

OPINION

It's time to consider renting your dream country home



BY WILLIAM KYLE

the length of time you spend in a purchased property, the more expensive it becomes.

Of course it doesn't just come down to finances. Some people just feel the need to own their own property. Renting, even long term, can feel like a temporary arrangement for a nation that's used to ownership. And if you rent a property there's less you can do to make it feel like your own.

Choice too is much more restricted. In rural areas, there's a limited supply of rental property available, so you may have to compromise more than you would if you were buying.

If you do the sums, rural renting makes financial sense. For anyone who needs mortgage funds to buy a property, it's substantially cheaper to rent than buy, even taking into consideration today's low interest rates. But don't assume that rental prices will remain stable – historically, rents have always gone up when capital value is stalling or devaluing.

If you're looking for rental property, be organised in your search. The best start is the internet. Compare the market in your area via the various web portals and get an idea of what's available in what price bracket. Contact all agents involved and stay on the case. Renting has a much quicker turnaround time than sales, so you need to be in touch with the agents regularly so you hear if something new has come up.

When viewing property, you're looking for different things than when you're buying. Maintenance costs and repairs should all be met by the landlord so you may decide to overlook some of the things that would normally set alarm bells ringing but remember, the condition of the property may also affect the size of your utility bills.

If you're searching for a long-term let, establish with the agent that the landlord is looking for the same, or are they just looking for a six-month tenancy for lifestyle reasons?

As far as price is concerned, tenants aren't in a strong position at the moment – on the whole, advertised rental prices are being achieved. You may have to offer the full price to secure a deal. But it is worth investigating as there may be a little bit of leeway with negotiations.

Most tenants are Short Assured Tenancies, for a minimum statutory period of six months. While going for an initial rental period of six months, thus giving yourself a chance to check you're happy with the property, makes sense, offering a longer let can be a good negotiating tool. You may be able to negotiate the price by offering rental monies up front – and if you've just sold a property you may be in a position to do this.

● *William Kyle is the regional director of Stacks Property Search & Acquisition, based in Edinburgh*

Kenya

GETTING THERE

■ Kenya is approximately eight hours' flying time from the UK. Virgin flies a daily scheduled service to Nairobi, with onwards transfers to Mombasa via Kenya Airways. Charter airlines, including Kenya Airways, fly direct to Mombasa on an eight-day turnaround.

BEING THERE

■ Kenya is virtually on the equator and so has a tropical climate in the main. Coastal Mombasa benefits from cooling sea breezes from the Indian Ocean, but temperatures still reach 40C in high summer – January to March. September–November sees more moderate temperatures – around 30C.

BUYING THERE

■ There are no restrictions on Britons buying in Kenya. At EnglishPoint Marina, ownership is on a 99-year leasehold agreement, which is renewable. Purchase taxes – in the form of stamp duty – amount to 4 per cent of the purchase price.

Clockwise from main: the picturesque old port of Mombasa; EnglishPoint Marina bedroom with views across the stream to the old Mombasa skyline; the arches of Mombasa; EnglishPoint Marina, Mombasa's first international quality resort and beach

