

Live in Italy



About Live in Italy

I set up Live in Italy in 2003 to help English-speaking buyers purchase from Italian agents. I sourced homes from any agent, in any region, so each buyer had the full choice of the local market, and I stayed alongside them through the legal process to completion. Over the years we found homes across Piemonte, Lombardy, Liguria, Tuscany, Umbria, Lazio, Campania, Puglia, Sardinia and Sicily.

Today I focus that experience on my beloved Sicily, helping people marry there.

Dom Hebblethwaite

Live in Italy Ltd traded from 2003 to 2015 and is no longer active. These client stories are reproduced from the company's website, in the clients' own words.

Client testimonials

A cross-section of the clients who wrote up their stories, in their own words.

Ortigia, Siracusa

ANN AND CHARLES GORDON · A 300-YEAR-OLD APARTMENT OVER THE SEA

Many years ago we bought a house in Tuscany and enjoyed it with lots of family holidays, but sold it when our business commitments meant we could travel out there less and less. We wished we still had our little place in Italy, and decided to buy a property in Sicily.

Having spent a couple of holidays there, we narrowed the search to a specific area, Ortigia, an island attached to Siracusa. We found Live in Italy on the web and I approached Dominic with a very specific list: two bedrooms, two bathrooms, a sea view and a roof terrace. We had already spent two long weekends on our own and with Italian agents, but nothing had really been appropriate.

Dominic immediately found us several possibilities and within a very short time we narrowed it down to two or three, although I knew as soon as I saw the photograph that the one we eventually purchased had our name written all over it.

Having decided to proceed, despite some difficult and drawn-out conveyancing problems, Dominic guided us through the minefield, and we are now the proud owners of a 300-year-old apartment literally overlooking the sea, with the most spectacular views from the roof terrace.

Dominic was extremely helpful throughout, helping us locate an architect for a specific matter and liaising between the agents and the lawyers. We have just returned from our first proper holiday there and really appreciate his involvement, because I am not sure we would have managed without it.

Ann Gordon



Charles and Ann's property in Ortigia.



The view from the roof terrace.

Petralia Sottana, Madonie

RENE OLSEN · A TOWN HOUSE IN THE MOUNTAINS

I, Rene Olsen, a Dane of 36 years, decided that my time was wasted in the 9 to 5 treadmill in Copenhagen, and resolved to quit my job and move somewhere where life was less efficient.

After initially considering the northern part of Greece, I turned to Sicily. I found a few outlets that did property searches and ordered some. Some companies were very locally based and only searched a small area, some covered the whole of Sicily, and then there was Live in Italy, which covers the whole of the country. I had a very detailed idea of what I was looking for but did not know where, which posed a problem for some companies, including Live in Italy, because of the wide area they cover.



Rene's home in Petralia Sottana.

The initial search did not really give me what I was looking for, but after talking it over with Dominic we decided to focus on a specific area and, as many agents in Sicily are not equipped to promote their properties online, to tour around the local estate agents. I agreed and decided on the Madonie mountains. It turned out to be the right way to do it, and on the trip I saw quite a few properties within my category.

I finally decided on a house we viewed in Petralia Sottana and used Live in Italy to assist the purchase. I had the confidence that they could handle it without problems. I do not speak a word of Italian or Sicilian, so buying a house unassisted was not an option. Live in Italy was not the cheapest option, but there were no blurred lines on the payment side, and they were clearly capable of managing the purchase.

Rene Olsen

Trevi, Umbria

JOHN BURNS AND MARY SCHOOLING · A MEDIEVAL PALAZZO AROUND A COURTYARD



Once a residence of Carlotta Bonaparte.

Mary and I had been thinking of buying in Italy for many years but had been daunted by the logistics. We had always loved Umbria, having had several holidays there, and we wanted to find somewhere in one of its many beautiful small towns. We searched the web and contacted a number of agencies, many of which had what looked like excellent properties. However, we knew that to find somewhere without any real local knowledge, searching for ourselves would take time and an amount of organisation we did not have the bandwidth for: we live in Hong Kong, have full time jobs and three daughters. When we found out about Live in Italy, it seemed the perfect solution.



The courtyard of the palazzo.

We told Dominic roughly what we were looking for, we weren't very specific, and he provided a list of properties to select from. I then met Dominic in Umbria and started our three day search. Dominic has access to local agents, so properties that would not be available through the web became an option. In three days we went to all corners of the region and viewed 20 plus properties, including two or three we really liked, some that had not been on the original list. One of those was outside our budget, but the agent said we could not miss it. I fell in love with it, a medieval palazzo surrounding a courtyard in Trevi, beautifully done up by the present owners (we wanted somewhere ready to live in).

We made an offer on the Trevi house and, once it was accepted, Dominic did a fantastic job guiding us through what turned out to be a rather complicated process, as there were some issues with the property's title. He had introduced us to an excellent lawyer, and they worked together to bring us to a very satisfactory completion.

We now have our dream home in Umbria. Were it not for Dominic, it would remain a dream.

John Burns

An art-monastery search, Umbria

CHRISTOPHER FÜLLING · A SEARCH THAT TOOK AN UNEXPECTED TURN

We were a network of American and European artists and musicians who decided to try and set up an art monastery in Italy. We wanted to acquire and renovate an old convent and run a not-for-profit arts centre that would operate in the manner of a traditional monastery.

Of all the companies we contacted, Live in Italy came up with by far the best, most exciting and broadest range of properties. We fixed up a viewing trip, accompanied by Mr Hebblethwaite. Dominic was an invaluable translator and guide to the very foreign world of Italian real estate. In a country legendary for back-door deals and hidden arrangements, Dominic was the picture of clarity, always putting our needs above those of the occasionally questionable estate agents we encountered. Although that is a general case for employing an unbiased buyer's agent, Dominic seemed to go the extra distance to protect our interests.

In two trips, we viewed more than ten monasteries found by Live in Italy, some renovated, others complete ruins. We fell in love with several sites, including an abandoned monastery in the beautiful historic town of Amelia. Throughout, Dominic gave realistic estimates of how much time and money would be required to turn an evocative ruin into a functioning living space.

Ultimately, we paused our search to buy when we received an unbelievable offer to move into a convent in Calvi dell'Umbria in exchange for some renovations and cultural activities. This let us circumvent the daunting task of finding investors to purchase and renovate a large convent before we had proved the idea would work.

We have now moved to Calvi, which gave us free accommodation while the renovations were finished, to help us get started. If all goes to plan we will resume the search to buy another convent in the future, and we will call Live in Italy to help us find our final location.

Christopher Fülling



A monastery viewed during the search.



Another viewed during the search.

A trullo in Puglia

PHILIP AND JANE HARRISON · AN INDEPENDENT SEARCH, NO TIES TO ANY AGENCY

Having fallen in love with Puglia on holiday, we started to make enquiries about buying a trullo. We selected a UK company with Italian representatives and arranged to spend a long weekend viewing. We were introduced to a local estate agent and shown a few properties, none of which met our expectations, then deposited back at our hotel after a total of four hours. The viewing was, to say the least, a big disappointment.

Not giving up, we got in contact with Live in Italy. What immediately appealed to us was the service offered: most UK agents appear to work closely with a limited number of Italian estate agents, while Live in Italy offer an independent service with no ties to individual Italian agencies. They carried out a search and emailed a large number of properties meeting our requirements. We booked our flights for a three day viewing trip.

The viewings were a complete contrast to our previous experience. Not only did the properties meet our brief, but the estate agent's attitude had changed. We must have viewed eight to ten properties each day. Thank God for the long lunch breaks!

Live in Italy was able to introduce us to smaller agents where we had less competition from other international buyers. We concluded that properties with agents who advertised and spoke in English carried a price premium over those who did not, and it was with one of the smaller agents that we saw our dream holiday home.



Philip and Jane's trullo in Puglia.

Live in Italy arranged a meeting with the vendors on the evening of our departure. It was all in Italian, with much gesturing and stern faces, and we were reliant on Dominic, who performed admirably on our behalf. We came away with a good indication of what the vendor would accept before submitting our formal offer on our return to England.

Live in Italy was then on hand to help, and to lend a sympathetic ear, throughout the rest of the fairly bureaucratic purchase process. We have no reservations in recommending them: we found the service professional, reliable and of good value.

Philip Harrison

Two trulli, Martina Franca and Alberobello

SUSAN GARDNER · TWO HOMES SECURED AT A DISCOUNT

When I decided with my sister to purchase a property in southern Italy I tried contacting Italian estate agents and attended a property show, but I didn't have much success, or even a response in many cases. Finally I approached Live in Italy and found them professional and efficient from the start.

I wasn't sure exactly what I wanted: all I knew was that I wanted somewhere in Puglia and needed a minimum of two bedrooms. So Dominic arranged a viewing trip, taking in everything from villas to apartments by the sea to the beautiful trulli.

It was very reassuring to be assisted throughout by someone who not only speaks the language perfectly but is also experienced in the Italian ways.

I ended up buying two properties: a beautiful trullo in the country close to Martina Franca for myself and my sister, and a second right in the heart of Alberobello, the UNESCO-protected town with the biggest concentration of trulli. Live in Italy helped secure both with good discounts, the Alberobello trullo for even less than what I'd suggested as my first offer.

I am very glad I used Live in Italy and, even with their property finding fees, I know I saved money. Most importantly I secured two lovely properties with a stress-free experience. Even after we'd completed, they continued to help: setting up meetings with the builder and being on hand to translate when pointing, waving arms and saying "Quanto costa?" was not enough.

Susan Gardner



Susan on her trullo, near Martina Franca.

Toscolano Maderno, Lake Garda

VIC AND SUE ISON · A RESTORED APARTMENT IN THE OLD QUARTER

We booked a last minute holiday on Lake Garda at the end of August 2004. During our stay we visited several towns on the edge of the lake and fell in love with the place, especially the beautiful west bank.

On our return to the UK we began making enquiries into buying a property there, and registered with Live in Italy for a search in the Gardone Riviera and Toscolano Maderno area. We didn't know exactly what we wanted, but had a tight budget to stick to, needed two bedrooms, and, having not long ago restored a farmhouse in Yorkshire, did not want to take on another project.

Live in Italy sent us a cross-section of properties matching our criteria, and we were excited to view them. Initially we were a little reluctant to go on an assisted tour and preferred the idea of viewing independently, but having heard the reasons for the assisted tours we were happy to go ahead, and with hindsight we know we could never have managed so successfully on our own.

On our two day tour with Dominic we met every estate agent who had potentially suitable properties, viewing all those of interest, and more. Live in Italy's knowledge of the Italian legal system and purchasing process, and complete fluency in Italian, was crucial. Without it I doubt we would now own our two bedroom restored apartment in the historic quarter of Maderno.



Vic and Sue on the balcony.

Sauze d'Oulx, Piemonte

ROGER AND MELANIE WRIGHT · A SKI APARTMENT BY THE LIFTS

We've been skiing in lots of different resorts in Europe, but after several holidays at the Stella Alpina Hotel we decided to buy an apartment in Sauze d'Oulx. I contacted all the estate agents in Sauze asking what two bedroom apartments they had for sale. Admittedly my message was in English, but I was a serious buyer and would have expected at least one reply. Then I found Live in Italy. They work for the buyer and find properties from any Italian agent. I discussed my needs with Dominic and registered for a search, and less than two weeks later they sent over translated details for all the apartments available in Sauze.

We went out with Live in Italy and viewed the most interesting sounding apartments. The trip helped us decide that what we really wanted was a place right by the ski lifts. As the only property close enough wasn't right for us, we decided to wait. Dominic kept in regular contact with the agents and called about five months later to say he might have found it. It fitted all our requirements and, most importantly, was just a few metres from the lifts.

Live in Italy were on hand throughout, helping to negotiate on price, advising on the purchase process, and making sure my Italian lawyer, the agent, the vendors and the notary could agree on the best way forward. I would have no hesitation in recommending them to anyone who wanted to buy in Italy.

Melanie Wright



Sauze d'Oulx, Piemonte.

Val di Vara, Liguria

GILL BALDOCK · A STONE FARMHOUSE WITH GOLDEN SUNSETS

I have been dreaming of moving to live in Italy for many years now. I have read almost every book on Italy and have been having Italian lessons for the last two years. After exploring different parts of the country on holiday, I started searching for property in earnest in April. I went on three trips meeting various agents, but did not find them very helpful. I had to spend ages giving them details of what I wanted, only to be told they had nothing suitable, and they seemed unwilling or unable to make alternative suggestions.

I then contacted Live in Italy in September. As they will find properties from any Italian agent, I was able to focus my search on my favourite area in the whole of Italy: the Val di Vara. I love skiing and sailing, and the Val di Vara is in the mountains, with countryside to match Tuscany's (but without the excess of Brits), only half an hour from the Ligurian coast and seaside towns like the Cinque Terre. After a viewing trip where I saw every possible kind of property in the area, I settled on my lovely stone farmhouse at the top of a hill, with magnificent views and golden sunsets. I am restoring it to its former glory and will soon realise my dream of leaving my IT job in Staines to live in Italy. And my beloved dog Jake, who now has a European pet passport, will be joining me, so I know I won't be lonely as I start my new life.

Gill Baldock



Gill's farmhouse in the Val di Vara.

Alassio, Liguria

RICHARD AND LIZ STONES · AN APARTMENT BY THE SANDY BEACH

As a family we had always talked about buying a place in Italy. We may have our different tastes but we all love the country. In the longer term we thought of spending more time in a warmer climate, perhaps most of our time when we retire.

Liz loves the seaside, I do not like extreme heat, and we both liked the idea of a place within reach of France and Switzerland, so we focused on Liguria. Liz spent a few days prospecting, getting off the train at each resort, looking around and checking the beach (sand was essential). Alassio, with the palm trees in the station square, the sandy beach and the narrow streets of the old quarter, immediately attracted her. So we all came, and saw, and liked. But finding somewhere to buy was another matter: there are innumerable estate agents, but their advertisements are in Italian estate-agentese. What is a trilocale, a box, or an angolo cottura? Our Italian is not good and the idea of organising viewings ourselves was just too off-putting.

Our daughter Liv said there must be someone who does Place in the Sun for real, so I looked on the web and found Live in Italy. I didn't feel very optimistic, but Dominic grabbed the project by the scruff of the neck and took details of what we wanted and what we could pay. A week or so later Liz and I went to Alassio with him. We saw sixteen properties in two days. Dominic managed the improbable feat of coordinating almost as many estate agents as properties, ensured we didn't waste time on unsuitable places, and kept cheerful when we couldn't agree among ourselves. We saw an apartment which fitted the bill and agreed to go for it.

Of course that is just the beginning: there are the mysteries of Italian property law and Italian surveyors. Dominic steered us expertly through to completion at the notary's office and a large lunch with the vendors. What started as a vague aspiration has been converted, with remarkably little fuss, into reality. Now there are Italian builders and decorators (and family strife about the colour of the walls), but Dominic is still on hand.

Richard Stones



Alassio, the sea and Richard.

Costa d'Oneglia, Liguria

JONATHAN MARSHALL AND GRAHAM BURNSIDE · TWO IDEAL APARTMENTS IN A DAY

We both enjoy the sunshine, culture, food, wine and the seemingly (!) more unhurried lifestyle of Italy. Having just taken early retirement, and with Graham considering a similar path, buying a holiday home seemed a sensible and less boring way of investing some hard-earned cash than leaving it in a bank account. We had spent a short walking holiday in the Cinque Terre earlier in the year, and the combination of the sea, coastal resorts and mountains of Liguria is a great attraction.

We spent a few idle hours looking in estate agents' windows whilst tramping in the Cinque Terre, but proceeded no further: the pressures of Graham's job would not allow for extended periods of independent property viewing. Another member of our walking party had friends who had previously used Live in Italy successfully, obtained the details and put us in touch. There's nothing like personal recommendation. After weeding out a number of properties sent by email beforehand, we viewed about a dozen with a number of local agents. Despite packing a lot in, we still had time for a relatively leisurely lunch. By the end there were three properties that would have worked well, reduced after some discussion to two apartments in the hill-top village of Costa d'Oneglia, just three kilometres inland from the Mediterranean and the city of Imperia.

The following day we made a second visit to the two short-listed apartments, either of which would have been entirely suitable. It was quite hard to decide, but in the end we did, and a verbal offer was made and accepted later that day.



Sea and church views from the terrace.

I'm still amazed that we found not one but two potentially ideal properties in just one day. We could never have hoped to achieve such a result on our own, and Dominic was absolutely invaluable. The whole process took just four months, from first viewing to being handed the keys. I think that speaks for itself.

Jonathan Marshall

Pisa, Tuscany

DAVID AND VICTORIA · AN APARTMENT MINUTES FROM THE PIAZZA DEI MIRACOLI

We've never visited a place in Italy that we didn't love, so our biggest problem was always going to be deciding exactly where to buy.

We wanted to settle in a beautiful town, but without the hassle of living in a major tourist centre, and we needed somewhere we could reach quickly to make the most of our limited spare time. Pisa, where the Piazza dei Miracoli is perched obligingly on the very edge of town and the bus from the international airport to the centre takes just ten minutes, seemed a perfect candidate.

We also knew that finding someone to help us was the only way we'd ever make our dream come true, so we were delighted when we discovered Live in Italy. Dominic did a truly outstanding job of making sure we saw all the property available in Pisa in the short time we had. Over three days we saw an amazing range, from a purpose built apartment with panoramic mountain views to a major renovation project in a tumbledown palazzo.

We found Dominic's understanding of Italy's rather intricate property law absolutely invaluable as we moved towards completion. He also helped us negotiate successfully on a number of issues, not least getting the vendors to include the kitchen in the price so we could avoid a complete refit. Pisa has turned out to be the perfect place for us, and we can't thank Live in Italy enough for helping us discover that.

David and Victoria



The historic centre of Pisa.

Prati, Rome

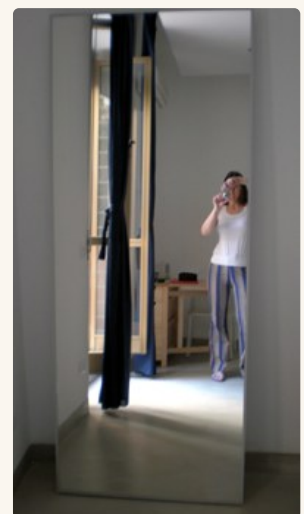
CHRISTINA OCHS · AN APARTMENT WITH A GARDEN IN CENTRAL ROME

I lived in Rome for three years while studying at St John's University. Living in Rome was incredibly exciting, and once back in America I tried to return as often as possible. Then one day I decided I couldn't do without my own place there. With my fluent Italian and good network of friends I felt I should be able to find somewhere, but I'd forgotten just how difficult getting anything done in Rome can be. The cultural differences in business practice are particularly acute.

Most Roman agents aren't easily accessible online, don't take photos of the properties they are selling, don't give detailed descriptions, and the standard response to any query is "just come and see it". Then when you do come, they often cancel at the last minute and offer you 11:45 next Tuesday. Mildly irritating if you live in Rome, but from the US it makes the search effectively impossible.

After eight months of research, during which I made three visits, I was still at square one and concluded I needed help. Even with the patience to deal with the agents, between the time difference and my day job there was no way to find the time to make the necessary calls.

I turned to Live in Italy. Apart from deciding to buy my apartment, it was the best decision I made in the process. With Dominic taking care of all liaison with the agents, things kicked into gear. He produced a thoroughly researched and extensive list of properties, had a wonderful

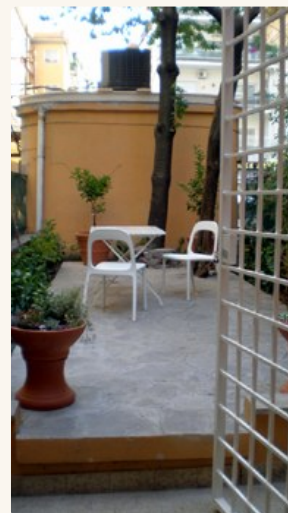


Christina in her apartment.

instinct for spaces, and each apartment was very close to what I was looking for. After my previous experiences, the viewing process went like clockwork.

I fell for an apartment with a garden in the Prati area of central Rome. It needed work, but I knew that with some love and attention it would be beautiful, and the garden perfect for those hot Roman summer days. He even arranged furniture delivery, a lifesaver as I had friends coming to stay before I could get over myself. Dominic is impeccably professional in a country that, though beautiful, is notoriously difficult to do business in, and a careful guide through the peculiarities of the Italian property market.

Christina Ochs



The terrace, central Rome.

Marino, Castelli Romani

DONNIE AND KATHLEEN MCGILVERAY · AN APARTMENT IN A RENOVATED HISTORIC BUILDING

For the last 12 years we have had a holiday home on the Isle of Cumbrae off the west coast of Scotland, but for a few years now we'd wanted somewhere in Italy as well. On holiday we met a UK company covering the area south of Rome. We wanted to see properties in Frascati, in the Castelli Romani, but the agent told us there were none for sale there. We knew there were, and showed her a brochure we'd picked up from a local agent. After much persuasion she called them in her broken Italian, only to say that all the properties had been sold. We felt we were missing out on a big slice of the market.



In the historic centre of Marino.

Once back in Scotland and still keen to buy in the Castelli Romani, we went on the internet and found Live in Italy. We arranged a viewing trip and fell for a lovely apartment, within a renovated historic building, on the edge of the historic centre of Marino. After a few offers and counteroffers, and with Dominic's help liaising with the vendor's agent, we reached agreement on price. During the conveyancing the vendors began making a number of requests, some impossible for us to meet, and we started to doubt whether they even wanted to sell to us. Dominic and our lawyer helped steer us through, agreeing to some requests and refusing others.

We are so glad we persisted, as we now own a beautiful apartment with great views in Marino. We are still finding new restaurants hidden in the back streets, 22 at the last count. There are great walks by Lake Albano and in the woods, and we have even cycled to the sea. We are certain we would not have been able to buy in Italy, never mind this apartment, were it not for the support of Dominic, whom we are now proud to call a friend.

Donnie McGilveray

Palestrina, Lazio

CHRIS AND BERNADETTE FEENEY · A REFURBISHED APARTMENT IN THE OLD TOWN

We were seeking an affordable launching pad for our planned forays to Pompeii, Ostia, Tivoli and, of course, Rome itself. We needed to be close to the Roman airports, with good transport links. Our exhaustive yet mainly futile Google searches had produced just one promising lead: Live in Italy. They provided details of many possible properties. We stayed in Palestrina on that first visit and were amazed to find that this beautiful town has a major Roman monument we had never even heard of: an enormous Republican-era temple built into the face of a small mountain.

With Live in Italy we saw various properties in Palestrina and other towns close to Rome. The one that really interested us was a small, freshly refurbished apartment in the oldest part of Palestrina, just three minutes from a museum holding important Roman artefacts, including the famous Nile mosaic.

We would have been more than happy to pay the asking price, but Live in Italy negotiated on our behalf and achieved a reduction that more than justified the cost of their service. It felt as though we'd been given all this help for free. They guided us through every stage, including the appointment of a bilingual solicitor. At all times we were treated professionally, kindly and with great patience, and all the Italians we met, the agents, the notary, the vendor, the shop owners and officials, treated us so well and so fairly that we have had nothing but positive experiences.

Chris and Bernadette Feeney



Chris and Bernie in their apartment.

Sabaudia coast, Lazio

MICHAEL AND JUSTINE HOWARTH · A VILLA NEAR SAN FELICE CIRCEO

We went on holiday to Sorrento and immediately loved Italy, the culture, the food and the people. We thought, wouldn't it be nice to have a place here? Sorrento was out of our budget range, so on a tip from a Roman friend we focused on the Sabaudia, Terracina and Sperlonga stretch of coast, south of Rome.

We did the typical internet searching, but Live in Italy was the only company that would help us in the area we were looking. I also tried contacting local Italian estate agents directly, without success. Live in Italy sent over 20 properties to give us a feel for the market (although, remember, Italian agents aren't too fussy about taking good photos: one sent us a great picture of the doorstep).

Over three days we viewed a whole range of properties with Dominic, including some extra ones Live in Italy found for us, and found what we were looking for between Sabaudia and San Felice Circeo. Our villa is close to a beautiful coastline with fantastic beaches, where Italians from Rome holiday and keep their boats. At weekends it is buzzing, but through the week it is so peaceful, and from the terrace all you can see are trees and the Circeo mountain behind.

Not only did we get all the help during the process of finding and buying, but Dominic helped us build good relations with the estate agent, who continues to help us now, as well as securing a gardener to look after the property.

Justine Howarth



The villa near San Felice Circeo.

Torchiaro, Campania

MICHAEL WHELAN · A NEW HOME IN THE HILLS BEHIND AGROPOLI

"I want to live in Italy" were the words I typed into Google in early 2004, and that is how I came to find Live in Italy. I knew I wanted a property somewhere in southern Italy, in Campania, in which to retire, but I hadn't worked out exactly where, and realised that to make full use of Live in Italy's services I needed to decide that first.

In May I arranged a flight, car hire and a week in Paestum, about as far south as I wished to live, and while there I met a few agents. I found that the Agropoli area was where I wanted to be. I also met a young Italian lady at the hotel, called Mirella.

After the week Mirella returned home to Belgium, where she lived, and I came back to England. I didn't get any replies to my emails to the agents I'd met, so I got back in contact with Live in Italy and asked Dominic to represent me. We arranged a viewing tour for September, after the holiday season.

Live in Italy arranged a hectic three days to visit all types of properties, using all the agents I had visited and emailed to no avail, and more besides. Dominic's command of Italian (which impressed Mirella!) and his knowledge of the industry were superb, and definitely changed the attitude of the agents.

Now I am the proud owner of a new build home in Torchiara, a small village in the hills behind Agropoli, about 5 km from the sea with south-facing views that are out of this world. The house is completed now, and Mirella and I have a beautiful home in which to share the rest of our lives together.

Michael Whelan



Michael and Mirella in Agropoli.



Torchiara in late November, 23 degrees.

Alghero, Sardinia

SIMON LEES · AN APARTMENT NEAR THE SEA

One of my dreams came true this year with the help of Live in Italy. Having holidayed on the beautiful island of Sardinia for a number of years, I decided this was the year to buy a home there. At least there would be no more hotel bills to pay.

Having set my criteria, an apartment in Alghero, close to the sea and with as much outside space as possible, I turned to the big question of how. I started out making my own visits to local estate agents, but after a very short time I realised a more professional and coordinated approach would be required.

Following my return to the UK, I found the service offered by Live in Italy. After registration, they contacted local estate agents on my behalf and soon presented me with a list of properties meeting my criteria, a great deal longer than I had managed from my own initial efforts. I was keen to make a return trip as soon as possible, and asked Dominic to arrange as many viewings as possible. At the end of the week we were viewing nearly 20 properties over a two day period.

I was impressed by Dominic's extensive knowledge of the buying process, his organisational skills and, above all, his helpful and positive approach from my initial enquiry through to completion. Following the purchase, Live in Italy were of immense help in arranging works to the property, including the fitting of a new kitchen. I am now the proud owner of a home in Sardinia. Without their help I am sure I would still be looking.

Simon Lees



The coast between Alghero and Capo Caccia.



MARRIED *in* SICILY

Today, Dom Hebblethwaite helps British couples marry in Sicily, the island he knows and loves.

Married in Sicily is a UK-based, bilingual wedding planning service: close to home, so it understands what you and your guests need, and at home in Sicily, so nothing is lost in translation.

marriedinsicily.com