

If you are looking to make a real estate investment, avoid making expensive errors and ask the Home Inspector Spain before negotiating the price.

Benno Bühler is a RICS-certified surveyor, appraiser (Banco de España) and architect, who has been on the Costa del Sol since 1996, and can help you throughout the whole conveyancing process.

We met Benno Bühler at his studio in the Soho area of Malaga where he answered important questions about what a home inspector does and what this service is good for.

Benno, what is a home inspector?

In the United States it is mandatory, but we think it should be brought into law here in Spain as well: someone who carries out the technical check (while the lawyers do the legal check); someone who will stop you from putting your money into a bad investment. This is what we do!

Can't real estate agent do it?

Real estate agents are 'business people'; their focus is to seal the deal. They will certainly not give you impartial information if this could harm their business.

Couldn't you also hire an appraiser or an architect?

In theory, yes! But they will prepare a page-long report, filled with complicated and technical language, which can take a long time to be delivered... But buyers want information immediately. As home inspectors, we are often able to come to the property on the same day and give our first impressions of the location, value and defects immediately. Sometimes things have to move quickly!

On the case!

Avoid making mistakes with the Home Inspector

What does your service include?

We like to get our shoes dirty and are on site to inspect our clients' dream property, trudging through wet and dark basements and in among the pool equipment. We prepare a list of defects, suggest repairs and make an estimate for the costs. Those defects can then be used to negotiate the purchase price. You could compare it to buying a used car. You'd want to know what it costs to remove the scratches and so on, then take this information with you when you go to discuss the price.

And your fee?

Our services start from 350 euros plus VAT, plus a share of the purchase price savings. The more we bring down the purchase price, the more we earn. This is a win-win situation for everyone - except for the seller, of course.

The buyers could also negotiate themselves

That is true. However, as soon as these defects, some of which are very technical, are brought up in negotiations, expert knowledge can quickly become necessary. A clever seller will already have their counter-arguments ready, leaving non-technically experienced negotiators in a tangle. Here's one example: during a house inspection, we discovered that, according to

the manufacturer's information, the chiller in the air conditioning system was not suitable for installation near the beach. As a result, we were able to negotiate a saving of 35,000 euros. Could you have explained this to the seller? We could!

What if the price has already been negotiated?

We also have flat rate agreements.

Does the customer need a lawyer for the purchase?

If it is a normal, legal property, it is recommended but not necessary. We can take you through the entire purchase process, right up to the handing over the keys at the notary. Should we encounter any legal problems, we can refer you to law firms which are known to us and ask for help. Of course, we are not allowed to provide legal advice. I see our service as complementary to the work of a lawyer: they do the legal check and we do the technical check.

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