

PRESS CUTTINGS

Spain & Property

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Buying in Valencia**Conor's homes in Spain, from the coast to the countryside**

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When Skerries man Conor Wilde met a young Spanish student in Dublin 14 years ago, he had no plans to become a real estate agent, or to move to Spain. But for the past six years, he and that student – now his wife Susana – have run their own real estate agency in the city of Valencia, and are just opening a second office in Monserrat, 25 miles west of the city.

Their agency, Spain & Property, sells apartments in the city of Valencia and villas – country houses inland from the coast with swimming pools, orange groves – to mainly English but now an increasing number of Irish buyers.

Its stock is a mix of second-hand and off-plan properties costing from under €200,000 to €400,000-plus, although he has handled houses in the €3 million-plus range.

€200,000 will buy a 15-year-old 240sq m (2,583sq ft) three/four-bedroom house on a good-sized plot of land inland – or a two-bedroom apartment in the beautiful old town of Valencia city.

What 32-year-old Wilde and his company offer clients, he says, is a very personal touch which includes after-sales service.

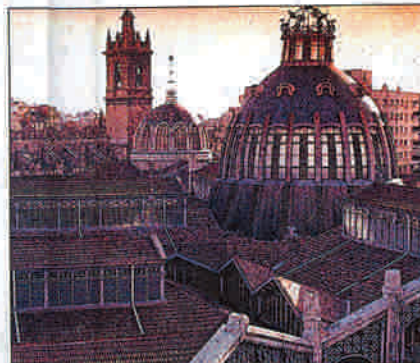
Many of the firm's customers are

people young and old relocating to Spain and needing advice – from how to find an independent solicitor, to an architect, to a doctor, where to find schools for the children and so on. "I have a team of 12 who work with me," he says, and they will help customers with all these matters.

Others are people looking for holiday homes, some simply for an investment. Properties in Valencia city or along the coast are rising rapidly in value at the moment as the city prepares to host the Americas Cup world yachting event in 2007; owners of properties should have no trouble renting them.

People buying houses inland will be able to rent for part of the year, but couldn't bank on rentals to cover repayments, he says.

Wilde is a fan of his new home: he raves about the beauty of the city of Valencia, with its old walled town, its culture, modern transport systems, its safety, its authentic Spanish-ness com-



The old city of Valencia, above left; right, a five-bedroom villa in Monserrat, 25 miles west of the city, which has landscaped gardens and a swimming pool with a separate baby pool for €479,950, also for sale through Spain & Property



pared to places nearby on the coast ruined by overdevelopment, and its fun. And properties inland, he says, are still in easy reach of the coast, but very different from tourist resort properties.

He smiles wearily when asked about the problems of "Valencia land grab", prominent in the minds of many English and Irish buyers because of publicity about people whose houses have been

expropriated by Valencia authorities.

Yes, he says, it is a question he gets asked all the time, and basically, he has two answers to the question of whether it's safe to buy property in Valencia: one is that buyers should always go for land zoned urban, and the second is to get an independent solicitor to handle the details of the sale.

But he points out that the land-grab

issue is currently before the European Parliament. He points out, however, that all buyers should get qualified solicitors and surveyors – as they would at home.

Ryanair now flies directly from Dublin to Valencia, making buying a holiday home there more feasible than previously.

● www.spainandproperty.com