Investing in Tuscan bricks with Toscocountry

THE BUDGET YOU WANT TO INVEST

The first step towards purchasing a Tuscan house, probably the most important, is focusing on the **features** you want in an ideal home…bearing in mind that the perfect one does not exist and that everything is always a compromise! The determination of **your budget** is also very important . Once you have decided what sum you are ready to spend, you have to calculate that this sum will be burden by **taxes,** to be paid at the time of the final contract, the notary and geometra fees, the commission rates of the agency and some minor or major restoration works.

THE AGENT

The second step is finding a **reliable Real Estate Agent** that you think you'll be comfortable working closely with. To ascertain the expertise and competence of the agent, the following list is a good starting point:

-Is he/she a member of the Italian Registry of Italia Real Estate Agents (Albo degli Agenti Immobiliari)? Keep clear of unregistered agents, if he/she is **NOT** on the list, the person is probably trading illegally!!!

-Is he/she part of the FIMAA, (Federazione Italiana dei Mediatori e Agenti in Affari) and the FIAIP (Federazione Italiana degli Agenti Immobiliari Professionali) or other minor organizations, and insured against professional risk?

<<< Toscocountry belongs to the FIMAA, is registered and insured. >>>

Last but not least, in terms of commissions, agents must receive money from both the seller and the buyer (by italian law) to ensure the realtor is **impartial** towards both parties in transaction.

DOCUMENTS AND ACTS

Now, after your House-Hunting experience, let's assume that you find the right property: the next step will be starting the process to buy.

THE CODICE FISCALE: this is your personal Italian identification code and is useful for many aspects of your Italian life, not only for the payment of taxes. This is normally requested by you directly at the Agenzia delle Entrate (Tax agency) or through the Italian consulates in your country. I can surely help you obtaining your tax code.

THE PROPOSAL TO BUY: The Real Estate Agent will prepare a **'Proposal to Buy'** in your name, indicating the purchase price that you propose for that property, payment terms and other details such as the availability the4 furniture and the land registry information.
This offer will typically be valid for one week: during this period the seller can accept, reject, or further negotiate the proposed purchase price. When completing the purchase offer, you will be asked to pay a deposit, usually by check, made out to the seller. The deposit will be held by the agent and transferred to the seller only if the offer will be accepted and upon completion of the urban planning and land registry checks, certifying the building's compliance with the planning laws.

Please Note that if the affair does not go ahead at this stage, for any reason, the sum will be given back to you without penalties.

URBAN PLANNING AND CADASTRAL CHECKS: Now that your offer has been accepted by the vendor, a trusted surveyor (a so called geometra or architect or ingeneer) will review the property's documents, like the deed of origin and the building permits, to ensure that no works have been carried out illegally . The completion time for the checks depends primarily on the municipality where the property is located...and it normally takes at least one month, for the surveyor, to accede the documents. At a later stage, the surveyor will inspect the property, comparing its current condition with the documentation collected from the municipality.

PRELIMINARY CONTRACT: While not a mandatory step, between the proposal to buy and the final deed, it is possible to sign a preliminary agreement (preliminary contract), a private document by which the seller and buyer commit to closing the deal. The preliminary contract contains the following elements:
1) The price of the property, 2) The payment terms and conditions, 3) The date of the official deed of sale (the final deed), 4) A precise indication of the existence (or absence) of mortgages or other encumbrances, 5) The house's compliance with building and urban planning regulations, 6) A precise description of the rooms and their locations, as well as a description of any accessory buildings, 7) The boundaries with other properties, 8) The amount of the deposit, etc.
Usually, upon signing the preliminary agreement, the buyer pays an additional deposit, also called **confirmatory deposit,** regulated by the Italian civil code: if the sale does not take place due to the buyer's fault, the vendor will be entitled to retain the deposit as compensation. If, however, the seller withdraws, the buyer will be entitled to compensation equal to double the deposit.

The Buyer is committed to register the preliminary contract at the tax office.

FEES

Estate agency fees are payable by Vendor and Buyer at the Preliminary stage or at the final deed.

NOTARIAL DEED

Last step of the purchase process is the signing of the final contract, called rogito. The **Public Notary**, will witness the transfer of ownership from one party to another and collects the taxes due on the transaction. He/she will check that the taxes and dues have been paid and if the property is burden by mortgages or debts etc.

Afterwards the Notary will register the new title within 20 days. If you have taken out a mortgage, the notary will register this too.

THE PRIMA CASA FACILITIES AND THE PURCHASE TAXES:

The calculation of taxes is something quite complicated which only a notary can do, knowing exactly how much you need to pay at the completion date so this article will give a rough idea!

If the house you are buying is your first house in Italy and you decide to be a **full time resident** (you have **18** months time to become a resident in Italy) the taxes that need to be paid are:
2% registration tax based on the statutory value of the house
50 euros for the imposta ipotecaria
50 euros for the imposta catastale.

If you are buying as **non resident**, you will pay 9**%** of the statutory value.
If you are buying from a Building company you will have to also pay the VAT .
The information given, can be changed by the Italian laws.

If you decide to live in Italy permanently, there are advantages when you buy your first house. This is what you need to know:

- It has to be the only house you own in that Comune
- You have to be a resident in the Comune where you want to buy, and you have basically 18 months to organize this.
- It does not have to be a luxurious house.
- It is enough to declare the intention of becoming resident when you go to the notary to complete the purchase. False declarations are punished by the italian law.
- You also cannot sell your house for at least 5 years, unless you buy another first house for permanent living, or pay the tax difference.

PROPERTY TAXES IN ITALY

IMU (imposta municipal unica or municipal property tax) is applied on your Italian property if it is not your primary residence.
TARI (waste tax), based on the size of the property and the number of people living there.

HAPPY HOUSE HUNTING!