



# The property finder who went up a mountain...

**Nadia Jordan** recalls how she used her knowledge of how French estate agents work (plus a *soupeçon* of professional guile) to add a wonderful Southern Midi-Pyrénées property to her clients' short-list

Sometimes, I wonder how anyone manages to buy a house in this region without using a property finder. I live and work here so I know all the agents and the region itself inside-out, and still the process of finding and getting to view the right property can be like trying to get blood out of a stone.

A few weeks ago, on behalf of one of my current clients, I went in to see an agent who was advertising a new property which looked very interesting – there's no point just telephoning, everything works better face-to-face here. The property in question, a mountain barn, appeared to fit my brief but I wanted to find out was where

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it was situated. Location, as we all know, is the vital element, especially for mountain properties. The agent told me in which valley it was located (one of my favourites), suggested I go and take a look and pointed a finger at a map.

I've fallen for this ploy before and then spent a few frustrating hours trying to work out exactly which isolated barn

I was supposed to be viewing. So I suggested the agent take me to see the property and perhaps even bring along a key so I could look inside!

Agents sometimes hesitate to leave their office for a viewing when



French estate agents will often hesitate to leave their offices to show remote properties to finders

the property is remote, but after some convincing we arranged a time for the next day. Unfortunately he didn't turn up at our meeting point, something which – sadly – isn't at all uncommon here.

I did eventually get to view the property and it turned out to be worth the effort. It consisted of two well-looked after barns, one of which had been completely renovated, on a great plot of land with lovely views and it was very peaceful. There even was vehicle access – certainly not a given for many mountain properties.

However, the majority of houses I visit, do not come up to scratch. Normally, I will view up to 80 properties during one search, of which only around eight are likely to reach the short-list.

The reason that many do not make it is that – as anyone who has done any house hunting in France will know – many estate agents are very good photographers. They're expert at cropping out the less salubrious aspects of the

immediate vicinity and can also be very creative in writing the particulars. This is why it helps to be local – to know the lay of the land, what to look out for, the price a property should be and to be close enough to view every property which might just prove to be 'the one'.

I now have a very strong short-list for my current clients and I am in the process of organising a viewing schedule for them. All they have to do is turn up for three days, knowing that I have done all the preliminary work, research and viewings on their behalf.

I'll show them around, provide advice and organise every element of the search and buying process. They're all great properties and I'm looking forward to seeing which one my clients will choose. 

● **Nadia Jordan** runs Foothills of France [www.foothillsoffrance.com](http://www.foothillsoffrance.com) and is the Southern Midi-Pyrénées buyer's agent for The French Property Finders: [www.frenchpropertyfinders.co.uk](http://www.frenchpropertyfinders.co.uk), [contact@thefrenchpropertyfinders.com](mailto:contact@thefrenchpropertyfinders.com)