



ENGLAND'S DREAMING

Imagine a land where binge-drinking is a national sport, no one speaks about sex and a marmite buttie is the staple diet of the half-naked locals? Well, we are already here, according to French journalist Agnès Catherine Poirier. Her new book *Les Nouveaux Anglais* offers a snapshot of modern-day Britain – Scotland, Wales and Ireland are not overlooked – and it's not a pretty picture.

Just released in France, the book provides an insider's account that will leave our neighbours scratching their heads. Poirier describes a country where 70 per cent of emergency admissions at weekends are due to alcohol consumption; where youngsters pour out of nightclubs at 2am wearing little more than a belt to protect them from the bitter cold and, where, despite topless models adorning the front covers of some daily tabloids, the *Kama Sutra* was banned until 1963. No wonder Brits are leaving in droves.

But what is it she thinks that the expats miss most about Blighty? Why, roast dinners, of course.



Finders keepers

Property search company, The Property Finders, has now set up shop in France.

Following successful operations in Spain and Ireland, the company has now opened offices on the Côte d'Azur.

Covering the coast from Monaco to St-Tropez and inland to the Var and the southern Alps, the company offers a comprehensive property-hunting service, with first-hand knowledge of the local market. Unaffiliated to any estate agents, they also offer completely independent advice.

Visit www.thepropertyfinders.com



ELECTING TO MOVE?

If you're thinking of selling your home in the UK and relocating to France, the time might be right. Propertyfinder.com predict that British house prices will rise now that the General Election is over.

As the saying goes, it doesn't matter who you vote for, the government always gets in. And it seems, the property market always goes into overdrive – figures from the last five General Elections suggest that a market bounce always follows an election.

Jim Buckle, managing director of Propertyfinder.com, observes: "Elections have a distinct effect on the housing market. There is no real logic to this, but house-buyers and sellers clearly hold back from taking the plunge until a new government is back in power. We firmly believe that 2005 is no different."

For a taste of the high life, French style, why not splash out on this chateau – pictured above – on the Côte d'Azur, a few minutes from the beach and only 10 minutes from Nice airport. €800,000 (€545,000). Atika International: 0207 245 6000. www.atikainternational.com



Web slingers

Just because you are moving to the middle of the French countryside doesn't mean you have to be cut off from the outside world. A group of expats in Limousin – a region that's a particular favourite with *A Place in the Sun* presenter Amanda Lamb – is launching a website that allows settlers in the region to tap into the local English-speaking community.

Simply-named Limousin Expats, the site went online in April and is well worth a look.

To find out more, visit www.limousin-expats.com