

## The experts



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# Ask the experts

While a new life in France might be a dream come true, the practicalities involved can sometimes be frustrating and complicated. Luckily, our panel of experts is on hand to solve your financial, legal and living dilemmas



### ASSET MANAGEMENT

**Q** We are looking to buy a property that we hope to move into permanently in two years' time. In the meantime we would like to let it out, but as a holiday home rather than a long-term let as we want to be able to visit the property. What is the best way of finding someone to look after the property when we're not there and to make sure everything is ready for each set of guests as they arrive? We haven't chosen an area to buy in yet – will this make a difference to how easy it will be to find someone?

**Jennifer Lester, Dundee**

**A** First I would say that your plan to live in the property eventually is a great advantage. When preparing the house for letting, it will help to ensure that you pay attention to detail and provide guests with the quality and finishing touches that you would want for yourselves.

When it comes to finding someone to manage the property, the first possibility to consider is the vendor. If you buy from an owner

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who is already letting and strike up a good rapport, then you could inherit from them a wealth of experience and suggestions.

Failing that, you could make enquiries at the local *mairie* for people who might be interested in looking after the property in your absence. Also, look out for local clubs or village societies to join. They will help you to become integrated and accepted and are a good network for being put in touch with local caretakers.

Once you have bought the house, you could hold your own *apéritif* evening, inviting the nearest neighbours to pick their brains for hired help. Remember that a caretaker who minds the property in your absence might not necessarily be the same person who does changeover duties like cleaning and welcoming guests. Obviously Saturday is a main changeover day and the most popular day for