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PROPERTY SIGNPOST NEWSLETTER

Email: berry@propertysignpost.co.zaWeb Site: www.chaseveritt.comSubscription: [Click Here](#)**Chas
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Chas Everitt International sales agents have all the latest market information regarding local property values at their fingertips – and are committed to the highest standards of personal service when it comes to selling your home. In addition, the Chas Everitt International property group offers you, the homeowner, the best possible exposure for your property in both national and international markets. So if you are thinking of selling your home, call your nearest Chas Everitt International office today for the name of your local area specialist - or visit www.chaseveritt.com

Every month the **Property Signpost Newsletter** will be issued to all our subscribers, filled with real estate information to help you make an informed decision, whether you are buying or selling a property.

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1. Welcome By Publisher

As we predicted, the weeks since the municipal elections have turned out to be a bumper sales period, with many of our offices around the country notching up record numbers of transactions.

And only a small amount of this additional activity can be ascribed to buyers who sat on the fence for two weeks in February as they waited for the new transfer duty dispensation to take effect. Most is the result of growing confidence in the economy as a whole and the increased buying power of individual consumers, which can only bode well for the market going forward.

Speaking of growth, Chas Everitt International continues to be one of the fastest-growing real estate groups in South Africa, having established more than 70 operations around the country in the three years since it began franchising.

And applications to join the group keep pouring in. However, our strategy is still to select top-notch franchisees and work at achieving significant market share in key areas rather than just increase the number of offices.

Meanwhile, we are proud to note that although the latest franchisees to join the Chas Everitt International “family” have extremely diverse backgrounds, they have all said they chose this group over other real estate organisations primarily because of our evident professionalism and unwavering commitment to ethical business practices.

We think that’s a real feather in our caps – and proof that we are remaining true to the strong values instilled by our founders even as we gain a reputation for marketing and technology leadership in our industry.

2. Quick offers no cause for alarm

Homeowners who plan to sell usually list a market-related price and a quick transaction as their top priorities.

But, all too often, they develop grave misgivings if their wish is granted and they receive a strong offer shortly after listing. As most seasoned estate agents know only too well, sellers in such a situation almost immediately conclude that their asking price was too low and opt to hold out for a better offer.

Sadly, however, a better offer usually does not come along and the property languishes on the market. And eventually, frustrated by delays, the seller is reduced to accepting an offer much lower than the original one.

Consequently, sellers should not be too hasty to believe that a quick offer means their asking price was too low. What it is more likely to indicate is the increasing efficiency of the real estate marketplace. These days, technologically capable agents are able to give many prospective buyers almost instant access to new listings – and savvy buyers are quickly able to evaluate and act on a competitive asking price.

A quick first offer that is slightly below the asking price should not be rejected out of hand either, but should be viewed as the starting point for negotiations. Buyers these days are much more likely to test the water by offering slightly less than they are really prepared to pay and skillful negotiation by an experienced estate agent may well result in second offer that will satisfy the seller – and allow him to get on with the job of finding a new home.

3. Take extra care when buying to extend

These days, many buyers keen to enter the market before prices rise even further are opting to purchase smaller homes with the intention of expanding them later.

But they need to take note of some potential pitfalls, the first of which is that if they buy in an area of smaller homes on smaller stands, it is quite likely that their plans to expand will be limited by zoning restrictions that regulate building size relative to stand size.

Secondly, even in areas where such restrictions are not a factor, the extended home will need to fit in with others in the neighbourhood to make sure the owner's additional investment is not lost when the time comes to sell. It is all too easy to over-capitalise a property and find that the costs of the improvements cannot be recouped.

Even in the best of markets, owners should not undertake improvements that push their home's value beyond 20 to 25 percent above the current average price in the area. And in a slower market, they should be very careful to keep their home's value in line with that average price.

And even buyers who are lucky enough to find a smaller home that can be profitably expanded to fit in with surrounding larger properties should think carefully about the upheaval inherent in any building activity, especially if they will occupy the home during renovations. Consumers often complain that building projects take longer or turn out to be much more complicated than they expected.

4. Pantries back in vogue

Pantries have become a popular feature in new upmarket homes and the trend is now filtering down to mainstream homes.

These utility rooms went out of fashion in the early 1960s with the advent of supermarkets and the rising popularity of convenience food stored in the fridge or freezer. But health-conscious people are increasingly opting for home-cooked meals prepared with fresh or organically-grown ingredients.

And even people who don't take issue with chemical additives prevalent in modern mass-processed food are in favour of the additional storage space that pantries offer. Bulk shopping still saves time and, in many instances, money.

The "nesting" trend that took root in the 1990s is also contributing to the reviving fortunes of the humble pantry. People exhausted by the fast pace of modern life are increasingly making their homes a retreat and rediscovering the therapeutic value of age-old skills such as preserving fruits and vegetables and making jam – and those rows of bottled tomatoes and cling peaches require shelf space that is not to be found in most modern kitchens.

5. Spotting bargains among the clutter

Most homes for sale are scrupulously scrubbed and tidied to show the property off to its best advantage – but it may just pay to have a closer look at properties that at first glance appear to be grubby and cluttered.

Prospective buyers often turn on their heel when shown a property that is not in show-house condition but those who can spot substance over style may just find a real bargain.

In a forced sale, such as in cases where the owner has died or has been suddenly transferred to another town, there usually has not been time for anyone to prepare the property for sale, and clutter may disguise good underlying value.

And although a dirty home may indicate long-term neglect and the possibility of substantial repair bills for a new owner, a closer inspection might just reveal that all that is actually required is a good scrub and a few coats of paint.

Such a property may also offer scope for serious price negotiations. A buyer can point out that it will require time and money to restore the property to acceptable standards and will be justified in subtracting the estimated total cost, including labour, from the price he is willing to pay.

It is, of course, a good idea to have any property professionally inspected to check that the structure, plumbing and wiring are sound before making a firm offer. But if they are and the owner is prepared to settle for a lower offer, all that will remain is to roll up your sleeves and turn your bargain into a clean and tidy home to be proud of.