

## British Invasion?

Buying a bolthole in France is hardly the preserve of the rich and famous these days, but who would have thought that as many as 600,000 British people now live or work there – and counting? With more of us than ever jumping on the French property bandwagon, it's no wonder that prices are rocketing and you can hardly go out for a baguette without bumping into a fellow Brit. It comes as no surprise that the Dordogne has been dubbed 'Dordogneshire' by the French, with foreign buyers flocking to popular areas and converting them into a home from home, thereby slowly eroding the rustic charm that gave them their appeal in the first place.

For those in the know, there are still some places relatively untouched by the masses. Picardie, in the North, has been passed-by for more sunny climates, but still has much to offer with charming towns, beautiful landscapes and remote beaches. Less than an hour away from Calais, it makes an ideal spot for weekend breaks. Situated on the Swiss and German borders, Alsace is also worth a look. Sheltered by the Vosges mountains, it enjoys warm summers and many of its medieval villages have a quaint Germanic feel. So get off the beaten track and invest in these hidden gems before they suffer the same fate.