



Chas Everitt



Berry Everitt



Barry Davies

FROM THE PUBLISHER

Lyn Massey-Hicks has been named as our 2007 Agent of the Year and we are very proud of her as we are of all the top performers honoured at the awards ceremony held during our recent "fun-vention" in Thailand.

Randburg-based Lyn was further named as one of two master agents in the group who sold property to the value of more than R300m in the past 12 months, sharing the spotlight with Christiaan Steytler of our Southern Suburbs office in Cape Town.

Christiaan and Murray Tocker then took honours as the 2007 Partnership of the Year, with the top listing agent prize going to Annette Rautenbach of the Mogale City office, and the prize for the top new entrant being won by Veronica Venter of the Stellenbosch office.

Randburg was named as a top metro office in the group, and St Francis Bay as the top non-metro office, with other master agent awards going to Paul Everitt (sales of R250m), Christine Todd (R200m) and Shanaz Sity (R200m).

Well done to all of them and keep up the good work!

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

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:

- **Is this a good time to buy?**
- **How to make sure of a sale**
- **10 ways to cut your lights and water costs**
- **What you need to know about buying carpet**

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Is this a good time to buy?

Buying a home if you expect to move in two years is a risk, especially in an uncertain market. That's because when you do sell, there are costs associated with selling.

But most buyers live in their new home an average of five years or more. If that fits you, it almost always makes sense to buy rather than rent, in practically any market.

There are various reasons for this, the first being that if you are thinking about delaying a purchase because you want to "time the market" to get the very best deal, that is almost impossible to do with precision. The most knowledgeable experts cannot reliably anticipate the "bottom" of a real estate market.

Secondly, if you aren't an owner, you're a renter, which means that you are giving whatever you spend on housing to someone else, with no long term benefit to yourself.

Third, the easiest way to accumulate wealth is through home ownership. Three out of four homeowners have more equity in their home than assets in retirement funds, stocks and savings.

Of course, there are some areas that had more rapid appreciation in recent years and may suffer from lower price-growth than the rest of the country or region over the next couple of years.

However, you can minimise the possibility of lower appreciation for your home by determining your price range and choosing an area where your target price is in the lower tier of prices in that area. That way, your home has less vulnerability on the downside and the higher-priced homes will help pull you up during hot markets.

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How to make sure of a sale

Selling a home is always nerve-racking, and especially so when the market slows, inventories increase and buyers have more time and more choice.



Doubts arise about the asking price, whether the property for sale is gaining enough exposure and if potential buyers will appreciate how well -maintained the property is.

But while these are all legitimate concerns, they can easily be dissipated with a little forethought and preparation, starting with a clear definition of the sales goal.

Two properties may sell for the same price but the seller who has to pay up for repairs prior to transfer will often end up with less in his pocket, so sellers must be equally focused on both price and terms - and on working with an experienced agent who will negotiate the best overall deal.

Sellers also need to do their homework about their local market. Today's buyers are well prepared and sellers need to know as much as they do in order to be taken seriously. In addition, sellers must ensure that their agent has a comprehensive marketing plan. Successful agents use a variety of methods to attract and qualify prospective buyers, including the latest Internet and communication advances. Make sure your agent is up to speed. And finally, sellers should not forget that presentation is the key to keeping buyers interested.

Buyers want an environment where they can see themselves living, so give them a showhouse where everything is clean, uncluttered, arranged, and attractive - a home where the only issue is when to move in.

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10 ways to cut your lights and water costs

The costs of municipal services such as electricity and water are increasing rapidly in SA. But fortunately new technology and common sense can cut these essential costs significantly.

Here are 10 ways to cut water and electricity bills:

- If your home has a shower, use it and encourage your children to use it whenever possible instead of taking a bath.
- Install modern low-flow shower heads and taps and cut water usage even more, particularly when rinsing vegetables and dishes, or cleaning your teeth.
- Check the thermostat on the geyser, which in most cases can be turned down several degrees resulting in a constant saving of electricity.
- Ensure that the geyser and hot water pipes are lagged to prevent heat loss and turn the geyser off when you leave the house for any length of time.
- Use cold water washing machine cycles whenever possible, and use the machine - and the dishwasher - only when you have a full load.
- Replace burnt out light bulbs with new, energy-efficient mini-fluorescents. These cost more initially, but they have a longer life and use only 20% of the power of conventional bulbs.
- Place your appliances carefully. Fridges, freezers and air conditioning units will consume much more electricity if they are sitting in the full glare of the sun.
- Draw curtains to prevent heat loss in winter and heat entry in summer.
- Cultivate good housekeeping habits like turning off lights when you leave a room and replacing leaking tap washers immediately.
- Install insulation - in the ceiling space and under carpets - to lower heating costs in winter and cooling costs in summer, and so generate even more savings.

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What you need to know about buying carpet

Despite the rising popularity of materials like tile, wood and laminates, carpet is still a front runner when it comes to the floor covering for many rooms of the house.

And it has many advantages, including the facts that it can go over a variety of surfaces, even concrete slabs, its economical and installation costs are generally less than some hard-surface products.

Carpet also absorbs sound, insulates against cold, cushions feet and adds safety by preventing slips and falls and protecting dropped objects from being damaged.

However, advances in technology and the variety of textures, colours, cost and durability may make choosing carpets seem like a huge undertaking, so before you buy you need to ask yourself how the area to be carpeted will be used, and how heavy the "traffic" will be.

Next, you should look for performance ratings that offer guidance on choosing the carpets that will perform best for various traffic needs. Most guidelines are based on a five-point scale, with four or five being best for heavy traffic areas. For durability, look also for high-density carpet with a tighter twist and a shorter pile height.

Only then should you select the colour and pattern that suits your décor. Experts suggest looking for a common colour in furniture and curtains and choosing a carpet to suit. Remember that medium and darker colours, tweeds, and textures will help disguise dirt in high traffic areas.

And finally, you should ask the retailer to unroll and air out the carpet before installing it, and ensure that your home is well-ventilated during installation to cut down on irritation from any adhesive fumes and emissions.

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