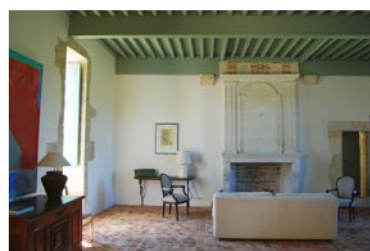




MY DREAM HOME

Sarah Francis would love to be queen of this château in Gers



Sarah Francis, of Sifex, explains why she is enchanted by this 12-bedroom château in Gers, on the market for €1.95m



I am passionate about the underpopulated Gers, with its friendly agricultural community, glorious gastronomy and sublime views reminiscent of Tuscany, so dreaming of living in a Gerseois castle is a regular fantasy.

One sunny spring morning this beauty dating from the 13-17th centuries captivated me. With its

lawned courtyard, four impressive cypress trees, bright exposed stone facade punctuated by red shutters and surmounted by square and conical towers, it had a definite

Italianate air. On the other side, the facade has chic shutters in donkey grey and a shady flagstone terrace (once a look-out post), ideal for a chilled *apéritif*. Snowy orchards of plum trees form a pretty backdrop.

I love the fact that this family home is historic yet manageable or

à taille humaine. I appreciate its understated authenticity, the perfectly preserved stone spiral staircase, the mix of traditional, modern and colonial. It even has that essential of château life: a billiard room, alongside its 12 bedrooms, 10 bathrooms and four reception rooms.

An ancient well with wrought-iron overthrow stands by an arched passageway to a terrace shaded by Lebanon cedars, with a family cinema to one side. A magnificent wisteria walk leads to the swimming pool, *pigeonnier*, tennis court and flourishing vegetable garden.

Five minutes away is the cathedral market town of Condom, which boasts an excellent Michelin-starred restaurant with a very competitively priced lunchtime menu. Temptation! A 1h40 easy drive takes you to Toulouse international airport.

The charming Parisian owners have reluctantly decided it is time to allow someone else to enjoy all that this gem has to offer. For me – a *Gasconne* at heart – it would fulfill my wildest dreams! ■

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