

appreciated when she moved there from Surrey, where she ran equestrian centres and competition yards. "I love the slower pace of life, it's a very friendly county and people have a real willingness to help," she says. "Even the vets seem to have more time."

Samantha and her husband moved to a house in North Curry during Covid and spent the next few years doing it up.

"The house hadn't been touched since the 1960s, but obviously the yard was done first," she says. "We used as many local people as we could and found brilliant tradespeople. They really take due care and attention and like a quality finish."

Samantha didn't rush to make big changes to her equestrian set-up.

"You learn as you go through the seasons; I didn't go crazy until I'd lived there a while," she says.

She now has an American barn, arena and is in the process of putting in a track system. As her property is on clay, "the grass can either be like rocket fuel or the ground is like concrete".

Living among the farming community has its perks, too.

"The horses are all tractor-proof now and the farmers let me have a canter around the edge of their fields," she says.

"Prices are 5-10% cheaper than Dorset and Wiltshire"

JUSTIN LOWE, GREENSLADE TAYLOR HUNT

Samantha has maintained much of her client base from Surrey, with some of them coming to stay with her for training breaks.

"It's a nice way for me to work and they like experiencing something else," she says.

The only downsides – phone reception and internet speeds – are more than made up for, in Samantha's opinion.

"The food! I've never eaten so much good food," she says. "Honestly, moving here is the best thing I ever did."

WITH all this on offer, it might come as a surprise that Somerset's equestrian

property prices can be at the more affordable end. Greenslade

Taylor Hunt's Justin Lowe estimates that prices are around 5-10% cheaper than Dorset and Wiltshire.

"At the lower end, a three-bed house with stables and three acres will start at around £600,000,

while a farmhouse with five to 10 acres and outbuildings will be in the region of £900,000 to £1.2m," he says.

For the best value for money, he advises looking at east Somerset.

"The Blackdown Hills still offer good value for money, as the majority of buyers favour west Somerset," he explains.

That said, buyers need to be patient.

"Generally, people have made a lifestyle

decision to move to this part of the world and we have a lower turnover of property than in other areas," Justin adds.

And the competition is set to get even more fierce.

"More and more buyers are relocating to our part of the world owing to the beauty and enjoyment of the area, with the opportunity to secure an equestrian property in a more affordable environment," he says.

The secret is out. **H&H**

What's on the market?



IN THE QUANTOCK HILLS Pepperhill Lodge, Over Stowey

Located on a bridleway in the Quantocks, a Grade II listed mid-19th century converted stone barn, arranged around a central courtyard. There are five bedrooms.

Equestrian facilities include a Dutch barn plus larger barn with two stables, and groom's flat. Set in 24.16 acres. **£1.425m**
GTH, 01823 277121



17TH-CENTURY FARMHOUSE Street Farm, Alveston

A six-bed home with original features, plus a cottage converted from the old bakehouse. There is an arena, four stables, three cow byres and a large tarmacked

yard. The 4.16-acre plot includes two generous paddocks, a walled garden and small apple orchard. **£1.5m**
Hamptons, 01179 111455



CONVERTED MILL The Old Mill, Ilminster

A four-bed former mill, with original wheel and cog. Features flagstone flooring, exposed beams and exposed stone. River Isle frontage in a small hamlet. An ideal

smallholding, with three stables, a tack room, stores and paddocks, within 4.8 acres. **£875,000**
Fox Grant, 01722 782727



TWO EXCEPTIONAL HOMES Oatfield Farm and The Olde Piggery

Oatfield Farm is a five-bed farmhouse steeped in history dating back to the Domesday Book, while The Olde Piggery is a two-/three-bed home. Set in 4.5 acres in

north Somerset. With three stables, two barns, a manège and easy access to bridleways. **£1.5m**
Fine and Country, 01275 859000

