

# Net threat to gîte owners

Owners of holiday homes in France are among the latest people to be being targeted by Internet fraudsters. Philip Suter of jml Property Services says many advertisers on [www.jmlvillas.com](http://www.jmlvillas.com) have been sent bogus enquiries over the past few months, with over 600 bogus enquiries from the website on 29 July 2005 alone.

The scam works by the enquirer sending a cheque far in excess of the required sum, then requesting a refund for the difference. After repaying this the gîte owner will find that the original cheque has bounced or is bogus.

John Owens lets out his house in Pyrénées-Orientales. On two occasions he has received suspicious enquiries by email. Each time the sender wanted to send John a sum of money far above the cost of the rental. 'On the first occasion the sender claimed he



had a client who owed him ten thousand pounds', says John. 'He said he would arrange for this amount to be sent and asked if I could return the difference in cash.' John refused to accept the booking. 'On the second occasion the sender claimed the excess money he was sending would cover the air fare, so I suggested

he contact a booking agent who could book a flight and house rental using the entire amount.'

Both requests were made for out-of-season bookings, which made them attractive at first glance. 'The senders also asked for non-standard lengths of stay so we built up a dialogue on email,' says John.

Philip Suter advises gîte owners to beware of the following types of email:

- Enquiries that seem too good to be true
- Emails that make it clear that the enquirer has not actually looked at your property details
- Offers whereby the applicant is an 'agent' saying he has a professor coming to your country for a conference

Further information for gîte owners can be found at [www.eurorentavilla.com/rental\\_scams\\_in\\_holiday\\_home\\_lettings.htm](http://www.eurorentavilla.com/rental_scams_in_holiday_home_lettings.htm)

# Sound advice

Imagine receiving advice on your French mortgage or how to cope with homesickness over the airwaves. From 5 November you'll be able to do just that by tuning in to Expats Radio, an Internet radio station aimed at those hoping to settle abroad and expats who have made the move.

Peter Richards, head producer of Expats Radio, decided to launch the station as more and more of his friends began to think about moving abroad. 'Many people I know came up against brick walls, particularly as they didn't speak the language,' says Peter. 'I think shared knowledge is the key to a successful move.'

The schedule is varied and will cover everything from music and plays to expert legal and financial advice; there will also be programs for just for children. All broadcasts will be available on the site for seven days, so you can't miss your favourite programme.

If you're interested in contributing to the station or have any questions contact Peter Richards by email: [peter@expatsradio.com](mailto:peter@expatsradio.com). Tune in to Expats Radio by visiting [www.expatsradio.com](http://www.expatsradio.com)

## What's on...



**Marché de Noël**  
**23 November**  
**– 28 December**

**Lille, Nord-Pas-de-Calais**  
Christmas has come early in Lille as the annual festive market starts on the last

Wednesday of November. The market is held daily from 11am until 7pm in the heart of the town in the Place Rihour. Local traders and craftspeople will offer original present ideas and Christmas decorations and don't forget to treat yourself with a warming vin chaud or gaufre as you make your way round.

Contact: visit [www.lilletourism.com](http://www.lilletourism.com) or call 00 33 (0)3 59 57 94 00

**French Property News Exhibition**  
**4-6 November**

**Taunton Racecourse, Somerset**  
Around fifty exhibitors will be on hand to share their expertise at this property show. Gather invaluable information and advice

from estate agents, builders and developers, architects, surveyors, removals companies and financial and legal advisors. The show covers all aspects of buying a property in France and is worthwhile for all those planning on making the move. Entrance is free.

Contact: visit [www.french-property-news.com](http://www.french-property-news.com) or call 020 8543 3113

**Beaujolais Nouveau**  
**17 November**

**Throughout France**  
Taste the new season's Beaujolais on the third Thursday of November. This annual event is renowned throughout France and starts at midnight on Wednesday for the most part. Dégustations abound as well as