



COTTAGE
PROPERTIES

5 mistakes that lead to selling your country house below its real value

The five most common mistakes that lead to masias, castles and country houses selling for below their real value, and our strategies to avoid this.

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From three years without offers to sold in three months



By Àngels Sabater, co-director of Cottage Properties

A few years ago, I had an encounter with the owner of a Catalan masía (a traditional country house, often a farmhouse) that **changed everything for me.**

He'd been trying to sell his masía, located in the northernmost part of Alt Empordà in Girona, for three years. He began with an asking price of around €1.5 million.

But despite many visits, his real estate agency kept repeating the same problems:

- The masía was too isolated.
- The area was not well known.
- It needed a lot of rehabilitation.
- He had to lower the selling price.

The owner was exhausted and was already considering lowering the price by more than €100,000. That's when he called me for a consultation. He wanted a second opinion.

“Three months later, I sold his farmhouse for €1.5 million.”



How to unblock the sale of a masía



During my nine years as co-director of Cottage Properties, I've seen many real estate agencies struggle with rustic, stone-built properties. They accumulate viewings without a sales strategy, waiting for someone to wander in and say, "I'll take it."

That may work with conventional real estate – but it rarely works with country houses.

To sell this masía, I understood the need to filter buyers from the start. This way, I could avoid a four-hour drive for a viewing with someone just curious. Then, I could dedicate my time to someone who truly fits the bill and provide him or her with an extraordinary service.

And that's what happened.

A few days after listing the masía on our website, I received a call from an interested buyer with the budget to buy and renovate. We discussed the farmhouse's isolated location, I presented a renovation proposal, arranged for a lawyer to check her legal questions... and we closed the sale within a few weeks.

It doesn't always happen so quickly – but when it does, I know it's not luck, **it's strategy.**

M^a Àngels Sabater Anell

Co-director and founding partner of Cottage Properties



5 mistakes that lead to selling your country house below its real value



1. Don't be fooled by an exaggerated sale price

And how to know the real value of your country house in the current market.

One of the most common mistakes I see is an exaggerated valuation, usually done by a real estate agency with the sole purpose of listing the property.

Be careful.

In my nine years of experience, at least 90% of the rustic homes I've sold needed some kind of renovation. And I'm not talking about painting a wall: I'm talking about reinforcing centuries-old wooden beams, installing septic systems, working with 50cm-thick stone walls...

And what happens when a high price is set without considering renovations?

The buyer goes to an outside expert for a construction proposal. And then two things happen: either the buyer freaks out, or the buyer uses the report to negotiate a drastic reduction in the sale price.

Solution: Value your property with a specialist

To avoid this mistake, the most important thing is to start with an appraisal by someone who understands the rustic market.

Even better if that professional has experience in rehabilitation.

That's why at Cottage Properties, we have a real estate team specialising in rural properties, as well as an in-house team of surveyors, architects, and traditional construction professionals. This allows us, from the first visit, to accurately estimate the total renovation cost and set a sales price that:

- Respects the real value of the property.
- Builds confidence in the buyer.
- Prevents future lowball offers and fraught negotiations.

I'm not talking about selling cheap. It's about selling at the best possible price. And for a process as important – and sometimes lengthy – as selling a rustic property, you have nothing to lose by requesting a free valuation from a specialised agency like Cottage Properties.

Case study: €1.1 million farmhouse sold in one week



Earlier this year, we added a Catalan masía valued at 1.1 million to our portfolio, and the next day received a call from a buyer interested in purchasing it.

During a consultation with our director, Àngels Sabater, we learned the buyer had been looking for a farmhouse in the Vulpellac area of Baix Empordà, where the property was located, for some time. The buyer was serious and had the budget to close the deal; all that was missing was a viewing.

Within a week, the buyer signed the deposit contract to purchase the farmhouse without reducing the sale price by even a €1.

Rural property sales don't always sell this quickly – but in this case, our search engine visibility, accurate appraisal, and negotiation service facilitated an extraordinary sale.



2. Not providing a rehabilitation proposal

And why leaving this to third parties can hinder the sale of your rustic property.

Failure to submit a rehabilitation proposal is related to the overvaluation error – but it must be highlighted.

I'll give you a real example.

A few months ago, a buyer called me about a country estate he had visited with another real estate agency. The property needed renovations. The agency recommended hiring an external architect to prepare a final renovation project – without mentioning that this comes with a minimum fee of €15,000 for a specialist and a waiting period of several weeks.

Seeing that we had the same farmhouse in our portfolio, and that we offer this service free of charge to buyers, he visited the property with our surveyor and ended up purchasing both the farmhouse and the renovation project with Cottage Properties.

If your country house needs renovations, the buyer will not proceed without knowing the costs.

Failure to provide a reliable estimate for the works slows down the process. The buyer hesitates, takes a long time to decide, or – worse still – starts to negotiate a drastic reduction in the sale price.



The solution: Offer the buyer a professional proposal

In my experience, providing a fully costed proposal is one of the most effective tools for selling a rustic property for the price it deserves.

We know that not all owners will have access to a surveyor. But if you're going to sell your country house through a real estate agency, ask if they can provide a proposal themselves or if the buyer would need to hire a third party.

Offering this service (at no extra cost to the owner) has allowed us not only to sell many rustic properties, but also to sell them more quickly. The buyer receives a clear roadmap, with realistic budgets and an architectural vision, which speeds up the purchase decision and eliminates arguments for lowering the price.

3. Not filtering the buyer before arranging a visit



And why saying “no” to the wrong buyer brings you closer to the ideal buyer.

This is, without a doubt, the most important mistake of all.

There are thousands of people in love with the idea of living in a historic farmhouse or estate. And we understand it perfectly: a country house is a property with soul, with a unique connection to nature, history and culture.

But one thing is the dream, and another is the reality of what it means to live in a historic property.

I recently spoke to a buyer who said: *"If this masía is 200 m² and the renovation costs €2,000/m², then it would be around €400,000 at most, right?"*

I had to explain to him that it wasn't that simple. Traditional materials, building permits, and the need for specialised technicians would raise the cost far beyond his initial estimate. Unfortunately, it was a project beyond his budget.

But the important thing is that we had that conversation before visiting the property.

Because the opposite – receiving dozens of curious people without a filter – is exactly why many frustrated owners tell us: *"I've had 50 or 60 visits in a few months... and not a single serious offer."*

The strategy: Filter buyers to save time and offer better service

Screening buyers before arranging a showing is essential. For two reasons.

First, to save time.

In traditional real estate, many agents schedule viewings with buyers without asking about their budget, whether they need to finance the renovation, or whether they know the maintenance costs.

These conversations aren't easy – sometimes they're uncomfortable and exhausting. But they're necessary. In our experience, out of every five people who request a viewing, only one actually has the budget to buy, renovate and maintain such a property.

At Cottage Properties, our agents constantly pre-screen interested buyers. And we do this for a second important reason: to offer extraordinary service to those who are prepared.

Thanks to this approach, we can dedicate a lot of time to the right buyers:

- We review the legal documentation of the property
- We prepare fully costed rehabilitation proposals
- We create custom project visualisations with AI
- We facilitate negotiations, consultations and multiple conversations

In this market, what matters isn't the number of visits, but the quality of the buyer. The right profile. Genuine interest. And the ability to value your property at the price it truly deserves.

4. Not preparing all the documentation in advance



And why it can mean the sale of your country house falls through at the notary's office.

If your farmhouse is more than 50-100 years old, it likely has some irregularity in the Cadastre or Property Registry in Spain.

So, what's the problem?

If you don't notice any irregularities until the day of the signing, the notary won't certify the sale. You'll have to return in a few weeks or months while you try to register the correct property information, possibly incurring legal fees. In the worst-case scenario, you could lose the buyer's interest.

I'll give you a real example.

A few years ago, I found a buyer for a masía with several buildings on the plot. When we visited the notary's office, there was a nasty surprise: two of the buildings weren't legal. The sale couldn't go ahead.

It's an extreme case, but these are mistakes that end up with country houses being sold after many years and below their real value.

The strategy: Review the documentation as soon as possible

The solution is clear: review the documentation before putting your historic property up for sale.

Make sure all built-up areas are properly registered, that the land registry and the land registry match, that there are no liens or debts, and that all documents are ready for the notary.

At Cottage Properties, one of the benefits of having our in-house architect, urban planner, and real estate lawyer is being able to review documents and find errors that could jeopardise the sale.

If you work with us, we'll tell you what irregularities exist and what you need to do – or we'll offer a service to prepare the documentation for you.

This way, we ensure we can close the sale of your country house at the original price and without unnecessary delays.



5. Neglecting the visual and emotional presentation of the property

And what strategies work in today's market to speed up the sale of your country house.

Many country houses come onto the market with prices above €1 million. But when a buyer first sees them on screen, they don't always look that way.

That first impression is critical.

When decisions start from a mobile phone or computer, the visual presentation of a property makes all the difference. That's why many agencies today rely on professional photography, attractive descriptions, virtual tours and lists of features that convey a property's value.

But with rustic properties, there is an additional challenge:

What happens when the property needs rehabilitation?



The strategy: Help the buyer visualise the property's potential

For country houses and estates, presentation isn't limited to taking good photos.

It's about helping the buyer imagine what it would be like to live there. And that's not always easy when it comes to a farmhouse in need of renovation or with farmland in a state of disrepair.

That's why, at Cottage Properties, we've developed a unique strategy in the industry: we use artificial intelligence to generate before-and-after visualisations of each space, in real time.

During a video call or an in-person visit, we can show the client what a renovated room, a manicured garden or a renovated kitchen might look like.

This approach requires knowing the buyer very well: knowing what style appeals to them, what type of renovation they have in mind, what details they value, in order to tailor the presentation.

We have seen very positive results with this innovation. With it, we ensure that the customer not only sees what is there, but also what could be.

Case Study: How an AI visualisation sold a rustic property no one wanted to visit



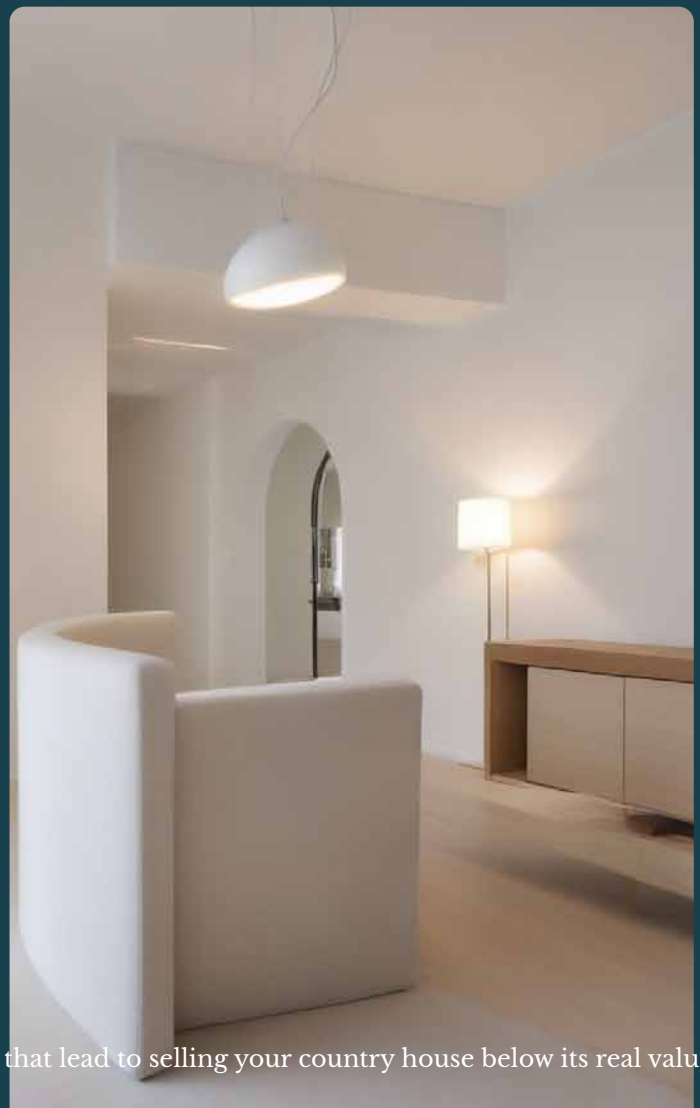
A few years ago, a couple approaching retirement called us looking for a country house in a highly desirable area of Baix Empordà (Girona). They had one thing very clear: the house had to be fully renovated.

Unfortunately, at that time, there was very little on the market. We had several stone houses in perfect locations to renovate, but the couple refused to visit them.

It was then that I proposed a “surprise.”

Under the condition that they knew nothing about the home before visiting it, the couple went with our surveyor to a stone house with spectacular views. Using artificial intelligence tools, we were able to reimagine the spaces, and the couple fell in love with the vision. Within a few days, they decided to purchase the rustic house and carry out the work with our team.

Without this innovation, we know that many of the rustic properties in our portfolio would end up selling for lower prices after long periods of desperation.





Dream Big, Live Bigger

The ultimate secret to selling at the right price



And how to protect yourself from the sometimes misleading advertising that exists in the real estate market.

We invite you to reflect on everything you've read: accurate appraisals, architectural proposals, buyer filtering, legal reviews, customised visualisations...

They're not just nice ideas. They're strategies that, when applied well, can make the difference between selling a country house and letting it sit on the market for years.

So let's get down to business.

In conventional properties, it's common to see a kind of "commission war" between agencies. Whoever offers the lowest commission wins the listing.

But when it comes to country houses, this approach often has consequences: sales that take longer than expected, tense negotiations and, often, price reductions.

The reason?

A low commission almost always means fewer resources, less attention, and no additional services for the buyer. No rehabilitation proposal. No documentation review. No resolution of legal issues.

And without that, your historic property becomes "just another house" for the agency – and sooner or later, you end up selling below its real value.



The ultimate secret to selling at the right price



The solution: Sell with a specialised agency

That's why, at Cottage Properties, we always recommend entrusting the sale of your property to a single agency specialising in the rustic market and historic homes. And we recommend doing so under a contract of exclusivity.

The benefits for you are clear:

- You're more likely to sell at the original price, without having to wait years or accepting offers below what you expected.
- The agency can pre-screen the right buyers and offer them the services they need to move forward quickly and confidently – without the frustration of receiving 10, 20, or even 30 visits without a single serious offer.
- Your property's appeal won't be tarnished by appearing on portals with different agencies, conflicting messages or price inconsistencies.
- You receive comprehensive and professional support, from the initial assessment to the preparation of documentation and the final signing of the title deed.

And how will you know if the agency is specialised?

Before starting the selling process, ask the agency for real examples of properties similar to yours that have sold at the asking price and within a reasonable time-frame. On the Cottage Properties website, for example, you can see our recently sold cottages along with testimonials from real customers.

If you find an agency that can prove it delivers on its promises, then selling exclusively with them will be your best strategy to avoid the most common mistakes...

And this way, you will sell your property at the price it deserves.

About Cottage Properties



Experts in the buying, selling and rehabilitation of rustic properties

Cottage Properties is a real estate agency specialising in the sale and renovation of country houses, masías, castles, rustic properties and stone houses in Catalonia and other regions of Spain.

With over 30 years of experience and headquartered in Navata (Girona), we have become a benchmark in the sector thanks to our unique approach and specialised services.

We have a multidisciplinary team made up of certified real estate agents, architects, specialised lawyers, engineers and traditional renovation experts.

We'll be with you every step of the way, providing a proven strategy for selling your farmhouse.

Cottage Properties in numbers

30

Years specialising in the buying, selling and rehabilitation of country houses, masías and castles

+700

Rustic properties sold in Catalonia and Spain

1M€

Average selling price of all our homes sold in the last 10 years

+88,100

annual visits to our website, in addition to being featured on 120+ real estate portals

6

Regions with properties for sale: Catalonia, Navarre, Valencia, Andalusia, Aragon, and the Balearic Islands

Request a valuation



Discover the true value of your property and understand your realistic expectations in today's market.

At Cottage Properties, we speak every day with buyers looking for farmhouses, stone houses, castles, and luxury country estates in Catalonia and Spain.

Thanks to this constant contact with real market demand, we can offer you an accurate and realistic valuation of your property, as well as a clear estimate of the average sale time based on its type, condition and location.



What does our free valuation include?

- Personal meeting with one of our directors to review your case.
- In-person visit and valuation of the selling price your home deserves.
- Analysis of the most suitable buyer profile for your property.
- Practical recommendations and services to prepare your home for sale.
- Initial basic legal and urban planning review (if desired).

Request your valuation now

It's free, no-obligation, and can make the difference between selling for less than it's worth... or getting the price your property truly deserves.

Visit here to request your assessment:

<https://www.cottageproperties.es/en/sell-country-house>



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