

January 2008

Advice on selling your property this summer

If you want to sell this summer then I should start by visiting local agencies as soon as possible with a view to putting the property on the market. The sales process is likely to take 2 – 4 month from the date that a purchaser signs a compromis.

Visit the local agencies to see firstly the type of properties they have in their windows, are they similar to your property and therefore do they attract suitable purchasers for your property? Do you like them? Do they have an international clientele? This last point may not be important but will depend on what and where you are trying to sell and therefore should be considered.

I would suggest that you give your property to three different agencies, perhaps one in the local village and two others nearby, but the decision will depend on the area you are in and if neighbouring villages handle properties in your area – it may be useful to go to the nearest large town and visit an agency there.

Make sure they are happy to take your property as if they are not keen they wont be able to do a good job for you and it does need to be near enough for them to show it regularly.

I would suggest that you then ask several of the agencies that seem to be suitable to come to see your property and tell you what they think it is worth. I am sure you have a good idea but do listen to what they have to say before deciding what to put it on the market for. You cannot value a property to the nearest 1000 euros and there is always some leeway. You need to price it correctly to attract the buyers, too low and you lose out and too high and you will frighten away the buyers when they compare it to other properties that they are shown. Choose your 3 agents on the basis of their enthusiasm and professionalism as well as the value they put on the property.

Be aware of the market, prices continued upwards last year but a little more slowly but this year we have seen some price reductions so don't overprice your property in the current market if you want it to sell. If you are bringing back the money to the UK you will be getting more Sterling for your Euros than previously.

French agencies will ask you to sign a mandate with them to be able to market your property. This should not be a sole selling mandate if you want

to be able to give it to several agencies and perhaps offer it yourself. The mandate may say that if the agent gets the asking price then you are bound to sell, this is normal in France and may or may not be applied but presumably if they do get an asking price offer you will be happy to accept it. The mandate will state how much commission the agency will be charging which can be from 5% to 10% of the purchase price and the agency should have their list of commission charged displayed for you. Also check that the agencies you go to hold their own 'carte professionnelle'.

Be prepared to accept a lower offer on your property as it is entirely normal for a purchaser to try to negotiate so allow for this in the pricing.

It is a good idea to let the three agencies each have a key to your property so that it is easy for them to show it – the easier it is the more likely they will show it regularly.

You can also advertise your property privately in the UK in the various French property magazines and National press, which will mean that your purchaser will not have to pay the agency fees but that you will have to be in a position to show it when required and perhaps be let down by people who don't turn up. You will also be responsible for contacting and dealing with the notaire with regard to the sale throughout the sales process which is something the agencies normally do for you.

When selling in France you will have to get various surveys done for your purchaser which will need to be within 3 months of completion so that it is best to wait until you have a purchaser to get these done. Agents will normally arrange those that apply in your area for you at your cost. They include, lead, asbestos, termites, energy efficiency and risk assessment.

Make sure you leave your property looking as good as you can – clean, tidy, beds made-up and looking like a comfortable home. During cold weather a little heating can make the place feel cosy. If there is a garden, then a few flowers can make the first impression more pleasing.