

Italian beauties

By Andrea Watson

DEPOPULATED villages in the Italian countryside have become objects of desire among the country's developers.

An example is Borgo Santo Stefano di Sessano, in the Abruzzo region, which was an important wool trading centre in the 16th century but succumbed to the fate of many remote villages in the late 20th century as young people left to seek work in the towns and cities.

Now several historic properties are being restored and marketed in the UK by RealItalia, which works with Italian development company Sestantio.

Both are dedicated to creating quality homes in projects that respect local communities and the environment. Many are set in undiscovered and beautiful areas of Italy.

The abandoned buildings of Santo Stefano, surrounded by national park, will retain many of the historical features, such as vaulted ceilings and old fireplaces, but will be brought up to date with the latest technology.

Examples of properties include the two-bed Casa Sotto la Torre (The House below the Tower) which is on offer at €500,000 (£380,000), and the one-bed Casa Sotto la Chiesa (The House by the Church) which is on the market for €350,000.

All homes will be furnished with old and antique pieces collected from the Abruzzo countryside. Even the bedlinens will be produced locally. A management service is in place to give owners any help they require.



RealItalia is also the exclusive agent for Colletta di Castelbianco, a similar award-winning restoration project in the Liguria region of northern Italy. The 18th-century

hilltop village, once abandoned, is now reconnected to the outside world thanks to modern technology. Owners, who include high-flying executives, can keep in touch with

owners come together in December to collect olives to make their own oil.

Outwardly, the properties appear to have changed little since medieval times.

Surrounded by gardens, the only hint of modernity is a large swimming pool and sauna and a modern open air theatre. Internally, they are a mix of historic features and the best and latest in Italian designer fittings.

Prices start at €350,000 for a renovated studio with an expected gross rental return of four per cent per annum.

Back in the Abruzzo region of central Italy, Residenza Coda is a new off-plan development of 70 apartments and studios on Lake Scanno, which offers buyers a retreat in an area of dramatic scenery with snow-covered peaks and wooded hills.

Residents will have access to hotel facilities, including a swimming pool, tennis courts, spa and a fitness centre, and a private beach.

The properties come with a 12-year rental scheme with five weeks guaranteed use per year. Prices start at €190,074.

The spectacular Abruzzo region is situated between the Apennines and the Adriatic Sea and is one of the most thinly populated and unspoilt regions of the Italian peninsula.

Summer activities include canoeing, hiking, mountain biking and tennis.

During the winter, skiing is available on Mount Rotondo where new slopes reaching more than 2,100m are being planned.

INFORMATION:

● RealItalia
 0870 2909936
www.realitalia.co.uk
 ● Residenza Coda
 0890 6530 769
www.overseashomesearch.co.uk

STUNNING: Colletta di Castelbianco in Liguria and (inset) the Residenza Coda development on Lake Scanno

their business from a fully-equipped internet centre which offers broadband connection, wireless or wired connection in the conference rooms, teleconferencing and fax/e-mail facilities.

Colletta, the first of Europe's e-villages, is a perfect marriage of ancient and modern – many of the