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LYON, AN INVESTOR'S DREAM

Sharon Hill, Director of Your French Property gives investors some hints and tips to buying in France's second city

Lyon is often driven through but never visited and yet it's a beautiful city with a strong cultural heritage and fascinating architecture. The truth is, many rarely look to Lyon for inspiration - motorists unfortunately drive through the most unattractive part of the town as they cross it on the motorway and unfortunately never stop to visit yet alone to consider buying property.

As France's second city, it has all the benefits of a city, yet at the same time all the advantages of its surrounding countryside which are within easy reach, its proximity to the Alps, to Geneva and to the South of France. A real crossroads in the heart of France, Lyon offers diversity and is doing extremely well in the property boom due to its strategic location, international airport and great transport links.

Lyon is an investor's dream and is often ignored in favour of Paris or the Cote d'Azur. Investors here can benefit from steady capital appreciation and good rental income whether they buy a leaseback or a buy to let property. Prices have risen by over 25% since 2005 and are set to continue rising with the regeneration of certain districts, such as Charlemagne, La Duchere, Berthelot and generally speaking the 7th, 8th and 9th districts as well as Villeurbanne.

Within less than 30 minutes you can find yourself in the heart of the Beaujolais countryside with its rolling hills, vineyards and traditional golden stone properties. The Beaujolais is of course famous for its wines and there is plenty to visit in the area. Or, by going 20 minutes East you will come across surrounding towns and villages which are commutable into Lyon, each of which have their own character.

Prices in these areas are still reasonably low compared to other parts of France which have already attracted a lot of foreign attention and are set to rise considerably in the future as the region surrounding Lyon benefits from the property boom's mushroom effect.

Prices are now reaching in excess of 4000 Euros per metre square for new build property which has been rarely seen until now, although this is expected to continue to increase with the development of the city.

In terms of investment, Lyon rates fifth in Europe just behind Paris and boasts a 38% increase in tourism. It is a terrific spot for a winter break and is very popular amongst tourists this time of the year. It not only has two international class rivers, but it has a renaissance quarter on an Italian scale, plus more art and culture than anyone would desire.

The city has so much to offer with the festive season approaching, from the 6-9 December the city lights up with the 'Festival of Lights'. Courtyards, bridges, statues, rivers and squares all light up with colour and the city illuminates by night. It has a shopping district that a Christmas shopper cannot afford to miss, from top end designers located between the two rivers and the zillion high street stores on the Rue de la Republique, which is actually the longest pedestrian street in France. We must not forget the food markets which are a cross between the Harrods food hall and normal food markets, providing fresh produce that leaves you drooling at the mouth. The district is renowned as the city of French Gastronomy, you can eat in international chains or choose somewhere more quaint where the Lyonnais eat in 'bouchons', small neighbourhood restaurants.

It takes between five to five and a half hours to reach Lyon from London by train. Airlines serving the city include BMI, British Airways, Air France, Aer Lingus and the most recent to announce new routes is Easyjet. They are investing 600 million Euros to create two new bases in France by 2011 at Paris's Charles de Gaulle airport and Lyon-Saint-Exupéry airport. They will have five new aircraft two of which will operate from Lyon. Easyjet's new base at Lyon's Saint-Exupéry Airport will operate seven domestic and international routes to Bordeaux, Toulouse, Casablanca, Marrakech, Venice, Porto and Lisbon.

Investors looking to purchase in Lyon should seek properties with access to the tube or tram systems and should aim to purchase smaller properties such as one bedroom apartments, as these are more sought after and sell extremely well on the resale market although larger properties in the more affluent areas of Lyon such as the 2nd and 6th districts are also desirable.

For further information please contact Your French Property on 01793 610 947 or visit www.your-french-property.co.uk

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Notes to Editors:

Established in 2003, Your French Property is at the forefront of the French Investment Property market and specialises in providing investment opportunities to overseas customers, mainly in the UK and Ireland. Your French Property offer leaseback and buy to let investments as well as resale property, covering all of France from studio apartments in major cities such as Paris or Lyon, to luxury ski chalets in the French Alps.

For further press information please contact:

Evelyn Nicola at ECN Public Relations

Telephone: 0208 391 9186

Mobile: 07932 725 365

Email: evelyn@ecnpublishing.com