

Having agreed the price with the owner you will be required to sign a binding contract (*compromis de vente*) with the seller so that he cannot sell it to anyone else and that you are committed to buy. You will be required to deposit 10% of the purchase price with the *Notaire* (Solicitor) until the completion. If you pull out of the sale the 10% goes to the seller. If the seller were to pull out after the signing he would have to pay you 10%. There are clauses in the *compromis de vente*, which confirm that a mortgage is being sought and should that be refused you will receive the 10% back without penalty. But be careful to understand exactly what the contract says as this approach is not the same as the buying and selling of property in England and once you have signed, you are effectively committed with final closing being little more than a formality by this stage.



The *Notaire* will be chosen by the seller and he represents the interest of both the buyer and seller. It is possible to appoint your own but I have never heard of issues of biased practises. The *Notaire* will perform the necessary searches and prepare the necessary documents for the sale. As in the UK, this is not a speedy process and 10 to 12 weeks is about average for the preparation work to be completed.

The *Notaire's* fees are fixed by law, about 7-8% and a stamp duty of 6% for property older than 6 years is also applied. Before the signing of the contract he will require the balance of the price plus all applicable fees to be deposited in his bank account. This too takes time in France and it is

advisable to confirm this in advance and not end up like us, when we were telephoning the bank from the *Notaire's* office to get confirmation that the money had indeed arrived!

There is one more legal point that you need to discuss with the *Notaire* and that is the issue relating to inheritance according to French family law. It is different to the UK and you will need to understand the options and ensure that the option you wish to follow is covered in the contract you sign.

**The Finished Article.**

Included are three photographs of our house; the first of the main house which was originally built in 1711 and an extension built a hundred years later. As you will see from the later article the house when we bought it was basically a shell with a roof that needed a great deal of work and "TLC".

The next is of the studio, the swimming pool and bar area. The studio started life as a cow shed and was the first building we renovated and it was used as a base as we worked on the rest of the property. The swimming pool of 11.5 by 5 meters is a must during the summer. Last year the temperature reached Saudi proportions and since there is no air conditioning you needed somewhere to cool off. The well in the foreground is not for real (There is no well on the property) and when completed will be a feature for the patio.

The last is the garret, garage and workshops. This was a part of a much larger barn that was demolished by the previous owners. This was reduced to just three walls and rebuilt and will feature as a future article.

To some extent these series of articles are simply our memories of the work we and others have done over the past 6 years. If there are any aspects that the reader would like for us to cover in more detail we would be happy to include it in the future articles.

In the next edition we will be covering the planning of the restoration and the redoing of the roof on the studio and the main roof.

