



Marvellous Mazarrón

Having little success finding her place in the sun, Donna Pursey enlists the help of a couple of experts

DONNA PURSEY'S dream of owning a property in Spain came to fruition in May 2006 after a difficult year of family tragedies. The dream makers were some property locators based in Puerto de Mazarrón on the Costa Cálida and her very tolerant baby/dog/horse/husband sitting Mother.

I wondered why this part of Spain in particular. Donna explained, "Ten years ago, I left my really boring job, sold my house, bought a camper van and travelled all around Spain. One area that always stuck in my mind was Murcia and the beautiful beaches of Mazarrón. I liked the way it was always so popular with the Spanish and back then it was relatively unknown back home in the UK. I loved the old time feel and the fact that there were no streets full of British bars and lager louts that I'd come across elsewhere on my travels. It sounds a bit of a cliché but it really was like stepping back in time and thankfully it has kept that authenticity even today."

That was the location sorted easily enough. But when it came to the actual property Donna explained that she'd had a few false starts.

I contacted some of the big agencies but hadn't really felt listened to. I'd say how much I'd got to spend and then I'd get sent details of loads of properties well over my budget. The other thing I couldn't stand was the constant phone calls from them - I found them a bit intimidating."

Help at hand

Donna went on to say how she worked out a different way of doing things by getting someone else on board. "I was reading *Living Spain* magazine one day, and I came across a feature on ADS Property and instantly warmed to the couple, Maura and Pat, with their no-nonsense and down to earth approach. I liked the fact that they'd been through the buying process themselves and were now using their experience to help others."

It was at this point that Donna at last felt that she was getting somewhere. Donna went on "It begins to feel like a bit of an ordeal at times you know - more so if you're trying to do it on your own. Now, for the first time I really felt listened to and every property report Maura sent was realistic and really detailed. It didn't take long to find my perfect home."

But it wasn't all plain sailing however, Maura did have one hurdle to overcome. "I was completely computer illiterate (couldn't even switch one!), but with Maura's patience and hard work pounding the streets of Puerto de Mazarrón in search of suitable properties for me, at no cost to myself, we finally cracked it. After many over the phone "computer lessons" from Maura and the use of our wonderful postal system, she found me my perfect apartment: Beachfront, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, stunning mountain views and even a storage room and parking space thrown in. Knowing that I



Donna, Stormy and Clemmie

had small children, Maura had searched for “child friendly” apartment, rejecting any with steep steps and dangerous roof terraces.”

Love at first sight

So with children, dogs, horses and husband left in granny’s capable hands, Donna set off to view their prospective new holiday home. Donna outlined how her trip worked out, “Maura picked me up at the airport and settled me into a hotel close to the apartment so I could get a feel for the area. She’s fiercely efficient and business-like, Maura, but it’s a very down to earth approach to life. Not once did I feel pressured in any way to purchase the property. She made sure I had plenty of time on my own to wander around and think things through in peace; however, still being available to answer the many questions I had for her.”

The first thing that I noticed about the area was that it hadn’t changed one bit since my first visit 10 years ago. The sea was still the stunning azure blue it had always been; the mountains still breathtaking and it still had that wonderful laid-back feeling. There are not many places any where in the world you can say that about!

But what about Maura’s suggestion for an apartment? “Love at first sight!” answered Donna. “As soon as I saw the apartment I knew it was the one. It was right next to a lovely safe, sandy beach and only a few minutes walk to restaurants, Spanish bars, shops, supermarkets and of course the famous Sunday market where you can buy anything from a spit roast chicken to a cute little puppy.

Fairy Godmother

After Donna agreed to purchase the apartment, Maura swung into action once more. “I don’t know what I’d have done without her really. She helped me with the paper work, took me to the police station to get the N.I.E number you need

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for buying a property in Spain. Then it was on to the Notary for the final signing for the property. All a bit daunting really for anyone, let alone a scared little farmer’s wife from Herefordshire – and best of all the service Maura and Pat offer is free, believe it or not.”

So signed and sealed it was back to the UK and the reality began to sink in for Donna. “I’d set out in search of my own little piece of

paradise on the Costa Cálida and now with the dream come true I had to get my head out of the clouds and sort out all the everyday things. Difficult when you are not actually on the spot I ventured. “Not when you’ve got a Fairy Godmother (as I now call her!), the furniture buying, lighting, arranging cleaning staff, fitting of air-con, organising the water contract, more computer lessons, taking delivery of furniture, key holding, paying staff etc. etc; Maura got all this sorted whilst I was back home.”

Donna went over to Spain to add the personal touch but even then Maura was at hand. “She really does know the best shops in the area. We spent 2 fantastic days zooming around in her car and at the end I’d furnished the apartment right down to the last teaspoon. Every item of furniture I bought whilst I was with Maura was delivered the next day free of charge! The lighting people were amazing. They delivered everything free of charge and when they got there fitted it all for free as well. Brilliant!”

Fun and stress free

I was beginning to think it all seemed a bit too good to be true and Donna admitted to the one odd thing in the whole process. “The only hiccup I had was when I walked into the apartment on my first day after everything had been signed and it really was ours, for some strange reason the toilet was in the hallway! Maura made a phone call and a within the hour a very sheepish looking plumber came along and fitted it into the it’s proper place in the bathroom...”

Two years on, Maura is still helping Donna and her family with computer studies, keeping an eye on the apartment when they’re not around and answering her e-mails for local info. “I’d have no hesitation about going through the buying process again as long as these two were at my side” she said, smiling at Maura and Pat. “Believe it or not



they made the whole process fun and stress free with that special personal touch you just wouldn't get with a big agency."

A very satisfied customer then. I wondered how much the family got to use the apartment. "My family love the area and we take several holidays a year to our little piece of paradise. The children are spoilt rotten in the shops and restaurants. I love the fact that I can take my children to Puerto de Mazarrón on my own and feel safe. Even walking back at night from a restaurant we've never felt threatened. The beaches are almost deserted, apart from July/August, when you see a really lovely aspect of Spanish family life when whole families descend onto the beaches complete with grannies, uncles, aunts, grandchildren etc for days at a time, with all family members taking turns looking after the children. With its clean beautiful beaches and flat, level ground it is truly a resort for all the family, young or old. For me it's heaven on earth with its own micro-climate and mild winters. Its an idea winter sun getaway and where else could you get an authentic Spanish 3 course meal with wine and bread for €6-8?" "But" she begged, " please, don't go telling everyone... We found it first."

After reading about some of the bad press Spain's been getting recently I remarked how heart-warming Donna's tale was. She agreed, " You do hear some real horror stories, but if you do your homework before you go, keep a level head, find yourself a Maura, and get independent legal advice, it is possible to succeed. Even for a lone computer illiterate farmers wife from Herefordshire!" ■



FURTHER INFORMATION

If you would like to see more of Donna's dream holiday home or are interested in rental of the property, please visit **holidaylettings.co.uk/17073**

If you would like to see more of Maura and Pat's good work you can visit their website at **www.ads-property.co.uk**, or give Maura a call on 00 34 646 969 455.