



KNOW the market



Nadia Jordan is an independent property search agent for the Haute Garonne, Ariège and Southern Gers. She offers her expert advice to those wishing to find ‘the one’ in the Midi-Pyrénées (the house that is).

France remains one of the world's most desirable locations and the great thing about buying a property here is that the system is incredibly well regulated and designed to protect the buyer at all stages. There are also many beautiful properties for sale in stunning locations and frequently offering incredibly good value for money. However, finding the right property in France can be extremely difficult as many house-hunters discover to their cost.

In most other countries, there are one or two property portals which will list every property on the market with every agent and every private seller but that is not the case in France (and certainly not in the Midi-Pyrénées) which means trawling numerous different websites. Agents operate very differently here too; they are not interested in taking your details in order to send you suitable properties to consider as they come on the market; they expect you to visit

them and then will show you what they have available on their books at that time, a very frustrating and time-consuming business. You also won't be given a handy map with the exact location of the property marked on it because agents are far too worried that they will be cut out of the sale so property details will only give a very vague location, often not even the name of the closest village, meaning that you can't do a drive past to have a sneaky peak at the house to



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see whether it is worth your while arranging an appointment for a formal viewing. Which means you really do need to view a large number of very unsuitable properties here before finding ‘the one’. This is why I set up Foothills of France search agency for

other expats like us moving to the area west and south of Toulouse, needing easy access to Blagnac airport and good schools or those looking for holiday homes in the region. The majority of my clients hire me just like they would hire any other profes-



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sional to handle aspects of their life that they don't have the time or inclination to deal with themselves. Most are very busy, professional people who have their own jobs and lives to manage and realize that it would be a waste of their valuable time and effort to trawl the internet for hours or to make numerous calls to estate agents looking for property in France.

Many people think that search agents provide services only to the super-wealthy. Not true, my clients have budgets ranging from 100,000 EUR upwards and we find and secure for our clients any type of property from renovation projects to manoirs, barns to châteaux, holiday homes to businesses and everything in between. A large part of my job as a property finder is to ensure that I find the property that not only ticks all the boxes for my clients but also is in the best location for the type of business they are looking to set up. So if it is a gîte business, it is important that there are plenty of pretty and interesting villages and towns nearby and opportunities for holiday and leisure activities such as ski-

ing, walking, kayaking, riding etc. Likewise, if somebody is looking to work from home, then obviously broadband has to be available and if they are commuting back to their home country, then easy access to Toulouse airport is a must. Proximity to good schools is also more and more important as many of my clients have school-age children.

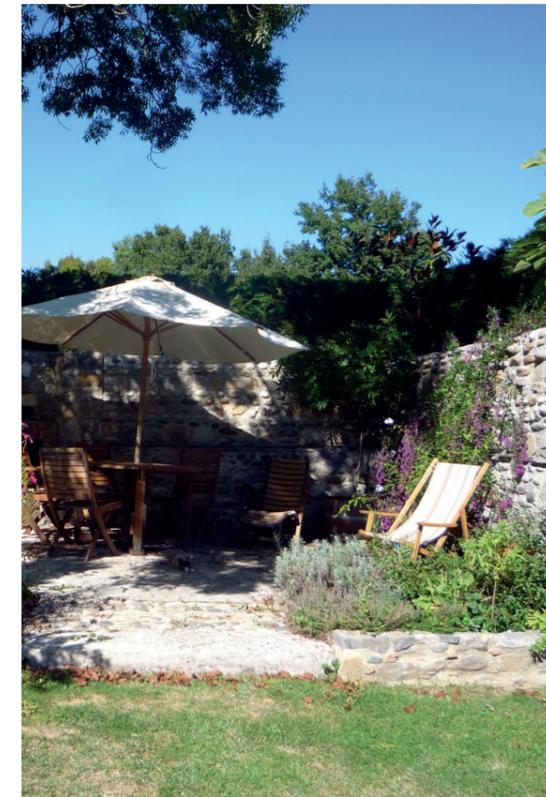
Of course, it has been challenging setting up a business in France especially as agents here are not used to working with property finders so it has taken time to convince them of the benefits. However, over the last eight years, the business has grown and grown to the extent that I constantly bump into past clients now happily settled in the region. It has certainly made me realize that, for all the frustrations of house hunting and the wider economic problems of France, it is hard to beat this region for property investment and, in my opinion, buying anywhere within an hour of La Ville Rose is a good long-term bet financially but, far more importantly, offers a fantastic quality of life.



When it comes down to it, moving to a new country and buying a new home is a bit like falling in love and getting married; there is the trawling through potential candidates on the internet, the initial excitement of seeing details of the possible 'one', arranging a date and the first impressions followed by the legal bit, the honeymoon period and then the long process of getting to know both the good and the bad aspects of your chosen one. It takes some personal investment, plenty of compromises and a sense of humour but it is definitely possible to find 'the one' and live happily ever after.

Nadia Jordan runs Foothills of France and is a registered search agent. She is based in the Ariège, Haute Garonne and Southern Gers regions in the Midi-Pyrénées.

For further information visit www.foothillsoffrance.com or e-mail nadia@foothillsoffrance.com



The benefits of using a property search agent

A property search agent has no vested interest in selling because they work exclusively for the buyer and are completely independent which means that they can show you properties with every agent (we do not take any commission from agents and hence have no bias), as well as those being sold by Notaires or being sold privately or those not even yet on the market at all.



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