# British antiques trader transforms Mussomeli with €1 home purchases



George Laing, a 32-year-old British antiques trader, has attracted significant attention after purchasing a derelict three-storey property in Mussomeli, a town in Sicily, Italy, for the symbolic sum of just €1 (85p). The purchase was made under a local council’s renovation scheme aimed at revitalising the town by encouraging buyers to restore neglected homes.

George completed the purchase in December 2022, with the total cost, including administration fees, agency costs, and mandatory energy certificates, amounting to approximately €5,000 (£4,300). Despite the property needing extensive work—such as repairing a leaky roof, installing electricity, and reconnecting the water supply—George undertook much of the renovation himself, investing less than £10,000 in total.

The antiques expert divides his time between Mussomeli and Eastbourne in the UK. He described the lifestyle as “not completely glamorous” but “definitely rewarding,” speaking to the Daily Mail about his experiences renovating the home, including challenges like a storm that caused water to pour into the building.

Since publicising the project on his Instagram account (@george\_laing\_), George has attracted an overwhelming response, with more than 500 people keen to rent out the home. He explained: “It’s been the best decision I’ve made. I’ve got a waiting list of more than 500 people waiting to rent my home out. I just use my website and a booking form; I don’t have to use Booking.com or Airbnb—it’s edging up to nearly 600 people now.”

Emboldened by the success of his first purchase, George has acquired a second property in Mussomeli, also for the symbolic price of €1. Located just a five-minute walk from his first renovation, the new home is structurally sound and larger, conditions he believes will make renovation easier. He anticipates beginning work on this property within two or three months. Under the one-euro scheme, buyers must complete renovations within three years or risk fines.

George’s ambitions extend beyond these two homes. He has expressed a long-term vision to purchase “whole rows of one euro homes” to establish a community in the town. Moreover, he is contemplating opening an antiques shop in Mussomeli, capitalising on the significantly lower costs compared to the UK. According to George, setting up a shop in Mussomeli might cost around €5,000 (£4,300), a stark contrast to the £200,000–£300,000 required for a similar venture in the UK.

Reflecting on his motivations, George remarked on the current difficulties faced by many in the UK property market and cost of living. He said: “Eventually, in the long term, I do want to buy a countryside house in the UK, but property is so expensive, and there’s such a disparity between wages and property prices. I’m in a position where I am savvy enough and not scared of taking risks and could come here, but life for most people in the UK is unbearable right now. No one is thriving, everyone is just surviving. Taxes shouldn’t be getting to 40 per cent and after rent, bills, national insurance, the UK has become crazy expensive. A coffee costs £5, a pint is £8, it’s £10 to travel around London, nobody can afford anything—the average person is struggling.”

The renovation scheme in Mussomeli is one of several across Italy that aims to revive towns facing depopulation and economic hardship by offering properties at symbolic prices, provided buyers commit to restoring them. George’s experience highlights the opportunities and challenges presented by such initiatives, showcasing how they can attract new residents and investment to rural areas.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.idealista.it/en/news/property-for-sale-in-italy/2025/02/20/204338-from-london-to-mussomeli-for-a-1-euro-house-i-ll-never-have-a-mortgage-again> - Corroborates George Laing's participation in Italy's 1-euro home scheme in Mussomeli, Sicily, and his experiences renovating the property.
2. <https://www.tiktok.com/@george_laing_/video/7497236468058950934> - Supports George's active promotion of affordable Sicilian properties and public engagement through social media.
3. <https://www.idealista.it/en/news/tags/1-euro-homes-italy> - Provides context about Italy's 1-euro home initiatives, including Mussomeli's program mentioned in the article.
4. <https://www.tiktok.com/@george_laing_/> - Demonstrates George's use of social media (Instagram not directly available, but TikTok serves as a comparable platform) to publicize his renovation projects and attract rental interest.
5. <https://www.idealista.it/en/news/property-for-sale-in-italy/2025/02/20/204338-from-london-to-mussomeli-for-a-1-euro-house-i-ll-never-have-a-mortgage-again> - Reiterates details about George's €1 property purchase costs and renovation efforts, though specific financial figures in the article require broader contextual confirmation from Italy's housing schemes.
6. <https://www.idealista.it/en/news/tags/1-euro-homes-italy> - General information about Italy's 1-euro home programs aligns with the article's description of renovation requirements (e.g., three-year timeline) and community-revitalization goals.
7. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/travel/article-14656019/brit-italy-one-euro-house-pictures.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data