

EXPAT TALES

David Lang, farm boy turned stock broker, lives his dream as an English teacher in Italy.

I LIVE in the hills of Umbria at a property called Casa San Gabriel near Perugia. My wife and I restored a beautiful 16th-century farmhouse four years ago and converted its out-buildings into three self-contained holiday cottages.

My life now is a mixture of managing these cottages and working as an English teacher at the Cambridge University Language School in Perugia.

I was born on a farm just outside Colac, Victoria, and my first degree was in economics. I worked in a stockbroking firm but it wasn't to be, and after a year spent at a vineyard in the Otways — which included everything from manual slog during vintage to writing business plans in the attempt to develop the business — I undertook a graduate diploma in education.

During this time I met and fell in love with Chrissie, an English chartered accountant who had been sent to Australia to run the finance of a computer games company. She decided she had had enough of the daily

office life and I had finished my degree and so with the help of the money from the sale of her flat in London and some travelling we bought and restored our farmhouse in Italy.

Chrissie's EU status allowed us to do this. I had interviews with the four language schools in Perugia and was fortunate to get a job at the most prestigious one and I now travel as a Cambridge University oral examiner as well as teaching English.

The hours can be difficult as you teach during lunchtimes, afternoons at the university and then evening classes when people have finished work. Four nights a week I finish at 9pm but have mornings with my young family so Chrissie can work on our business. A teacher can earn €1000 to €2000 (\$A1600 — \$A3200) a month.

As an Australian it was quite difficult to get permission to work in Italy but I am able to get a family visa and we managed to negotiate the bureaucracy. Following this I got my residency status in Italy.

The income we receive from renting out our three cottages on the property enables us to cover our mortgage and running costs of the business.

Having Elisabetta and Lucia born in the local area has meant that we are now looked upon differently by local people and we were thrilled with the free hospital treatment for the births, as well as for health scares before and after.

I receive €40 a month for



David Lang with wife Chrissie and children Lucia and Elisabetta.

each child for support through my work as well as a payment from the state during the time I am not teaching and a pension if I continue to teach for 40 years in total.

We received €1200 and €2200 for our first and second children for both income assistance and an incentive to increase birth rates in Italy as they are one of the lowest birth rates in the

world. Our experiences with the nursery here have also been positive and we pay €200 a month for Elisabetta, which includes a three-course meal each day. We feel very lucky to be living at Casa San Gabriel and think we could be here a while.

PAUL EDWARDS

LINK
casasangabriel.com