

# AN AGENT SPEAKS

**Freddy Rueda** looks at the property market in Languedoc-Roussillon and shares some inside secrets



## What part of France do you cover?

The agency covers the Hérault and Aude departments in the south of the Languedoc-Roussillon region.

## What kind of budget does your typical British client have?

At the moment most of my British clients have a budget of between €200,000 and €300,000.

## What kind of properties are proving popular with your British buyers at the moment and for what purpose are they looking to buy?

I would say there is an even split between three different types of buyer. A third of them are looking for a property to retire to immediately and are selling their UK home; a third are buying a property for future retirement but will be using it as a holiday home in the meantime, and the remaining third are looking for a property to use for their own holidays which they will also rent out on a short-term basis to generate extra income.

## How is the French property market looking to you at the moment?

Languedoc-Roussillon has the advantage of offering 300 days of sunshine each year, not to mention the best of both worlds in the form of mountains and sea. As a result the region is still very much in demand among property hunters and we are seeing an increasing number of cash buyers. Prices have not really dropped in recent years, and the euro's current strong performance makes it a very good time to buy.

## What are your predictions for the market over the next six months?

I don't think there will be any major changes in the next six months, but in the next few years I predict that property values will increase here as it is one of the most popular places in Europe to retire to.



*Freddy's property pick is this spacious renovated barn in the heart of a village. On the market for €250,000 it is 25 minutes from Béziers*



*Priced at €274,000 this five-bedroom property has recently been renovated and benefits from an in-ground swimming pool*

## What are the cheapest and most expensive properties on your books right now?

For just €25,000 you could buy a village house in need of complete renovation, and at the other end of the scale there is a 19th-century castle set in 215 acres of land on the market for €10.5m.

## FACTFILE

**Departments:** Hérault (34), Aude (11)

**Region:** Languedoc-Roussillon

**Capital:** Montpellier

**Average house price:** Hérault €216,000, Aude €135,000

## Which of your properties do you think represents a 'good buy' and why?

Any property with a garden for up to €250,000 represents a 'good buy' as it is rare to find a good-sized house with garden here, so if you do they tend to be very expensive.

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## What is your property pick of the month?

A barn which has just been fully renovated and features exposed beams and attractive stone walls. Located in the village of Causses-et-Veyran, which offers good amenities and is surrounded by vineyards, it is on the market for €250,000 and benefits from a lovely private terrace with a jacuzzi.

## What is your favourite part of the area you cover and why?

My favourite part is the triangle between Pézenas, Saint-Chinian and Béziers. The villages here are surrounded by vineyards and are all within half an hour of the coast and mountains, as well as the spectacular Parc Naturel Régional du Haut-Languedoc.

## What advice would you give to prospective buyers starting a property search?

Make sure you have your financing in place before going to visit properties, as it is very disappointing, not to mention frustrating, to find the perfect property only to return home to a negative answer from your bank. You won't forget that property, which may overshadow the rest of your property search.

## What would you recommend as a 'must-see' or 'must-do'?

There are so many things to do here that it is difficult to choose just one, but I would certainly recommend a visit to the unique Cirque de Navacelles, as well as a meal at Le Presbytère, a restaurant in a former presbytery which offers excellent food and panoramic views of the surroundings. ■

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*With a jacuzzi, swimming pool and 2,870m<sup>2</sup>, this five-bedroom villa enjoys lovely views over a river and is priced at €626,000*