

The beautiful stencilled panels on the ceiling in the living room were done by a Parisian academic who owned the house years ago. The stencilling was also on the walls but Brenda didn't want the room to feel too ornate, so painted them in an off-white
Sofas, CMF



'As soon as we walked into the house we fell for the spacious room'

All about us

WHO LIVES HERE? Brenda and John Sills, who are both retired. They spend part of the year back at their home in Lincolnshire, and several months here in France. Their daughter Amanda and son Andrew and both of their families also use the house for holidays

PROPERTY A four-bedroom, 18th-century town house in the village of Vibrac near Cognac in the Charente region of southwest France. The house can be rented when the Sills are away through www.letamaris.co.uk

BOUGHT FOR £85,000 in 2000



SPENT Around £25,000

WORTH TODAY In the region of £250,000

WHY WE LOVE IT 'We love the peace and quiet of this part of France and the gloriously sunny climate,' says Brenda

Seven years ago, Brenda and John Sills decided to follow their dreams and buy a second home in France. 'We're retired now,' says Brenda, 'so we're able to split our time between France and our home in Lincolnshire. We also decided it would be nice for our daughter Amanda, son Andrew and both of their families to have somewhere they could use as a holiday home.' The property the couple fell in love with is a beautiful 18th-century house in the tiny village of Vibrac near Cognac.

How did you find this place? Initially John and I were looking for somewhere in the south, but

we found the traffic dreadful in summer, so we did a bit of research on other areas nearby and changed our focus to the Charente region in the southwest, as it's so peaceful and quiet. We also found out it's the second sunniest part of France! When the estate agent took us to this house we both agreed on it immediately. It's built from a beautiful golden stone and we fell for the spacious rooms and lovely big fireplaces.

Did the house need work?

Most of the hard work had been done by the Irish couple who sold it to us. They had converted the attic into two bedrooms and a shower room and also added a new roof. We just redecorated most of the »