

## Bulgaria or Bust!

Having successfully purchased a house in a beautiful rural location sitting on a large plot of land in September of last year; we thought that it would be plain sailing when we revisited the site in May of this year to discuss structural work necessary for the "house of our dreams".

We had no problems with the purchase and after care attention we received from the agency we used, and saw no reason to doubt that their builder would be as diligent.

How wrong could we have been!

We had 14 days in Bulgaria to organize the refurbishment of the property which had never been completed when built in the late 90's. The builders came out to the site on the 5th day of our stay, and through an interpreter we explained what we wanted to do. Although they took no notes, they seemed to agree easily to all the changes we wanted to make and we went away to wait for the quotation.

They told us it would take six days to give us quotations and plans for the work so we patiently waited.

We used the interim time to take in the sights of Varna, and look around the DIY stores and marvel at the range of goods on offer. On the 5th day of waiting for our quote we called in on their office to ask what time we had to come in the next day and were surprised that they had to call the builders and remind them! 1.30 we were asked to go for the meeting and we were very excited at the prospect after all the waiting.

You can only imagine our amazement when all we got was a piece of paper quoting for the septic tank, UPVC windows and metal spiral staircase, and a paragraph that said-"in our professional opinion, to remove the walls on the first floor would not be recommended because these walls are a main support of the house. The repair work of the inside of the house is not included in the quote because of the above as stated."

Well this summed up 85% of the work we needed!!!

We were devastated, and left to believe that the house was unsafe and there was nothing that could be done.

Sitting in our hotel room with two days left we really started to think that we had made a dreadful mistake and the only recourse would be to knock the house down and rebuild, which we cannot afford, or to sell the land and try to recoup our original investment.

Then we remembered a barman in the hotel had given us a publication called The Black Sea Gazette. We had read an article packed with useful information about the pitfalls and the plusses of buying property in Bulgaria; and inviting other British purchasers, or prospective purchasers, to call and share their experiences or seek guidance.

It was with a degree of trepidation that we picked up the phone and dialed the number we have to say, but it was the best thing we ever did.

Within ten minutes we were having a coffee with Ron, who after hearing our plight invited us to the office immediately to arrange for their builder to give us a "second opinion".

The visit by the builder was arranged for the next day, and we were accompanied by Ron and Constantina (who is Bulgarian and speaks fluent English, as well as having excellent legal and financial expertise). We soon learned that the work could be done including underpinning, concrete strengthening and flooring, re-roofing, septic tank with pipe work to bathroom and kitchen, rendering, internal archways, wooden staircase, and new

updated power supply.

The builder went further by suggesting other work that would extend the living space and improve security and light. He also told us that the location for the septic tank would be on the other side of the house as the previous suggested location would have allowed waste to drain toward the house!!!

We are now aware that you do indeed require planning and building regulations to extend or alter an existing structure in spite have been told to the contrary by the former company.

As well as going home with peace of mind regarding the house, we are also as a result of discussion with Constantina armed with all the appropriate documentation for visa application.

We have no hesitation in recommending Black Sea Property Management to anyone who needs a professional, reasonably priced and efficient guiding hand.

Jenny and David Grimley



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