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From Art to Architecture: Michael's journey to the Provence

Michael Baldwin is French Plans' representative in the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (PACA) region of France. In this article, Michael tells us what brought him to France and why he enjoys working as an architect, together with helping clients to apply for planning permission.



2. The Italian Connection

A registered architect with experience of working in London and France, Michael grew up in Italy. As a young man, Michael took up a life drawing class enabling him to wander around the ancient streets of Rome in seek of inspiration, as part of his studies. The course however kindled a different passion and interest: architecture.

After qualifying, Michael worked with various architectural practices in London.

A desire to live and work in France led to Michael leaving the capital and moving across the Channel. Michael has strong connections with France; the French side of his family is from the Luberon in Provence, which resulted in him visiting the area for several months each year as a child.



From July 2020, Michael spent much more time living and working in the area – so a move to France was a logical next step. In 2021, Michael was appointed as a representative for French Plans serving clients in the South East of France. “The experience and knowledge of the rest of the team, as well as the flexibility in their work ethic is one of the things I most enjoy about the role,” Michael explained.

3. A love of French architecture

We asked if Michael had a particular style of French building that he preferred.

Michael said, “I am particularly fond of local, historical architecture that uses regional materials and styles. But I also specialised in sustainability during my Masters, so I do appreciate a well-built contemporary house as well. My favourite is when you get contemporary, efficient and crisp renovations of old, unused agricultural buildings like barns or farmhouses.

“One of my most interesting projects to date is a renovation project of an old ‘bastide’ in the eastern Luberon. Our brief was to design and renovate a traditional Provençal borie. Bories are a typical Provençal building, originating many centuries ago and were used as a type of shed for oxen. Nowadays, this fascinating structure is changing from one used by shepherds to look after their animals, or to store tools, to a place to stay, particularly on the weekends and for holidays.”

4. The future use of space

Finally, we questioned Michael on the changing perception of the best use of interior and exterior space. Michael said,

“Slowly but surely I feel that people are changing their opinion on the best use of space both inside and outside a property. People want to spend more time outside and are prioritising light and ventilation more. This is a good trend, as passive design principles are underpinned by these elements.”

Thank you for your time Michael and good luck in your role at French Plans.



Would you like to know more?

If you are also looking to realise your own plans in France, whether it is a renovation, a new build, an extension or another project, residential or commercial – please get in touch.

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