



# IN LOVE WITH LE MARCHE

*When you fall in love with Italy; you fall hard and you fall fast. This intoxicating land can take your breath away and fill your soul with overwhelming joy, all in a solitary second. Sharon Kilby meets British-born interior designer Dawn Cavanagh-Hobbs and her husband Michael who have set up a property business in Le Marche.*

Often, an Italian romance starts gently, yet very swiftly becomes an everlasting, passionate affair that envelops the mind, body and soul. This is when you experience the heartfelt desire to enjoy more and more of the dolce vita and the draw becomes simply irresistible.

It's no surprise that so many people make Italy their part-time home, or at least spend many of their regular holidays here. One couple who fell head-over-heels in love with Italy not only made it their home, but also launched a thriving property business sharing their experience and ex-

pertise with other families worldwide. British-born interior designer Dawn Cavanagh-Hobbs, husband Michael and their family had originally been keen to set down some roots in the city of Florence or in the heart of the wine-growing region of Chianti. After several visits it was clear that while Tuscany was and still is picture-postcard beautiful, it is also extremely popular and very busy in the summer tourist season. After a few extended visits to Italy, Dawn decided to explore a little further afield and following a tip-off from a friend headed east, to the lesser known region of Le Marche.

*“We fell in love with the language, the people, art, history, food and wine. Le Marche has it all, and we wanted to find a way to share this piece of paradise with others”*



## AUTHENTIC ITALY

**First impressions were dramatic and, in an instant, Dawn knew this was the place she needed to be. An unspoilt, authentic hideaway, resting gently between the Sibillini Mountains and the Adriatic coast, Le Marche offers a tranquil yet vibrant setting, rich in culture and history, with some of the best wines and cuisine in Italy.**

“We loved Italy and initially started our search in Tuscany. A beautiful

region, but for us it had lost some of the ‘Italianness’ we were looking for. We were looking for authenticity. Within ten minutes of arriving in Le Marche I turned to Michael and said, ‘This is place.’ It has everything we were looking for – sea, mountains, rolling hills, medieval towns, vineyards and olive groves. It was not overrun with tourists and the locals were very friendly. For us, this was the real thing.

“I knew when we found our first restoration property that I want-

ed others to enjoy what we were experiencing first hand, but in a professional and hassle-free way. Appassionata evolved instinctively from our love and passion for Italy; we fell in love with the language, the people, art, history, food and wine. Le Marche has it all, and we wanted to find a way to share this piece of paradise with others.” With a shared vision of creating the perfect Italian lifestyle vacation, Dawn and Michael decided to pool their shared knowledge of

entrepreneurial business, property development and interior design and create something magical, reflecting their life experiences and incorporating their strong family values. Appassionata was born out of a desire to offer a turnkey, affordable solution to international homeowners.

“We are delighted to offer something unique – a boutique family-owned fractional ownership business.



## INVESTING IN LE MARCHE

Dawn's background in property development and design combined with Michael's savvy business acumen allowed them the opportunity to invest more than just euros into their Le Marche property portfolio. With the help of a team of local experts each house has been lovingly restored from a state of dereliction. Dawn's project management expertise means that each property has been renovated to the very highest standard, where function and form work in perfect harmony.

Original architectural features have been preserved where possible and local materials sourced for the construction process. The finishing touches are truly personal and Dawn enlists the input of local suppliers

wherever possible. "Collaborating with artisans and local craftspeople is one of the great joys of working as an interior designer in Le Marche. Over the years I have met so many talented people. For example, the wall lights we use are handmade by Alfio. I choose the design, size and colour and his grandmother makes the shades. Each piece is unique."

Since launching Appassionata in 2007 the business has gone from strength to strength and Dawn and Michael have successfully bought, sensitively restored and fractionally sold four historic properties in Le Marche. Appassionata currently has over 50 global owners and just a few opportunities for purchase available in their latest project Il Riposo.

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## IL RIPOSO

Dawn's background in property development Il Riposo has recently been sympathetically restored into an elegant three-storey home. Situated in the historic village of Patrignone, this four-bedroomed family home faces the Adriatic Sea and offers a taste of authentic life in Le Marche. Of course, Dawn's trademark design details can be found throughout the beautifully furnished interior where a sense of understated Italian luxury prevails. "I came across the travertine floor tiles at a reclamation yard and also spotted some beautiful antique liberty tiles tucked away in the corner. I bought the lot! I placed them throughout the house as statement pieces. The bathrooms are decorated with Venetian plaster, a natural lime-based waterproof product. It is applied in layers by a skilled artisan. It can be tinted or coloured using natural colourants and sealed

with a protective layer of wax, and creates an iridescent finish, giving the appearance of depth and movement.

"I always work with a local blacksmith and his son, who can make virtually anything from metal. They made some very elegant cream stair rails for the inside staircase and around the garden terrace. The linens were purchased from a small shop in Fermo, Capriotti. The range, all Italian, is high quality and elegant. High thread count cotton sheets and embroidered bedspreads adorn the beds."

The house enjoys a large walled garden with open views of the rolling countryside and nearby hilltop towns. The swimming pool is on the lower secluded terrace. The upper level provides the perfect spot for alfresco dining and entertaining with family and friends.

## IL RIPOSO DESIGN DETAILS

- 210 sq. m
- Light and spacious living areas
- Fully equipped country kitchen
- Four luxurious bedrooms
- Three bathrooms and roll top bath in bedroom no. 2
- Private walled gardens, terraces and pool
- Chandeliers and artisan lighting
- Original art, sculptures and ironwork
- Italian linens, ceramics and glassware
- Antique furnishings, wood burner, bespoke mirrors
- Travertine tiles, exposed brick and aged timber

*For more information on fractional ownership opportunities at Il Riposo or details on Appassionata's Italian lifestyle brand go to [www.appassionata.com](http://www.appassionata.com) or contact Dawn directly [dc@appassionata.com](mailto:dc@appassionata.com)*