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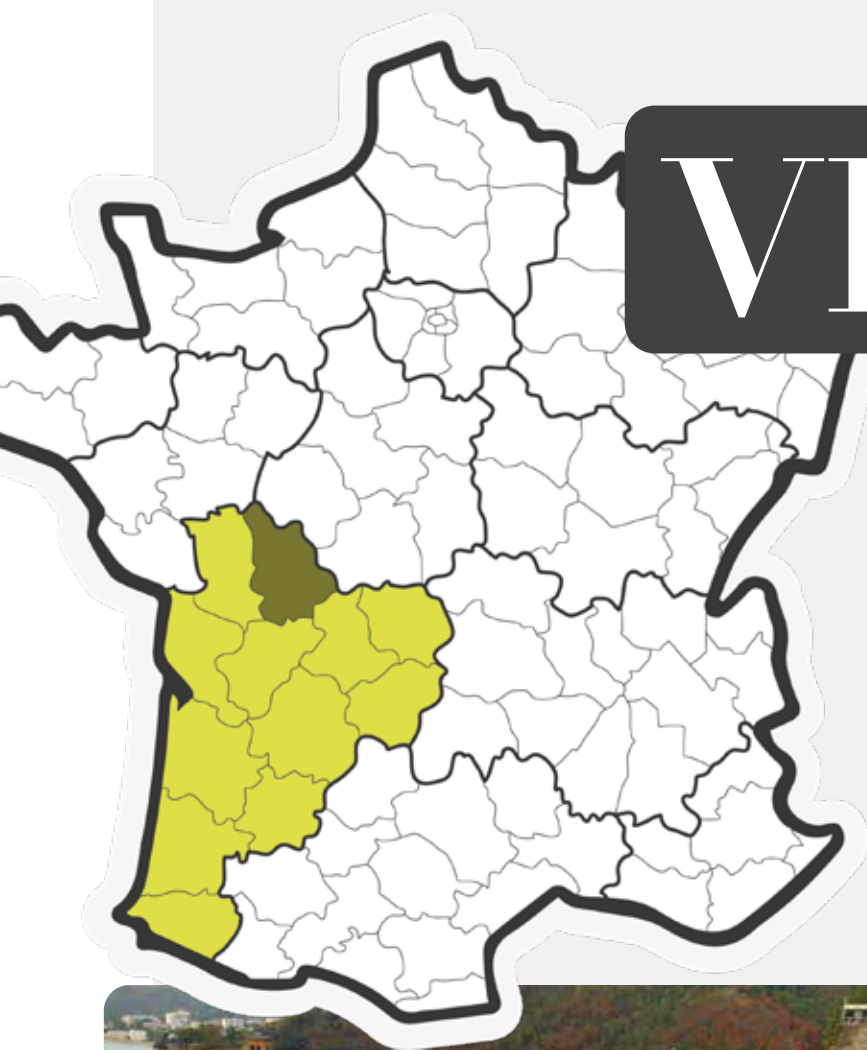
GUIDE TO THE VIENNE

TIME FOR A CHANGE?

This practical, no-nonsense guide is for anyone considering a move to the Vienne, covering where to live, daily life, culture, property, travel and key local services. Everything you need to get a realistic picture of life in south-west France, all in one place.



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VIENNE

NOUVELLE-AQUITAINE

SO, YOU'RE CONSIDERING A MOVE TO THE VIENNE?

Vienne offers an appealing mix of affordability, accessibility and authentic French living, making it an increasingly popular choice for expats seeking a quieter pace without feeling cut off. Anchored by the historic city of Poitiers, the department combines charming market towns, rolling countryside and a strong sense of local community with excellent transport links—most notably the TGV connection to Paris in around 1.5 hours.

With attractions such as Futuroscope, a good standard of healthcare and a relaxed lifestyle, Vienne is ideal for those looking for value, practicality and a more traditional French way of life.



PROPERTY *in the vienne...*

Property in the Vienne offers excellent value and a wide variety of options, from traditional stone houses and village properties to larger countryside homes and renovation projects. Whether you're planning a permanent move, searching for a holiday home or looking for a property with business potential, it's important to understand what different budgets can achieve and how the French buying process works.



€60,000 - €100,000

The Vienne has a great range of properties at the lower end of the price range, and you'll be sure to find something in the 1-3 bedroom type property, and plenty of town living options.



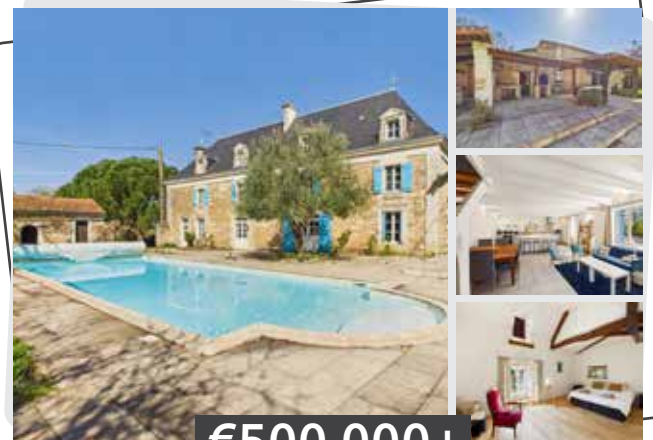
€100,000 - €300,000

Properties start increasing in their habitable size at this price range; bigger rooms, and more land. Looking at more rural locations, and you start getting to see some of the views of Vienne.



€300,000 - €500,000

Some beautiful and unique properties at this range, and some great properties found along the Vienne River. You are looking at lots of land, and space and often a swimming pool or hot tub!



€500,000+

You won't see too many houses reach the millions in the Vienne, but there'll be a few special properties at the 600,000-850,00 mark usually a rural location with plenty of bedrooms for income potential.

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WHERE TO LIVE *in the Vienne...*

The Vienne offers a mix of historic cities, practical market towns and quiet rural countryside, making it appealing to a wide range of expats.

Many are drawn by the department's affordability and strong transport links, particularly around Poitiers, while others prefer smaller towns and villages where property offers more space and value.

The area has long attracted British buyers, but also appeals to Dutch, Belgian and increasingly North American expats.

Tip: Many expats aim to be within 15-25 minutes of a town like Poitiers, Civray or Montmorillon to balance rural living with access to shops, healthcare and services.



Poitiers

The capital of the Vienne and its largest city, with a population of around 90,000. Poitiers offers a vibrant mix of history, culture and modern living, with excellent shops, restaurants, healthcare and schools. Its TGV station provides fast connections to Paris, making it a popular choice for those wanting accessibility alongside city life.

Châtelleraut

Located north of Poitiers, Châtelleraut is a practical town with around 30,000 residents. It has good transport links, including a train station, and offers a range of shops, supermarkets and services. It's popular with expats looking for value and convenience.

Civray

Civray is a charming market town in the south of the department, known for its picturesque riverside setting and historic centre. With a population of around 2,500, it offers a friendly, community-focused lifestyle.

Montmorillon

Often referred to as the "City of Writing and Books", Montmorillon is a small but characterful town with around 6,000 residents. It has a strong cultural identity, a weekly market and a good selection of shops and services.

Loudun & Northern Vienne

Loudun and the surrounding northern Vienne area attract expats looking for larger properties, land and lower prices. The area is more rural but still offers essential amenities, with access to nearby towns for shopping and services.

POITIERS

Poitiers is the capital of the Vienne and its largest city, with a population of around 90,000 people (over 130,000 in the wider urban area).

Known for its rich history, Romanesque architecture and lively student population, Poitiers offers a balanced mix of culture, convenience and accessibility, making it one of the most attractive places to live in the department.

What it's like to live there

Living in Poitiers offers a blend of historic charm and modern city life. The old town is full of narrow streets, beautiful squares, cafés and restaurants, creating a vibrant yet manageable city atmosphere. Thanks to its large student population, the city feels lively year-round, with cultural events, festivals and a good social scene.

At the same time, it remains relatively calm and easy to navigate compared to larger French cities. Many expats choose to live either in the centre or in surrounding areas such as Buxerolles, Saint-Benoît and Mignaloux-Beauvoir, which offer more space while staying close to amenities.

Shops and everyday amenities

Poitiers has an excellent range of shops and services for daily life. The city centre offers boulangeries, boucheries, cafés, boutiques, pharmacies and independent food shops, alongside well-known brands and larger stores. There are also regular markets supplying fresh local produce.

On the outskirts, several retail parks and shopping centres provide access to supermarkets such as E.Leclerc, Carrefour and Intermarché, as well as DIY stores, furniture shops and other household essentials.

Transport and getting around

Transport is a major advantage of Poitiers. The city has a TGV train station with direct high-speed connections to Paris (around 1.5 hours) and links to Bordeaux, Tours and beyond. There is a reliable local bus network covering the city and surrounding suburbs, making it possible to get around without a car if you live centrally. Poitiers also has a regional airport with a selection of flights, mainly to the UK and other European destinations.

While a car is useful—especially for exploring the countryside—it's one of the few places in the Vienne where you can comfortably live without one.

CHÂTELLERAULT

Châtellerault is the second-largest town in the Vienne, with a population of around 30,000 people, located between Poitiers and Tours.

Historically an industrial centre, the town has evolved into a practical, affordable place to live, offering a good range of amenities and strong transport links while maintaining a quieter, more laid-back feel than larger cities.

What it's like to live there

Life in Châtellerault is straightforward and community-focused, making it a popular choice for those looking for value and convenience. The town has a mix of traditional architecture, riverside areas along the Vienne River and more modern residential neighbourhoods.

It doesn't have the same tourist appeal as some other parts of the region, which means it feels more authentically local and is active year-round. Many expats choose to live either in the town itself or in nearby villages, where property tends to be more spacious and affordable.

Shops and everyday amenities

Châtellerault is well equipped for everyday living, with a good selection of boulangeries, boucheries, cafés, pharmacies and independent shops in the town centre. There are also regular markets offering fresh local produce.

On the outskirts, you'll find several supermarkets and retail zones, including E.Leclerc, Intermarché and Lidl, along with DIY stores and other practical outlets. While the shopping offer is not as extensive as Poitiers, it comfortably covers most daily needs.

Transport and getting around

One of Châtellerault's key strengths is its transport connectivity. The town has a train station on the main line between Poitiers and Tours, with access to TGV connections via Poitiers, making travel to Paris and other major cities relatively easy.

By road, it is well positioned near major routes, allowing straightforward travel north and south. There is a local bus network, but as with most towns in the region, a car is recommended for day-to-day life, especially if you live outside the centre.

For many expats, Châtellerault offers a sensible and well-connected base, ideal for those prioritising affordability and convenience while still enjoying life in south-west France.

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CHARENTE €484,000 HAI
BVI82691 Fabulous 4-bed, 2-bath stone longère with barns and pool
 Fees: 6% paid by the buyer Net price: €456,604



EXCLUSIVE

DORDOGNE €265,000 HAI
BVI79786 Tastefully renovated 4-bed hamlet property with pool
 Fees: 7% paid by the buyer Net price: €247,664



EXCLUSIVE

HAUTE-VIENNE €88,000 HAI
BVI83942 2-bed, 1-bath stone house and barn near Magnac-Laval town
 Fees: 10% paid by the buyer Net price: €80,000



EXCLUSIVE

AVEYRON €315,000
BVI78163 6-bed property including a 1-bed pigeonier and superb views
 Fees: Paid by the vendor



EXCLUSIVE

INDRE €249,899 HAI
BVI77976 3-bed characterful barn conversion with large garden
 Fees: 7% paid by the buyer Net price: €233,551



EXCLUSIVE

CREUSE €109,499 HAI
BVI78078 3-bed hamlet cottage with outbuilding, 15 mins from town
 Fees: 9% paid by the buyer Net price: €100,458



EXCLUSIVE

AUDE €365,000
BVI81825 4-bed, 4-bath villa with pool between coast and mountains
 Fees: Paid by the vendor



EXCLUSIVE

TARN €265,000 HAI
BVI82591 Rustic 4-bed, 2-bath village house with salt-water pool
 Fees: 6% paid by the buyer Net price: €250,000



savills

VENDEE €700,000
BVI72046 5-bed manor house plus guest house, stableblock and 4Ha
 Fees: Paid by the vendor



savills

ARIEGE €925,000
BVI83662 Gorgeous rural 3 house property. Pool, rural views and 2Ha
 Fees: Paid by the vendor



savills

TARN-ET-GARONNE €1,699,500 HAI
BVI73432 Spectacular 18thC estate in 8.6Ha - superb pool and views
 Fees: 4% paid by the buyer Net price: €1,634,000



EXCLUSIVE

savills

GIRONDE €1,250,000
BVI82981 Luxury estate with pool, equestrian facilities and 7.8Ha
 Fees: Paid by the vendor

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CIVRAY

Civray is a picturesque market town in the south of the Vienne, with a population of around 2,500 people. Set along the Charente River, it's known for its historic centre, relaxed pace of life and strong sense of community.

Civray has become particularly popular with expats looking for an affordable, friendly and well-serviced small town.

What it's like to live there

Life in Civray is calm, sociable and community-focused, making it an easy place to settle, especially for those new to France. The town has a traditional feel, with a central square, riverside walks and a mix of local cafés and shops.

There is a noticeable expat presence, particularly among British buyers, which can help with integration, while still retaining an authentic French atmosphere. Many people choose to live either in the town itself or in the surrounding countryside, where properties often offer more space and value.

Shops and everyday amenities

For a town of its size, Civray is well equipped. You'll find boulangeries, boucheries, cafés, pharmacies, banks and small independent shops, along with a popular weekly market that brings the town to life. There are also a couple of supermarkets, making it easy to manage day-to-day shopping locally.

For a wider range of services and retail options, residents often travel to Poitiers or Angoulême, both within reasonable driving distance.

Transport and getting around

Civray is more rural, so a car is essential for most residents. While there is limited public transport, the town is well positioned for road travel, with Poitiers around 45-50 minutes away and Angoulême just over an hour.

These larger towns provide access to TGV rail connections and wider services. There are also regional airports within reach, including Poitiers and Limoges.

For many expats, Civray offers a welcoming and manageable introduction to life in rural France, combining charm, practicality and affordability in a well-located small town.

MONTMORILLON

Montmorillon is a characterful market town in the south-east of the Vienne, with a population of around 6,000 people. Often referred to as the “City of Writing and Books” (Cité de l’Écrit), it has a unique cultural identity, combining historic architecture with a creative, slightly bohemian feel.

Set along the Gartempe River, Montmorillon offers a peaceful yet engaging lifestyle.

What it’s like to live there

Life in Montmorillon is relaxed, cultural and community-oriented. The town has a charming historic quarter with narrow streets, old buildings and independent bookshops, alongside more modern areas with everyday amenities.

It feels more lively than some smaller towns in the Vienne, thanks to its cultural focus and steady flow of visitors, but it still maintains a calm, local atmosphere. Many expats are drawn to the surrounding countryside, where properties offer space and good value while remaining close to the town.

Shops and everyday amenities

Montmorillon is well served for daily needs, with a good selection of boulangeries, boucheries, cafés, pharmacies, banks and independent shops, as well as a weekly market offering fresh produce and regional goods.

There are also supermarkets in and around the town, making everyday shopping convenient. While it doesn’t have large retail parks, it comfortably covers most essentials, with bigger shopping trips typically done in Poitiers.

Transport and getting around

Montmorillon has a train station with regional services, connecting to Poitiers and Limoges, providing access to wider rail networks. By road, Poitiers is around 45–50 minutes away, making it easy to reach TGV connections and larger city services.

Public transport locally is limited, so a car is recommended for day-to-day life, especially if living in nearby villages or rural areas.

For many expats, Montmorillon offers a blend of culture, tranquillity and practicality, making it an attractive option for those wanting a quieter lifestyle without feeling too isolated.

MARKETS & SHOPPING CULTURE

in the Vienne...

Shopping in the Vienne is a blend of traditional French market culture and practical everyday convenience, with many residents combining visits to local markets and independent shops with weekly supermarket trips. Whether you're in a larger centre like Poitiers or a smaller town, food and shopping are an important part of daily life, often centred around fresh, seasonal and locally sourced produce.



MARKET CULTURE

Market culture in the Vienne is authentic and community-driven, particularly in smaller towns where markets are a key social event.

It's common to shop for fresh ingredients and then stop for a coffee at a nearby café. Most markets run from early morning until around midday, with the best selection available earlier in the day.

Seasonal produce plays a big role, reflecting the agricultural nature of the region.

Major Weekly Markets

- **Poitiers** - Les Halles & outdoor markets: *A central hub for fresh produce, meat, fish and regional specialities, along with regular markets throughout the week.*
- **Châtellerault** - Market days (Thurs & Sat): *A busy market with a mix of food stalls, clothing and household goods.*
- **Civray** - Tuesday Market: *A popular and sociable market known for its local produce and friendly atmosphere.*
- **Montmorillon** - Wednesday Market: *A traditional market offering fresh food, plants and everyday items.*
- **Loudun** - Tuesday Market: *A well-established local market serving the northern part of the department.*

Daily Shopping & Opening Hours

For larger shops, residents rely on supermarkets such as E.Leclerc, Carrefour, Intermarché, Super U and Lidl, which are found in and around the main towns. Poitiers has the largest shopping centres and retail parks, offering everything from fashion and electronics to DIY and home goods, while towns like Châtellerault also have good supermarket options.

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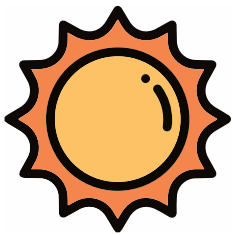
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WEATHER & CLIMATE *in the Vienne...*

Summer (June-August)



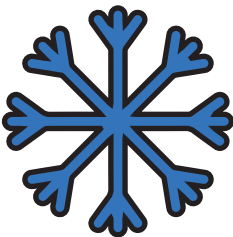
Summers are generally warm and pleasant, with temperatures typically between 22-28°C, although occasional heatwaves can push this into the low 30s. Evenings tend to cool slightly, making outdoor dining and socialising comfortable. The region feels lively, with markets, festivals and outdoor activities in full swing.

Autumn (September-October)



Autumn is a particularly enjoyable season in the Vienne, with mild temperatures ranging from 15-22°C in early autumn, gradually cooling as winter approaches. The landscape takes on rich autumn colours, and the pace of life slows after summer.

Winter (November-February)



Winters are cool but generally mild, with temperatures usually between 3-10°C. Frosts can occur, particularly in rural areas, but snow is rare and typically short-lived. Days are shorter and quieter, especially in smaller towns, but larger centres like Poitiers remain active.

Spring (March-May)



Spring in the Vienne sees temperatures gradually rise from around 12-15°C in March to 18-22°C by May. The countryside becomes lush and green, with blossoming trees and longer days. Weather can be mixed, with a combination of sunshine and occasional showers.

TRAVEL & TRANSPORT

in the Vienne...

The Vienne is a well-connected department, particularly thanks to its central location in western France and strong rail links via Poitiers. While much of the area is rural, getting around locally and travelling further afield is relatively straightforward, especially if you combine public transport with driving.

Air Travel

Poitiers-Biard Airport – a small regional airport located just outside Poitiers, offering a selection of flights, mainly to the UK and other European destinations. For a wider range of international routes, residents often use larger airports such as Bordeaux-Mérignac Airport or Nantes Atlantique Airport, both within 2-3 hours' drive.

Train Travel

Poitiers is on a major TGV high-speed rail line, offering direct connections to Paris in around 1.5 hours, as well as links to Bordeaux, Tours and La Rochelle. Towns such as Châtellerault and Montmorillon also have train stations with regional services connecting into Poitiers and the wider network.

This makes rail travel a practical option for commuting, day trips and longer journeys.

Road Network & Driving

The Vienne is well served by major road routes, including the A10 motorway, which runs north-south linking Paris to Bordeaux. Driving is often the easiest way to get around, particularly in rural areas where public transport is limited.

Roads are generally quiet and well maintained, making everyday travel and exploring the region straightforward.

LOCAL TRANSPORT

- Poitiers has a reliable bus network covering the city and surrounding suburbs, making it possible to live without a car in more central areas.
- In smaller towns and villages, public transport is more limited, with infrequent services.
 - For most residents, especially those living outside Poitiers, a car is essential for shopping, appointments and day-to-day life.



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LIFESTYLE & CULTURE

in the Vienne...

Life in the Vienne is relaxed, authentic and community-focused, offering a slower pace than many parts of France while still providing plenty to do. With a mix of historic towns, countryside and a lively student presence in Poitiers, the department strikes a balance between traditional French living and everyday practicality.

Food & Drink

The Vienne has a strong connection to regional, seasonal food, with local markets and independent shops playing a key role in daily life. You'll find excellent fresh produce, cheeses, meats and baked goods, with many people shopping regularly at boulangeries, boucheries and weekly markets.

Café culture is an important part of life, particularly in towns like Poitiers, where terraces are busy with people enjoying coffee, lunch or an apéritif.

Restaurants range from simple, good-value bistros to more refined dining, often focusing on classic French cuisine and local ingredients.

Festivals & Events

The Vienne has a varied calendar of events throughout the year. Poitiers hosts cultural festivals, concerts and exhibitions, while smaller towns and villages organise local fairs, food festivals and night markets, especially during the summer months.

The nearby Futuroscope also brings a steady flow of visitors and events, adding to the region's activity.

Outdoor Activities

The Vienne is ideal for those who enjoy a gentle, outdoor lifestyle.

The landscape of rolling countryside, rivers and farmland lends itself to walking, cycling and exploring quiet rural roads.

Rivers such as the Vienne and Gartempe provide opportunities for kayaking and fishing, while the generally flat terrain makes outdoor activities accessible for all ages.

Community & Expat Life

The Vienne has a welcoming and growing expat community, particularly in towns like Civray, Montmorillon and around Poitiers.

Many expats are drawn by the affordability and quality of life, and there are plenty of social groups, clubs and language exchanges that help newcomers settle in.

While English is sometimes spoken within expat circles, learning French is important for day-to-day life and integration.

Most people find the local communities friendly and open, making it easier to build connections and feel part of the area.

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PRACTICAL LIVING *in the Vienne...*

Healthcare & Services

Healthcare in the Vienne is reliable and accessible, with a good network of local doctors (médecins), pharmacies and clinics across towns and larger villages. Poitiers is home to the CHU de Poitiers, a major regional hospital offering a wide range of specialist services and high-quality care. Towns such as Châtelleraut and Montmorillon also have hospitals and medical centres. As with much of rural France, you may need to travel for certain specialists, and waiting times can vary, but overall the standard of healthcare is high once you are registered in the French system.

Education

The Vienne has a good range of public schools, from primary through to secondary level, which are generally well regarded and a popular choice for expat families looking to integrate. Poitiers, as a university city, offers higher education options and a strong academic environment.

International schools are limited in the department, so some families opt for private schooling, homeschooling or online international programmes, depending on their needs and the age of their children.

Cost of Living

One of the Vienne's biggest advantages is its affordability. Property prices are typically lower than in more well-known regions like Dordogne or coastal areas, offering good value for larger homes and renovation projects.

Everyday costs such as groceries, utilities and dining out are generally reasonable and in line with the French average. Living in or near Poitiers may be slightly more expensive, but overall the department remains a cost-effective choice for both retirees and families.

Language

French is essential for living in the Vienne, particularly in smaller towns and rural areas where English is less widely spoken. Day-to-day tasks such as shopping, healthcare appointments and administration are typically conducted in French.

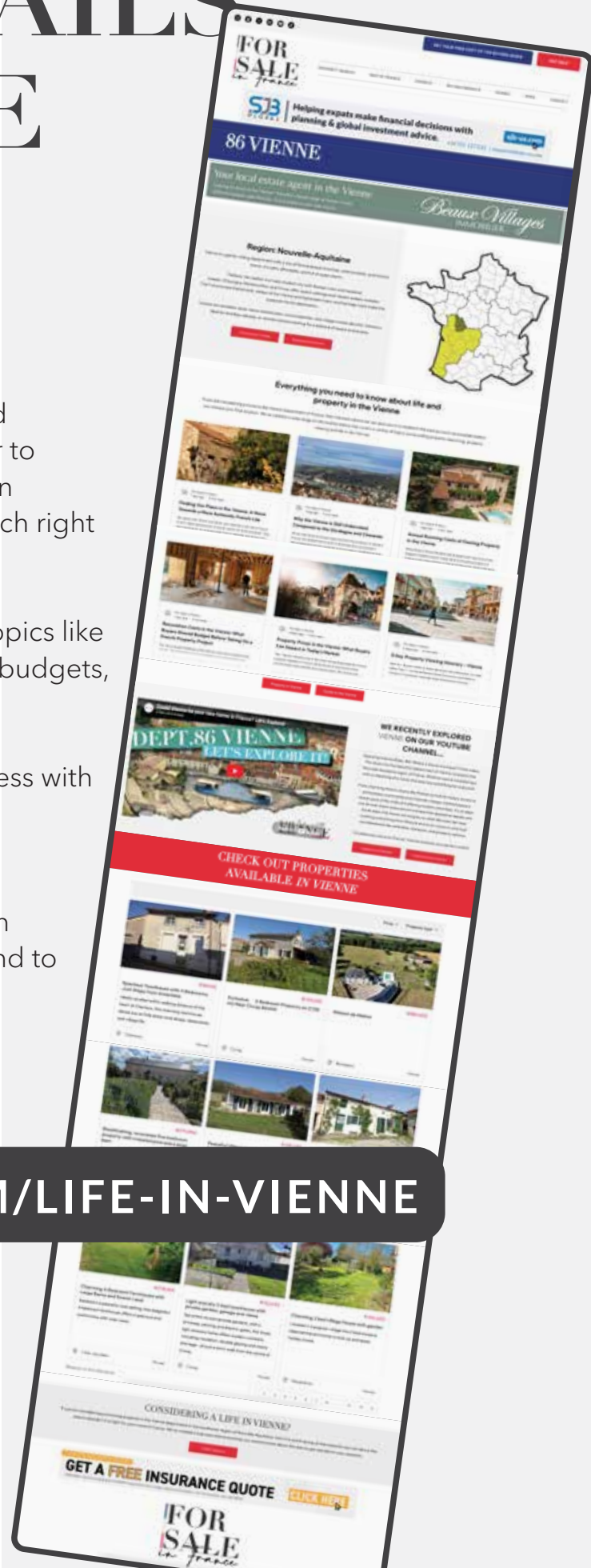
However, the presence of expat communities and local support networks can make the transition easier. Taking the time to learn the language—even at a basic level—will greatly improve your experience and help with integration into the local community.

MORE DETAILS ABOUT THE VIENNE

For a further dive into property in the Vienne and personalised support with your move, head over to forsaleinfrance.com/life-in-vienne where you can explore current listings and start your home search right away.

There you'll also find tailored guidance on key topics like running costs of living in the Vienne, renovation budgets, property finding options, what your budget can realistically buy in different areas, and a practical property checklist to help you navigate the process with confidence.

Whether you're looking for detailed living-cost insights, renovation advice or hands-on help with viewings and buying logistics, the team is on hand to support you at every step.



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YOUR GUIDE TO THE VIENNE

