

HOMEFRONT

PROPERTY TREND

Decentralisation: the new normal



Parc at Gold Coast Estate in Sibaya Coastal Precinct on the KwaZulu-Natal North Coast

Semigration to coastal areas continues its momentum, with families and mature buyers reconsidering their life choices. As remote working flexibility increases, more semigrators are signing up.

WORDS: KIM MAXWELL — PHOTOS: SUPPLIED

In the latest FNB Estate Agent Survey released this January, 11% of sales in Q4 2020 resulted from the relocation of homeowners to another part of SA. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the associated lockdown has been playing a role in the life choices of South Africans. According to a recent Savills report, lockdown restrictions have disrupted the global economy severely. Yet residential real estate is proving to be one of the more resilient sectors – also in SA, where the market is showing continuous momentum uninterrupted by a record-low interest rate. This is especially evident in the R200,000 to R3m price band. Pam Golding Properties group chief executive Andrew Golding says the rent versus purchase equation has shifted towards buyers, and this has a significant impact on local housing market activity. “Homeowners globally have re-evaluated their lifestyles and, in particular, their living spaces. Lighthouse Property reports that many countries

are seeing reverse migration as remote working becomes a permanent option across job sectors and industries. It’s resulting in a steady increase in movement to smaller cities and towns where quality of life, family and affordability are highly valued. “Lighthouse points out that in SA the trend is more about a balanced lifestyle. Purchases in coastal areas are dominated by buyers in their late 20s and 30s and early retirees,” he says.

AFFORDABILITY Younger buyers in particular are finding value in less obvious coastal locations. Gabdi Botha of Hulwin Properties makes the point that, compared with alternatives on the Atlantic Seaboard, Paardevlei Lifestyle Estate in Somerset West offers greater affordability along with competitive safety, luxury and convenience.

“We’re only 1500 steps from the Strand beachfront with a private residential pathway to the beach across the road from Strand Golf Club,” she says.

Botha believes Paardevlei Lifestyle Estate represents excellent value for money. Two-bedroom, two-bathroom apartments start from R18,49,900 and include integrated Stieg appliances, fibre- and DStv-ready connections, basement parking and a private store room each. Aside from the convenience of nearby shopping malls and the estate’s numerous amenities at its modern lifestyle centre on site, the setting means “every day feels like a holiday” for residents.

“Our location also plays to our advantage. It is only 25 minutes from Cape Town International Airport, 33 minutes from the city centre and 17 minutes from the Stellenbosch wine farms, so centrality and flexibility of location are prime,” she adds.

Further afield, rural towns such as Rietbos, Pringle Bay, Betty’s Bay, Kleinmond, Malmesbury, Hermanus, Oortrus and Gansbaai are attracting home-buyers not only from elsewhere in the Western Cape, but also from Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal. “Hermanus and Oortrus

offer all the necessary amenities for buyers of all ages to live here permanently – good schools, medical facilities, shopping centres and enough attractions to please the outdoor enthusiasts,” says Annelien Borg, MD for Pam Golding Properties in the Boland and Overberg. “Thanks to growing commercial investment in these areas over the past few years and with more people relocating, a number of infrastructure investments and road upgrades have taken place.”

Nicola Lloyd, Pam Golding area manager for Rietbos, Pringle Bay, Betty’s Bay and Kleinmond, confirms that holiday or retirement “dreams” have become permanent residential locations as more people switch to remote working.

“Besides retirees, we find that more younger buyers, mainly families, are relocating here because access to schools is easier. The major demand is for homes priced between R2m and R3m.”

“More and more people are looking for an all-in-one package – convenience,



The beachfront of Ballito, another KwaZulu-Natal destination popular with commuters and retirees

SMART MOVES How would Rodrigues advise potential semigrators who find that Camps Bay may not be in their price range? “For someone wanting to move to Cape Town, the upper price brackets and living next to a beach is reserved for only a few,” he says. “But wallet estates offer a basket of advantages – Burgundy Estate has convenient shopping centres and three schools, as well as a central location near beaches, the CBD and the Durbanville wine route.”

This is where Rabie’s new development Bow Tie offers a stress-free atmosphere with parks and indigenous green corridors on the fringe of Cape Town’s Northern Suburbs. Rodrigues says outdoor enthusiasts will delight in a range of facilities including multipurpose sports fields, a nine-hole massive golf course, a clubhouse with a tennis court and an expansive canoeing pond, as well as jogging paths and cycle tracks.

Bow Tie prices start from R845,000 for a one-

bedroom apartment and from R1,62m for a two-bedroom house (three-bedroom options are also available). “The homes combine green building principles, smart design and lush landscaping at a smart price,” Rodrigues says.

Ten minutes from King Shaka International Airport, the sectional title development Parc at Gold Coast Estate in Sibaya Coastal Precinct affords young professionals and families remote working convenience with the option to commute for occasional meetings. And when they’re not working, a subtropical climate and a beach lifestyle sweeten the deal. “It’s the epitome of coastal living – and close to the business hub Umhlanga,” says Rainmaker Marketing director Stephan Botha.

Parc’s two-bedroom villas start from R37m. Sectional title is an appealing option for homeowners who don’t fancy the costs or time input of maintaining a freestanding house, and estate security is an obvious benefit.

“KwaZulu-Natal attracts buyers relocating permanently, particularly from Gauteng, but also from Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and East London,” says Greta Daniel, national sales and operations manager for Pam Golding Franchise Services.

PERFECT BALANCE Daniel says demand for homes in Durban North up

to Ballito is consistent in general, but especially for Gauteng family commuters and the growing retirement market relocating to this coastal belt. Decentralisation is the new normal.

“The South Coast, with its appealing hamlets – from Scottburgh and Pennington closer to Durban through to Southbroom, San Lameer, Port Shepstone, Margate, Ramegate and Port Edward down the coast – holds many attractions for home buyers, including semigrators and retirees seeking a coastal lifestyle at an affordable price,” Daniel adds.

Port Elizabeth is another solution for those diverting their focus from unattainable property prices in major metros to a more affordable coastal home. Westbrook Lifestyle Estate MD Clifford Oosthuizen says this destination strikes a balance by offering big city amenities without some of the more trying aspects associated with many urban metros.

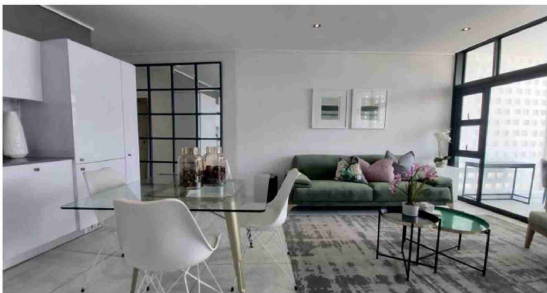
“There are huge discrepancies between house prices by city, meaning buyers often have to sacrifice space for location. For those prepared to make the move, now more feasible than ever with the widespread shift to remote work, estate living is achievable for the price of what would probably get you a small studio flat in the likes of Cape Town,” says Oosthuizen.

Port Elizabeth’s newest suburb Westbrook is currently in development. The estate has security, walkable streets, parks and play areas, a cycling and running track, schooling and a mixed-use precinct.

The Ridge, the first of nine villages, is completed and sold out. Next in line is River Dale, currently under construction. Here potential investors can buy a three-bedroom, two-bathroom freestanding estate home with a double garage at prices starting from R1,555,000.

Unsurprisingly, architects have made design tweaks in residential developments during 2020, as remote working gives many homeowners more flexibility and choice of location. FNB senior economist Siphamandla Mkhwanazi notes that the pandemic brought about changes in housing specs globally – for example, demand for bigger spaces to facilitate work from home needs. Locally, 2020 surprised many by slowing robust home-buying activity. In fact, 2020 registered the highest volume of mortgage approvals in SA in more than a decade.

Stephan Botha reports that residential developers in KwaZulu-Natal are generally incorporating business centres, or pods, and private meeting rooms as part of their communal facility offerings. Back up power and fibre in a secure estate are a given.



Paardevlei Lifestyle Estate, a Balwin Properties development in Somerset West