

Untold Italy Episode 56 - Realizing the dream of buying property in Italy with Nikki Taylor

[00:00:00.060] - Katy

This is the Untold Italy Travel podcast, and you're listening to episode number 56.

[00:00:12.950] - Josie

Ciao and Benvenuti to Untold Italy, I'm Josie

[00:00:16.040] - Katy

And I'm Katy, and we're here to help you plan your trip to Italy.

[00:00:19.880] - Josie

Between us, we have many years of travel experience and we want to help you uncover your own as yet untold stories and adventures in Italy.

[00:00:27.920] - Katy

Each episode, you'll hear practical advice, tips and ideas to help you plan your own trips to the magical land of history, stunning landscapes and a whole lot of pasta.

[00:00:36.770] - Josie

We'll have interviews from experts and focus on local destinations and frequently asked questions about travel in Italy.

[00:00:43.850] - Katy

Thanks for listening and make sure to subscribe to our show.

[00:00:46.970] - Josie

Now let's get started on your regular dose of Bella Italia.

[00:01:02.680] - Katy

Ciao friends, how are you all doing? I hope you have started off the year with plans and goals that help you take the next step towards making your dreams of Italy come true. We know travel is virtually impossible at this moment, but things will change. So even if you are building up your savings, planning draft itineraries or building lists of inspirational places to visit and things to experience, then you are getting one step closer to that dream.

[00:01:30.970] - Katy

So keep at it and never stop dreaming. This episode, we are taking a little side tour away from our usual travel content to take a look at one of those dreams that captures so many of

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our imaginations when we get to visit Italy. Buying a property of our very own here. See, what happens to many of us, myself included, is that when we're in Italy strolling around cities and towns, we start wondering what it would be like to live there, living in this incredible country with its friendly people, beautiful culture and amazing food. I'll freely admit we often stop at the real estate storefronts and look at what is available to rent or buy, wondering and hoping that there is something suitable in our price range that could help us fulfill our dream of living for six months of the year in Italy. When we return home, I guess our day to day life kicks in and the dream sits there simmering away under the surface until maybe an article pops up - you know, the ones where an impossibly pretty Italian village is offering properties to foreigners for one euro each and the dream bubbles to the surface again for a few moments that go along the lines of - what if? Could we? Should we? Only to fade with the weeks and days.

[00:02:47.650] - Katy

Our guest today is someone who helps people like you and I realize their dreams of owning a property in Italy. Nikki Taylor is an Australian woman who followed her heart and dreams for herself and now lives in beautiful Puglia in Italy's south. After a few detours and adventures, Nikki realized her dream and now helps others do the same. She's the owner of Italy Property Consulting and helps people from all over the world confidently navigate their way through the Italy property purchase process and helps them create their dream life in Italy. I can't wait to hear what she has to say and find out whether those one euro village property deals are a good investment.

[00:03:28.370] - Katy

Ciao. Benvenuti Nikki and welcome to the Untold Italy podcast.

[00:03:33.560] - Nikki

Ciao Katy. Thank you so much for having me. It's really great to be here and share this time with you guys.

[00:03:39.720] - Katy

Oh, thank you. Now, Nikki, I've invited you on the show today to talk about how we can make the dream of owning a property in Italy come true. But before we get to that, can you tell our listeners how an Australian woman came to be ending up living in beautiful Puglia?

[00:03:57.010] - Nikki

Sure. Actually, today, funnily enough, is my six year anniversary of arriving in Italy.

[00:04:02.500] - Katy

Congratulations.

[00:04:03.510] - Nikki

Thank you. I left Sydney 2014, 14 December 2014. I arrived here on the 15th and I guess backtracking a little bit, how I decided to come here was - I was working in banking and

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finance for more than 10 plus years. Very unoriginal story of corporate burnout. I just had enough. My health was suffering 12 hour days and I was just exhausted. And I had spent 12 years living in London. So I had a UK passport. And I knew that when I moved back to Australia in 2012, I never felt settled. I never felt like I was back home again because I'd been away for so long, I'd been away for 13 years. And I had this kind of line in the sand moment of like, where do I really see myself over the next five years? Do I really want to be burning myself out in corporate, or do I really want to have a life? And Italy has been a country that has been on my radar ever since I came here in 2001 to Florence. I was 21. I was just so blown away by the place and I was just it just felt like I was home. And a lot I hear a lot of people say that the first time I go to Italy, they feel at home. And when I was living in London, I came over to Italy as many times as I possibly could because it was just so close. And I always said to myself, I would love to retire here one day and I never really thought anything about it.

[00:05:20.500] - Nikki

And then fast forward being in Sydney, and I think it was December 2013. I was just - I'd had enough. I was exhausted. I was just really, really fed up. And I had a really great lifestyle. I had a really well-paying job at Deutsche Bank, had a beautiful apartment with a harbour bridge view, fantastic social life, but I just felt like my soul was destined to be somewhere else. And I just said to myself, right. It was actually a very boozy Italian dinner with a friend of mine in Sydney. And I was like, right, that's it. I'm moving to Italy in a year's time. She's like, yeah, yeah, yeah, thinking it's the wine talking. And I came home and I got my laptop out and I started researching Italian language lessons in Sydney. I signed up straightaway online to a six month course. I called my mum, said, I'm moving to Italy. And everyone thought I was nuts, and just because it was never going to happen. And then to a year, exactly a year later, I was living in Bolzano. So I had that throughout that year, I started learning Italian, preparing to to move. But in all this great preparation, I never thought about what I would do for a job. I never really thought about it. And I remember looking online and these job websites and they were all in Italian. And because I was going to move into Bolzano on and they kept mentioning something called 'tedesco'.

[00:06:40.270] - Nikki

And I'm thinking, what is tedesco? Is that like a computer skill or is it what is this? I have no idea what. And tedesco means. German. They need you to know German. So German language. And not only are the jobs in Italy saying we need you to speak Italian, but also German. And I was like, right, this is going to be harder than I thought because I didn't speak Italian or German. I moved to Bolzano and fortunate enough, a German real estate agency called Engel & Völkers, which is a luxury real estate agency worldwide, had a need for someone that spoke English. So I was like right? Well, I can definitely do that. I can't speak Italian, I can definitely speak English. And I applied for the job. And I remember when my future boss called me to ask me to come in for an interview. I was having a post afternoon snooze on the couch, as you do. I mean, everyone has a sleep after lunch in Italy, one of the luxuries, something that I never took advantage of living in Australia. And I remember getting this phone call from this woman. And I generally don't ever answer the phone if I don't know the number. And at that time, I never used to answer the phone because if they spoke in

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Italian, I'd have no idea what they're saying. And I woke up in a half asleep voice saying, "pronto"? And she started talking to me in German. I'm like, oh, my God. Like, what is she saying? And she could understand that I had no idea what she was saying. And then she switched to English. And I'm like, ooh right, you're calling about the job. OK, yes. So we arranged to meet and she's the most beautiful woman. Like, she's so sweet. Luckily she speaks perfect English. And we had this interview and they hired me straight away. And my role there was to manage all the international client transactions, obviously being mother tongue English. And that's really how it started. I've always had a passion for real estate. My first ever job in Australia was working in property management. And I've always been someone that, like, goes through trawl through the property listings online. I love to see what things cost. I love looking at reno jobs and stuff like that. So it's always been a massive passion for me. So it was something that was very well aligned and that's really how I got started, I guess, in the real estate industry. I lived in Bolzano, which is on the, if you don't know where it is - is in the far north east of Italy, on the border of Austria, so hence why they all speak German there.

[00:09:03.990] - Nikki

And as much as Bolzano is beautiful, like it is picture postcard, kind of breathtaking scenery, mountains. It's spotlessly clean. You won't find any rubbish on the streets. There's like these manicured flower beds everywhere and everyone's super friendly. But they weren't warm. And it wasn't the real Italy that I was searching. So me being an Aussie, I missed the beach and being close to the sea. And my Italian teacher from Sydney was from Puglia and she had moved back to Italy by the time I was living there. And I remember calling her and saying, look, I really want to move to the south. It was between Puglia and Sicily, and I didn't choose - as much as I love Sicily - I didn't choose it because I felt it was a little bit far away. And you kind of like because it's an island, you kind of you know, that that little bit detached. And I decided to check out Puglia. And I remember coming down to Monopoli and it's going to sound so cliched, but I'm walking down the historical - through the historical centre I had goosebumps. I started to cry and I was like, this is exactly what I was looking for. And Monopoli and Puglia just took over me, basically.

[00:10:19.590] - Katy

Wow. And how long have you been living there now?

[00:10:23.310] - Nikki

So I'm now in Martina Franca, so we're not in Monopoli anymore, but we are going to be buying property Monopoli in the countryside. That's on the agenda for 2021, but I was in Monopoli for a year. And in that year I remember going for a walk one afternoon and I came across like a really beautiful door and on the beautiful door there was a sign saying, you know, it's a sign for a real estate agency. It was all written in English - ooh right - written in English maybe they might need somebody. And I just I knocked on the door and I went in and I asked to speak to the boss and he wasn't in, I got his business card. And I came home and I sent off my CV and he immediately contacted me and he said, Right, we need you to come in as soon as possible because we've been looking for someone like you with your skills and I

went in there and funnily enough, they were just about to launch a new - they're a real estate company, but also have a luxury holiday rental - so they were launching a holiday rental company up in the mountains and because I had experience working in Bolzano in the mountains, plus working in social media and real estate and everything like that, it was actually a done deal. And I started working for them straight away. And my role again there was to manage all the international client transactions. It was through that time where my business idea kind of came to me - as much as it was a great learning experience working there. Anyone that knows what it's like to work in Italy knows that the wages are terrible. You are not paid what you're worth - your skillset. I left a six figure income behind in Australia. I never expected to earn six figures working for another company here in Italy, but I was earning six hundred euros a month at this estate agency and I was bringing all of my international skills to the table and being completely exploited. And I was like, this has got to stop. I've got a baby on the way. I've got a family. This is not how I projected my life to be, but it was through working at this company that my business idea came about because I kept getting these well the company was getting these inquiries from international buyers, all with the same fears. Fear of buying property, fear of being ripped off, fear of losing their money. They're not sure who they can trust. There is horror stories miles and miles long on all the forums and how people have had really bad deals gone wrong.

[00:12:49.890] - Nikki

And so I thought, right, there's a gap in the market here. This is where I can come in. I can create a coaching business that guides people through the entire process. I can connect them with the best leaders in the industry from an accountancy perspective. From a property law perspective. I can help them renovate. I can help them avoid buying a property that's had an illegal renovation done because that is a nightmare. And we can talk about that throughout our chat as well, because that can really, really set people, set people back and I can help them mitigate currency risk. So all of my, I guess banking and finance skills and stuff like that that I'd learn over the years. Plus my experience in real estate all just came together beautifully, was very, very aligned. And I created a course called Purchase the Dream, which has been a sell out course ever since it launched. And it's been a real joy being able to be on a journey with these beautiful clients who have all become my friends from all over the world, helping them buy their dream home in Italy and guiding them through that process.

[00:13:52.530] - Katy

So it sounds to me like the stars aligned for you and you're helping the stars align for other people. Sounds amazing, and I do think that people have this, so many people have this dream. I know my husband and I, wherever we are in Italy, we're always kind of like sauntering past the real estate, just just checking it out just on the off chance and kind of have it in the back of your mind that it's a - it's an option. And I think you just don't really dare to believe that it's true. But, you know, I think that people really need, especially now after this crazy year, is to hold onto those dreams and go right. Well, maybe it is true. So tell me, what type of people are you helping. You said they are from all over the world? Are they mainly from certain countries?

[00:14:43.680] - Nikki

So, yes, I'm mainly Aussies, Americans, Canadians and Brits.

[00:14:51.370] - Katy

And do they have like do they usually have an Italian background or family history?

[00:14:59.220] - Nikki

Maybe about half of them do and the other half have just, you know, that they have this dream that they want to realize and yeah. So it's a mixed bag, really.

[00:15:11.520] - Katy

OK. And I think, you know, I guess when people first start off, this is me anyway, so I'm just going to use myself as an example. You have like a kind of an idea of where you want to live, like you have this idea of a town where you wanted to live that was really friendly. And it sounds like you want to be by the sea. Is there certain areas that people really want to start looking at when they go looking for property in Italy.

[00:15:34.180] - Nikki

Well, it used to be Tuscany and now it's Puglia. Everybody wants to be in Puglia. But, you know, there are certain people that they don't know where they want to be. And I go through this specific kind of visualization technique with them. So I say to them, right, so tell me, when it was that you decided to move to Italy, where were we watching a film? Did you have a dream? Did you look at something online? And I get to go back to that that memory. And then I'll say, look, if you were to have your perfect day in Italy, what does that look like for you, are you by the sea? Are you in the mountains? Are you in a big city? Are you in the rolling hills of Tuscany? All that sort of thing? Do you want to be in a city-center where you can walk to everything? Do you want to be commuting? And then, you know, we just kind of go through like a process of elimination. And then I say, what is it about your current life that you don't want to have repeated in Italy? So if you're living if you're working corporate, you're in the rat race. You don't want to be taking a metro every morning to get to places you want to be kind of stepping away from that. Or what is what about what is it about your life that you do want to bring? So we kind of go through this massive, like, process of elimination. And then I say, OK, well, from what you've told me, I think this would be a great spot or that would be a great spot. And then I'm telling about the spots that I've never even heard of before. So it's really, really great. I love doing this exercise with my clients.

[00:16:55.840] - Katy

I think I'd like to do it. It sounds amazing. Like all these - the memories are so important, I think, and really connecting like life decisions, whether it's a trip or like, probably a big decision of buying a property is to those memories is really important. It just is. I think we don't need to follow what everyone else does. I think we need to follow our own dreams and choose our own paths forward. But I'm a bit of a dreamer, so... But what about like let's talk about the practicalities. It sounds like it might be an expensive thing. Exercise, Niki, is it?

[00:17:31.590] - Nikki

It depends. Obviously, if you're looking to purchase like a massive villa that needs a complete restoration, you're going to have to be spending some money. But right now, Italy is the number one country in the world to buy under market value real estate. That's according to Forbes magazine. But I've been saying it for absolutely ages. And luckily, Forbes backed up what I've been saying. And because I have a newsletter that I curate every week called La Dolce Vita on a Shoestring, which is basically a hundred under market value properties every month. And I go through and scour the Internet and I find properties and I am blown away by what I come across, like literally places in Tuscany, prices in Liguria, places that are you know like prime real estate that you can find that are really, really, really good value. And this is what I send out to my clients. It's great for them because a lot of people, obviously, can't travel right now. So getting this newsletter that on a weekly basis is helping keep that dream alive for them.

[00:18:33.750] - Katy

Yeah, I know. I can just see myself scrolling. Scrolling. Yes, I'd live here, I'd live there. Yeah. Beautiful, beautiful. And so I think people are also very enticed at the moment by these one euro deals. Now, certain, I think it is now three villages that have offered a couple in Sicily and now one in Abruzzo, I think that offering these one euro, to buy a house in our village for one euro. What do you think about those?

[00:19:04.020] - Nikki

Well, look, I love a bargain. And I was very tempted myself until I did my research. And so 1 euro homes - and so it's not one euro for a start. So the property value itself - so you're being still charged on what is called the cadastral value, which is a land registry value. So you might have a property that you're paying one euro for, but the land value of that property is probably thirty or forty thousand. So when you're - the purchase taxes, you're paying, you don't pay tax on one euro because it'd be nothing. You're paying purchase taxes on the land value. Plus, there is a lot of hidden costs with purchasing these properties. It's not like it's a very easy process. There's a lot of bureaucracy, a lot of red tape. It's a great marketing ploy as far as I'm concerned. A lot of people do. They fall into this trap of thinking about these properties because I think all right, I'm going to set up this amazingly successful Airbnb in this town, I want to get this really cheap home, do it up on the cheap and make a good profit Airbnb. But the whole point of these properties, are they trying to repopulate the areas? So you have to live there as a main resident, it has to be your main residence. You can't utilize it as an Airbnb. There's only one town that I know of in Sicily that doesn't have this restriction. Also, there are restrictions on the time scale to some of them as to when you have to renovate them by. You don't know who are the right builders to approach. So you might be hiring. And this is what I've heard as well. But there's been cases of this and I've heard this first hand. So you buy this property, you've been told you have to renovate it within two years, otherwise you have to give the property back. You hire local builders who you don't realize are in cahoots with the original owners, you're paying to get this property restored, but they keep delaying the final bit. So they've maybe done three quarters of it, and they don't finish it for whatever reason. And then you have to give the property back to

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the original owners who have gotten given back a property that's pretty much fully restored for them. Or there's another one that was one euro home prices in the province of Puglia where you can have the property, but then after 20 years, you have to give it back. Like what kind of logic is that? And also there's another thing as well. Like you're buying a property in a very distressed area where there's nobody. Imagined a local piazza - there's a couple of old blokes asleep on the park bench, these cats running around everywhere. Everything's closed. Is that really screaming tourism to you? Like, if you're thinking you're going to create this property that's going to either be used as an Airbnb or you're going to restore it and sell it on for profit. This is not Australia is not the UK, it's not America or Canada. We don't flip houses here and make a massive profit. You're going to be buying this place. You're going to spend at least 50 to 100K on doing it up. And then you're thinking, I'm going to sell it and make that money back. Ha! Good luck with that. Nobody is going to spend that kind of money on buying a property there, where you could, which is what I've been doing, buy a property that's under market value that's habitable, that probably needs a bit of work that's habitable. Some of them are completely habitable and do not need any work. And you have no restrictions. You can buy it wherever you want, you can rent it out, create a business you're much more free. That is by far, in my opinion and the opinion of my community - a much better viable option than being sucked into a 1 euro home and with all the pitfalls that go against with it.

[00:22:51.790] - Katy

Sounds like pretty good advice, and I think you always need to read the fine print, but you know what iff you don't speak Italian, what do you do you like all of these fine print and all the laws? I mean, obviously, Italy has a reputation of being extremely bureaucratic. Is there a way that you can help people through that?

[00:23:10.600] - Nikki

Oh, definitely. So my aim is to take out the bureaucracy, take out the fear and doubt and help them feel into their eyes and join enthusiasm of buying their dream home. So that's why I created my program. That's why I have one on one bespoke coaching with my clients. You just tell me what you want. I'll go and find it for you. I'll hold your hand to the entire process. I project manage the entire thing. You don't even have to get involved in it. And then all they have to do is pay the money. They get the key. That's it.

[00:23:40.720] - Katy

Do you have a do you have a good story that illustrates that prices like someone that you - one of your favorite clients where you took them from - they had this dream and then you took them on this journey.

[00:23:52.450] - Nikki

There is one client that - I was just doing this series, one I did a few months ago every Monday, I was picking regions and I was finding under market value properties and one week I picked Umbria and I picked this property in Perugia and Perugia, which is a great spot. It's beautiful, but also from an investment perspective, it has the university, so you could, in theory, have four or five years worth of tenants paying all year round. So it's a very, very solid

investment. And I came across this property that had needed no work done. It was furnished, really beautiful. Four hundred meters from the University and one of my clients, he bought it without even seeing it. And I walked in through the entire process and now he's he's got it rented out, he's got it rented out to students, making a good income from it? That was really, really simple.

[00:24:43.000] - Nikki

But on the flip side, I've had clients you know, so we do, and I'll talk about - what they call cava abusiva, which sounds very, very intense. It's basically buying an illegal building. And this happens a lot. And we come across a lot with my clients properties that have had an illegal renovation done to them. So people would think, oh, I'm going to build a pool, going to put a pool in, they don't speak to the local council or I'm going to extend my house by 30 square meters, or I'm going to knock that door through and put a new window here, what have you. And they never bother to get approval from the local council. And that all goes undetected until you have to sell. So if a client of mine or someone wants to buy a property (anyone, not just a client of mine) anyone who wants to buy a property and they're not aware that the property's had these illegal add ons done to them, as soon as they are the owner, they are liable for that. They are liable for the fines. They are liable to pull it out and pay all of that to get it ripped out and start again. They're liable for all of that when it wasn't even them that decided to put it in in the first place. So we've had a few instances. So I always say to my clients, right, I have a sequence of steps that you have to follow and I'm really, I'm really strict with them, I say that you've got to follow the steps because we don't - if you go right, they go, oh, it's a very emotional to buy a property you say the house and they're like "oh my god, it looks perfect. The agent said it's structurally sound. It's totally fine. I believe the agent, he spoke English and he seemed really friendly." Yeah, right. OK, so for starters, you don't listen to it because the agents - what's the agent's objective? To make a sale, to make commission. The agent gets commission from the buyer and the seller. So they are not - they just want to sell the property. They don't care if it's good, bad, whatever. There are some agents who are very, very good. And I have a specific list of agents who I deal with but there are - I've come across some agents who are downright unethical and absolute sharks.

[00:26:41.610] - Nikki

So a client who is a friend of the builder who does all the renovations for my clients, he bought this property on the proviso that property had a pool. He's from the UK - imagined these beautiful summers in Puglia with his pool, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. He then enlisted my geometra, who is basically, say, a civil engineer, a surveyor to start building an extension on the house. So when the survey was done, to do all the plans, everything like that, it came about that the pool is not even allowed to be there. So this poor guy's bought this house for the pool and has to rip out the pool, has to pay the fines for the pool being put in, has to pay for the pool to be ripped out. That's just one scenario. You know, you have to get a survey done when you buy a property because, you know, you can be told that the property's structurally sound. For example, one of my other client, Aussie woman living in Tuscany, I helped to buy a property, Abruzzo. The property had been on the market forever. It was

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originally two hundred thousand. She got it for fifty thousand. So instantly there's a hundred fifty thousand off like that's one of the under market value properties I'd found and the agent said house is totally structurally sound. And I said, right ok, we're not listening to the agent, we're going to get the surveyor down to do the survey. And that's the first step. Right? Came back with a forty two page document of what the property needed to have done to it. And there's this massive crack going from the ground to the ceiling. So obviously the house is not structurally sound. So what happens is the geometra, the surveyor told my client, look, this is the the structural issues, et cetera, et cetera. My client called the agent said, you've lied to me. You told me it was structurally sound. The agent then calls the surveyor and blasts him for being so transparent with my client. So you can see that this stuff happens on the daily. So this is why you need someone like myself and my team. We are bilingual. We speak the language. We're like the bridge between the two cultures. We're helping you avoid this, put it politely, nightmare that people can come across all the time.

[00:28:53.070] - Nikki

And it blows my mind when I see people try to get free advice when they buy property. In Italy, there are so many forums online and you see people asking questions and they're people responding to the answer who aren't qualified to give the response. And then people take those answers as gospel and it's very dangerous game to play.

[00:29:12.910] - Katy

Yeah, I think definitely I mean, we see that with pretty much everything that you want to get advice for on the Internet. It's really important to do your due diligence and make sure that people have got the expertise and the experience to help you with anything, whether it's travel or buying a property, and that they're upfront and and really honest about who they are as well. So, yeah, it's really interesting. But I think, you know, people do get swept up in the dream. It is so romantic, isn't it? I mean, you know, yourself, coz you had that moment when you arrived and I think many of us have had that moment. But I'm really.. I would love to hear about a client that's just like I had this idea in their head and like they could I see this view and they knew it was happening. And then it all came real. And you went over there for barbecue and it was fantastic.

[00:30:07.300] - Nikki

It what's happened right now, actually, I came across a property for a client of mine. She wanted to buy in Puglia and she described to me her exact property. We found it. We did the virtual tour yesterday, actually. And she's going to be putting in the offer today. So it's. Yeah, and the great thing is, is these clients are buying properties without seeing them in person. So that's the trust factor. They put their trust in me and my team because these houses are being snapped up everywhere. Everywhere. And they can't travel right now. So what do you do? Do you sit back and you wait? You look while all these beautiful properties pass you by, or you go 'Right. OK, I'm going to take that first step' guided step, obviously, with help of people who know what they're doing. And we help make that dream a reality. So by the time she can travel, she's going to have the house, the renovations going to be done for her. We're doing

everything for her. So she's going to have a dream home and it's going to be all ready to move in by the time she can travel again.

[00:31:14.620] - Katy

It's giving me shivers! Lucky her! Like it. It really does seem like it's a big leap from that idea to buying the property and eventually moving in. But I guess one of the other challenges that would be is the visa situation, because I know it's - as Australians we can only go for I think it's 90 days, twice a year. Right. So that's some six months of year. So if you wanted to leave permanently, you've got some other challenges to to work at as well, haven't you?

[00:31:43.990] - Nikki

Well, there is twenty one different types of visas. So in my in my network I have a specific visa and immigration consultant that I pass on all my clients to. So this is definitely not my forte. And I don't ever get involved in the visa aspect because it is so complex. Even if people who are applying for citizenship, it can be very, very complex. So that's why I've created, I guess, a network that people can know that they are looked after in a very holistic kind of perspective. Need a visa. You go speak to that person. You need to your taxes, you go speak to that person. You need to sort out the legal due diligence. You speak to that person. My role, I guess, is to connect everyone together, to find the properties, to utilize my experience from holiday rentals and and real estate, to find the right properties. I have a good eye for what is a successful holiday rental after work in the industry so many years. And and that's my role. And I'm very lucky to have a very great team. I got the best people in Italy, highly reputable people, all bilingual, that can help to every bit of the jigsaw into the puzzle together.

[00:32:54.490] - Katy

Yeah, I think it's really important, like you do have these dreams, but I think it's a challenge. You've got to want to bridge the gap from getting from your dream to reality, but not be scared off by all the bits that you've got to do. So it's definitely worth taking it step by step and getting some help from people that know what they're doing. I think. Now, you know, I think a lot of people would consider, as you mentioned, like renting out their property for as a holiday or vacation rental. And you made such a good point before. It's like if you're going into the remote, you know, like it's going to be really hard to rent that out. You might do the most beautiful renovation in the world, but if it's not in the right spot, then it might be a bit of a challenge, I think.

[00:33:36.010] - Nikki

Well, to be honest, it depends because - I'll use Puglia as an example. There are the Trulli houses that are in the middle of nowhere but some people love that. So if you like, for example, imagine you live in a massive city like London. You're commuting every day. You're in the rat race. When you go on holiday, you want to be somewhere that you can switch off and chill out and just be at peace. Especially now, holiday rentals are really, really in demand, ones that are not so close to other properties because of what's happened with the

virus, people want to know that they're kind of in a safe spot with their family, not around other people.

[00:34:14.790] - Katy

It's so true, you need to think through all of these different things. Look, I'm trying to think of them off the top of my head here, and I'm getting a bit bamboozled myself, just thinking of all the different challenges. But I can see that you've thought of them all. But I guess when all said and done, though, do you think it's worth it to go through all of this so you can have that dream home in Italy?

[00:34:36.450] - Nikki

Definitely. Definitely worth it, because if you were to do it on your own, then you will come across language barriers, all sorts of problems, and you might think - this is really not worth it. This is not the dream that I had. It's been an absolute nightmare. And that's why, you know, I have put together my business and to help people have that dream. And it is worth at the end of the day, when you have that key in your hand and, you know, I'm not going to dress it up and say that it's a complete breeze when you move here, because it is a very bureaucratic country. It is very hard. There are a lot of hoops to jump through. There is a lot of red tape. But if you're in contact with people who have done it before, it makes it so much easier. It's not what you know here. It's who you know. You just need to have those right connections in the right places that can give you the information, give you the advice, and then you kind of sidestep a lot of the bureaucracy. And it just makes life a hell of a lot easier.

[00:35:33.390] - Katy

Sounds like it. What's the quickest that someone's gone from going right. I've got this place in mind to buying a property, have you ever seen?

[00:35:43.080] - Nikki

So this is the guy, a guy in Perugia bought the place in Perugia. So he's from New York, lives in Sicily and he bought the property. It was accepted straight away. And I think he close on the property within two months. It was easy. Aa lot of my clients now, I mean they're buying properties that need restoration or improvements and stuff like that, so there is that it takes a little bit longer. But, you know, there's no real rule of thumb. When I worked in real estate in Australia, you have a 28 day settlement. It's not negotiable. 28 days, you get the key. That's it. Here, you might be in a position to move very quickly, but the owners might have a need to stay on a bit longer or it's all that stuff. There's no rule of thumb. All that stuff is kind of negotiated when you make the purchase so they can take a long time

[00:36:32.670] - Katy

2 months eh? From dream to reality. I love it!

[00:36:38.340] - Nikki

He followed all of my steps. He did. He was a dream client. He does literally follow the sequence. And it was just really, really good for him.

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[00:36:46.680] - Katy
He did what he was told?

[00:36:46.910] - Nikki
He did what he was told, yeah!

[00:36:46.910] - Katy
Aww Nikki - so this has really given me and I know our listeners - some food for thought and I know you have a lot of ways for people to start their journey to buy property initially. How can our listeners stay in touch with you and keep taking steps towards that dream?

[00:37:04.230] - Nikki
Well, I have a community called How to Confidently Buy Property in Italy and live La Dolce Vita. You can join that group and learn more about the process. I do regular training sessions as well. And plus there is my course, which is more in depth of the exact steps, guidance, and there's monthly coaching in that. So people can always be kept on track and if they have any questions and things like that - they've got an open forum to have those answered.

[00:37:32.060] - Katy
And you also mentioned a newsletter.

[00:37:33.530] - Nikki
Yes, I'm going to be relaunching the newsletter in January for properties under 100 thousand and then properties between 100 to 250, because I find that there are so many people on the cusp of the 100 to 150 thousand bracket. So you might find a property that's 110 thousand and people who are under the 100 thousand category, they might not get to see that. So I'm combining two categories for this that are- it's a hundred properties a month, so they get it weekly, so it's 25 properties a week. And that is going to be relaunched in January, so I will send you the link. You can put it in your group and if anyone wants to sign up there, they're more than welcome. And these newsletters get really, really well received. I get emails from my clients going, oh, my God, I love this week's selection. I'm so excited. I can't wait for the next week. And they go out every Friday and they get really excited to receive them. So that's really good for me, because not only it's my passions of trawling through Internet sites and finding properties, it's the fact that I'm delivering exactly what they wanted as well.

[00:38:34.830] - Katy
Great. Well, just out of interest. What can you get for under 100 thousand euros? I think that's quite a reasonable price.

[00:38:47.760] - Nikki
20 thousand, you know, one bedroom, two bedroom properties, twenty thousand There are properties in Tuscany for under 100 thousand. I've seen actual homes in Tuscany for 80/90

thousand. You can get a beautiful apartment in Ostuni, in Puglia with a sea view - a roof terrace and a sea view for under 100 thousand. You would be absolutely blown away. Sicily beautiful properties in Sicily. There are properties all over. I generally stick to regions such as Sicily, Sardinia, Calabria, Abruzzo, Lazio, Puglia, Lombardy, sometimes Piemonte as well. Tuscany. I don't really go to look for in areas such as Basilicata, Molise because they're not really in demand for the foreign markets. So I really tap into the areas that are in demand for the foreign markets.

[00:39:43.040] - Katy

Wow, it all sounds wonderful. I really think that having a dream and thinking about it in those manageable steps is really the key to realizing it, don't you? And I think whether that's a trip to Italy or owning a property there is that's really what you've got to do. You've got to sit down, break it down and work through it in a slow and steady pace or even quick - in 2 months, you'll have your own apartment in Perugia.

[00:40:07.940] - Nikki

I mean, you know, they all have their why. And it's up to me to give them the how. And I give them the how, and as I say, break it down to simple steps and they don't even have to be involved at all if they don't want to. So I do one-on-one bespoke consulting for some clients, and I'm doing that for a couple of clients at the moment and the just said "this is what I want" and I go and find it. And we found the property yesterday and I'm going to be putting together a beautiful restoration project on it as well. So it's a real - I get to live vicariously through everyone's dream. And it's that that is the bit that lights me up. I absolutely love to help people make that dream a reality.

[00:40:45.020] - Katy

It's wonderful. Grazie mille Nikki for joining us today and sharing the possibilities with us. Thank you.

[00:40:50.460] - Nikki

Thank you so much for having me.

[00:40:53.910] - Katy

So what do you think? Some of those property prices are incredible for the value on offer? Nikki talked me through the details of several places that meet our brief and I've got to be honest, my heart skipped a few beats. Maybe this dream really could come true. I think the best piece of advice Nikki gave is to really do your research and understand that you should be working with experts when undertaking this kind of project or any high value investment. Whether that be a dream trip of a lifetime or that perfect villa in Tuscany - you want to know that the people you are seeking advice from are qualified and experienced. So if you want to find out more about buying property in Italy and how to join Nikki's community head on over to the show notes at untolditaly.com/56 for episode fifty six.

[00:41:47.260] - Katy

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