

Meet the reader...



NAME: Richard Markin

AGES: 58

JOB: Actor

WHERE: From Crystal Palace in London to Valencia in Spain

CONTACT: For details of the range of homes currently available from Spain and Property, or to arrange a visit, telephone Conor Wilde on (0034) 647 787 350 or visit the website at www.spainandproperty.com. Buyers from the UK can call free on 0800 032 6407.



WHY BUY THERE: VALENCIA

- Valencia is a cosmopolitan city, the third largest in Spain, and full of cultural attractions.
- There are beaches at the heart of the city.
- There are fantastic possibilities for all kinds of sport, such as golf, diving, cycling and tennis.
- Low-cost flights to Valencia make the city accessible, boosting the rental market.
- Property here remains cheaper than other parts of Spain, although the area is rapidly increasing in popularity, particularly among foreign buyers. Venture inland and you will find property at bargain prices.

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Valencia's cathedral is home to what's said to be the Holy Grail

The world's a stage

After purchasing a plot of land near the city of Valencia, actor Richard Markin set about building his dream home, writes **Liane Voisey**

Best known for his performances in stage shows like *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Carry on London*, fate has always played a strong part in Richard Markin's career and so it was no surprise that Lady Luck also intervened when he decided to buy a property abroad.

He explains, "It started when one of the cameramen on *The Da Vinci Code* knocked on the door of my house in Dulwich and offered to buy it. I had put the house on the market a year before and had changed my mind and taken it off again, but he had found it on the net by chance. He purchased it privately from me for £320,000," Richard says.

With a healthy budget, Richard set about fulfilling his lifetime ambition of writing his first novel abroad and embarked on a series of property search trips to Finland, Bulgaria, Holland and France. However, it wasn't until he travelled to Spain with a girlfriend who was looking for a two-bedroom flat in Valencia that he discovered his dream plot, again all by chance.

"I had never even considered Spain as I thought everyone moves to Spain and I wanted to be

different. However, when Conor Wilde, managing director of Spain and Property, took us to view a plot of land near Turis, I fell in love with it the minute I saw it. The site was very unusual as it already had a tennis court and a swimming pool and the views were just incredible," he says.

Again luck had played a part; the land had been sold to a local builder by the owners of the nearby house just three weeks before. Richard says, "I could imagine myself swimming in the pool and making orange juice in the morning from oranges growing on my tree. I knew I had to make an offer before somebody else saw it."

PEACE AND QUIET

Charming Turis was another attraction for Richard. A keen swimmer, he was thrilled to discover an Olympic-size pool in an art deco building with restaurant and bar. Turis also has further shops, restaurants and bars.

"I need peace and quiet so I can get on with my novel but is nice to know that there are plenty of things to do in Turis in the evenings. And it's just 25 minutes on the motorway to >>

“ I could instantly imagine myself swimming in the pool and **making fresh orange juice** in the morning from oranges growing on my tree ”

REAL LIFE VALENCIA

Valencia, which has all the shops, nightclubs and restaurants you could ever want.”

Richard was adamant that he didn't want a traditional villa and worked with a local architect to draw up plans for a cool, modern property. The three-bedroom villa, which is due to be complete in December this year, will feature a 39-square-foot galleried living area, an oak kitchen with state-of-the-art lighting and a large master bedroom with a deck with uninterrupted views of the surrounding countryside.

Richard concedes that buying a ready-built property would have been much easier but says that he relishes having so much choice over how his new home, which will cost a total of €350,000, will look.

“Valencia is the home of the ceramic tile industry in Spain and they do some incredible tiles there. The builder has promised to take me along to his suppliers to pick all my tiles and marble worktops. You could never get a property like this in London; for the equivalent amount in sterling you would be lucky to get a two-bedroom flat in some unfashionable suburb.”

LET'S DO BUSINESS

While Richard has read horror stories about buying property abroad, he has never had any concerns. He says, “The moment I met Conor Wilde I knew that he was a man I could do business with. He has been working in Spain for the past 14 years and knows the property industry there inside and out. He would not give the builder an inch when we were negotiating details of the building programme.”

Along with helping Richard buy the plot and hooking him up with the architect, Spain and Property handled all the legal work for the house. “The lawyer Spain and Property recommended speaks excellent English and she guided me through a maze of legal work,” says Richard.

Conor Wilde says, “The house will be one of the finest properties in the area. Prices here have increased by 27 per cent in the last 12 months and the property will be worth €445,000.”

Richard has no plans to sell his villa, though, and can't wait for the curtain to be raised on his new life in Spain. “I'm hoping that I get peace to write my novel, but so many people have asked to come out and stay with me that I am starting to wonder if I will get any work done at all!” ■

Valencia is a cultured and beautiful place, and Richard's villa is within easy reach of the city

