



Chas Everitt



Berry Everitt



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**FROM THE PUBLISHER**

According to all the experts, the market is set for a real slowdown now in the wake of all the interest rate increases and the introduction of the National Credit Act - but nobody seems to have told the market that. Despite all the gloomy predictions we read, we continue to see growth every month, with our coastal offices doing particularly well and even the luxury sector of the market holding steady.

Our stats show that prices are currently 16 percent up on the same period of last year, on average, while the Standard Bank stats show that the five -month moving average growth increased 10,8 percent in June from 7,5% in April and 8,4% in May.

The question is, of course, what's driving this determinedly upward trend, and we believe it is a combination of consumer confidence in the economy as a whole, a residential building slowdown and, as we predicted last year, steadily rising demand due to the growth of the middle class.

What we can say for sure is that it is not the result of a surge in foreign purchasing. Our exposure at overseas exhibitions has shown us just how competitive the international second home market is, with many other countries coming in ahead of SA in attracting foreign investors. Indeed, foreign buying still accounts for only around five percent of local sales. On the other hand, there are some great opportunities now for South Africans to invest in new developments abroad, and / or second properties locally - and we are well positioned to help them do either - or even both...

**Your Area Specialist:**

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](http://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.

**In This Week's Newsletter:**

- **Subtract, don't add when showing a small home**
- **It's still worth having showdays**
- **Don't let electrical problems come as a shock**
- **What the young want ...**

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**Subtract, don't add when showing a small home**

With more people working from home at least part of the time, the demand for properties with a study or home office space has increased, but if your property does not have this extra space don't be too hasty to plan an addition or renovation before trying to sell.

There is really no need to do so as there is currently excellent demand for well-priced smaller properties - especially among previously disadvantaged buyers who want to move to established suburbs close to good schools and workplaces. Adding on, in many cases, would just render properties too expensive for such buyers.

What is more, there is a growing trend among busy young executives and professionals to deliberately seek out smaller homes in upmarket suburbs so that they can enjoy the advantages of living in such areas without maintenance or security becoming too much of a burden.

And then there are many retirees who don't want to leave a familiar area, but would be delighted to downsize from a large family home to a smaller property that is easier to manage. Consequently, you are usually better off not making expensive alterations but making sure the space you do have is well kept and well presented. This is what will give your home the edge over others in the same price range.

And the number one strategy for making a small home look bigger and more appealing is to get rid of clutter. Move that lifetime's collection of knickknacks, holiday mementoes and heirlooms out of sight and keep accessories and art works simple.

Other ideas include:

- Painting walls and ceilings in light colours and hanging light curtains and blinds.
- Removing unnecessary items of furniture and adding mirrors to give rooms more depth.
- Using tall, narrow lamps and planters that take up less floorspace and add an



impression of height.

- If possible, incorporating an outside entertainment area into the "living space" through the use of sliding doors.

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### It's still worth having showdays

Home sellers who don't receive an offer after a showday may question the value of such occasions and the effort it takes to get a home ready for showing - especially now that prospective buyers can "view" homes on the Internet and set up appointments to visit only those in which they are really interested.

But knowledgeable estate agents who have experienced both disappointing and exciting initial responses to showdays still have great faith in their value as a marketing tool.

They point out that not all properties are advertised electronically and that not everyone has access to the Internet. What is more, buyers can't really get the feel of a home from a photo or video. Showdays, especially on weekends, give buyers the opportunity to visit properties and envisage what it would really be like to live there.

In addition, holding a show house generates "live feedback" that will validate an asking price or help the seller to make a quick adjustment in line with what buyers in the area are really prepared to pay. It can also help affirm an agent's advice about the way the house looks or what it needs, as well as marketing strategy.

Of course it can happen that the only people who show up on a particular showday are inquisitive neighbours or some hopelessly underqualified buyers.

However, this is much less likely if you have chosen to work with an experienced, knowledgeable agent who will match your efforts to prepare your home for the showday with his or her own efforts to promote and advertise the showday properly and generate maximum possible interest among suitable buyers.

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### Don't let electrical problems come as a shock

It's winter and the increased use of heaters, stoves, geysers and electric blankets is putting the electrical systems in many homes under strain - and families at greater risk from electrical hazards and fires.

Unfortunately, however, most homeowners don't know what to do to prevent electrical accidents, although there are signs that should alert them to potential problems - and prompt them to seek professional help.

The first of these is receiving even a mild shock when you use any plug, switch or appliance. This indicates that at least part of the system is not properly wired and grounded.

Secondly, you should watch out for flickering or dimming lights: This could indicate a loose connection, an overloaded circuit, improper wiring, or arcing and sparking inside the walls. Hot, discoloured plug boxes, switch plates, cords or plugs are also a bad sign. If you can't keep your hand on these for more than five seconds, you may have an overload or product malfunction.

Fourth, you should not ignore the smell of burning metal or plastic as this may indicate a loose or broken connection, a malfunctioning switch, overheating components, arcing or sparking inside the walls, a damaged cord or any one of several other potential hazards.

Fifth, you should check regularly for frayed or overheated cords, light bulbs that are the wrong wattage and overloaded plugs or circuits that are often a sign of insufficient capacity.

And finally, even if you have not detected any electrical problem, the Electrical Safety Foundation International recommends a thorough system inspection by a qualified electrician for any home more than 40 years old, any home more than 10 years old that has had any major renovation or major appliance added, and any home at the time of purchase.

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### What the young want ...

Homeowners preparing their properties for sale and buy-to-let investors need to think about the features that will most impress the new generation of buyers and tenants - and the lifestyles of young adults can provide valuable clues.

For example, young people tend to seek entertainment outside the home much more frequently than their parents did. This indicates that a young couple with two salaries coming in may well prefer an area close to restaurants, cinemas, clubs and other leisure venues. In addition, a formal living room and dining room is likely to be much less important to them than an older-generation buyer.

Similarly, young buyers or tenants are much more likely to view a spare bedroom as a potential study or computer room than as occasional accommodation for visitors. In any case time on the Internet usually takes up quite a chunk of their day and they appreciate having a dedicated space to go online.

Many also want space for gym equipment, and most insist on good "lock up and go" security. Environmental awareness is also growing and greater energy efficiency is also becoming a must.

Meanwhile a well-designed kitchen with plenty of work surface and cupboard space is still high on the priority list of most younger buyers and as outdoor entertainment is common in SA's

summers, both buyers and tenants favour homes with a patio and / or a dedicated braai area.

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