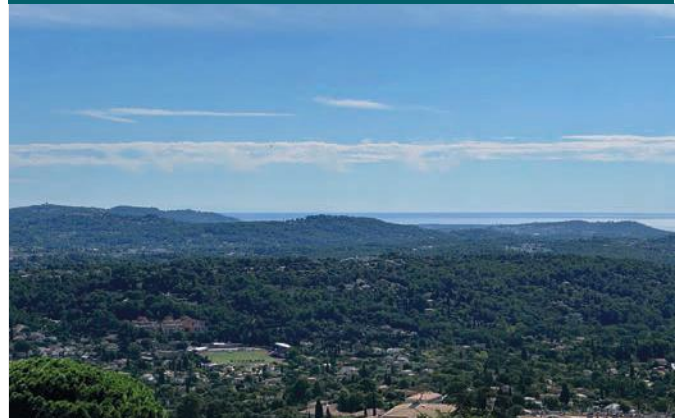
€276,000



Ideal as a pied-a-terre and rental investment 800m to Juan les Pins sandy beaches and all amenities on foot. Newly built top floor 1 bedroom 1 bathroom apartment with parking.

GRASSE, CÔTE D'AZUR REF: 85369239

€399,000



Top floor 3 bedroom, 2 bathroom apartment with stunning panoramic sea views from its vast 60m² triple aspect terrace in new and elegant development located in the exclusive residential area of Le Petit Paris in Grasse. Pool. Parking.

CANNES, CÔTE D'AZUR REF: 85579535

FROM €350,000



Ideal pied-a-terre and rental investment 30 mins to La Croisette and 10 mins to all amenities on foot. Newly built 1 bedroom 1, bathroom apartments with private external spaces on the ground, 1st and 2nd floors. Pool. Low French stamp duty applies.

JUAN-LES-PINS, CÔTE D'AZUR REF: 86210635

€449,000



Just 600m from the sandy beaches at the foot of Boulevard Wilson on the Juan-les-Pins side, newly built 2 bedroom apartment in elegant new residence in the heart of one of the French Riviera's most sought-after neighbourhoods. Low French stamp duty applies.

HALKIN RIVIERA Ltd

London Office, 2 Eaton Gate, Belgravia, London, SW1W 9BJ United Kingdom (by appointment only)

TEL: +44 20 7989 7777 EMAIL: mail@halkinriviera.co.uk



PROPERTY SHOWCASE

MORBIHAN, BRITTANY REF: 693855

€153,750



Three bedroom house with outbuildings.

CORRÈZE, NOUVELLE AQUITAINE REF: 694212

€191,500



Beautiful three bedroom stone house with two bedroom gite. Riverfront access.

GERES, OCCITANIE REF: 694124

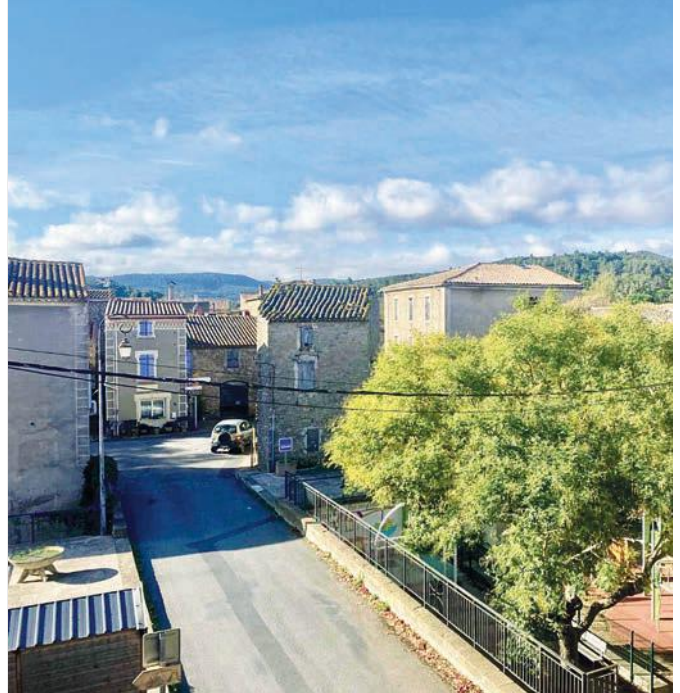
€239,000



Three bedroom home with swimming pool and far reaching views to the Pyrenees.

AUDE, OCCITANIE REF: 692983

€195,000



Charming french village house with terrace.

FRANCE PROPERTY SHOP

TEL: 0044 (0) 1225 463 752 EMAIL: admin@francepropertyshop.com WEB: Francepropertyshop.com



PROPERTY SHOWCASE

CHARENTE, NOUVELLE AQUITAINE REF: 694133

€172,800



Charming detached village ideally located near Confolens town centre.

LOT-ET-GARONNE, NOUVELLE AQUITAINE REF: 694210

€351,200



Just a few minutes from Marmande, a charming stone house set in over 7 hectares of woodland with a little lake.

VAR, PACA REF: 694164

€472,500



Charming villa with panoramic views in Cotignac.

MANCHE, NORMANDY REF : 694022

€118,000



Beautiful renovated former bakery with views.

FRANCE PROPERTY SHOP

TEL: 0044 (0) 1225 463 752 EMAIL: admin@francepropertyshop.com WEB: Francepropertyshop.com



PROPERTY SHOWCASE

ILLE-ET-VILAINE REF: AS-5139

€375,000



Accessed via double gates and a gravel driveway, this impressive 228m² property offers two homes within 3,274m² of landscaped, fenced gardens and woodland, peacefully located near Saint-Malo and the coast.

ALPES-MARITIMES REF: 87043877

POA



Just 500m from the town centre and 700m from sandy beaches, this elegant new development between Cannes and Antibes offers 1 and 2-bedroom apartments from €289,000, with pool, parking, low stamp duty and delivery expected March 2027.

CHARENTE MARITIME REF: 00106FB

€460,000



Discover this splendid south-facing Charentaise home in sought-after Fontcouverte, combining period charm with modern comforts. Set in peaceful surroundings just six minutes from historic Saintes, it offers countryside living with easy access to town amenities.

COTES D'ARMOR REF: HERB1234

€1,240,000



Set within 4,020m² of unspoilt natural surroundings, this exceptional property includes a main residence and renovated guest house, enjoying an elevated position with breathtaking 180° sea views across 10km of coastline among France's most beautiful shores.

FRENCHENTRÉE

TEL: 0044 (0) 1225 463 752 **EMAIL:** propertysales@frenchentree.com **WEB:** propertyinfrance.com

French Entrée
FIRST FOR BUYING PROPERTY & LIVING IN FRANCE

PROPERTY SHOWCASE

GIRONDE REF: BVI82378

€519,400



Nestled between the bastide towns of Duras and Monségur, this beautiful stone property offers spacious family living, a swimming pool and separate guest house, ideal for holidays, entertaining or rental income in peaceful South-West France.

VAUCLUSE REF: 018783

€775,000



Discover this superb stone farmhouse in the Uchaux Mountains, combining charm, authenticity and tranquillity. Set within 1,900m² of wooded grounds, it offers elegant living spaces, four bedrooms and a beautiful swimming pool in peaceful surroundings.

HAUTES-PYRENEES REF: MM2340TC

€798,000



Built in 2019, this striking contemporary home in Southwest France offers panoramic Pyrenees views, elegant indoor-outdoor living, heated indoor and outdoor pools, spacious entertaining areas and luxurious accommodation, all set within 2,854m² of landscaped grounds.

ALPES-MARITIMES REF: 87044331

POA



Just 600m from the marina, beaches, shops and restaurants, this new development near Nice offers stylish 1-3 bedroom apartments with terraces, sea or mountain views, air-conditioning, parking and storage. One-bedroom apartments from €292,000, delivery June 2027.

FRENCHENTRÉE

TEL: 0044 (0) 1225 463 752 **EMAIL:** propertysales@frenchentree.com **WEB:** propertyinfrance.com

French Entrée
FIRST FOR BUYING PROPERTY & LIVING IN FRANCE

PRIVATE SALES

Britanny, Côtes-d'Armor

Nearest town: Pleubian

€1,240,000

FrenchEntrée Ref HERB1234



House and guest house with exceptional sea views

Overlooking an uninterrupted 10 kilometers of Breton scenic wild coast, on a piece of land of 4020 m², at the dead end of a private road, these two houses with ten living rooms.

(7 bedrooms-3 bathrooms-2 kitchens) for a total and estimated 201 m² benefits of an exceptional maritime atmosphere.

The property has been restored during these last 3 years.

Work in the guest house has been completed this year.

Pedestrian access to a sandy beach. All commodities within 1 mile.

CONTACT: Hervé Bré **EMAIL:** hb@enezgreen.com
TELEPHONE: 0033614473300

Nouvelle Aquitaine

Charente, Cherves-Châtelars

€280,500

FrancePropertyShop Ref 694476



Beautifully renovated Charente farmhouse with four bedrooms, outbuildings and nearly one hectare of land

Nestled in the peaceful village of Cherves-Châtelars in the heart of the Charente, this beautifully renovated farmhouse offers over 9,164m² of open land surrounding 220m² of characterful living space. The property is in excellent condition throughout with, amongst other high ceiling rooms, three bedrooms, a mezzanine and two bathrooms. The traditional outbuildings are full of potential, with two large barns and a hanger perfect for storage or conversion into a gîte or guest house.

CONTACT: Lucy Esposito **EMAIL:** lucyespositoconseil@gmail.com
TELEPHONE: +33 (0)7 67 70 78 24

Occitanie, Lot(46)

Cajarc,(10 mins) Cahors, (35 mins)

€346,500

FrenchEntrée Ref 693149



Character three bedroomed stone house with holiday Gite on the edge of a peaceful village overlooking the river Lot. (Cénevieres 46)

House and Gite have been renovated to a high standard sustainably with new central heating, double-glazed windows and doors, electrics, plumbing, oak and travertine floors. In 'Les Causses de Quercy' regional park, area of outstanding natural beauty. Toulouse airport 1 1/2 hrs, nearby market towns, Cahors, Cajarc, Figeac.

Three large terraces afford spectacular views of the landscaped garden, pool, the river and the valley. The successful 3-star Gite provides a source of regular income.

See more on Gite website and online advert: <http://www.Gite-des-Reves.com>



CONTACT: Melody and David Sills **EMAIL:** melodyjane1@mac.com or melody7@ntlworld.com
TELEPHONE: +33 (0) 623352543

Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, Var

Pignans

€559,000

FrenchEntrée Ref PIF12704



7-bedroom fully renovated house: a blend of authentic period charm with contemporary luxury. Move-in-ready!

Nestled in the heart of historic Pignans, this exceptional property delivers nearly 270m² of turnkey luxury living. Meticulously renovated with premium finishes, the property marries period character with contemporary elegance across six impressive levels: including an equipped kitchen, seven bedrooms, multiple en-suites and a vaulted wine cellar.

The private, walled 100m² garden is a true entertainer's paradise, complete with a salt-water pool with counter-current system, sun-drenched terrace, and functioning ancient well.

Turnkey opportunity, ready to move in straight away!



CONTACT: Mira McEniff **EMAIL:** del.mira@yahoo.fr **TELEPHONE:** 00353892256999

Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes

Bresse

€3,500,000

FrenchEntrée Ref: FPS130126



Stunning fully renovated 18th century historical chateau

Price includes the existing furniture and the vintage Mercedes Benz Anno 1984 in perfect running condition.

18th century historical Château, completely renovated.

Furnished with period furniture, large living room, music room, 5 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, large dining room and kitchen, billiard and games room, private chapel, completely excavated, central heating, salted water swimming pool, pergola, pool house, English stable style outbuilding including orangery, fully furnished apartment and large garage, central heating, huge park with period statuary and central basin, clear view. Ideally situated 20km from Mâcon (Burgundy), 33km from the Beaujolais wine region and 80km from Lyon airport. English speaking owners.

CONTACT: Julien Tissot **EMAIL:** j.tissot.71133@notaires.fr
TELEPHONE: 0033 (0)3 85 75 30 11

Nouvelle Aquitaine

Pyrénées-Atlantiques (64) Lescar, Pau (20 mins drive)

€265,000

FrenchEntrée Ref BPJ1234



Charming countryside retreat with barn and extensive grounds in the heart of Aubertin

Discover the tranquillity of rural Béarn with this detached stone-built home. **Ground floor:** Welcoming kitchen, comfortable lounge and shower room. **Attic level:** A large, light-filled bedroom suite. Set on 17,915 sqm of private outdoor space including lush meadows, moorlands and coppice woodland, ideal for small-holding, equestrian use or nature enthusiasts. This property offers a perfect blend of living space, functional outbuildings and natural beauty.

CONTACT: Bruno Petit-Jean **EMAIL:** bdpetitjean@gmail.com
TELEPHONE: (0)7596314271

Brittany, Côtes-d'Armor

Illifaut

154,000€

FrenchEntrée Ref FRE112618



Peaceful south-facing country home with land and orchard

South-facing property set on a fully fenced 4,775 m² plot offering peace, space and privacy. The home features two generous double bedrooms, a large bathroom with shower, toilet and double sink, a utility room and an open-plan kitchen/diner with woodburner and radiators. Outside, enjoy a large garden with orchard, vegetable plot, a well for irrigation, double garage and off-road parking. Fibre-optic 5G internet is available, no close neighbours and just a 15-minute walk to the village: ideal for a self-sufficient lifestyle.

CONTACT: Ernest Mayzubel **EMAIL:** ernest.mayzubel@univ-rennes.fr
TELEPHONE: 0033789 856162

Nouvelle-Aquitaine

Deux-Sevres, Faye l'Abbesse

€110,000

FrenchEntrée Ref MOFAYE081



Spacious, detached 3-bedroom house in a commune surrounded by countryside in 79350 Deux-Sevres, Nouvelle-Aquitaine

Located in the centre of a commune with shop, post office, library, pharmacy, garage and a short drive to a hospital and large town, this 3-bedroom, 2-bathroom house is ready to move in to. Fully re-wired and decorated in 2022, it retains a French feel. It boasts a large loft space and full C/H. It has secure parking and outside space. Mains drainage. Separate land included. Main home or lock-up and leave. No agency fees and opportunity to pay in Sterling.

CONTACT: Adrian Moore **EMAIL:** vanade1966@gmail.com

Nouvelle Aquitaine, Dordogne

Cénac (6km), Sarlat (13km - 15 min)

€470,000

FrenchEntrée Ref: KZIG123



South-West, Périgord Noir, in La Roque Gageac, authentic stone house with Dordogne river view, terrace and garden

In the heart of Périgord Noir, in La Roque-Gageac, one of the most beautiful villages in France, this charming, authentic stone house is close to major tourist attractions. Spread over three levels, the property features exposed stonework and beams, tasteful décor, and a beautiful view of the Dordogne River. It offers a 24 m² kitchen, a 39 m² living room, four bedrooms, two full bathrooms plus one half bath. Additional features include a terrace, cellar, and a small garden with courtyard BBQ. Heating is provided by electric radiators and a wood-burning stove. Resident parking spaces are available.

CONTACT: Françoise Deunf **EMAIL:** francoise.deunf@iadfrance.fr
TELEPHONE: (33) (0) 6 48 69 26 53

Nouvelle Aquitaine

Charente

€214,000

FrenchEntrée Ref FRE16140



Fully renovated 3 bedroomed stone cottage in centre of village with shop, pub and pizza restaurant

4km from Aigre. Lounge with wood stove. Large kitchen/dining room with French doors ideal for indoor/outdoor living, opening onto terrace and walled cottage garden replete with rose arbours and pergola.

Downstairs toilet, 2 bathrooms, C/H, double glazing, PVC doors and windows. Laundry, garage and barn. Ideal 2nd home.

CONTACT: Janet Bradley **EMAIL:** janet.bradley4743@gmail.com
TELEPHONE: +33 (0)677398138

PRIVATE SALES

Charente

Near Confolens, Nouvelle Aquitaine

€940,000

FrenchEntrée Ref FP655610



Fully renovated historic Chateau with Cottage and Equine facilities

An exceptional 15th century chateau set in the heart of Charente countryside near the charming village of Lesterps. Beautifully restored and offering 462 m² of refined living space, this historic residence blends timeless character with modern luxury. The estate includes a 3-bedroom guesthouse with private parking, plus 11 acres of parkland featuring a carp lake, paddocks and stables: ideal for equestrian pursuits or countryside leisure!

With its scale, setting, and immaculate presentation, the property offers exciting potential ventures for a boutique hotel, wedding venue or luxury retreat.

Conveniently located for international travel, with easy access to the airports of Limoges, Poitiers-Biard, and Bordeaux.



CONTACT: Frederick Page **EMAIL:** frederickpage12@gmail.com

Provence

Gard (Beaucaire-Tarascon)

€945,000

FrenchEntrée Ref: 42664MO



Unique and special. A stunning and spacious stone-built hilltop villa, pool and gite in Provence

Urgent Retirement Sale after 23 years - All offers considered

Wonderful views. 6 bedrooms, 5 baths etc. Parking for 6+ cars and 2 garages. Magnificent pool with sun terrace, summer kitchen, BBQ, shaded summer lounge. Detached 1-bed gite in the garden. Superbly located, private and exclusive but not isolated. In the 'golden circle' of Avignon, St. Remy de Provence, Arles, Nîmes, Uzès and the Pont du Gard.

Award-winning rental income. 5-star reviews.

See more on our own website: www.villaromantique.co.uk
(Optional adjacent land with building permission also for sale)

CONTACT: Tony Cremer-Price
EMAIL: tony@villaromantique.co.uk **TELEPHONE:** +44(0) 7836 291791

Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, Drôme

Chanos-Curson

750,000€

FrenchEntrée Ref MOJ123



Elegant provençal 19th century manor with pool, outbuildings and immediate vacant possession

This fully renovated 19th century manor offers 400 m² of living space across three levels, including 7 bedrooms, generous reception areas and an independent loft. Set within a secure 1.2 hectare park with swimming pool, summer loft, stables and multiple outbuildings, the property combines historic character with modern comfort.

The owner is ready to vacate immediately and is willing to leave all furniture, equipment and contents, officially valued at 70,000€, making this an exceptional turnkey opportunity.

CONTACT: Pierre Mojon **EMAIL:** pieralyse@wanadoo.fr
TELEPHONE: 0033475073235

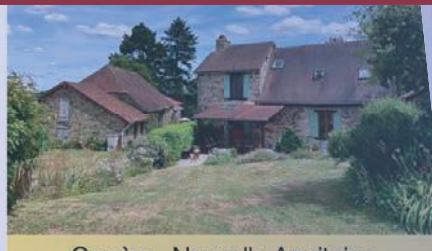
FRANCE PropertyShop



Dordogne, Nouvelle Aquitaine

POA

Chateau de Monboucher - own a slice of luxury in south west France



Corrèze, Nouvelle Aquitaine

€370,000

Correze 2 farmhouses, outbuildings, 2 acres, well and lots of quiet



Hérault, Occitanie

€864,000

Superb Character Property With 311 M2 Of Living Space, Annexe And Park Of 1660 M2. Unique



Drôme, Auvergne and Rhône-Alpes

€995,000

19th Century Manor house at the heart of Provence

A greater selection of French properties than ever before

Whether you're looking for a cottage in Normandy, a mountain chalet, or a new-build apartment or villa on the coast, **France Property Shop** has a property and location to suit all tastes.

Sign up to our weekly e-newsletter and property alerts to make sure you don't miss out on your dream home!



www.francepropertyshop.com

ISSUE: SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2026
ON SALE 21ST AUGUST

BUY YOUR COPY AT [FRANCEMEDIA.SHOP](https://francemedia.shop)

NEXT ISSUE

in

FRENCH PROPERTY NEWS

Aubusson in Creuse

CREUSE CONTROL

Discover the rural location that offers gorgeous scenery, pretty villages and bargain properties

LA BELLE EPOQUE

How did this period of optimism influence French architecture, from monuments to homes?

HOME INVASION

Normandy Landing Beaches – what do the coastal towns and hinterland have to offer?

FOODIE HEAVEN

Deciding where to buy? Why not choose the place where your favourite foods are produced!

DORDOGNE DREAM

How a love of France led to a memoir about restoring a village home in the French countryside

FRENCH INTERIORS

When it comes to best-selling antiques, the pieces people fall for are not always the most expensive

STILL ROSY?

A reader looks at how the reality stacks up against the dream of owning a home in France

NEW NOTRE DAME

Timber, bells, stone... We explore some of the areas that supplied materials for the epic restoration

MY CHARITY

Meet the people who have started their own not-for-profit or charity since their move to France

GUIDE TO...

Decluttering... friperies, vide greniers, recycling, book banks, private sales, auctions and more

MEMORY LANE

What we've learned over 27 years of French property ownership in Brittany

ASK THE EXPERTS

Your legal, financial and property questions answered along with advice on living in France



A longheld Riviera dream come true

Vence sits apart from the busy Côte d'Azur, yet close enough to enjoy it – **Steve Wilkison** shares the path that brought him and wife Carole to this sun-kissed corner of France

Why did you choose Vence?

I discovered it on a cycling trip in 2008 and it was love at first sight. We kept visiting regularly so when we moved in 2019, we already had many friends here. We are about 20 minutes northwest of Nice, though worlds away from the luxurious villas, and beaches of the Côte d'Azur.

With 18,000 people Vence is large enough to feel lively, yet small enough to keep its village character year-round. When we want a change of pace, Nice, Antibes and Cannes, are all within easy reach, and the airport is 30 minutes away.

What aspects of local life do you enjoy?

Having grown up in the American suburbs, where every outing requires a car, it's a joy to have the bank, the doctor, the grocery store, the pharmacy, the *boulangerie*, the dentist and restaurants all close at hand. The markets make everyday life feel richer and more personal; you get to know the people behind the counters.

We also love the local festivals, my favourite is the *Fête de la Transhumance* in St-Étienne-de-Tinée, where thousands of sheep are paraded through the tiny village.

What is there to see and do in the area?

The history of Vence fascinates me; I spend a lot of time researching and writing. Human presence goes back to the Palaeolithic (tens of thousands of years ago).

Just before the Christian era, these hills were the territory of the Nerusii, defeated by the Roman Emperor Augustus. Traces of the ancient Roman city, known as Vintium, are

still visible. Then there is the smallest cathedral in France and one of the oldest, housing Marc Chagall's mosaic. After the Second World War, Henri Matisse gave Vence one of its most remarkable landmarks: the Chapelle du Rosaire.

Also, as far back as the Middle Ages, Vence has had a reputation for exceptionally good water. Today, that tradition is still visible in 27 fountains, still fresh, clear, and very drinkable.

Vence is perfectly located in the foothills of the Alps, making it an ideal base for hiking and biking or exploring the nearby 'perched' villages.

How do you find interacting with the locals socially?

We have never had more friends than we do in Vence. Some are part of the local expat community, but many are French, and that mix has definitely made our life here feel richer. We have found the people of Vence to be exceptionally friendly and welcoming.

How was your French when you arrived and now?

It was beginner level, probably A2 for me. Carole just had a few

simple phrases and words. It's better now, but not as much as I had hoped! I passed a B1 test a year ago – I'm not sure I'm ready for B2 yet. It's a constant frustration. I work with a tutor and practice, but it just doesn't come naturally. I worry that people are going to think, "You've been here seven years, and that's the best you can do?", and that keeps me from engaging more. Carole's French is improving daily.

Do you work here?

Carole is retired, and I still work part-time in web design and development. I created 'Steve and Carole in Vence' about the history, heritage and culture of Vence and beyond, and feature my photography on postcards for Vence and some of the *Plus Beaux Villages de France*. I have also published a book *10 Magnificent Perched Villages You Must See When Visiting The Côte d'Azur* and am launching a second in a few weeks, *An Insider's Guide to Vence - How To Make The Most Of Your Visit*, both available on Amazon and on our website.

Additionally, I offer guided tours of the historic old town in English.

Are there any local foods, wines or specialties that you developed a taste for?

We both love socca, a traditional Niçois chickpea savoury 'pancake'. Served hot with a little black pepper, it is simple, inexpensive and delicious.

Has anything surprised you about living in this part of France?

Having spent a great deal of time here before the move, we pretty much knew what we were getting ourselves into. Living in France is something I wanted for so long, that very little really bothers me.

The paperwork, cultural differences, small frustrations of daily life, language barrier, most of these issues just roll off my back. For Carole, it can feel different, partly because this was not a lifelong dream for her in the same way.

I think it is important to be honest about the dynamics of moving as a couple, where one person is more deeply attached to the idea than the other. That doesn't mean that both people can't enjoy it.

What is your favourite French saying?

'On verra!' Literally, it means 'We'll see', but it often carries something deeper. So much about making a new life in a foreign country is difficult to anticipate. *On verra!* accepts all of that with a kind of calm good humour. We don't know yet, but we'll deal with it when the time comes. It is practical, reassuring, and sensible. ■

Find out more about Steve's photography, guided tours and books at: steveandcaroleinvence.com





GOLDENWAY INTERNATIONAL PETS & LIVE ANIMALS

✈️ WORLDWIDE LIVE ANIMAL RELOCATION SERVICES ✈️



SETTING THE GOLD STANDARD OF GLOBAL ANIMAL RELOCATION

- First worldwide freight forwarder specialising in live animals to obtain the IATA Certificate of Excellence for Independent Validators in Live Animal Logistics (CEIV)
- Working together with worldwide Zoos to ensure the safe and tranquil transport of these precious animals
- Preparing pets and following strict country regulations to ensure we unite pets and families together again
- Luxury transit lounge for animals in our care when transiting, before export and after import
- IATA Certified Agent
- Air-conditioned vehicles & live animal facilities on CDG Airport
- DDCSPP Approved (Ministry vet)
- AEO accreditation



**PROVIDING A PROFESSIONAL AND CARING TEAM
READY TO FULFIL ANY OF YOUR ANIMAL LOGISTICS.**

Contact Goldenway for a free quote at our
CDG Airport Office Paris



Accredited
Partner



"Safety comfort and care for your pet, peace of mind for you" ©

Aéroport Charles De Gaulle
Bat 3421J Cargo 6
Rue De La Jeune Fille
BP 19379
95706 Roissy CDG
France

Tel: +33 (0)1 48 62 87 25/ 11/ 27/ 59
Fax: +33 (0)1 48 62 87 30
Email: Contact@goldenwaypets.com

www.goldenwaypets.com

PropertyInFrance.com

The new French property portal from FrenchEntrée

Find your dream property in France

Use the form below or click an area on the map to begin your search.

Search Region, Department, Nearest Town

€0 - €5,000,000+ Reference Minimum Beds

ADVANCED SEARCH FIND PROPERTIES

Find Your Dream Property in France

FrenchEntrée

PROPERTY SEARCH SERVICES MAGAZINE HELP & ADVICE CREATE PROPERTY ALERT LOGIN/REGISTER

Property for sale in Tarn

110 properties found

Filters applied: 10

Charming stone house with 4 bedrooms, swimming pool and attached garage, near Pignat

€285,000

10m Distance

10m Distance

€148,900

10m Distance

Spacious family home in Cognac les Mines

€220,000

10m Distance

10m Distance

€536,000

10m Distance

Discover thousands of homes across every region of France with the new **FrenchEntrée property database**.

From rural farmhouses and cosy cottages to coastal apartments and elegant châteaux, **PropertyInFrance.com** makes it easy to search for your perfect French property.

- Thousands of properties across France
- Search by region, department or town, price and property type
- Set property alerts and never miss a new listing

Scan to search



Visit **PropertyInFrance.com** today!