

‘ [...] I’m moving to Italy for a better lifestyle’

Silvia Marchetti November 8, 2023 2:08 pm



Charlotte Low, a 29-year-old Australian living in the UK, says the British lifestyle doesn’t suit her (Photo: supplied)

A 29-year-old Australian [expat](#) who moved to the UK a year ago says the British lifestyle doesn’t suit her and she now plans to relocate to the sunny Italian region of Puglia.

Charlotte Low, who lives and teaches music at a girls’ private boarding school in Ascot, Berkshire, says [...] after visiting [Italy](#) in the summer, she has decided it would be a better place to live.

“I know I’ve only been in the UK for a short time and I do [...] enjoy it here but after I recently visited Italy this summer I’ve figured out it’s better to live there,” Ms Low tells [i](#).

[...]

“Everyone is so very busy in the UK, I go to bars and cafés, play board games with people I meet but it’s hard infiltrating what I call friendly barriers.”

Ms Low has found that being in Ascot has presented some barriers in terms of accessing cultural attractions. “Where I live, it’s a bit removed from the cultural scene, places aren’t close and I need to take the train to London,” she says.

“In Italy I can be more immersed in the culture, near the restaurants, the art galleries. It’s more of a small-scale world, where towns have everything close by.”

Ms Low is looking at teaching music or the cello at one of Italy’s top international schools as she basks in the warmth and southern charm of southern Italy – a stark contrast to England.

She will be applying for a work visa, taking advantage of a special income tax rate of just 10 per cent aimed at attracting highly skilled foreigners, far lower than normal income tax that in Italy can reach 45 per cent. The tax applies to workers with higher qualifications and specialisations.

Editor’s note: The special income tax regime is not a flat tax of 10% but a reduction of one’s taxable income to 10%. For example, someone earning €100k would pay tax on only €10k of their income, therefore, a total annual income tax of €2,077.

“In the UK, where I have a one-year freelance contract at the boarding school, taxes are 40 per cent.”

Ms Low says she was spellbound by the beauty of Italy during her July tour, which included Ancona and Montecassiano, in the Marche region between the Apennine Mountains and the Adriatic Sea.

What she missed most about Italy when she was back in the UK to start the school year, besides the weather, was the slower-paced lifestyle, welcoming locals and delicious food.

Returning to England after experiencing an Italian summer was “slightly disheartening”, she adds, and was part of the reason for wanting to return to Italy to live.

The other contrast was the culture. “I noticed that Italian people spent time appreciating more of the little things, like family and traditions,” she says. “Obviously food and wine are a huge part of their culture, and I was immediately welcomed to take part in whatever eating and drinking was going on at the time.”

Ms Low is applying for a special artist visa with the goal of relocating to Italy in the next few months, as soon as all the needed paperwork is done.

She is still debating which southern region to pick as her new home, although it will probably be Puglia, which she says stole her heart.

Ms Low thinks she will rent a house, and has hired an Italy-based relocation agency catering to aspiring expats, called Finding La Dolce Vita, to help her navigate Italian visa bureaucracy and find a job and home in Puglia.

“The agency is looking at various musician role solutions, so depending on the job they find me, I’ll pick the exact location,” she added. She says she was “very uninformed on the complicated visa bureaucracy hurdles and costs” of relocating, so it has been “best to have someone on the ground” in Italy as support.