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Title: Pandemic, crime forcing wealthy to flee into luxurious laagers

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Pandemic, crime forcing wealthy to flee into luxurious laagers

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The need for social distancing, future infection fears, crime and traffic congestion are pushing more South Africans towards swanky residential estate living.

Property experts have in the last six months seen more people showing a "real need" to be outside, alone or with their families without having to worry about their safety — which estates that come complete with business hubs, schools as well as medical and sporting facilities offer.

Pam Golding Properties head Andrew Golding said there has been heightened interest in homes in lifestyle estates recently.

"In a time of social distancing, it makes sense for people to minimise their interactions with other people, outside of

family and a close circle of friends.

"This is possible if you live and work in an estate which offers retail outlets, sporting amenities, schools, medical facilities and offices or business hubs, or is in proximity to these amenities."

Golding said estates, within easy reach of cities and major hubs, have proven "increasingly attractive" because of open spaces, including children's play areas, 24-hour patrol and sporting facilities.

According to Lightstone Property, in 2010, estates accounted for 12.7% of all homes sold in SA.

By last year, this rose to 14.7% of all properties sold.

During the first half of the year, estate sales accounted for just over 15% of all properties sold, according to Lightstone figures.

Ryk Neethling, marketing director of Val de Vie Estate in the Paarl-Franschhoek valley, said in the past six months, "we have noticed a 50% increase in property purchase inquiries from Cape Town suburbs — and from a mixed market sector of families, couples and professionals.

"I think that in the teeth of the pandemic, people began to re-evaluate what means the most to them.

"Many people indicate a real need to be outside, alone or with their families while not having to worry about their safety."

He believes the pandemic "was an obvious disrupter".

"In almost every quarter, patterns shifted."

Seeff Property Group chair Samuel Seeff said they were "definitely seeing a number of Covid-driven trends in the real

estate market". This included multigenerational living, especially on estates, where a combination "of a better lifestyle and better security and people looking to be closer to their loved ones" were drawcards.

"Urban areas especially are seeing this trend including the Sandton/Midrand area as well as Randburg and Pretoria east — Seeff has for example seen some of the best trade in years in some of these areas with high value sales achieved in many estates," he said.

Wealth analyst Andrew Amoils of New World Wealth said going forward "we expect more SA high net worth individuals to work remotely in 2021 from affluent towns such as Hermanus, Franschhoek, Umhlanga and Plettenberg Bay.

"We also expect estate living to become more popular." — *Sunday Times Daily*



LIFE OF LUXURY: Val de Vie in the Western Cape is the kind of residential estate wealthy South Africans are flocking to for safer living