

Four-bedroom house in Montaigu-de-Quercy, Tarn-et-Garonne (see listing right)



It's your move!

If it's time to bid au revoir to your place in France, the market might just be in your favour - **Julie Savill** explains how to help yourself to a quick sale at the right price

No matter why you want to sell your French property (and we understand that it might be a happy or a sad choice), the market in France right now is buoyant in a way that we haven't seen in the past 10 years. Good properties that are sensibly priced are coming on to the market and selling swiftly. This is a new phenomenon and it means that if you have been toying with the idea of selling, this could be the moment to set the ball rolling. So, what should you expect from the selling process, and what can you do from the comfort of your armchair in the UK?

GETTING STARTED

The first thing you need is to get an idea of the current market value of your home. A good agent based in the right area for your property will be able to offer a free market appraisal. That might include examples of similar properties that have sold recently but also properties that have gone on to the market at too high a price and are 'sticking' as a result.

The market is good right now but it's not a free-for-all. For a long time now the internet has meant that buyers have been able to do plenty of research and therefore form their own opinions about value. A busy local agent will have current

experience of the price that the market would support for a particular type of property in a particular area.

Of course, if you want to try a speculative price that's a little on the high side, you can give it a try but be prepared to wait longer for that one person who just falls completely in love with the property.

BEST FOOT FORWARD

First impressions can be everything and making your property look as nice as possible to potential buyers may take a little planning if you live elsewhere. It will repay the outlay if you can find someone local to keep the grass cut and

bat away the cobwebs before any viewings. As you get into the summer season it always looks better if the pool is open and flower beds kept neat. If the house has been locked up for a long period of time it will be a good idea to have the windows opened and the rooms aired.

It goes without saying (doesn't it?) that the property should be left clean, tidy, uncluttered and with beds made so that it looks its best on the day.

If your interior decor style is a little on the flamboyant side, consider starting to declutter by packing up what you're keeping and selling what you're not. Brightly coloured



€380,000

MONTAIGU-DE-QUERCY, TARN-ET-GARONNE

A lovely stone house in the Tarn-et-Garonne countryside, with breathtaking valley views. The property boasts four bedrooms, a balcony overlooking the pool area and hills beyond, a large barn, 11x5m pool, pool house and fabulous summer kitchen.



€250,000

VERGT, DORDOGNE

A magnificent one-bedroom tower property, in the heart of the Dordogne, that's straight out of a fairytale. There are lovely character features such as an ancient fireplace with a woodburner, a wooden staircase and lattice windows with countryside views.



€724,000

LAUZERTE, TARN-ET-GARONNE

Pretty stone house located in the heart of the Quercy Blanc, close to the medieval village of Lauzerte. The property consists of a main house with five bedrooms, a large stone garage, vaulted cellars, a terrace with panoramic views, and four hectares of gardens.



€250,000

PUY-L'ÉVÊQUE, LOT

A beautifully presented house located only a stone's throw from a village with all amenities. The property has lovely character features, four bedrooms, a wine cellar and fantastic views over the surrounding countryside.

walls aren't to everyone's taste - trends are more generally in the neutrals, greys and off-white range so you might want to take a paintbrush to a room or two.

VIRTUAL VIEWINGS

All the contracts needed to advertise your property online can now be signed digitally, so there is no bother with printing, signing and posting paperwork. It's very straightforward and safe.

More and more property searches are done online these days, from initial internet

“Leaving a set of keys with the agent is the best way to capitalise on last-minute visits”

searches to video and 3D tours and even Livestream viewings where only the agent is at the property and prospective buyers dial in. Live streaming gives buyers an amazing opportunity to 'walk through' a property as if they were there, stop and ask questions and have a real look around. At the very least this can

help someone rule a property in or out of a shortlist for a physical viewing and, on occasion, it can even result in an offer.

If you have good wifi or a strong phone signal at your property, it may be worth asking your agent about offering Livestream viewings to prospective buyers.

REMOTE ACCESS

Viewings often happen with little or no notice in France. People change their spec as they do their first few visits and realise what they are really looking for, and so an agent will have to add different properties into a tour at a moment's notice. If you can leave a set of keys with the agent then you'll have the best opportunity to capitalise on any possible last-minute visits. Second best is to leave a key with a trusted friend or neighbour who can open your house up in time for visits.



€295,000

AUVILLAR, TARN-ET-GARONNE

A renovated stone house situated on the edge of a pretty village with a restaurant and school. A few minutes' drive from Auvillar, one of the most beautiful villages in France, the property has three bedrooms in the main house, a stone outbuilding and a garden of approximately 950m².



€1.26M

MONPAZIER, DORDOGNE

A magnificent domain surrounded by 40 hectares of land. The main house has four bedrooms and four bathrooms. Outside, is a large swimming pool, a barn which has been converted into a bright reception room, a one-bed gatekeeper's cottage, a second barn, a large tobacco drying shed and three garages with electric doors.



€477,000

NAJAC, AVEYRON

A pretty ensemble comprising a house, gîte, heated salt pool and almost three hectares of land with breathtaking views. The main house has three bedrooms and there are four further bedrooms in the self-contained cottage.



€345,744

LAROCHE-TIMBAUT, LOT-ET-GARONNE

A charming renovated farmhouse with pretty pigeonnier. On a wooded plot with five bedrooms, a hangar, workshop and large swimming pool, this property is only 15 minutes from all amenities at Agen and Villeneuve-sur-Lot.

Another option is to fit a key safe somewhere discreet and give the code to those people who might need it.

One thing to consider seriously if you are selling remotely is an exclusive mandate. This way you would have one point of contact rather than trying to deal with multiple agencies.

SERIOUS BUYERS

The rise and rise of the internet as a search tool has

some side benefits. The days of the tyre-kickers are well and truly behind us. Those holidaymakers who took every rainy day as an open invitation to view properties just to pass the time are few and far between and today most people who plan a viewing trip are in touch with an agent well in advance.

This means that, if a viewing is scheduled, the person looking to buy will be serious and a decent agent will have

checked how they intend to fund the purchase before agreeing to a visit.

COMPLETE THE DEAL

You might choose to offer your property for sale including contents, in which case there will be little to do when you get a deal. Otherwise, you'll need to arrange to empty the property ahead of completion. Either way, the completion can go ahead without you being present if you sign a power

of attorney (a *procuration*).

Whatever your motivation for selling, you will have a bank of memories of your place in France that no-one can take from you - and that's as good as money in the bank. ■

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