



New Years Resolution?

So – your new year’s resolution is that you will definitely get around to buying that property in France that you have been dreaming of! Well – here’s a few more resolutions that should go alongside in order to make the experience enjoyable, as inexpensive as possible and avail yourself of the best service that agents can offer.

1. Accept the differences in the way that agencies in France work to agents selling English properties – when in France do as the French do.

2. Arrange your finances so that you know exactly what your budget is and be honest with the agents as far as this is concerned. When you tell them your maximum budget tell the truth – purchasers in England often give a lower amount as they believe the agents will push them up – but in France you may not be offered properties higher than you tell them and may well miss out on the perfect house in this way. Bear in mind that French agents are legally allowed to tell you what the owner may accept – if they know.

3. Do a certain amount of research before your visit – visit exhibition – read French Property News etc - but there is no alternative to viewing ‘in the flesh’. All the questions that you have can normally be answered by the local agents whilst you are viewing . The information will be up to date and apply to the area – books give general information only.

4. If you don’t have a particular area in mind then choose your area according to your own requirements ie. for activities, weather, access or an area where your budget will enable you to buy what you are looking for.

5. Talk to lots of agents in England and obtain details in advance – discuss your requirements as far as you know them and listen to the agents who know the areas to help you make your choice.

6. Make your reservations for transport to the chosen area – preferably hold off making accommodation bookings until you know exactly where the agents offices are in France – the last thing you want to be doing is driving huge distances to get to the agents each day – when you will in any event be on the road viewing all day – very tiring.

7. With your dates booked the easiest way to proceed is to contact one agent in England only – discuss the properties you wish to view and areas that interest you and fix dates and times for appointments – the agent can then check with their various agencies in France who are bound to have a wider selection to offer. Building a good rapport with your agent will mean that his understanding of you and your requirements will be passed on to the agents awaiting you in France. In any event there is often a lap over with properties with several agencies dealing with the same ones. If you allow one agent to plan your route and viewing it is more likely to be achievable as the agent should know the areas and the distances and times involved. Put your trust in your agent – that they will check that you will be seeing agencies that have a selection to suit you.

8. Once you have these appointments confirmed you can try to fit in other appointments with other agents – but never make more than 2 agency appointments in one day – and then only if they are within an hour maximum of each other. Always check before making the 2nd appointment as to how long the 1st agent thinks he will need to see you - depending on how many properties he thinks he will have to show you within the budget and requirements you give.

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9. Don't think that the only way to make full use of the visit is to book every minute so that you end up without time to see the areas and without time to see the properties that the agents will have to offer that have just come on the market – often the best of the bunch.

10. Never set your heart on one property – the market recently has been so buoyant there is no guarantee it will wait for you. You will find it a much more useful trip if you base your viewings on where you want to be rather than chase about the country seeing properties that look good on paper.

11. Once you have your itinerary you can book accommodation or ask for recommendations from the agents – best to stay close to the appointment you have the next morning so you are fresh when you start even if this means staying somewhere different each night.

12. So you arrive in France – clutching your letter listing appointments – make a copy of it before you go so that you can put it somewhere safe, then if you leave it somewhere or lose it you will have the other one – keep your English agents's number to hand – they will help you out if you get lost, are late etc.

13. First rule – the appointments made are definite appointments – with real people waiting for you – having set aside their day for you – if for any reason you cannot make the appointment or are going to be late – please please telephone them. A mobile can be invaluable. Remember they normally close at lunch time and may not have an answerphone. If you find this impossible then phone your English agent to let them know.

14. When you arrive at the office – do not open the conversation with what time you need to leave – this gives the agents the wrong idea – ie. that you are more interested in somewhere else – give them time to do their job. Remember that some agencies have properties an hour away from their offices in different directions and therefore viewing can be time consuming – if they look of interest and you want to view – then if necessary telephone to cancel the following appointment. – I am sure the agent you are with will oblige.

15. If you find you have spare time due to an agent not having as much left to offer as was thought – you can always ring your English agent to get him to arrange another appointment – or use the time to look in more detail at the area – or take a little to relax and review what you have seen, been offered etc – decide as to whether you are looking for the impossible in that area – and if necessary change appointments – thinking time whilst you are there is essential in this busy market – where taking too long to make up your mind can result the property being sold before you do.

16. When viewing the properties, say what you think – give the agent something to go on so that he can change the selection depending on what you say and so save time. A polite 'very nice' does little to help you or them whereas telling them that the property 'requires too much work – you don't like the style – the position – the view – the size of the rooms, the layout will at least help them come up with something more suitable.

17. If you don't see anything you like at all in their files then be honest and tell them – they would prefer not to have their time wasted – but do listen to what they have to say about the properties which may be more helpful than the details.

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18. If after viewing nothing has appealed – again tell them that on this occasion you didn't like any of them – if possible try to say why – but if you don't like the area or the style of the area then just thank them politely and tell them so – don't leave saying you will be in touch when you have no intention of being!

19. If you do come across the property that you want – then at present remember there is no time to hesitate – make your feelings known – discuss anything that might be of concern – discuss the price etc. Take the agents advice as to what to offer. You will not be committed to purchase until you sign a contract and pay a deposit – making an offer does not commit you – although it is not sensible to do so unless you fully intend to proceed all things being equal.

20. When you leave an agent in France in an area that you like – having not seen anything of interest – leave a mobile or phone number where he can reach you – as often as not the property that would most appeal to you is brought into the agency within a few days when you might still be in France and the agent could contact you – saving another trip or loss of the perfect property.

21. When you get back to England – whatever the outcome – remember to phone an report on the trip to your English agent who will be interested to know not only if you bought a property, but what you thought of the areas, the agents and the properties in general. This will help them for your future visits if you have not found a property and after working hard to arrange your trip it is gratifying to hear all about it.