



OUR LIFE IN SARDINIA

Mark and Ann Marie Rehorn, based in the West Midlands, fell in love with Sardinia the moment they first set foot on the island in 2002. They now own two villas just south of the fabled Costa Smeralda, and offer holiday rentals as well as enjoying frequent visits.

“We’d always holidayed in the south of France,” Ann Marie explains. “Then my father-in-law persuaded us to visit Sardinia on his yacht, and we were bowled over by the place. It’s so natural and unspoilt. It’s fantastic for sailing, especially the northeast because of the constant breeze. What really got us was the beauty of the beaches – it’s the Caribbean in the Mediterranean. And we love the family-oriented culture.

“We holidayed in northeast Sardinia for two years, then bought a villa. A couple of years later we bought a second property, purely for holiday rental – it’s very well-stocked and has the most fantastic view. Our rentals are going well. Originally all our clients were British, but the market has really opened up and now we have lots of different European nationalities.

“Our property hunt wasn’t easy, as the local agents weren’t showing us the kinds of things we’d asked to see. At the last minute we were flicking through a property magazine and found a London-based agent and he was great. Before that, we couldn’t get written details; when we’d ask the price of a property they seemed to just pick a number out of the air. The bureaucracy is arduous, and obviously there’s another language to contend with. You really have to do your homework before you buy here.

“Investment-wise it’s been very good. Our properties’ values have increased because local infrastructure has improved – roads built, mains electricity put in, and EU funding to smarten up the nearby city of Olbia. This area is a traditional holiday playground for people from Rome and Milan, but out of season it’s wonderful. May, June, September and October are the best times to be here. It’s still warm, and you’ve got glamorous beaches all to yourself.

“I would advise would-be buyers to consider all the costs. There’s the purchase price, then the tax on top, then the notary’s fees. Be prepared. If you’re buying a new-build, it probably won’t be finished when you want it. The pace of life is much slower here. Things progress slowly; you’ve got to take that into account. Learn some Italian, because English isn’t widely spoken. The Sards are fiercely proud of their island and their traditions. They’ll love you if you show a real interest in the place. Immerse yourself. Go into with your eyes open, be cautious, and enjoy the adventure!”

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