

Home downsizing: From micro units to micro mansions

Convenient, hassle-free living is a growing trend across property market segments, with even some upmarket home buyers longing for more manageable space, but without compromising on luxury and quality - and with an emphasis on lifestyle.



So says Dr Andrew Golding, chief executive of the Pam Golding Property group, who elaborates: “As spaces shrink, when it comes to high-end homes, there’s no need to forego the latest cutting-edge architecture, leading world-class luxury and stylish, contemporary design. On the contrary, you can still create a showpiece with all the latest luxury features, unique appeal and privacy to boot. Visualise a sun deck that can ‘float’ between swimming pools, or an amphibious floating house which rises in sync with the level of the River Thames. These are both realities in existing micro mansions overseas.”

Cape Atlantic Seaboard

A trend being noted internationally is the emergence of micro mansions, a catchphrase which definitely epitomises the very nature of the Cape’s Atlantic Seaboard due to the scarcity of view sites and the demand to live in this prime, narrow coastal strip perched on the side of a mountain, says Basil Moraitis, Pam Golding Properties area manager.

“In this regard there is no doubt that sought-after Nettleton Road in Clifton must take the crown, as you just need to drive along it to appreciate that this concept has found favour here in the Cape. Let us not forget the spectacular apartments perched on the water’s edge in Clifton, Bantry Bay and the rest of the Atlantic Seaboard, where the trend in recent years has been to create bespoke living spaces overlooking the ocean, without the hassle that comes with maintaining a large mansion set on large grounds.”

Moraitis adds that this is a trend which has taken off in the property market on the Atlantic Seaboard in recent years, so much so people are remarking at the fact that ‘downsizing is the new lifestyle upsizing’. These buyers seek the convenience of hassle-free living within the confines of the special micro climate offered by the Atlantic Seaboard, with easy walking access to trendy restaurants, shops, pavement cafes and outdoor activities such as walks on the beachfront promenade. Here they enjoy the benefit of enhanced security offered by these apartment blocks, many of which offer a front desk concierge and high-end security. There are a number of gyms in the area within walking distance and the Green Point Urban Park is a big drawcard as well as the proximity to the V&A Marina and more importantly, the lack of gridlock traffic when heading into the CBD.”



Shift to open plan living

Says Sandra Gordon, Pam Golding Properties senior research analyst: “While people in their fifties and sixties may be reducing the scale of their properties, this is not necessarily in regard to value. In Cape Town, which has the strongest house price inflation in the country, we’re seeing an increasing number of buyers selling their larger homes to buy similarly-priced yet more compact, lock-up-and-go properties on the Atlantic Seaboard or City Bowl area.”

Adds Richard Smith, Pam Golding Properties area manager in Hyde Park: “Living space requirements have changed over the years, and there is a definite shift to more open plan living. Some people want to create spectacular houses on smaller properties, where there is less garden to maintain, but the homes are luxurious and up to date. So there is an emphasis on glamorous architecture, upmarket fittings, 21st century features, space, security and above all, comfort. We certainly have a segment of worldly residents in Johannesburg, for whom the benefits of a micro mansion in this context will have high appeal.”

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