

*Italian flavour:
Karen White (right)
and the farmhouse
in Umbria, which
she bought with
husband, Steve.
This leaves them
free to rent less
affordable
properties for their
frequent trips
to England*



Karen and Steve White Bought in Italy. Rent in West Sussex

For Karen White, 44, and her husband Steve, 42, the decision to rent in West Sussex and buy in Umbria in Italy was a lifestyle one, backed up by living in more interesting rental properties than anything they could afford to buy.

The couple, who run the Italian

property search company Ultissimo (www.ultissimo.com) from their farmhouse in Umbria, return regularly to Fletching where they rent a cottage for £950 a month.

“Seven years ago, we owned a two-bedroom house in Reigate and we had a further £200,000 to invest. What we could buy in the south of England for that money didn’t compare with Italy, so we bought a farmhouse for £66,000 and spent £150,000 restoring it,” says Karen.

“When we sold the Surrey house in 2004, we decided not to re-buy in the UK. For the same amount that we would spend on a mortgage, we could rent some exciting places, including a Gothic lodge house, which would have been out of our price range. We now rent a secluded cottage, which would cost about £500,000 to buy.”

They have now bought a derelict house on Lake Como for £120,000, which they will restore and rent out.