

Letting your home in France



Buy-to-let schemes are becoming increasingly popular with British buyers in France. If you are interested in buying and leasing a property but don't want the hassle of managing the property and finding tenants, companies are cashing in on the boom with special deals known as 'sale and leaseback' schemes.

Under these schemes, you buy a property and select several weeks during the year that you will have sole use of it. Then you lease it back to the developer, who manages the

property and lets it for the rest of the year. In return, you get a pre-agreed income.

In France, investor protection in leaseback schemes is strong. Most schemes being marketed are off-plan, which means you buy the right to the property before it is built. The property might run into difficulties if the developer can't get enough interest or his firm goes bust. In France, however, there are guarantees that exist to ensure off-plan schemes are completed whatever the circumstances. Of course, you can make more money if you buy the property and rent it out independently.

More than 80 per cent of those who buy properties abroad intend to rent them out for part of the year to cover their mortgage costs and make a modest profit. It's important to be realistic about the amount of money you can make from letting, particularly if you're relying on the income to help pay the mortgage and running costs. The letting season is longest in Paris, where

you can let year-round – and similar in southern France, especially the Côte d'Azur. Inland, properties are more restricted and may only achieve a maximum of 12 weeks letting during the year.

Letting rates vary considerably according to the time of year, the area and the size of the property. Mid-season rates (June, September and October) are generally 25 per cent less than high season (July and August), and considerably lower in winter. Various rules and regulations apply when letting property in France. The property must be registered with the local *mairie* and, if you're offering B&B or a hotel with more than seven bedrooms, the local *préfecture*. It must meet set standards and comply with local regulations. You may be charged a small *taxe de séjour* for each paying guest and be required to inform your insurance company. Always check with a lawyer before going ahead with any letting arrangement.

Now for something completely different



If you're looking for a really unusual property in France, look no further! This unique, historic *château fort* dating back to the 12th and 15th Centuries is currently being renovated. The property now benefits from a new roof and new electrics and is being prepared ready for decoration by the new owners. Could that be you?

The property boasts lovely features including an impressive 12th-Century stone staircase, a huge vaulted wine cave and its own 12th-Century chapel. In addition, there is an attractive *pigeonnier*, mullion windows, a bread oven, magnificent stone fireplaces and some original beams and flooring.

The property has a variety of potential uses including as a hotel, a health spa, holiday *gîtes*, a conference centre – or as the ultimate holiday home! Price: 495,000 euros (£352,000).

Details: Allez Français, 0871 717 4176 (UK); 00 33 5 49 27 01 22 (France).
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