



INVITATION TO ITALY

Help is at hand to assist buyers in finding the property of their dreams in Italy

WHETHER BUYERS ARE LOOKING FOR a rental investment, a place for the summer, or are moving lock, stock and barrel to Italy, there are few companies better placed to serve individuals' needs and concerns than Feravidus White.

Bi-lingual husband and wife team Steve and Karen White work principally around Lake Como, through Umbria and Tuscany, and all along the Amalfi Coast, and have built up a strong reputation with people interested in moving into the area for their dedicated personal approach.

After a full consultation in the comfort of the client's home, Steve and Karen soon return with a shortlist of the most appropriate properties on, or off, the open market. It is during the tour of these potential properties that prospective buyers begin to understand why so many clients prefer the personalised approach. They notice the smallest requests have been served, whether in the particulars of the location, the style of the building or its redevelopment potential.

Steve and Karen will always make sure they are meeting their client's exact requirements; then, once a property is found, they will wrap up all that infamous Italian red tape, leaving the client to concentrate as much or as little as they wish on the design. Feravidus White will then manage the entire renovation or restoration until the client is 100 percent satisfied.

In the family

On average, Italians move house only once every 20 years. Houses tend to be kept in families for generations, and are often extended to accommodate

new family members – indeed, it is traditional in Italy for a newly married woman to live in the property of her husband's parents, thus negating the need for newlyweds to purchase their own home.

It comes as no surprise, then, to find that Italians, unlike many of their counterparts in neighbouring holiday destinations, have avoided the temptation to over-develop or over-sell. Instead, they have remained true to the ethos that a home is for life – this, combined with rigorous planning regulations, means that large-scale developments do not afflict Italy; in fact it is still possible to find an old ruin there that can be developed into a family home.

A traditional market

Italy's economy may have taken a hit over the past couple of years, but there has been only a marginal decrease – of approximately 10 percent – in property prices, mostly observed in the mainstream domestic market as opposed to the holiday home market. During the first quarter of 2010 there was a steady increase in the number of foreign purchasers on the Italian property market. Although the Euro may be strong relative to Sterling, this is compensated by the low interest rates that are currently available in Italy.

There is a consistent holiday rental market across the popular regions of Northern and Central Italy. Many buyers are achieving steady rental returns on their properties. Feravidus White recently restored a traditional four bedroom Umbrian farmhouse for one of their clients, and this summer the property was fully booked, with rentals in excess of £3,000 per

week during the peak season. Similarly, properties in Venice are such that only the tide could ever threaten their value.

Diversity

For buyers, Italy offers great diversity. Havens of relaxation and serenity can be found in the beautiful renaissance hilltop towns that dot Umbria and Tuscany; alternatively there are the crystal clear waters of both the Amalfi coast and Sardinia, or the chic and exclusive Lake Como.

Feravidus White has worked around the Lake Como area for many years, during which time prices have risen dramatically: today, a one-bedroom, mid-range property will set you back £150,000-200,000. Villas along the lake-front command significant price tags, however there are still excellent properties for those who want lake views without spending a fortune.

Yet there's so much more to Italy than just these familiar (often expensive) locations. Low-cost flights have opened up previously unknown destinations in Italy to a host of visitors and property buyers, and as a result property prices are evening out across the country.

So, whether you're a property investor, aspiring expatriate or simply a holidaymaker, Italy has everything you could possibly want: spectacular landscapes, an unrivalled historical legacy, unique cuisine, distinct fashion and picturesque coastlines. Given its status as a consistently popular tourist destination, as well as the quality and range of properties on offer, Italy really is a sound investment for the future. ●