

La Vie Française...

Last year, over 78 million foreign visitors chose France for a vacation...and with good reason. The French version of the Good Life - *la vie française* - is an experience to be savored. Exquisite food...fine wines...stylish fashion...lasting friendships and entertaining conversation...rich traditions and culture. These things matter to the French...and these are the things that make the prospect of living in France so appealing.

Whatever your own notion of a dream location, this wonderfully diverse country has the lot. Snow-capped alpine peaks, stylish beach resorts, a glorious green and golden interior where ancient towns cast shimmering reflections into lazy rivers. Old oak forests...miles of vineyards... gnarled olive groves...blossomy apple orchards. Feasts, fair days, and festivals...Open-air markets overflowing with tempting produce...Paris, the world's most glamorous and exciting city.

If you need more persuading, well...how about prices that start at less than \$12,000? Not a great deal to pay for a 19th-century cottage near one of the country's most picturesque medieval towns...

Dear *International Living* Reader,

Is making three trips to Paris in six months the sign of an obsessive personality? Maybe it is, but if I don't visit France at least once a year, I get miserable. You see, this is one of my favorite European countries. And judging by feedback from readers, it's one of your favorites too. After we produced our first edition of *France: The Owner's Manual*, the interest from subscribers was incredible.

In fact, such was the overwhelming response we decided to open an *International Living* office in France...and also to invest in our own Parisian pied-à-terre.

Over these past months, both myself and other *IL* correspondents have been exploring even more of France on your behalf, making new contacts and unearthing some tempting investment opportunities. Identifying new locations. And rediscovering some of the country's most sought- after areas too...

Dream Locations

Some French regions don't really need to sell themselves. Take Provence. With its hilltop villages and sunshine coast, I doubt it will ever go out of fashion. Sunflowers, lavender fields, and lost-in-time *villages perchés*...the Côte d'Azur's palm-fringed promenades...quiet towns where locals gather in shady squares to play *pétanque*...vibrant cities like Marseille, Arles, Nice, Aix-en-Provence, and Avignon.



France offers a sunny climate, stunning scenery, excellent food and a relaxed way of life.

Yes, admittedly property values here keep rising - those who followed our advice and bought two years ago have seen the value of their homes increase by an average 30%.

But that doesn't mean this beautiful region has become unaffordable. \$66,000 seems reasonable to me for a refurbished village house set amongst stunning mountain scenery. An hour's drive from Nice, this is a world of streams, lakes and rugged peaks. If you appreciate village life and outdoor activities such as climbing, rambling, water sports and skiing, you'll love it.

Here's another one: a village house in St. Martin de Crau. This village is a gateway to the Camargue wilderness, home of Provence's famous white horses, black bulls and pink flamingoes. The house has a living room,

kitchen, 2 bedrooms, and bathroom - and it's priced at 64,000 euros (approximately \$80,000). Still think Provence is only for millionaires?

And do you realize it's possible to buy studio apartments in legendary St. Tropez for less than \$60,000? (I must admit I didn't either until we investigated the French government-backed leaseback program.) These apartments - not just in St. Tropez, but also in other sought-after Riviera resorts - come with guaranteed rental income and tax breaks. We explain how you can take advantage of this special program in our brand-new ***France: The Country Kit*** - an introduction in both words and pictures to this irresistible country.

Where To Find Your Perfect Property

Of course, we're not suggesting that Provence is the only place to consider looking for a home. On all my own vacations and working trips, nowhere in France has ever disappointed me. From the wild coastline of Celtic Brittany (land of a thousand witchy legends) to the half-timbered fairytale wine villages of Alsace, this magical country has an incredible amount to offer.

In fact, it's like opening a treasure chest. Take the Languedoc - another luscious southern region that's now being billed as 'the next Provence'. This drowsy land of troubadours is hauntingly beautiful, riddled with Cathar castles and mysterious legends. It meanders down to the Spanish border - those who live here certainly don't have to compromise on good weather. With property prices still enticingly inexpensive, we believe this region is worth close attention.

Here, fixer-upper cottages and small village houses start at less than \$20,000. For \$44,000 you could buy a small restored house inside the walls of a medieval town. A 4-bedroom home with garden and swimming pool?

We've unearthed one selling for less than \$183,000 - and it's hardly in the middle of nowhere. This property is only 5 minutes drive from Carcassonne.

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