



Chas Everitt



Berry Everitt



Barry Davies

**FROM THE PUBLISHER**

Chas Everitt International has become the first property group to introduce free - and compulsory - specialist training in sectional title sales for all its agents.

We have noted a significant increase recently in sectional title sales as a percentage of the total market - and a steep rise in the number of plans being passed for flats and townhouses which indicates that most new homes coming to the market in the next few years will be sectional title.

This can only mean that agents will increasingly be called upon to handle sectional title sales. But, as our Franchising CEO Barry Davies noted recently, there is a world of difference between such sales and the freehold transactions most agents are used to, and thus an urgent need for specific sectional title education.

To this end, we have already enlisted the help of well-known attorney and sectional title specialist Marina Conostas, who has compiled and is already presenting courses to equip all Chas Everitt International agents and principals with a thorough understanding of sectional title transactions.

And we have received her praise for spotting the trend and responding pro-actively to meet the needs of the growing number of sectional title clients.

"I have seen enormous damage done in the sectional title field by ill-informed agents," she says. "On the other hand, the role that an agent who is knowledgeable about sectional title can play in educating buyers and even trustees cannot be over-estimated. The difference lies, very simply, in agents receiving appropriate training, and Chas Everitt International clients will undoubtedly benefit from its decision to provide its agents with such education."

**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:**

- Shine a light on your sale
- You can't just pocket the rent
- Clean-up coming for laundries
- How to get the job done right

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**Shine a light on your sale**

When a house goes on to the market, the owners usually try to ensure that it looks its best. Paintwork is touched up, carpets are shampooed, surfaces are cleaned and the garden is trimmed.

But familiarity breeds...well, familiarity, and long-time owners can easily miss one of the most important factors in creating a great first impression on potential buyers: good lighting. If a house is dark, buyers will be hard-pressed to notice how clean, fresh or neat it is. The correct lighting, on the other hand, can change the appearance of a room from dull and even a little gloomy to bright and airy.

A small room can be made to appear much larger, and localised lighting in a very large room can create comfortably cosy areas. Down lighters will help to shorten very high ceilings, washing one wall with light will visually push it away and illuminating the wide sides of a long, narrow room will make it look shorter. Accent or spot lighting will accentuate and attract attention to the room's best feature, perhaps the fireplace.

And contrary to common perception, changing the lighting in a home is inexpensive, especially when compared with other home decorating or renovating options.

The range of modern light fittings available and new systems such as low-voltage lighting, track-mounted spots and mini fluorescent bulbs, which last much longer than normal bulbs and use less electricity, means no homeowner needs to be in the dark.

What's more, a little imagination and the correct advice on what fittings to use to create the effects you want can really boost the value of your home to a potential buyer.



### You can't just pocket the rent

Have you been declaring the rental income received on your investment properties? Non-declaration of rentals received - after deducting the appropriate expenditure - is a contravention of the Income Tax Act. And with the improvements in the efficiency of tax collections by the South African Revenue Service, it is very likely that non-declarations of rental income will be detected, says Paul Nelson, director of Johannesburg-based auditing firm Nelson Financial.

"The Act allows revised assessments to be issued for three years after an assessment is issued. However, where income has been omitted, this three-year period does not apply, allowing SARS to re-open any year of assessment for which income has been omitted," he says.

"But if you have not declared your rental income in past periods it is advisable to approach SARS and settle the matter rather than to adopt the wait and see approach. This will save you worry and perhaps the cost of paying the additional taxes and interest that SARS can impose." It is recommended, though, that you make use of the services of a reputable tax consultant or accountant to approach SARS on your behalf - and to ensure that the net rental income received is properly calculated and disclosed in your current tax return.

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### Clean-up coming for laundries

The laundry, that utilitarian room at the back of the house with the big sink, washing machine, tumble-drier, ironing board - and assorted tools, surfboards, fishing rods and camping gear - is due for a makeover.

Laundry rooms have now become a priority for homebuyers in the US, according to the National Association of Home Builders, with families being willing to shell out as much as \$30 000 for the extra accommodation.

The laundry is also taking on a new role as the "family studio", with room not only for state-of-the-art clothes care appliances, but also for crafts, hobbies and homework, and a computer workstation for paying the bills or surfing the Internet.

And SA seems sure to follow the trend, as many families dispense with domestic help and do their own washing and ironing, and space for pastimes becomes harder to find in increasingly compact new homes.

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### How to get the job done right

A constant cause of concern for holiday homeowners is how to get improvements or additions and even routine maintenance completed satisfactorily while they are not on the spot. Most families are unwilling to have their annual holiday disrupted by a team of workmen coming in and out of the house and the mess and disorder of work in progress. And in any event, many tradesmen don't work during the main holiday periods over Christmas and Easter.

But if the work is going to be done during the absence of the owner, special precautions need to be taken to ensure that it is completed satisfactorily. Or you could end up in the same situation as a Gauteng developer who recently arrived on the site of his own new holiday home on the KwaZulu-Natal South Coast to find that work worth more than R100 000 had to be demolished.

Obviously for a major contract a local architect or an established and reputable construction company should be employed, and they should be capable of securing the necessary permits and complete the work according to the plans. A professional contract will ensure that grievances can be redressed.

A smaller job, say the conversion of a garage into a granny flat, can cause more problems. Large building companies are unlikely to take on such a contract and the owner will have to rely on smaller, one-man operators.

The first step then is to seek local recommendations. The estate agent who sold the house may have a list of reliable builders, or friends or neighbours in the area may have used reliable contractors. Before the contractor is engaged, ask him if he can supply recent references and be sure to check them.

The homeowner can also check whether tradesmen are members of the relevant trade association, which may also provide some guarantee of professional service.

And finally the owner must insist on a valid contract which stipulates who is responsible for securing municipal approvals, the start and completion times of the job, the procurement and payment for materials and progress payments. You should also ensure that provision is made for the final payment to be held back until you are satisfied that all the work has been carried out and that you are satisfied with the quality.

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