



Au courant

Keeping you up to date on the French property market, news, travel and events

Property market set for promising 2016, say industry professionals

Professionals in the property, mortgage and currency industries have made positive predictions for the year ahead in France, meaning 2016 looks set to be another good time to invest across the Channel.

“Overall we are looking forward to 2016 as a great year for sales,” enthuses Peter Elias of estate agency Allez Français (allez-francais.com), who covers a large area of the south west including the departments of Dordogne and Lot-et-Garonne.

“We have a record ‘pipeline’ level of business going forward and our diaries are already very busy for this time of year.”

Sally Stone of LBV Immo (lbv-immo.com), part of Les Bons Voisins Property Group, says: “Here in north-west France we are seeing the positive effect of realistic valuations coupled with a good exchange rate for foreign buyers wanting a base in this area, and expect that to continue throughout 2016.”

Estate agency Home Hunts

(home-hunts.com) has also released an official statement for the year ahead, with company director Tim Swannie noting that it remains a buyer’s market in France. “We predict a strong year in 2016 and are receiving considerable interest from UK-based clients as well as buyers from across mainland Europe.”

Particular areas that have come under the spotlight in his report are Provence, Languedoc-Roussillon, Dordogne and Bordeaux. “We have many clients already booked in for viewings in the first quarter of 2016 in all these areas, so we hope that the increased activity of 2015 will continue throughout this year,” Tim continues.

“The market in the Riviera has remained relatively buoyant throughout the economic crisis but really took off last year and we feel it will continue in the same direction in 2016, with prices likely to remain stable.”

Ski property website nidski.com has also predicted a return of



buyer confidence to the Alpine market, with analyst Justine Stewart making particular comment on the abundance of new-build developments in premium resorts, as well as opportunities in lesser-known villages for buyers with smaller budgets. “The Alpine market could also benefit from the UK’s rise in stamp duty on buy-to-let from April 2016, from which point property prices in France will no longer look so high,” she says.

As far as currency is concerned, the exchange rates experienced in 2015 could potentially be repeated into this year. “Although the rate gave back half of its gains in

December and went into 2016 at 1.35, it doesn’t mean that a run at 1.40 is out of reach,” says Matthew Harris of Cambridge Global Payments (cambridgefx.co.uk).

Furthermore, low interest rates in the eurozone are good news for potential mortgage applicants.

“Mortgage rates in France are likely to stay at or close to their historic low levels during 2016,” explains Simon Smallwood of International Private Finance (internationalprivatefinance.com). “With 20-year fixed rates starting at around 2.15% at the time of writing, financing a second home in France with a French mortgage is as cheap as it has ever been.”

SALE OF CHÂTEAU NEAR PARIS BREAKS WORLD RECORDS



Château Louis XIV, a newly built mansion in Yvelines, has become the world’s most expensive house after being sold for €275m. Located between Versailles and Marly-le-Roi on a 23-hectare walled site, the property is surrounded by moats and its grounds pay tribute to the French garden style of André Le Nôtre, with plays on perspective, yew trees clipped into small pyramids and a tree-lined labyrinth.

The château was constructed between 2008 and 2011 by property developer Emad Khashoggi, who had previously restored the Palais Rose in Le Vésinet and the Château du Verduron in Marly-le-Roi. Building on the site of the former Château du Camp in

Louveciennes, Khashoggi’s aim was to create a modern house with 17th-century aspect, layout and materials. He employed an average of 120 different artisans each day and resulting residence boasts two master suites and several guest suites, numerous reception halls, two custom-made artisanal kitchens, a floor designed for recreational activities, an underwater room built in the heart of the moats (the only one of its kind in Europe), a cinema and a wine cellar. The trompe-l’œil fresco in the rotunda drawing room was inspired by that conceived by Charles Le Brun for the Château de Vaux-le-Vicomte, and took master painters several months to create.