

A Place in the Sun

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Summer Retreats



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for £50k-250k

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8 GREAT
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**FLORIDA
BUYING
GUIDE**



FRANCE » CYPRUS » ALGARVE
MONTENEGRO » CARIBBEAN

9 771743 069029 03 > £3.50

Flying fanatics Sue and Adrian, from Sussex, have a budget of £300k-£400k to buy a property with a runway, or, more realistically, near an airstrip, in either southern France or south-east Spain. Can **Christopher Nye land them their ideal home?**

S

ue and Adrian Whitmarsh, in their late 50s, from Horsham in West Sussex, have a very particular request. "We would like a runway in the garden, for an aircraft. And a hangar."

Adrian is a flying fanatic. He owns a jet charter business used by rock legends on tour, including Bruce Springsteen, and he spends most weekends flying his microlight aircraft. Sue goes along for the ride — literally — but admits that it gets a bit nippy in the air over Sussex.

So, with retirement approaching, they are looking forward to moving south for some warmth and sun. They fancy either southern France or Spain's southern and eastern costas. For climate, Sue and Adrian would prefer Spain. But since they both speak a bit of French, and microlighting is bigger in France, they will consider both.

Apart from the airstrip, their property shopping list is short. They want a house or bungalow, fairly near the sea, and don't want to do any renovation. Everything else they're happy to leave up to us. Pool? Not bothered. Old or new? You choose. Near a town? Not really important, we can drive.

Now, cards on the table, France's southern coastline isn't that long, and Spain's is mainly built upon, so we won't find a garden large enough to land an aircraft *and* with sea views. So Sue and Adrian have agreed to look at a smaller property with sea views and a local airstrip, or at buying a larger plot inland.

Must-haves:

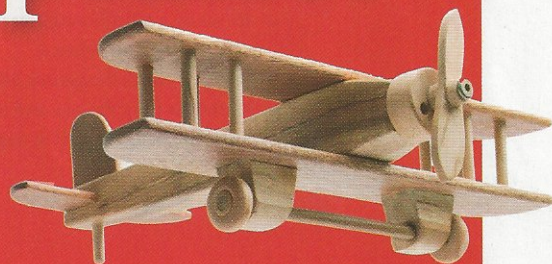
- Budget: £300,000-£400,000, give or take
- Detached villa or bungalow
- Two or three bedrooms
- Ready to move into — no renovation at all
- Landing strip, either within the garden or nearby
- Garden
- Mild climate
- Spain or the south of France

Like-to-haves:

- Sea view
- Pool
- Nearby village

PROPERTY HUNTERS

"Spain or France,
with
somewhere
to land
my plane!"





1

France

Where: Near Narbonne, Languedoc-Roussillon

Buying in France

From Peter Esders, Judicare
judicaregroup.com

Buying costs

The costs of buying will depend on whether this is a new property or a resale property, as there are significant tax differences between the two. A resale property typically costs around eight or nine per cent of the value of the property, but a new property may cost in the region of 30 per cent (most of which is taken up by the equivalent of VAT on the property). Therefore, if you are looking at a new property it makes huge sense to understand whether the price being quoted is inclusive or exclusive of Vat.

Transaction time

France can be quite bureaucratic, and therefore it can take between 10 to 12 weeks for the transaction to take place.

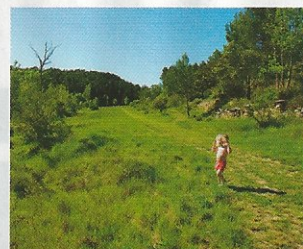
Process

The French buying process is structured and formal. The notary (*notaire*) in France gets involved a lot more than in many other countries, and even gets involved in the signature of the initial purchase contract. If you are buying with a mortgage, there is a cooling-off period built into the process, whereby you can change your mind about buying. The contracts are often signed prior to carrying out searches, which may seem strange. However, with the cooling-off period and clauses allowing the contract to be "subject to searches", this rarely causes a problem to buyers.

Beware

Searches in France are often more extensive than in other countries, as is the use of surveys. Termite searches are compulsory in certain areas.

"The French buying process is structured and formal"



€520,000 (£442,300)

- Nineteenth-century home on three floors
- Four bedrooms
- Recently modernised, with open fires and original features
- 240m² on a 30,000m² plot
- Country and river views
- Gym and outbuildings (easily converted to a hangar)
- Plenty of room for an airstrip
- Village with amenities three kilometres away

For more details:

Home Hunts, home-hunts.com

They like:

- We like how they've kept the interior features, especially the superb kitchen with island unit, wooden floors and original stone walls
- It's got real character and a nice big garden
- Location next to a wine-growing village is definitely a plus

They dislike:

- It's set on a hillside with trees. That makes flying into it too difficult, as trees cause turbulence
- Being terraced, the garden will be a challenge to maintain
- It's too far from the sea, and isn't within walking distance of any shops
- Even knocking a bit off in negotiation, it's too expensive

2 France

Where: Gers, Midi-Pyrénées



€415,000 (£353,000)

- Fully restored farmhouse
- Two bedrooms, three bathrooms
- 160m² built on a 12,000m² plot
- 6x12m saltwater pool
- Separate three-bedroom apartment
- Mountain and country views
- Flying: probably room for airstrip. Also microlighting at Saint-Blancard, Auch and Castelnau-Magnoac

For more details:

[Home Hunts, home-hunts.com](http://HomeHunts.com)

They like:

- The exposed beams and wooden floors in the bedrooms are lovely
- The pool would be a great asset, especially with us being able to swim or lounge around it with the views of the Pyrenees in the background
- It's just the right size for us and for visits from our son, but with the apartment for guests. We have a distant dream of running a B&B for microlight flyers, so the three-bedroom apartment could be a start on that

They dislike:

- Again, there is probably not enough space to land a microlight comfortably
- It's quite a long way from the sea

3 France

Where: Sauveterre-de-Béarn, Pyrénées-Atlantiques



€243,800 (£207,400)

- Pretty, 17th-century country house
- Two bedrooms, three reception rooms, study
- South-facing, on 5,000m² land
- Large barn for storage or to convert. Also a garage
- Close to a market town, with views over Gave d'Oloron
- Less than 1 hour from skiing and coast
- Possibly enough room for an airstrip, certainly enough hangar space. Microlighting available at Pau Airport and three airfields within 50km

For more details:

[Latitudes, latitudes.co.uk](http://Latitudes.com)

They like:

- It's a pretty and compact home
- Adrian likes fishing, so the nearby river would be ideal
- It's a large plot of land, with good views
- The price is very good indeed

They dislike:

- Two bedrooms will be fine most of the time, but maybe an extra bedroom would be useful, after all? Or, we could convert the barn, but that's a hassle we hadn't bargained on
- Flying near the Pyrénées can be hazardous, because of the winds coming off the mountains