



NAME: Andy Sayle
AGE: 54
WHERE DO YOU LIVE? Roquecor, Tarn-et-Garonne
WHEN DID YOU MOVE? 2012
WHERE DID YOU MOVE FROM? Cheshire
OCCUPATION: Running a classic car hire company and working as a marketing consultant
WHAT WERE YOU DOING PREVIOUSLY? I was the managing director of a design and marketing agency for 25 years. I was also a competitive racing driver and race instructor.
CONTACT DETAILS FOR THE BUSINESS: Cross Channel Sports Cars
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WHY BUY THERE: MIDI-PYRÉNÉES
 ● Boasting beautiful properties in stunning locations, a fantastic quality of life and a lovely climate, this region is one of France's best in which to live or holiday. Although its property doesn't come at bargain prices, it generally remains well under UK averages.

GOT A REAL LIFE STORY? Share it with us!

Email editor@frenchentree.com or write to FrenchEntrée Magazine, France Media Group, 2 Seven Dials, Bath BA1 1EN, United Kingdom



A Driving Ambition

Former racing driver and marketing man **Andy Sayle** launched his classic car hire business in the glorious Midi-Pyrénées so that like-minded petrol-heads from around the world can experience the delights of driving in south-west France for themselves...

FRENCHENTRÉE MAGAZINE What first attracted you to life in France?
ANDY SAYLE My wife and I fell in love with France during our numerous trips to compete at race circuits. Over the years, we'd visited many different regions and found the climate, culture and slower pace of life very appealing.

FM What do you do?
AS As the saying goes 'If you turn your obsession into your profession, you'll never work again' so in January we launched Cross Channel Sports Cars in south-west France. We're currently focusing on hiring Morgan cars, although we've just added a Citroen 2CV to the fleet.

FM How was setting up a business in France?
AS Frustrating, mainly due to language issues and the huge amount of form-filling required. In France, things have to be done in a precise order and this slows the process, compared to my experiences of setting up businesses in the UK.

FM Where do you live?
AS We live in a beautiful medieval hilltop village. Our Quercy stone cottage dates back to 1784 and was originally the local forge. Every time we dig the garden we unearth old pieces of iron – we've found tonnes of rusty relics!

FM How did you go about finding your home?
AS We discovered the Midi-Pyrénées through selling a Maserati to someone who'd just built a house in the area. So we rented his property and went to check out the Lot Valley and Quercy region. The countryside is stunning. We decided to dip our toes in the water and bought a small 'lock-up and leave' property. After a couple of years, we realised this was where we wanted to be on a permanent basis and decided to buy a larger property.

FM Did you have to do much work to your current property?
AS La Forge had been renovated 25 years previously and was structurally sound, but needed

modernising throughout – with the addition of extra bathrooms, new plumbing, re-wiring and a chainsaw massacre in the garden to reveal the amazing views of the valley below!

FM Could you speak the language?
AS I never did a language at school and I'm finding it quite difficult. I'm great at what I need to get by with: car parts, building products, food and wine. However, conversational French is a challenge. My wife Ann-Marie is a lot better than I am and we're improving by the day.

FM What have been the main challenges?
AS Setting-up a car rental business from scratch in the UK would be a tough call, so you can imagine how difficult it's been dealing with all the French bureaucracy and legislation. There's a lot of help available online and we've found the FrenchEntrée website a godsend.

FM How have you benefited from the move?
AS You tend to spend much more time outside, which in itself means being more active. Life tends to revolve around the weather and the seasons start and finish properly, as seasons should!

Clockwise from opposite, top: Andy, Ann-Marie and Misty; home is the medieval hilltop village of Roquecor; a fully restored 2CV has just joined the hire fleet; a rental Morgan outside La Forge



© ANDY SAYLE



"After a couple of years, we realised this was where we wanted to be and decided to buy a larger property"

FM Have you found it easy to integrate?
AS Being involved in motorsport and classic cars has certainly helped. For instance, on our second visit, the chef from the village restaurant spotted our sports car, and with him being a fellow petrol-head, a great friendship was instantly made. Suddenly, we seemed to know everyone!

FM Describe a typical day.
AS If we have a car to deliver, then it can be a very early start. In and around the rentals, there's my wife Ann-Marie's greeting card business, which sees us displaying at local events. Outside of work, we find plenty to keep us occupied, aided by our energetic spaniel, Misty.

FM Do you have any amusing anecdotes of your time in France?
AS Quite a lot of enquiries about the Morgan rentals are from wives who want to treat their husband to a surprise birthday present. Consequently, we get involved in a great deal of 'cloak and dagger' correspondence, in a bid to keep the surprise gift a secret. It backfired on one French lady when her suspicious husband found our number appearing numerous times at odd hours on her mobile. We had a very concerned Frenchman on the phone, who was extremely relieved and embarrassed when we let the cat out of the bag! 🐱