

# THE KEY

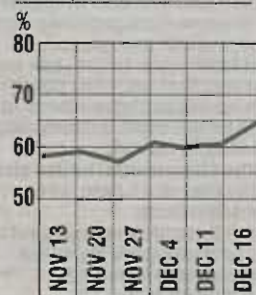
VICTORIA'S BEST ADDRESS



Grant Thomas will have plenty of room to unwind at his \$2 million coastal retreat  
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## KEY FIGURES

Private sales	656
Auctions reported	570
Sold	300
Sold before	70
Sold after	3
Passed in	197
On vendor's bid	107
Auctions last week	1175
Auctions last year	622
<b>CLEARANCE RATES %</b>	
Overall yesterday	65
Overall last week	61
Houses yesterday	65
Houses last week	58
Flats/apts yesterday	68
Flats/apts last week	61



## MARKET REPORT

### MARKET RECOVERS TO END ON A HIGH

VICTORIA'S property market has ended the year on a high note, with yesterday's auction clearance rate recovering slightly from its slump.

Yesterday was the first Saturday in more than a month with fewer than 1000 auctions scheduled, and industry figures said the contracting supply had helped boost clearance rates. The Real Estate Institute of Victoria reported 65 per cent of properties auctioned sold under the hammer — up from 61 per cent the week before.

The figures show 71 per cent of properties were sold at auction in the state during 2010, down from 81 per cent the year before.

But REIV spokesman Robert Larocca said the figures did not tell the full story. "The clearance rate may be lower, but that obscures the overall healthy state of the market because 30 per cent more homes have (gone to) auction than last year," he said.

Ray White Mill Park director Rocco Haco said the Mill Park area had finished the year on a high note, with his office selling six out of seven at auction yesterday.

"The talk has been on clearance rates and a softening market, but out here, where houses are relatively cheap given their proximity to central Melbourne, we feel immune to those pressures," Mr Haco said.

Barry Plant Group director James Hatzimoisis said the company sold 40 out of 65 properties auctioned yesterday.

"There was activity there, but it wasn't sparking, with a lot of people holding back and properties selling by negotiation after auction," he said.

Fletchers director Tim Fletcher said they had an "end-of-year rush by buyers wanting to stitch up a home before Christmas."



Praying monks symbolise peace and harmony

Plenty of natural light provides warmth and balance

Chrysanthemums symbolise nobility, permanence and long life

Pink porcelain vase containing flowers provides uplifting energy

Lounge suite and cushions display fire and earth colours to balance the room's energy.

Open floorplan allows for circulation of positive energy

FENG SHUI

# Living in harmony

HAMISH HEARD  
Key editor

## Property buyers and sellers are turning to feng shui for success

THE Chinese have long believed the design and decor of a home can bring its occupants financial prosperity, health and good luck.

Now property experts are reporting Victorian home owners and buyers are increasingly turning to the age-old practice of feng shui when finding and setting up homes.

Feng shui has been building in popularity in the West since the 1990s and its consultants here said business was booming, especially in the eastern suburbs, the destination of choice for many Asian buyers moving to Australia.

The practice strives to use the physical environment to create balance and harmony in a home, inviting in positive energy and bringing with it success, romance, health and money.

Philip Webb Real Estate principal Philip Webb said about one in five clients he dealt with was seeking properties with good feng shui.

"You can have a beautiful house at the right price and in a fantastic area, but if the feng shui isn't right they certainly won't buy it," Mr Webb said.

He said that with 20 per cent of people inquiring about properties through his offices in Doncaster, Ringwood and Mitcham being born in Asia, he would be foolish not to take

Chinese superstitions on board.

"There are certain auspicious street numbers that are more attractive than others. For example, four is a number that refers to death whereas the number eight refers to luck, prosperity and longevity," Mr Webb said. "My car's number plate has 8888 so people believe I'm very lucky to deal with and why rock the system?"

Janene Laird, of Shen-Chi Feng-Shui, said the popularity of suburbs such as Doncaster and North Balwyn among Asian buyers could be explained by the ancient art form.

"Between February 2004 and February 2004 we are in the age of eight, which means the energy is coming from the northeast, so I would imagine that the northeastern suburbs would be very attractive because of that," Ms Laird said.

Ms Laird is one of a growing number of feng shui consultants charging a fee of \$300 to \$600 to help people find, renovate, design or decorate their homes.

She said that central to feng shui were the themes of water and mountains.

"A classic example is Hong

Kong, which fronts the water on Victoria Harbour and has mountains towering over the rear of the city," Ms Laird said.

"Open water brings positive energy and opportunities for prosperity and the mountains contain that energy, so it doesn't just pass on by."

Ms Laird listed dos and don'ts for people wanting to improve their lives with positive energy.

a hill, tall trees or a two-storey house — helps to contain the precious life force energy.

3. Select a home that has good natural lighting and ventilation to ensure that the energy always remains fresh and vital.

4. Select a home with a fairly open floor plan and wide passageways to allow energy to circulate easily throughout the home.

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PHILIP WEBB REAL ESTATE PRINCIPAL, PHILIP WEBB

### DO

1. Select a home on a relatively quiet street because the flow of traffic is slower and less frequent, enabling the energy to enter the house more easily, bringing prosperity to the occupants.

2. Select a property with an open area at the front of the house. This allows the energy to settle and accumulate in the front yard while a tall form at the rear of the house — like

5. Select a home that is more regular in shape — such as a square or rectangle — to allow energy to be distributed easily throughout the house.

### DON'T

1. Avoid properties located on busy thoroughfares because the movement stops energy from entering the property, making opportunities for prosperity simply pass on by.